

Task 1

Academic and Employability Skills
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08/2019

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Introduction

In this report, I will be discussing my employability and academic skills and also be inputting any academic texts that support my skills. I will aim to showcase what my strengths and weaknesses are, the steps that I will be undertaking in order to improve said weakness and also how I aim to obtain new sets of skills that are not only important but also relevant to the sector that I wish to pursue a career in. The report will be focused on the skills that I have that are related to the Health and Social Care sector, texts/studies that support my skills and also a discussion on my academic skills which I gained through in class exercises.

2. Employment Skills

2.1. Communication

Working within the Health and Social Care sector has in a great deal helped in improving my communication skills, be it verbal, non-verbal or even written. Before working as a health care assistant, my confidence level while communicating I would say was not of a high standard as I was very shy and timid while talking and always spoke in a low voice which made it hard for me to not only get my point across but also made it hard for me to be heard especially in a crowded room. But within a short period of being a homecare assistant I quickly learned with the help of my work peers and also family and friends how to effectively communicate with people, how to use my tone of voice and pitch to get my point across and also how to express myself in a professional manner when I do not agree with something.

While I gained the confidence to effectively communicate with others, one major skill that I developed was being able to express my views and opinions to my peers and service more openly and confidently while still maintaining professional. Which then lead to me being able to control my tone of voice, how to address people by listening to their preferences and communication back information.

Maund et al (2017) states that "communication skills are foundational for individual, team and organizational success". Which then proves that in order for the workplace to run smoothly and be successful co-workers need to be able to not only communicate effectively , but to also encourage and motivate those that are lacking with communication, proof of this my own experience e.g. without the help of my coworkers I would have not been able to come out of my shy and timid comfort zone while communicating.

Being able to communicate effectively in a Health and Social Care setting is such an important skill, one that I believe all health care practitioners should aim to possess.

2.2. Team working

The first term of this course has taught me a lot about team working.

This is a skill that I have always possessed from my days of school and college, and even though it is not a skill which I use on a daily basis, I am very confident while in a group situation. Even though I enjoy being a group, what I seem to enjoy and cherish more is the duty and responsibility that comes with being a team leader. This has not only provided me with the opportunity to lead others, but it has also put me in a position to effectively and fully listen and consider the ideas and viewpoints that my team members are voicing across, which if working on my own I may not have come up with.

By taking a positive outlook to the teamwork that I have undertaken, I believe it has encouraged me to always aim to think outside the box, this then leads to a fine balance between having sufficient authority and credibility within the group to facilitate the groups achievement (Healy, 2012).

2.3. Assertiveness

To me being assertive means being able to possess the skills of:

- Recognising the difference between facts and opinions
- Thinking before I speak
- Being able to stand up for my own rights and those of others in a respectable and professional manner
- Encouraging others to be open and honest about their views.

Assertiveness also includes the ability to find a neutral balance between being passive aggressive, which I personally think is a skill that I need to improve on as I am still on the passive side.

Although I do not use this skill daily, it is one that I do possess and believe that it will enable me to succeed both academically and in my future career choice.

As a health care worker, a big part of my job includes being able to remove myself from positions that will hinder my ability to differentiate between my personal opinions and what is facts.

Even though I've worked in care before, this is still a skill that I find myself still struggling with, an example of this is while I was doing a work placement at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, I found myself at times unable to work out what I can and cannot voice across that were of my own opinion rather than presenting the facts of the situation at hand. This more than often got me into trouble with my supervisor, but with time I came to the realisation that not all of my opinions should be voiced and that what makes a great health practitioner is not the ability to voice my opinions, but moreover it is the ability to present credible facts.

I believe that being assertive and team working interlinks with each other. The reason why I say this is very simple, in team working to be able to get a successful result each team member must participate on the task at hand and being able to voice/ address their points of view, which is the same as being assertive where you have to encourage others to be open and honest about their views.

2.4. Weakness

In not only my working life but also my life outside of work, one skill that seems to be my weakness is that of time management.

I find it very difficult to effectively manage my time, which then pushes me into falling behind on any tasks that I have to do resulting in having to do things last minute.

For someone that is aspiring to become a nurse in the future, this is a skill that I know I must improve on and get better at. In order to improve I have established that I should produce a personal development plan/timetable which lays out any activities that must accomplish by the end of the day.

Something else that I need to work is to be able to not procrastinate and I aim to do this by taking time to myself to read and removing any distractions such as phones, tv, social media and laptop (unless it is needed for research and studying purposes). By taking these steps I am confident that I will succeed both in my career and academically as a research by George et al. (2008) shows a link between good time management and success.

3. Deciding to study

Deciding to go back into education was something that I wanted to do after the birth of my daughter but I wasn't sure on the route that I should follow. I decided to go back to college and finish my level 3 diploma in Health and Social Care, which I did and got a merit grade at the end of the course. After passing my level 3, I was in limbo about what to do next when the opportunity for a level 4 course at the University of Wales Trinity St David presented itself. The main reason that I decided to seize this opportunity was simply for the fact that I thought it would put me on the right path to where I want to be in the future and also help me in developing the skills that I feel I lack which I would definitely need in order to progress to the next level which will hopefully be a nursing degree.

At the start of starting this course, I would say that I wasn't entirely sure about what to expect in regards to the teaching methods, the lectures and the other students. This is something that was heavily on my mind, but I found out on the first day that I was putting myself through worry and stress for no reason, everyone in the class

were very friendly and welcoming, the lectures taught at a speed which was very easy to understand and grasp on what they were attempting to say and also the lectures themselves were good lectures. I found easier to settle in because we all seemed to come from different walks of life with different situations but we all seemed to connect and help each other through anything that we didn't quite comprehend. We have helped each other through in class tasks, worked together during group work and have also helped each other with ideas on how to do our assignments.

4. Academic Skills

4.1. Harvard Referencing

This course has helped me to enhance my knowledge on the Harvard referencing system.

I have always known about the this of referencing, but it is something that I wasn't confident in doing and I didn't know the right/correct way of doing it. That confidence has since improved with the help of my tutors who have gone in depth about the correct way to do the Harvard reference.

Within an academic setting, a tool that all students should have is that of being able to always reference their work. This is important because students to be able to showcase where their information came from, because failure to do so results in work not being marked as your own which then you can lose marks for, and in some serious cases being removed from your course due to plagiarism.

4.2. Summarising

During lecture we have undertaken tasks on what is known as summarising. To summarise is to be able to look at a text and then giving a brief statement what the text is about. You then do this by taking key points of the text, recognising the structure of the text then giving the statement in your own words ensuring that you stick to the original structure of the text.

4.3. Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is all about taking the ideas of someone else and then transforming said ideas into your own words. Being able to paraphrase in an academic setting is so important, especially when you are using the works of others to somewhat add weight to your own thoughts, views and ideas.

To effectively paraphrase, you need to be able to change the wordings of the text and also changing the structure of the whole text while still conveying the same message across, while bearing in mind that even though you are paraphrasing you must always acknowledge it by being able to provide references.

5.Reference

Healy, K. (2012). Social Work Methods and Skills: the essential foundations of practice. Basingstoke, U.K: Palgrave Macmillan

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Morgan, P. (2017). *The Business Student's Guide To Study And Employability*.
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