

Academic Report

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Table of Contents

Contents	Page Number
Intro	3
Time management	3
CV Writing	4
Cover Letter Writing	4-5
Public speaking and giving presentations	5-6
Conclusion	6
Reference	7

Introduction

This report will be based on Academic skills in association with employability skills. I will be splitting this report into several different parts where I will be explaining, in detail, what I have learnt from these past ten weeks. In this report, you will also find researched information as evidence to justify the points made, as well as showcasing how I have been able to utilise the skills that I have learnt within this module & outside of the classroom.

What are Academic Skills?

Academic skills are skills “associated to employability skills. Most academic skills such as academic writing, organization, time management, meeting deadlines, researching, oral communication, critical analysis/ evaluation and problem-solving skills are all relevant to employability skills”. (1)

Time management/Organising Study.

Time management to me, is being able to use your time in an organised and effective way that works around your own/or the schedule of others. What I found through my research is: “Time management is the process of organizing and planning how to divide your time between specific activities”. (2)

From my understanding, time management is one of the most essential tools to use, not only for employability purposes but, this tool is a necessity in our day-to-day lives.

As someone who intends to go into the Social Work industry; time management is a major essential skill required as the work schedule of a social worker can become remarkably busy and challenging. My research shows that most social workers standard hours are likely to be around “37.5 hours a week” (3). This is a considerable number of working hours; however, it is quite common for social workers to put in more than 8 hours of overtime each week, this leads to my next point as to why learning the importance of time management has benefited me within this module.

Organisation is vital in Social Work as you are more than likely to work with several service clients in one day (this is known as caseload). Social workers must ensure that they manage their time effectively to help their clients and give them the service that they need. Many different time management tools could be used in situations such as Diaries, Reminders, To-do lists and various others. With this knowledge, I have been able to use several of these specific tools and will be able to now utilise them in my future career, hopefully becoming more productive and structured.

In class, we completed a range of different activities regarding time management. One of these activities was for us to review the time we use, that is when we were introduced to “The Eisenhower Method” which consisted of a table where we had to identify personal tasks that were either urgent, not urgent, important and not so important. It helped give a personal understanding between importance and urgency, both of which I used to confuse. However, I have now learnt to prioritise tasks more efficiently.

CV Writing

“A CV is a document aimed at convincing an employer that who you are, your qualifications, work experience and your skills makes it worthwhile for them to offer you either work experience or a chance to move forward in a formal selection process.” (4)

CV Writing is an extremely critical tool for employability. CV Writing gives employers a summary of your goals, achievements, hobbies. It is an overall account of who you are as an individual before employment. An appropriately written CV qualifies an individual for a sit-down face to face interview or alternative interviews such as virtually or over the phone due to various circumstances, COVID-19 being one.

This topic was a personal favourite of mine, as I found it to be one of the most beneficial topics within the module, the reason for this was because I had started the lesson only understanding the basic structure of a CV, such as; opening your CV with a personal statement, following with your work experiences, qualifications and then ending the document with your hobbies. From viewing the CV Writing videos that were shown in the classroom, I now understand that my idea of a written CV was not as accurate as I had once thought.

During the lesson on CV Writing there was an activity given to the class that had helped me understand your CV is a personal brand. The activity that enabled me to come to this understanding was when our lecturer had first differentiated the difference between knowledge, attributes, skills and hobbies, which I will state below my insight on the four.

- Knowledge is information that you gain from experience.
- Attributes are character traits that you have as an individual.
- Skills are talents that you have naturally or talents that you have acquired from experience.
- Hobbies are activities that you enjoy in your free time.

After, the lecturer then gave us an activity to complete which was to make a personal list stating our knowledge, attributes, skills and hobbies in detail. I found this to be an interesting task to complete as it allowed me to acknowledge my strengths which I can bring to future job roles outside the classroom.

Another tool that I was able to take with me outside of the classroom was how to write my CV in a simple format but, in a way that will be appropriate for employers to look at when reviewing it.

Cover Letter Writing

“A covering letter is a professional business letter which provides an employer with an introduction to an accompanying CV.” (5)

Cover letters are not a necessity for all job applicants as some companies forgo asking for one entirely.

The importance of a cover letter is to summarise in detail as to **why** you are suitable for the specific job role you are applying for.

Before learning this topic, I did not fully know what a Cover Letter was as well as not knowing how to format a one from start to finish. I had previously attempted to write a

personal cover letter a couple of months ago when applying for a job role as the company demanded applicants to provide an additional cover letter alongside their CV, at that time I failed in the application. This was heavily due to my letter not following the proper format for a cover letter, it lacked in structure, clarity and most of all passion.

In the lesson, the class had some time to discuss amongst ourselves what we think is the importance of a cover letter and when and how to use one. Hearing other pupils' opinions on the topic, expanded my own outlook. During the lesson, the lecturer had shown three informative videos explaining cover letter writing, they were named the following:

- "2 things recruiters hate to read on a cover letter". (6)
- "How to write a cover letter recruiter will love". (7)
- "How to write the perfect cover letter". (8)

These three videos gave a substantial number of tips on Cover Letter writing. After watching the three videos listed above, I have successfully been able to grasp the requirements needed when writing up a cover letter from beginning to end.

The activities following those three videos have given me a greater understanding of how to format a cover letter appropriately in ways that will catch the interest of a recruiter. The knowledge that I now have regarding this, has helped me write up my very own brand-new cover letter in a more professional way. This has greatly boosted my confidence when applying for jobs where companies ask applicants to send my cover letter alongside my CV.

Public Speaking and Giving Presentations

A basic take on Public speaking is voicing an opinion or making a speech before a group of individuals. However, this is only scratching the surface of this skills use.

Before learning about Public speaking, I knew this skill was a necessity in terms of employability. To me, public speaking was a necessary skill to have as the working environment is unpredictable at best and constantly changing, public speaking helps you to communicate more clearly & concisely with others on mass.

There are jobs such as corporate for example, that require you to participate in presentations & team meetings discussing issues within the company. My overall understanding of public speaking is this is a skill that is one of the fundamental requirements at every place of work. It is multifaceted and is a key component for anyone, but, especially to any well-rounded prospective employee. Research strongly agrees with my statement as reads; "Public speaking is a critical skill that is valuable to anyone regardless of their general duties or responsibilities". (9)

During class, we learnt that there are three main components to giving a successful presentation. Speaking, Body language and length, my understanding of the three are the following.

Speaking- This is about the clarity of your voice. To give a good presentation, you need to make sure your words are clear for the audience to understand. I also learnt in the lesson that you need to have a steady pace, not talking too slow or too fast and lastly the tone of your voice. The class has taught the tone of your voice needs to be calm, so the audience is comfortable.

Body language- My understanding of this is in terms of the gestures you make when you are speaking, one key point the lecture stated which I found extremely hard to do before this

lesson was eye contact. Eye contact is important as it engages the listeners. Body language can make people relax, depending on how it's used, such as an open stance.

Length- The lecturer had given us key tips on length regarding presentations. I found this greatly beneficial for my module 1 assignment. What I took away was, when you are presenting you need to ensure you are not speaking too long otherwise the audience will become bored. We were taught when you create a presentation only bullet points the key aspects and speak on them briefly to keep the audience engaged.

Our lecturer had prepared multiple different activities for the class to take part in to help us with our presentation practice. One of the activities given for the class to complete was a task where we had 5 minutes to speak about ourselves. This task was for us to have an idea of how to speak publicly in front of a group of people. The task given in class has benefited me so much, it has enabled me to build confidence when speaking to others. I also now understand how to plot key components to have a successful presentation. This task has aided me outside of the class, as I now use this new knowledge at my youth group as I give a lot of public speeches to the young people who attend. It will further help me in any future work I will have.

Conclusion

Overall, I think time management, CV writing, cover letter writing, and public speaking/ giving presentations have a significant importance in employability; these are tools that will help you to achieve job roles of your dreams as well as help you to stand out from other candidates. I believe everything I have learnt within this module has and will benefit me both now and for the long future.

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