

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Professional Career Development

Reflection on Own Employability Skills

Florina Loredana Lupulescu 1922055
Tutor: Saqib Shamim

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
REFLECTION ON THE ROLEPLAY INTERVIEW.....	4
PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING	5
My personal/professional vision of the future.....	5
Self-evaluation review	6
Development planning	8
EXPECTATIONS OF THE WORLD OF EMPLOYMENT	10
CONCLUSION.....	11
References	12
Attachments.....	13
APPENDIX 1 Roleplay interview questions	13
APPENDIX 2 SWOT analysis	13
APPENDIX 3 Reflection on learning styles	15

INTRODUCTION

This report is written from a personal perspective with the intention to show awareness of the importance of having the necessary attributes and tools to help develop one's professional career. Continuous professional development (CPD) is a "methodical approach to maintain and improve professional and personal skills, to enable personal work effectiveness throughout an individual's career" (Maund, 2017).

The aim of this report, in the next few pages, is to have an insight on some of the skills that I possess and update knowledge or improve new skills to help me grow in my workplace and as a person.

As part of my CPD I will start the discussion in this report by reflecting on the interview role play that is part of the assessment in this term. To show the reflective process, I will analyse the interview experience using a reflective learning cycle.

Afterwards different strategies/tools will be used to help evaluate and reflect on the person I am personally and professionally. To properly do this evaluation, I will list my strengths and weaknesses in a SWOT analysis, explain my career goal and what motivates me into doing things. To better understand how I learn I will reflect on some of my skills with the help of the visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic (VAK) learning styles- showed in appendix 3 and I will end the report with a description of the skills I need in the PDP and explain why I am ready for this move in the world of employment.

The purpose of self-evaluation is to reflect on my skills and understand how to work on them to draw a personal development plan to help me work on achieving my goal for the future.

The evidence used in this report will be examples of own everyday life or from employment, work experience, where I proved my skills, evidence supported by literature research.

According to Peter Knight and Mantz Yorke (2004)

REFLECTION ON THE ROLEPLAY INTERVIEW

Moon (2004, p.186) discusses that “Reflective writing is the expression on paper/the screen of some of the mental processes of reflection”, reflecting with the purpose of learning something.

For the first task of the assignment, I had to act out the roles of interviewer and interviewee for a chosen job, together with a colleague. I applied for a teaching assistant position where my colleague was the interviewer and my colleague applied for a beauty therapist position where I was the interviewer. There were 5 questions to be answered (attached appendix 1) considering the job description and person specification.

I as the interviewee and colleague as interviewer (for teaching assistant) - At the start of the interview, the informal discussion was missing, the interviewee said hello first instead of the interviewer who should have welcomed the candidate. There was very good reflection on the CV and person specification. Good technical questions and good detail response with answers in very good detail. Communication and behaviour situation explained well on what you will do. Examples based question was answered well. Reflecting good experience of dealing with behaviour and by mentioning that will follow the behaviour policies shows that I read the policies. Good end and remarks and questions asked.

I as the interviewer and colleague as interviewee (for beauty therapist position) - Introduction addressed with good greetings. Answer to questions addressed well, very simple way of answering. Reflection on application and CV was done as well. Most questions were answered with examples providing evidence from experience, which is good. Reflection on technical skills was general. Good wind up from interviewer. The end was detailed.

What could have been done is to extend the question in a discussion when candidate responds. Could further improve the response also talk about specific things requires like for example ‘SEN children are different because... and normal children are...’. The answer in question 3, a specific concern could have been mentioned. Could ask about technical skill, industry specific like ‘the staff needs to follow a specific standard’.

Having done this role play has helped me very much to understand what I will be going through when I will apply for the tutoring position as now, I know what I need to work on as well. And as Kolb's theory focuses on individual's learning through experience. Arguing that "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984). I relate to this and I conclude that this for me was a new experience that taught me skills from both interviewer and interviewee's point of view.

PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

My personal/professional vision of the future

I am a down-to-earth, active, and thoughtful person known of caring for others who plans to use abilities and acquire new skills to grow personally and professionally.

In a few years' time I see myself moved forward on a different position at work. This would be tutoring in the school that I work. Why taking me a few years? Because I am on maternity leave and I will not be able to return to work immediately. Applying for this position is part of my professional development and in order for me to achieve this, I have enrolled into Skills for the Workplace course that will give me the necessary tools to apply my personal transferable skills to improve my workplace performance and employment expectations.

What I want is to be able to improve the skills I need to grow into position at work and I will prove them by being able to take on more responsibility and other tasks and specific trainings that the school may require of me to have in order to apply for the position.

Personally, I have the family I wished for and holding on to a working position to be able provide for my family the essentials they need is what I want.

The tutoring position requires certain skills that I am not very confident in practicing and that I need to improve or attain before applying so I am evaluating myself as a person and list some of the skills that I have into a Self-evaluation.

Self-evaluation review

1. SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis is an opportunity to find my talents and skills that will help further my career and achieve my goal. In appendix 2 I have listed some and the main ones are described below.

My **strength** is communication. This is a skill that I feel confident in doing at my workplace as I can communicate well with teachers, colleagues, parents, and other professionals involved in the children's education and wellbeing. I also speak Romanian and Spanish that helps me when needed. I am able to adapt very well to changes, remain calm and react positively to challenges, proved during the pandemic when I had to work from home using my IT skills to create and present short activity sessions for the children over zoom meetings. I love working with children and I think being compassionate about gives me the patience needed to help with their learning. I also show commitment to my work and make use of my time efficiently to be productive.

Weaknesses

Public speaking is my weakness because I get nervous when speaking in front of a crowd and that often pulls me back from expressing my ideas. Taking over the class and speak in front of the children is where I will start to improve my experience.

I am not very creative when I need to come up with play ideas to improve children's tasks. I fear of failure and being embarrassed to show off my talent. To improve my creativity, I need to build more my confidence that I can do it and look for inspiration in reading about it, meditate and exercise or doodle on paper.

Team leadership and delegating tasks - I find it hard to tell people what to do because I am afraid of failure. I will use the leadership skills learnt at course and practice them when leading the class in the absence of the teacher, to get better at leading.

Opportunities

Being able to enrol into a course to deepen my skills in the workplace is a great opportunity that I am taking on. Using a computer daily at work helps improve my typing skills and cuts on the time I spend when writing progress during activities. New job roles opportunities available every year to develop my career like lead class/HLTA, tutoring or NQT. The class teacher has weekly PPA and covering her duties is a great opportunity for me to practice my teaching skills and lead the other TA's.

Threats

Other colleagues who want to develop their career are competing for the same position I am planning to apply for, and I see this as a threat; also I feel I am less experienced in working with children compared to them.

2. Motivation

Another strategy that helped in evaluating myself was learning to use self-motivation to understand how to motivate myself into doing things.

“Motivation is what drives us to achieve our goals” (SkillsYouNeed, 2021).

According to the result of the self-motivation quiz (scored 27) I took I “allow my personal doubts and fears to keep me from succeeding”. Which is half true maybe because I am a little laid back and do not like to challenge myself into doing more. I am always looking at things and say, “I will do it later, there is time”. But every time there was opportunity, I would let other things take first place and put my career on hold, I was thinking of my family, money issues, health, and the fact that I will be more involved into work than family. I said “half true” because for example at work I am motivated to help the children that have learning difficulties and disabilities achieve and to become as independent as possible. Also, I would not be where I am today if it were not for my family who are my motivation to go on.

3. Achievements

My greatest *professional* achievement was completing my bachelor’s degree in Teaching. I had to work part-time to help my dad support me financially. Doing this has taught me how to manage my time between study and work, plan and even budget. I am proud of this accomplishment and what I learnt has given me an advantage as I was able to use the skills learnt to get a job in a school setting environment. Which is what I wanted since I graduated, to teach and support children and give them the guidance they need.

Personally, my greatest achievement is my own family, my husband and my two children (8-year-old girl and 2 months old baby boy) which I am very proud of and care for happily. Having them next to me gives me the motivation I need to do anything in life.

Academically, after enrolling into Skills for the Workplace Course to improve my skills and experience, I am very proud of how far I have come with my development as a

person and professionally as well. I am more relaxed when communicating with professionals or colleagues at work. I learnt how to identify my skills to do better at work. I am more motivated and confident in approaching new tasks and challenges and see things in a different perspective when making decisions. My academic skills: report writing, doing research, employability skills, organising time for study, work and family are just some of the skills I feel I have improved so much.

4. Learning styles

Pritchards (2008) defines a learning style as “a preferred way of learning and studying” and adds that a learning style is also “a mode of learning; an individual’s preferred means of acquiring knowledge and skills”.

Finding my preferred learning style was useful in my evaluation as it showed me a different learning style than what I thought I usually used to learn.

VAK stands for Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic and is a learning style model designed by Walter Burke Barbe and later developed by Neil Fleming and means that a person learns information by seeing it, hearing it and doing things physically. A person uses one of the styles or combines two or all three in their learning (Macmillan, 2018). The result of the questionnaire showed that I am a visual learner meaning that I learn through seeing and visual displays like charts, diagrams, illustrations in books, written information, and body language. This is true I do like to read instructions and watch others do it first when completing a task because I feel it will help avoid making mistakes, but I also like to learn by listening to instructions and practicing doing certain tasks, learning as I go along, which are the other two learning styles in VAK.

For example, when there is a training at work, I always have a pen and paper to take notes while listening and watching the trainer explaining. This way if I am stuck with my work, I can go back to my notes.

Development Planning

Morgan (2016) mentions in his book that there are two forms of PDP, personal and professional. A personal development plan “is a plan intended to develop those skills that are seen as peripheral or unnecessary for working life. And a professional development plans “is a plan intended to develop those skills that are seen as important for working life, particularly within an organisation.

After I have done an evaluation of some of my skills and decided on my future goals, my next step, the professional development plan is described below. Here I have listed some of the skills I need to attain in order to apply for a tutor position and how I will be able to work on them.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

NAME	Florina Loredana Lupulescu	TARGET JOB/CAREER	Class lead/ Tutor
-------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------

TIME PERIOD	From: January 2021	To: September 2023
--------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------

What Skills do I need to achieve my goal?

SKILLS	How Will I get them	What resources or support will I need?	What can prevent me from achieving my goals: (unemployment, illness)	How long should it take
Leadership skills	After attending the skills for the workplace course, I learnt about leadership skills. Now I need to practice at work what I have learnt.	Guidance and advice from my class teacher and allowing me to practice leading the class in his/her absence. Books.	At the moment my maternity leave. Failure of not succeeding. Excuses like: I may not be good enough/not ready/not the right time/experience/I may do it wrong...	It might take years to become a leader, but this is a starting point for me to practice.
Problem solving	By applying the theory learnt in the course: spotting problems and make judgements based on facts.	I need to gather information. Books Computer	Focusing on the end result which is an assumption if the problem is not solved.	In time.
Initiative	Taking different roles. Asking questions. Ask for feedback and building my self-confidence.	Planning, read articles. Study other colleagues.	Distraction. Wasting time watching others take initiative while I sit back and watch.	Whenever there is an opportunity.
Analytical thinking	Analysing situations and make decisions accordingly and applying the steps to analytical thinking	By taking reasoning or numerical tests. Practicing problem solving skills or playing brain games.	Obsessing too much on details. Suffering when making decisions.	No time limit. Continuously learning and use analytical skills in everyday life or work.

	learnt in the course.			
Creativity	By better understanding the topics I need to be creative at. Take risks and try new things. Build more my confidence that I am capable.	Look for inspiration in reading about it. Meditate and exercise. Doodle on paper.	Fear of failure and being embarrassed to show off my talent.	In time.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE WORLD OF EMPLOYMENT

I think that the world of employment is so unpredictable that is making everyone stress about finding a job, undergoing training, acquiring information and skills, and other activities that enable people to manage employment or strengthen their chances for future employment.

But, like everyone out there, what I am expecting from the world of employment is job security, fair pay or being paid to meet my needs, being able to progress in the job by having the chance to advance in the company, having certain benefits like for example in my case being a mum, longer maternity time and help with childcare before the child is two years old. Having said this, so far, for me, my workplace delivers all this, and I am very pleased.

I am very confident that the skills that I hold, described in my SWOT analysis will help me to work on my PDP and achieve my goal of becoming a tutor in my school. I believe that I am suited for this position because taking the initiative and lead the class (with both pupils and other teaching assistants) will prove a good outcome for me in improving the leadership and problem-solving skills. Being able to plan a lesson and deliver it, apply teaching techniques that I know of when presenting a lesson is a great deal for me and it will show that I am capable. This is a great opportunity to show my presentation skills and what I have learnt from the course or seen other teachers do.

CONCLUSION

Joining skills for the workplace course has proved a real tool that enabled me to use my skills, acquire and discover new skills to improve my workplace performance and employment expectations.

To achieve my career goals, I need to consider my strengths and skills that come from my education and work experience and drawing a development plan to work on improving these skills was a great tool in understanding where I am, what I can do and what I need to do in the future.

Overall, as a candidate to keep up the pace with the everyday changes in the labour market it is very important that I also know the skills and how to keep them updated, to gain employment in the future and

After having an insight of the skills needed to grow in my workplace, I conclude that I now understand that each career has certain required or desired knowledge, skills, and abilities that are essential for success on the job and no matter what direction someone is going through with their career, they must attain these skills or work on them in order to gain employment or stay in employment.

REFERENCES

- Moon, J. A., 2004. A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and practice. In: *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and practice*. London: Routledge, p. 186.
- Kolb, D. A., 1984. *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. London: Prentice Hall.
- Maund, A. (2017), Certificate in Higher Education: Skills for the Workplace Student Yearbook, SAGE Publications, Ltd. (UK), [Insert City of Publication]. Available from: VitalSource Bookshelf.
- Morgan, P. (2016), The Business Student's Guide to Study and Employability, SAGE Publications, Ltd. (UK), [Insert City of Publication]. Available from: VitalSource Bookshelf.
- Macmillan, F. (2018). VAK Learning Styles: What are they and what do they mean? Accessed April 2021 at: <https://engage-education.com/aus/blog/vak-learning-styles-what-are-they-and-what-do-they-mean/#!>
- Pritchard, A. 2008 "Studying and learning at university; vital skills for success in your degree", (Reference and Research Book News, vol. 24, no. 2), London: Sage Publication. Accessed at: <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/docview/199665658/fulltext/9C1C5D1DA1574C29PQ/1?accountid=130472>
- Mind Tools Content Team, 2020. Being effective at work, Accessed at: <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/being-effective.htm>
- SkillsYouNeed, 2021, Motivation Skills, Accessed April 2021 at: <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/lead/motivation.html>
- Indeed Editorial Team, 2021, February 23 Article:10 reasons why soft skills are important to employers. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/why-are-soft-skills-important>

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: Roleplay Interview Questions

Job: TA position in a SEN setting.

1. Can you tell me how did you get to work with SEN children?
2. What qualities do you have that make you a good SEN TA?
3. What would you do if a child tells you something of concern?
4. How would you motivate a child that refuses to do their task? For example, the child is distracted by something he sees in the classroom and ignores you.
5. Can you give an example of how you reacted in a challenging behaviour situation? What did you do?

Ending:

Do you have any questions to ask?

Appendix 2: Personal SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
- I communicate well with teachers, colleagues, parents and other professionals involved in the children's education and well-being. - Besides my mother tongue (Romanian) and English I am very fluent in Spanish. - Attained QTS following my past studies in Romania. - Hold a Community Interpreting Certificate - Good visual memory when it comes to people and places, I am Compassionate about the children I work with and have patience in helping with their learning. - I am able to adapt very well to changes, remain calm and react positively to challenges I use my time effectively to produce high quality work. - Very good IT skills used for planning, teaching assessing and recording of progress.	- I am a slow typer - Not very creative - I am afraid of failure. - I find it hard to decide when choosing things which is why I take my time in order to come up with the right decision, not just going with the flow. - I am overthinking things that are not helping my decision making I am often told I find it difficult to say no to requests and I feel overwhelmed with pressure by not being able to do it. - I could use more experience in public speaking, team leadership and delegating tasks (I find it hard to tell people what to do). - Sometimes I lack confidence in showing my knowledge about certain things
Opportunities	Threats
- Being able to enrol into a course to deepen my skills in the workplace. - Being a speaker of 2 other languages and intervene when needed will help my workplace support children and their families that don't understand English properly and with	- I feel I am less experienced in working with children compared to other colleagues. - Other colleagues who want to develop their career are competing for the same position I am planning to apply for.

the help of my interpreting course certificate, I will be able to use a professional manner. • Using a computer daily at work helps improve my typing skills and cuts on the time I spend when writing progress during activities. • New job roles opportunities available every year to develop my career like lead class/HLTA, tutoring or NQT. • The class teacher has weekly PPA and covering her duties is a great opportunity for me to practice my teaching skills and lead the other TA's	• Having to come up with new interactive activities for the children I work with is a challenge when it comes to my creativity.
--	---

Appendix 3: Reflection on learning styles

Complete the grid reflecting on the style in which you feel you can best develop and improve each attribute

	Visual	Auditory	Kinesthetic	Other	Reflections
Leadership			Would clearly explain instruction first then show how to be done.		Leading is not my forte but I will use the leadership styles that I learned about in Skills for the Workplace Course and practice some to see which one will help me.
Ethics	Learned from my parents how to behave around others.				I always take responsibility for my actions and treat others with respect and thoroughly follow the rules of conduct at work.
Team Building		Work well with people by listening, understanding and helping others.			I am building my team work skills everyday at work as we need to work in a team to teach the children and keep them safe in school.
Conflict Resolver		Listening to both sides and understand that everyone has a point of view.			I would remain calm in a situation like this and choose communication to solve any issues and respect others ideas.
Numerical Skills			Doing lots of examples.		I think the only way for me to get better is to practice using theory as well and improve over time.
Time Management			I use a daily routine to keep track of time.		I make sure to use my time effectively to get more things done. Sometimes I multitask to be more productive.
Communication			Use body language and face expressions when talking.		Even if I am not a native english speaker I try to express myself clearly and speak slowly to make myself understood.
Motivator	I see my family as a main motivator that keeps me going.				When I feel I am failing, I move forward by thinking of my family and this helps me achieve things as well.
Negotiator	I tend to learn from others by listening.				To be a good negotiator I have to work on my confidence of holding strong onto my opinions.
Written Skills	I tend to read and understand the meaning.				To improve my writing skills I always double check for errors and correct any mistakes.