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Introduction

There has been an increase in national debates over the ways to prepare students and graduates for career and college life. Career readiness is associated with three core skills, including academic skills and the ability to apply these skills to real-life situations and functioning in a work environment and daily tasks; employability skills, such as responsibility and critical thinking, which play an important role in the career aspect; as well as job-specific technical skills to develop unique career paths. A number of studies believe that these skills are essential to enable students to join a reliable career path because the career path provides professional development opportunities and family support compensation. Academic skills involve concepts that enable students to sharpen their career preparation skills.

The abilities and skills related to academic and employability are essential to be employed in large companies, and the proper use of different skills, tools and knowledge can improve the chances of success in a career. In the professional field, communication, teamwork and time management are the most important skills, which can be achieved by understanding and evaluating one's own performance (Hanks *et al.*, 2016).

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First of all, this report will use the Gibbs Reflective Cycle in order to analyse the academic writing that I learnt throughout the module, how research methods and academic reference techniques can help me develop my academic and employability skills. Second, I will use the Gibbs model to identify any skills gaps and propose how I will adopt an action plan to improve these gaps. This model is very useful for analysing the causes of different positive and negative experiences throughout a wide range of events.

Gibbs Reflective Cycle

In this assessment, I explained the importance of developing academic skills and employability skills by analysing specific situations. In this case, I took Gibbs' Reflection Cycle into account to understand and evaluate a specific incident as well as my experience during and after the event. Based upon this, I could understand the process by which I direct my critical thinking and relative actions. During this module, I realised that I needed to improve my communication, time management and teamwork skills. In this case, the Gibbs model was able to help me choose the actions that should be considered in order to significantly develop my academic and employability skills (Koh and Tan, 2018). The Gibbs model involves six different stages: the *description* of the

situation, the identification of the *feelings* related to the situation, the *evaluation* of the situation, drawing a *conclusion* and formulating an *action plan* to improve future skills (Beesley *et al.*, 2017). Adopting and implementing this model at all levels will help me make a coherent evaluation of my personal experience throughout the learning module.

Description

In the description phase, different people mainly describe the whole situation in a detailed way (Di Gregorio *et al.*, 2019). During this term, the lecturer taught us various *time management* methods. I studied how to make and use my development plan, how to maximise my time as a student, and how to improve time efficiency. In addition, the lecturer clarified how to collect relevant information for the preparation of reports, papers, essays and projects. Some of the important aspects identified include note-taking approaches, analysis of sources, how to find good sources of academic data, and evaluating information from websites. The lecturer provided us with a brief guide on academic writing style, basic essay structure and paragraph structure. Through this guide, I developed my skills by understanding many language instructions, thereby improving my academic ability. I also found several ways to understand clauses, sentence structure and academic paper structure.

Another important detail of what I learnt in this module is the *paraphrasing*. I explored important paraphrasing steps by practicing on the examples. For example, in a report writing exercise, I learnt how to write reports and the main similarities and differences between papers and reports. I gained more skills on how to outline a source, either by paraphrasing or summarizing.

Another aspect that we learnt is how to make and deliver *PowerPoint presentations* and develop our *public speaking skills*. I researched the most effective ways to use PowerPoint, how to improve my presentations, and the role of body language.

At the beginning of November, I learned how to write my *Curriculum Vitae*. The lecturer taught us the important things to consider when designing a resume. For example, I found that a one-page resume was short and practical, and it made a good impression. I also learnt the terminologies of job interviews and the secrets to success in an interview. I learned how role-playing can increase the chance of passing an interview. In particular, the lecturer explained the various ways to pass an interview, how to answer interview questions, and the importance of identifying weaknesses.

Feelings

My feelings about learning academic skills and employment skills are different. I find that learning is both stressful and important in academic writing. For example, I feel that an in-depth understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and style is needed to develop a perfect academic writing. From several aspects, I learned that academic writing is unique to other forms of writing. Its requirements are also unique and defined in a way of developing grammar, sentences, text paragraphs and sentence clauses. In addition to understanding the standards and practices of academic communication, each student must also follow various writing styles. I found that students could apply several steps and methods to academic writing. Therefore, I conducted an in-depth research on various academic writing techniques and the stages of writing academic papers. Again, I realise that it is easy for students to be confused about writing excellent academic projects, especially when they lack understanding of the application of several writing techniques and language functions.

At the same time, citing proved to be difficult, and I realise that it plays an important role in verifying academic writing. For example, the way a writer borrows and uses the work of other authors and I acknowledge that failing to properly cite other authors' work can lead to plagiarism. Using other authors' work without approval is a serious violation of the law and may result in dismissal. Instead, their use provides evidence to support claims and arguments in academic writing. This also shows that the author appreciates the author by acknowledging the author's views. Using references can also allow writers to track and identify the sources used in the work by including them in a list of references, cited works or bibliographies.

Evaluation

One of the achievements of my Academic and Employability Skills module is that I gained a lot of knowledge about grammar, vocabulary use, and sentence structure. In the past, I often worked hard to formulate a research topic, narrow the scope of research, and focus on specific research questions. However, thanks to this module, I can easily elaborate a research question, identify the relevant source, and apply it to my paper. Ever since I learned to work out paragraphs and sentences, academic writing now fascinates me.

Sometimes, I encounter challenges in understanding the information provided by other students. Therefore, this raises the challenge of properly summarising or paraphrasing. I also

experienced the challenge of distinguishing academic and unreliable source materials. I often think that the author of an article writes down all the ideas it contains, especially in scientific book sources. Without further consideration, I would use such resources incorrectly to maintain my ideas and propositions. Therefore, I have learnt that it is important to attribute the ideas and information of the source to the appropriate authors. I also found it necessary to train myself not only to acknowledge, but also to properly assess the resources needed.

Analysis

In the end, I realised that I had developed and improved my academic and employability skills. As a result of this module, I have a better understanding of the process and can write papers in record time. I developed helpful methods to check and find out research resources and related information accordingly. The purpose is to ensure that the essay links to selected sources and provides clear verification and reasons for conclusions. Time management lectures also improved my writing speed and skills. I now choose to work in an appropriate writing environment to avoid postponing. Lectures on grammar, vocabulary, and style also helped me improve my skills in following standard structures when writing academic papers. But then again, I still identified some gaps that need improvement, such as using various referencing styles.

Conclusion

In the above discussion, I analysed that I have improved my time management skills, and can prepare and apply my development plan to perform my daily activities. These skills are not only helpful in my student life, but also in my future job. Because I learnt not to delay activities, I became time-saving, observant, and focused on results. I can now not only write academically, but also evaluate and use reports, projects and articles. As a student, I can successfully link academic skills with actual situations, even the situations that I will face in my career. The skills I acquired in critical, reflective and analytical thinking will help me adapt to problems, solve issues and use research-based evidence for a fruitful and creative communication. I believe that in this course I gained enough academic writing skills. By improving grammar, vocabulary, sentence structures, body paragraphs and citations, I can write tremendous academic papers, research projects, reports or CVs. As a matter of fact, this module helped me flourish my academic and employment skills.

Action Plan

The action plan was developed to systematically pursue my future improvements. In addition, this also helped me to reduce the lack of skills between my personal and professional levels.

Both academic and professional lives require a specific set of skills. In academic writing, the way I use time not only has a great influence on the quality of the work I deliver, but also has a great influence on my future achievements. Effective time management will determine my future work efficiency. My academic writing and time management skills have improved. I can write essays from unique ideas using appropriate grammar and vocabulary. However, I rarely use references. Therefore, I need to understand citation methods. To achieve this, I will study and practice more on the use of Harvard referencing style.

Conclusion

At the end of this assessment, I can conclude that some things in the module are going well for me, while some aspects have been done as efficiently as possible. The Gibbs Reflective Cycle helped me complete the second task by making a reasonable understanding of my experience and learning cycle. Besides this, I also understood the loophole I have regarding reference styles. Gibbs Reflective Cycle gave me an understanding of the factors that need to be reviewed in order to flourish my employability skills through the development of academic skills. Furthermore, I also learnt the process of using the reflective cycle and theories when performing different tasks related to the module. It can be outlined that different experiences can be obtained through this reflective paper and they are very useful for organising professional development plans.

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