

BMSW4001: Academic Employability Skills Term 2

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Introduction:

The objective of this task is to reflect on the four topics from term one: employability skills, future-proof human capabilities, keeping job skills current, and challenges associated with employability. Reflection refers to the identification of the skills that a person has developed from the contents/topics of the module and the areas one needs to improve (Hind and Moss, 2011). The undertaking of this report can be divided into five sections. The Gibbs reflective cycle model has been used to describe the reflection in a systematic way. The first part describes the experiences regarding the four topics. The feelings regarding the experience have been delineated in the second part, which is followed by the evaluation of the experience, that is, which experiences are good and which ones are bad. The fourth section analysed the experience by recognising the learnings from the experience and how they will enhance future career development. Lastly, the conclusion part discusses the strengths and weaknesses, and the action plan outlined the way the weaknesses will be overcome.

Reflection using the Gibbs Reflective Cycle:

The reflection on the five or six topic terms will enable me to understand what my takeaways are and how I can use them in the future. The Gibbs reflective model helps to think systematically, hence, it will allow me to go through an organised way to recognise my learnings and experiences and the way they will enhance my career (Ed.ac.uk 2020). The model will aid me to structure the experience into different phases and aware me of it in more detail so that I can better judge my own actions and adjust my behaviour to grow. The reflection will identify both the positive and negative effects of the event from which I can learn.



Figure 1: Gibbs Reflective Cycle

Source: (Hind and Moss, 2011)

The reflection on the topics like employability skills, future-proof human capabilities, upgradation of current skills and employability challenges will be provided by using the different stages of the reflective cycle.

1.1 Description of the Experience:

In this assessment, I was required to reflect on the topics which I have undergone on term 1. In this regard, I studied different articles on particular subject matters associated with employability and the article topics are as follows.

1. Employability skills: The skills you need to get a job.
2. How to keep your job skills current
3. Future-proof human capabilities raising the future employability of graduates
4. Addressing employability challenges: A framework for improving the employability of graduates in Botswana.

During the term, I encountered several events, which shaped my experience during the terms. I learned that the current skills must be boosted to match the changing needs of the organisations, that is, to cope up with the environmental and social change, I have to improve my current skills and acquire new to enhance my employability and career. I also got to know the various ways I can keep my job skills current. Furthermore, I grasped an in-depth knowledge of the skills and capabilities including technical and soft skills to raise future employability. In addition, I learned about the challenges associated with employability, which I will consider while seeking employment or shift careers. Acquiring future-proof human capabilities and preparing to tackle the challenges will help me to get desirable employment and progress in my career development.

With regard to employability skills, every day I needed to make decisions regarding the various problems that I faced during the period and I had developed an organised to arrive at a decision rather than being confused and taking a wrong decision. I used to think of the solutions to a particular problem and then assess them based on the impact on me and other persons involved to make the decision. Afterwards, I used to review the actions of my decisions so that I could make better decisions in the future. The experience of working in a team was a special one because it helped me to learn from my classmates and friends and develop better personal and professional relationships, which enhanced my experience during the terms (Sekarwinahyu, et al., 2019). Communication was a major part of my experience as I had to regularly communicate with my friends, classmates, module instructor, etc. The achievement of these employability skills has enriched my experience during the term.

1.2 Feelings:

My experience during the term consists of mainly good feelings though I will not deny regarding the bad feelings entailed with some of my experiences. With regard to keeping the current job skills current, I felt pretty boggled by the fact that acquiring the skills is not enough to progress in career development. I need to update my skills according to the changing situation and environment. While analysing the future-proof employability skills, I came to know that some particular frameworks and statistical tools can be used to identify the skills gap, overlaps in capability so that I can focus on developing and honing those skills that will augment my future employability. It felt very unfair to me that even if someone developed the skills and capabilities, they might not be employed due to some other factors like the natural imbalance between supply and demand for human resources in organisations, economic downturns, etc. When I conducted my personal SWOT analysis, I came to realise that I perhaps had limited career opportunities ahead of me, which left me feeling a bit depressed.

In addition, the structured way to make decisions helped me to approach problems efficiently and make better decisions (Adeani, Febriani, and Syafradin, 2020), which is why I barely regret my decisions even if the results might not have turned out the way I expected. The effective teamwork filled my experience with many great feelings because working in a team gave us a feeling of belongingness and helped us to be open to each other and share our feelings (Frazer and Oswald, 2019). We often helped each other out when someone from our group faced a problem. I developed close personal relationships with some of my team members. When it comes to communication, I have good feelings because it helped me to develop good relationships with various people and it also assisted me to communicate with my team members and develop teamwork skills. The attainment of the employability skills gave me a great feeling about my future career.

1.3 Evaluation of the Experience:

The evaluation of the experiences relates to pinpointing the good and bad experiences during the term (Royds, 2010). Both the good and bad ones helped to improve and grow by changing my behaviour. In relation to employability skills, I had some great experience from working in the team because we brainstormed together, solved different problems, worked on different topics, and learned from each other. However, when we were discussing a particular topic, we used to

present our personal thoughts and perceptions about the issue and the differences in personal opinions often led to a deterioration of our relationships. Besides, my decision-making process is structured to generate logical and rational decisions rather than emotional ones, which is why I inadvertently hurt the interest of someone of my friends, which I consider as my bad experiences during the term. In relation to communication, my experience is good, because the more I improved my communication skills over time, the more I got to share information and co-learn from each other (Cartwright, 2012).

While analysing the ways the job skills can be kept current suggested in the article, I did some research on my own, which enriched my experience. I found out that LinkedIn and other social media profiles of the industry leader actually help to understand how to keep job skills current. However, whether the ways like going to professional schools, participating in workshops, etc. improve employability depends on the individual professions, career directions, and unique needs. The examination of the capability framework and human capacity framework (HCF) also helped me to understand the factors I should consider when identifying the skills that I must focus on to ameliorate my future employability. The experience in recognising the challenges entailed with employability has enabled me to manage my expectations and prepare to face the challenges that I may encounter in my career.

1.4 Analysis:

The most important part of my reflection relates to what I have learned from the term and how I will implement my learnings to augment my career (Taylor, 2010). I also got to increase my knowledge about problem-solving and decision-making processes that is, I now consider the factors affecting my decision and its consequences, which leads to more informed decisions and better outcomes. Throughout the term, I gained insights into how I can effectively communicate with my peers, module tutors, friends, etc. I learned that I should take cultural differences into account while communicating with people from different backgrounds. The organisations encourage the formation of both formal and informal team and the leadership skills shown in the team helps the employees to escalate in higher positions (Bloom, 2014). The experience of working in a team during the term improved my employability skills and will enrich my career further.

The analysis of the article that suggested the ways the job skills can be kept current engulfed me and enlightened my knowledge as to how I can improve my general and job-specific skills to match the expectation of my employer. I also learned that keeping the job skills current may be enough to deal with the contemporary needs, however, to enhance future employability, I must use a framework to identify my skills gap so that I can attain the capabilities and skills that future employers will value, for example, a good knowledge of machine learning and IoT will augment my future employability. Furthermore, the undertaking taught me to recognise and resolve the conflict between assessing skills based on future needs and today's needs. The undertaking also broadened my horizon by making me aware of the challenges regarding employability, which will prepare me to deal with challenges like skills mismatch, supply-demand imbalance, etc.

1.5 Conclusion and Action Plan:

The analysis and evaluation of my experience helped me to identify my strengths and weaknesses, which will be discussed in the conclusion part. Besides, it aided me to recognise the areas where I could improve my skills further (Ehrlinger, 2017). The action plan will describe the way I will overcome my weakness by boosting my skills and competencies. The improvement in my communication skill will help me to effectively communicate with my colleagues and superiors when I will be working for an organisation. It will also help me ameliorate my professional rapport with them. The way I approach to diagnose my problems and reach a decision to solve it is another strength of mine. This skill enables me to make a quick and better-informed decision, which culminates into better results most of the time. Another strength of mine is my knowledge regarding teamwork and communication. From the personal SWOT analysis, I also got informed about my weaknesses, that is, I am not a hard worker and I have limited employment opportunities. Hence, I have developed an action plan to overcome my weaknesses.

To overcome my weakness of having limited service lines, I will develop capabilities in other areas of knowledge like HR and strategy development to augment my job options. I will enrol in different intermediary and advanced level courses of HRM and strategic management like employee engagement, talent management, strategic management, strategy formulation, and strategy development. I will analyse the LinkedIn profile of the industry leader to identify the area of knowledge that is most valued by present and future employers. In addition, I will make a

schedule using the Microsoft Outlook Calendar, which will notify me about the tasks that I have to carry out. I will try to stick to the schedule to deal with my laziness. By implementing these action plans, I will increase my chances of getting the desired job quickly and keeping my skills updated to continue to meet the changing demands in the workplace.

Conclusion:

The reflection on the five topics provided insights into the takeaway and learnings from the module. The undertaking helped to identify the strengths that can be harnessed to perform better for the employer. The recognition of the weaknesses laid down the foundation of the action plan, which demonstrated the way the weaknesses like having a limited job opportunity will be overcome. The reflection is a good way to conduct the self-assessment, which opens the door for further improvement in certain skills. Knowing thyself better helps to modify behaviour and adapt to the changing situation, which enhances employability and embellishes the professional career development.

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