

ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

- **Student name: 11815908**
- **Student name:Ana Maria Beta**
- **University of Wales Trinity Saint David**
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Task 1

Introduction

Skills can be referred to as one's ability to execute any assigned task related to both academic and employment purposes along with desired results with the required time and energy provided (Benson *et al.*, 2014). Academic skills and employability skills are important for the personal as well as professional development of any individual. These skills are vital for contributing to the self-development of any individual that will make one suitable for both academic and employability purposes (Collet *et al.*, 2015). Having a good academic record enables one to have the opportunities of getting employed efficiently. This report will be discussing the basic concepts of academic and employability skills along with their influence in one's life. SWOT analysis will be conducted for identifying the strong and weak skills followed by a personal and professional development plan for enhancing the same.

Concepts and Types of Skills

Skills are defined as the capability of an individual to perform any complex task in a systematic order for efficient completion and obtaining desired results. These skills are goal-oriented as they contribute to achieving any desired objective. There are mainly two types of skills namely employability skills and academic skills (Jackson, 2014). These skills enable one to develop both personally and professionally as mentioned below.

Employability skills

Employability skills are those that are required by an individual to get employed. These are considered transferable skills that consist of both hard and soft skills. Hard skills are measurable which include skills like reading, writing, technological, and so on. Soft skills are

the traits that are necessary for being efficiently employed which include listening, communication, time management, etiquette, and many others (Asonitou, 2015).

1.1. Communication

Communication skills refer to the ability to convey any message or information from one person to another. Effective communication skills are very essential for getting employed. These skills are essential for exchanging thoughts and ideas between people hence, resulting in maintaining a strong and healthy relationship between people. Both written and oral communications are necessary for an individual to develop both personally and professionally (Suleman, 2016). Effective communication helps in preventing any kind of internal conflict caused due to communication gaps within any business organisation. As a result, effective communication skills contribute to the efficient completion of assigned job responsibilities. In the case of academic purpose, communication helps in enhancing the studying ability of individuals. It helps in interacting with teachers as well as other members to express their thoughts and clarify any issues. Lack of effective communication will result in the insufficient academic outcome of individuals resulting in poor results of the individuals. This will also restrict the individuals to have a better understanding of what their respective teachers say or teach (Deeley, 2014). Hence, an individual needs to achieve good communication skills for excelling in both academic and professional skills

1.2. Time management

Time management skills refer to the ability of any individual to manage and organise any assigned task for efficient completion of the same in a given time period in their education as well as a professional career (Betta, 2016) Having good time management skills enables an individual to accomplish his or her desired goals or objectives within a short period of time making him more efficient and employable (Ismail *et al.*, 2015). Effective time management skills assist an individual to reduce the work pressure by accomplishing the same within the given time span that in turn gives opportunities and extra time to learn new things and develop professionally. As a result, the individual is able to get a wide range of career opportunities in the employment sector. In academic purposes, time management skills play a vital role in guiding individuals to organise given tasks like assignments or homework which help them to efficiently complete the same. For this reason, in education proper time management helps to keep a balance between study, completion of assignments as well as someone's personal choice of learning some specific skills stress is reduced with which the individuals can easily keep a track of their respective tasks resulting in improvement in academic scores (Rabiner *et al.*,

2016). Hence, time management skills are crucial for the academic and employability enhancement of any individual.

1.3. Team working skills

Teamwork refers to the combined efforts of a group of people with similar goals or objectives that helps in accomplishing any assigned task in an effective and efficient manner. In employability, team working skills are important as these skills help in strengthening the bonds and relationships between the employees within any business organisation. As a result, this helps in maintaining a healthy and cordial work environment (Collet *et al.*, 2015). For this reason, the employees are able to work together, cooperate with each other and support each other which lead to the accurate and efficient accomplishment of their objectives resulting in enhanced productivity and performance (Ribner *et al.*, 2017). In academic purpose, team working skills are essential for acquiring a “well rounded education”. Team working skills between the students help them to have a better academic understanding resulting in enhanced performance and attaining academic success. The more effective team working skills within the students exist, the more opportunities the students get to expand their knowledge and obtain good academic skills.

There are many other skills that are important for academic and employability purposes like leadership skills, problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, listening skills, and many others. Leadership is the ability to assist others for accomplishing their respective objectives (Sala *et al.*, 2017).

Leadership skills help an individual to assist other employees by motivating and encouraging them in effective accomplishment of the organisational objectives that contribute to the enhanced performance and productivity of the employees. In academic purpose, leadership skills contribute in enhancing the self-esteem and self-confidence of a student that helps him to prepare for his future. Good leaders are important as they help in successful accomplishment of any task related to both academic and employment purposes by assisting and motivating other peoples this skill are important in hospitality sector for leading different groups of staff of the housekeeping department in an effective manner.

Problem solving skills help in identifying the issues faced by any employee and resolving the same in an effective way to enhance the overall productivity of the employees. In academic purposes, problem solving skills help a student to clear his doubts and perform efficiently to get good academic scores that will lead to many future opportunities (Betta, 2016). As a result,

this skill helps to identify any issues related to housekeeping services and mitigate the same in an effective manner.

Critical thinking plays an important role in analysing any given scenario hence, enhancing the logical thinking capability of an individual for both academic as well as employment purposes. This skill is important to encourage innovations and modern tools for enhancing the future.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is a planning technique that enables an individual to identify his strengths, threats, opportunities, and weaknesses for future benefits. With the implementation of this analysis, I will be able to identify the skills I am good at as well as the skills I lack. This, in turn, will facilitate me for my futuristic personal and professional development.

Strengths	Weaknesses
● Strong communication skill is helpful for me to establish a proper coordination with others which is helpful for me to discuss my ideas in detail, develop my knowledge by detailed discussion and share thoughts for future development. ● I have the ability to work with other people in a team. I am supportive and cooperative towards others which in turn help me to complete any assigned task in an effective way. ● I can motivate other people to work more efficiently and assist them to accomplish their respective tasks. Hence, I have effective leadership skills.	● I have analysed that I need to improve my written communication skill to enhance the quality of my writings. ● I have realised that I have poor time management skills. I am not able to complete any assigned task within a given time frame. As a result, I have to suffer insufficient sleep, lack of punctuality. In the head hospitality sector, it will be difficult for me to perform effectively if I do not have effective time management skills. ● I have realised that I am not able to think critically. As a result, I am not able to link different logic to enhance my thinking process. In the hospitality sector, critical thinking is important for identifying the most effective strategies. Hence, I need to enhance my critical thinking skills.

	I have analysed that I do not have the ability to solve problems. I find difficulty in providing effective solutions for solving any problems or issues. In the hospitality sector, it is important to identify any issue and resolve the same efficiently. Hence, I need to enhance my problem solving skills.
Opportunities Mitigating my weaknesses will help me with wide ranges of opportunities. I will be able to have a bright future as head housekeeping professional. I need to focus on the skills that I lack and work on it effectively with lots of patience.	Threats In the hospitality sector, there is huge competition. Hence, in order to sustain in this competitive market, I have to enhance my weaknesses. Otherwise, I will not be able to become a successful head housekeeping professional and my career will be completely disrupted.

Table 1. SWOT analysis

(Source - Created by author)

Academic skills

Academic skills, also referred to as study skills, are the essential components that are required for learning. These skills play a critical role in obtaining academic success in schools or universities by scoring good grades. Academic skills help a student to improve his writing styles, organising tasks accordingly, understanding the information conveyed by the teachers and express own thoughts and issues faced, if any (Bays *et al.*, 2014). These skills enhance the efficiency and performance of the students leading to achieving good academic marks. There are various academic skills like reading skills, communication skills, time managing skills, writing skills, and many others. Academic writing skills are very important as these help students to conduct excellent academic activities resulting in enhanced productivity.

2.1. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the representation of the languages or contents used by any other authors. In simpler words, plagiarism refers to the process of copying the work of someone else and giving self-identity to the same. It is considered as an “act of fraud” and unethical in the process of academic writing. Copying the writings and contents of some other people means stealing the identity of their own intellectual property that is an illegal act (Suleman, 2016). Plagiarism degrades the writing capability of an individual leading to failure. It also hampers the academic growth of the individuals having a negative impact in his future. Hence, every student should focus on avoiding plagiarism while writing in an effective manner. The most common ways to avoid plagiarism are stated below.

Paraphrasing

One of the most effective methods of avoiding plagiarism is paraphrasing. Paraphrasing is considered as a process of restating a sentence by using a different pair of words keeping the meaning the same. This means that paraphrasing methods will help the students to take an idea and then write it in their own words. As a result, this prevents the chances of copying the overall contents from someone else (Asonitou, 2015). There are three paraphrasing techniques namely “Paraphrase to summarise”, “Paraphrase to shift level of abstraction”, and “Paraphrase to acknowledge and clarify”.

Referencing

Another effective method of avoiding plagiarism is citing references. Referencing helps in giving acknowledgement to the contribution of the writers of the books or sources whose assistance is taken for the academic writing purposes. The university assignments strictly need to cite referencing for the words or statements used from the sources written by an author to give required credits to them (Jackson, 2014). As a result, this will prevent plagiarism and provide authenticity to the academic writings of the students.

Summarising

Summarising is another effective method to avoid plagiarism. It refers to the explanation of the main points taken from any sources. As a result, a student can take the main points from others’ work and explain the same in his own words. Summarising also contributes in enhancing the quality of writing of the students (Jackson, 2014). Hence, this method will help in preventing the plagiarism risk and maintain the ethnic form of academic writing.

2.2 Presentation skills

Presentation skills refer to the effective method of delivering the outcome of any assigned tasks. In academic purposes a student needs presentation skills to show his good academic ability to obtain good grades. These skills are very essential as these help in enhancing the confidence of the students, help in enhancing their oral communication, and gain a sound knowledge about the tasks they are assigned with (Benson *et al.*, 2014). These skills also help in enhancing the vocabulary of the students resulting in efficient oral communication, hence, improving the academic credibility of the students.

I aim to start my career in the hospitality sector as head housekeeping professional in the future after completing my course. From the SWOT analysis conducted in table 1, I am able to understand that I have good oral communication skills, leadership skills, and team working skills which are important for being successful head housekeeper. However, there are certain skills like time management skills, problem solving skills, and written communication skills that I lack and which are equally important for pursuing head housekeeping jobs. Hence I need to design a Personal Development Plan which is helpful in overcoming the weaknesses that I possess as shown in table 2.

Priority	Skills	Present condition	Target condition	Development opportunities	Time span
1st priority	Written communication skills	Weak	Having strong writing skills	Self practicing, attending seminars, online books, articles	3 months
2nd priority	Time management skills	Weak	Having strong time management skills	Attending seminars, self practicing	3 months
3rd priority	Problem solving skills	Weak	Having strong problem	Solving case studies, online videos, books,	4 months

			solving skills	articles	
4th priority	Critical thinking skills	Weak	Having strong critical thinking skills	Self-practices, attending seminars, watching online videos	3 months

Table 2. Personal development plan (PDP)

(Source - Created by author)

According to the personal development plan shown in table 2, I will be enhancing the skills which I lack at present. I will follow the activities mentioned in the plan within the given time frame. Effective execution of this plan will help me enhance my skills and facilitate my future as head housekeeping professional.

Conclusion

Skills are important for accomplishing and performing any given task. This report highlighted the basic concepts of academic and employability skills and their importance in the life of an individual in both academic and professional aspects. Different skills have been discussed that help an individual to develop both personally and professionally. I have performed SWOT analysis to determine the required skills needed for being head housekeeper professional. I have identified the skills I lack and have performed a personal development plan for enhancing those skills in an efficient and effective manner.

Task 2

Introduction

Employability and academic skills are vital for developing both academic and professional aspects. These skills help an individual to hold good academic grades as well as have wide opportunities to get employed. In this part of the report, I will be performing self-reflection for discussing my successful accomplishment in enhancing these desired academic and employability skills. I will implement Gibbs' reflective cycle in order to have a thorough analysis of these accomplished skills along with their direct impact on my activities.

Reflection

I am able to improve my critical thinking skills, time management skills, problem-solving skills, and written communication skills in an effective and efficient manner. I will implement Gibbs' reflective cycle to have a thorough analysis of the process of identifying and improving these skills.

Gibbs' reflective cycle

This model was established in 1988 by Graham Gibbs in order to provide a structure to the outcome of any experience (Tanaka *et al.*, 2018). With the help of this framework, I will be able to express my experience, feelings, ideas, thoughts, and conduct an evaluation and analysis of the whole experience. This cycle consists of six steps namely description, analysis, evaluation, action plan, conclusion, and feelings as shown in figure 1.

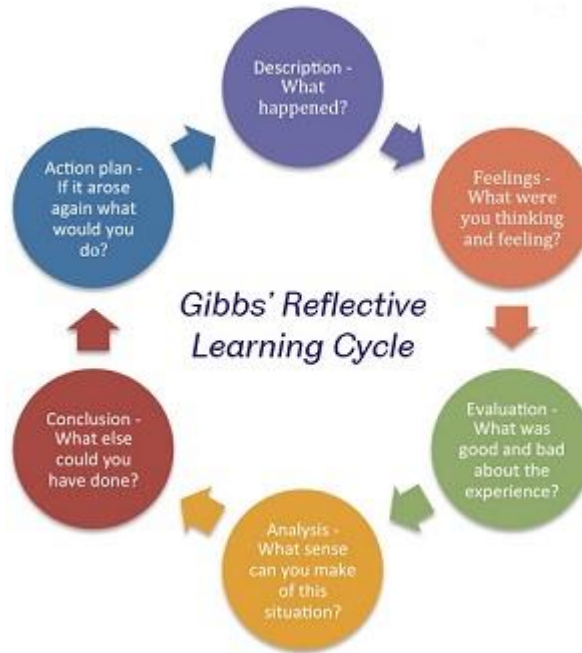


Figure 1. Gibbs' reflective cycle
(Source - Tanaka *et al.*, 2018)

Description

This is the first stage of the cycle where the deep details of any particular event or experience are discussed. I will be discussing my personal experience related to an incident related to my work for performing this stage in an effective manner. The head officials of the linen company, which is contractually linked with my organisation, came to stay at my organisation for few days for spending a short holiday. Two days' after their stay, one of them claimed the loss of some personal stuffs. In spite of telling them to give a written application of the lost stuffs, they showed no interest and said they will inform the senior authorities. I tried to handle the situation and wrote a letter to our higher officials. However, it worsened the scenario leading to internal employee conflicts. This incident helped me to a great extent in improving my written communication skills. As a result, this helped me in improving my ability to express my thoughts and ideas through writing. I have been able to think critically. The scenario have helped me to get out of the box and interlink different logic for mitigating the chaos which in turn improved my problem-solving skills. I have been able to choose the right ideas as well as implement the most suitable and applicable logic for solving the raised issue. Now, I am capable of understanding the impact of these skills in my academic and employment aspects. I have been able to develop myself both professionally and personally with the improved skills. In the present scenario, I am capable of performing good writings by using proper words and

expressing my thoughts in an effective manner. I am able to complete tasks within a given time frame and I can brainstorm my ideas to critically think about resolve issues efficiently if any.

Feelings

This stage includes the feelings and thoughts during the personal experience. I will be discussing my feelings during the chaotic scenario. Throughout the chaotic situation, I felt very tense and nervous which resulted in a lack of self confidence. Throughout the process, I struggled a lot to write the official letter to my seniors in an effective manner like others. All these reasons made me realise the importance of written communication skills. I was not able to handle the situation and stop the conflict within a short time period. As a result, my girls were suffering as the situation was getting worse with time. For this reason, I started taking too much stress and tension which led to more deterioration in my performance. I was not able to thoroughly and critically analyse the scenario and take necessary actions. I was also not able to understand what I was supposed to do at that critical situation. Due to all these reasons, internal conflicts aroused within the staff resulting in increasing the chaos. However, during the whole chaotic process, I was able to improve my writing skills which provided quality in my writings. I have been able to complete the given task within a specified time span and I implemented exceptionally innovative ways to get rid of the critical situation. Besides, my subordinates stood by my side throughout the process in spite of issues and problems.

Evaluation

This stage involves the overall identification of the positive and negative aspects of the experience. My overall experience involving this specific incident was not good. The outcome of the chaotic situation was that they kept their stuffs somewhere else and did not find it which resulted in such a chaos. This particular situation helped me in understanding the importance of skills. I have been able to acquire good written communication skills which will help me in the future to develop both personally and professionally. I have been able to brainstorm my ideas and thoughts effectively and critically to perform in an effective way. This personal experience helped me to enhance my ability to organise and complete my tasks within a given time frame making me more organised and disciplined. As a result, I can say that this incident has a strong positive impact on me as I got a chance to upgrade myself by improving the desired skills. This stage involves the process of extracting the actual meaning of the experience. During the process of this chaotic situation, I have been able to analyse myself to have a clear understanding of the skills and characteristics I possess as well as those I lacked. I compared myself with other members to identify the main difference and reason why I was facing so many problems. I have been able to realise the skills which I was weak at along with their

impact on my development in both academic and employability aspects. I have been able to understand that written communication skills are important for my development. I understood the importance of being organised and disciplined and that in turn helped me to be more punctual and complete my tasks within a given time frame. I was not able to solve any kind of issues during the chaotic scenario. As a result, all these reasons enabled me to understand the importance of the desired skills and I got an opportunity to develop these skills for enhancing my own academic and employability aspects. However, without the constant guidance and support of my subordinates, I would have never been able to improve my skills and perform effectively and efficiently.

Conclusion

To conclude, I can say that it was a bad experience as well as a big and unexpected opportunity to execute a written group assignment. I got an opportunity to analyse myself deeply, compare myself with others, and identify the skills and qualities I lack that resulted in developing me to a great extent. This incident helped me to learn and work at the same time, hence, getting the chance for practical learning. I am able to have a clear understanding of the importance of the four main skills namely written communication skills, time management skills, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving skills in my personal and professional development. If I had excelled these skills before, I would have been able to work more effectively in future and this would have prevented any kind of issues and challenges that are experienced during the overall process. of the group assignment. I am also thankful to my teachers who were my constant guide and assisted me with the whole process and helped me to overcome my challenges and issues.

Action Plan

An action plan is a set of activities that helps in setting any futuristic objectives and fulfilling the same in an effective manner. I have also conducted a specific action plan during the process of conducting the group assignment which helped me to enhance my desired skills resulting in my personal as well as professional development to a great extent.

Goals	Current scenario	Required actions	Supports	Assigned time
Enhancing the written communication skills	Weak	Self practices, attending seminars,	Online books, articles	3 months
Improving time	Weak	Attending	Online videos,	3 months

management skills		seminars, self practices	books, articles	
Improving my problem-solving skills	Weak	Solving case studies	Online books, books, journals	4 months
Enhancing my critical thinking skills	Weak	Self practices, attending seminars	Online videos, books, journals, articles	3 months

Table 3. Action Plan

(Source - Created by author)

Table 3 shows my action plan which I took into consideration for enhancing my skills. For improving my written communication skills, I have attended various seminars and practiced writing. I set a time limit of 3 months for enhancing my writing skills. For improving my time management skills, I have practiced myself by setting time and aiming at completing any task within that time. I also attended relevant seminars. The time limit for improving my time management skills was set for 3 months. I solved practical case studies and attended various seminars to enhance my problem solving and critical thinking skills. The time limit set was 4 months and 3 months respectively. Apart from all these, I took assistance from the online books, journals, and articles to improve these desired skills.

Conclusion

Reflection is a vital factor that enables one to analyse self and identify the respective strengths and weaknesses. In this part of the report, I have emphasised my reflection by discussing my personal feelings and thoughts about a specific experience. I have implemented the Gibbs' reflective cycle to have a better understanding of the desired skills that I lacked as well as the process of how I was able to improve the same. This helped me in explaining the impact of the desired skills. Lastly, I have provided the action plan which helped me to enhance the desired skills.

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