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Introduction

Before we are even born our parents have started planning ahead for our future. What our name will be? What skills are they going to teach us? What school should we go to? What job should we do? Everything is planned out for us, and then we develop our personalities and begin thinking for ourselves. That is the moment when we start deciding, do we follow the path they have chosen for us or do we make our own choices? Nevertheless, we have dreams and goals that we want to achieve, things we want to learn, or things we want to do for a living. Some know already what they want and how to get it. Others don't and need every bit of help they can find along the way. That is why people like Kathleen McMillan and Jonathan Weyers have put together a guide called "The Study Skills Book", to help such people that have reached an intersection in their lives and don't know what their goal is or how to reach it.

This report will serve as a review of the book and it will also explore and analyse one section of it. It will focus on the last section of the book, "Planning for the Future" and it will procedurally review and summarize each segment of the section.

Book Summary

For a lot of people comes a time when they will enrol in a university thinking this is the biggest hurdle they have to overcome, but in reality, their journey has just begun. Many will feel lost and confused by the sheer amount of work they have to do or how different the university environment is. This book addresses many of those issues by breaking them down into different easy-to-understand sections. The book is a no-nonsense, get-to-the-point guide that can be an essential tool for every student from his first till his last year in the university.

The seven sections of the book address:

- **University Pre-Entry Expectations**

The first part of the book addresses the period before you apply. How to prepare, what to expect, how is university a different kind of education compared to other institutions and how to start your academic journey.

- **Self-Management**

In this section, the authors describe the importance of a personal development plan and also give plenty of examples of how to do it. Managing your time is also a very important skill described in detail in this section followed by tips about finance, because as some would say "Time is money.". In addition, they describe what campus life is like and what opportunities you will get to contribute to the academic community.

- **Learning Skills Development**

By far the largest and most detailed section of the book addresses topics such as styles of learning, reading, writing and listening skills, working independently or in a team, e-skills and library resources, analysing information and critical thinking, presenting skills, and much more academic skill required for a student to be as effective as possible in this environment.

- **Mastering Academic Writing**

One of the reasons why universities are different to schools is the style of writing that is used during your stay there. Academic writing is a skill learned and honed throughout the duration of one's student years. Since there are so many rules for writing styles, citation and referencing, plagiarism, grammar, spelling, vocabulary,

etc. this part of the book will help the reader figure out all of those questions that will arise every time at the end of the term will approach.

- **Assessment**

Like with most things in life, we assign value to products, services or performance. One of the instruments universities use is an assessment system that will rate your performance and grade you with different merits. But this process can be extremely stressful especially when a student doesn't know how it is performed. The information provided in this section will break down all the different types of assessments the students will encounter and what to expect from each one of them.

- **Exams**

Another tool universities use to test the level of knowledge are exams. Using the tips and strategies for memorising information, focusing and revising, and taking different approaches to manage stress is part of the functioning skills explored in this section.

- **Planning for the Future**

The final section of the book talks about the final days of university and life after academia. By setting you on the right path by teaching you how to plan your career, evaluate your skills and abilities, prepare your CV and how to lay the building blocks of what will become your professional life path this guide has given the reader the know-how on how to deal with everything that a student's life will throw at them.

Skills Evaluation

For the purposes of this report, the focus will be the seventh and final section of the book. Further down a full breakdown of the section will analyse the importance of the skills thought in it.

Career Planning

Many would argue that the key to a successful career is a good plan and companies such as Indeed would offer free online guidance on how to build one (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). A career plan is a step-by-step action plan that we create that will guide us on our way to the end goal we have set for ourselves. It helps us identify potential career paths, positives and negatives that we can encounter in a particular profession, set S.M.A.R.T. Goals and keep track of the progress made. By following this plan we prepare ourselves for change and the unknown that we might encounter along the way and it also paints a clearer picture of the path we need to take to reach our end goal (CMI, n.d.).

Self-Assessment

By knowing your strengths and weaknesses you can adapt to any situation, but to do that a person must have spent time analysing what are the skills and personal qualities they possess. Skills are competencies we have learned and can perform on an adequate level, as for personal qualities, they are something you are born with and reflect the essence of who you are as a person. By successfully identifying this information we can reflect on past experiences so we can build a better persona that will have all the necessary qualities for the career we are trying to achieve. But sometimes it is difficult to look deep or properly identify those skills so tools like Myers-Briggs Test, Strong Interest Inventory, Career Beliefs Inventory, Values Assessment, Kiersey Temperament Sorter, etc. can be used to our advantage (Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, n.d.).

CV

One of the key skills you can learn is creating an appealing CV. A CV is your personal advertisement in front of the eyes of a recruiter. Qualities such as relevance, good presentation, honesty, evidence or examples of past successes are highly valued in a good CV and nowadays the majority of businesses will first filter the candidates based on their CV.

Many online sources will offer advice on the structure or the content of the CV (National Careers Service, n.d.) or offer examples or a premade template and you just have to fill in the missing information (Jobseeker, n.d.).

Career Development

Developing a career is like planting a seed, but for it to grow you have to choose the right seed for the right job. Preparing the right CV, finding appropriate positions on the job market, researching the position and employer, and tailoring each aspect to optimise your success are all ingredients in the recipe for successful career development. Some would even underline the importance of planning your professional development due to negative factors such as economic downsizing and technological innovation (Siddharthan, 2020).

Conclusion

The path to success is long and full of challenges and only by adapting to them and learning new skills can we reach new heights and every tool we encounter on the way can be used or adapted to our needs. A tool such as “The Study Skills Book” is just a small part of what will become the force that drives you to a successful career.

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