Reflective portfolio of practical task

by Jef Pascual

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On January 2023, I divulged my journey in University of Wales Trinity Saint David as a Gastronomy study after over a decade of being out of school, and my growth has been remarkable since then. At times, I felt overwhelmed by the various acti[1] that I aspired to engage in, but the university and my lecturers have been incredibly supportive of my goals. They've provided various opportunities and connections within the industry, furthering my development.

Working in the hospitality industry poses a significant challenge for [2] often find myself in uncomfortable situations under a lot of pressure. However, through these experiences, I've realised personal growth and acquired valuable practical and interpersonal skills.

Throughout my placement, I've had the opportunity to visit numerous locations, and I've gained a deep appreciation for the significance of hierarchy and teamwork within both the kitchen brigade and the front of house. Effective communication between team members is also a key aspect that I've come to recognised as vital a part of successful service delivery. [3]



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During the past few months of my placement at Beach House Oxwich, I've realised the important role that kitchen hierarchy plays. It significantly improves the efficiency and effectiveness of our workflow by ensuring that each team member comprehends their roles and responsibilities.

Interview with Executive chef Hywel Griffith
Leadership and Management:

Q: What do you think is the quality of a good leader?

A: As a leader, you must embody various roles – not just directing, but also encouraging, inspiring, and motivating individuals. Many people, particularly young chefs, may not fully recognise their capabilities and can be intimidated by the complexity of the operation. It falls on me to push individuals to realise their potential. Achieving this requires a delicate balance between maintaining happiness, pushing for growth, and instilling discipline.

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Q: What is your leadership style?

A: My leadership style is characterised by a combination of firmness and fairness. I am dedicated to helping individuals who display a genuine passion and a desire to learn. I go to great lengths to support and mentor those who are ready for promotion. Conversely, if someone exhibits an inflated view of their capabilities or maintains a negative attitude, I make the tough decision to part ways. Essentially, my approach has two sides—nurturing those with potential and making decisive choices when necessary.

Q: What is your challenges you experience as an Executive chef?

A: When it comes to staffing, the most challenging aspect is finding a cohesive team. This is a collaborative effort, and having one person who believes they are exceptional can create a selfish environment. In the restaurant industry, success is not solely dependent on the kitchen; it involves the entire establishment, including the front of the house and other components. The goal is to unify everyone, recognizing that not everyone performs at their best every day. The most difficult challenge lies in achieving a balance, assembling a team that works harmoniously and complements each other. Different personalities, varying levels of drive—finding that equilibrium poses one of the toughest challenges.

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Q: What can you tell about my performance?

A: Your overall performance has been consistently very good. However, the challenge for you is different as you have been a chef for several years. In some respects, being an adult and a more rounded individual adds a different dynamic to the situation. It's not worse, just distinct, as certain aspects, like maintaining cleanliness, don't need to be explicitly communicated to you. Undertaking this transition from a nursing home environment to a demanding kitchen is a brave move, and it highlights the resilience and determination you bring to this challenging setting. 6

Q: In which areas am I performing well, and where do I have room for improvement?

A: Your performance is generally quite good, and I don't perceive any major shortcomings. Time management may improve with more experience, and I've noticed that you pay great attention to detail. At this point, what you need is consistent repetition. By continually practicing, you can refine your skills and become even better over time. 7

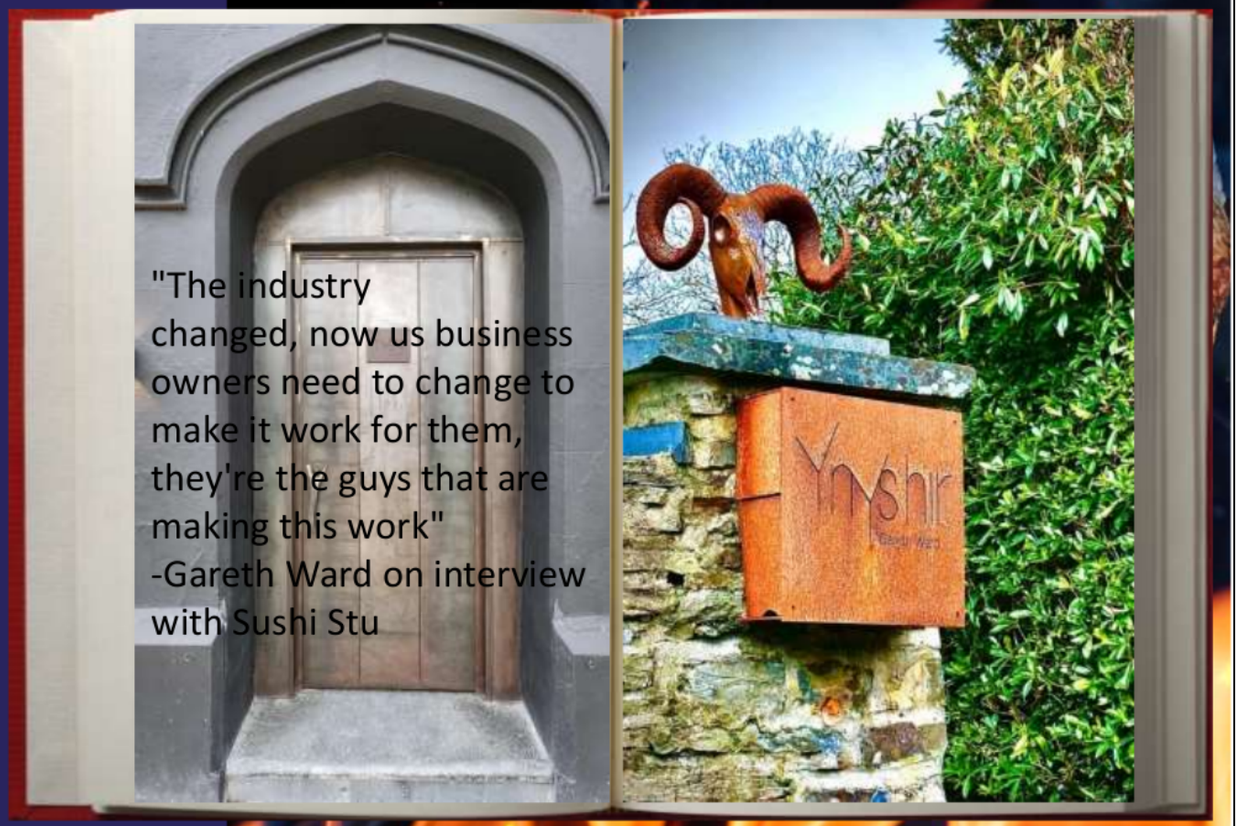


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My time at Ynyshir Room and Restaurant has been my most rewarding experience to date. Chef Gareth Ward is dedicated to fostering the growth of his staff and encourages them to share their ideas, ensuring a cohesive team dynamic.

At Ynyshir, teamwork is paramount. The team describes themselves as a "crab," symbolising the principle that wherever one person goes, everyone follows. In this collaborative environment, individuals support each other by stopping and lending a hand whenever needed. Tasks, including cleaning, are approached collectively, with everyone contributing to shared responsibilities. 8

Teamwork is defined by Scarnati (2001, p. 5) “as a cooperative process that allows ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results”. Harris & Harris (1996) also stated that a team is united by a shared goal or purpose, allowing team members to cultivate productive and mutual relationships aimed at accomplishing team objectives. Teamwork hinges on individuals collaborating in a cooperative setting to reach shared team goals by exchanging knowledge and skills. 9



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One of the most remarkable places I've had the privilege of experiencing is L'Enclume, a three-Michelin-star restaurant. My time there was truly extraordinary, providing a clear illustration of industry standards that define top-tier culinary work which is evidence in their accolades.

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At Our Farm by Simon Rogan, I met his hardworking team and experience working with them for a day. We planted thousands of beautiful chards.

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During my time at Grove of Narberth, Alexious, the Wine Director, not only provided me with a fundamental understanding of wine but also offered valuable advice on why I should continue pursuing my passion. He emphasized the importance of passion in any chosen endeavour.

Additionally, other team members took time to show me how the different areas of service function, allowing me to gain hands-on experience in the front of the house and providing insights into their methods and practices.

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My initial venture into stage cooking sessions took place at the Swansea Food Festival, where I had the honour of collaborating with our University Director, Dr. Jayne Griffith and Chris Rogers, my placement coordinator. Together, we demonstrated the art of crafting a delicious meal using leftovers from our fridge. The experience was genuinely extraordinary, marking it as one of the most memorable days I've ever had. Despite my usual nervousness, on that day, I felt a newfound confidence and assurance that I could successfully handle the task at hand.

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Swansea Fish Ltd or Copper bay seafood. We learnt so much from a little bit of Swansea bay history to filleting three different kind of fish.

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During our visit to Llaeth Beynon Dairy Farm, I gained a more profound understanding of the processes involved in producing high-quality milk. It provided a clear picture of the operations of a local producer in the Swansea area. The day was truly memorable, altering my perspective on the dedicated efforts required to produce such high-standard pro[15] Additionally, it highlighted their commitment to supporting the local community through collaborative initiatives.

According to LLaeth Beynon Dairy sustainability is a core principle guiding their operations. They are committed to producing the highest quality fresh milk with minimal impact on the environment. By pasteurizing the milk on their farm, they reduce food miles, and their use of reusable glass bottles helps minimize the need for plastic.



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Our lecturer, Chris Rogers, provided us with the fundamentals of the wine industry, a field I am eager to pursue in the future. It's an intriguing topic that has the potential to enhance my skills. The aspect of wine tasting is particularly enjoyable, and I look forward to delving into more topics like this next term. I aspire to obtain my certification from WSET (Wine & Spirit Education Trust) as it promises to provide me with valuable practical skills in the field.

The Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) is a distinguished awarding body and registered charity committed to creating and providing qualifications and courses in wines and spirits. Initially established in 1969 to serve the UK wine trade, WSET has expanded its reach to become a worldwide industry leader. Functioning as an independent and not-for-profit organization, WSET focuses on delivering educational products that provide unbiased and comprehensive learning. These resources serve as a solid foundation upon which individuals and businesses can construct knowledge and expertise in the realm of wines and spirits.

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I've received an invitation to explore the world of produce and provenance in Wales at ICC Wales in Newport. This opportunity provided me with valuable insights into sustainability and the diverse range of local products that the region has to offer.

Food & Drink Wales is dedicated to broadening the range of Welsh food and drink through the Geographical Indication (GI) quality mark. The Welsh Government actively promotes and supports GI applications across all sub-sectors in Wales. The GI process serves as a champion for Welsh food and drink products, allowing them to share stories of expertise, tradition, and sustainability, all rooted in a passionate connection to their unique origins.

The term 'Geographical Indication' (GI), while modest, holds significant weight in showcasing the pride of Welsh food and drink. Products with GI status not only bear the distinctive quality, authenticity, and heritage of their natural place of origin but also have the potential to be sought after by consumers, both in Wales and around the world.



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I was featured in the Taste/Blas Spring edition 2023 magazine, where they highlighted my journey as a student, including details about my placements and my background. It was truly heartwarming to read such lovely feedback about my work ethics from renowned chefs.

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Being involved in the YCYW competition (as a helping hand) was not only a wonderful experience but also a privilege. I gained insights into how competitions operate and learned the ropes of organising as a competitor. The day concluded with a fun-filled night at the Gala, where I enjoyed the company of my team at the beach house.

Another surprise came through my way when I was nominated in "one to watch category" in The Staff Canteen a month ago. I wasn't expecting to be recognised in this level. Just being nominated is already an accomplishment when you have



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In my experience, the hospitality industry proves to be a dynamic field that nurtures creativity, teamwork, and the chance to craft memorable experiences. I personally find fulfillment and joy in delivering excellent service, refining my skills, and establishing enduring connections with both colleagues and guests.

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As a student within the industry, I currently observe negativity around working in hospitality like mental health issues, anxiety and such in social media. However, I haven't noticed much emphasis on the positive aspects of hospitality, and it's crucial that we shift that perspective.

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Through the consistent sharing of positive stories, insights, and initiatives on social media, we, as individuals in the hospitality industry, have the power to reshape our collective image. This effort can cultivate a more optimistic and supportive atmosphere for ourselves, our fellow professionals, students, and colleagues alike.



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GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

32 /100

GENERAL COMMENTS

PAGE 1

PAGE 2

Comment 1

Please give examples of what activities and where to provide context

Comment 2

Why? Give some ideas of what you've found challenging and why, plus how have you coped and adapted to meet those challenges

Comment 3

Again, can you provide relevant examples here please and perhaps a citation to back up your assertion?

PAGE 3

Comment 4

Great idea to interview Hywel, but there needs to be some reflection on his answers and some tying in to your experience at the restaurant itself. What examples can you give to back these statements up?

PAGE 4

Comment 5

Lots of good information here, but you need to tie it in with your own personal experiences, analyse and critically evaluate the concepts and answers he gives. It is not enough to just let these comments speak for themselves. Remember, it's your experience and what you've learned that we're interested in

PAGE 5

Comment 6

Can you back this up with examples, maybe the different working environments and how they have challenged you?

Comment 7

Great feedback for you, but again this needs to be analysed. Do you agree with the chef? How have you developed there and do you feel your time management needs to improve?

PAGE 6

Comment 8

Does this work well in your opinion? Would it transfer to a larger restaurant and would you like to foster this sort of collaborative approach in other places you've worked? Analyse the plus and minus points of this and back it up with academic sources

Comment 9

Do you agree with this? Why? Start looking at these statements with a more critical eye

PAGE 7

Comment 10

Why was your time amazing? What did you learn about restaurant management and yourself? How long were you there and what did you learn or what skills did you develop?

This could have been used as an example to give credence to a point you had made regarding different restaurants operating ion different ways according to their wants/needs and how principles like communication and collaboration are key to success

PAGE 8

Comment 11

What did you learn from this that you can apply to your development and learning in management

PAGE 9

Comment 12

It's great to see you're gaining experience in different places, but this must be bought back to your learning and developing your strategic and critical awareness of management

PAGE 10

Comment 13

Good to know that this experience built your confidence and by pushing yourself you are discovering that you can meet new challenges. However you need to bring these experiences to life with critical analysis and self analysis. How did you feel before and after? What have you learned about Events and how to manage a Team at an event like this? What about the preparation and what did success look like? Was there anything you would have changed?

PAGE 11

Comment 14

For me, the biggest takeaway was the sustainability aspect, along with the skills and wider knowledge of the people in the industry. You could have talked about how as a manager you need to choose suppliers with care and ensure they meet with your ethical considerations

PAGE 12

Comment 15

What were your previous expectations?

PAGE 13

Comment 16

This has no place here and needs to be, at best, an in text citation whilst you're referencing what you've learned about wine and how it will help with things like profitability, team building and customer engagement

PAGE 14

PAGE 15

Comment 17

Your hard work and dedication is definitely paying off, but you're not making the leap into thinking like a manager. This requires different skills which come naturally to some and not to others. However they are vital skills to enable you to run a businesses and to also help, encourage and inspire others - just as you have been helped and inspired by those around you!

PAGE 16

PAGE 17

Comment 18

Please give some examples here

Comment 19

This would be a great place for some relevant references and a discussion about what managers can do to create a sustainable working place for their teams - perhaps referencing Seren Group as an example of that

PAGE 18

JEF PASCUAL

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ENGAGEMENT WITH LITERATURE

Demonstrate a clear understanding of the relevant literature and theories related to restaurant management. Engage critically with the literature and draw upon it to support your arguments and reflections. Use appropriate referencing and citation practices to acknowledge the sources of your ideas. Use a minimum of 10 references.

There needs to be much better use of intext citations and academic referencing to back up your points. These were sadly lacking in this piece of work.

2

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

You should demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of the principles of restaurant management. Clearly articulate the challenges and complexities of working in a restaurant environment. Show evidence of learning and growth in your knowledge and understanding throughout your placement

You have mentioned concepts of leadership, teamwork and collaboration in your work, but without exploring them in any way. The interview with Hwyel was a great idea, but needed to be explored

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further in your own experiences and perhaps challenged or expanded upon depending upon your point of view. I would suggest you start looking at things like a manager as oppose to a valued member of staff and see how that changes your approach and perspective.

COGNITIVE AND INTELLECTUAL

Analyse and evaluate your own experiences and actions, drawing on critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Demonstrate creativity and innovation in your approach to addressing challenges. Show evidence of reflective and self aware thinking.

You need to analyse your own experiences more, rather than just stating all the things you've done (and you have done some amazing things!). Start looking at your experiences with a critical eye. What did you do and was it successful? How would you do it in the future? What do you do now that you didn't before and are you now more effective? How has that influenced those around you?

2

PRACTICAL SKILLS

Discuss specific examples of how you applied your knowledge and skills in a practical setting during your placement. Reflect on the effectiveness of your actions and identify areas for improvement. Demonstrate an understanding of the practical implications of theoretical concepts and ideas.

You've talked well in some cases about the differing ways that teams work and the leadership styles that enable that. Hwyel's approach to supporting his chefs and the reward for humility and a willingness to learn that brings encouragement and support, plus the 'crab' idea of teamwork from Ynyshir, but you've not evaluated or commented upon them in any way. Nobody who knows you doubts your ability or work ethic, but management is a different skill and mindset.

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TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS

You should write this assignment as a reflective essay, provide your student name, number, module name and module code and assignment title. You should use a font of Arial 12 point. Justify your text, in order for your journal to look professional. Use 1.5 line spacing throughout the document. Spelling and grammar should be accurate.



You have so many skills and a huge talent for the kitchen, but I would suggest that to reach your potential you need to start thinking more like a manager, and perhaps that's where the issue with this assignment comes into play. You talked about feeling you 'usual nervousness' before the Swansea Food Festival, and yet you did a splendid job. I have no doubt at all that you will become a fine manager in your time, but the journey needs to start somewhere. You're not afraid of putting yourself into new and challenging positions, - this is just a new one for you.

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