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My Academic Report

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to analyse my academic and employability skills that I have acquired while studying. I will be talking about five essential skills I have improved over such as summarising, paraphrasing, critical thinking, leadership and time management. Within these skills, I will be giving their definition, reasons as to why the importance of having these skill's and finally why they are part of my skill sets. Progressing towards the end of this report, I will be writing a conclusion stating the meaning and differences of both academic and employability skills. Through this report, I aim to show my professors a widened knowledge of these skills with references to credible texts, articles, websites and books. Alongside with references the use of quotations and a well-interpreted analysis of each skill's definition to my understanding.

Summarising

The definition of summarising, according to the Cambridge dictionary "state in a few words the main ideas", this refers to the core information of the text. It is the ability to shorten large quantities of information and passing it forward resumed in a way that the conclusion the author of the information was trying to reach is also understood. This is the central concept of summarising and it is vital that it is used effectively or its purpose is defeated, without the critical information when summarising it suddenly becomes hard to understand or not understandable at all. Studies conducted by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, tells us that the tendency of writers is relying "too heavily on summary". It goes on forward to say that it eases the efforts of writing someone else's ideas and that writers incline to "repeat what he or she said" (2019).

Summarising is a skill that I have been learning how to use more effectively, by the practice of in-class exercises and videos on YouTube by Shaun Mcleod, an American teacher who uses this online platform to teach students around the world academic skills. Practising this skill has helped me to have a clear understanding of what the main points of a text or

discussion are, identifying them and applying them. This for me was especially important because both in my workplace and university I work with PowerPoint presentations, so my content must have a clear summary as it helps peers and colleagues understand what I am presenting and also for myself as guidelines of what I will be speaking.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is the rewording of which was either spoken (verbally) or written (non-verbal) by someone. It is the using of information received and translating it with your own words, and this can be done by choosing keywords and reapplying that same information to make it relevant to your target audience, Mugridge T (2019). However, it is essential when paraphrasing to maintain the source of information, giving the same content with different words to avoid plagiarism. This brings me to the prominence of having paraphrasing as one of your skills, as it assists you in expressing your ideas and opinions through the information you've received. Paraphrasing is one of my skills that I have sharpened throughout my studies, and with practice today, I can say that I've acquired this skill.

Paraphrasing for myself is essential as I am currently situated in a university, so it is essential that I execute it correctly to prevent plagiarism on my work. The in-class exercise given by Anita has really helped me to develop my paraphrasing skills because of the understanding it has brought me through the repetition of practice. Learning how to pick out the correct information from a text, paraphrasing it and then receiving feedback on it has been the key to learning this skill to its fullest.

Critical Thinking

Looking at the meaning of Critical Thinking, It is imperative to breakdown the words and looks at them separately. Considering that the word 'Critical' is used for expressing opposing or negative comments and that 'Thinking' is defined by the manner of cogitating or reasoning something, Cambridge Dictionary (2019). The definition comes clear with the combination of both the importance of studying the information given and applying your own personal judgement. Critical thinking becomes crucial to individuals because it gives them the ability to decipher information and problem solving; this leads to less confusion with a clear understanding. Richard P and Elder L (2006) speak about on their book "Critical thinking: learn the tools the best thinkers use" the importance of understanding the approach you should have to situations in order to be able to do 'critical thinking'. How to correctly question these positions you are faced, and learn the skills we see in the book title that the "Best thinkers use".

Reading this book on critical thinking has shown me that this is, in fact, one of my key skills because naturally, I oversee and have my own opinion towards the information of which gives me a better understanding or decision to whichever situation I am presented with. I'm constantly questioning, to find the best outcome to whichever situation with the least of amounts of risks or effort to execute it. Working in management within the service sector has been crucial in learning this skill, to me maybe without the pressure I have gone through at work and life events I would not have had developed it to the level it is at today.

Leadership

The definition of leadership can vary depending on the context it has used, an interesting quote states that "Leaders help themselves and others to do the right things" MindTools (2019). Another "the ability to see what no one else sees" Cummings G (2011), these quotes are representations of what defines leadership. The meaning of leading comes from an individual who provides certain security and assures that goals and objectives are achievable taking control of situations and responsibilities. Alongside with independence he or she also needs to be able to work with others, giving respect without using the title of being a leader as power but to use it in finding potential in the people who nominated that person as a leader.

There are many reasons why leadership is one of my skill sets, some of these being my approach to responsibilities or difficulties, and my confidence helps me bring surety to the people I lead. Inherently I find myself in circumstances where I am looking to help others succeed wherever I can, within my leadership experience, I've had the privilege to work with people from various backgrounds such as in university. One of the modules I was elected team leader, where I had to listen to the other group members take down ideas and implement strategies of how to execute them in order to achieve our final business plan. Within my church community, I'm the leader of young couples where I help them with various problems helping them get through tough situations. I've also worked with management at a restaurant, and all of these experiences have led me to understand leadership, which influence my personal ambitions highly for the future.

Time management

According to Cambridge Dictionary (2019), time management is a form of applying you are in hand time, in an effective way to maximise your outcome. Having this skill is important because you are able to increase your daily productivity, the number of tasks concluded and not forgetting important to-do is in your day today. I have identified this skill in myself after

learning how to effectively, use a powerful tool that is The Pareto Principle. Vilfredo Federico Damaso Pareto is the man who started this concept back in (1896), the theory is that 80% of your results are achieved by 20% of your work. Discovering how to use time management is of extreme importance within the business sector, John Rymer questions his readers in his article (2006: 41) "*The importance of time management*". In your 24 hours a day what decisions do you take that result you succeeding, he mentions some successful business owners with one of them being Reed Scheweizer. He emphasis and goes as far as to say that a businesses success comes from the management of time, if we consider this being true, we must implement and master time management.

This principle was taught to me whilst studying in university, my lecturer Anita has helped me attain this skill, and the impact it has had on my life is noticeable. Her advice to me was to "eat the elephant first" with one bite at a time whilst avoiding procrastinating, through in-class exercises, I learnt my best way to tackle my day-to-day problems. By listing down my to-do's and confronting the hardest first, It will ensure that 80% of my results is succeeded by 20% of my work.

Conclusion

This report on my academic and employability skill has analysed the definition of my five key skills and how some of these were acquired during my studies at university. Overall summarising has helped me put together this work, by collecting information from different sources and applying it towards this report. Its helped me keep my thoughts in context with the information I was reading, together with summarising and the use of paraphrasing has assisted me with the structure of my paragraphs. The similarities between these two skills are that whilst summarising is acting as a filter to reduce information, paraphrasing is maintaining that information just with different wording.

When looking at these next skills for me, it is important to categorise them together because they work really well with one another. For me, these were vital skills to have because of the relationship they have to my dream, in owning a successful business in the future. All three; Time management, Leadership and Critical Thinking when looking at it as a whole, we can see how they impact both the business world and the day-to-day. Learning more and perfecting these skills in university to me has been of extreme significance, through this report it has given me a better understanding of what each skill means and the opportunity I am having in being able to study them.

I have understood that academic skills aid you both during university and once you leave, it

gives you the fundamental skills that you will use in your career and in life with simple things like communicating with others. On the other hand, we have employability skills, which are sought out by employers looking for the best candidates for that specific business or job role, these skills are very limited to the workplace environment. Learning both academic and employability skills in schools, colleges and universities prepare individuals for their future. As for myself, this is still the first term, and I have gained so much over these last four months, with expectations for the next terms I aim to endeavour the foremost and effectively apply all these skills to my life.

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Time allocated: 1 hour. Please return your paper to the lecturer upon completion. It will be returned to you at the next session. You will need to include a scanned copy of this exercise in the form of an appendix together with your Task 1 (part of the Assignment for this module).

Ex.1

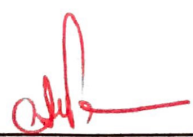
Read the following text and make notes on the main ideas. You can do this on a separate piece of paper which you do not have to hand in.

The success of ALDI

The food retail industry is a highly competitive market. Aldi understands that its customers want value for money but do not want to compromise on quality. This case study will demonstrate how Aldi uses a lean approach to its business operations to offer its customers quality products at competitive prices. What distinguishes Aldi from its competitors is its competitive pricing strategy without reducing the quality of its products. In fact, in some cases Aldi's products are 30% cheaper than those offered by its competitors. Aldi can do this because the business operates so efficiently. The three core values of Aldi are simplicity, consistency and responsibility. Lean production ties in closely with these values. For example, Aldi stores are simple in design and all stores are very similar which creates consistency.

For Aldi operating efficiently involves reducing costs in all areas of the business. Some of the key areas where Aldi is able to minimise costs are by saving time, space, effort and energy. Aldi's approach to doing this is to run its business around the principles of lean thinking. Whereas other food retailers have elaborate displays, additional services and promotions that draw customers into the business, Aldi's core purpose is to 'provide value and quality to our customers by being fair and efficient in all we do'. The principles of lean production are planned and built into everything that Aldi does. This starts within its supply chain. For example, up to 60% of Aldi's fruit and vegetables are sourced locally where possible, reducing the need for long and costly delivery journeys.

The principles of time based management are also built into the training provided for Aldi's employees. Through training staff to do a variety of tasks around store Aldi can minimise its staff requirements. Staff costs can also be reduced as fewer staff are required if they can perform a variety of duties throughout the store. Aldi's 'no-nonsense' approach to retailing therefore leads to cost saving in numerous areas. These cost savings are passed on to customers in the form of lower prices, allowing the business to differentiate itself from its competitors in terms of price, as well as the quality of the products it has on offer.

Lecturer's signature: 

Date: 12/08/2019

Ex.2

This task is designed to see if you can summarise ideas from course materials in your own words. Re-read the text 'The success of ALDI' on previous page. Now answer the following question in your own words: What factors contribute to ALDI's success? Write about 175 words.

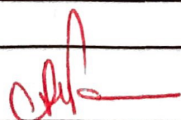
Aldi's success came from the very first moment ~~that~~ they understood their customers wants, 'Value for money without compromising quality'. The key here that leads them to success, was finding a strategy to lower product pricing without losing its quality. Providing the same or similar products, cheaper. Aldi accomplished this by 'effectively reducing costs' through the use of lean thinking. Cutting down 'time, space, effort and energy', whenever possible. These varied from the store layout to the purchase of almost 60% of fruit and vegetables locally, eliminating costly delivery journeys. Through these different forms of 'lean thinking', Aldi can now sell their products 30% cheaper than their competitors whilst maintaining the quality. This is where Aldi created their success giving their customers value for money. (sp)

Another key factor that I find very important, is keeping the internal of the business functional. They provided all employees with time management training, ensuring their 'lean thinking' is done by all employees creating synchronization and motivation within the business resulting in better service to customers.

Lecturer's comments:

Good paraphrasing skill. Well done!

Lecturer's signature:



Date:

12/08/2019