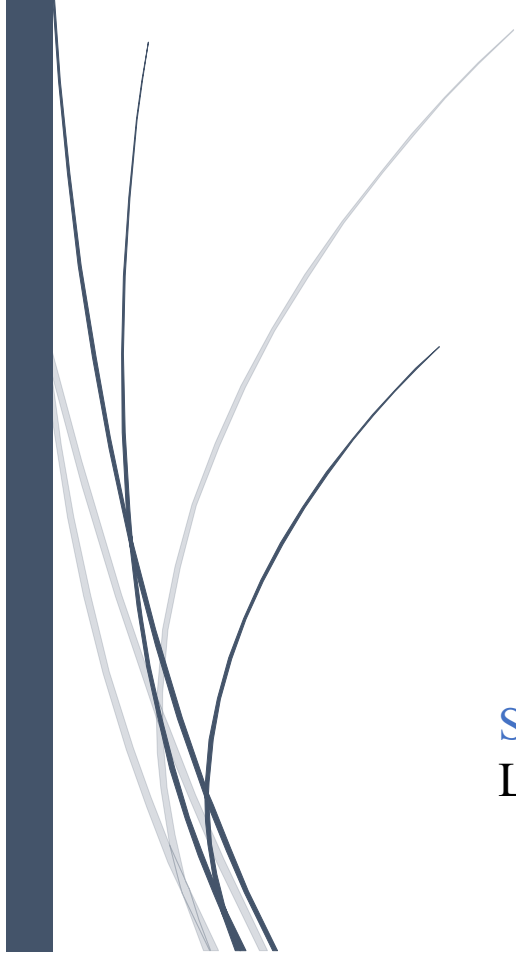




ACADEMIC & EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

BMSW4001



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Lecturer: Sylvia Hoffmann

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INTRODUCTION

In this report I will be reflecting on what I have learnt in this module and how it has helped me to develop employability skills. My journey at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David has encouraged me to deliberate my choices, criticize my past decisions and be the best version of myself. This process has allowed me to become much more aware of myself, my surroundings, and look at life from a different perspective and with much appreciation. I will take the opportunity to discuss and evaluate the feedback I have received regarding in-class exercises and activities. I will examine four chosen topics which we have learnt in this particular module over terms 1 and 2, namely; Referencing, Analytical and critical thinking, Cover letters and Public speaking and giving presentations. As the practice of reflective writing involves much critical thinking, I believe it will benefit me in compiling well written, high standard essays. To support my reflective writing, I have chosen Graham Gibb's Model (Stewerts, 2015) of reflection and this is because I found his model to be the simplest and effective for my needs.



Figure 1, represents the Graham Gibb's Model of reflection (Stewerts, 2015).

TOPICS

REFERENCING

DESCRIPTION

The first topic I will reflect on is referencing, this is the term used to cite and give credit to an author when using their ideas to avoid plagiarism and unfair practice. We were taught the Harvard format of referencing in term 1 and I believed I understood most of it yet faced hurdles when writing assignments for the first term.

FEELINGS

I found it difficult to correctly reference online resources, in particular a dictionary. I struggled to find the resources to help me find the correct method to do this. Though I had the knowledge of Harvard referencing I did not have the practice or experience. This urged me to research sources which could aid me to reference suitably.

EVALUATION

When I received my feedback for the assignment, I was initially a little surprised that I had, in fact, gotten it wrong. After discussing this with Matt it came to my knowledge that I referenced the online dictionary incorrectly. Furthermore, during week 10 of term 2 we were given the opportunity to learn about referencing as part of an assignment workshop. I found this exercise invaluable as here, I learnt how to reference sources which I was unaware I could even reference! I also learned that we have access to The Harvard Referencing Guide on Moodle. This has enabled me to sharpen my understanding of referencing credible sources.

ANALYSIS

As I am writing this assignment, I am aware of the fact that I may make the mistake of referencing inaccurately again as it is a tedious task, but this time I am better educated on the subject and I will also rely on the Harvard Referencing Guide available to me. Whilst doing some research on how to reference essays I came across forums and groups discussing the use of games to help referencing correctly. Higher Education libraries have used games to help reference in the past but Dix (2019) proclaims that there is a particular game which is more gamified and further explains that it will consist of characters, a plot and soundtrack to assist students in grasping the rules of referencing.

CONCLUSION

Upon completing this task, I have become more proficient in referencing and have come to realise the importance of doing so.

ACTION PLAN

I intend to experiment with this idea of gaming to see if it helps me understand referencing better. Although referencing is heavily considered an academic skill, I personally feel it's a skill which could prove to be vital in employment as for example; there could be a situation where research is required of me, and I now know how to differentiate information which is dependable opposed to information that is not.

ANALYTICAL AND CRITICAL THINKING

DESCRIPTION

During the class where we were shown a video on critical thinking there were some excellent examples on how we could dissect information and find the best solutions. Pungra (2016) discusses the difference between analytical and critical thinking, he explains that analytical thinking is a tool which allows you to categorise and organize your thought process. Critical thinking on the other hand, requires you to question and challenge concepts as this is the best way to achieve change for the better. Both are essential skills for academia and employment as they require you to analyse and adapt to your situation.

FEELINGS

This is a subject I found interesting, as critical thinking and analysis is something that we do in our day to day lives. However, transferring this into academic practice is far more difficult.

EVALUATION

The great thing about the class was that critical thinking was transformed into simple and relatable depictions, this allowed me to truly understand the meaning of the concept. We also engaged in a role play activity in which I took the role of an interviewee. The task prompted me to think about my answers and really think about what the best outcome was. On Moodle there were several videos about analytical and critical thinking, one of which I found extremely beneficial.

ANALYSIS

Smyth (2016) states that “Writing is a discipline that leads to analytical, critical, an logical thinking”. What I learned was that critical thinking allows you to approach a topic from different angles. This is an essential employability skill as the workplace can often be a rapidly changing environment and critical thinking will assist your transition or approach to new projects. This process has allowed me to reflect on past experiences, problem solve and think about what I would do differently in the future using critical thinking to make decisions.

CONCLUSION

Attending university has enabled me to really make use of this tool, as I have had to analyse and think critically about the content in my assignments.

ACTION PLAN

I now have the knowledge and ability to find credible sources and counter arguments for my opinions. Morgan (2017) describes how to understand the nature of strong and weak arguments by using a chart and going forward I would rely on this chart to make future decisions.

COVER LETTERS

DESCRIPTION

Cover letters are an important element for employer's, as this tells them what position you are applying for and how qualified you are for the job. Term 2 brought the teachings of CV and Cover Letters, in particular I will discuss what I learnt regarding the process of preparing an effective cover letter. Morgan (2017) states that “A covering letter is a professional business letter which provides an employer with an introduction to an accompanying CV.” This is the stage where you have the opportunity to sell yourself to employers and catch their attention, ensuring that the necessary components are included.

FEELINGS

We were expected to practice some cover letter writing in class as this was to help us prepare for the formal In-class exercise. Initially I felt very reluctant and insecure, I didn't believe that I could put this together efficiently.

EVALUATION

The practice session itself was not as tough as we had the support of a template, but I did not feel confident enough to compose this piece of business writing on my own without some aid. For the in-class exercise, we were given some job scenarios which we could choose from, I settled on the Centre Manager position as this best describes my own past experiences. The feedback I received was very positive to my astonishment, with the only critique being that I

could have described more about the company's ethos. This reassured me that I had chosen the right course, but I need to work on my self-confidence and morale.

ANALYSIS

I believe that if I had been careful in planning and time management, I would have executed the cover letter better, however I did rush towards the end which resulted in the lack of detail. This experience has taught me that employers are meticulous and look for people who exhibit enthusiasm and interest in the company they are applying to. Smith (2019) explains that cover letters need to be "attention grabbing and concise" further breaking it down into what should be included in each paragraph.

CONCLUSION

I am now prepared to write cover letters when I do begin my pursuit for a job, and that they should and need to be tailored for each job role applied for. This is important to secure interviews increasing the possibility to be selected. Furthermore, it's also important for employers as they can use their skills to critically analyse and eliminate/chose applicants.

ACTION PLAN

Going forward I will personalise my cover letters for the jobs I submit applications for. I will research the company's backgrounds and ethos to ensure the company and I suitable for each other.

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND GIVING PRESENTATION

DESCRIPTON

Ryan (2013) explains that public speaking differentiates you in the workforce and if you can become a confident and capable speaker this can mean this difference of being in a lower pay grade to a higher pay grade. It gives you the opportunity to stand out and demonstrate your knowledge and above all is essential skill to have for a leadership role.

FEELINGS

Public speaking and giving presentations are not my forte and have been my worst fear. However, it is important to excel in these tasks, hence they are practiced at University to prepare you as some job roles can require public speaking or giving presentations.

In class we were expected to give a short group presentation on a reflective writing model, ours being Gibbs' model. I prepared for the presentation with note cards as I was anxious of forgetting my parts. I found myself in an extremely nervous and vulnerable state, my presentation resulted in my reading off the notes with very little engagement and interaction with the audience, my peers also felt that we could have had a visual aid to support our presentation. This was to prepare us for the in-class exercise where we had to give a short presentation on a topic related to the module Academic and employability skills, my topic was reflective writing.

EVALUTION

Having reflected on the feedback from our practice session I put together a PPT presentation and prepared thoroughly, but as anticipated, yet again, I found myself in a situation of nerves and lack of confidence. I was very mindful not to excessively rely on my notes and I educated myself comprehensively on the topic, and also practiced some of the tips on giving presentations.

ANALYSIS

As expected in my feedback I was informed that I needed to project my voice and slow my pace down and again, I was reliant on my notes. I referred back to Morgan (2017) and the companion website which has a survey on critical thinking, I used this survey to evaluate this experience, I found the survey intense and the questions made me think about how I could improve myself, subsequently this is a tactic I will now be adopting for future reflection.

CONCLUSION

Presenting also helped me to understand my topic further, broadening my own knowledge. I have found that teaching or giving information is an excellent method to learn.

ACTION PLAN

After much self-observation I feel that only practice will help me overcome this fear. I feel going forward I perhaps need to rehearse my presentations beforehand to eradicate the doubt and insecurity I have about it. For any upcoming presentations I will endeavour to prepare a handout for the audience, this is beneficial as it builds a relationship between the presenter and the audience.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion after a considerable amount of self-analysis and scrutiny I have come to the understanding that I have become more confident in exploring areas which I was once fearful of before. For example; standing up and speaking in front of a group of people is not something I was comfortable with prior to this experience. I am now able to recognise my strengths and weaknesses and have strategies to improve and better myself. Being agile is a quality employer's look for and I feel I am able to adapt and learn to grow myself. Acquiring all these skills and more has improve my chances to be employable and I find myself constantly looking to enhance and develop my abilities. Veine et al (2019) discuss how reflective writing can have a positive impact on students learning. Studies showed that students who continuously engaged in reflective journal writing demonstrated improvement in academic performance. Reflection is an instrumental skill to possess in order to process experiences and learn from them. It has given me the opportunity to ascertain an understanding and critically evaluate myself. Thus, I intend to keep an academic journal for reflection to assist in my progression and carefully consider deeper meaning and understanding.

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APPENDIX



Academic and Employability Skills (ACE) – term 2 BMSW4001

In-class exercise 1: Cover letter writing

Student Name: SIDDIKA CHAUDHURY Student ID: 1904201
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 you Task 1 (part of the Assignment for this module).

Ex.1

Choose of the jobs provided by the lecturer. Read the chosen job description carefully. Write a cover letter as if you were going to apply for the job.

[Your Name] SIDDIKA CHAUDHURY
1 Any Street, Anytown

[Hiring manager's name] MS HEATHER WATSON
[Hiring manager's company name] WATSON MARTIN
[Today's Date] 07.11.19

Dear MS. Watson,

I wish to apply for the role of the Centre Manager at Watson Martin, currently
which is currently being advertised on www.reed.co.uk.

Having worked as a store manager in the flagship Monsoon Accessorize store
branch, I have had 10 years of experience in managing, leading and
motivating people around me. I am an extremely professional and determined
individual who always has success in mind.

In my current job role, I have demonstrated how to deliver customer service
at the highest level, and I lead by example. Working at a flagship store
has enabled me to excel in managing a busy environment and I am
confident I can manage (resolve stressful situations in a calm, sophisticated
manner.

I believe I have an eye for detail and am competent in delegating and
supervising workloads. As a branch manager my role requires me to liaise
with the HR team as well as recruit new members of staff and deliver
training. I am also responsible for staff rates, authorising absence and holidays
and payroll.

I am a good team player and I have strong organisational, time-management
and administrative skills. I produce and deliver weekly business
reports to the area manager and attend meetings, ensuring that

Lecturer's signature: _____

Date: 14.11.2018

all communication has been circulated to the correct people. My current role has taught me advanced IT skills whilst ~~being~~ ^{having to} produce reports, ~~and~~ I also have excellent written and oral communication skills, and am able to tailor my communication at all levels.

→ what is their ethos?

Given the opportunity, I would love to work for Watson Martin because I better ^{fit} ~~in~~ ^{their} ethos. I have a can do attitude and I am great at multitasking and very flexible.

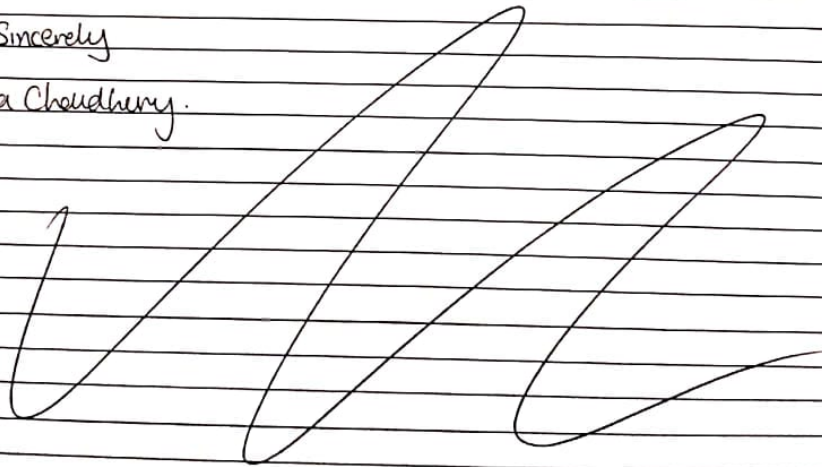
~~Thank you for~~

I would be grateful should I have the opportunity to be interviewed to further discuss my experience and skills.

~~Thanking~~ Thank you for taking the time to consider my application, I look forward to hearing from you.

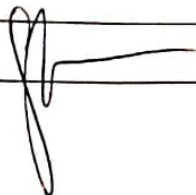
~~Yours~~ Sincerely

Siddhika Choudhury.



Lecturer's comments: *Very good. What would have made it perfect would be if you described more about the company's ethos. Otherwise, still very good!*

Lecturer's signature: _____



Date: *14.11.2018*

Mini-presentation Feedback Form

Student presenting: SIDDIKA

Date: 12/12/19

SCORE: 5= Excellent, 4=Very Good, 3= Good/Average, 2=Poor, 1= Very Poor

REFLECTIVE WRITING

Topic:	5	4	3	2	1	Comments
DELIVERY						
The presenter delivered the material in a clear and structured manner	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	- Good use of information - Excellent use of visual aids - Be careful of pace of speech if you're nervous - Great eye contact - Be careful of dependence on notes
The presenter was knowledgeable about the topic and any related issues	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
The presenter maintained my interest during the entire presentation	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
The presenter was enthusiastic about the topic	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
The presenter was well organised and prepared	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Eye contact was maintained	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Body language was appropriate	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Time for presentation used effectively	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
The presenter was able to present the material without excessive dependence on notes	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The volume was appropriate	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The presenter spoke clearly	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The pace of speech was natural	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	
There was a clear introduction	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
There was a clear conclusion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
CONTENT						
The topic was interesting	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	- Perhaps a bit louder - Good use of examples of models and relevance to module
The presentation was concise and informative	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The presentation contained good examples	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
Content was relevant to the topic	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Relevance to the module	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
OVERALL PREPARATION						
POINTS AVAILABLE <u>100</u> POINTS EARNED <u> </u> GRADE <u> </u> %						LECTURER: PLEASE SIGN AND DATE IN THIS BOX TO CONFIRM COMPLETION OF THE PRESENTATION.
						MATT PEAKE

Please note the above grade is for general feedback purposes only; you still need to reflect on this presentation in your written assignment and attach the scan of this page as an appendix.

Mini-presentation Feedback Form

Student presenting: Siddika

Date: 12/12/2019

SCORE: 5= Excellent, 4=Very Good, 3= Good/Average, 2=Poor, 1= Very Poor

Topic:	5	4	3	2	1	Comments
DELIVERY						Good PPT prepared. Siddika was ~~speaking~~ ~~clear~~ speaking clear.
The presenter delivered the material in a clear and structured manner	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The presenter was knowledgeable about the topic and any related issues	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The presenter maintained my interest during the entire presentation	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The presenter was enthusiastic about the topic	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The presenter was well organised and prepared	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
Eye contact was maintained	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
Body language was appropriate	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
Time for presentation used effectively	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The presenter was able to present the material without excessive dependence on notes	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The volume was appropriate	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The presenter spoke clearly	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The pace of speech was natural	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
There was a clear introduction	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
There was a clear conclusion	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
CONTENT						
The topic was interesting	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
The presentation was concise and informative	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The presentation contained good examples	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Content was relevant to the topic	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Relevance to the module	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
OVERALL PREPARATION						LECTURER: PLEASE SIGN AND DATE IN THIS BOX TO CONFIRM COMPLETION OF THE PRESENTATION.
POINTS AVAILABLE <u>100</u> POINTS EARNED <u>80</u> GRADE <u> </u> %						

Please note the above grade is for general feedback purposes only; you still need to reflect on this presentation in your written assignment and attach the scan of this page as an appendix.

Mini-presentation Feedback Form

Student presenting: SINDIKA CHOUDHURY

Date: 12-12-2019

SCORE: 5= Excellent, 4=Very Good, 3= Good/Average, 2=Poor, 1= Very Poor

Topic:	5	4	3	2	1	Comments
DELIVERY						
The presenter delivered the material in a clear and structured manner	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>could speak louder. Good preparation Good eye contact could speak a slower.</i>
The presenter was knowledgeable about the topic and any related issues	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
The presenter maintained my interest during the entire presentation	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The presenter was enthusiastic about the topic	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The presenter was well organised and prepared	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Eye contact was maintained	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Body language was appropriate	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Time for presentation used effectively	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The presenter was able to present the material without excessive dependence on notes	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The volume was appropriate	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The presenter spoke clearly	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The pace of speech was natural	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
There was a clear introduction	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
There was a clear conclusion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
CONTENT						
The topic was interesting	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	<i>conclusion was too short</i>
The presentation was concise and informative	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	
The presentation contained good examples	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Content was relevant to the topic	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Relevance to the module	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	
OVERALL PREPARATION	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	LECTURER: PLEASE SIGN AND DATE IN THIS BOX TO CONFIRM COMPLETION OF THE PRESENTATION. <u>12.12.2019</u>
POINTS AVAILABLE <u>100</u> POINTS EARNED <u>78</u> GRADE <u>E^B</u>						
%						

Please note the above grade is for general feedback purposes only; you still need to reflect on this presentation in your written assignment and attach the scan of this page as an appendix.