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Academic and Employability Skills

1.Introduction

The purpose of this report is to reflect my academic and employability skills that I have accumulated and developed during this year. I will do this using the reflective circle created by Gibbs (1988). In this report I will try to reflect as much as possible how I have approached all these new things during on term one and term two, the feelings and thoughts that I have experienced during their accumulation. In this essay I will talk about the way I felt when I first came to college, how those changed on the way, how all my experiences changed during these terms, what was new and what I improved. I will also analyse all these and evaluate.

2.Description

As a student at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, at the end of first term of the module "Academic and Employability Skills" we had to write a report. For this term, I have been asked to reflect on my learning in this module, to reflect the skills accumulated during these two semesters. This being time management, academic skills , also things that will be useful to me in the future such as Personal Development Plan, SWOT analysis

3Feelings

Starting with the interview for acceptance to university I was stressed and scared, thinking that I would not face him, and in my mind, it was just that, why not try, but to my surprise I was accepted. This fact made me happy, but it still made me realize how serious the situation is about the university, where we must make assessments to the end of each term. When I first come at this college, I was afraid, because I thought I will not pass any exams.

Everything seemed for me very difficult. Given that speaking English is not really my strength, it was hard for me to get used to each teacher's accent to understand what was being taught and explained at the time, at first asking colleagues who had a primary language just like mine, to explain what I did not understand. From the first week I learned about some things, which in the past those seemed pointless to me. Each teacher telling us that at the end of the semester that we will have those assessments, putting even more pressure on me.

With each passing week, the teacher's explanations received made me feel much more comfortable and confident. In order to enrich my knowledge and to better understand the ones explained by the teachers, I studied passages from the books. "Certificates in Higher Education: Skills for the workplace Student Yearbook" by (Maund, Schriek , Tinkler 2017) and "The Business Student's Guide to study and Employability "(Morgan, 2017). I started to understand those things, also to understand their importance, and yet it is always a place to learn more and more, it is never enough.

4.Evaluation and analysis

At first everything was difficult, I did not know how to approach all the new information, I was frustrated, believing that my place does not belong here. But paying attention to what the teacher said, everything started to be logical for me, although there are still gaps that I will try to cover. In term 1 I learned about skills I need if I want to be employed, skills like communication, working in a team, time management. Also something new for me was to create a SWOT analysis being "a valuable technique for planning and decision making" as (Gurel, 2017) said and (PDP) Personal Development Plan, which helped me to know what things have to be done first in my future.

These two at first made me confused about the four hours we spent talking about them. I came home and started looking for different examples of these on the internet and then I tried to make mine, because I needed them at the first term for the assessment report. When I asked the teacher's opinion about it, he confirmed that I had done well. Because for a success in life I always must start with the beginning and take them step by step, analysing the things I have to do, what I need

to improve and what helps to achieve the goal. Also swot analysis made me to discover what my strengths are but also my weaknesses, and where I should work to improve them. This was a bit difficult from my point of view, because I was not sure how it should be done, also I did not realize the qualities I have but also the disadvantages that should be improved or hidden until I had to create mine.

Other important skills that I studied in term 1 were the academic ones or transferable skills, which any student has to have, or at least to acquire over time as Smith (2002) suggests "Remember that it is impossible to complete college without acquiring transferable skills". The first thing that helped me to pass the exams was Academic writing. Things like paraphrasing, summarising and referencing they had an impact on me, because at first, I could not understand anything that was explained to us by the teacher. The summary was something I was doing in my country, so it was not so hard to understand this, but it was also different and harder still considering that English is not my primary language. Through the exercises I managed to create very good summaries, based on the feedback received from the previous teacher for the exercises done in class. Paraphrasing was not as difficult as it initially seemed, while it was easier to put it into practice.

The ability to reference was difficult at first for me because it was something new. All the names and years that had to be put in a certain order, and in a certain way, and differ when you put the quotation in the text to the reference at the end of the essay. All of these are difficult to remember, but with practice and careful attention, I managed to pass the essays, although I still have much more to practice on the ability to make references. That helped me not to be accused of plagiarism in my assessments. Also, the teacher instructed us to read the "Referencing Handbook- Harvard" carefully, and this will help me to pass the essays more easily, which helped me. But I think that, if I do not practice them or do exercises on them, in time I will forget them and again I will have to take the things from the beginning to learn them.

Another important skill that I have improved is time management. Without it all would be a disaster around us. This ability helped me prioritize things, for that I used the Eisenhower Method, so that the most important and urgent things are resolved first, and the least important and least urgent being last. As Heuer T. et. al. (2016) said

“It’s hard to manage time when you aren’t cognizant of how you’re actually spending your time. Many people significantly under or over-estimate how long a specific task actually takes.”

In my opinion, when it comes to time management, I can refer to two things. The first of these is to be punctual and always on time, so I can avoid conflicts but also inconveniences both in the workplace and in the relationship with others. And the second is to organize things according to their importance, through that I can save time and not crowding it with unnecessary things.

In the second week of term 2, I learned about creating a CV. This helped me a lot because I realized that the CVs, I made so far were not good at all and that with them I will never be accepted at the job I want. Through this session I understood the mistakes I made and what needs to be improved on it. For example, writing the address is only necessary if I am asked for it. Also, the order of the things I write in the CV is important because I cannot write all the things together and mix them, they need to be in sections. Before creating a CV, that made me completely confused, not knowing what to write, I was insecure. That the CV’s that I created in the past included only a few skills, what degree I had, and where I worked, unsubscribing my skills through examples so that the employer wanted to hire me. Also, through this session I learned a lot of things that should be included in a CV, things like aptitudes, attributes, knowledge and even the things we are interested in.

However, written in a grammarly correct CV, they will help me to be accepted at the desired job, without the employer thinking much. With this CV, the employer will make a good first impression about me. Another thing that I kept in mind from this lesson was to use strong words in creating the CV like "committed, promoted, enhance, generated" instead of the usual words that each person uses. Also, the cover letter for cv being a new thing, I didn't even know it had to be included in cv or created. Finding out that here I must write why I am suitable for the job I want and that I need to sell myself to be accepted. This session helping me in my future so that I can get the job I want.

All of these things had a positive effect on me, so I learned a lot of things that will help me both at work and at being employed, but also when I will continue my studies knowing what I have to do and what needs to be improved.

5.Conclusion

In this report I tried to reflect the skills accumulated during these two terms. During these there were many new things for me. I think they will be of great use to me at the right time in my life to get where I want. However, there will always be room for learning new things. The skills accumulated and developed during this period are for example time management, I have enriched my level of academic writing, as well as creating a CV that will be of great use to me at the right time. I also found out what my weaknesses are and what needs to be improved during this time by creating swot analysis and (PDP) Personal Development Plan in term 1.

6.Action Plan

If I gave the time back, I would do more exercises at home on the subject learned in class. I would also read more secondary research and document much more. Another thing that I would change, would be to not pay attention to things that are not important, but to focus on the teacher and what he said. Being a silent person, I did not ask questions during these terms, now I would change these things asking about things that I did not understand so I would be clear about all them taught at these sessions. I would also recap the resources given by the teachers to be much more prepared for the next class in that subject.

7. Conclusion

By creating this report, I was able to do a review of everything I did during these terms. I could realize that I had accumulated skills that I never would have thought I would have, by reflecting on the subject matter learned in terms one and two. Making this essay, it was a good thing for me

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