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Academic and employability skills

Introduction

The aim of this report is to reflect on several academic and employability skills that I have learned during my time in the University of Wales Trinity Saint David so far. I shall reflect on them using Gibbs reflective cycle.

Description

Studying at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David gives me the opportunities to learn many new things I did not know about previously, but it also comes with responsibilities, one of which is assignments. In this assignment I will write about the following skills: Time management and Eisenhower method, Referencing and Harvard referencing, CV writing and the importance of different skills and factors in it, Cover letter writing and Giving a presentation, how I felt about learning in university and how they helped me improve myself as a person.

Feeling

Entering university was and still is a big decision in my life, so I naturally felt a lot of anxiety about the first lessons and how they would be taught, and especially about my ability to understand what was being taught, this being my first experience in an institution that taught exclusively in English while the ones I studied before at I did in my native language. Nevertheless, as I attended the first few lessons my confidence grew about my abilities, and, as I was already confident in my English-speaking abilities, the lessons on Academic and Employability skills seemed rather easy to me. It is obvious that I did learn many new things, of course, yet I did not feel overwhelmed by the new knowledge and the need to learn because I always liked learning new things and so I instead welcomed it. As time passed I started feeling excited for the new lessons rather than anxious and even though I am naturally shy and don't speak much in unfamiliar environments, I did start feeling more relaxed and talkative during the lessons, and in case of not understanding a particular thing I felt more at ease to ask questions about it.

Analysis and Evaluation

Time management

During the last term I learned about time management, it's importance in all spheres of life and some methods of increasing the time usage efficiency. For example, I learned about the Eisenhower method with which I can use a diagram to organize my activities according to a matrix and prioritize the ones that are critical and require immediate attention while those that don't and are not as important can be left for later. I personally coined the name "Strategic procrastination" for the Eisenhower method because I can leave specific matters that are not urgent to be done in the future while focusing on more important tasks. Still, a part that is important but seemingly subjective which is the choosing of the urgent and important tasks can further be analysed to find the most efficient and objective way to organize the tasks using the Priority Quotient or PQ which is a multiplication of different factors like the ease of doing a task, it's immediate urgency, it's importance and the consequences of doing or not doing it, making the choices for which tasks to do much more nuanced and efficient.(Ngandam Mfondoum et al, 2019).

In this way I can increase the amount of work I do in the same time frame as compared to before learning about this particular approach, which is an important skill in both my day-to-day life as well as any future work that I might have, indeed it would have helped immensely had I learned this before joining university as it would have given me a more focused perspective and a more efficient working style.

Referencing;

Referencing is a method of acknowledging information taken from sources other than myself. Referencing was a concept that I knew about but rarely used before entering the academic environment of the university. I learned much about it including the existence of more than one such system as well as how to use the Harvard referencing system which is required in this field in general and this university in particular, and thus it is useful knowledge for the assignments in the university. It also made me realize the vast amount of research done in the fields that I studied and just how complex they all are, making me more interested in studying in my own time and expanding the breadth of my knowledge on these subjects. Indeed, I think that learning referencing and the way our lecturers encourage further study has made me search for more information, even if many students around the world feel that their subjects at university in fact discourage further studying and referencing from other studies (Mbutho and Hutchings, 2019)

All of this made me more interested in the fields that I study and has focused my attention towards the problem of plagiarism, and how to avoid it, thus improving my writing style to become more original and making me more attentive to where my information comes from thus making me more impartial.

CV writing;

After the lessons, I have gotten a more thorough understanding of how to write a CV, as while I did write my own one previously using a template, I have now learned that I missed some key points, including the usefulness of writing my interests and attributes and how they are perceived. I also now know that my personal information such as my address is not necessary unless explicitly asked for. Besides that, there was also the point of using references in my CV so as to properly corroborate my claims.

An important lesson was to see my CV more from the perspective of an employer, including minute details, such as the use of specific power words. All parts of the CV are important, though some parts like communication skills, job field compared to study field, relevant experience and others are more important than entrepreneurial skills, thus it is more important to focus on them to attract employers. (Humburg, 2015).

CV writing is a highly important part of applying to any job, thus it should never be ignored, as the CV is possibly the first or second texts through which an employer might become interested in my skills, therefore it is an important way to advertise myself and my skills in order to go on to the next part which is the interview.

Cover letter writing;

I learned more about cover letters, finding a well thought out structure, which consists of 4 paragraphs detailing my intentions and the way I found the job, relevant skills and their descriptions and my eagerness to go to an interview to further explain the details about them. I found out that when explaining skills in a cover letter I can add the way I acquired and used them in order to gain the confidence of my potential employer about my ability to perform at a high level.

This skill is important because a cover letter might be the first way an employer gets to know me and a way for him to evaluate my skills and compatibility to the company and the role I applied for. It gives him an insight into the way I worked previously and how I describe my skills helps him identify if I can be an asset to the company.

Giving a presentation;

During my studies I have learned and had experience with giving a presentation, and while it is rather hard for me to do so due to my shyness, the lessons I learned about this subject helped tremendously. I learned the specific parts that I need to focus on when giving a presentation, as well as the many small details about my own body and voice that I need to keep in mind. For example, it is very important to tailor the presentation to the audience that you expect to listen and watch it. The visual and written parts should be guidelines to the spoken one but shouldn't be ignored and instead should be given some effort as well. Besides that, the anxiety when speaking can be negated by practice and more practice, including before a live practice audience in order to better prepare for what reactions people might have to different styles of speech. (Morgan, 2017)

This skill is very important to have in any job, as it is crucial in helping convey information to co-workers and is expected by employers. It is also important to have in

day-to-day life because it can improve my confidence, speech and attention to different social cues when talking to others, making me stand out more and the whole exchange more interesting and pleasant for both parties.

Conclusions

I have drawn some conclusions from learning these two terms at the university. I found out that my lack of confidence and my shyness shouldn't hold me back like they did in the first term, and I should be more talkative and active during the lessons. The subjects I learned about helped me tremendously, and I hope to be able to use what I learned in a job as soon as possible. It was a good experience for me, as I have learned about things I didn't really think about or though were rather irrelevant, but I found out that they are complex matters with big impacts on how our human world works. This insight will surely help me in the future, and as I learn more, I improve myself more and become a better and more developed person.

Action plan

I believe that learning more about all of these subjects as well as many more is a crucial part in becoming a better person and seeing the world in a more objective way. I learned that even things that seem rather simple on the surface can be very complicated, and even minute details can influence a decision of a person, thus I plan on paying more attention to them rather than only on the big picture. I will also delve deeper into subjects that I thought were irrelevant before to learn just how they affect our world, as I believe that all things in the world are somehow intertwined and therefore affect our lives, so learning more about them will help me be better prepared for different events, and to predict them better.

The skills that I learned at the university will help me a great deal to better understand others and myself, to improve myself and become a better person.

Conclusion

In this report I reflected on the skills that I learned during the first two semesters at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and I found that reflecting on what I learned and what I can do in the future with them is very interesting and helps me better understand what I learned and how I can use this new knowledge to my advantage. This reflection showed me that I learned a tremendous amount of information in university and it made me far more interested in studying them more thoroughly in my own time.

References

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