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Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Academic and Employability Skills (BMSW4001)

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INTRODUCTION

Writing about experiences can be difficult, sometimes we do not find or do not know how to fit the words to talk about it. In this report, I want to talk about the importance of Commercial Awareness and Reflective Writing. I want to explain how critical/analytical thinking has influenced me. And how much Public Speaking helped me. I am going to use the reflection method of Driscoll's Model (What? So What? Now What?) to reflect my report.

I have chosen these 4 topics that we have studied in class because I think that somehow, they have a connection, and this is what has interested me the most. I think there is a relation between my personal life and why I am studying these modules now. I want to reflect some of the experiences that I am having recently and how my academic life is helping me and giving me a guide to improve my personal/professional life.

Although other points learned in this module have also helped me, I think that these are the ones that have had the most impact on me and the ones that I will probably use and improve in the foreseeable future.

Commercial Awareness

Commercial Awareness is the first topic of the second term, we studied it in the first week and it seemed very interesting to me because I was just thinking of starting a project. I cannot remember everything we talked about that day in class, we were working on *What is employability* and we did some exercises about different roles at work. But I remember that this topic interested me a lot because it also mentioned some tips about how to use LinkedIn.

I have decided to start my own business, a digital marketing agency. The problem is not that I am not a marketing expert or that I am not going to deliver the service directly, I am finding it difficult to upload content to my social networks. I want to address the public in the field of sports, and although it is a niche that interests me, I do not know what news or things related to marketing I can publish.

With the Moodle theory and the shared content, I have started to investigate how I can improve my commercial awareness. Gwyn Day, Leading Communications Consultant & member of Mensa, in a video posted on YouTube gives 5 tips to improve your commercial awareness (know the vocabulary, stay current, put it in context, understand business and do it yourself), so I took these tips and I am trying to apply them. With this, I hope to improve my commercial awareness and have more knowledge about the sector I want to address.

I think another important point about this is the Network, the first week we see a bit of theory (a blog posted on Moodle) about how important it is to have a good network to grow professionally. I have started by open an account in Facebook and LinkedIn, and joining different groups related to marketing and sports (climbing, personal trainers, hiking, etc.). It is a very useful tool to search for information or publications related to my niche.

I used the theory that we did in class as a guide to starting to improve my commercial awareness. I did not know very well how to start informing myself about this or how I should do it, where to start, what to look for, etc. I am very interested in developing this skill. I think it can be key in my business. Besides, knowing more about this topic will make me more interested, and this will be reflected in my performance.

I hope to continue learning how to improve my commercial awareness because understanding the field in which I have to develop (professionally or personally) can give me a huge advantage over others, help me make better decisions and also be more prepared for possible problems. It will also be useful for me to search for new ideas.

Reflective Writing

We did this topic in the fourth week and I could say that for me it is the most complicated. It is the first time that I must write an essay from my perspective and analyse what I have learned, and when, and why, etc. I can also say that I do not remember much what we talked about that day in class, but I can reflect it in the following way.

This is the second attempt at my assignment, the first time I thought I understood it, I gave several explanations (as I am doing right now), but I did not reflect anything I learned in class, or at least mention it.

I showed my assignment to the teacher so, she could give me feedback on what I had already written and before class ended, we talked about it. The truth is that I had not understood very well what was really what I had to project, I'm still not very sure if I understood it 100%. First, I got confused with the topics I did not choose them well, and I had only written about two different ones. Later, although I had analysed some situations, I had not related them to things learned in class, activities, or any feedback.

When we made this call, it felt good because I could see where it had gone wrong and what things were not necessary. I was a bit upset that I had to erase more than half, but I am glad I did. I have also reread the examples that we studied that week in class (they are in Moodle) and I have compared them with the one I had written.

I think that in the following points I develop better and begin to understand how to write reflectively, although it is still hard to me, it is something I must continue working on and I hope I can improve this skill because I know that I will have to use it again in the future.

Critical and Analytical Thinking

Critical and Analytical thinking are the topics of the week 6. I remember that that day we practised in class some exercises for thinking skills. We had to solve a little challenge, it consisted of joining 9 points without going through any of them twice. I had played solving these types of games before, but it was the first time I saw this one (9 Dots Challenge). There is another similar challenge, you have to draw a house with a dot in the middle, but you cannot lift the pen from the sheet. When I saw the solution, I could not believe that I had not thought of it first.

The first challenge seems more difficult than it is, you can draw past the point, you do not necessarily have to turn and connect with another at that point. And the second, tells you that you cannot lift the pen from the sheet but it does not tell you that you cannot use more sheet, the solution is to take a piece of paper when you have finished the house (without going through any of the lines twice) and raise the pen to bring it to the middle and be able to paint the point. The solution is always there, simply that many times we are not able to think differently, to analyse the situation well to see what options we have.

We receive information daily and if we are lucky, we learn something new. But that we receive a lot of data does not mean that we process them all. Most of the time we do not even have an active thought about this, we just listen to it and let it go. For me, this point has been quite important because it has made me think if in personal situations, I analyse all the options I have before deciding.

From that week and thanks to a couple of personal experiences that I have had lately, I can say that I have started to improve my critical and analytical thinking skills. I was prone to decide at the moment without thinking about the other options and what results they would give me. But I have noticed that lately, I think more clearly and that I try to visualize the different decisions that I could make, I try to have a "plan b" in case the first attempt does not work. I have also learned to think more calmly, without despairing of time, taking advantage of it to find information and compare it, ask for help from another person who knows about the subject or simply give me another point of view.

This has helped me not to run and make mistakes, to look for alternatives that lead me to a result closer to what I want. I hope to continue improving these two ways of thinking, I think it is very useful to use it, and I hope to make it a habit.

Public Speaking

This topic is the last of term 2, I have decided to talk about it because it has helped me a lot when presenting assignments for the other subjects. When I saw it in the schedule for the term 2, I did not like it at all because I have never been very good at giving presentations, but I have to say that it was one of the classes that I liked the most.

I remember that we had to give a short presentation for our classmates, the presentation had to be 5 minutes long and it was about our achievements, without PowerPoint and documents. I was very nervous about giving my presentation, the first thing I thought is that these people were not interested in my life, that they were not going to be aware of what I said, and in part, that helped me a lot. I was quite calm thinking that maybe only the teacher would listen to me and that I could be more relaxed.

The fact that I had to talk about myself was also very useful. I had to explain 3 things that were important in my life. After a few presentations seeing my classmates receptive and the teacher giving feedback in a way that gave confidence to the other students, I felt confident to do my presentation. I remember explaining what it meant to me to be at university in England, when 3 years ago I could not even say four words in a row in English.

After that week, I had two more presentations about my assignments, and I felt confident to speak because I visualized the same feeling I had that day. They were the same people, I knew what I was talking about, and they did too, it was an easy presentation.

I am sure that I will continue to improve this skill because it is an indispensable tool in my project, and the fact of having to do them, yes or yes, puts me in context for the following occasions.

Conclusion

The last weeks while reviewing the theory studied and the activities carried out in class, I kept making connections, understanding everything a little more, perhaps even surprised that everything was happening at the same time (my project and the topics studied).

I guess that it is why I chose these points, in my opinion, everything has a connection. Improving Commercial Awareness has to do with the image that we have of ourselves. If we visualize ourselves being who we want to be, we will find a way to search for information, to nurture our knowledge on that subject. I know that I have an interest in improving my commercial awareness because I see myself running my marketing agency, I visualize that, in a few months, after researching and learning, I will have the confidence to talk about this issue, to make decisions.

Thanks to the fact that I am changing my habits and my mentality, I am improving the person that I am, or I am letting it act, so to speak. Every day I take 5 or 10 min of my day and analyse what decisions I have made; what thoughts have flowed through me and whether they have been positive or negative. I try to find the root of the inconveniences that I am having, and I manage several options before making the decision.

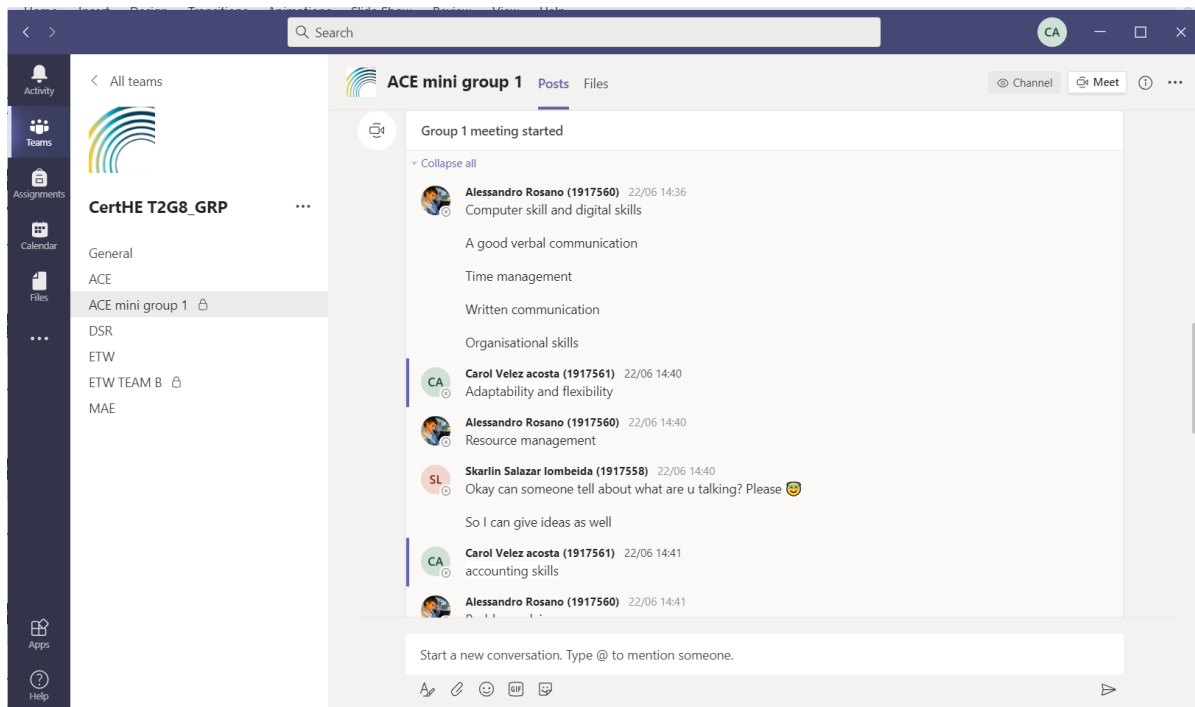
I also try to visualize myself giving presentations, or rather having meetings with clients. I try to calm down and take some of the advice studied in this term. I trust that in a few months, I will have complete confidence to make these calls.

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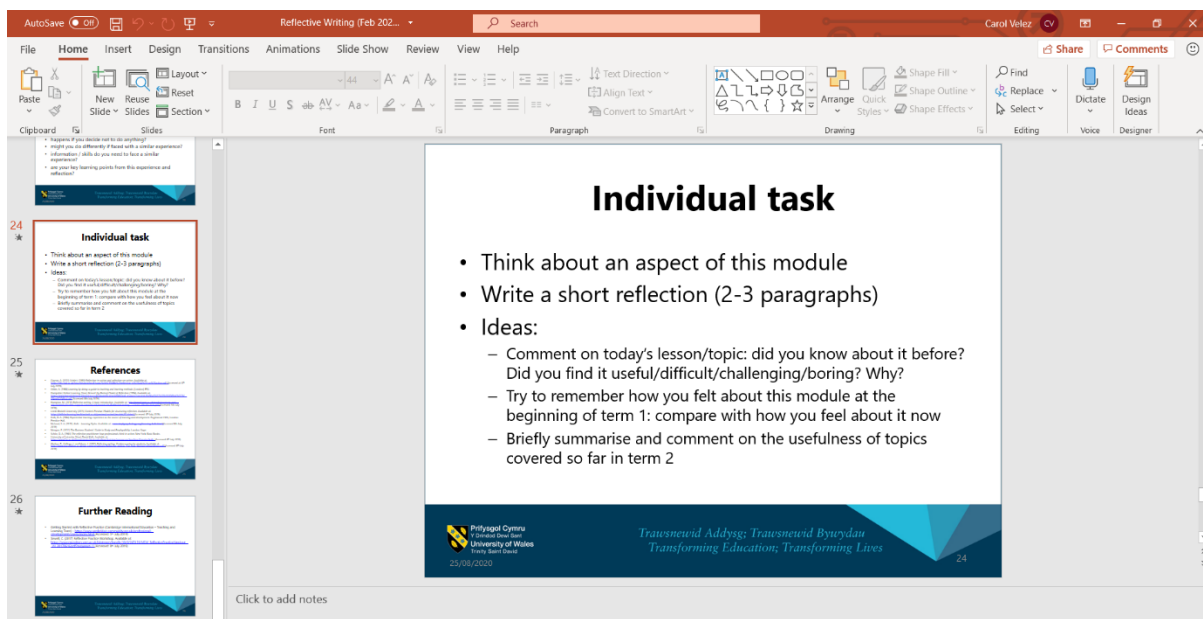
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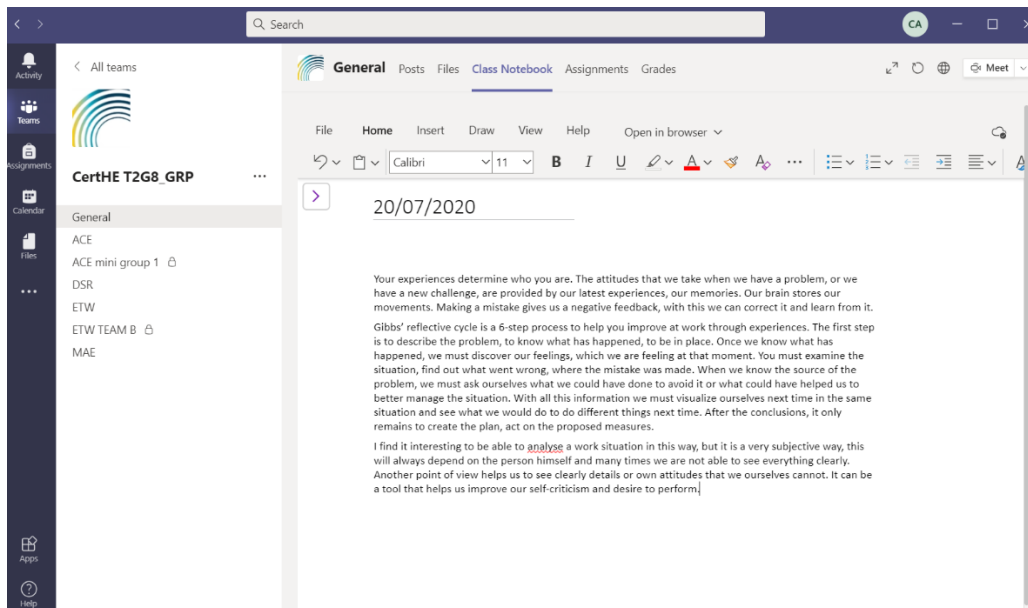
Appendix

- Week 1, employability review, group task different skills for a specific job



- Week 4, Reflective Writing, individual task

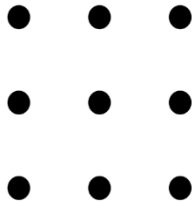




- Week 6, Analytical and critical thinking, 9 Dots Challenge

9 dots challenge

Connect all the dots by drawing four straight, continuous lines that pass through each of the nine dots, never lifting the pen from the paper.



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