

Employability skills: Professional Career Development (BMSW4012)

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Reflective writing is a form of personal evaluation combined with critical thinking. Its purpose is to help students understand and reflect on experience and future development as it promotes a deeper understanding of self-awareness and improvement which is highly important as it influences growth and future performance, for my own personal reflection i will dissect and explain what I have discovered about myself during classes and day to day life as well as overcoming challenges and setbacks.

On the first day of this class I have felt a little overwhelmed as it had been a couple years since I've been in a school like setting, I had felt the pressure that comes with trying to be successful and seeing new faces

that I would be getting to know had made me feel out of place as I've got two children that require my attention at all times therefore I'm not quite good at being social. At the end of the day, I had a think about how the first day went and to my surprise it was not as I expected it to be. Going in I was quite nervous but once I've spoken to some of my classmates and gotten to know them, I realised they also could've felt the emotions I was feeling as most of them are also parents therefore there was something to relate to with my classmates and I instantly felt more comfortable. The lecturers were also very kind and understanding of the way we as a class might be feeling so a couple jokes were made which made us all more relaxed which I really appreciated, looking back I can see more clearly that the feelings I had were valid but I could've had taken a slightly different approach and thought more positive which would only benefit me as I would help myself feel more secure then unsure and for the future I would like to go into new experiences with a more level headed mind instead of foggy and uncertain. This experience taught me that in a way I'm not alone with how I viewed the day may go as there are others that are facing the same emotions and that taking a better approach should be a choice I allow myself to have.

A couple weeks ago my lecturer has introduced several self-awareness and personal development tools and taught us how to use them as well as the purpose behind them which I found intriguing. One of the tools that stood out to me personally was the Growth mindset vs the Fixed mindset that I will explain in detail and walk you through how I have added this tool into my personal development. The Growth/Fixed mindset is essentially a way of how people view their own potential to learn and grow. A person with a fixed mindset is a type of person that limits themselves from potential development due to a few factors such as refusal of criticism and feedback, won't accept failures or mistakes and actively shy's away from unfamiliar subjects and experiences. However, a growth mindset is a person that views challenges as opportunities, embraces constructive feedback and focuses on the process and not the results

Growth mindset or fixed mindset—can the way we think about ourselves and our abilities shape our lives? Absolutely. The way we think about our intellect and talents not only affects the way we feel, it can also affect what we achieve, whether we stick to new habits, or if we will go on to develop new skills..

In my opinion I would say I'm a mix between the two which can vary on situations. Overall, I'd say I am a reserved person and I'm quite shy, so I'd say having this personality makes me have a fixed mindset from time to time. For example, during one session in class we had a small task to complete, we were given a sheet of paper, and we were told to write a formal email and hand it to our lecturer, as I

had written it I changed it around a couple times just to make sure its accurate which now that I look back on that situation I can see I refused to fail even though it was just a small exercise and I mainly focused on proving I can complete it. On the other hand, I am capable of having a growth mindset as I can remember a specific time in class where I have noticed this attribute, A few weeks ago in class we were put into random groups to complete a task as a team, due to my introverted personality and it being the first time being put into a group in class I have only pinpointed a couple ideas to my group which made me feel proud of myself for at least attempting to voice some ideas, I have realised my group members are very smart and outgoing people which made me reflect on myself and was inspired by my group members for stepping outside of comfort zones. Leaders with higher self-awareness tend to be more successful and achieve better outcomes, including performance metrics (Ashley & Reiter-Palmon, 2012). Overall, I want to improve on seeking out challenges that are out of my comfort zone to strengthen my growth and learning, one more thing I would take out of this experience is practising positive talk as I often limit myself due to not always being open minded and not being resilient. Someone with a growth mindset views intelligence, abilities, and talents as learnable and capable of improvement through effort. On the other hand, someone with a fixed mindset views those same traits as inherently stable and unchangeable over time.

Another tool that was taught in class is the Johari Window. The Johari Window is a psychological tool used for self-assessment through feedback. It's essentially a personal window to improve self-awareness, strengthen communication and relationships and encourage personal growth which helps people explore their own personality traits. . In the Johari window there are four key elements which are, the open area, hidden, blind, and unknown which give a deeper understanding as to why we react or behave in certain ways. The method of conveying and accepting feedback is interpreted in this model. A Johari is represented as a common window with four panes. Two of these panes represent self and the other two represent the part unknown to self but to others. The information transfers from one pane to the other as the result of mutual trust which can be achieved through socializing and the feedback got from other members of the group

The Johari Window has helped me understand parts of myself that I often hide when I feel under pressure or when in a place where I can be judged for example, teamwork. I don't particularly do well in teamwork-based environments because there's an open space for failure knowing my decisions can implement the result of my team, so I tend to not speak up even if I do have good ideas to share with others. This would categorise into my hidden area, additionally when in class our lecturer asks the class a question now and then I do get asked for my take without showing my lecturer that I want to state my opinion and I know this is because I'm one of the more reserved students in class and my lecturer wants me to be more involved in class conversations. I Haven't noticed this trait about myself up until I started education again and I've realised this would also fall into my blind spot. Knowing this information, going forward I would like to improve this aspect of my personality as I continue learning and I'd like to be able to adapt to challenges like this as I want to enhance my communication skills and confidence.

Regarding the open window I'd say I'm care taking, kind and understanding. Due to having children I'm very attentive to my

family and friends and I pride myself in taking care of the people close to me and I know this because I had compliments and feedback based on these attributes, so this quality falls into my open area. I will continue developing my open area as I've concluded that people are comfortable around me and they feel secure to share any opinions and ideas. In the Unknown area I haven't explored what could be added but that only suggest to me that I haven't yet been in a situation where I can experience the unknown area which has potential for surprising growth and development. For example, before having children I used to think that cooking and baking wouldn't be something that I genuinely enjoy but after having children cooking and baking has become my hobby and a weekly activity for me and my children which is something that is now in my open area as everyone that knows me is aware that cooking is something I very much enjoy. The unknown area is something that is found through self-discovery therefore every time there's an opportunity for me to give something a shot it reminds me there's always a new feeling, challenge, and development to discover. Individually, you should take advantage of every electrifying opportunity, and as a leader, you can achieve positive results by creating a culture where others can make mistakes without pressure and serious consequences

One more tool that was taught is the personal SWOT analysis. It's a way of people to distinguish their goals, career planning, self-improvement and development, it's a four grid collum that helps your awareness regarding your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. A SWOT analysis is a planning tool which seeks to identify the **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats involved in a project or organisation. It's a framework for matching an organisation's goals, programmes and capacities to the environment in which it operates.

In my personal swot analysis, I have concluded that my strengths are my resilience and my focus. When it comes to adapting to situations that need immediate attention I am on task, and I've realised I do my best in tough challenges as I am driven and focused on what needs to be completed. However my weakness is being introverted, this pushes me back from thriving in public speaking or group-based settings, by pinpointing these weaknesses I can focus on improvement as I've distinguished what needs to be changed and work on them intentionally. For example, I want to start being more involved during group tasks and voice my ideas and I also want to practice public speaking by showing my friends and family which they can also give me feedback on and that will open some more opportunities for me to boost my confidence and communication skills. The "Opportunities" section should highlight external factors that represent potential growth or improvement areas. Additionally, my threats are fear of failure and being judged which is something that I need to improve and manage. This reflection has boosted my plan to development and personal growth; it has also showed me what I need to improve on to move forward and helps me distinguish what's holding me back.

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