



Professional Career Development

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Introduction

My name is Constantin and I am a chef, currently working at my own business: a coffee shop.

In this report I will make a reflection on the role play experience of me participating to an interview for a head chef position. I will apply Kolb's theory for my reflective writing. It will enable me to think in depth of the experience itself from different perspectives and to critically evaluate how would I act differently. This will be part of a practical example of recruitment and selection.

This report is based on the analysis of my own work experience and set of skills highlighting strengths and weaknesses, which will give me an understanding of my readiness for employment and what do I need to improve. This includes the self motivation topic, discovering what gets me motivated and increase my awareness for what motivates me.

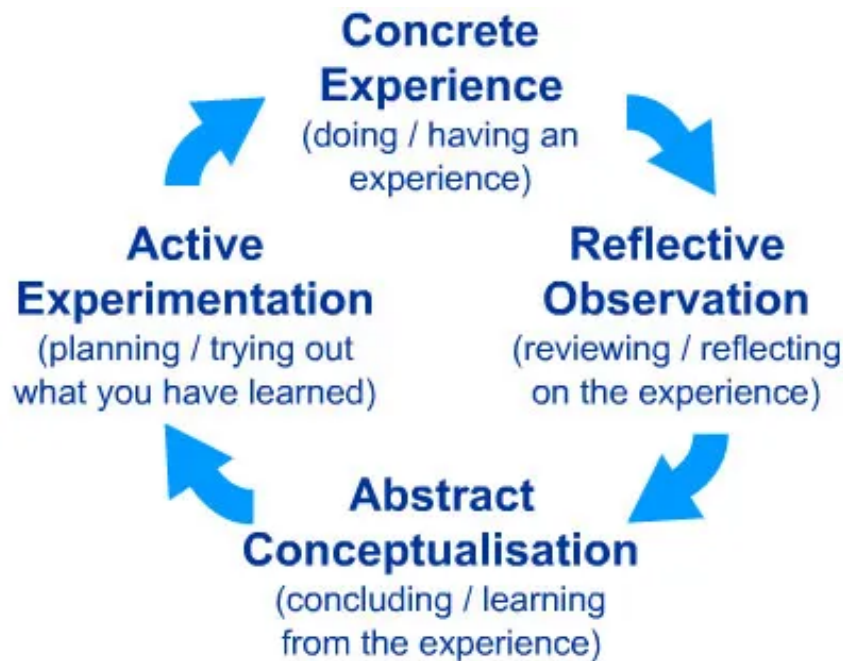
This report will also look at the learning styles. By understanding what kind of learner I am it will give me, a better perspective on how to implement these learning styles into any learning I plan for my professional development.

I will make use of theoretical models such as Johari Window, SWOT analysis, SMART objectives. This will be used for self assessment and for establishing career aim. Therefore I will also discuss about career plans, but will also analyse what are employers requirements nowadays and how to address that. I will conclude with a personal plan of action that will include precise steps to achieve my career ambitions. This will provide me with the structure and guidance that I need in order to be proactive, and actually take the steps needed to reach my established aims. It will consist of a written account of self-reflection and improvement, which doubles up as a detailed action plan used to fulfil my career based goals.

Reflection

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1984) is a theoretical model used for reflections on learning experiences. It is organised in four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, active experimentation which are repeating in a cycle for every new learning experience (Figure 1.)

Figure 1. The Experiential Learning Cycle



I am using Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle to reflect on my role play experience from the Personal Career Development module. The concrete experience stage from my learning experience is the role play between my colleague and I who took turns on holding an interview. The first step was to complete the PCD Application form which gathered information on work experience, skills, interests and hobbies and personal details. Based on each other's application we formulated questions for the job title that we applied. I applied for the head chef position and I was asked about my experience as a chef, my strengths and weaknesses, ability to design a new menu, dealing with a difficult situation and personal goals. I asked my colleague about her working experience in restaurants, set of skills, working under pressure and dealing with a dissatisfied customers examples.

In the reflective observation stage I can state that the experience had a positive outcome. The marker had positive comments on the questions in the role of interviewer and good answers,

speaking at length in the role of interviewee. The role play was very formal and I was too focused on the questions and did not make “small talk” and I was marked low by the marker.

The abstract conceptualisation stage helps me develop new strategies based on the experience, to have a better experience with the next interview experience. I understood the importance of body language, smiling, making eye contact. Also how to enhance best my skills and experience and show my fit within the organisation. The experience had great contributions to my knowledge towards the interviewing and career development.

The active experimentation is the stage when I apply the learned elements of the role play experience. At the workplace I can make use of non verbal communication such as body language to be more opened and have an efficient communication.

Going through all the stages contributes to the effectiveness of the learning, formulating abstract concepts and test them in future experiences.

Self motivation

A self motivated person will register success on personal and professional plan. It is important to understand personal values, desires, priorities, needs and wants. This way it is known what are the real motivators, attract opportunities and take action. Setting up goals keeps the person motivated to be determined and to maintain focus.

Therefore self awareness is in connection with self motivation and the motivator factors can be internal or/and external. The internal factors relate to thoughts and feelings and the external factors relates to life situation and circumstances. Self motivation involves positive attitude and it can be very useful to practice regular techniques towards that. A positive attitude allows the individual to face challenges better .

Researches have identified several methods to boost motivation: allocate time for self-awareness, start personal planning considering the balance personal life with work life, get active, exercise and be productive. Building self confidence is another motivator key factor. Knowing personal strengths and weaknesses helps to overcome obstacles and use for achieving own advantage. Understanding dreams, professional fulfilment creates clarity and increases awareness levels. Emotional intelligence is another key aspect to motivation as will contribute to stronger relationships. Some persons choose to benefit of mentoring in self-motivation who will help channeling the energy and give guidance (Positive Psychology, 2013).

Learning styles

The learning styles refer to the learner's best modality to "store" information. The VAK theory is a very popular learning style inventory theory that stands for visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. The visual learners have good learning experiences through graphical representations and all types of visual images. Auditory learners have a preference for listening to instructions, discussing, debating. The kinaesthetic learners need to move, be involved in the learning process. That is why in an organisation it is recommended to diagnose the learning styles of the staff and to tailor instructions based on that (Bransford et al., 2000).

Other studies come in contradiction with the learning styles theories claiming that there is no evidence to support the "preference" of the learners in following instructions (Pashler, et al., 2009). Despite that learning styles are not limiting the potential abilities of the learners and should be applied when considered.

SWOT analysis

<u>Strengths</u> Organisation Multitasking Leadership Determination Time management Creativity Professional Cookery Level 3	<u>Weaknesses</u> Hard skills: computer skills Lack of knowledge for social media Being too critical
<u>Opportunities</u> Learning new cooking techniques Food styling Events management and catering	<u>Threats</u> Competitors Changing technologies

In the SWOT analysis I identified that I am an organised person, able to do multitasking, both are helping me in my profession as a chef. I also have studied for level 3 professional cookery course. I like to experiment in the kitchen and I use my creativity to test recipes and create new dishes. I was always a determined person and I worked hard to achieve my goals, that is why I recently opened my own coffee shop. Leadership skills are helping me to lead my team and run the kitchen at the expected standards. I have also improved my time management skills along the time and during my CertHE in skills for workplace course. My weaknesses is that I have poor hard skills such as computer skills. I do not have very good knowledge for using social media which could help me

promote my work or business. I am also at times too critical with my team as I want everything to be perfect and at high quality. I recognised my opportunities to improve my techniques and my knowledge on new cooking techniques and food styling which is trend. Also I could get more experience and success by getting involved in catering and events management. Competitors are my threats, because there are many good and famous chefs in London. Changing technologies could be a threat if I don't embrace modern technologies and be open for change.

Johari Window

The Johari window is a model of increasing self-awareness and personal development. It has four regions that presents traits suggested by "self" and "others": the arena, the blindspot, the facade and the unknown self (Self Awareness, 2013). The arena is the information known by the self and the others. My team and I know that I am honest, I am very determined and don't take no for an answer. In a team I take the role of the leader. The blindspot is the information known by others, but not known by self. I have discovered that the team considers me a funny person and that enjoy working with me. The facade is the information known about self and not known by the others. I would like to be able to travel more with work and get training around the world. The unknown region is the information about self not known by any of the parts. I don't know if I have good teaching skills.

Employers expectations

Majority of employers are looking for certain skills, traits and achievements when employing. They expect the job applicants to have relevant experience from a paid job, volunteering, community work etc. Teamwork is essential for employers and they want to see personalities that would integrate easily and work effectively in a team. Good communication skills can be an indicator for job applicants teamwork skills. Reliability is important for employers and that means to be punctual, to execute the tasks well. Further that employers want to see initiative and employees who are able to solve problems, but know to ask for help if is required. Taking responsibility for own actions is a sign of maturity and also be able to take criticism positively and make use of the feedback. Employers want employees who are interested in their job, in learning new things and self improvement (Youth Central, 2018).

Career aspirations

My career aspirations are related to my passion as a chef and to develop myself as a chef. I want to become a head chef, working for big restaurants. This will keep me engaged and will contribute to my knowledge as a chef. It will enable me to make use of the past experience and it will keep me challenged.

SMART objectives

The SMART objectives is the method used for goal setting that helps quantifying the progress (Indeed, 2021).

Specific: to become a head chef

Measurable: I would like to use my experience and knowledge and apply to head chefs positions

Achievable: I would finish my CertHE in skills for workplace course and continue my training as a chef

Relevant: I would like to work as a head chef as I consider I have the experience and knowledge and that I feel ready to take more responsibility

Time bound: I will finish my CertHE in skills for workplace in October and I can start studying for Certificate in Cookery Level 4.

Plan of action

Personal and Development plan is used to “become aware of skills you have, identify and develop skills you need, work out what you want to achieve and how to achieve it, focus on potential study, career and personal development options and goals, develop a source of information for CVs, job applications, interviews and appraisals at work, demonstrate your readiness for promotion or for development opportunities” (Open University, 2021).

Personal and Development Plan

Skills to be improved	How to achieve	Potential obstacles	Completion date
IT skills	Online course	Busy at work	01.12.2021
Level 4 Certificate in Professional Cookery	Enrolling at an Academy	Financial problems	01.02.2022
Social Media	Researching online of the modality to use social media for promotability	Busy at work	01.10.2021

My Personal and Development Plan relates to the improvement of my weaknesses and to take advantage of my opportunities. Therefore I want to improve my IT skills to be able to deal with admin tasks as a head chef, to expand my knowledge and get new skills by doing my Level 4 and to learn about social media and how to use it for promotability of my work and business.

Conclusion

This module of Personal Career Development has given me the knowledge to reflect on a learning experience: the role play for interviewing and participating at an interview. It has given me the knowledge to do better at future interviews. I also learned how to apply tools of analysis for increasing self awareness such as SWOT, Johari window. It determined me to identify what employers want and to set career goals using SMART objectives. Based on the analysis I was able to create a plan fo action and my write my Personal and Development Plan.

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Appendix

Private & Confidential Application for Employment

To ensure that you are able to complete the application form in full, please refer to the short-listing criteria on the job description.

Position Applied For	Head chef
How did you learn about this vacancy?	Indeed

1. Personal Details				
Title	Mr			
Surname	Macaran			
Previous Name				
Forenames	Constantin			
Address				
Post Code				
Telephone number		Mobile No		
E-mail address				
National Insurance Number				
1a. Additional Information				
Do you hold a full, clean driving license valid in the UK?	No	No		
Do you have the right to work in the UK without restriction? (Proof of right to work in the UK ID will be required)	Yes	Yes		

2. Employment History The last 5 years employment should be detailed, including any gaps in employment. Please continue on a separate sheet if required.				
Current or Most Recent Employment				
Employers Name	Friends Place Café			
Address	N/A			
Postcode	N/A			

Job Title	Chef/ business owner			
Dates of Employment	From	20/05/2021	To	Date
Reason for leaving		Salary	£25.00	
Brief outline of main responsibilities and key duties	I am the owner of this new business together with my family we opened a coffee shop. My main duties relate to kitchen operations, organising the kitchen equipment, creating the menu, finding suppliers, ordering stock from suppliers, leading the team, preparing food, ensuring high standards for food presentation, ensuring health and food safety, ensuring food handling safety, cleaning the kitchen.			

2. Employment History The last 5 years employment should be detailed, including any gaps in employment. Please continue on a separate sheet if required.				
Current or Most Recent Employment				
Employers Name	Q Bar			
Address	N/A			
Postcode	N/A			
Job Title	Chef			
Dates of Employment	From	01/03/2018	To	01/04 /2021
Reason for leaving	Opening own business	Salary	£23.00	
Brief outline of main responsibilities and key achievements	I was responsible with supervising the kitchen operations, preparing and cooking the food to high quality standards, creating the menu, ordering supplies			

Previous Employment				
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Employers Name	Teresa Restaurant			
Job Title	Chef			
Dates of Employment	From	1/02/2011	To	01/11/2017
Reason for leaving	New job opportunity	Salary	£21.000	
Brief outline of main responsibilities and key achievements	Responsibilities and key duties include food preparation and cooking, ordering supplies, leading the kitchen staff			

Previous Employment				
Employers Name	Giardino			
Job Title	Chef			
Dates of Employment	From	01/04/2008	To	01/10/2010
Reason for leaving	New job opportunity	Salary	£18.000	
Brief outline of main responsibilities and key achievements	Preparing the food, assisting the head chef, ensuring food is cooked following food handling and safety procedures			

Please continue on a separate sheet if required.

3. Formal Qualifications and Training & Development Continue on a separate piece of paper if required. You will be required to provide original qualification certificates if successful.					
Secondary Education Qualifications					
Name of Qualification	Date Gained	Level	Grade	Awarding Body	
Baccalaureate Diploma	15/07/1996		7.60	Moreni Highschool	

Further/Higher Education Qualifications					
Name of Qualification	Date Gained	Level	Grade	Awarding Body	
CertHE in skills for workplace	01/08/2021	4		Ofqual	

Professional Qualifications				
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Name of Qualification	Date Gained	Level	Grade	Awarding Body
Diploma in Professional Cookery	01.09.2019	Level 3		

CPD / Training and Development	
Brief description / course title	Date Taken
Health and safety Food safety	

4. Interests and hobbies

Please provide details of your hobbies / leisure activities / voluntary work

I am an active person and I am very interested in sports. I play football with friends once a week.

5. Referencing Referencing required for 2 full years (with a minimum of 2 references). At least 1 reference should be your current or most recent employer. Please confirm any existing personal / family relationship with existing PRC employees			
References (Current or most recent employer)			
Name of Referee			
Job Title			
Employers Name			
Address			
Postcode			
Telephone Number		Ext. Number	
E-Mail Address	T		
Are you willing for this referee to be approached prior to interview?	Yes No		

References			
Name of Referee			
Job Title			
Employers Name			
Address			
Postcode			
Telephone Number		Ext. Number	
E-Mail Address			
Are you willing for this referee to be approached prior to interview?	Yes No		

6. Reason for applying

Please detail below reasons for applying for the position including your skills, experience and attributes.

Working as a professional chef in busy kitchens helped me to develop a variety of skills. It helped me learn how to overcome obstacles and identify quick solutions as customers are not happy when they have to wait for their food. This job is a hands-on learning experience and working for so many years in the industry it helped me to establish high standards regarding my cookery abilities. Multitasking is another skill that I developed over the years, time management and also leadership skills as many positions involved supervising the staff and leading the kitchen operations.

Please specify how you meet the criteria for this role.

7. Declaration

Please complete the following declaration and sign it in the appropriate place below.

I certify that:

- All the information given to me on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge
- All questions relating to me have been accurately and fully answered
- I possess all the qualifications which I claim to hold

Signed:

Date:05/07/2021

Print Name:

Macaran Constantin

Interview Questions

1. Tell me more about yourself?
2. What skills do you have to help us to improve our restaurant?
3. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
4. Can you give me an example of you working under pressure?
5. Give me an example of dealing with an unsatisfied customer?