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Group 2

When preparing for this interview task I was nervous. While I have done many interviews in the past this was slightly different as it carried the weight of my grades. Because of this I was worried about not overcoming my nerves as I often panic when given a new unfamiliar task and this is a problem, I still work on to improve. As a kinaesthetic learner I tried to apply this to my preparation by regularly practicing how to answer interview questions by using the balance careers interview questions [1] so that I would be prepared and used to the type of questions that are asked in an interview. By doing this I calmed my nerves and learnt how to best answer the questions given to me by using the Star technique. While I felt like I answered questions well in previous interviews I used to sometimes trip on my words or get flustered. However, this taught me how to structure my answers in a way that makes sense and sounds more professional to an employer. It also helped calm me down as all I had to do was make sure that when given a question, I was not sure how to answer, I should take a moment to think about my answer and how it would fit into the star technique.

For career development planning I realised that while I set myself goals in what I want for a future career I did not really plan how I would get there or work on what I need so I decided to give myself Smart targets. The first point of self-reflection I made when making my smart targets was. If I were to hand in my cv would the interviewer be pleased with it? By asking myself this I saw that my CV was lacking so my first goal was to develop my cv by looking at scholarly articles and other sources such as articles from the guardian [2]. This helped me take the first steps to improve myself and help me reach my goal. Not by just having a broad 'end goal' but by breaking the steps down so that its specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and can be done in a certain time. By doing this with my career goals I can see progress with my development, which motivates me to reach my goals, but it also shows me which areas I may be lacking in.

Looking at my feedback from the interview task, I was incredibly pleased to see that my preparation paid off as one of my strengths was that I was very calm when answering questions and that I was ready to answer any question. This shows that the star technique was valuable to my developing skills as it allowed me to answer any question given to me in a calm manner. However, I was advised to look at the Thomas and Kilman model as part of my feedback. This model refers to assertiveness and cooperativeness in a work situation. This was unbelievably valuable feedback as it showed me an area of improvement that I was not fully aware of. Applying the model to my self-reflection I can see that at times I do not apply the four areas (competing, avoiding, accommodating, and collaborating) in the

[1] <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/behavioral-job-interview-questions-2059620>

[2] <https://jobs.theguardian.com/article/how-to-write-a-cv-video-/>

[3] <https://hbr.org/2014/04/the-problem-with-being-too-nice>

[4] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318390296_Why_written_objectives_need_to_be_really_SMART

right situations. This is important in an interview as I can come across as to combative or passive in different situations depending on how I answer. To improve this, I need to reflect on myself and the different situations I have been in. For example, when asked about my teamworking skills I need to show off my ability to accommodate and collaborate rather than avoiding or competing. On the other hand, when I am asked about my individual work, I can then show my competing skills. In general, I need to learn when to compromise in situations to the necessary skills for my career path. Linking this back to making smart targets, one smart target I will make is to keep a diary of work situations where I have or could have applied the Thomas and Kilman model. By doing this I not only get to practice and reflect on my improvement but by writing it down and learning I get to recall these events to use in interviews so I can demonstrate these skills to my employer. This target is sensible as keeping notes will help as I cannot always rely on my memory. It is achievable as even if I do not use the model well in these situations writing it down means I can reflect on it and see where I went wrong in my own time. This also shows the targets' relevancy and its time scale.

Another area of development that I need to work on is self-awareness. I often find it extremely hard to make self-reflection as I do not know where to start. But looking at Johari's window I now know how to answer that question. The theory has different 'regions' each region depicts how information is communicated to others but most importantly it shows how information is unknown to self but others. I feel like this was my major problem as I did not know about all the issues I could work on. It also talks about information known to self but known to others. This model has taught me that I need to be more proactive my self-development by doing things such as asking for feedback more often as there is information about myself that I am unaware of, but others are likewise when discussing about areas of improvement I need to be honest with myself and tell others about areas that I am struggling in as they will not know about everything, I need help with unless I tell people. In terms of giving myself a smart target I will aim to reflect on myself whenever I can in a working environment while applying this model.

Another area of improvement is my vocabulary skills. At times I find it hard to write in a professional manner, so this is something that I have been working on in my own time. This is an especially important skill used in the workplace or when applying for a job as many ask for a cover letter. To work on this, I have been looking at different articles on how to improve my writing. I have also practiced my writing skills by writing small journal entries of my day. By doing this I get used to writing more often and I get to widen my vocabulary in a natural way. By doing this I become more prepared for working in a professional environment and develop the skills I need to succeed.

Using the S.W.O.T method to analyse my strengths and weaknesses really helped to show me what I was doing right and where I was lacking, which further helped me to develop my career path. My strengths are strong time management, which is essential for my profession. Appropriate time management in the social care field and work environment at large allows me to reduce stress levels by pre planning all my activities. This means that I can be more productive, this also means I get to create more opportunities for myself and reduce conflict in team environments as I am able to prepare myself accurately and proficiently for these tasks.

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Strength

This leads to my next strength, which I was surprised to see applied into another aspect of the process, I was surprised to see applied into another aspect of the process which is team building. My awareness of the team building process means that I can establish my image as a team leader when creating a team. This is an aspect that I was not aware of. However, being able to foresee the stages of team development and the problems that may arise means that I can help the team to prepare for these, which accelerates our productivity. Using this strength to establish a position as a team leader has posted my confidence as being a team leader is a position, I do not normally see myself in, but this has taught me to be more proactive in the future with this strength in mind when given group tasks.

My final strength is that I am interactive with my strengths and weaknesses. This is vital in the workplace as it means that not only can I play to my strengths to increase work efficiency, but it also means that I am more capable and willing to build upon my weaknesses and shortcomings when they arise. I try to best capitalise on this to further improve myself daily by creating realistic and achievable smart targets as I have mentioned earlier.

Weakness

Some of my weaknesses, however, are that I try to accommodate other people's wishes to the point that I take risks that jeopardise the task at hand. This is a particularly important weakness that I am actively trying to overcome this weakness by reading various scholarly articles such as the Harvard Business review [3] which states the danger of trying to be too accommodating in a work environment. I try to apply these teachings daily to my work environment by first understanding the effects of my actions so I can then prevent them in the future for the benefit of not only myself but the work environment.

Opportunity and Threat

Finally, one of the biggest threats present was my inability to properly create smart achievable targets that directly correlated with my weaknesses and end goal. It was especially important to me that I overcome this as without this skill I will not be able to improve on my weakness. By reading scholarly articles on smart targets [4] has allowed me to fully understand where I was going wrong. Simply setting my end goal as a target was not enough as a target as I did not allow myself to prepare for potential obstacles that will present themselves. Through research I learnt that setting smaller daily goals in the run up to my end goal allowed me to see physical progress rather than just waiting to see the end goal. Creating smart goals allowed me to reflect on my actions and see what I need to do to reach my end goals through a set path rather than trying to guess if what I am doing helps or does not further my goals.

In conclusion by using the models and theories I have listed as well as the use of smart targets, I feel as if I have improved my professional skills to a point where I am more confident in my abilities. Through analysing my S.W.O.T it has helped me to accurately see what I do well, what I can work on and what I can do to actively pursue my goals. Through this course I have learnt the value of realistic

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self-improvement and developed not only my research skills but my analysis skills and applying theories and methods into my working life. I have developed my confidence when completing group or individual tasks and have increased my independence in the work environment to the point where I am now comfortable completing tasks such as being a team leader. I have also learnt the value of reading scholarly articles and analysing research to further apply to the workplace to better understand not only myself but also my work colleagues to minimise risks and increase productivity.

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