



ACE Practical Portfolio

Denis Dedi 2011014

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Lecturer : Anita Nan

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Introduction

The piece of work I would like to share with you is an academic report that will reflect on my personal, professional and academic experiences. I will be using the Gibb's model in order to show a reflection upon the events I will analyse. The aim here is to underline, understand and avoid the mistakes that I have made during those experiences. Firstly I will focus on my time management skills, then my Curriculum Vitae and the last part of my report will be about presentation and public speaking.

I - Time management

1) Description

The first event I would like to reflect on took place this semester, during online classes at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. I was part of a team of five, and I had the task to work with them on a group presentation with the deadline on the 9th of December 2020. I was in charge of collecting the work of each participant in order to put it into an online powerpoint, while also having my own part to prepare for the presentation.

2) Feelings

I was frustrated due to my own difficulties to manage my time, but here the situation was worst because I had to deal with my colleagues time management as well. Usually co-workers were sending me new updated slides for their parts that made me change the presentation constantly.

Moreover, online classes and meetings did not help in time management, it was very difficult to find convenient timing for all of us and once again I felt left by myself not able to manage everyone's timing. The whole situation made me stress due to the fact that I am used to deal with my own time management issues, but when it involves other parties it is much more stressful and represent more responsibilities as well. The absence of control over the other team members time management was very baffle and made me realise it is a skill we should all work on as students.

3) Evaluation

My time management has always been a weakness in my personal and professional life. I realised that I was spending a lot of my free time not achieving anything and neither taking advantage of this time. I am currently dealing with a full-time job as well as part time studies which is new to me. Due to this situation I realised that this weakness of time management really needed to be improved.

On the other side I strongly believe that I am very efficient on last minute works as I can concentrate more actively when under pressure. I noticed this as a correlation with my behaviour at work, I am always providing better outcome and perform better when working under pressure during busy shift.

Here is what happened in regard to this presentation; even if a lot of last minute amendments have been made, we have managed to give a valuable presentation.

4) Analysis

I am an hyperactive person, which is why, I guess, I cannot manage to be efficient when not in a rush. I am now used to this way of performing but also I understand its limits when it comes to group work. Furthermore, I understand the need to reflect on a work, the short amount of time I have left generally does not allow me to proper review or improve much which I could if starting earlier. Here, more meetings and work done in advance would favour the final presentation.

5) Conclusion

I have learned that working as a team is very challenging in terms of time management. It is a skill I definitely need to develop and hope that in the future my co-workers would have this essential strength as well. However it is a skill that takes time to acquire, it is by practicing and experience that it can improve through events.

6) Action plan

In order to manage my own time better I will start by organising myself and the task I will have to achieve. I could for example follow the Pomodoro Technique (Francesco Cirillo, 1980) which would help me to be more efficient in a small amount of time. The aim is firmly to define the task I will be working on, then set a timer to 25min, work for 25min and finally take a break of 3/4min. This would help me to be more focused, as it is a short amount of time and frequent breaks would push my motivation to work during this amount of time. Moreover some other methods have been offered in order to better handle time issues and management in professional life (Drucker, 1967; Lakein, 1973; Mackenzie, 1972; McCay, 1959). However it has been recognised that planning does not always lead to the completion of the task done (Drucker, 1967), which could be a potential challenge for myself. Regarding the whole group time management, as hopefully in the future I will have achieved this skill, I will be able to pass it on my co-workers and make them understand the importance, for us, as a group, to be organised.

II - Curriculum Vitae Writing

1) Description

The second event I would like to reflect on took place at my workplace. I was working on my curriculum vitae writing with the help of my superior. The aim was to update my curriculum vitae with the new skills I developed. It is essential to keep a resumé updated with the latest experiences, skills, trainings (Cleary and Horsfall, 2013). This event took place a year ago, since then I have been trying to use this new curriculum vitae to apply for new positions. My candidacy is often retained but my interviews are rarely ending with a positive answer.

2) Feelings

I have confidence in my curriculum vitae, as it represents my skills, experiences and profile as recommended (Cañibano and Bozeman, 2009). However I have the feeling that it is too good for me. I am struggling to keep up with it when presenting myself. I knew that my superior helping me to re-write my curriculum vitae believed in myself and then it made me think that this my resume might be over skilled.

3) Evaluation

I have learned a lot from the time I have spent with my manager working on the new Curriculum Vitae. New ways to express myself with a much better professional vocabulary language. After evaluation, I understood that the issue was not from my new summary but of the difference between the writing presented and the way I actually express myself. The employers were left with this feeling of me lying on my Curriculum Vitae when I was simply saying things differently and maybe not with the same confidence.

4) Analysis

I fully understand the importance of a strong Curriculum Vitae, however it is not enough to be employed. It is an employability skill, but it needs to be developed along others which is what I missed here. Now that my resume is well organised and demonstrating my professional skills, I need to learn how to present myself with the same assurance.

5) Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to underline the fact that a Curriculum Vitae can easily go from standard to excellent. It is essential to express the previous experiences and skills developed in a detailed writing and using strong academic writing.

From saying for instance “I was a receptionist” to “I was in charge of the reception” is already different.

6) Action plan

In my own experience I had the chance to benefit from my work environment help, which I believed really enhanced me to do better and accentuate skills I would not have noticed. I would not refer to this experience as something negative as I suppose that we all need to make mistakes in order to point up to our weaknesses. Here I understood how essential it was to believe in myself and see my own potential and skills I am developing.

III - Public Speaking And Giving Presentation

1) Description

The last event I would like to reflect on is live interviews. During the current pandemic I had to process all my job interviews online, which was new for me. Most of the time it was via Zoom Call with the employer and other candidates. The task was to present ourselves and answer questions asked by the HR representative. At this moment I was impacted by the fear of public speaking (FOPS) which paralysed me for a lapse of time (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

2) Feelings

During this video call I felt very uncomfortable for few reasons :

- I wasn't expecting other candidates to be present
- I wasn't prepared enough (time management)
- I wasn't confident enough due to previous rejections.

Before the meeting I was trying to be positive and enthusiastic, however once it was over I did not want to be too confident or positive just not be disappointed if I would be rejected.

3) Evaluation

This experience helped me to practice my public speaking, I did not have generally the occasion to be confronted to those kind of circumstances before. The feedback I had from this experience is firstly the lack of eye contact with the interlocutor (feedback I received from my last assessment presentation as well). I am aware of the importance of eye contact (Quianthy and Hefferin, 1999) but I have to learn how to focus and keep it for the whole conversation. Moreover I

was not prepared to all questions and did not give the best answers or sometimes did not know.

4) Analysis

I suppose that I was afraid of the other participant listening to which is why I was not as expressive and enthusiastic as I usually am. I am conscious of the importance of “selling” myself, the ability to show my competencies however when doing interviews the first skill that will be examined is communication. Verbal communication is a considerable weakness for myself, I am comfortable writing or even communicating with people, however when it becomes official, with unknown faces the panic takes over me.

5) Conclusion

What I learned from this situation is to be ready to any situation. I realised that if anything does not go as I planned it, I can easily be distracted and lose my capabilities. This interview would have been more straightforward for myself, it would have been face to face and one to one, but I understand that by challenging myself and going through new situations, I am improving and can be ready in case it arises again.

6) Action plan

From now on, I am prepared to any type of interviews, first I was unsettled to online interviews, then to group interviews, but now I know that anything could happen and the employer could choose any type of interview. Moreover, as mentioned before time management influenced my performance as well. If I had prepared those questions and different types of situations before I would not have been surprised and would have maybe managed to hide my confusion.

Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to emphasise on those actions plan I shared along my analysis. I strongly believe that by analysing events I can actually understand my mistake and make sure I will not happen again. This reflective method could help me to develop my personal and professional skills in an efficient way.

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