



REFLECTION ON ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

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Introduction

Section 1

While creating my PowerPoint presentation there were a few key points I learnt;

[1] One of the first being is making eye contact with the audience, this allows for a more intimate and comforting PowerPoint, this can boost your PowerPoints performance allowing for the message to come across more easily

[2] Another key point I learnt was keeping the PowerPoint simple, this ties in with Edward Tufte very well as he is a pioneer in data visualisation. One of his rules is to ensure there is no chart junk, which is information that doesn't need to be there and adds no value to the message trying to be put across. This is especially important in PowerPoints as having too much on one slide can really obscure what you're trying to help your audience.

One point I found interesting when learning how to produce a PowerPoint was using appropriate fonts and colours, [2] colours are powerful they can evoke feelings so selecting the correct colour can really help to improve your PowerPoint and capture the audience's interest better. With fonts its important to keep it limited to no more than two complementary fonts to ensure simplicity and readability.

In my PowerPoint I think I could have improved on a few things, the first being the design I could have made it a lot more personalised and not used a template. I think using a template will bore the audience as its probably something they have seen before.

Another point I think I could have improved on in my PowerPoint is adding some animations or maybe a couple more photos as some slides look very bare and adding images captivates the audience more.

Section 2

Skills required to be a successful student

When Identifying what the key skills required to be a successful student are I found out that one of the most important skills to have is to be Self-driven, [3] In university you are expected to manage yourself unlike in school where teachers would manage in your workloads and attendance, in university you are required to do that, its important to keep yourself motivated so that you push yourself to be the best.

Another key skill I identified was to self-organise, [4] being organised in university is important it keeps you up to date with what work is due as well as exams, it can help you to stay ahead and not fall behind.

An important key skill that I would see often while researching is attendance, I would personally make this one of the most important skills that I manged to identify, attending university will grant you a higher chance at passing, it's also difficult for the teacher and the class to build their skills if a big number of students are absent.

A key skills that both sources mentioned as well was the need for time management, [3] being able to take control and set times that work best for you will help to get work done, [4]this could mean doing work in 60 minute blocks or doing it first thing in the morning.

Skills Employers generally look for when hiring

When you are an employer some of the key skills I found that would be required for new personnel are broken down into 4 sections, the first being: [5] attitudes and aptitudes, these are something employers are keen to see as they set out the work ethic for the person they are employing. They also tell the employer a lot about who they are employing, these can often be seen with more value than formal qualification. Attitudes in work can be so important that [5]"Nearly half of employers stated that they had not hired a young person because they felt they did not have the right attitude."

The second key skill that employers generally look for is resilience, this is important as there is a need for potential staff to be able to cope with setbacks and criticism, being able to acknowledge your error and learn from it is something that is sought after by employers and helps to build relationships and respect.

The third key skill I was able to identify is communication skills, this can come in for forum of talking to customers or staff and is very important in a work environment, being able to communicate effectively allows for more efficient work as there is less confusion, this is especially important when working in a team which is a very important skill employers are looking for.

Being able to stay calm while under pressure is generally another skill employers are looking for, work environments can be very busy and stressful so having the ability to be able to stay calm and work through it allows for a better work environment and allows for the work to still be done.

Self-Evaluation to discover self-qualities

Site A

One of the first things I wanted to do is a personality test, I already had a good website which provided such a test. The test I used was broken down into 16 different types of personalities, after doing the test I was given the result of ENFP-A which is also known as a Campaigner. (See Appendix B)

The Campaigner personality is described as a [6]“true free spirit. They are often the life of the party, Campaigners are less interested in the sheer excitement and pleasure of the moment than they are in enjoying the social and emotional connections they make with others” This so far, I found very accurate to me, I really enjoy being out and experiencing life and I really do enjoy just going with the flow.

The test also goes on to state a few strengths and weaknesses related to my personality type, the strengths I found relevant to me about my personality type include being curious, observant, excellent communicator, energetic and enthusiastic.

The weaknesses that are relevant include poor practical skills and find it difficult to focus, I do really find it difficult [6] when it comes to conceiving ideas and starting projects, especially involving other people. I also find it difficult to focus on the task at hand, it's hard to maintain an interest of the task at hand and I find myself getting distracted easily.

Site B

I also did a personality test on a second website (See Appendix C). This website was the Humanmetrics Jung Typology Test and it gave me the same result at the first test which is “ENFP”, However the website did not provide much more information. The personality test did however provide a career choice based on my personality type.

As a career choice the website recommended humanities and social sciences and suggested jobs such as a reporter, psychologist and counsellor. Although I personally feel that these jobs don't appeal to me as I'm not someone who really enjoys a lot of writing.

Conclusion

One thing I did find very interesting is that both tests provided a comparison of 8 different options which were split into 4 categories and whichever had a majority was most likely to resonate with your personality type.

16 Personalities		Humanmetrics Jung Typology Test	
Mind			
Extraverted 81%	Introverted 19%	Extraverted 62%	Introverted 38%
Energy			
Intuitive 74%	Observant 26%	Intuitive 34%	Observant 66%
Nature			
Thinking 24%	Feeling 76%	Thinking 22%	Feeling 78%
Tactics			
Judging 29%	Prospecting 71%	Judging 44 %	Prospecting 56 %

From the results of both tests they are similar even though both tests questions were completely different the findings are still similar if not the same. I also found out more about myself in this process when looking back at my PowerPoint I didn't really describe myself as well as these personalities tests, I missed out a lot about how I'm an outgoing person and how I'm all for going with the flow.

Section 3

Action Plan

To prepare myself more financially for university I will get a job while studying, I will hand out CV's both instore and online once a week. I will check on emails daily to see if any potential employers have responded.

For the first academic year of the Level 4 HND In Applied Computing, I will pass all my assignments and exams with a mark of at least 40%. I will check Moodle to make sure I am attaining my goals as well as speaking to lectures.

By the end of my Level 4 HND in Applied Computing, I will learn how to code in C# and HTML fluently, I will use online tests and tools to ensure that I am improving my skills.

When I am finished studying at university I want to get a job programming games, I will make sure I have the skills required such as C#, Java and photoshop, I will work on these skills weekly to ensure I am improving to meet my goal.

By the time I am 23 I want to be moved out into my own house, I will pass my university studies and have a job that pays well enough to support living in my own house.

Section 4

Looking after your data

My back up strategy is to have 1 file saved onto my computer at home another onto my USB and the third and final online on the cloud, this obeys the “in 3 different places” rules because I have 3 separate copies of the data, 2 of which are on different storage devices and 1 of them located offsite. I will however always have files of my assignments uploaded to Moodle and on the University’s network. Given the location of where my work resides I managed to come up with the following scenarios;

A fire

In the event of a fire I could potentially lose 2 of my back ups one being my USB and the other my PC, I would however be able to recover the files from the cloud which could be downloaded to any device that has an internet connection. Although I would be losing 2 of my devices in a worst-case scenario I would still have a 3rd place to restore my files from.

A Virus

If a file was ever to be infected with a virus it could be restored easily, if my USB got infected I would be able to simply wipe it and either download all my documents from the cloud or copy documents from my computer. If my computer got infected then I could use my USB or download my documents, and if my files on the cloud got corrupted then I could simply upload them again.

A Hacker

If someone was to target my documents they would still struggle, getting access to my USB would be very difficult as it has no internet connection and would need a manual approach but even if it got stolen I would still be able to restore my files from the cloud by downloading them or copying them to a new USB from my PC. If a hacker managed to corrupt the other devices the same approach would be taken, just like the USB. Even if a hacker managed to corrupt both documents on the cloud and my PC I would still have the document on a USB which could be copied over. A hacker would struggle much like the virus to compromise all 3 devices making this strategy once again successful.

A flood

If a flood was to ever happen at least two of my copies would be compromised as electric and water do not mix, however I would of course be able to recover my documents from my online backup which can be downloaded to any device necessary.

Conclusion

Overall my strategy works very well in a fire my files are still able to be recovered by downloading them from the cloud, so it would be quick to restore to. A virus would have an extremely hard time trying to corrupt all my data because of how hard it would be to reach all 3 devices, making this strategy very effective, the same goes for the hacker it operates much like a virus in terms of how it would infect your system, making this strategy yet again effective. Overall, I can conclude that my in 3 different places strategy is effective against all possible disaster scenarios.

Time management and self-organisation

My example of a potential career was a School Network Manager, the requirements needed an HND or degree, the job required a vigilant person who can communicate effectively while working in a high-pressure environment, the job also required the person to be knowledgeable of the task at hand. The salary was £22,000 to £70,000 per year with hours between 35 to 40 per week.

(See full report at Appendix D)

SWOT:

Strengths I have strong people skills, I can hold up a good conversation. I can work well in a high-pressure environment, it helps me to work hard and faster. I'm energetic and enthusiastic, I can form new conversations and ideas by bouncing them off other people and taking in what they must think about it.	Weaknesses I can find it difficult to focus, I sometimes will get side tracked without even realising it. I need to take more time to do assignments as I tend to leave them to last minute. I'm not very organised leading me to forget about thing completely or remember about them just before.
Opportunities My lectures can offer support to help with my studies. My college can offer counselling or general help if ever needed. Use my summer holiday to put my plan into action and become a better student	Threats Friends are easy to get distracted from work. The work balance.

Setting Goals:

What do I want to achieve?	What do I have to do?	What resources will I need?	Target date
A balance between work and my social life	Set out a work time table so I can balance between work and my social life	Time table, paper	February 10th
Become a more organised person	Get a planner so that I can write information and reference to it	Planner	March 5th
Interact with my class more	Strike up conversation, ask to meet outside of class.	Confidence	August 10th

Section 4 Conclusion & Evaluation

While studying the AES module I learnt many key things, one of the first things is how to present a document, towards the start of the module I learnt the basic structures of assignments and how to create one, this included learning how to correctly reference information from websites and books and then implement that correctly into my assignment work.

I also started to understand the basic structure of an academic piece of work, this meant planning and structuring a report, linking ideas, using facts and analytically thinking. I learnt that by bringing all that together you can begin to form a report.

Another big thing I felt that I learnt was my presentation of a PowerPoint, during the module I realised so much went into making a good PowerPoint everything from not over filling your PowerPoint with information and styling it in a simple but effective way. I also found out colour plays a massive role in how information is perceived. Taking all this into account made my PowerPoints better.

A huge key finding for me while doing this module was finding out what type of personality I am which is campaigner and how that ties into the type of way I learn. By finding out my personality type I was able to find out information about myself that even I didn't know, the personalities tests were surprisingly accurate. I found that I am a very observant person and that I am curious.

I also found out a lot about employers and how people's abilities and attitudes affect the hiring process. It was surprising to learn people with good attitude are more likely to be hired even if their qualifications don't quite match up to what they expect.

The AES module has also taught me how to set goals and plans by conducting swot analysis's and self-evaluations so that I am able to achieve the goals I am setting in a reasonable way, it helps to break down everything and put it into smaller manageable chunks.

My final key finding while doing the AES module was how to better manage my storage, before I only used to keep data in a single place but after researching the 3 places rule, it helped to widen my understanding of data protection and how to come up with a strategy to combat it, I now know that if anything happens to one of my back ups the others will be safe.

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Appendix

Appendix A



Introduction to
self.pptx

Slide 1

I am 19 but I am born in august so that meant I was the baby of my school year making me one of the youngest in my year.

I have lived in Swansea my whole life and don't plan on leaving anytime soon however after university who knows what could happen.

Blue has always been my favourite colour something about that colour is just really appealing to me, maybe because it's just so vibrant.

Pizza is probably one of the best foods out there, you can literally put any ingredient on a pizza and it will still be enjoyable to eat, apart from pineapple of course.

Computer games are how I waste a lot of time, they are just to fun and addictive to play.

Slide 2

As mentioned earlier I really do love computer games, some of my favourites include Fortnite, World War Z, GTA V and CSGO. Fortnite is a battle royale which has a building mechanic that changes the game drastically, because of this big twist in game play it has kept me playing. World War Z is a new edition to my game library however it is fantastic it is a zombie game but includes a CO-OP story mode which is why I got it. GTA V is a classic and will share being my favourite game with many other people, as the name suggest the game is based around being a criminal.

I love setting up events with my friends where we have DJ's and speakers, and everyone just comes and parties and has a good time, I love doing these types of events because they bring so many people together to have a good time which is very gratifying to see.

As just mentioned because of my interest in setting up events with my friends it has also lead me to develop an interest in lighting production because I've had to learn how to use the lighting equipment and program it to go with the music which I find so fun to do, seeing the result of the finished lighting program is amazing and really makes the work worth doing.

One of my favourite times of year is festival season, they are like the small events I set up with friends but on an unimaginable scale, attending a festival is a life changing experience it brings likeminded people to the same place all to just enjoy music. I've been to four festivals so far with two more this year which are boomtown and Nass. Last year I went to Nass and really enjoyed which got me to go again this year, boomtown however will be the first time I visit.

Slide 3

I started to get to grasp with Adobe Photoshop when I first started college where people in my class taught me how to use the program, as I started to learn the basics I went and did my own things eventually gaining me more skill in the program to the point where almost anything I wanted to do was possible.

My experience with After Effects is like Photoshop in the sense that I had to teach the program to myself with the help of videos on YouTube, although I don't use After Effects as much as I used to, but I still have a good understanding of the program and can do more than the average user.

With the Microsoft office suite, I have used almost every program in the package which is mostly due to school/college and university work, because of my constant use of these packages I have learnt how to use them all fluently and be able to create any kind of PowerPoint/spread sheet or word document. My knowledge in these programs exceeds what the average person would know, and I can end up creating things that people didn't think were possible in the programs.

Software I can also use is Visual Basic which is an integrated development environment which allows for the creation of software, because of my need to build programs I have learnt how to use Visual Basic which has been valuable as now I am able to make basic programs.

Slide 4

C# and C++ I would say is my strongest computing language I know because of my use of it with university assignments it has allowed me to gain a decent amount of knowledge with the language allowing me to create some basic programs, however I have gone into some advance aspects of coding such as arrays and classes.

My knowledge of python was mostly gained during comprehensive school as it was used as a basic introduction to programming, through python I learnt some of the basic underlying concepts of computer programming which I could then apply to other programming languages.

Lua was my very first interactions with a programming language, it was used in a game called Roblox, which is a kid's game and had its own game engine, when I used to play I would try code my games in Lua which allowed me to gain some programming knowledge.

HTML, CSS and Java Script I have used these all together to create interactive and professional websites, HTML in my opinion it is a very basic languages and understanding it is very easy to do given a bit of time, CSS is like HTML in the sense that they are both easy to use and understand. At the current state of my knowledge with these three languages I can produce a website but making a secure one and adding advance features such as login's and databases is where I start to struggle.

Slide 5

Other skills and abilities I excel at are communication, Teamwork, Problem solving and Leadership. Communication I am good at, I understand how big of a factor it can be when working in a team which is another thing I am good at, when in team I know everyone in the team is just as important as the other. Being in a team requires you to work together meaning sharing the workload evenly and treat everyone with respect.

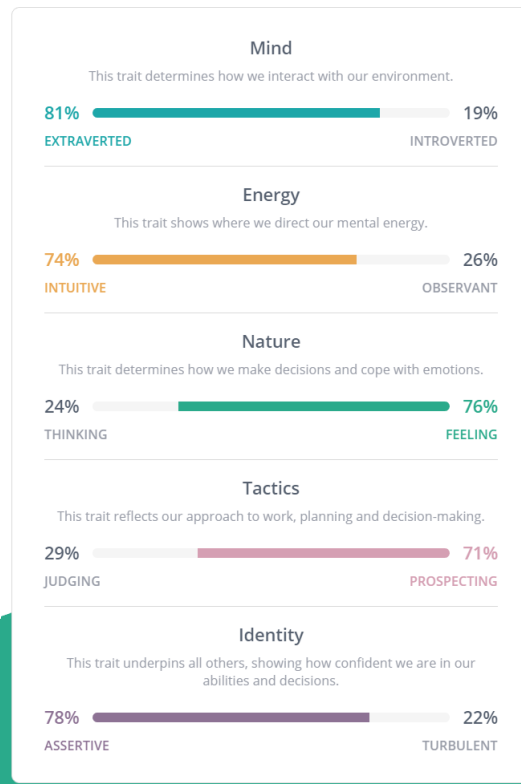
I am also good at problem solving, I am able to find unusual solutions to problems that work. Problem solving for me includes anything from disagreements to computing faults and being able to come up with a solution is something that's key especially if it's important. I feel that these skills are very adaptable and are useful in and out of a job.

Appendix B

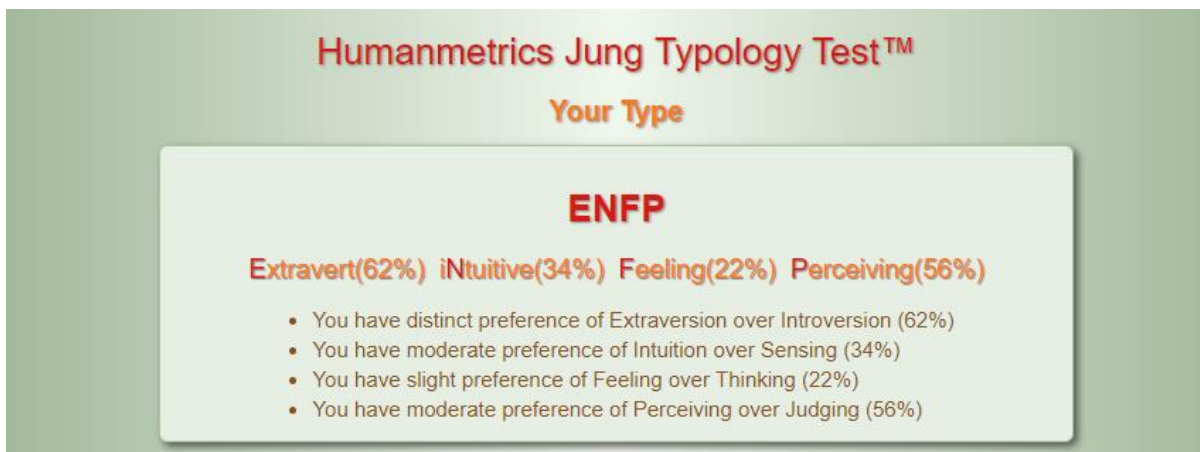
Your personality type is:

Campaigner

ENFP-A



Appendix C



Appendix D

Mock Assignment 1

Job: School Network Manager

Job type: Full Time

Salary: £22,000 to £70,000 per year

Hours: 35 to 40 per week

Job description:

Having valid experience and knowledge in computing is required for this job, you will need to have an HND or degree in a subject that is relevant. Other qualifications or experience will be considered if it is relevant to computing.

The role of a network manager is vitally important as they maintain one of the most important parts of our organisation, being a network manager requires you to be vigilant and, on the ball, as most of your time will be spent maintaining the network. The network that this job is for is based in a school where student and teacher's data is stored. You will have to manage data by making sure it is stored correctly and backed up properly, this will include making multiple backups to ensure the safety of people data. You will be a leader of a team where you will have to work well and communicate clearly, managing a network can sometimes be a high-pressure environment so being able to work well under pressure is a desirable skill. You will also need to be able to have a clear understanding of the task in hand and be knowledgeable in the role required. Managing this network could potentially mean call outs during late hours if the issue is serious enough.

Skills required:

You need to be able to work well in a team, as you are leading a team it is important you can work with other around you.

Being able to lead a team and come up with effective plans to combat problems within the network.

To be able to have good time management skills, this will help you to use your time efficiently.

Your job will require adding students to the network as well as making sure their data is kept safe and up to date.

A good work ethic and attitude towards the job such as a can-do attitude.

To be able to multitask, this will mean doing multiple things at the same time and being able to choose which one to prioritize over the other.

Desirable skills:

Some knowledge in a programming language such as Java, C++ and C#

Be able to use Windows 10

Be able to use windows server OS

Be able to use Cisco Networking Appliances

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MARKING CRITERIA and STUDENT FEEDBACK

This section details the assessment criteria. The *extent* to which these are demonstrated by you determines your mark. The marks available for each criterion are shown. Lecturers will use the space provided to comment on the achievement of the task(s), including those areas in which you have performed well and areas that would benefit from development/improvement.

Common Assessment Criteria Applied		Marks Available	Marks Awarded
1. Engagement with Literature Skills			
No reference to in-class sources used, no reading log.		20	12
2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills			
SWOT basic, SMART targets not relevant to possible career needs, No real Action plan- one created is too basic and not career relevant. Data storage - saving to cloud only mentioned in disaster scenarios. No application of class assigned evaluations- missing from appendices and not mentioned/used in your work		20	9
3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills			
Action plan very limited, no relationship to extended qualifications beyond present work. Non-technical strengths discussed in detail.		20	5
4. Practical Application Skills			
Powerpoint first and second slide not really relevant to potential employers, rest Ok Evaluations are quite non- technical, you want an IT degree- which one what other courses quals do you need- no explanations. No methods of enhancing productivity, organisation, stress management etc.		20	10
5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice			
No detailed timed technical action plan/ PDP/e- portfolio.No CV.		20	7
Assignment Mark (Assessment marks are subject to ratification at the Exam Board. These comments and marks are to give feedback on module work and are for guidance only until they are confirmed.)	Late Submission Penalties (tick if appropriate)		43
	Up to four weeks late		
	1st/2nd/3rd attempt?	1st	