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Skills For the Workplace

Component 1: Reflection

You are required to write a 1500 words (+/- 10%) Reflection based on your experience of attending an interview using a **recognized reflective theory to structure your work** (i.e., Kolb or Gibbs).

I used Gibbs' method because it seemed more descriptive to me.

Description:

That interview was for the first job in my life. This happened in the summer of 1982 in my hometown Craiova, Romania. Since that year I was a student at the Faculty of Mechanics, and I needed a job to finance myself. At those times I could find a job only at the 'Labor Force' office. I chose two technical positions, one was in the industry and the other in construction, then I went home to consult with my parents where to go for the first time. My parents advised me to be positive and calm, no matter it will happen and to go at the first time in construction. I was left over there early in the morning. I was scheduled at 10 a.m. but I arrived earlier with a half-hour, as a precautionary measure. After a while, I was invited inside by the secretary. At the interview, I met the company's chief engineer Mr. A. T., who was my interviewer. I introduced myself and I handed him the documents regarding my professional training. I was questioned about my training and if I finish the military service. After that, I inform Mr. A.T. that I am a student at the Mechanical Faculty in our town and two times a year I need a not pay holiday for the winter and summer sessions. He told me that will not be a problem, and he said: 'as a big company we encourage all kinds of studies.' Mr. A.T. asked about technical aspects and work protection. Most of the questions I answered were difficult at first because I was not familiar with the technical terms specific to the interview. Then I was asked about the mechanical section and where it is. The downside was that I lost two hours a day with round-trip transportation. However, I thought it was temporary, and in time I would find something closer. At the end of the interview, Mr. A.T. wish me good luck and congratulated me as a construction mechanic. 'The most appropriate research instrument appeared to be the semi-structured interview questionnaire.' (Cock, 1980, p.238)

Feelings:

Since I did not participate in any interviews, it was normal to be worried.

I was self-confident that this event will be a success. I was excited and at the same time anxious about what will happen to me. After the interview began, I calmed down because I remembered what my parents had told me: to be calm and positive. In addition, the person who interviewed me inspired me confidence and after a while, I became calm and positive.

Being a young high school graduate, I was hungry for success, on all plans, professional, school, personal, etc. This positive state in which I found myself helped me to get over this important event of my career. After this positive event, I was relieved that this burden had been taken from my shoulders and I realise it professionally and personally. I also solved that big problem with the free time I needed to graduate from university.

Mister. A.T. was satisfied with what he heard from me, otherwise, he would give me the answer immediately. My parents were also happy for this achievement, no longer a financial burden for them. The happiness of my parents seeing me as an employee and a student at the same time was for me the greatest achievement of that period.

I was unhappy that the mechanical section of the construction trust was at the other end of town, and I was wasting precious time because I had to go to university in the evening. This being the only inconvenience, I had nothing to do for the moment but to look for a job closer to home.

Evaluation:

Throughout the interview, I was in control of the situation, and I had a positive attitude. This contribution was due to my family inspiring me with a positive attitude, to be calm and Mr. A.T. showed seriousness and peace that was transmitted to me during the interview. The whole family congratulated me on my job, and they were happy to be on my feet.

If I could give that interview today, I think I would change some questions and give some more comprehensive answers. On the other hand, I did not like that the pause between the question and the answer was too long and this bothered me because the answers came harder. This happened because of the fear of not making mistakes, which haunts me even today. In the future, negative experiences will help us to adjust to the right time. Taking part in my first interview, I was unfamiliar with the technical vocabulary I was trying to use, so the pauses between questions and answers required more time to think.

The biggest contribution to this success was the technical training I had in the industrial high school I had finished two years before. Mr. A.T. asked me if I had more experience in construction because it was a job closer to my house. I replied that I stay on

the mechanical side that I went on the road. I was happy for my family because I did not want to be a financial burden to them anymore.

Analysis:

Looking critically at this event I can say that I could change something, but not something important. Without my calm and positive attitude, I would not have passed this first interview. The technical part had a major contribution to this success. My outfit was impeccable, so I made a good impression when I got inside. Also, Mr. A.T. was an educated man and he had a lot of work experience I felt extremely excited to answer his questions. I would have liked to be more spontaneous and to answer faster and more convincingly the questions that were asked during the interview. In the future, this helped me to improve and not make mistakes during an interview. 'Gibbs reflective cycle is a seminal theory in reflective practice' (Gibbs,1988, cited in Jasper,2013)

The key point of this interview was that they accepted my unpaid leave conditions, which I asked for on the very first question. Without this condition, I could not continue my university studies. The moral support of my family also mattered a lot, especially the advice on the positive attitude and calm that I must show during the interview.

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After the small problems related to short breaks or inappropriate choices of the questions I asked, it was a successful interview, especially since it was the first time.

Conclusion

From this experience, I learned more things than I ever imagined. First, to be a positive, calm person, who inspires confidence. Then, to be punctual and as presentable as possible, the first impression always matters. I should always listen to my parents' advice; always they will know what I need. 'He provides the critical elements needed for reflection and judgment. (Lara,2007, p.107)

However, it was not the most successful interview, so I would change the technical approach and formulate my personal questions in advance. Thanks to the experience gained in so many years of work, I am sure that interview would be quite different if it happened today. Indeed, the motivation was different, perseverance was lower, and the work power was on my side. If I could change some skills, it would be the power of concentration and perseverance, these were the weak links at that time.

Action plan

Professionally, I will develop my skills during the course I am taking with pleasure at university. I will put the new knowledge I am accumulating this year into practice in my future job. Personally, I hope to become an intelligent person and find my inner peace at my

future job. If I had that interview tomorrow, I would be better prepared in many ways. Today's society is more technological than 40 years ago, there is more information on the internet, you can find a lot of tips about the interview itself.

Bibliography:

Cock, Jacklyn (1980) *Maids and madams: a study in the politics of exploitation*

Jasper, M. (2013) *Beginning reflective practice* (2nd ed.)

Lara, M. P. (2007) *Learning from catastrophes*