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Introduction

In this assignment I will aim to cover grounds on what I have learned and understood so far in my academic and employability skills module. My academic writing skills, research methods, academic referencing techniques, reflective writing, analysing my skills for employment has improved with great understanding in how and when to make use of these skills. By attending this classes I have learned how to use tools, technics as well as gaining knowledge to use for employment purposes. Saying that I have also benefited from these skills in my day to day life. I have found ways to study do research and carry on in further education by organising myself in what needs to be done urgently, what can wait. The module has enabled me to take responsibility to make time for myself to do more learning and studying, be more confidence and competence as an effective student should be.

In Lessons I got to do exercises that have helped me improve my CV. we also studied cover letters which is important when completing application forms and showing my interest and capability for the job role. Since attending my classes I have gained confidence in speaking out loud and answering questions, standing Infront of the class and doing presentations. Group exercises in class gave me good practice of working in a group we had to work together, complete tasks share ideas accept differences and all opinions and come to conclusion. I have noticed that I have developed a range of employability skills such as self-reflection, time management, organising and presentation skills, which makes me feel proud of myself that I made the right choice in coming back to education as once said by Muhammad Ali "Do not count the days but make the day count." My days in class has made me understand and value all the exercises and learning done are very useful and transferable to employment and helpful on a day to day basis.

Learning and improved on skills Gaps.

One of the main reasons I came back to education is for me to gain and improve my academic and employability skills. By attending this module, I got to practice and improve on my time management skill, presentations, summarising, report writing, and reflective writing including how to improve my analytical thinking skills. Alongside these topics we also learned the difference in formal and informal writing structures.

Time management the definition I have found at (Lexico Dictionaries | English, 2019) is having

“The ability to use time effectively or productively, especially at work/educational purpose.” This skill is a very important and by attending my class I got to practice it more as I made sure I was in class on time. To do this I organised and calculated the time I will need to get up and get ready, leave my house to catch the bus on time, from their catch the tube and then walk to class all together I had worked out I need to leave my house two hours before nine o'clock to attend my class on time. This skill has prepared me to value my time and not waste any, I'm more productive as well as organised now than before. This skill is very beneficial for me in my personal life and professional life. Being punctual is important to me it shows that I am reliable, and I will meet the needs as a student should. I have never been late to any of my lessons. As mentioned by Morgan (2017) “managing time is vital, crucial, important, in all different ways.”

In class I have learned how to reference my work, the term reference means “A book or serial publication to which individuals can refer for confirmed facts. The information is intended to be found quickly when needed. Reference works are usually referred to for particular pieces of information, rather than reading the whole beginning to end.” According to (Definitions.net, 2019)

You can use the source of information in order to ascertain something, but also to give recognition and credit that it is someone else's work. In class we had the chance to understand the importance of referencing especially for our assignments. We were told any information or source we use in our assignments needs to be referenced.

We had lessons on how to recognise the difference in academic writing, were the lecturer provided us with too letters with the same context but different writing styles. With this activity we got to recognise and analyse the different terms used but with the same meaning, how it had to be formal, clear and impersonal, use of correct vocabulary and structured correctly. I understood that when writing for educational or professional purpose it has to be structured and written in a formal manner, not how you speak or text, make sure to avoid a chatty form of writing and definitely not to use slang words such as 'yeh' instead use the correct term 'yes'. We learned to apply formal writing and recognise the difference between the formal and informal. According to (S, 2019) “Formal writing is when the writing is used for business, legal, academic or professional purpose. Whereas, informal writing is used for personal or casual purpose. Formal writing must use a professional tone, whereas a personal and emotional tone can be found in informal writing.”

Paraphrase, from what I understood is reading something and rewording in your own words. This action is key in our assignments and is part of the referencing technique.

I have also learned how to gather information, do reflective writing and analyse my own work. All these sessions have been beneficial for me as I had not been in work or education for the past ten years. By attending my classes I could see how much I had forgotten and how much improvements are needed to be done academically. Now that I have learned how to do reflective writing, I was able to respond back to my children's school letters in a more academic and formal manner whereas before I was more personal and took the situation out of context. I have learned how to be on point in writing academically stay on the subject. I am now more confident in filling in application forms and

responding to emails and letters by myself whereas I use to have someone look at it before sending it off.

Most of these skills that I am learning and improving are transferable to all kind of employment sections including the Health and Social care sector and Office based jobs.

From my research at (www2.port.ac.uk, 2019) I understood that "Reflective writing is a declaration of your reflective thinking. Academically this involves you looking back at something, this can be an event, i.e. something that has happened, or a piece of writing that you would do differently in your present time. You would analyse the event or idea by thinking over and from different perspectives. I would try to explain when possible by referencing to the topic or use theories to show understanding and knowledge of the concept. Thinking carefully about what the situation or idea means to myself and my ongoing progress as a learner practising professionally. Reflective writing is more personal than other forms of academic writing. We all at some point think reflectively, but maybe not to the same depth as expected in a good reflective writing at educational level."

From this paragraph it is clear of the concept of reflective writing means. I have learned how to apply the skill of reflective writing to improve my CV. When I will be writing about my myself, I shall be using my experiences whether it be educational, work or personal life to describe myself, my qualities, skills and experiences and what I can deliver. I can describe specific attributes about myself to suit the job I may be applying for. To be employed in health and social care, I can demonstrate my competent, as I have ten years of personal experience with children who have special needs and challenging behaviour, with referencing it with my experiences in this field either via reports, analysis. Any other references can be given from university, college or friends and colleagues who know me closely.

Analytically thinking, according to (IQ Doodle School, 2019) said "is a critical component of visual thinking that gives you the ability to solve problems quickly and effectively, this involves a methodical step-by-step approach to think and allows you to break down complex problems or situations into single and manageable components." Learning and understanding about this in class has helped me, to take actions when I am overloaded with tasks and situations that can only be solved by myself, now I am able to analyse it in terms of how when, what is important, and what can wait a little longer. My studying timetable has become more organised due to my ability to manage and organise myself better than before. This has also been beneficial at placement where I have resolved situations by thinking, organising and applying analytical thinking. After recognising and being able to use this skill at the right time has made me more confident in using this skill more often.

Carrying on for level 5/6 : Using Gibbs method.

Description- From when I started in February 2019, attending class was very difficult as I was traveling early long hours to attend my lessons. I have had a long gap in education and work it was hard for me to stay focused and not worry about my children, I kept looking at my phone just in case I would get a call or miss any calls as my phone had to be on silent as part of our classroom rules. My writing wasn't so good either, I also struggled taking notes and to top it off my anxiety and nervousness increased a lot. I felt uncomfortable in asking questions in case I sounded silly.

Feelings-When experiencing my first problematic situation e.g. asking questions when I didn't understand something I was really nervous, but into a few lessons the lectures reassured us and told us 'no question is a silly question' if we do not ask then we will not get an answer. I felt a lot more comfortable and better to put my hand up and just ask after this conversation.

Evaluation-This incident was challenging for me as I felt uncomfortable and didn't want to look silly when asking questions or be laughed at. However I am pleased that my lectures helped and encouraged us to ask questions and made us all feel welcome and comfortable.

Analysing-I know and understand that coming back to education was going to be hard, but I didn't think it would be fun and I would make great encouraging colleagues that are also friends now. I also have met some great and supportive lectures which has been brilliant for me it has helped me regain my confidence academically and I can see the improvements in my work/assignments. I have been enjoying classes and studying it has helped me think more professionally and academically.

Conclusion-Looking back from the beginning of the start to my education, I can see that I made the correct choice in coming back to education. I can now see that my action has resulted in a lot of positive impact in my life I feel very confident in myself and am ready for work, but I would like to continue in my education and complete level 5/6 for a better career choice and to better myself more.

Action Plan-My future plan is to pass my assignments and carry on my education for the next two years. I aim to use my knowledge of what I have learned so far and continue in the same subject to complete and achieve a degree that may lead to a bright career.

Conclusion

Upon successful completing this assignment, you should be able to see how much I have learned by attending my classes and using new tools and techniques for my assignments. I believe I am now capable of publishing literature relating to a specific topics or subjects. I can fully reference, use appropriate structure, produce academic reports, reflect on my own, I know how to use a range of tools e.g. Gibbs, I can do research and present findings in a variety of formats either for employment or education purposes. Furthermore, I have collected and analysed my own feedback to improve myself. This learning period, I made sure of using more digital technologies to support learning and time management.

In my assignment you can see how beneficial it is for me to want to learn and improve all different types of skills, which then will support me in finding work and be a credible candidate. It was a wise choice that I made time to invest into going back to education, as it has made me more confident and ready in a professional manner. "once all the information is understood by all the team members, you will be closer than they originally thought." This was said by Maund, Schriek Tinkler (2017) I received support from my friends and family which has helped me a lot. Any skill is useful in life to improve upon, everyone has them some more than others and that is how we better ourselves. According to Maund, Schriek and Tinkler "that there is no perfect time or place to grow with in our self than working in a team." (2017)

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