

Academic and Employability skills  
Assignment 1  
Task 2

Academic Report  
Module: BMSW4001

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# Introduction

In this academic report I interpret my experience, thoughts and findings in **time management, academic writing, referencing** and **online learning**. I have chosen these four topics because they are the ones that I enjoy the most in a way or another struggled and also helped me change the way I manage my studies and personal life using the Gibbs reflective cycle (1988).

My decision to join university did not come easy as I was feeling very insecure about many things first of all about my English, my age, being a single mother of four children and working as a P.A I thought I had enough on my plate and was not going to be able to cope with more things in my everyday life After considering the decision for a long period of time i made it and once I was accepted, I was thrilled and told my kids the good news and they have been supportive in every step of the way.

This course has helped me to develop many skills such as my grammar skills, time management, work with others and helped me advance my research strategies. During my first week of learning, i learned the importance of time management and I was also able to understand and set SMART goals by completing the SWOT analysis and being realistic about my goals and personal development plan. I started to notice that I almost knew nothing about conducting the correct analysis to set a SMART target goal or develop a P.D.P. so it was challenging for me, so I researched online and read about the Eisenhower method to help grow my understanding as well as realising why managing my time before was a big struggle.

## **Time management**

Prior to commencing this course my time management skills were not the best i had many tasks to complete during the day be it personal or business. However hard I tried I could not get them all complete. once I learnt the Eisenhower Method and put it into practise it has truly helped me both on a personal and in a business level, I seem to have more free time as I am managing my time in the correct way which allows me up to do other things. I have many priorities and it can be hard to manage my time for example, balancing the time I spend with my kids as well as the time i spend studying online and working, this can be very exigent for me.

These methods have helped me in my day-to-day life for example now I revise two hours with my children, I spend one hour studying and now i even got time to go to the GYM. I never realised how important balancing my time in the correct way will help me so much.

## **SWOT analysis**

Using this analysis has created a better understanding for me. For example, when using this analysis on a business it helps me to identify the weaknesses of my competitors which now, I see as an advantage. it enables me to recognise my strengths including discipline, patience, dedication and interpersonal skills and also acknowledge my weaknesses even more as it is difficult for me to speak in public, spontaneity and being more confident when making decisions as I can be indecisive. The opportunities I had by joining university are being able to do online learning as it is not the same as I was used to when I completed my Beauty Therapy Course as it was a face-to-face learning. There has been different obstacles and challenges along the way but i have learn to overcome them by spending more time revising and reaching online.

## **Eisenhower method**

This method has been the one that has helped me the most organizing my time in the correct way to be able to complete more tasks than before. I can prioritise things now in a different way or delegate giving me more time to revise or complete other tasks from work or around the house without stressing by not having enough time. I can analyse and refocus on what is really important and what should be handle and when and now you see me using this matrix all the time.

## The Eisenhower Decision Matrix



## SMART Goals

I learnt how essential setting goals are around 10 years ago when I was studying beauty therapy as this was one of the many topics I have studied in college. When you work in salons you are not only there to carry out treatments but to sell the products and reach sales goals set by salon managers.

Sometimes business owners or managers are not realistic when setting their goals and this can make employees feel disappointment when not reaching their expectations. For instance, when I set myself targets in my personal or business life I learn to set short and long term goals.

## Personal Development Plan

The P.D.P was something I learnt in university and it was completely new to me. I had no idea on how to create one for myself but once my tutor explained what it was about and left me homework, I had the chance to create one and learn how the personal development plan works which is about self-reflection along with a more in detail action plan. I found it really hard to complete this task and it took more time than I expected due to familiarising myself with creating a P.D.P as I am not used to reflecting on a long-term basis. Now that I look back at my development plan, I notice that it gave me a better understanding on what I want to accomplish in the future and how far I am from my main goal.

# **Academic writing**

Academic writing is more complex than what I thought it would be. English being my second language can be confusing and challenging to understand in the academic world as there is a lot more to it than just English, I learn that in every paragraph there are usually three parts such as topic sentence, supporting sentence and concluding sentence. Each of them is very important as including them help develop a better grasp when writing paragraphs or even adapting them into my reports. Now I learned how to advance and adapt my writing when my boss asks me for a report.

## **Sentence structure**

Being able to learn about sentence structure influenced me to use a variety of sentences to make my writing more sophisticated and understandable. Including compound and overlong sentences in my essays to give me better marks. Using sentence structure in your writing is key since it is used nearly everywhere you go especially when writing essays, reports, articles and evaluations.

## **Paragraph Structure**

It was by around week 5 of my course that I was more familiarised with academic writing and everything I learned about what a paragraph structure is it made me understand that is the balance between your thought and the words expressed the voice of writers and that should be predominant in my writing therefore a paragraph must have three main parts. Topic sentence, supporting sentence and concluding sentence for the reader to be able to understand the writer. Learning this gave the push i needed to get a better understanding of the books I read as before i had to go through a page more than once to understand the writer.

## **Topic Sentence**

Get to understand the topic of what the paragraph is about is the most important part for me also to be clear with what the main idea is, which is what I want to talk about to express myself and be as clear as possible to the person reading my report or an essay. Topic sentences gives me an advantage to write a paragraph and focus on one subject. I knew what a topic sentence was but I wasn't familiar with the name so

when my teacher was speaking about topic sentences, i already knew about it yet it still assisted me in my introductions and improved my evaluations.

## **Referencing**

I learnt that by referencing in the correct way you recognise other people's work and give acknowledge of their findings also demonstrate the breadth of my research and add academic credibility if there was to be an argument carried out. By referencing I allow others to find the sources I used for my work in addition to avoid plagiarism.

## **Plagiarism**

My understanding for plagiarism is when someone copy or take someone's else work taking the recognition away from the person who accomplished the work or their findings it can often be accidental. This is why referencing is so important when completing a report for university or for work, after researching and understanding about how important is to read something from a person that has credibility on what they are saying.

## **Correct Referencing**

The correct way of referencing your work id by adding the name of the person who wrote the paragraph or book, enter the year it was written page number and add link where I got the information from if available. However, in my university I am required to use the Harvard referencing style. If I wanted to introduce any part of someone's research I can start with a sentence like i.e., according to (Pears and Shields, 2006, p6) learning and using the correct way of referencing helped me get information from the correct person in case of doubts allowing me trust in that person's work.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, I learned many useful methods and developed many skills during this term, skills that will assist me now and in the future as i can transfer them from my day-to-day life to my employment. For example, I am now able to use my academic writing skills such as being able to understand and create a correct paragraph by having the correct structure stating the main idea and using compound and overlong sentences in my writing. Creating a personal development plan by making a list of the essential and unessential activities like the Eisenhower matrix method has given me time to even go to the GYM and spend time with my kids or friends. The SMART goals chart assisted me in being specific and realistic about my goals which have helped me focus on what I want to achieve in life allowing me to have a clear vision of my short-terms goals and always be reminded that I can achieve my long-term goals by having consistency and discipline.

When researching I like to use references as this illustrates that I got my ideas from different sources which allows me to look back at my work and find where I got my research from. This also assists me to make sure my research is accurate. For instance, when my teachers are checking my work, they are able to find the website or articles of where I have got my information from as it demonstrates that I have got my research from an accurate origin. Studying about the correct way of referencing created a better understanding of how to demonstrate where I have got my ideas a d information from like mentioning the name of the person who discovered how to write a report or a newspaper article. When studying about plagiarism, I had no idea of what it was. It was new but I recognized that it was another word for using someone else's idea as your own therefore it made it easier for me to understand. Everything that I have learned from my online lessons I put it into practice which particularly advanced my skills in life.

# Reference List

The skills handbook by Stella Cottrell, fifth edition 2019.

<https://www-vlebooks-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/Vleweb/Product/Index/2009047?page=0>

My notes taken during classes and homework completed.

Referencing handbook from the university library.

[https://uwtsd.ac.uk/media/uwtsd-website/content-assets/documents/library-and-learning-resources/infoskills/Harvard-eng\\_v.1.2.pdf](https://uwtsd.ac.uk/media/uwtsd-website/content-assets/documents/library-and-learning-resources/infoskills/Harvard-eng_v.1.2.pdf)

# Appendix

Please find below classroom activity and homework completed during this term.

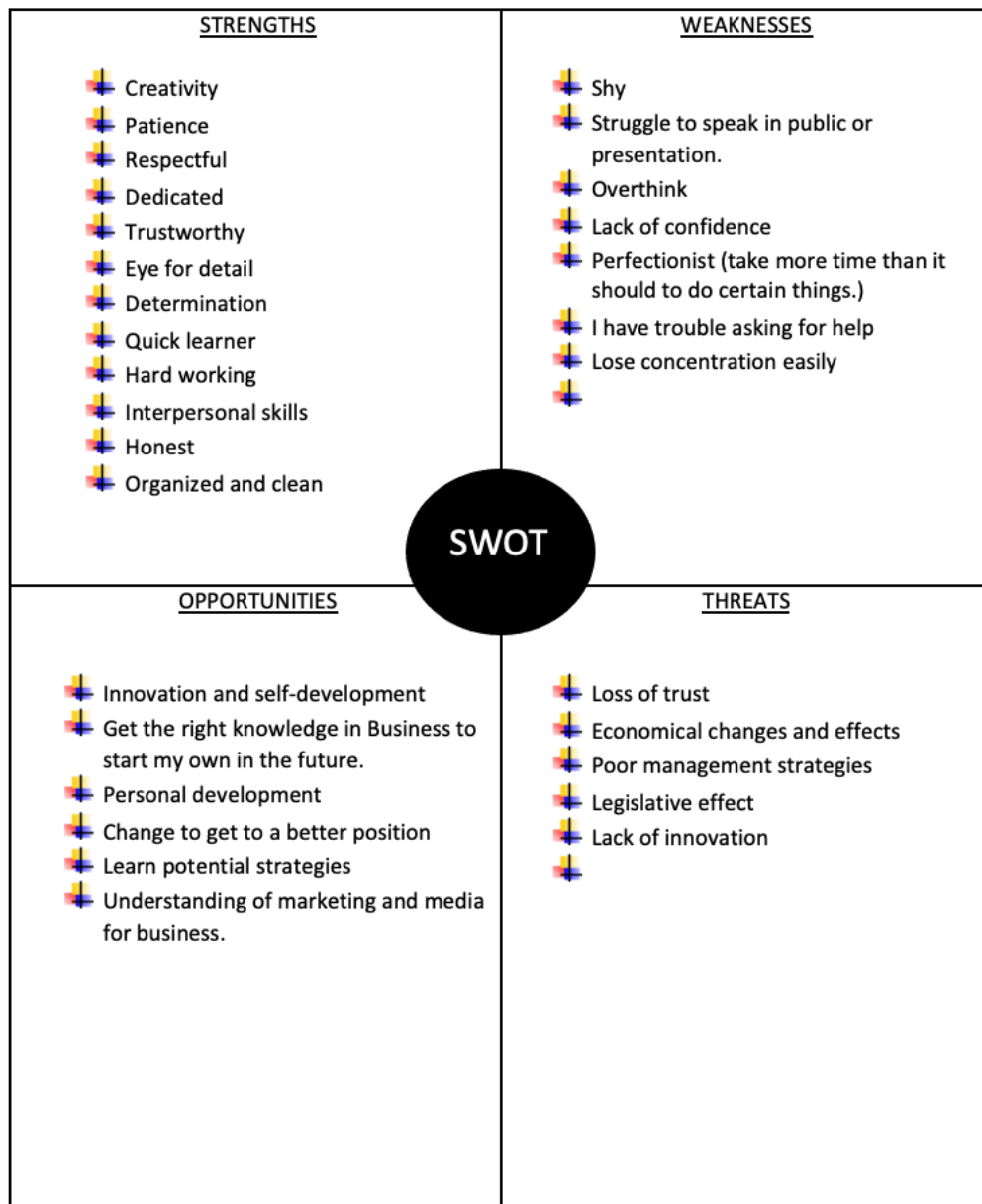
Time Management: **The Eisenhower Method**

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|                                                                                 | URGENT                                                                                                                      | NOT URGENT                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>I<br/>M<br/>P<br/>O<br/>R<br/>T<br/>A<br/>N<br/>T</b>                        | DO NOW<br>GO FOOD SHOPPING<br>COMPLETE MY HOMEWORK<br>HELP KIDS WITH HOMEWORK<br>TAKE MY IPAD TO GET CHECKED<br>MAKE DINNER | PLAN/SCHEDULE<br>PAINT MY DINING ROOM<br>BUY PAINT AND BRUSHES<br>GET NAILS DONE<br>LUNCH WITH MY FRIENDS<br>BUY A LAPTOP FOR MY STUDIES |
| <b>N<br/>O<br/>T<br/><br/>I<br/>M<br/>P<br/>O<br/>R<br/>T<br/>A<br/>N<br/>T</b> | DELEGATE<br>DO THE LAUNDRY<br>CLEAN BATHROOM<br>HOOVER THE HOUSE                                                            | ELIMINATE<br>GO IKEA LOOK FOR A SOFA AND A BED FOR MY DAUGHTERS<br>GO CURRYS LOOK FOR A TV<br>GET EYEBROWS DONE                          |

# Personal Development Plan

|                                                                                                                             | <u>Short-Term time frame</u><br>What do I want to accomplish in the next three to six months?                        | <u>Mid-Term time frame</u><br>What do I want to accomplish in the next six months to two years?                      | <u>Long-Term time frame</u><br>What do I want to accomplish in the next two to three years?                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><u>My goals</u></b><br><br>What are my overall goals that I want to accomplish in this time period.                      | Focus on my studies and start my Interior Design online course as well on my business career                         | Get my certificate or diploma in interior design in conjunction with my business career.                             | Start my own business as an Interior Designer                                                                        |
| <b><u>Skills and knowledge to be learn</u></b><br><br>What specially do I need to learn? what project do I need to work on? | Read and research to gain knowledge                                                                                  | I am going to redo the interior of my house and get before and after pictures to start with my portfolio.            | Have graduated from Business and be on my last year of Interior Design.                                              |
|                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                      |
| <b><u>Next Steps</u></b><br><br>How am I going to acquire the skills and knowledge?<br>How am I going to do this project?   | Enrolling with the Interior Design institute                                                                         | Look for a job within the industry to develop the skills and gain more knowledge.                                    |                                                                                                                      |
| <b><u>Resources</u></b><br><br>What resources do I need?                                                                    |                                                                                                                      | Create a network and                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                      |
| <b><u>Time schedule</u></b><br><br>What is my time schedule?                                                                |                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                      |
| <b><u>When will I start?</u></b><br><br><b><u>When will I finish?</u></b>                                                   | I have started my business I will start in January the interior design course in January 2021                        | I will finish this course by 2021 and will have a diploma in Interior Design                                         | I will finish my studies by 2023                                                                                     |
| <b><u>Completion</u></b><br><br>When have I completed each step?                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Date<br><hr/> <input type="checkbox"/> Date<br><hr/> <input type="checkbox"/> Date<br><hr/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Date<br><hr/> <input type="checkbox"/> Date<br><hr/> <input type="checkbox"/> Date<br><hr/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Date<br><hr/> <input type="checkbox"/> Date<br><hr/> <input type="checkbox"/> Date<br><hr/> |



## H/W Week 2

Take notes using below article. Comments, questions and highlights important bits and keywords things useful for your employment development etc.

It is difficult for a person to change carriers in a recession, but I believe in doing what you love to do and try as hard as you can to follow that dream. When you do what you like your skills become better and you learn quicker.

### Changing your career: How to identify your transferable skills

Assessing your own experience, in order to work how you can fill gaps in the sectors you want to move into, is an essential exercise if you want to stand out from the crowd

Many people who want to change career — and I meet many of them in my job as a career coach — buy into the myth that it is near on impossible to change sectors in a recession. It is easy to assume that when competition is tough, recruiters are going to default hire the candidate with the most relevant experience. However, through conversations with recruitment consultants, I have found employers want much more for their money and are looking at people with a wider skill set who can work across a number of areas.

This is a key advantage for job seekers who are looking at changing careers. Everyone has transferable skills of great use to employers in different industry sectors that are facing talent shortages and skills gaps

Bacchus, E (2010) Careers Blog, *The Guardian*, 29.06.2010, 12.47 BST [Accessed 13.10.2020 15.15]

What are the gaps I will need to fill in?  
Identify what type of crowd/audience to be able to stand out and be different.

Identify industries with talent shortages and skill gaps to be able to make the right decision when changing careers and be able to transfer your skills.

Recruiters will want the people with the most experience however if a person without experience never gets the chance to work in a new industry will not be able to develop their learning and skills.

## Homework Week 3 Paragraph writing practice

To be able to make a career change I think is very important to understand and identify the gaps and shortages of skills in the area you want to move into to be able to be different to anyone else and stand out from the crowd. It is not an easy decision and mostly now days with the pandemic as a lot of people are losing their jobs. One of the advantages is that employers are more interested in working with people with wider skills that can work across a number of areas because of their experience, passion and skills.

I always believe in doing things the better I can even as no job is less than other and you can make the difference by being the best at it.

**H/W week 4: write a summary of the text in bold**

**Q; One of the most commonly practised activities in modern day society is travelling between two countries on a huge mechanical device, which has two wings, a tail and four engines, for no other purpose than for pleasure.**

*A; One of most common activity in modern society is going abroad by aeroplane with your family or friends.*

This means that is very common for people to practice this activity is one of the most used by modern society.

Traveling by aeroplane become one of the safest methods in travel and it allowed you to travel vast distances in lest time, is cost effective and you can sit and relax.

You can learn and see so many things by visiting other countries e.g.; cultures, food, architecture etc...

People travel for work as well as pleasure.