



Programme: Certificate HE Skills for the Workplace

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ACE Practical Portfolio

Assessment 2- Academic report

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Introduction:

We are living in challenging times, were because of the actual situation of the planet, some of the people including myself are finding a bit difficult to adapt at the new ways of doing the things as learning online, work meetings online and so on. Maybe because of the age or the fact that I have a gap of years between my last studies and my actual studies from now. I am sure, in time if I focus, I will do better and I will be able to achieve all my goals.

The purpose of this report is to reflect on my learning experience as a student at UWTSD, which helped me a lot in this first 10 weeks to develop a new set of skills and to practice more in the online learning process. I need to specify that I will use the Gibbs reflective model to complete this report.

In this first Term as a student of UWTSD, I learned a lot of things which will help me not just to finish this university and get my degree but also in my career and I can say in life as well because now I have more knowledge in terms of time management, reflection, public speaking, giving presentations, analytical and critical thinking skills, online learning experience. Also, it helped me to understand how to write a report properly because we studied academic writing, paraphrasing, summarising, and referencing. Additionally, we studied how to write a proper curriculum and a proper cover letter so this will help me maximise my hiring process.

I chose 3 topics which I feel are more relevant for me in my student life also in my job and private life as well. These topics are time management / organising study, public speaking and giving presentations and analytical and critical thinking skills. I will describe what we did in class lessons and what I understand for each of these three topics.

Description:

The first topic I chose to discuss is **time management and organising study** that we learned and studied in the first lessons of the term. The definition of the time management is *“the ability to use one's time effectively or productively, especially at work”* (Oxford University Press, 2020) also *“time management is the key to efficient working”* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

In class we discuss about 3 basic time management principles as:

- *“direct your effort appropriately, that is, towards the things that are most important”* (Cameron, 2002)
- *“direct your effort efficiently, that is, maximise what is achieved by the expenditure of time and energy”* (Cameron, 2002)
- *“reduce time wastage”* (Cameron, 2002)

What I understand from these principles is that I need to prioritise what I need to do, so I can discover the most important things and focus and put my energy to finish that important thing so I can maximise my achievements and goals.

In order to achieve my goals, I need to be more organized. To do that I can use some tools that will facilitate to reduce my time wastage as: diaries, to do lists and time logs.

Also, I learned about some methods that will help me improve my time management and my organise study, as: Eisenhower Method, which is a table where I can divide between urgent and, not urgent activities and also, I can divide between important and not important activities to do. I believe that this method will help me a lot in the future, and this table is really useful.

In terms of organising study, time management as well but also in work and private live SWOT analysis Method is the one that work the best from my point of view, because is a personal analyse about my own strengths, weaknesses. Opportunities and threats, and I believe that in the moment that I can write and describe this thing I will sure that I will know myself, which sometimes is not so easy.

As second topic I will describe **public speaking and giving presentations**. I chose this topic because it is really relevant to me due to the fact that as a student I need to know how to do and give a presentation as well as how to speak with the people in front of me which are my audience. In this first term at this module, I learned about the 9 steps that I need to follow in order to give a proper presentation in front of my audience. These steps are pre-talk preparation where I need to prepare myself to be in front of my audience. I need to dress nice, turn off the phone and test the equipment that I will use for my presentation. Second step is to use handouts, but from my point of view is not really necessary as the audience will read ahead what I want to say, and they will be distracted. Third step is the opening of the presentation where I need to get straight to the point and try not to improvise at the last moment. Fourth step is the actual speaking where I need to have a natural rate of speech, make briefly pauses so the audience can understand the information and repeat critical information.

The fifth step is the body language which is really important because everybody can see your gesture. I need to keep my eyes on the audience and not turn back of them and also, I need to use natural gestures. Sixth step is about the questions where I understand that is not a good idea to take questions during the talk because I am not an experience person in this field, and I may forget my point if I lose time to answer during the presentation. The seventh step is the length of the presentation. I did some research and I discovered that the ideal length of a presentation is between 15 and 20 minutes. The eighth step about giving presentation is the behaviour I need to have in front of my audience. I need to make eye contact, to show enthusiasm, to try to involve my audience and also the most important thing to not get distracted by noises. And the last step of this topic is of course the conclusion of the presentation where I summarise the key concepts and the main ideas and where I can take questions from my audience.

If I will follow all these 9 steps and I will try to do that, I am sure that I will evolve as vocabulary, body language and as a better person because the public speaking in a presentation will rise my confidence in my own powers.

My last chosen topic is **analytical and critical thinking skills**. Analytical thinking is when I observe, research, and develop critical insights from data or other information. When I use analytical thinking, I gain knowledge, solutions or ideas related to a problem or topic. (Indeed 2020)

From my point of view this is one of the most important topics on this course because the knowledge I gather after I studied this topic will help me develop my problem-solving skills, after all this is what analytical thinking means. I start

already to use some tips that we discuss in class to improve my skills as playing brain games and trying to learn a new thing every day. The meaning of critical thinking is “*the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgement.*” (Oxford University Press, 2020). When I understand the links between ideas, I recognise and build appropriate arguments, I approach issues in a systematic way, prove that I am using my critical thinking.

Feelings:

The first term of my first academic year as a university student has finish. I definitely can say that I had a different experience from what I had in mind when I decided to start this university. As I said in the introduction, I was not familiar with the whole concept of online learning. The first lessons have been a bit overwhelming having basic knowledge in this field. But lesson after lesson I start getting more familiar with my new laptop and with the idea of online learning, until the point in which I become comfortable about this, even if I still prefer the traditional learning experience. Also, from my point of view seems that this type of online learning is becoming the new normal.

These ten weeks have been extraordinary, for different reasons. First of the reasons is that I can call myself a student which is something that I really wanted to do for long time, to start studying again. The second reason is that I believe that in this first term I learned so many useful things not just for my student life, but also for my private and work live, receiving and understanding a lot of tips that will facilitate my live from now on.

Now that I finish my first term ever, on the university, I am lucking forward to start the second term with new experiences, more knowledge to gain, and who knows maybe I will be able to see my classmates face to face.

What started as a small straggle, become a mesmerised experience.

Evaluation:

As an evaluation for this first term, I can say that there have been both positive and negative aspects of the experience.

The positive aspects are, as I said the fact that I am studying, I gain more knowledge, which will help me not just finding a better job after I will finish this university, but also in my personal self-development so I can become a better person.

The negative aspect for this first term is the fact that we studied online, so I need it to rely on internet connection and sometimes the internet connection was not so good and is getting frustrating when you want to pay attention in class on a subject that really matters for me, but I can not do that because the connection is poor and I can not listen well my lecture and my colleagues, explaining something important.

Analysis:

When I am thinking about my learnings in this module and when I am trying to reflect on this, the first thing that is coming to my mind is the fact that how much the world has change and because of the technology we can do things that 15 years ago we only dreamt of. I am glad and proud to say that I am a student of UWTSD, because in this first term my lecturer demonstrates me that it is possible to learn online, contrary to what I expected. Also, I need to specify that this module helped me a lot within my job. Now after all this knowledge which I gain, I become more organised not only at work but also in my personal life, and I am not talking about cleanliness, but the way of keeping every document and all the notes in a proper manner so it will be much easier for me to go back to them when I will need it to. I learn a lot of interesting stuff that I am one hundred per cent sure that sooner or later I will need each and every part of this

module knowledge to help me facilitate my life, and for all these things I am really grateful.

Conclusion:

This module helped me to develop a new set of skills and to improve the skills that I already had. Apart of the topics that I described in this essay, I need to specify that this module in this first term helped me to understand at another level who to write and read as a student using academic writing, paraphrasing, summarising, and referencing, which are important skills in the academic life. Also, I have learned about CV writing and cover letter writing which will help me no doubt when I will decide to change the job.

Was a pleasant online learning experience which helped me to reflect about my skills and a way to improve and to gain more skills, because the life is a continuous process of learning.

Action plan:

My action plan is to build more knowledge and to develop more skills whit the help of what I am learning and what I will learn in the future, not just as a student in the academic life but also in my personal and private life and as a housekeeping manager.

I already start to adopt the principles from time management and also as I said before I am using some tips described in module lessons to increase my analytical and critical thinking skills.

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