

Academic and Employability skills

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1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this report is to identify and build up a portfolio of my academic and employability skills. Apart from the identification ways for these skills to be improved will be considered as well as identifying what needs to be added to my portfolio and what are the best ways for this to occur. Possessing good academic and employability skills is key to creating a good personal image which is essential in starting and building up a good career aimed in the right direction. In-class exercises will also be covered in this report as well as identifying and evaluating how they could help in the end result this report is aimed at.

2. WHAT IS A SKILL?

A skill is the competence to complete a certain task, usually within a period of time. (Cambridge Dictionary n.d.) Skills are perfected through a high amount of practice. In this report we are going to look at a fair amount of skills which are beneficial in both everyday life and in academic and employability scenarios.

3. ACADEMIC SKILLS

Possessing good academic skills is key to building up a good work related portfolio. Just like all other things academic skills are learned and perfected through a lot of hard and persistent work. There is so many of them that it's virtually impossible to learn and perfect all of them throughout university. Essentially good academic skills provide the ability to learn efficiently which eventually rewards the student with better time management and opportunities to achieve anything academic related. The following are examples of academic skills which are often deemed as the most important ones to get to know about:

3.1 Written English

In order for a student to reach top level in their academic the most important factor is the understanding of English. Often that is the difference between a good and a great a student as good students are not able to express themselves as fluently as great

ones. A good way to improve written English is to practice writing as well as reading books as learning new words can only occur if you encounter them and it's best to encounter them in written form as words in English tend to be pronounced differently than how they are actually written. (Oxford Royal Academy 2014)

3.2 Essay Writing

Good written English must be put into context and this could be shown via essay writing. Apart from showing what a student level is in English essays provide their comprehension of directness and influence which writing can bring in. Even though the main structure of an essay must be followed by all it is a one of the few free forms of writing and different people approach essay writing differently. A big chunk of essay writing knowledge is acquired during school, however essay requirements during university years are far more demanding. Along with more intense studying and analysing the usage of footnotes and references is compulsory. (Oxford Royal Academy 2014)

3.3 Referencing

Referencing is one of the if not the most important part of any academic work. It carries out some very important factors for a students work one of which is giving the whole project a structured look. It also provides the reader with proof of the extensiveness of the research involved. Acknowledging other people's work is maybe the most important factor of referencing as it provides credibility and acknowledges which work is the students and which is not. Referencing is essential as it: backs up the ideas included in the academic work; provides proof of the sources for the reader to get back to if they are looking for it; avoiding plagiarism- clarifies the comprehension of a topic, provides the evidence needed to separate the ideas from the writer and those of other people. Referencing must occur every time an idea of someone else's work is included in a students own work. That refers to both paraphrasing or citing (using the exact words) meaning as long as it's not the students personal work it must be referenced. (University of Leeds 2019)

3.4 Paraphrasing

It refers to developing someone else by using your own vocabulary often with the aim of providing more precision. Paraphrasing is the higher valued way of referencing someone's ideas as compared to quoting as it provides the reader with proof of the comprehension the writer has received while using their ideas. It's essential for the writer to get back to the resource as it shows that the reader hasn't stolen the ideas.

A big mistake which leads to people committing plagiarism is using nearly identical words or structure when paraphrasing which is why there are a lot of techniques in order for this not to occur. Some of them are:

- Usage of synonyms- This is the most important tool in paraphrasing. English possesses countless of synonyms for most words so it's down to the writer to have good knowledge and put it to use.
- Changing the structure of the sentence- This goes a long way in paraphrasing, however it's important to make sure that the meaning stays the same as different structure could easily change the meaning of the sentence.
- Breaking down the information into simple sentences- Using this method the writer could also emphasise on several key points. (Gahan 2019)

3.5 Summarising

Summarising means compressing a large chunk of information into a small passage that explains a few main points. Summary could be done using the following structure:

- Glancing- this is vital as it gives the writer an idea of what they have to include in their summary.
- Highlighting- going over the information again and grasping the most important chunks of the text.
- Note taking- as mentioned before note taking is key to any written work as it provides the writer with a clear idea of what will be the main points of the summary.
- Writing- while doing this the writer needs to make sure they only emphasise on the points which do appear in the text and not add any personal comments or ideas.
- Checking- very important part as it covers what has been written and provides security when it comes to the writer possibly having made a mistake.
- Referencing- this is essential in summarising.

A summary is divided into three key sections in order for it to be better structured. These are:

- The frame- this is usually a main part of the introductory sentence and it covers the predominant concept of the piece of writing.
- Reminder phrases- The main aim of this tool is to remind the reader that the written work is not personally the writers. This is very handy as it provides the writer with extra safety against possible plagiarism.
- Transition signals- for that tool to come in handy the writer needs to make sure they introduce the correct transition signals and this could be done by understanding and acknowledging the structure of the original text. (Smith 2019)

3.6 Time management

This refers to how is time approached in order to separate given amount of activities which have to be completed within that set amount of time. People tend to believe that understanding time management is needless as it would take some of their actual time in order to grasp the concept but on the contrary, the advantages a person can take away from it are huge. A few of these advantages are:

- Better and more efficient work outcome
- Calmer state of mind leading to better focus on the work
- Opportunities for ever growing advancement
- More time to achieve career and life goals

On the other hand failing to manage time appropriately often results in the following:

- Insufficient work quality
- Missing set goals and deadlines
- Stressed way of life leading to poor results (Dowding et. al. 2016)

4. EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

“Employability Skills can be defined as the transferable skills needed by an individual to make them ‘employable’.” (STEMNET n.d.)

4.1 Soft Skills

Also known as transferrable skills these are “personal aspects of one’s identity that allow them to productively and collectively interact collaborate with other individuals. In this report we can see 7 soft skills a proactive individual should possess.

- Communication skills- this relates to a compound of five aspects of communication in order for a person to best comprehend and be comprehended: Verbal(ability to use words to communicate); Non-verbal(usage of body language to help emphasise thoughts and ideas); Written(ability to compose clear ideas using text) and Visual(usage of pictures and visual assistances to your advantage).
- Teamwork- The ability to work as proficiently in a team as a person does individually.
- Problem Solving skills- Understanding that problems do occur at the workplace and therefore working out a solution to fixing them.
- Work ethic- understand your place and make the most of it by being responsible for your work.

- Leadership skills- Building up a strong image which could then be used for the good of the business.
- Flexibility/Adaptability- Being able to take on more than one responsibility and carrying out the work properly.
- Interpersonal skills- Being able to construct and control relationships especially within the business. (Williams 2019)

4.2 Hard Skills

These are skills which are usually attained via formal education and programs designed to train an individual these particular skills. Examples of places where hard skills are acquired are online and physical courses, educational institutes such as college, apprenticeships etc. Examples of hard skills are: Programming, Computer developing, Designing, Reporting and many more. (Doyle 2019)

5. SWOT Analysis

5.1 Strengths

As person I can confidently say there are a number of strengths in my repertoire.

- I have strong language/ writing skills. I can confirm that I do possess a rich vocabulary which could be noticed in this report as well as the in class exercises.
- Over my one year period at NexGenMobi I have managed to improve my communication skills as my job required making contacts both verbally and non-verbally and during this period of time I have managed to build up and maintain over 150 contacts.
- Problem solving skills are also something which I have built up on over my experience working for NexGenMobi. These included faults in the software system as well as clarification of targets seeing as a big percentage of my contacts weren't English.
- Teamwork skill is another of my strengths as I had to work hand in hand with my colleagues which involved helping each other with building up stronger relationships as well as transferring contacts in order for work to go smoothly.

5.2 Weaknesses

Both due to my lack of experience and the lack of structure within the business I have managed to determine my biggest weaknesses.

- Lack of motivation was a weakness of mine during some periods. This was down to the fact that I required new methods to be brought in but I wasn't heard.
- Time management- I tend to leave most if not all my work for last minute.
- Low self esteem resulting from not being acknowledged straight away.
- Building too many friendly relationships within a business setting.

5.3 Opportunities

- Eventually I would like to go and get my Masters and PHD.
- I am open to building up a career starting at a low position
- I have underwent teaching experience within the ABBA setting which has to do with Autistic persons. This in future could help me with improving my communication skills.
- I have worked in different types of work environments from construction sites to office settings which in future could be beneficial with settling in a particular work environment.

5.4 Threats

- Life is ever changing and more and more challenging so I need to keep up to date every day in order to build up a successful persona.
- Many jobs which I would be interested in future require work experience without pay which in today's world is extremely challenging
- My requirement to get PHD would mean not being able to work full-time until the completion, meaning material and moral challenges.

6. In-class exercises

The first in-class exercise consisted of a text which had to be paraphrased where my work wasn't correct on one situation where I tried using decimals to paraphrase which is not acceptable.

Regarding the second exercise I had made two grammar mistake due to my lack of attention as opposed to not knowing the right grammar.

7. Conclusion

In this report the following topics have been covered:

- What a skill is
- What academic skills are as well as some examples
- What employability skills are as well as some examples
- Personal SWOT analysis

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Time allocated: 1 hour. Please return your paper to the lecturer upon completion. It will be returned to you at the next session. You will need to include a scanned copy of this exercise in the form of an appendix together with you Task 1 (part of the Assignment for this module).

Ex.1 Write a paraphrase of the following passage.

Chocolate has always been considered an affordable little luxury, associated with romance and celebrations. Therefore in 2001, revelations that the production of cocoa in Ivory Coast involved child slave labour deeply shocked chocolate companies, consumers and governments alike. The USA passed legislation mandating that standards be created to permit companies who could prove that their chocolate was produced without forced labour to label their chocolate "slave-labour free." The chocolate industry agreed to an international protocol that would give chocolate producers four years to limit abusive practices.

When it comes to romance and celebrations chocolate has always been used as a method of showing gratitude and a cheap luxury. ~~There~~ Because of that in 2001, ~~chocolate companies~~ consumers and governments were distraught when they found out that child slave labour took place in the Ivory Coast in order for cocoa to be produced. In order for the chocolate to be ~~labeled~~ deemed "slave-labour free" the USA went through with a legislation which mandated standards to be introduced where companies would have to prove that their production is conducted without forced labour. An agreement was reached regarding the chocolate industry where chocolate producers were given $\frac{2}{5}$ of a decade to restrain offensive use. This was officially formed into a global protocol.

This is ^{roughly} accurate but 4 years is 4 years and cannot be changed. We do not say $\frac{2}{5}$ if we mean 4 years as it is too complicated. But good try!

Lecturer's comments:

Excellent restructuring and use of synonyms.

Lecturer's signature:

Date:

12/11/19.

Ex.2. Complete the blanks in such a way that the meaning of the second sentence is as close to the original sentence as possible, using the word in brackets where given. Pay attention to grammar and make sure what you write matches what is already given.

1) There will be a few changes around in the office. (announce)

The boss announced that some changes will be made in the office.

2) He doesn't write to me as frequently as I wanted.

I wish he would write to me more often.

3) We were concerned about her health.

We had some concerns regarding her health.

4) You weren't careful, so you made so many mistakes. (had)

If you had been more careful, you wouldn't have made so many mistakes.

5) The council cut funding so we could not provide free parking.

Because of the cutting of the (municipal) funding, free parking no longer possible.

6) His proposal was a failure as it was too theoretical. (relied)

His proposal relied on theory too much and it turned out to a failure.

7) It was Mary who stole money.

He accused many of stealing his money.

8) He seems well-educated. However, he's not very bright. (although)

Although he looks like a well educated man, he does seem very smart.

9) Universities place the burden of understanding plagiarism and attribution conventions on students.

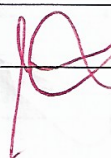
The responsibility for copying and attribution deeds is put ~~placed~~ on the students shoulders by the universities.

10) 33% of adolescents who have one baby, have a second baby within two years of the first baby's birth. (third)

A third of mothers who had a have second baby i the space of two years from the birth of the first one.

Lecturer's comments: _____

Lecturer's signature: _____

Excellent!


Date: _____

12/11/19

