Self awareness and opportunity awareness

Science

I have undertaken 5 classes to evaluate my strengths and weaknesses on various topics associated with employability and careers. The classes use a variety of tests and other methods to analyse me in order to produce reports on each topic. This report will summarise these topics and my conclusions from the classes, as well as reflecting on the exercises and how I found the results and their consequences.

Employability Skills

Employability skills are one of the most important skills a person can learn. It is one thing having the necessary qualifications for a job, but if you don't have the employability skills required, you will not succeed. From Class 1 on " Employability Strengths and Weaknesses" I found out that my main strengths were my organisation and work skills. For organisation, the class discovered that my main strengths were setting and reaching targets, prioritising tasks and meeting deadlines. These points are all related and vital at University and also at a job in " the real world". Without being able to set targets and accomplish them, nothing would ever get done and in life targets need to be set and reached in order to progress.

They can be used to monitor you and see improvement, which is a large benefit. My main weakness in my organisation category is mymotivation. Sometimes I can't get motivated into doing a piece of work, but once I start and get flowing, I do it till it's finished. Its one of the areas that I have improved on, but there is still room to develop. For work skills, the class confirmed that I am good at using and applying financial information which I gained and developed at college studying maths and business studies which

could open up different types of careers, associated with computing also. My weakness in work is teamwork, but only with something academical. I have no problems team working in a sport or socially, but would often prefer to complete a piece of work individually rather than in a group of people as I get more control in the content.

The skill that is my main weakness is my adaptability. My strength in this area is the ability to learn from experiences and develop new strategies for tasks that I experience. My weaknesses in this skill are finding creative solutions to problems and I think this is because overall I am not a particularly creative person. Another weakness in this area is that I am not resilient to change and the exercise states that most of us have this as a weakness but its something that is always going to happen and we need to accept change and thrive upon it. Another possible weakness in this area is transferring skills from one situation to another. The test results for this class state that people often have many skills that they have attained from every day life that they do not realise and these skills can be transferred into University or the work place. To improve in this area I have completed the exercises that are contained within this class and this will help me to identify improvements that can be made so that I can turn weaknesses into strengths to maximise my chances of getting a successfulcareer.

For this class, I found that I had done most of the activities before gaining similar results so I didn't actually learn much about myself, rather confirming the thoughts that I previously had. The most beneficial part of this class was getting a summary of each individual area of employability that related to me. It showed a graph as an overview of the skills and then described them

in detail, which was really helpful as it stated what I am good at and what needs further work on.

Occupational Interests

Class 2's aim was to help me identify the nature of occupation that was suitable for me and to learn about why it is important to recognise career preferences for choosing an occupation. The test that I completed in this section didn't tell me anything that I didn't already know. The main point that the test found out was that I am not very artistic, which I have known for a long time and anyone else that knows me will know this also. For the other 5 areas, it found that my interests were divided across the board. Apparently this will lead to a " conflict" in terms of career choice as " it may prove difficult to find a career area that satisfies all of my interests".

It implied that my answers may have been incorrect, but I feel this is because the questions were too general and could only be answered with a " yes" or a " no". As this was the case, I answered " yes" for most questions as I felt that it was either correct or partially so. Due to the format of the questions, I felt the summary of answers was irrelevant and conclusions could not be formed from the questions asked. An improvement to the questions could have been to answer on a scale of 1 to 10 and make conclusions based on the scale; this would have given a more in-depth summary on career interests which would have made it more relevant to each person, rather than general answers.

Learning Style & Team Working

The aim of class 3 was to identify my role when working in a team and my strengths and weaknesses of team working and my learning style when working alone and in a team. Although I participated in the Belbin method of identifying team roles before, it was in the first week that I was at University and my role has changed over this time as I have became more involved in groups and grown as a person. After completing the test as part of the class, the team role that best suited me was " Team Worker". The main points of this role are that I support members in their strengths and improve communications between members and help create team spirit within the group. Qualities in this role contain humility, flexibility, popularity and good listening skills, all of whichI believeto have. Weaknesses are a lack of decisiveness and toughness and distaste for friction. When I originally did the Belbin test, I didn't rate it highly and didn't pay much attention to the role it gave me. After completing it this time, I agree with the entire summary and believe the method to be informative and helpful in deciding roles for members within a group in order to get the best out of the team members.

Employment Opportunities

The main employment opportunity that I have in the near future is the year long industrial placement that takes place after my current year. The industrial placement will refine my employability skills in the workplace and also teach me new skills that will increase my knowledge and level of work ready for the final year and progressing from there onwards. Experience in industry for a year will also increase my job prospects once I leave University, as many jobs now require that people have at least 1 year's experience, but to get experience you need a job. It's a cycle that is hard to

enter but the industrial placement joins the cycle and gets that valuable experience required.

My current employment is working in a high street electrical store. Working with them has improved mycommunicationand team working skills as I work as part of a small team which requires constant communication for us to function efficiently. As part of a team, we get assigned roles and each role in the team is vital for the running of the store. I took this job mainly to fund myself at University but it has taught me skills that I can transfer into my work and for future jobs and career opportunities.

Career Decisions

The aim of class 4 was to identify my own decision making style and find out and use two methods of improving the quality of my decision making. Also this class helped to prepare to take appropriate action to progress to career plans. I am a mixture of decision making types, including rational, intuitive and " please everyone". I discovered that I tend to collect information about the possibilities and weigh up the pros and cons of each outcome to base my decision upon. Other times, I tend to know intuitively which decision to make. I can often not explain or justify these reasons for choosing a particular decision, but I'm drawn towards it. I also like to please as many people as I can when making a decision. If I have no preference on a decision, or would be pleased with a number of outcomes, I would choose the most popular vote to prevent conflict and make the most people happy.

The test on Career Decision Making stated that I have a good idea of where I am heading in career terms and that I may have a good record of successful

decisions and a strong idea of what career I wish to enter. I agree with this summary of my career progress but was unsure that the test would come to this justification. In the test, there were only 3 options per question and only 12 questions in total so I was sceptical whether it would come to an accurate decision given the lack of depth of the questions, but seeing as though it proved accurate for me, I cannot fault the process too much.

Conclusion

These classes have enhanced my knowledge of myself and the current skills that I obtain, and also the skills that I need further development on. Some of the classes have exercises that I have experienced before and weren't particularly useful as they told me nothing new, but they confirmed the results that previous tests had found. Other classes and exercises were new that I hadn't done before showed me my learning style which I hadn't previously known and I found out which team role I belong in, which has changed from the last time I did the exercise 14 months ago. One improvement that could have been made to the course was if there were practical classes, roughly once every 2 weeks that we could attend and get a better idea of what was happening and receive any help if we required it and a physical class would have been easier to keep up to date with the certificate than it all being online. Overall I think that these classes, and exercises within then, have been worthwhile as I have learnt which skills I posses and am good at, and also which skills I need to work on to improve my employability.