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**SEMESTER I SESSION 2020/2021**

**UKQE3001-02**  
**EXTRA-CURRICULAR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (EXCEL)**

**ASSIGNMENT 1:**  
**EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES REFLECTION REPORT 1**  
**CAREER READINESS-PERSONALITY COURSEWORK**

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## REFLECTION

Career Readiness Personality Coursework 2019 is a 7-week workshop organised by UTM Career Centre (UTMCC), aiming to train candidates' personalities and mentalities to cope with different challenges in the future career. Before being selected as a participant to join the workshop, all second year students from the School of Computing attended a short talk and were asked to fill in a Career Readiness-Personality survey. Based on the results of the survey, UTMCC had selected several candidates that met their selection criteria and research requirements. Fortunately, I was one of the lucky candidates that had been selected out of hundreds of students.

The workshop was held twice a week, a short 45 minutes session on Tuesday afternoon and a long 1 hour and 15 minutes session on Thursday evening. Every week, the organiser arranged different tasks, activities, talks, mini games and scenarios based on the Big 5 Personality Traits, namely OCEAN to determine participants' ranges between two extremes of each factor so that we could understand ourselves better and find the most suitable job. The letter O in the acronym OCEAN stands for openness to experience; C stands for conscientiousness; E stands for extraversion; A stands for agreeableness and lastly, N stands for neuroticism. All activities were planned to prepare us for a successful transition from university into the workplace.

In each week of activities, I had to reflect on what I have learned, identify my own traits, and determine my future goals including both personal goals and career goals. I noticed that all activities were purposely arranged to improve participants' competencies in career readiness including critical thinking, communications, teamwork, career management, leadership, professionalism, intercultural fluency and many more. Besides, there were a lot of activities that involved brainstorming and problem-solving that trained my thinking skills as I had to

process given information, draft connections, make decisions and create new ideas within a limited time.

I remembered that one of the most interesting and impactful activities, namely In Person, was conducted by the industrial representative, Mr Tan Boon Siang. The sharing session was definitely one of the greatest experiences that I gained from this workshop. Mr Tan Boon Siang shared his working experience as a management trainee under Nestle Malaysia. Besides sharing his own working experience, he also shared some useful tips such as the expectations of an employer, how to prepare ourselves towards future career and the do's and don'ts during a job interview. He mentioned that a great first impression was very important during a job interview. Hence, one should practise confident, accessible body language and good manner from the moment entering the building. He also showed some great examples of answering techniques which definitely widened my eyesight and made me reflect on the way I think on certain issues. For example, when the interviewers asked about our weaknesses, we should never answer them in a straightforward way. Instead, we had to let them know that we were aware of our own weaknesses and willing to work hard to cope with them.

Upon joining this workshop, I realised that my thinking skills had become more analytical and critical. As mentioned before, there were many activities that involved problem solving within a limited time. I felt that I could now practise sound reasoning to analyse the situations, interpret possible outcomes, make decisions and finally overcome the problems. I believe that the ability to think critically is one of the utmost important requisite competencies that all graduates should demonstrate when we talk about career readiness. Furthermore, I knew myself better after doing plenty of personality trait tests which would benefit me a lot in future career management. Most of the activities helped me to identify my personal skills, interests, strengths and even hidden talents that are relevant to my career goals. Learning on how to interpret the nature of a job also gave me the ability to explore job options that suit my

personality traits, take necessary steps to pursue desired position, and understand how to speak-up for myself for what I need and what I want in the workplace.

The experiences that I gained from this career readiness workshop were very different from the other workshops or talks that I had joined. I would say that I faced more challenges and difficulties during the whole period of this workshop, especially on time management and mind preparation. This was the very first time that I joined a periodical workshop that lasted for seven weeks. Usually, the workshops that I joined would last at most for three days. However, I needed to attend this workshop on every Tuesday from one o'clock in the noon to quarter to two in the noon and on Thursday from quarter past five in the evening to half past six in the evening. Even though it only took for two hours every week, I still needed to plan and arrange my time wisely especially during assignment peak period. Besides, I took my co-curricular course on Tuesday evening so I had to make sure I followed my schedule properly to accommodate both activities. It was very tiring to have a session on Thursday evening after a long day of lectures, not to mention if I had examination on Friday morning.

On the other hand, I felt mentally challenged when attending the workshop because it involved a lot of collaborative activities. Unlike the usual workshops or talks that I previously attended where the organisers focused on knowledge or experience sharing, this workshop required us to participate actively in every activity. At most of the time, I am always a person that prefers staying in my own comfort zone. I would not say myself as an introvert, but an ambivert or more likely an "outgoing introvert", who can be an extrovert in certain situations, around certain people or if I need to. Hence, building collaborative relationships with other participants was not easy for me as most of us did not know each other or even met before. In addition, all participants came from different backgrounds, races, genders, cultures, religions and viewpoints and we were randomly assigned to different groups every week. Nevertheless,

I managed to overcome it but it really took me quite a long time to struggle and be mentally prepared to work within a team structure.

For me, the most significant aspect of this workshop is not about helping us to gain the knowledge of our future careers but how the organiser virtually promote professionalism in all participants through the activities. I realise that I manage to demonstrate personal accountability by just attending the workshop because it requires my commitment and dedication, not to mention about other ethical behaviour such as punctuality, time management, productivity and tolerance. From the perspective of a student, having professionalism in me allows me to act responsibly in my study. As a student, it is my responsibility to arrive class on time, pay attention during class and bring proper lecture materials. I truly understand that developing professional behaviour now is definitely one of the must preparations for the real world in the future. A commitment to developing professionalism implies the willingness to continuous self-development, grow and evolving; learning to overcome difficulties; knowing myself better; seeking to improve my professional ability and competences; accepting both my strengths and weaknesses and being open to learn and accept new things.

In short, I have learned a lot of hard skills and soft skills that are helpful in my future career management by joining this workshop. Learning hard skills such as the ability to interpret the nature of a job and compare it with my personality traits allows me to determine whether the job suits me or not. Before attending the workshop, I was always not sure about my decision as I used to think that my thinking skills were not critical and mature enough to analyse this and that of a certain job. Not to say that my thinking skills are at a very high level now, but the skills that I have learned would definitely come in handy when I come across different situations or options of jobs in the future. From now on, I will be more decisive as I have learned how to obtain, interpret, and use the facts and knowledge to make decisions. I believe that these skills would definitely be further sharpened over time.

Likewise, gaining soft skills shapes me into a better person and undoubtedly a better employee in the future. When I compare the experience of joining this workshop to other experience of learning career management through readings or listening to talks, I can see how participate actively in all kinds of activities can inspire me to be more connected to my future career. I believe that workshops or talks which include activities that encourage participants to be more involved in real life situations are more effective than discussing the knowledge from the papers. In conclusion, as part of my career readiness practice, I intend to join more similar workshops that will allow me to explore how practical activities can contribute to my future career management. I hope that by taking this initiative, I will be able to close the gap between my higher education and the world of work.

## APPENDICES



