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# PSY399: a capstone unit

1. Make students aware of graduate capabilities they have developed
2. Consolidate and synthesise discipline specific knowledge and skills learned in different units in psychology
3. **Reflect\* on how undergraduate learning might be used to explain everyday behaviour**
4. Use 1-3 above to facilitate employability

## Reflection\* tips

- Find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed
- Prior to the first reflection, make a list of the subjects you have done and other issues you want to reflect on
- Work through the list systematically by having an agenda for each session or working through a number of issues in a block
- Keep a reflection diary
- It can be helpful to use the same time and place for each reflection
- It should be quiet and comfortable
- Beforehand, review the specific issues you will reflect on
- Begin with basic relaxation – starting with your toes and working by muscle groups toward your head, tense and release your muscles, concentrating on the feeling of release and relaxation
- Once relaxed, think through the issues for the issue, one by one.
- Take notes as you go and make notes after each reflection session – your thoughts, your conclusions and issues for later sessions
- Make an agenda for the next session
- Do something relaxing afterwards

## **Finding a job: creating a CV, preparing for interviews and other practical advice for job seekers**

### Professional development

- ✗ What is important in going to an interview for a volunteer placement?
- ✗ Would you take a CV? How long would it be?
- ✗ How would you prepare?
- ✗ What would you wear?
- ✗ Which of your traits do you want them to remember you for? How will you do this?

### Preparing for placement

- Familiarise yourself with the workplace
  - o Where is it, how to best get there, who are the people sitting nearby
  - o Look at an organisational chart
- Clarify your role and expectations
  - o Write down the details about the tasks/projects, clarify the deliverables
  - o Who might you work with to get things done
  - o Write down the peoples names and their job titles
  - o Ask questions to check that you are gathering the right sort of information
  - o Keep notes on important information e.g. your phone extension, IT help desk

### Work habits

- Wardrobe and grooming
  - o Check the dress code upfront
- Attendance and timing
  - o Contact your boss/supervisor on arrival each day just to check in
  - o always arrive a little early
- Breaks
  - o Most companies allow up to 1 hour break for lunch
  - o There may be no formal morning/afternoon tea breaks; keep these to a minimum
  - o Always tell people where you are going if you leave your desk
- Personal calls
  - o Avoid personal calls (maximum 1 brief one per day)

**Professional behaviour**

Do	Avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Say hello and goodbye to people nearby</li> <li>o Smile and have good eye contact</li> <li>o Keep your work space tidy</li> <li>o Use quiet rooms for personal or confidential client telephone calls</li> <li>o Put your phone on silent</li> <li>o Minimal use of personal mobile phone, telephone, email, twitter etc. at work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Talking loudly with your colleagues across the office</li> <li>o Talking loudly on the telephone</li> <li>o Mobile phones (make sure phone is on silent)</li> <li>o Eating strong smelling foods</li> </ul>

**What you may gain from the placement**

- Confidence
- Practical experience
- Australian workplace knowledge and cultures
- Mock job application experience
- Networking opportunities
- A referee
- A job offer

**Challenges you may face**

- Networking/interacting with others
- Negotiating with your supervisor
- Cultural shock
- Communication
- Picking up speed
- Not enough to do

**Strategies**

- Treat it as a paid job (professionalism)
- Show reliability
- Show flexibility
- Show initiative
- Show openness and honesty
- Show a positive attitude
- Show curiosity
- Show helpfulness
- Follow instructions and use common sense
- Ask questions when unsure
- Keep yourself busy
- Build a good relationship with your supervisor and colleagues
- Work with your placement coordinators

**Why is self-marketing important?**

- Competitive job market - differentiate yourself from other candidates
- Employers respond to positive, motivated people who show initiative in promoting themselves
- The way you conduct yourself during placement can give the employer an indicator of your attitude and aptitude for the job
- You may get to hear about roles that are never advertised

**Employability skills**



**Be clear about what you have to offer**

- Plan to develop and hone at least 2-3 capabilities during your project/ activity e.g. presentation skills, influencing skills
- Chase opportunities to participate in activities that build on these
- Showcase these and market yourself e.g. through an elevator pitch on your resume (the purpose of a resume is to get yourself an interview, let the employer know what you have to offer and let the employer know you have the necessary: skills, knowledge, personal qualities and qualifications)

**Be a ‘STAR’ in your interview**

Example interview question: tell me about a time when you demonstrated effective written communication skills?

Example answer according to ‘STAR’:

<b>Situation:</b>	When I was a volunteer support worker at ‘Making Children’s Lives Better’
<b>Task:</b>	My manager approached me to write a report on the previous month’s fundraising activities for distribution to senior management of the organisation
<b>Action:</b>	I communicated with key stakeholders in order to gauge their views on the success of the fundraising and to note their key recommendations for future activities. After collating this information, I drafted the report using both quantitative and qualitative research techniques learned during my Psychology studies at Macquarie University. I summarised the findings into a user-friendly format, then submitted a draft to my manager for her approval.
<b>Result:</b>	My manager very impressed with the quality of the report and made only minor changes before it was distributed. In addition, two managers sent emails to congratulate me on the quality of my report.

**Using your project experience**

- Your activities and projects in this unit can form the foundation of your STAR answers
- The people you meet and work with can become your entry into the field
- The organisation you work with may have entry level openings

Person/environment fit

- The match between an organisation and an employee is known to be related to:
  - Job satisfaction
  - Job performance
  - Citizenship behaviours
  - Reduced turnover
  - Reduced mental/physical health concerns
- A better perceived person-environment fit increases your chances of being hired
- Some of this is determined in the initial screening process (resume/selection criteria/targeted questions), but the most important is in the interview
- The desire of the organisation will vary based on organisation, job and supervisor

Skills employers look for:

	List <i>behaviours</i> that demonstrate...	List <i>examples</i> that highlight...
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Common goals</u></li> <li>• Values contribution</li> <li>• Collaborate</li> <li>• Bringing together</li> <li>• Cohesion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disagree in an open way</li> <li>• Respect ideas</li> <li>• Integrate</li> <li>• <u>Active listening</u></li> <li>• <u>Make decisions</u></li> <li>• Effective contributions</li> <li>• Complement each other</li> <li>• Feed off strengths and common weaknesses</li> </ul>
Problem-solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise</li> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Delegate</li> <li>• Consult</li> <li>• Perspective – diversity – avoid Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Plan</li> <li>• Break things down</li> </ul>