

THE EDINBURGH AWARD



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Submission example: SKILL

DEMONSTRATING REFLECTION & PURPOSE

Skill: Thinking on my feet

During the Edinburgh Award I wanted to develop my ability to think on my feet. Given that this is an extremely important skill for future employment, being a PALs facilitator (Peer Assisted Learning) was a unique opportunity to put this into practise and to increase my confidence in my abilities.

In order to avoid being unable to answer a question, I ensured that our PALs sessions were well planned and prepared. In addition I sought to ensure that I knew or I had researched the answers to potential questions that could arise. Taking these steps to improve this skill I learned that effort in advance helps me feel more confident and improve my ability to think on my feet. As situations or questions arose that forced me to use this skill, I became more confident with my own ability to answer.

I am also part of an Investment Club and sought to use this to improve my ability to think on my feet by volunteering to research a company for a stock pitch. This meant that I was responsible for knowing information about the company in great detail and was required to think on my feet when put in the pressurised position of answering questions.

Through honing this skill I felt confident in thinking on my feet when under pressure. As a result I recently secured my place on a competitive internship after presenting a case study and answering complex commercial questions on my feet.

Skill: Thinking on my feet (reflective)

During the Edinburgh Award I wanted to develop my ability to think on my feet. Given that this is an extremely important skill for future employment, being a PALs facilitator (Peer Assisted Learning) was a unique opportunity to put this into practise and to increase my confidence in my abilities.

In order to avoid being unable to answer a question, I ensured that our PALs sessions were well planned and prepared. In addition I sought to ensure that I knew or I had researched the answers to potential questions that could arise. **Taking these steps to improve this skill I learned that effort in advance helps me feel more confident and improve my ability to think on my feet. As situations or questions arose that forced me to use this skill, I became more confident with my own ability to answer.**

I am also part of an Investment Club and sought to use this to improve my ability to think on my feet by volunteering to research a company for a stock pitch. This meant that I was responsible for knowing information about the company in great detail and was required to think on my feet when put in the pressurised position of answering questions.

Through honing this skill I felt confident in thinking on my feet when under pressure. As a result I recently secured my place on a competitive internship after presenting a case study and answering complex commercial questions on my feet.

This is a good example of reflection because they have stopped and given thought to how and why the actions they have taken have helped them increase their ability to think on their feet.

The reflective element is also made stronger through their description of the learning that has come from developing their chosen skill.

Skill: Thinking on my feet (purposeful)

During the Edinburgh Award I wanted to develop my ability to think on my feet. Given that this is an extremely important skill for future employment, being a PALs facilitator (Peer Assisted Learning) was a unique opportunity to put this into practise and to increase my confidence in my abilities.

In order to avoid being unable to answer a question, I ensured that our PALs sessions were well planned and prepared. In addition I sought to ensure that I knew or I had researched the answers to potential questions that could arise. Taking these steps to improve this skill I learned that effort in advance helps me feel more confident and improve my ability to think on my feet. As situations or questions arose that forced me to use this skill, I became more confident with my own ability to answer.

I am also part of an Investment Club and sought to use this to improve my ability to think on my feet by volunteering to research a company for a stock pitch. This meant that I was responsible for knowing information about the company in great detail and was required to think on my feet when put in the pressurised position of answering questions.

Through honing this skill I felt confident in thinking on my feet when under pressure. As a result I recently secured my place on a competitive internship after presenting a case study and answering complex commercial questions on my feet.

This account shows clearly that the student has taken purposeful steps to strengthen this skill. The student recognised that they needed to be prepared to improve at being able to 'think on their feet' and they have also actively worked to increase their knowledge of subjects to improve this skill.

The text also works well because it shows they have recognised that they can develop this skill outwith their PALs activity and have gone out of their way to volunteer for an activity that they believe will develop their chosen skill. This is a clear, purposeful step taken to enhance their skill.

Submission example: IMPACT

DEMONSTRATING REFLECTION & PURPOSE

Impact on others

My role was providing academic support, while developing confidence, planning and leadership.

I attempted to plan thoroughly and have confidence in my knowledge to ensure attendees gained a lot from sessions. We endeavoured to make sessions more dynamic and interactive for attendees, which I feel was achieved through planning, leadership, structuring and materials. However assessment sessions attracted more attendees which is a future working point. I was active organising and leading preparation, suggesting meetings and ensuring materials were available making sessions run smoothly; which also helped my confidence grow by being forthcoming. Ensuring I prepared directions in case conversation lulled spurred the raising of important points and questions, a skill used increasingly effectively lending to fruitful sessions for attendees. The blog helped PALS (Peer Assisted Learning) become more noticeable and accessible. Providing notes provided access if students could not attend, or for reference; extending our support online and integrating it with the Psychology Society, including adopting their branding giving us recognition and extending support to more students. The blog received good feedback and views and will continue as requested by the Psychology Society. Our PALS scheme has seen more attendance and contact; staff and students have referred more to the scheme, extending our support as a result.

Impact on others (reflective)

My role was providing academic support, while developing confidence, planning and leadership.

I attempted to plan thoroughly and have confidence in my knowledge to ensure attendees gained a lot from sessions. We endeavoured to make sessions more dynamic and interactive for attendees, which I feel was achieved through planning, leadership, structuring and materials. **However assessment**

sessions attracted more attendees which is a future working point. I was active organising and leading preparation, suggesting meetings and ensuring materials were available making sessions run smoothly;

which also helped my confidence grow by being forthcoming. Ensuring I prepared directions in case conversation lulled spurred the raising of important points and questions, **a skill used increasingly**

effectively leading to fruitful sessions for attendees. The blog helped PALS (Peer Assisted Learning) become more noticeable and accessible. Providing notes provided access if students could not attend, or for reference; extending our support online and integrating it with the Psychology Society, including adopting their branding giving us recognition and extending support to more students. The blog received good feedback and views and will continue as requested by the Psychology Society. Our PALS scheme has seen more attendance and contact; staff and students have referred more to the scheme, extending our support as a result.

This is a good example of someone reflecting on their impact; as well as describing steps they have taken to increase their impact this student has also described the learning that has come out of taking these steps, including further opportunities for increased impact. They reflected clearly on how their actions directly impact the students.

Impact on others (purposeful)

My role was providing academic support, while developing confidence, planning and leadership.

I attempted to plan thoroughly and have confidence in my knowledge to ensure attendees gained a lot from sessions. We endeavoured to make sessions more dynamic and interactive for attendees, which I feel was achieved through planning, leadership, structuring and materials. However

assessment sessions attracted more attendees which is a future working point. **I was active organising**

and leading preparation, suggesting meetings and ensuring materials were available making sessions run smoothly; which also helped my confidence grow by being forthcoming. **Ensuring I prepared**

directions in case conversation lulled spurred the raising of important points and questions, a skill

used increasingly effectively leading to fruitful sessions for attendees. The blog helped PALS (Peer Assisted Learning) become more noticeable and accessible. Providing notes provided access if students could not attend, or for reference; extending our support online and integrating it with the Psychology Society, including adopting their branding giving us recognition and extending support to more students. The blog received good feedback and views and will continue as requested by the Psychology Society. Our PALS scheme has seen more attendance and contact; staff and students have referred more to the scheme, extending our support as a result.

This is a good example of someone taking active steps to increase their impact; as well as recognising the sort of impact they can have, this person took the time to think about clear actions they could take to increase their impact on the students in their sessions.

Submission example: SKILL

**ALTHOUGH WELL WRITTEN, WEAK
IN REFLECTION & PURPOSE**

Innovation

The first development priority that I chose was “innovation.” My initial reason for choosing innovation as a development priority was that I was not a particularly creative person, and I knew that throughout the peer-assisted learning scheme (PALS), I would need to use innovation in order to make the sessions more engaging. The sessions which I had to plan for PALS were often on very dry subjects, such as “note-taking” or “how to structure legal arguments.” Therefore in order to help the first year students get the most out of the sessions, myself and the other student leader had to come up with new and exciting ways in which to present this topic. We did this through allowing the first years to use teamwork, “fun,” non-legal exercises, etc. Whilst doing this I was able to improve upon this development priority through creative session planning and learning think on the spot when these sessions did not go to plan.

Innovation

Well written but weak in reflection & purposeful steps

The first development priority that I chose was “innovation.” My initial reason for choosing innovation as a development priority was that I was not a particularly creative person, and I knew that throughout peer-assisted learning scheme (PALS), I would need to use innovation in order to make the sessions more engaging. The sessions which I had to plan for PALS were often on very dry subjects, such as “note-taking” or “how to structure legal arguments.” Therefore in order to help the first year students get the most out of the sessions, myself and the other student leader **had to come up with new and exciting ways in which to present this topic. We did this through allowing the first years to use teamwork, “fun,” non-legal exercises, etc.** Whilst doing this I was able to improve upon this development priority through creative session planning and learning think on the spot when these sessions did not go to plan.

This is an example of a reflection that is really well written and reads very well but actually doesn't meet the learning objectives. This student doesn't describe any purposeful steps they have taken to improve their 'innovation'. While they have recognised what they need to improve in this skill, use of phrases like 'had to' imply that this is not an active step they have chosen to take. Rather, they found themselves in a situation which forced them to innovate. The description of the exercises used to make the sessions more dynamic does not describe how this person purposefully tried to get better at being 'innovative'; instead they are simply giving an example of using this skill. This is an important difference: providing an example of using a skill is not the same as describing steps you have taken to strengthen your skill.