

Comp230 Semester Review

1507680

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1 Introduction

It is the start of the second year and the first semester is coming to a close, reviewing problems and improvements needed is a key part of progressing in the workplace. Keeping track of my progress through weekly reports I was able to identify 5 key skills that I need to improve on, these skills are organization and clear goals, retaining what I read, time management, analytical writing and reviewing marked work. This short report will identify why these skills are important in the workplace, how they affected my work and how I am going to implement improvements using SMART goals.

2 Organisation and clear goals

Organisation of clear goals is important in the games industry as you are giving tasks to complete, being able to organise goals would help you stay on task and allow you to complete goals at a steady pace. This skill affected my work as at times as I had no structure to what I was working on, I found myself pondering on what I should be working on today. The first few weeks I focused solely on the ethics essay and neglected other projects. The first technique I'd suggest to improve on this skill is a visual representation of my final goals, I will by next semester purchase a cork board and have all assignment briefs printed off so I am able to stick these to the cork board in order of time completion. This would allow me not only to see which tasks are more time sensitive than others but be able to stick helpful notes next to them. The other solution to this is to develop a task list for each of the projects, a good online web tool for this is Trello, this would allow me to break up big tasks into smaller ones and set times to do these by.

3 Retaining what I Read

Retaining what one has read is important in the workplace as it allows for quick recall of past read items, instead of having to research the problem again you are able to remember it straight away. The reason why this affected my work is that I forget a lot of what I read, when reading articles and helpful online notes a couples hours later it would be out of my head. A way to improve on this retention of what I read is to read more, I should have a set amount of articles a week I should read, a set amount of books a month. Then a questionnaire at the end of each week to summarise and ask certain generic questions to build up this memory. Another way is similar, I would get my lecturer to give me an article they have read and then they are able to ask me more specific questions to this. Lastly I think the most helpful is to write out a glossary of key things I learn from reading when I read them, studies show that we remember things more when we write them down. Each article I read I will write down at least 3 key points from it, I should aim to have at least 15 key points a week. This also relates to programming, as I'm progressing and I find an algorithm that is useful. I should implement it so that I will be able to remember it in the future.

4 Time management

Managing time is somewhat mandatory in the games industry, deadlines are almost always a thing that cannot be overlooked. The reason this affected my work is because I have been very inconsistent in the way I spend my time. In the past I have sometimes been able to do a consistent 2-3 hours a day schedule and it worked quite well but i've been falling back into a burst of work every other week which is not working. This means when I am unable to do a programming problem I have a lot of time when I do not work on it again. Methods of solving this problem would be having something I can work on when I am unable to do a programming problem so that instead of getting flustered and just giving up on work I can still do something productive each week. This would be measured by the time on task, if I were to consistently do 2-3 hours of work for 4-5 days it would be a success. Another way is to have a visual timetable on my wall where I can set times to work and some for recreation, this would change around to find the most effective time to work. Having set periods of time for different bits of work allows me to concentrate on individual tasks.

5 Analytical writing

Analytical writing is important in the workplace as sometimes employees must research a certain topic and instead of giving it at face value must analyze it and test all the information. Analytical writing has been somewhat hard for me in the past, having to analyze the question and research i've done but also be impartial to it at the same time. The main method of improving this skill is practice over all else, I should aim to have draft of work well ahead of the hand in date so I am able to have feedback on how the analysis of the work is going. Peer review would also be good as it allows me to get informal feedback on how I can improve. Another method is researching papers on analytical writing, this allows me to see examples and techniques I can use to improve and try to implement them into my work.

6 Reflecting on marked work

Reflecting on marked work is a key skill to seeing past mistakes and improving on them, if you were to do something wrong in the games industry it would be professional to review these mistakes and work on improving them. I found that once a piece of work is done I completely forget about it and move onto the next task, all too often I fail at the same thing i've done before, by going back and actually reading and understanding the marked feedback i've got I will be able to improve any future work that I do. The method for improving this skill is not only reading over comments from lecturers but also pinning these comments up for visual reference in the future. When I then start a new piece of work I should look over these for advice, and once i finish a draft I should proof read with these comments in mind. I can measure this by seeing how many mistakes I did not repeat.

7 Conclusion

In conclusion there are multiple small but efficient improvements that could easily be made, the main focus for me personally I think would be time management and having set goals each week. Being able to have a steady time schedule with set goals for the week would boost my productivity and keep me focused, I am confident I work better when I do small amounts of work each day rather than rushing it all into the last few weeks.