

## STAGE 2 WORKPLACE PRACTICES

### ASSESSMENT TYPE 3: REFLECTION

**Task:**

Reflection on **one** of the following:

- Vocational learning (Work experience, casual/part-time employment, parenting, or carer)
- Reflection – VET areas of study
- Careers Event
- Graduate Qualities & Personal Attributes

**Purpose:**

This task enables you to:

- reflect on and evaluate your learning experiences in relation to undertaking vocational learning / vocational education and training or attending a career expo event.
- OR**
- reflect on and evaluate the learning experiences which helped you develop the graduate qualities and Personal Attributes.

**Description of assessment:**

You are to prepare a report to review and reflect on your vocational learning experience in a workplace. Your report should demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of practices in the workplace, workplace conditions and workplace cultures, and draw from your own practical experiences in a workplace.

**Assessment conditions**

Written reflection maximum of 1000 words

<i>Learning Requirements</i>	<i>Assessment Design Criteria</i>	<i>Capabilities</i>
1. Understand and explain concepts of industry and work 2. Analyse the relationships between work-related issues and practices in workplaces 3. Demonstrate knowledge of the roles of individuals, government legislation and policies, unions, and employer groups in work-related and workplace issues 4. Investigate the dynamic nature of work-related and workplace issues, cultures, and/or environments locally, nationally, and/or globally 6. Reflect on and evaluate learning experiences in/about the workplace.	<p><b>Knowledge and Understanding</b> The specific features are as follows:</p> <p>KU1 Understanding of knowledge, skills, and competencies appropriate to the relevant industry</p> <p>KU2 Understanding and explanation of concepts and issues related to industry and work.</p> <p><b>Investigation and Analysis</b> The specific features are as follows:</p> <p>IA1 Analysis of the relationships between work-related issues, tasks, and/or practices in the workplace.</p> <p>IA2 Investigation of the dynamic nature of work-related and workplace issues, tasks, cultures, and/or environments locally, nationally, and/or globally.</p> <p><b>Reflection and Evaluation</b> The specific feature is as follows:</p> <p>RE1 Reflection on and evaluation of learning experiences in/about an industry and self-evaluation.</p>	Communication Citizenship Personal Development Work Learning

On May the 22<sup>nd</sup> I attended an excursion with other year 12 high students, this excursion was the career expo held at the Adelaide showground. I currently have a job and am looking to move and have a range of careers in mind, with that being said I used to career expo to the best of my ability to collect information in those fields and also in fields I hadn't thought about joining until after this excursion. I visited TAFESA looking at the plumbing and electrician field. I visited the defence force recruiting booth and engineering booth, I also visited the training and employment centre.

### Experience within the event.

I found all the booths that I visited and collected information from were all very useful, and the people running the booths were willing to help you out with answering whatever question I through at them as best as they could.

After talking to TAFESA about plumbing and electrical they spoke me through the best way to apply for jobs in an industry of that sort, they explained I don't need very much experience and can enter a job as an apprentice which will also help me become qualified and I'll be able to obtain a certificate in the trade after the 3/4 years on learning and training.

They introduced me to the courses that they provide to people who are looking into entering one of these trades and also the courses they offer the people who are already apprentices and have to go to trade school. After giving me a rundown of what they offer and what you learn while attending this course he proceeded to tell me that if I was serious about making one of the following jobs my career that my best way to go about it was the go through as a school apprentice.

The TAFESA representative that I spoke to gave me a lot of information towards both careers and explained that they are both great careers to get into if you have an opportunity.

The representative from the plumbing and electrical was possibly the most helpful at the career expo in helping me towards a plumbing or electrician career and giving me information on both of them. He explained to me that they work similar to TAFESA and also offer trade school programs for apprentices in the trade. The representative is an automotive mechanic by trade and is now a business development manager for training prospects. He introduced me to a few of the guys who were also working within the booth who are qualified in both trades I'm interested in.

The presenter whose name I cannot recall shown me the basics in the trades electrician and plumbing. This really helped me out a lot in not only knowledge but also helped me and my decision towards the career I want and what career I would choose out of the two of my interest.

I visited the defence force as a point of interest and information, and after a long conversation with Sargent L I really enjoyed the thoughts of the defence force as a career. He went into detail in telling us the training and fitness level that is needed if I was serious about going into this field. He gave us a run down about the speed boat and diving as he is a fully qualified diver.

Right next door to this booth was the engineering booth which I chose to have a look at as I was passing by on my way back to the bus. This engineering company are the guys who build and put

together the aircrafts for the air forces in Australia. He briefly described to me what they do and the workings of the aircraft engines. He told me they also service the engines and told me how they test that the engines are working to the standard they should be.

Word count: 661 words

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Earlier this year I had a school based apprenticeship at a car service and sales centre known by the name of R. . while I was at the garage I was doing my cert 3 in automotive mechanic at TAFE where my trade school was based, I managed to gain this employment after doing a week's work experience which I managed to get with the help of a family friend while doing a VET course in Automotive at high school. While at the garage I was taught a variety of skills by many older mechanics in the garage that have been in the trade for most of their life, one mechanic there has been a mechanic for over 40 years and taught me many things that I will remember in the future.

This was the first year of my apprenticeship and I was proud of myself that I was able to display the skills I had from Certificate I in Automotive, like cleaning the workshop to WHS standards and knowledge of motors and how they work, to the point that they offered me an apprenticeship. I think my knowledge coupled with my enthusiasm about the industry and eagerness to learn more impressed the employer.

During my first few shifts at R. was shown around and shown a lot of expectations and requirements. I was shown the basics such as emergency exits and how to react to emergency situations such as chemical spills and normal liquid spills, fires, etc. This stuck with me for the whole time of my employment at R and came in handy a few times throughout my time as an apprentice there. During my employment I had to deal with a few chemical spills being in the workshop. One example of when I put this knowledge into practice is when a large bottle of coolant was once dropped onto the floor and covered a wide area with coolant. Coolant poses a danger because it can burn through clothing and is poisonous if it gets into the eyes and mouth or into a cut. This is why, when using coolant, you must always wear gloves and safety glasses.

I was asked by a senior's mechanic to clean up the spill and this is where my WHS skills and knowledge came into action, if I did not take the responsibility to clean it up and it would have been left, this could have led to further injuries to other mechanics in the workshop, as explained above. I made sure to be wearing safety shoes and long pants (which I was expected to always wear in the workshop), put on long vinyl gloves (regular cleaning gloves are not strong enough as coolant can eat away at them and can soak through), and put on safety glasses. I then got myself a bucket of hot water and mopped up the worst of the covered area, making sure not to fling the mop when draining it. I followed the regulation of mopping and wincing the coolant into the hot water 3 times only and then changed the water. I did this because otherwise I would've been mopping the floor with watered down coolant. Once the floor was mopped and was still slightly damp I used the bin of saw dust purposely for chemical spills and sprinkled saw dust over the damp and wet area which soaked up the moisture and the remaining's of the spillage. Once it was soaked up it was ready to be cleaned up and thrown into a bin out back. The senior mechanic who first asked me to clean the spill also praised me afterwards for doing a good job in keeping the workshop tidy. This made me feel happy and confident in myself for the remaining of the day as it proved to my employer that I was able to put the knowledge they taught me into practice.

Soon after I started working I also started trade school at TAFE S/ , my first few modules at trade school were also to do with Workplace Health and Safety. This taught me safety requirements clothing and safety considerations to be taken when working on a motor vehicle. However, since I had completed Certificate I in Automotive and had been working in a workshop for some time I was aware of many of the risks and hazards involved. This meant that I was able to contribute to class discussions and finish my work in a timely manner. However, the course did build my understanding further by allowing me to gain a deeper understanding for the reasons behind some of the rules.

Other knowledge and skills I learnt at TAFE that I was able to put into practice at the R workshop included replacing clutches, diffs and breaks, sanding down discs. At first I found replacing clutches the most difficult task to do because there are many steps. On some cars you are required to remove half the motor, replace the clutch and then put the motor back which is a very timely process. After having done this a few times I now feel more confident in changing clutches on certain but all cars because it's more complicated on some cars due to their build.

Other skills that I learnt at TAFE during trade school included rebuilding gear boxes, working with electrical wiring, re-gassing air-conditioning systems and rebuilding diffs. This included theory and practical work which I was successful at. However, I was not able to put these skills into practice at work because Rebel Ford did not offer these kinds of services. The only one that was offered was air-conditioning re-gassing which requires a licence that I don't have. This was a little concerning because I really enjoyed doing this type of work at TAFE and was not able to practice my skills in the workplace. This meant that I was at risk of forgetting how to do these things and not developing in these areas further. This also meant that if I wanted to gain employment in another automotive workshop after my apprenticeship I may be at a disadvantage even though I had finished the apprenticeship because someone who had the same qualifications as me but had the experience in these skills would get the job over me.

While working at R as an apprentice I first started doing very basic jobs and helping out the qualified and older mechanics, soon I was taught the basics and how to service cars I was then told to do one by myself, with every service there is a checklist sheet so that helped me when it came to completing the service and I still had a head mechanic look over all my work I completed on a vehicle for my whole apprenticeship, I was given bigger and more skilled jobs to complete more into my apprenticeship. One of the main experiences that stands out for me was replacing a water pump and gasket on a car in three hours when the given time for the completion of the job is 4. I was initially impressed with and proud of myself but when I realised that I had 2 bolts left over after finishing the job I became concerned and asked the senior mechanic to check over my work. I then had to take most components back off the car and put the bolts back on. This took another hour. From this experience I learnt to follow instructions carefully and that retracing steps is an important skill in this trade. When components are not put together correctly they can pose a serious risk not only to the mechanic working on the car but also on the road.

At R work with people of all different ages, we often worked together as a team. The employees were aged between 16 and 60. I am the youngest employee at the workshop but am treated with respect, as an adult and feel comfortable and valued there. There are no females working in the garage centre of the company. This is not surprising as the amount of females working as motor mechanics is very low, in fact it is below 5% of all motor mechanics across Australia. However, the receptionist and the sales person are women and they work mostly out the front of the business. There are times that the sales office employees and garage mechanics work together such as when preparing a new vehicle ready for sale and departure from the company. When this happens all employees treat each other with respect and do not take account of gender and age when a job needs to be done. R is an Equal Opportunity employer and I am sure would hire a woman mechanic or a man to work out the front of the business if the individual had the correct skills to complete the job.

Overall the business has approximately 80 employees. This includes sales reps, spare parts contractors, mechanics and receptionists. In my area there were approximately 20 mechanics employed on a full time basis. I was the only school based apprentice and there were 4 apprentices employed full time, through the M. The pay rates varied between the employees depending on their experience. I was getting paid as a first year apprentice, one of the other apprentices was in his 3<sup>rd</sup> year and two were in their 4<sup>th</sup> year. We were all getting paid the Award rate for our year of apprenticeship. The amount of I was being paid was adequate

for me because coming out of a part time job at pizza hut it was a significant pay increase. Since I am still living at home and do not have to pay board or contribute to bills the money I was earning was for my own spending. This therefore allowed me to have more independence and freedom to do a lot more things with my friends because I could afford to do them.

Interestingly, I found out that the M apprentices were being less than I was even though they were further into their apprenticeship. I was told that this was because the M gave them a 'free' tool box when they started which they had to pay off to the M. The M also finds them the apprenticeship so they have to pay a percentage of their wage to the M. The apprentice who I was talking to about this had a lot more experience and responsibilities in the workplace than me, when he found out that I was getting paid more he was disappointed and stated that he regretted going through the M to find his apprenticeship. This conversation made me appreciate my position a bit more, there was a stage where I was thinking of going through the M for my apprenticeship and was glad that I did not do so, on reflection.

Verbal communication was the main mode of communication in the workshop during my time at R. I received my instructions daily from the senior mechanic and he was the one who trained me and checked over my work. The workshop was managed in a team manner. The mechanics were divided into a red team and a blue team with a team leader for each. I bounced back and forward between the teams as a school based apprentice. This allowed me to observe two different styles of management. The leader of the red team was a little more authoritative in his style while the blue team leader was more relaxed and I found him a lot more approachable. I can see the benefits of both styles of leadership but preferred the style of the blue leader. He spoke to me and other team members not only about the work but also other things, establishing a relationship with us. This style of leadership and the relationship I had with the blue leader made me feel more comfortable with that team, I also found that I got my work done a lot quicker because I was more relaxed and able to feel clearly. In future I hope to have an employer with a more relaxed style of leadership but also who holds high expectations of his/her staff. If I am ever a leader I will try to be that style of leader.

I worked at R as an apprentice for approximately 1 year before I realised that I didn't really want to work in the automotive industry. I found that the job was the same 'day in day out' – service and delivery of cars. It was very repetitive and therefore boring. Another factor that contributed to me changing industries was that you can't move into working with and tuning performance cars but you can't do that with the training and experience background I was getting at R. After some time I started to dislike the work and some of the other employees so the decision to change careers completely, and industries, was an easy one to make.

I am now working as a school based apprentice in the electrical industry and am enjoying the work. I plan to go full time next year and finish the apprenticeship which will take 3 years. After that I hope to become a fire fighter. The electrical knowledge will be beneficial to this job.