

UNIVERSITY OF WALES

Trinity Saint David

LONDON

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MODULE CODE: BMSW4001

**MODULE TITLE: ACADEMIC AND
EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS (TERM 2)**

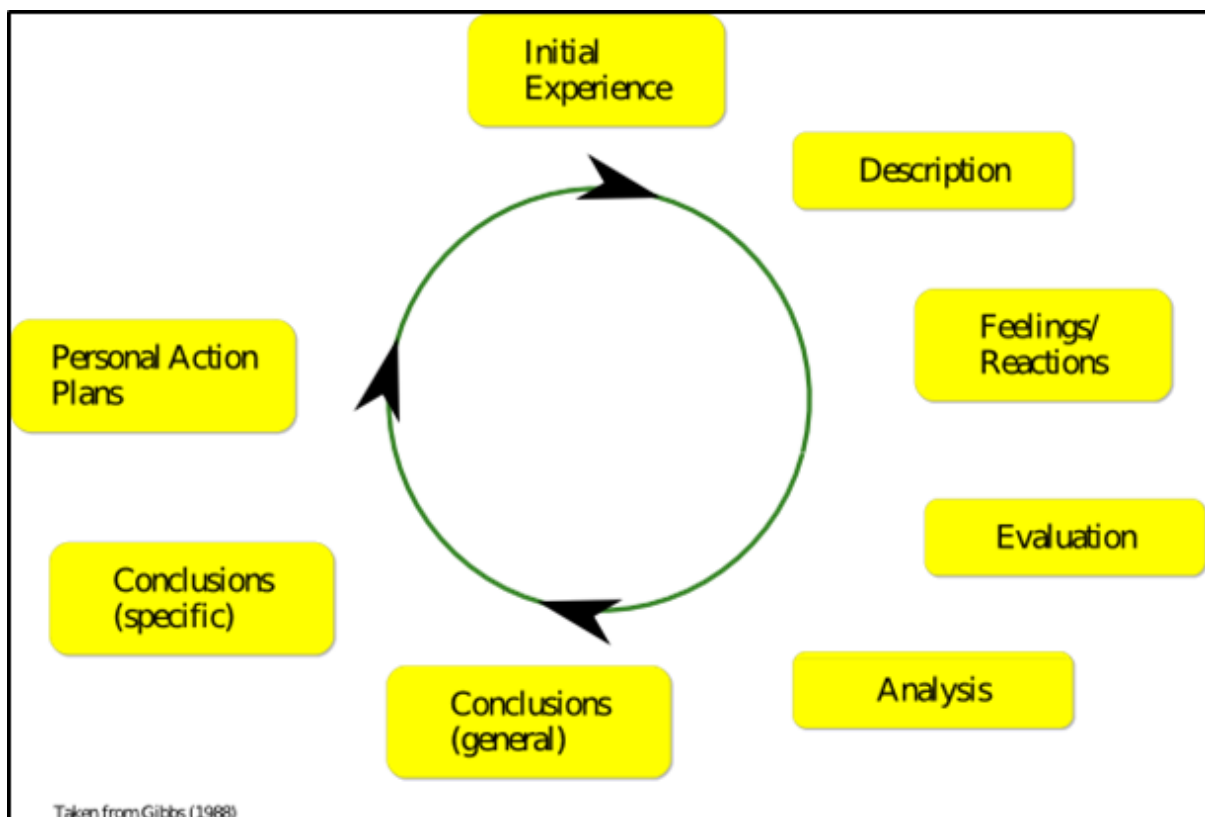
ASSIGNMENT TITLE: REFLECTIVE WRITING

COURSE TUTOR: DR ALFRED MENSAH

REFLECTIVE WRITING

INTRODUCTION

A reflective report is an art of writing by a student in the form of a summary of how they critically reflect on a subject. It also gives room for the student to look critically through their work and can reflect the experience gathered while looking at the views and ideas of other people. This type of report allows for first-person accounts unlike the conventional way of academic writing.



Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988)

Description: In June 2020, I gained admission into the University of Wales Trinity Saint David to study Health and Social Care. This happened to be a new field for me. I presently work in the security industry. My choice to study Health and Social Care is to enable me to get a pathway to studying Social Works.

Presently in the university, we are studying four different modules and we are already into our second term. Initially, when I resumed studies, I was feeling nervous because I have not been in a school setting in a very long time and this was made more complicated by the fact that all our studies were done online. This made it compulsory for me to adapt to using a computer at all cost because my knowledge of the use of computers was not great before this

time. Learning online also made it difficult for me to get acquainted with my fellow students because we did not have the chance to physically work together in the classroom.

Another strange development was the various courses that we are studying in school. I will mention some of them during this reflection. These courses which are all classified into modules are all strange to me and I am trying my hardest to make sure I grasp what is being taught in class. Amongst these modules are, Academic and Employability Skills (ACE), Digital Skills and Research Methods (DSR), Professional Career Development (PCD) and Effective Team Working and Development (ETW). During this report, I will mention four different topics from the Academic and Employability Skills module, these will include the following: Employability skills, Paraphrasing, CV writing, and Personal Statement.

Though these topics are not new to me by virtue of the fact that I have been coming across them either in the workplace or generally in my day-to-day life, I never knew that they were so in-depth and carry so much meaning beyond what I ordinarily thought. The whole experience at this level became strange and sounded quite different from what I thought they were.

Employability Skills: These are the transferable skills, knowledge, and attitudes that a person is expected to possess to be employable and able to move between jobs. These skills include the following: Leadership, Team work, Good communication, Problem solving and Organisation.

Paraphrasing: This is a way of putting forward ideas and information in one's own words and referencing the source from where you got it. When you paraphrase, it shows that you truly understand what you read. (University of South Australia, 2020)

CV writing: This is the art of writing a document which is used when applying for a job. It reflects the unique skills, character, education, and work experience you have. I have been writing CVs for all of my professional life, but I just realised how complex and important they are when applying for jobs.

Personal Statement: This is also referred to as a covering letter, it sums up one's achievements, skills, interests, and goals that makes one qualified to be employed. It is best when it is brief, clear and avoids repeating information. In other words, if a personal statement is well written, it could make you a difference between you getting the job opportunity and losing it. (Cheary, 2020)

Feelings: As the term commenced and progressed, I felt so odd and found it difficult grasping what was being taught by my teachers in class, even in instances where I had previously been exposed to the ideas being introduced. I was filled with so much anxiety because of the virtual learning environment through which the lectures were being taught. This feeling of palpable anxiety was compounded further by the fact that I had little to no grasp of the use of computers. This was very noticeable in the Digital Skills and Research methods where one was to learn about computers skills directly. Though I was scared, the experience was a very good one for me, as all the initial fears I harboured were dispelled. I was not alone in nursing this fear as many other students also felt the same way too and a couple of our classmates even withdrew from the course and this made me get more afraid.

As it stands now, we are in the middle of our second term of the course and I am more settled and following my lectures with more ease and I believe I will be doing great at the end of this term and thereafter.

Evaluation: Initially the thought of becoming a university student instilled so much fear into me. I kept harbouring the fear that I may not be able to cope with the university's academic schedule and its attendant demands. However, when the academic year commenced, I gradually started following and understanding the lectures; this was helped by the very kind and understanding lecturers in the school who have been very encouraging and quite appreciative of the plight of students like me who have been away from academics for a very long time. Virtual learning environment is becoming more interesting to me as the academic year is progressing, though not being in the classroom has made it difficult for me to get to meet my fellow students and we have been denied the good feeling of sharing knowledge and familiarising ourselves as it would have been.

Analysis: After gaining admission and resuming studies, I realised that I am in school for the reason to gain knowledge and there is every reason I must study very well to graduate and make good grades in the process. From the commencement of lectures, things looked strange, but I was able to overcome this because I was well prepared. I bought myself a new laptop for my studies, acquired a new Wi-Fi service provider because my previous provider was not giving efficient service. Since our lectures will be virtual from the onset, it was better to be equipped to face the situation.

From the lectures we have been having so far, I have come to see that University of Wales Trinity Saint David, London campus is really an institution that has high standards and has very highly committed teachers on its payroll. The IT staff have really been very efficient in making sure that lectures are held smoothly with little to no disruption. Other departments like the library and student support services have been forthright in meeting the demands of students.

The idea of virtual learning is very smart and novel because of the dangerous nature of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, which was spreading like wildfire all over the world and one of the quickest ways of spreading it is through the gathering of people. Virtual learning helped in curtailing its spread amongst the student population.

So far, one of the main drawbacks I have noticed with the Virtual learning environment is the lack of interaction between students because we are not coming into the class for physical lectures. Also, the students are made to feel this sense of isolation because they are unable to discuss classwork on a real-time and ongoing basis as it would have been when in class. At times technical issues caught up with either the students or teachers in the middle of lectures. This leads to students missing some vital aspects of lectures while if it happens to the lecturers it eats into the time allocated for such lectures.

Conclusion: From the above-mentioned points I have arrived at the firm belief that virtual learning environment has been a very positive development at this time with the pandemic blazing through the world. If not for virtual learning environment which even enabled students to do their studies and workers to work from home, the world would have come to a complete standstill and this would have caused incalculable damage to education and all other sectors of the world economy at large.

With virtual learning environment, I have now come to improve my usage of the computer and can pride myself as someone who is fairly good at the use of the computer and I am still improving my computer skills at a very fast pace.

I also need to improve my public speaking skills as I have often been made to address my classmates online. Over the past few weeks, I have gotten significantly better at it but still have a long way to go to be grounded in the art of public speaking.

I have now come to see that I should always be ready to put in more effort in my modules and never take any of them for granted because last term, I had a very poor score in one of the modules. On critically examining what I did wrong in the course, I realised that my referencing was not up to scratch and I really felt so bad about it.

With virtual learning environment, I have been able to travel cost as I am able to attend lectures in the comfort of my home.

Personal Action Plan: I have learnt in the process of this course that it is always good to be prepared for whatever venture you want to go into, that is the reason in the future I would like to be involved in learning through a virtual learning environment because I have now improved tremendously in my IT skills and Microsoft Teams is now a familiar terrain for me.

I would also strive hard to get my managers in the office to allow me to get a permanent night shift. Joining the night shift on a permanent basis will give ample time to attend my lectures without interference from work.

I am aiming to put in more effort into my studies so that I can progress into gaining admission to study Social works given that I hope to become a social worker in the next five years after bagging a Bachelors degree in social works. I am aiming to do some volunteering in Social Works in the NHS to enable me to gain some practical experience needed before I can get employed. I also need to be registered with Social Works England for me to be able to practice in England.

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