

Reflective report - Gibb's model

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Introduction

Through this reflective report will be analysed the experience and learning process across the Academic and Employability Skills module. The report will include 2 main activities conducted along the semester: one is the writing of the academic report for task one and the other one is the activity from week 8 where the students had to work as a team. For a better and more organised analysis, the Gibb's reflective cycle will be used.

Gibb's reflective cycle

Gibbs's reflective cycle is a framework that is heavily based on learning from experience. It emphasises the necessity to analyse and reflect about a situation and to learn from it. The framework is created on the principles of Dewey (1933) and Kolb (1984). The six steps of Gibbs' framework are: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan (Grant, McKimm and Murphy, 2017).

Task 1, the academic report

Description

The first task was to write an academic report that explores the difficulties of stimulating employees in any workplace. The research had to explore different types of motivations which can be used by a company to keep their staff engaged. The paperwork had to have a clear introduction and a clear conclusion with the most effective techniques to motivate staff.

Feelings

I felt I have done my best to provide the right information as the assignment's brief required. I was a bit nervous at the beginning as I have no experience in writing assignments and I found it a bit difficult to organise all the information in my mind, before starting the process of writing. I was also stressed about selecting the right references as online is endless of sources, but most of them are not trustable enough to include them in an academic report. Throughout the whole writing process, I was afraid not to include irrelevant information, but also to skip key elements which could affect my final grades. I was thinking about strategies to improve the quality of research when conducting the research about motivational factors. I was wondering what theories to include about this subject, as there are multiple studies about motivation, but most of them are not relevant for my research. On top of this, there are several examples of theories with similar conclusions, so I tried to select only theories with a different point of view, to avoid any repetition.

Evaluation

The good aspect of this assignment is that I had the opportunity to analyse and learn from different types of motivation theories. During the analysis, I learned how to motivate the staff of a team or any person no matter their environment. I learned which are the main motivating factors and how to identify which of them can be used on a person, taking into consideration their interests.

The bad aspect of this research is the word limit as I was unable to present many theories which could also be quite valuable for the research theme. Even if I presented the most important ones, I personally consider this subject as a complex one, so a more in-depth research can be conducted, resulting in a better understanding of people behaviour and motivations.

The contribution that I made was to conduct an audit about different types of motivation factors and theories, understand them and after this, creating a piece of work which includes all this information. I summarised and presented the information, in a manner easy to read and understand, without needing a reader to use other external sources to understand the subject.

Analysis

If I were a reader, I wouldn't probably have wanted to have all kinds of unnecessary information. Also, I would like all the information to be well structured and easy to read. Thinking from a reader's perspective might give me all kinds of different points of view, helping me have a better understanding of how to write useful paperwork.

The reason for the confidence I gained during the writing process of this academic report is from the support offered by my lecturers. At the beginning, before I started writing, I reviewed a few elements from the recorded lecture, to make sure that I had all the information clear in my mind. Going again through the lecture I was able to review the information already learned but also, I was sure I had not missed any critical information which could lead to losing important marks on the final result. Another important role was played by the lecturer who answered with patience (even with more information if the situation required) to all my questions, making sure that I understood everything and that I have no more questions.

The main thing I can get from this assignment is that I ought to conduct extensive research on my topic in order to begin it. I need to understand the purpose of my research and use every technique I know to improve the research quality. I've discovered my skills and weaknesses, which may influence my personal development plan.

The knowledge that I gained from this assessment is that it is important to understand each person before offering him/her a motivation. Everybody is different, so the first step is to understand from which category the person is, as McGregor presented in the X and Y theory. We must understand in which life stage each person is, as Maslow said in his theory and last but not least, we have to understand what they want to achieve, as McClelland stated.

Conclusion

I learned a lot of useful information through the analysis, which will help me become a good leader. Dealing with people is an important skill which may improve my employability opportunities. I also have learned that asking for help is a good action as it is the easiest way to develop yourself and also, I learned that having a good communication with my lecturers is the key to success. I still have to work on my communication skills.

For myself, I still have to work on my ability to decide what information to include in my future assignments or projects. Also, I consider it important to learn how to work closer with my tutors and to ask more frequently for feedback on my work.

Action Plan

As a personal plan I want to improve my skills of writing. To achieve this, I have to follow the next steps: ask for more personal feedback for my work, access the university writing guide resources and create a list with recommendations from the feedback of other assignments. This target would improve my ability to write my essays or other projects I would have during the university. Also, knowing how to write a report could play an important role for my employability chance. To monitor the progress, I will create a chart with my future grades, which indicates their evolution. I would like to achieve this by the end of the first academic year.

Task 2, the group activity

Description

The second activity in which I participated was a team project with my colleagues. Our teacher created the group, which consisted of four people. The meeting was held via the social media platform that my university uses, and it lasted for about three hours, time in which we prepared our project from the very beginning to its final form. Our assignment consisted of making a PowerPoint presentation about a job description of our choice, and then each member of the group presented a slide of the presentation to the rest of the colleagues. We decided to search for job descriptions on different sites, such as <https://indeed.com>, to have a better perspective of our task, and then we created a structure that we should follow in order to create the job description. We listed down all our ideas and then, a colleague that could not join us from the beginning, came in later and helped us finish our presentation as he had other good perspectives. We wrote down all our ideas on slides and decided that each of us should deliver a section of the presentation.

Feelings

At first, I thought I would be very comfortable being in a small group of four people, since it allows me to talk more easily. However, I became a little bit nervous because I was nominated by the teacher as the leader of the discussion and that was something new for me in a group with folks that I didn't know well enough. To my relief, through talking about the work, we began to socialise and get to know each other. We all pitched in to divide the assignment into semi-topics so that we could get a quick result. In addition, as a task-focused group, we discussed the assignment and began delegating tasks to each member. Everyone's opinion was respected, and we shared information and planned how to conduct our research and present it. At the end I felt really relieved that we managed to finish our task successfully and that our work was sincerely appreciated.

Evaluation

Throughout the entire meeting the good part was that we worked connectedly, and the team performance was enhanced. We all contributed to the effort and constructively shared our views since we all wanted the job to be done right, and keeping a positive attitude was mandatory.

From my point of view, the disadvantage was that at times, everyone was doing everything and that was inefficient. Another drawback was that one teammate could not join us from the beginning and he came in later. Even though he helped us a lot to finalise the assignment because he had new ideas, I consider that a downside because we could not connect and synchronise together from the very beginning.

According to Belbin's reflective cycle, when a team is performing at its best, all members have very defined roles. To boost the team's effectiveness, it's critical to clearly classify the functions that individuals play because teams with a good mix of personalities outperform those with duplicate personalities (Belbin M., 1993).

Individual team member responsibilities were developed by Belbin, who stated that each team member is distinct and has unique behaviour that may affect the assessment's performance.

If I try to follow Belbin's (1993) individual role in the team, the role that most represents me is "Action oriented role", as I was constantly responsible for getting things done by translating the team's ideas and approaches into reasonable actions and plans in a methodical and structured manner.

Analysis

Out of this activity, the tutor offered us the opportunity to try several important experiences which are very useful for our future career. The experience working in a team is quite important and challenging, as you have to work with others who have different styles. When working with others, you not only must listen and take their opinion into account, but also you have to express your ideas or concerns in a friendly way. After finishing the project, presenting the result is challenging too. Everybody is listening to you, so you must be careful with what you say as everybody must understand you. On top of these experiences, our lecturer offered me the opportunity to see what it is like to be a leader. It is challenging, as you have to keep the team engaged, listen to everybody's opinion and make a final decision which is good for the entire team. The third challenge was our colleague who was not active from the beginning of the activity. From here I learned how to pass a situation like this, but more importantly I realised that even when an activity looks easy, unplanned challenges can appear. As a leader I had to manage the situation in a way which offered him the chance to join later, but also to make sure that we will not be affected in the situation if he will not join at all.

Conclusion

During this experience I learned multiple new pieces of information, I developed my ability to be a valuable part of a team, and also, I discovered what it is like to be the leader of a team. I've also discovered that accepting self-responsibility may be viewed as a way of obtaining adequate information about a subject and can aid in doing more individual assessments on the subject at hand.

On top of the above information, I discovered that I still have to work on my ability to speak in public, as I am nervous about this, and I am not confident enough to gain the audience's trust. Also, as I am still new and I have to work at me as a leader, because I have no experience, and a situation like the one previously presented may induce me some panic.

Action plan

My personal target, after this group activity, is to learn how to become a better public speaker. To achieve this, I will watch a few recommended courses in the first part and after I will try to take an authorised course which offers me some practice too. Developing this ability, I will have more confidence, so I will do better during my future academic presentations. I will monitor my progress using the feedback from the audience. I would like to achieve this until the end of my university course.

Conclusion

During these two Gibb's analyses I discovered what I have to work on, in order to increase my grades but also my employability opportunism. I ought to work on the ability to write an assignment but also on the ability to speak in public. Because teamwork requires extensive time to be achieved, I am looking forward to work harder on these skills which may be really useful for my future development.

Reference

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