

E-Portfolio ECGE4005P/C

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Element 1: - Blog – What is reflection and why should we use it?



Yesterday, I was sitting in the garden thinking about the next to do list that I needed to write even though I still have countless tasks to do on my current one when I suddenly realised why can't I complete these never-ending lists? Do I have enough time in my day to sit, review and critique the 'to do' list then maybe just maybe I would have reflected a few tweaks were needed for it become more effective. Now that is the million-dollar question, isn't it? When do any of us take the time to reflect on work projects or life events and ask ourselves what did we learn?

(Yancey, 2016, p.3) states that Sharon Pianko defined reflection behaviourally as the 'pauses and rescanning's' stimulating 'the growth of consciousness in students about the numerous mental and linguistic strategies' entailed in composing and 'the many lexical, syntactical and organisational choices made during composing.

What could we improve upon and what can we take away from this? In a school setting we are constantly encouraging the reflective practices in children to encourage them to become the best learners – we always ask after each task what went well and even better if – these behaviours become the norm so much, so it is integrated into all aspects of the school day. So, if reflection can be integrated at such a developmental level why are we as adults so bad at it?

It sounds so simple doesn't it?

To sit and think about

What have I learnt from that experience?

What can I take away from it?

What skills do I have now?

What could I have done differently?

All of these questions are key to supporting our understanding of reflection and how we choose to improve ourselves, others and our learners. We are constantly learning and progressing on our journey through life. Fesmire (2019) confirms that Dewey believed that we do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on the experience.

So why should we reflect? What's in it for me? When will I possibly have the time?

Higgins (2011) states that this process of reflecting for, in and on action makes it possible to change our current understanding of action by framing the issue or encounter in a different or novel way, or by improvising on new ways to solve the issue at hand. The thing is when do we have the time – reflective practices allow us to confirm our learning, make ourselves better, build on our knowledge and skills for the future. There is certainly much to be gained for taking some time out to sit and reflect on that work meeting, project or family event. You will be a better person and more content from doing so as you will be able to evaluate and review all the things you thought went well and what you would change or improve for the next time. Just remember learning is a journey and our experiences and skills help shape that so take the time to reflect and reap the benefits!

Something to ponder.....

Wheatley (2002) stated that without reflection, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences, and failing to achieve anything useful.

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Element 2: Mini essay – What is good Time Management?

Time management is a process and behaviour that used effectively according to leadership specialist ensures that you become a highly effective individual. Time management by its very nature is reliant on the highly organised, effective and motivated individual to accomplish and complete tasks. In all aspects of life we are looking to maximise our time and it is something that we cannot bargain, buy or trade. This essay will explore what is time management and what is good time management and how can this be achieved and what are some of the attributes that can be associated with good time management. According to Forsyth (2013) time management is not optional. It is something that everyone who wants to work effectively must consider, whether formally or informally. In fact, virtually everyone practises time management to some degree; the only question is how well they do it and how it affects what they do.

Stoilov (2012) states that according to the review, time management is most commonly defined by (a) time analysis, (b) planning, (c) goal setting, (d) prioritising (e) scheduling (f) organising and (g) establishing new and improved time habits. The literature on Time management is substantial and this essay will explore what time management is and how it can be applied to everyday life to ensure a more effective and stress free life. Mindtools (2022) state that time management means organising your time intelligently – so that you use it more effectively. The benefits of good time management include greater productivity, less stress, and more opportunities to do the things that matter. Effective time management is essential to everyday life and to some extent an individual's mental health and well-being. There are several elements to according to academics that make for effective time management including prioritisation of tasks, setting goals and targets and reviewing and reflecting upon your tasks.

It is interesting to note that many recommendations for effective time management are concentrated on setting targets and goals. Given that targets and goals can be set and reviewed in a timely manner this is definitely a more conducive approach to effective time management. From reviewing the academic research, it appears to be clear that goal setting, prioritisation, effective meeting management and focus are key elements to be being good at managing your time which in turn provides a less stressful and chaotic environment in which to operate in. It is also apparent from the academic research that key to being good at time management is the ability to adapt and reflect on those targets and reset if necessary, depending on the circumstances.

Whilst there is a wealth of information and academic literature on what good time management is why is it then so difficult to apply practically? It is clear that from most perspectives it is the responsibility of the individual to set the targets, review and monitor their progress however there are clear distractions or barriers to good time management. Bedford and Wilson (2013) state that many students feel that poor time management contributes to a feeling of stress, as do many other pressures, such as the difficulties of combining work and study and balancing the demands of friends and family. There are clear distractions that impact upon being effective and managing our time wisely. However, what is clear is that it is personal responsibility and self-discipline which impacts on how successful we are at managing our time in our work, home and family lives.

Rao (2014) states that Stephen Covey rightly said, 'The key is not to prioritise what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities'. This ability to prioritise important tasks and priority tasks Covey saw as a key behaviour and skill to managing your time effectively on a daily basis. Covey's time management matrix enables you to prioritise tasks with a high or low priority and urgency. However, any model or management theory is still needed to be underpinned by self-discipline and reflection in order for time management to be highly effective and useful in day-to-day life. Time

management is critical and key however there are many skills to master for it be highly effective. What is also key is that managing our time requires organisation, review of setting goals and adapting if things are not working. Another important observation is that procrastination can stop us from managing our time effectively. We can spend so long deciphering models and theory that we end up actually not being productive and starting what we meant too.

It is clear that time management is a key skill that everyone has to master in order to be effective within work, home and family life. How we do this is not a one fit size approach and requires constant review and tweaking until it is mastered for the individual. Writing lists, setting goals, focusing on tasks, delegating, working smarter, reviewing daily targets or concentrating on key activities it is apparent that time management is different for everyone and how we master these skills is key to its success. In conclusion, it is clear that from all the academic literature there is an abundance of information on how to manage your time however how you do this is up to the individual and how effective you are at developing the skills needs to effectively manage your time and life. Cook (2011) noted that there is a saying: 'Unless you change how you are, you will always have what you've got'. Ultimately, effective time management and organisation is all about self-discipline.

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Critical Thinking

Question

Focus

Analyse

Problem-Solve

Evaluate

Apply

What is Critical Thinking?

- Analysis
- Communication
- Creativity
- Open Mindedness
- Problem Solving

Kraft (2000) states that critical thinking or inquiry is a skill that necessitates one to engage in processes of questioning beliefs, values and assumptions that one holds about virtually everything.

Models of Critical Thinking

- 3 step Model, Hilsdon 2010
- Blooms Taxonomy

Ask the Questions
Who, What, Where, When, How
and Why

What do I use Critical Thinking for?

- Checking data and information
- Understanding and improving yourself
- Being able to consider all the options and arguments
- Adapting to the environment and finding solutions
- The ability to consider all options and make a decision to move forwards



Kincheloe (2000) confirms that all educators agree that it is important to teach students and teachers to think critically

Why should we use critical thinking?

- To develop our creativity
- To enhance our skills of analysis and enquiry
- To develop our questioning and rational of data
- To provide focus and organisation
- To ensure we are able to review and reflect on our decisions and provide evidence to support them

Haber (2020) states that critical thinking is an understanding of the relationship to language to logic, leading to the ability to analyse, criticise and advocate ideas, reason inductively and deductively, and reach factual or judgemental conclusion based on sound inferences drawn from unambiguous statements of knowledge or belief



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