

Coaching and Mentoring Skills for the workplace

Assessment 2

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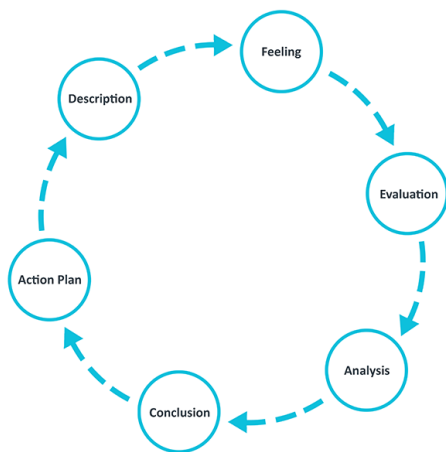
Introduction

This report is a reflective essay that will make use of various theories to reflect on the role play experience. It will also critically assess if the proposed coaching or mentoring session would create positive results and it will analyse the skills, behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and values of an effective coach or mentor.

Reflective statement

The reflective statement will make use of a reflective model developed by Gibbs in 1988 with the purpose of giving structure and framework to examine experiences and to have more effective learning. The model has a cycling character going through six stages (Figure 1) description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action plan. The cyclic nature allows the reflectors to learn and plan things on repeated experiences and it can apply particularly well to similar situations (University of Edinburgh, 2020).

Figure 1. Gibbs reflective cycle



I am applying Gibbs Reflective cycle to my reflective statement after my experience during the assessment of the module Coaching and Mentoring Skills for the workplace. I selected this reflective theory because it has a cyclic character which enhances the learning for repeated situations and will look at the six stages for the role play that we had to do as part of our assessment (Gibbs, 1988).

The first stage the description of the experience presents the experience itself, detailing the participants, the location, the desired outcome and the actual outcome. Being a student in my last

year at the University for one of the modules we were requested to create a coaching and mentoring session for an established scenario provided about a company that activates in the pharmaceutical industry. We were given a case study about the company which included information on the current changes that have been adopted and the staff views on the existing situation. Taking the role of the manager we had to create a coaching or mentoring session for one of the staff. I have selected Janice to take part in the role play which was represented by my colleague Laura. By using the GROW model I have developed a mentoring session. This model is “a coaching framework used in conversations, meetings and everyday leadership to unlock potential and possibilities. GROW was created by Sir John Whitmore and colleagues in the late 1980s. It has since become the world’s most popular coaching model for problem solving, goal setting and performance improvement” (Performance Consultants, 2023). I have used this model because I consider that Janice will benefit of a mentoring session, as she has high aspirations for career development and is very ambitious and keen on pushing her limits. The GROW model is an acronym for goal, reality, options and will. Goal refer to what is wanted. I began the role play by introducing the mentor Philippa who was presented as the manager in the company. Philippa is the manager of the department of Quality Assurance for the past 4 years and Janice is the senior microbiologist and has worked in the company for the last 5 years. Recently Janice has been given different responsibilities and has been asked to be in charge of the monitoring and development work. Based on that I have considered that mentoring will be more beneficial for the situation. Assessing the current situation in the company it has been presented the reality of the situation in the company, where there have been introduced some major changes within the company, some activities have been automated and staff has been asked to work from home where possible. As a mentor I have tried to ask Janice different questions to see what were her views in regards to all of these changes. I have proposed that the model of mentoring to be one-to-one mentoring. The goal of these mentoring sessions will be to help improve her leadership and managerial skills. Other aims of the mentoring consist in benefiting of first-hand knowledge sharing, effective learning, improving interpersonal and communication skills, empowering Janice to progress and be more confident in the new additional responsibilities that the management has been given recently to her. In her role as a mentee Janice will build up independent thinking and confidence to pursue professional development. By using open ended questions, Janice has expressed her satisfaction about the new role and also that she would like to work in a more supportive environment. Further that have assessed the options and have let Janice to select the most suitable one. Statistics show that employees with mentors are promoted five times more than their peers. In my role of the mentor I strongly believe that taking part in a mentoring program will

be more beneficial to the mentee than job training as it will enable to grow more holistically and help building a professional relationship. I proposed a long-term formal mentoring with organised meetings agreed before hand. Have also established what will be done and the timeline for the next sessions.

The feelings stage is the second stage which is allocated for exploring feelings during the experience and their impact, before and after the experience. I had mixed feelings because it was part of our assessment and I wanted to do well, but at the same time I was anxious about presenting in front of a public and have this new role of a mentor. Post the role play experience I can see the benefits of the exercise and the difficulty of a mentoring role.

The next stage is the evaluation of the experience. It is an opportunity to assess the positive aspects and the negative aspects of the situation and for this part it is also very helpful that we have received feedback from the tutor through a Role Play Feedback Form. The feedback has referred to positive aspects “Good introduction- explained the purpose of the session”, “the coach was focused on the coachee agenda”, but also negative aspects “no independent thoughts expressed during the presentation as students were mainly reading from written scripts and asking on occasions closed end questions”, “the coach did not act as a problem solver”. From my personal point of view I gained important skills for public speaking and as a mentor. I took on board the positive and negative comments from the tutor and I have now a better understanding of what I could improve for next time. Also will allocate more time for practicing and prior preparation.

The next stage the analysis stage and questions focus more on the “why” element of the experience, why things happened that ways and what was the meaning of the situation. This role play has given me the advantage of having to perform as a mentor, however I realised that preparedness is essential as a mentor because there are needed high levels of confidence for the mentee to look up to you, to consider you a valuable source of knowledge and information transfer.

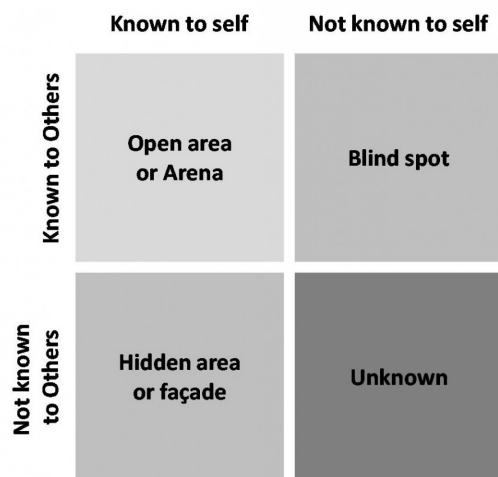
The conclusion stage emphasis the learning from the experience, what was learnt from the situation, how could I have handled better the situation, what else it could have been done to be a more positive experience for everyone involved. Based on the feedback provided from the tutor I could have been more independent and read less from the written scenario. The experience would have been more positive to everyone involved if I would have use more open end questions and showcase more independent thinking.

The final stage is the action plan which has the role of identifying how to act in the future similar situations and I plan that for the future to have a more engaging approach, to prepare better for future presentations to be more proactive and to do more individual research. For future

assessments such as the role play or having to act as a mentor or coach, I also plan to practice more, as preparedness is key to a confident presentation.

According to Communication Theory (2023) the Johari window is another model that can be use for personal development. I will apply the model to increase self-awareness and analyse elements and traits suggested by self and others. The model is mapped on four areas the arena, the blindspot, the facade and the unknown (Figure 2). The first area is the sum of the self knowledge and others knowledge such as personal traits, I am a very honest person and although I take things seriously I tend to joke about it to cope with the situation and be more relaxed. I am a good leader and that gives me the required confidence. The blindspot area is the sum of the knowledge and information known by others, but not known by self. I am a team player, but the team has suggested that I tend to override the situations and want to have total control. This has not been beneficial for my role play as I should have let my colleague to provide the suggestions and solutions by using open ended questions. The facade area of the map is the information known about self and not known by the others. I am a perfectionist and I am expecting others to show the same. The unknown region gathers the information about self not known by the others or by the self. I can not say or others can not say if I would be a good engineer for example.

Figure 2 Johari window



The Johari Window Model

Further my reflection I consider that within the proposed context the mentoring will improve performance and morale within the provided company. This has also been agreed by the my colleague as a mentee. The mentoring sessions will provide requested support, will ensure

commitment from both parts, will help the mentee with the new role within the company, will help gaining new skills and improve existing ones and will help with the performance. Direct communication will be helpful to build professional relationship and would encourage the mentee to get in contact outside the established weekly meetings. It will also help with the development of hard and soft skills for the leadership role. The purpose of the introductory mentoring session was to develop the right mindset and attitude to facilitate professional development. The one-to-one mentoring is formal and on long term and it will be realised over a year. It will have an organised timeline, with weekly meetings for the first part. It will exist a continuous support system with direct contact when the mentee needs advice. Having the full attention of the mentor will contribute to the mentee understanding of the working environment and it can be shared fresh perspectives of handling changes for all the department. Benefiting of one-to-one mentoring will create better communication which will funnel down throughout the organisation as a whole. With the parties being prepared to give their best and to ensure consistent levels of accountability and effort this is very likely to improve performance and morale. The introductory meeting has the role of creating perspective of the benefits of the mentoring and will empower the mentee to progress and be more confident in the new additional responsibilities given to her recently.

According to UK Coaching (2019) a great coaching “is all about putting people first. Whether the participant or the person coaching them, being able to understand and connect with them is essential to creating an environment in which they can thrive. Listening to the wants and needs of people is key to creating the experiences they want from coaching”.

Both coaches and mentors need the same set of skills, behaviour types and sometimes it is difficult in drawing a line between the approaches. The coach or mentor can be external to the company or an internal member can take on this responsibility. Nevertheless it is important to have the fundamental ability to engage with the coachee or mentee and to be able to build a relationship based on trust and respect. This would encourage the coachee or mentee to express their views and feelings about different aspects. This way the approach is more guaranteed to achieve long lasting results. Self-awareness is an important aspect and the model presented above Johari window is a tool that be used to disentangle reactions and feelings and have a clear perspective with minimised preconceptions.

A prime skill is the active listening, is a quality that is imperative for the coach or mentor to have to determine quality and reach a deeper level on investigating the situation, the true feelings and thoughts. Staying silent means allowing the coachee or mentee to obtain quality of their thinking. Along with active listening goes summarising skills for full comprehension of what is being said

and for clear understanding of the statements. This also helps the mentee or coachee to clarify their thoughts.

Another very important skill is the ability to propose good questions and creating an open up conversation. It should make use of open ended questions to empower the mentee or coachee to identify solutions, to offer suggestions but to allow them to provide useful insights and options, to instigate confident approaches. Towards the end it could be used more closed end questions in the planning stage of actions that are needed to be taken.

A good mentor or coach should emphasis intent which is defined as the inner game of asking most effective questions and having the right skills and competencies. Along that giving feedback is crucial and it has to be realised in a very constructive way in order to have an illuminating effect.

All of these behaviours and skills has to be supported by adequate structure and session must have a meaning and revealing result.

Conclusion

In conclusion coaches and mentors must be able to build up relationships, but also to maintain relationships. Communication skills are the base of any collaboration and clear and consistent messages are providing high quality support.

The effectiveness of the work of a coach or a mentor will develop from applying the complex mix of skills and values according to the context and on in depth analysis. Managing various experiences can be difficult and challenging, so the coach or mentor needs to have vast knowledge, complex set of skills and to be able to manage the expectations of the parties involved.

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