

**Module: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
LCBB4002**

Assignment 2

Reflective Evaluation

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The purpose of this report is to reflect on my first semester academic experience, using Gibbs' model and to evaluate a particular project, linking theory with practice.

"It is not sufficient to have an experience in order to learn. Without reflecting on this experience it may be quickly forgotten, or its learning potential lost." (Gibbs, 1998, p9)

I come from a small country in south Europe, living in London for the last couple of months. Currently, I am a student at University of Wales Trinity Saint David, studying Business Management. As this is the first year of my course it is definitely an experience for me. All the modules of the programme were unfamiliar, so I was expecting to have difficulties. Though, through the semester, as the academic year progressed, it became clear that the learning process came to be easier than I thought. My module tutors are giving their best to help us understand the content and the purpose of the modules. I can surely say that with their help I have achieved a lot during this semester, including improving my English, learning how to think critically, learning how to write different kinds of reports, how to make a good presentation, how to manage my time in a better way.

On the first day of the semester I was surprised to find that all my colleagues were Bulgarian, we are a group of 20 students and I expected to meet more foreigners, in addition to improve my English. As the classes are just two days a week we were supposed to learn the major part of the module's content at home. As I am working and studying at the same time, I am facing many obstacles and struggles. However, I learned that when you are dedicated and committed to studying, it will lead you to success.

I felt extremely excited, and at the same time nervous when the course started. As English is not my native language, I was afraid I would not be able to understand what the lecturers says, thus interrupting my ability to learn. To my surprise, this was not the case. From the beginning I managed to understand almost every word, when staying concentrated, which was the most difficult part. As the time has passed my listening skills improved and I gained some confidence. The thing that frightened me the most was speaking in front of the class. I literally panic when I should answer a complex question. I made an impression of a shy person, although the truth is I am just struggling to speak in English. First, I should rethink

how to structure a sentence, is it grammatically correct and then utter it. When it comes to writing, I am quite more confident, despite I have studied the language at school and was really keen on, sometimes I feel embarrassed to find appropriate words to express my thoughts. Another thing I had concerns about was the content of the modules, as I had no previous experience in Accounting, Academic skills and Community engagement. They all sounded unfamiliar for me and I was stressed about how I will manage to learn them. Properly speaking, the modules are quite interesting and well-organized, so I have never been bored in class. The time for the assignments came, so I felt anxious if I would be able to deal with them, I was nervous about my presentations, having to fight with my public speaking concerns.

For the first semester module Community Engagement we should have written and present a role play scenario, in front of the class. In our second lecture the tutor asked us to think about a role play at home and present it the following week. I was ready with my scenario for the next week, but only a few students were asked to try and I was not one of them. Having to prepare the assignment for week eight seemed to be an easy task, as mine was ready for couple of weeks. Few days before the assignment I started to rehearse it, to make sure I meet the time criteria and I feel confident enough to present in front of my classmates. On the day, in my way to the university, I was rehearsing my scenario all the time. When my name was called, I went in front of the board and started to present my customer assistant role play. When I finished, I sit down, not knowing how it went and if I managed with it.

I felt extremely miserable at the time, I was angry at myself of not being able to speak in public, even though my classmates are also friends. When I got to the whiteboard, I was visibly shaking, my confidence disappeared in a single moment, my voice was wavering, I was nervous to the point that I missed a whole scene of my scenario, thus making it unclear for the audience. I was just impatient to finish, as I was anxious. When rehearsing at home, I was only afraid of the fact I would be evaluated, I did not doubt my presentation skills at all. But staying in front of the class, this was the last thing I was thinking about. I have never imagined I would be so worried to speak in public, as I have done it hundred times back at high school. I was probably always experiencing some kind of stage fright, but not to that stage.

Generally speaking, I was not satisfied with the outcome of my presentation. Because of the high level of anxiety my five minutes role play, probably turned into one and a half, and the interesting scenario turned into an unclear incident. I was rushing through the scenario, missing a scene of it, making it unclear for the audience. As Carbonell (2019) points out, talking fast may cause breathing in a short, shallow manner, even giving a sensation that you are unable to breathe. According to him, hurrying reduces the chance the audience can enjoy the speech, creating a barrier between the speaker and the audience, actually increasing the speaker's fear. The efforts to hide my anxiety, probably made it even more visible through my body language. At the time of the role play I didn't think about my body language, leaving it to chance, thus leading to instinctive typical for responding to threats: self – protective, withdrawing, timorous. (Morgan, 2016). Though I am not pleased with the outcome of the presentation, I am proud I cope with actually staying in front of an audience, presenting in a language that is not maternal, and gained an experience that would be really helpful for future projects. I have also learnt that like most people I am overestimating the hardship of gaining self-confidence and the ability to think calmly while talking to a group. (Camegie, 2017, p.4)

After reading my partner's feedback (see Appendix 1), I was more than surprised to find out that his impressions are different. He wrote that I spoke very clear and smooth, and that the scenario was interesting, which I do not agree. I realise my mistakes and weaknesses and after talking with my module tutor, we both agreed that I need to improve my time management, self-confidence and respectfully body language. These were the main points, my tutor mentioned, that hindered the development of my role play. Thinking retrospectively, I find my mistake in underestimating the importance of rehearsing in front of others, instead of rehearsing only in front of the mirror. Gallo (2019) explains that delivering a presentation in front of a crowd differs from going over it in your mind. Practicing more in front of an audience, reduces the chance to lose control under pressure. Another hindering factor was my time management, while presenting. Practicing at home with a timer I could easily have filled the five minutes time frame, however it was not the same presenting in front of the class. One of the most challenging aspects of presenting is the fear of running out of time, thus making you speak too fast. Fast-talking could be perceived as nervousness or having a lack of confidence, it can also lead to unclear articulation and an engaging tone, which my hinder your message to catch listener's attention. (Martinuzzi, 2018) One of my main faults was

thinking of the role play as something that should be evaluated, rather than understood. As Tsaousides (2017) explains the anxiety seems to be higher when the focus shifts from being heard and understood to being evaluated.

In retrospect, I would definitely change some things about my presentation. I should have rehearsed in front of a friend or a colleague, instead only by my own. I should also have worked more to improve my time management, making sure that I cover the time limitation. If only I had known that my body language tells the listeners so much about my fear and anxiety, I would surely have practiced my postures before the actual role play, even recording a video to be able to see my weaknesses, to catch the distracting habits and make an effort to overcome them. If I had the chance now, I would take several deep breaths before that, ensuring my body and mind are relaxed. Breathing properly helps using the right tempo, allowing to make pauses and to stop whenever it is needed. (Arriesgado, 2018) A different approach would undoubtedly have changed the outcome of my role play, for example not underestimating the importance of practicing, staying positive about my presentation, working on body language and self-confidence.

In future, I will ensure to practice speaking in front of an audience before the actual presentation and ask for objective feedback, I will make sure to rehearse far more times than before, in addition to deliver a really good presentation. Talking with my friends about my stage fight will help me overcome my fears and concerns. I plan to start going to yoga classes, with reference to balance my mind and body, improving my breathing techniques, as I think that breathing properly would be a good method to overcome my anxiety. After talking with my module tutor, I felt much more positive, as she gave me some useful advices on how to improve my body postures, which I will definitely have in mind for future projects. As I realized the importance of the body language, I started to read more about it and found some helpful techniques, which I believe would improve my approach. This situation has made me realise that I need to gain more confidence in presenting and be persistent in achieving my goal. I am grateful that this task was a stepping-stone for future presentations, I truly believe it helped me gain more confidence and overcome my fears. It was worth being unsuccessful once as long as I took advantage of my mistakes. (Appendix 3)

With hindsight, I realise that the first semester of my course is over, and I am actually satisfied with its outcome. Even though, I still do not know the actual results of the assignments, I am proud I have learnt many new things, overcome some of my biggest fears, improve my listening,

speaking, writing and communicating skills. Taking this into consideration, this semester was a good lesson and a great beginning of an academic life. I will ensure to give my best during the second one and to take advantage of all the things I have learnt.

To sum up, next semester I promise myself I will be even more dedicated, spend more time preparing for the classes, make some exercise to build up my confidence, practice some power poses to improve my body language, work on my time management skills – writing to-do lists, planning my days in advance, exercising and taking enough breaks, monitor my progress.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1

LCBB 4002 Community Engagement

Peer Evaluation Role Play Feedback Form

Name of Presenter

Victoria

Date

02.12.2019

Activity:

	Poor	OK	Good	Excellent
Introduction (Explanation)				✓
Presentation (practical demonstration)				✓
Conclusion (how well can you carry out the activity?)				✓

Any other comments

She spoke very clear and smooth. Her presentation was really interesting. Excellent!

Signed:

Georgi

Date:

02.12.2019

Appendix 2:

LCBB 4002 Community Engagement

Peer Evaluation Role Play Feedback Form

Name of Presenter Georgi Nikolov Date 06.12.19

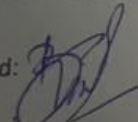
Activity: Role Play - Receptionist

	Poor	OK	Good	Excellent
Introduction (Explanation)				✓
Presentation (practical demonstration)				✓
Conclusion (how well can you carry out the activity?)			✓	

Any other comments

Very good detailed explanation of the situation. The presentation was clear, he managed to maintain the audience. The conclusion was a bit shorter and he needs to be more confident. Overall, he was comfortable with the situation and he made it sound interesting.

Signed:


Victoria

Date: 06.12.19

Appendix 3:

Name: Viktoria Vartigorova-Ivanova		Covering the period from: 01.01.2020 To: 01.07.2020		
What do I want/need to learn?	What will I do to achieve this?	What resources or support do I need?	What my success criteria would be?	Target dates for review and completion
I need to improve my time management skills, in order to complete my tasks on time, and not to rush while presenting	• Write to-do lists • Plan my day in advance • Take enough brakes • Limit multi-tasking • Reflect on each day	◇ Diary ◇ Time-management books ◇ Time support from my family	- Being able to identify difficulties - Monitoring my own progress - Completing tasks on time	End of April 2020 End of June 2020
I need to gain more confidence in public speaking	• Practice in front of an audience • Record a video while rehearsing • Watch some videos about Public speaking	◇ Support from friends/family ◇ Camera ◇ Computer	- I will be able to make a better performance on the next presentation	End of June 2020
I need to improve my body postures while speaking in front of an audience	• Relax my shoulder • Make an eye contact • Pay attention to different presenters' body language	◇ Time ◇ Articles/books about body language ◇ Videos of great presenters	- Seeing my own progress in future projects - Feeling more confident	End of April 2020 End of June 2020