

Report

Dominika Matug 2020974

Academic and Employability Skills

BMSW4001

Lecturer: Shao-Lan Yuen

Write an appropriately structured academic report where you reflect on your learning in this module, using a recognised model of reflection (one). Discuss 3-4 topics from those covered during the term (listed below) and reflect on how useful they have been to you, taking into consideration what you already knew and any learning you undertook outside of the classroom. You will need to explain the chosen model of reflection and apply it to each topic. You will also need to analyse published literature relating to the specific topics you discuss and use the feedback you received on all in-class activities.

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Time management	4
CV Writing	4
Public Speaking and Giving Presentations.....	5
Online learning experience	6
Conclusion	7
References	7

Introduction

This report is about a practical portfolio of work. I will be using Gibbs Reflective Cycle as my model of reflection to examine and explain my learning process. I will try to explain mentioned model of reflection and apply it to each of the following topics. I am going to discuss: time management / organising study, CV writing, public speaking and giving presentations and online learning experience. As my intended career of photographer, I have chosen these topics to let myself familiarized with them better as I presume a need to understand these in order to be successful. Before lecture, I have never heard before about Gibbs Reflective Cycle. I found it very fascinating. Thanks to this model I can try to analyse situations and understand them and my behaviour better.



Gibbs, G (1988)

Time management

A concept “time management” is very well known for me, although I have never let myself to think about it more deeply, to try gather information and research made by professional people, to get to know this conception more broadly and try to use my time more wisely and more productive. My understanding was quite simple; I go to work / school, then I need to split the remaining hours before sleep into few tasks that needs to be done and somewhere in between I need some rest and time for myself and my hobbies.

Every day, I am trying my best to do all the things I need but also those that I want, and which makes me happy. Multiple essential tasks related to everyday life sometimes does not allow me to complete all intended tasks. Sometimes I feel like a day is too short, like there is not enough time for those nice things. Maybe I am trying to do too much for one day what cause stress? Maybe I need to try to spread tasks in a few days instead of trying to finish everything in one day? A “GTD Method; capture, clarify, organize, reflect, and engage” found in the book Allen (2001) helped me to understand this skill a bit more. I need to try harder to keep everything in order, make a plan and set priorities, to try to avoid chaos in my everyday life.

In the progress of my research, I have found another intriguing and more complex thing to guide me even better and more efficient into time management techniques namely The Alpen method by Lothar J. Seiwert: “Define activities, estimate length of time, plan buffer time, establish prioritized decisions, note success level”. I find it the most effective for everyday tasks and it is easier for me than the GTD Method I have mentioned above. I have tried this out and I can honestly say that with the help of this method, I can easily create a plan for my day quickly.

Both methods can be an easy guide to create an organised day plan. I just need to select the most necessary things on my check list. No one but ourselves will know better what is best for us if it comes to time management, task planning, work organisation. Some people may need only a pen and a piece of paper to write down a simple plan. I am glad that thanks to the lecture I was able go get to know the minds of a few specialists about that topic in-class and outside the class.

CV Writing

“Curriculum Vitae” – I remember the first time when I met this term, reaching back to this experience I can honestly say that I had no idea about how to write a proper CV. I remember feeling overwhelmed because it was something new, a thing which should help me to get a wanted job, a thing that I did not know how to build properly and where the content is very important that is why, writing my first CV was challenging for me. The good thing is that, because it was necessary for me to write my first CV, as I was urgently looking for work, I had the opportunity to draw a lesson from each research I have done.

This is what I thought that time, because basically I was just searching for some samples of stranger people. Without knowing the right structure and formatting I was just simply following some ready-made templates. After the lecture about CV writing, I felt quite

embarrassed remembering all the CV's I have created through past years. I have learnt a lot of new information about CV and about differences from a Cover Letter. With curiosity, I started looking for information from other sources and luckily, I have found the book which is a must read in order of willing to write a remarkable CV. Starting from the way of gathering information, through devising a CV and going into guidance about how to use a ready CV, Mills (2009) is a leader to help me write an excellent CV.

After finding more specific information, I started to be curious about CV structures around the world. I was wondering if, with the knowledge I have, I can write a successful CV in e.g., Poland. What I have discovered, shocked me a bit. It comes out that there can be "different formats and rules about CV writing in a various country in the world" - SmartResume (2021). After that article, I was quite overwhelmed, but I am pretty sure that I could write an appropriate CV in different country with all the knowledge assimilated so far.

If today would be the first time for me to write a CV, I would do a wider research and also, I would try to get a feedback first like I did today from my lecturer Shao-Lan Yuen regarding my first report. Maybe I have missed a job position that I really wanted to get just because an employer did not even bother to read my inaccurate CV? With all the obtained knowledge, in the class and outside the class, I know that my next CV will be much better.

Public Speaking and Giving Presentations

When being a child, public speaking did not sound that scary. Either at school or during a family meeting I always liked to show off. With greater awareness, recognition of fear and stage fright, with a matter of time this concept started evokes an anxiety in me as I am a very bad speaker. Maybe it is because of shyness and fear of being judged? The one thing to remember is that we all make mistakes, but the point is to learn from them, and I have to take it beyond fear.

My last, and first, presentation was about my intended career. It took place online and it was for all the participants of the course I am studying. I cannot remember the last time I have been that stressed and nervous. I was well prepared, during practice I felt calmer but the awareness of audience looking and listening to my presentation was just scary. That feeling when stress is literally squeezes the throat, but I am trying to do my best just to allow words through my mouth. The presentation did not go that bad, I think. Basically, I was quite happy and proud of myself that I have done it.

I started to watch some talks and presentations online, admiring all these people stepping on the stage, in front of big crowds and just speak. A very interesting and inspiring video was the "Surprising secret to speaking with confidence" Goyder (2014). The thing that I have noticed right away was a very calm but convincing voice of the speaker. I would love to try the hint about breathing controlling that Goyder mentioned in the video. For me this is a big problem when it comes to a stressful situation, in this case, public speaking.

It inspired me to move a bit further with my research in a specialist's area. Following the steps of the videos I have watched, I found a very interesting and comprehensive book about public speaking. Anderson (2016) gives a tips to become a better speaker, shows common traps and how to avoid them, explains the preparation process. It is very clear, and pleasure read. Another brilliant book that I have found, brought me some humor about the

subject. Nihill (2016) reveals, how to become a better and funnier public speaker. To see a speaker who weave jokes into their speech is great, but to avoid embarrassment I would rather not take this advice as I never was the one who makes people laugh. Summarizing this book, that was a joy of reading and learning.

I think that, in order to become a better speaker, practice is essential. Plenty of information and tips about that subject can be found in books and online that can perform the role of guidance, but it is all about practice and being aware of mistakes made and fixing them. As I have experienced a high level of stress during my last presentation because of fear of failure, for the next time I will be more confident, better prepared and with positive attitude, as I know now that I can do it, even with making mistakes as I need to learn from them.

Online learning experience

In a world of progress, where technology advances in a compellingly fast pace, we are fortunate to be able to have opportunity to experience an online learning. During current situation with pandemic, online learning is the only option to many students around the world to continue study without need to leave the house. There can be many advantages of online learning but also disadvantages too.

I have started my online learning a two months ago. On the very first day of online classes, I was a bit stressed as it was a new situation for me. With each next lecture, I started to think that this way of learning can be even better than going to campus. Maybe it is because I am quite an introvert person. In my opinion, online learning can be a solution especially for shy, unconfident people.

As I have experienced online learning for the first time, I can say that it can be more convenient than standard learning. Possibility of having lectures in my own room is quite pleasant. This is my current classroom but only for me. From the other hand, I can consider it as a disadvantage as students can learn better when interacting with others and from practice. "Students can feel isolated when they spend hours studying all alone and interacting only with a computer" (Kauffman, 2015).

"Requirements of online learning include daily access to a computer, connection to the Internet, and technology skills such as keyboarding, use of browsers, e-mail, file management, and downloading and running of software that may be needed in a course. Inexperience with such technologies may be frustrating and inconvenient, but an orientation can help students quickly pick up enough skills to make it through a course". (Nilson, 2017)

Students who learn online in a small groups, can expand more sociability and create close bonds with other classmates (Akcaoglu & Lee, 2016) through online platforms and social media. I can honestly agree with that as I had luck to experience this with a group of classmates of my current course. Online learning can be an answer when it comes to learning outcome in a busy environment with a busy life.

I am very happy with online learning. Having possibility to learn new things and elevate a digital skills from my house is really amazing. The only thing I am willing to improve is a more frequent contact with classmates, exchange feedbacks and help each other whenever needed. We cannot see each other physically but we are still out there for ourselves.

Conclusion

All the topics discussed above were genuinely interesting for me, all the sources gathered and information from the lectures was like discovering new facts about things that I thought I knew something about already. My knowledge and understanding the subjects mentioned before was limited and now I can see the difference. I am keen to apply the knowledge I have gathered and received in a particular situations in my life.

References

- Akcaoglu, M., & Lee, E. (2016). Increasing social presence in online learning through small group discussions. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 17(3). [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/2293/3680>
- Allen, D., (2015). *Getting Things Done*. Little, Brown Book Group Limited
- Anderson, C., (2018). *TED Talks: The official TED guide to public speaking*, Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Job Wizards. 2021. ALPEN method: manage the work day more efficiently | Job Wizards. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://job-wizards.com/en/the-alpen-method-organise-working-time-better/>
- Kauffman, H. (2015). A review of predictive factors of student success in and satisfaction with online learning. *Research in Learning Technology*, 23. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.researchinlearningtechnology.net/index.php/rlt/article/view/26507>
- Mills, C., (2009). *You're Hired! CV: How to write a brilliant CV*. Trotman
- Nihill, D., (2016). *Do You Talk Funny?*. BenBella Books.
- Nilson, L., (2017). *Online Teaching at Its Best: Merging Instructional Design with Teaching and Learning Research*, John Wiley & Sons.
- SmartResume. 2021. Resume Formats in Various Countries: How Do They Differ?. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://smartresumeservices.com/resume-writing-various-countries/>
- YouTube. 2021. The surprising secret to speaking with confidence | Caroline Goyder | TEDxBrixton - YouTube. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2MR5XbJtXU>.