



UNIVERSITY OF WALES

Trinity Saint David
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Academic and Employability Skills

Reflection of Learning about Time Management, Reflection and Analytical and Critical Thinking through the Gibbs Reflective Cycle

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Name: Fatimah Choudhry

Student ID: 2012893

Lecturer: Barbara Chinyani

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1. Introduction

In this report I will be analysing the important following topics: Time Management, Reflection, and Analytical and Critical Thinking. For all of these 3 topics I will be focusing on what I knew before starting the module Academic and Employability Skills and what I have learnt, along with how I will reflect upon and apply this knowledge in my academic and for my future employability journey as a Social Worker.

2. Reflection Model: Gibbs Reflective Cycle



I will analyse the 3 topics by looking at them by applying Gibbs Reflective Model (1988). Graham Gibbs developed this model of reflection in 1988, a professor of English at Oxford, who taught to give a structure to learn through one's own personal experiences. I have chosen to apply this model to my chosen topics because I feel this reflection model is a model, which I understand well and can use for enhancing myself in becoming more of a reflective learner, and learning to apply reflection in different situations throughout normal day-to-day life experiences, and in an academic and employable way.

'It is not sufficient simply to have an experience in order to learn. Without reflecting upon this experience it may quickly be forgotten, or its learning potential lost. It is from the feelings and thoughts emerging from this reflection that generalisations or concepts can be generated and it is generalisations that allow new situations to be tackled effectively.' (Gibbs 1988). Gibbs published the article 'Learning by Doing', where he composed a learning method and structured the above cycle into 6 stages, upon reflection, concluding with a positive outcome and finding an action plan.

3. Academic and Employability skills

Academic Skills can be defined as core skills you acquire through studying, for example; time management, presentation and public speaking skills, academic writing, learning to reference, plagiarism and paraphrasing, analytical and critical thinking, and reflection. In this module I have learnt how to apply myself academically in these topics and understand them better. Referencing and citing work was a new topic completely, I previously thought writing a reference as copying and pasting a book name, author and year published was correct, or website, year. Here I learnt the academic way of referencing through the Harvard Style. In this module I also learnt all about the rules of writing without plagiarism or paraphrasing.

Employability Skills are transferable skills, which help one become 'employable'. The transferable skills acquired through studies, are applied through technological understanding and subject knowledge, which are skills employers look for in an employee and set expectations of skills needed accordingly. This module has prepared me to become employable through transferring the academic skills I have acquired. I have learnt about how to manage my time better, reflect upon myself through models, and overall develop confidently to be able to achieve higher academically and gain the ability to transfer the skill of confidence gained within my career.

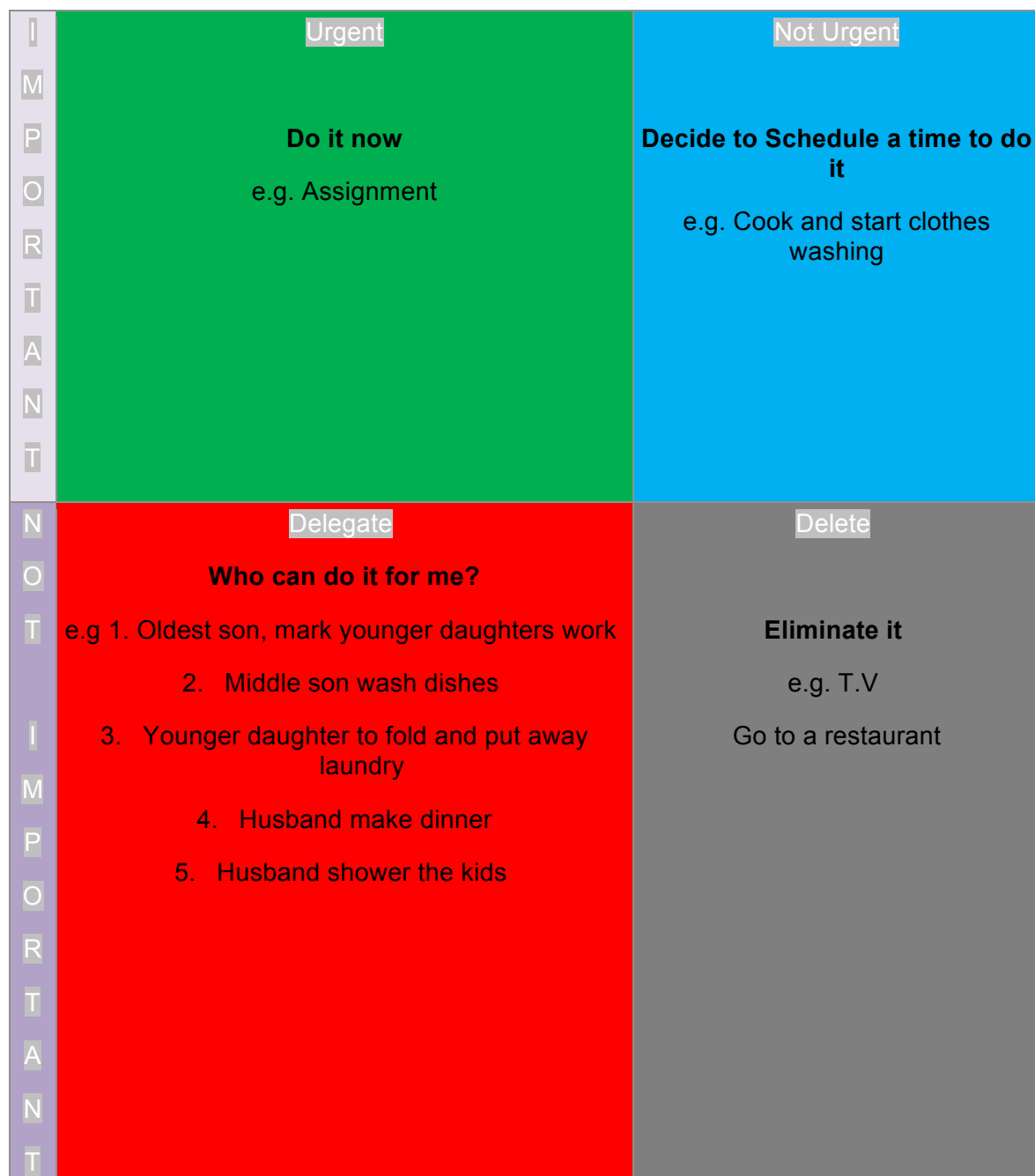
3.1 Time Management

Time Management is an elusive skill, which can evade the best of all of us at times. It is one of the most important skills as a key to a successful life. This is literally because time is linked to every organisational activity in life. Through the Gibbs Reflective Cycle, I can analyse and apply the cycle to my time management skills and am able to reflect. Before this term, I was definitely not aware that I was a procrastinator. Upon evaluation, I realised I was too comfortable in my daily life routines as I would often leave things to the last minute, like cooking dinner at the end of the day, waking up later, resulting in being late to pack lunches and get the children to school just in time. I analysed, I was often feeling overwhelmed and short tempered more due to being a procrastinator. The explanation for a procrastinating student is explained further by Bashir *et al.*, in the following article: "Time Management and its Application in Academic Life: A Study of Omani Students at Dhofar University, Sultanate of Oman". The authors described, "Time management means exercising deliberate control over the amount of time to increase efficiency and productivity. Time is an equal opportunity to everyone, which can be utilized

effectively. If a student is suffering from procrastination, it can easily be inferred that he is a victim of mismanagement of time.” (Bashir *et al.*, 2015)

Since starting University, it has been an additional challenge to adhere to adjust to a new routine, not only myself, but my family too. Nevertheless, by applying Gibbs I have been able to conclude by seeing how to apply an action plan to help manage the situations and have come across certain time management strategies, which have been an effective approach to manage all activities to ensure the completion of them all well in advance. Measures I have put into place are: through setting alarms earlier, writing a to do list, and keeping a diary of events and sticking to a self-prepared timetable.

The model that has helped me understand how to balance my time effectively has been through the Eisenhower Decision Matrix. It has taught me to prioritise tasks



according to a matter of urgency, or put into a schedule, delegate tasks to others and eliminate tasks if deemed unnecessary. Examples where I have applied this are by delegating tasks through my children and husband.

Above is an example of how I have applied the Eisenhower Decision Matrix to my own life; following is a diagram of the Eisenhower Decision Matrix:



Ultimately, this topic of time management is extremely useful for my academic and employability journey as the end goal is to produce effective and productive work in an academic environment to be successful in an employable environment. However, sometimes it takes time to fall into a productive routine or other factors can take over as things might not go according to schedule due to unplanned events occurring, e.g. Sickness. In such cases, Gibbs reflective model can be applied to reflect and avoid such occurrences arising again. As better organisational skills and to recognise you are a procrastinator, I believe is the first step in being able to change yourself and resolve the problem and start doing things earlier. Upon reflection, I am now able to prioritise better for my studies and employment wise. "As a result, time management could be considered as one of the major competitive tools that can contribute towards improved organisational performance" (Ahmed et al., 2012; Nonis et al., 2011).

3.2 Reflection

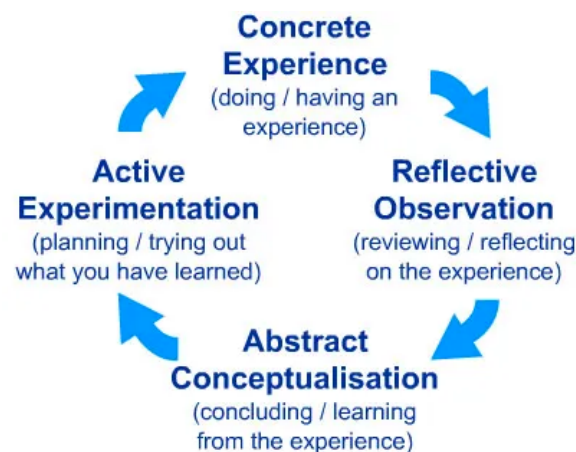
Reflection is a process of exploring and understanding ourselves, evaluating our own perspectives, analysing our achievements and experiences and reflecting on wrong actions, all to help improve ourselves and gain an insight to be able to move forward positively. I have always been a reflective thinker, and always tried to have an optimistic outlook to life. I strive to continuously find a positive overview from a negative situation and build further upon a positive situation. Ways I try to achieve this outlook is by keeping a reflection diary, where after every while in life I write an analysis of life reflections through my own feelings, or sometimes I portray my

personal experiences by writing a reflective poem according to a particular situation to get to a solution by working through my feelings and analysing a particular situation.

"Its power lies in being able to help you develop your understanding of the way you learn, the subjects you are studying and to define your longer-term goals. It can help to promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills, both of which are key to academic success. But it has further uses that relate to life skills: it is an essential part of personal development and prepares you for the world of work, encouraging you to develop the habit of analysing your actions or events and considering the consequences."

(Gillett, Hammond and Martala, 2009, p.164)

Through this module I have learnt that reflection is a powerful skill, to help you to progress through life in a positive way academically and in employability. I will describe the following models of reflection: KOLB (1984), Schon (1991) in comparison with the Gibbs Reflective Cycle (1988).



(KOLB, 1984)

Reflective practitioner

Donald Schön

(Schon, 1991)

Reflection-**in**-action
"thinking on your feet"

- Thinking ahead
- Analysing
- Experiencing
- Critically responding

Reflection-**on**-action
"naval gazing"

- Thinking through experiences
- Discussing
- Journal

<u>Model of Reflection</u>	<u>Stages</u>	<u>Use</u>	
Gibbs (1988)	6 ❖ Description ❖ Feelings ❖ Evaluation ❖ Analysis ❖ Conclusion ❖ Action Plan	❖ What happened? ❖ What were you thinking and feeling? ❖ What was good and bad about the experience? ❖ What sense can you make of the situation? ❖ What else could you have done? ❖ If it arose again what would you do?	
KOLB (1984)	4 ❖ Concrete Experience ❖ Reflective Observation ❖ Abstract Conceptualisation ❖ Active Experimentation	❖ Doing/having an Experience ❖ Reviewing/Reflecting on Experience ❖ Concluding/Learning from the Experience ❖ Planning/trying out what you have learned	
Schon (1991)	2		
	<u>Reflection in action</u> “Thinking on your feet”	<u>Reflection on action</u> “Naval Gazing”	<u>Reflection in action</u> ❖ Thinking ahead ❖ Analysing ❖ Experiencing ❖ Critically responding
			<u>Reflection on action</u> ❖ Thinking through experiences ❖ Discussing ❖ Journal

Reflection is a vital topic that can be applied at all times through my learning journey, even when receiving feedback from my lecturers after the presentations, I applied the Gibbs Reflective Cycle, as Gibbs cycle reflects through feelings. Throughout my presentation I went through numerous emotions, I started off feeling nervous, but after speaking for about a minute, I started to feel confident to explain what I had learnt. Then after some feedback from the lecturer and assessor, I was given positive and negative feedback, which helped me come to a conclusion and decide that next

time, I must talk within the timings given. After learning about all 3 of these reflective cycles, I would always use these in my academic and employability journey, I would use KOLB for research assignments and in a work environment as it is more of a concrete reflective model, where effective learning can be seen as the learner progresses through the cycle and the learner can enter at any stage and follow a logical sequence.

3.3 Analytical and Critical Thinking

Before I started this term, my idea of analytical and critical thinking was to simply being able to critically analyse a situation to come to a positive resolution. Analytical and critical thinking is a type of reflection.



(Zenhaus, 2020)

From this module, I have learnt that thinking analytically is when you use a methodical step-by-step approach to break down complex problems. You identify the cause of the problems and analyse them to come to a sufficient resolution.

When you think critically, it involves taking a much larger outer knowledge of things and evaluating them. Having critically thinking skills are a main body of thinking, while working through this, you reason, evaluate, problem solve, make decisions and analyse. This can be achieved through collating data and critically analysing this. “To critically analyse means to make a judgement about the quality of evidence and include when it can and can’t support your argument.” (University of Hertfordshire, 2019)

Schon’s cycle is also an efficient reflection model, but as it is a model that involves critically responding, this is a model I would use to critically analyse an academic or employable situation.

To have the skills to understand how to critically analyse is a crucial skill to learn on my academic and employability journey, it is highly needed to achieve a high level of

grading at university level. Gibbs Reflective Cycle can also be applied here to this topic as to critically analyse assignment gives a good outcome through Gibbs:

- ❖ I conduct research before starting the project
- ❖ I make sure I think carefully about what my research methodology could be
- ❖ I gain fantastic skills by growing confident through the more assignments
- ❖ I critically analyse the data through reasoning, evaluating, problem solving, making decisions and analyse
- ❖ I evaluate and reflect to see what I can do to improve
- ❖ If the problems I faced came back, how would I overcome them?

4. Conclusion

My key aspiration is to become a Social Worker. Social workers have to critically reflect on what they come across every day in all different case studies. They need to analyse, apply professional judgement and reasoned discernment. To come to a conclusion Social Workers must acquire skills to identify and evaluate different sources of knowledge and evidence. Social Workers must continuously reflect upon their judgment and evaluate how they have impacted others' lives, and if they would change their actions and decisions in any way if the same situation arose again (Gibbs Model of Reflection, 1988). In a Social Workers life it is apparent, all of the models discussed in this report can be applied in an academic and employment context. Understanding and applying these essential skills of: time management, reflection, and analytical and critical thinking are all factors, which affects the high achievement of success in academic and employment performance.

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