

BMSW4001

Academic and Employability Skills

Student Name : Maria Javad

Student Number : 2133709

Lecturer : Sukhpreet Grewal

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Introduction

Reflection offers meaning and sense to individual experiences. Individuals learn from their past experiences and reflective learning assists in developing the academic skills and employability skills that are required for being successful in both academic and professional careers (Wain, 2017). The reflection model applied in this module is Kolb's reflection model and this model is implemented in all the chosen topics. The selected topic for this study is reflection, referencing, summarizing, public speaking & giving presentations. This study will highlight the basic concepts of this topic and their usage of these in academic as well as professional practices. The feedback that the teacher provided will be also discussed and incorporated into this study.

Reflection

Reflective learning refers to the capability of individuals to reflect on their previous experiences and engage themselves in continuous learning (Black and Plowright, 2010). Through this practice, individuals can learn from their previous mistakes and avoid doing similar mistakes in future. According to Kolb, learning is the procedure in which knowledge is acquired through the evaluation of experiences (Kolb and Kolb, 2008). The learning experiences developed by Kolb involve four phases. Concrete learning is the first stage and, in this stage, an individual gets a new experience or evaluates a past event differently. The second phase is reflective observation and, in this phase, the individual views the new experience in the context of their prior learning and experiences. The third phase is the abstract conceptualization and, in this phase, the individuals modify their thinking or create new thoughts based on experiences & reflection. The fourth stage is active experimentation and, in this phase, the individual tests the effectiveness of new concepts in practical settings and determines if any adjustments are necessary. This procedure may take place rapidly or gradually (Tha and Khin, 2015).

I have used Kolb's reflective model for evaluating my experiences and enhancing my skills in reflective learning. Once my teacher gave me a task to reflect on my previous experience of any academic event. The experience I thought about was the mistakes I had done during my last academic lessons. The teacher asked me to report on a project of reducing local government expenditure by cutting some service programs. The topic I selected was to cut the special service that was available for transgender people. I used to believe that there was no need for the government to provide any particular services for transgender people. I came to understand that my discriminatory actions hurt other individuals. I have realized from these experiences that no people should be judged or treated based on their sexual orientation, cast,

or ethnicity. Each people living in the society has equal rights to accessing the available facilities provided by the government. I have implemented this new thought of mine in a practical setting. For this project of mine, I selected a topic in light of the needs instead of considering a person's sexual orientation, ethnicity and cast. This reflective learning is turn out beneficial to me as this stimulates my critical thinking skills and encourages me to participate actively in diverse education or professional programs (Ng and Tan, 2009). This practice enables me to become more aware of myself, better understand and knowledge of the circumstance, and also enhance my skills and competencies for doing better in future and avoiding similar mistakes that I had done before (Epstein, 2011). I have learned to reflect on my SWOT analysis skills. This practice is too time-consuming and this is one of the major challenges that I face (Reflective Practice, 2013). Before this module, I have some general ideas about different learning styles. Through this module, I have learned the importance of reflective learning and the detailed method of evaluating previous experiences for avoiding similar mistakes in future.

Referencing

References are an essential component of academic research. It provides the basis for the study, exemplifies the range and depth of the research, and recognizes the contributions of other authors (Moore, 2014). It specifies which content was created by someone else or came from a different source. MLA, APA, Harvard, and MHRA are the four significant referencing conventions that are widely used in UK universities. In most universities in the UK, the most common style used is Harvard. In this style, the author and the year of publication are cited in the in-text and the full specifics of the source are listed in the reference list (Deane, 2010). Kolb's reflection model is applied to evaluate this skill of mine. In the first semester, I had done an academic project where I faced some difficulties in referencing. I have some basic knowledge of referencing before these experiences, but the situation I faced in doing that project was completely new and surprising to me. From that experience, I have learned the approaches to referencing diverse sources such as books, journals, articles, newspapers, websites, etc. I have learned the method of in-text citation properly for diverse referencing styles. Before this module, I was acknowledged of just a few rules of referencing but with this learning module, I have known about almost all-important rules of referencing. From this module, I have learned the application and method of a citation using diverse referencing styles. I have also learned a new concept of misconduct through this model. This academic misconduct is any action or behaviour that helps others to get an unfair educational advantage. This referencing assists in avoiding plagiarism and misconduct. This skill enables me to specify which content is unique to me because I've cited other people's ideas in some places.

This skill is very useful to me as this assists me in avoiding plagiarism as this makes it clear which idea is my own and which I have taken from another person's (Cunningham, 2021). This skill displays my precise understanding of the subject. The skill of proper referencing aids me to provide supporting evidence to back up my ideas, concepts, and opinions (Williams and Davis, 2017). This inclusion is essential but not mandatory. In APA citation, the inclusion of page number is mandatory when quoting a source. When the work is referred to as a whole, there is no need to include the page number (McMillan and Weyers, 2013).

Summarizing

Summarizing entails reducing anything to its basic minimum. This skill allows for the rapid and efficient collection of ideas without information explosion or missing important specifics about what people intended to express (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2019). It aids the viewers who have no time for reading the full article by offering them the essential points of the whole study in short. For developing the skill of summarizing, individuals have to enhance their reading skills, filtering skills recognizing the main ideas from the resources, defining the key points and understanding the theme of the topic. They also have to differentiate fact from opinion and analyze texts by following the arguments (Importance of summarizing in academic writing, 2022). I have applied Kolb's learning model for assessing this skill of mine. In the last semester, the teacher provides an article and asked me to summarize the article. I was very poor at summarizing as I had no experience in summarizing articles before. I just had some theoretical knowledge about the process of doing a summary of an article. The seniors and even the teacher assist me a lot in breaking down this practice. From this experience, I have learned the process of writing a good summary. This procedure includes reading the text sincerely, breaking down the text into essential segments, identifying the key points from each segment, writing the summary of each key point, and checking the summary that I have written according to the article. In the next assignment of summary writing, I implemented my new learning properly. This skill helps me to gain the ability to identify key concepts and gather evidence that supports them. This ultimately enhances my writing skill. It permits me to concentrate on important phrases and terms in a reading document that are important to note and retain (Numan Khazaal, 2019).

Public speaking & giving presentations

Public speaking and giving a presentation are soft skill that enables individuals to communicate with people confidently and expresses & share their feelings and thoughts about particular issues publicly (Yakutina, 2020). I have applied Kolb's reflection model for

expressing my thoughts and opinions regarding the method of how I have improved my presentation skills and speaking skills in public. I have experienced a situation where I have to give a presentation on the selected topic in front of my teacher and classmates. I was very nervous in that situation as from childhood I have had a fear to speak in public and giving a presentation in front of so many people is just like a nightmare to me. I was an introvert and didn't like to speak much in front of many people (Raja, 2017). My classmate, seniors, and even my teacher help me a lot for fighting my fear and speaking confidently and fearlessly in front of them. From that experience, I have learned the way of developing my presentation as well as public speaking skills. I have learned the significance of communicating clearly and effectively in front of an audience. I have realized that for speaking and presenting in front of many people, I have to be confident and organized my papers in a manner with strong points which will attract the audience to focus more on my information rather than on me. I have learned about diverse tools like Microsoft PowerPoint for making convenient presentations (Schneider, Börner, van Rosmalen and Specht, 2017). I have also learned to express my inner feelings confidently in front of people. I have applied this new insight of mine regarding public speaking and presentation in my next semester. It was the final presentation of that semester and that's why external came from another university. For that presentation, I attractively organized my paper with very informative data which attract the audience and bound them to focus on my information (Schneider et al., 2017). At the first stage of starting this module, my confidence level in participating in public speaking or communicating with others was very poor. With this learning module, I eventually gained my confidence level and started to participate in public speaking and public presentations (Marinho et al., 2017). I have learned the tactic of attracting the attention of the listeners to what I present in front of them This practice is beneficial to me because confidently presenting feelings to others and speaking in front of the public is necessary for educational excellence as well as future career success (Carnegie, 2017). This also assists me to modulate my voice associated with the topic for creating any boring or monotonous situation.

Reflection on presentation

The presentation I presented in the previous week reflects on employability skills. Employability refers to the collection of accomplishments, talents, conceptions and individual characteristics that increases the chances of finding employment and succeeding in the chosen professions. I have discussed various skills that are required in employability and these are community skills, interpersonal skills, personal skills, numeracy skills, and General awareness. Communication skills are significant as they enable people to understand themselves along with other people. In this skill, the significant attributes are listening skills,

speaking skills, observing ability, and empathy skill. Interpersonal skills refer to the capability to interact with others, establish relationships, and grasp their perspectives, coworkers, supervisors, patrons, and the public in general. This includes problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, logical and systematic reasoning, creativity and innovation skills, etc. Personal qualities are acknowledged as soft talents that are challenging to teach. Adaptability, flexibility, initiative, aptitude for addressing problems, and analytical thinking are some of the attributes of these personal skills. The abilities and attitudes necessary for individuals to utilize arithmetic in a variety of contexts are known as numeracy skills. General awareness skills discuss ethical issues, environmental issues, health and safety issues, and the impact of the organization on society as a whole. I have also discussed the employability skills that are required for a particular role in my presentation.

Conclusion

Reflection is a fundamental part of learning and is becoming more and more common in regular practice. This practice enables individuals to become more aware of themselves, better understand and knowledge of the circumstance, and also enhance their skills and competencies for doing better in future and avoiding similar mistakes that they had done before. Referencing is very important as it assists in demonstrating my meticulous and comprehensive academic work. Summarizing is a fantastic technique to add interest and credibility to the writing. Public speaking not only showed the technique of speaking but also improved the writing and creativity of an individual.

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