

LEARNING IN THE DIGITAL ERA

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Student name
Student number

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Introduction

In this report, I will reflect on my journey to becoming a full time interpreter while being also a student, and what I need to do in order to work with the police and in court, using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988).

Main Findings

Description

In my previous career, I had 10-12 hours days. I would go to work in the morning, sometimes before my little boy was even awake, and come back late. One day, when he saw me and said something along the lines of 'mummy is visiting again', I knew it was time to make a change. This is when I joined the University course.

I also joined Language Line Solutions, which is a telephone interpreting company, and I was already collaborating with the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service, doing face to face interpreting. On one of the assignments ,I met another Romanian interpreter who had been working in the field for a long time. This lady mentioned that I would not get any police or court assignments without the equivalent of a Diploma in Public Service Interpreting, regardless of what qualifications I have acquired in Romania.

The same day, I went and joined a course that will give me the qualification I need in order to work with the police and court, while helping me get better with my terminology and refreshing on the code of conduct.

Feelings

The decision to completely change my career path was made rather quickly and triggered self doubt. After discussing it with my husband and making sure I have his full support, I finally resigned from my job and started my new adventure. It felt exciting to finally be starting the one thing I knew I would like to do, but it was also extremely hard to give up a career that I had worked so hard to build, and the security that came with it. Like Amelia Earhart said it so well,: ‘the most difficult thing is the decision to act; the rest is merely tenacity’ (Brainy Quote, 2022).

I joined the interpreting course that will help me obtain assignments with the police and the court shortly after I joined the University. I felt excited, again, but worried as well. As I identified in my SWOT analysis, one of my weaknesses is that I tend to take on a lot of tasks, without considering the pressure I put myself under (Teoli, et al., 2022) .

While most of the time I feel positive about the change, it is very difficult for me to be a beginner again. I understand that it will take some time before I will start getting more and more assignments, as there are other more experienced interpreters, but I can’t help getting frustrated on occasion. This is the reason why I joined University in the first place, to make sure that I have options for the future, if I want to get back into management . I felt the need to remain relevant.

Evaluation

The interpreting course is ongoing, I have one year to complete it. If I hadn't gone through a significant pay cut by leaving my management job and starting self employment, I might not have joined it at the same time as the University course. So far, I managed to complete all the assignments for both courses on time, without compromising either of them. However, balancing the two courses and work and family life has brought to my attention how good at procrastinating I am, which puts additional pressure on me. Time management is definitely something I need to work on, which is why I started reading 'The seven habits of highly effective people: restoring the character ethic' (Covey, 1989). I also started using my diary and planning my days better.

Luckily, I have a lot of support from all my tutors from University and the interpreting course, but also I have help from my interpreter friends and colleagues.

It has been a while since I had to write any type of academic work, so I was very grateful when I realised that I can use everything I learnt in the University course, to write my assignments for the interpreting course (how to set up a report, referencing). Another positive has been the constant work around paraphrasing, which is a very big part of the interpreting process, too.

Analysis

I did feel pressure when the deadline for the assignments started approaching, because I hadn't planned ahead well enough. I always tend to leave tasks for the last minute and of course, time becomes a problem. Luckily enough, I work well under pressure, but I had to remind myself that unexpected events can happen and that could set me back even more – for example, my son staying home ill for a couple of days, when I thought that I would have plenty of time to focus on writing reports.

My flexibility is definitely one of the things that is going really well. As I start to make sense of this new reality, I am starting to plan better. After the experience of the first few assignments, I know that I can stay up for a few hours after my son goes to sleep, and I can take a couple of hours during the weekend to do research, thus saving my days for work assignments.

I found the material covered in the University modules very helpful, especially the learning style questionnaires like Myers Briggs (myersbriggs, 2022). I had done management style questionnaires before, like the Tetra Map (Yoshimi & Brett, 2002), so I know what kind of manager I am, but I haven't done quizzes about the type of student I am in a very long time. The learning style questionnaire showed me what I did already know about myself, but made it clearer. I need to listen to new information, then write down a lot of notes, then practice. All this helped me process all the new information I learn everyday in the interpreting course, by writing my own glossaries of new terms I come across, including paraphrasing hard to interpret words from one language into the other.

Another thing that helped me was to realise that there is a lot of literature out there about procrastination. It was great to see that people who procrastinate are not necessarily considered lazy or to have poor time management skills, but that the procrastination is more of a self-protection mechanism against failure or being judged (Voge, 2007). I made notes of the tips I found that help avoid procrastination and I try to use them day by day.

Conclusion

The main thing I learnt from all this is that I need to take time to self reflect on all my learning experiences, to identify what is going well and what opportunities there are for improvement. I need to constantly look for ways to become more efficient and to avoid putting extra pressure on myself by leaving tasks until the last minute.

Overall, it has not been a bad experience so far, it just felt a bit overwhelming on occasion. I know that I can avoid that in the future, by being a bit more organised and following the tips to avoid procrastination.

Action Plan

I will constantly use the information from one course to help me with the other (for example, I will use my paraphrasing skills gained in the interpreting course for the University assignments and the strategies from the University course for the interpreting course assignments). I will set clear objectives for both courses, using the SMART method (Doran, 1981).

I will make better use of my time and focus on the assignments for the interpreting course during school holidays or at the beginning of new school term, when there are no University assessments pending. I will try to start research early, as soon as I see the subject of the future assignments.

I will stay in contact with my course colleagues, as I found that we can help each other at times, even if it's only with words of encouragement.

Link to video:

Hereismyvideo.com

This video is to be 3-minutes in length and is to be PowerPoint presentation similar to what you did for Task 4 within the E-portfolio. For ths, you will have slides for the stages of the reflective cycle.

References