

Using the Gibbs (1998), Reflective Learning Cycle, this piece of work will explore my contribution to the group video assignment, specifically focusing on my reaction to the suggested theme put forward by my peer group for the task. I feel the Gibbs (1998) model allows for a structured analysis of a situation, leads to an enhanced evaluation of circumstances, and creates a clear pathway to developing changeable outcomes.

Description

The first meeting with regard to the group video assignment was held in a study room on campus both for ease and for familiarity. The meeting consisted of four advocacy degree students, including myself and whom I shall refer to as A, B, C and D. Four students who since starting the course have worked well together, cheerleading the diversity in personality, experience, and contributions. The purpose of the get together was to discuss and agree a theme for our work as required by the module assignment. This was expected to be nothing more than clarifying a topic and voicing thoughts on the roles and expectations of the assignment.

Feelings

The overall feelings were of enthusiasm as is normal for our group when faced with a fresh challenge, however, I was unprepared for and overwhelmed by the level of excitement for the group to make the series of films about global sustainability. Student A, B and C were eager to discuss their thoughts on electric cars, the gasses passed by

cows and the recycling of plastics, however, at the time, I felt disappointed, unknowledgeable, and awkward. I was aware I was having a negative impact on the meeting and by only considering my perspective I was also missing vital components of what was necessary for the group task. My emotions took over and I could only see my viewpoint. Later, I realised that was a great opportunity to 'build up my skills' as recommended by Thompson, (2018) who suggests that I may not have been able to tune in to the expectations of my contribution due to anxiety and that I temporarily restricted the view. Adopting a reflective approach has allowed time to revisit the time and space and on critical evaluation question my responses which I now appreciate were moments with the potential to promote personal growth.

Evaluation

On realising I was upset some of the other students were supportive and asked about my feelings. Student A showed empathy in that they were aware of what I was going through without having to take on the emotion themselves and we discussed my discomfort and how to resolve it. Student C was very dismissive of my emotion, I believe because she feels uncomfortable in the distress of others. One of the things that surprised me was student B believing I had more knowledge than I realised and that I was underestimating my ability. I think the cause of my emotion was the fear of feeling threatened and exposed.

Analysis

What did not work so well here, was to get tearful. I am aware that I get tearful when I am scared, frustrated and angry. I had no knowledge or level of engagement with topics such as carbon footprints, climate change and other contemporary sustainability issues. Bloch (2016), confirms this by stating when writing about something, you need to enjoy it, understand it and engage with it in order to be passionate and coherent about it. Bloch (2016), continues this idea by suggesting a passion belongs to the activity of research within academia when the subject matter is of personal importance. I could not be passionate about methane gas, non-polluting cars, and paper straws and recognise that I usually leave environmental issues unspoken about for fear of seeming ignorant.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the meeting was emotionally challenging which none of the group had anticipated. I was disappointed with myself for letting emotion take over, and for exposing vulnerabilities. Student B reminded us how well we work things out together, each of us contributing something different from our diverse backgrounds, experiences, and skills. Looking back I realise how grateful I am that we as a group were able to discuss ways to make sustainability a comfortable subject for me, I was supported and empowered by their responses and more equal again with a reinforced feeling of having something to offer giving me a clarity and a focus. Thompson and Thompson (2018), discuss dimensions of group learning and how important peer support can be offering the opportunity to develop new

skills and to learn new values from each other, to gain confidence from the realization that we all have different anxieties and perceptions and also that group learning can remind us how what we individually contribute has its significant importance to the end goal. After the talk, I felt less inadequate and more able to contribute to the overall piece of work. Within this reflection, I have come to realise I am resilient in terms of bouncing back after an emotional outburst and am quickly able to rebalance myself. This led me to read more on resilience and I found that Thompson (2016), writes of a 3Rs Framework, Resourcefulness, Robustness and Resilience in terms of working with emotion. He explains that not falling at the first emotional hurdle, having the vision to realise the power and promise of human encounter and to bounce back quickly within adversity are firm foundations of working in an emotion-evoking sector of which I hope to aspire to.

Action plan

I plan to go forward with a family and community orientated slant on the topic, personalising my contribution to the group task.

I will endeavour to not get so frustrated and emotional when scared. I am very much aware of how I need to learn to voice feelings and opinions without emotions taking over and shall seek some support with assertiveness techniques to accomplish this as this skill is fundamental to the practice of advocacy, and as Bateman (2000), confirms can be enhanced with direction and support.

In the future, I will not assume that I am being judged upon my knowledge of a subject and to achieve this I will enquire where my contributions can fit in before panicking.

I also endeavour to continue to write in stages as reflective practice involves. I enjoy the different perspectives the passage of time allows for when engaging in this approach to learning.

References

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