

ACADEMIC REPORT

Tsvetelin Stoyanov

Student ID: 2115129

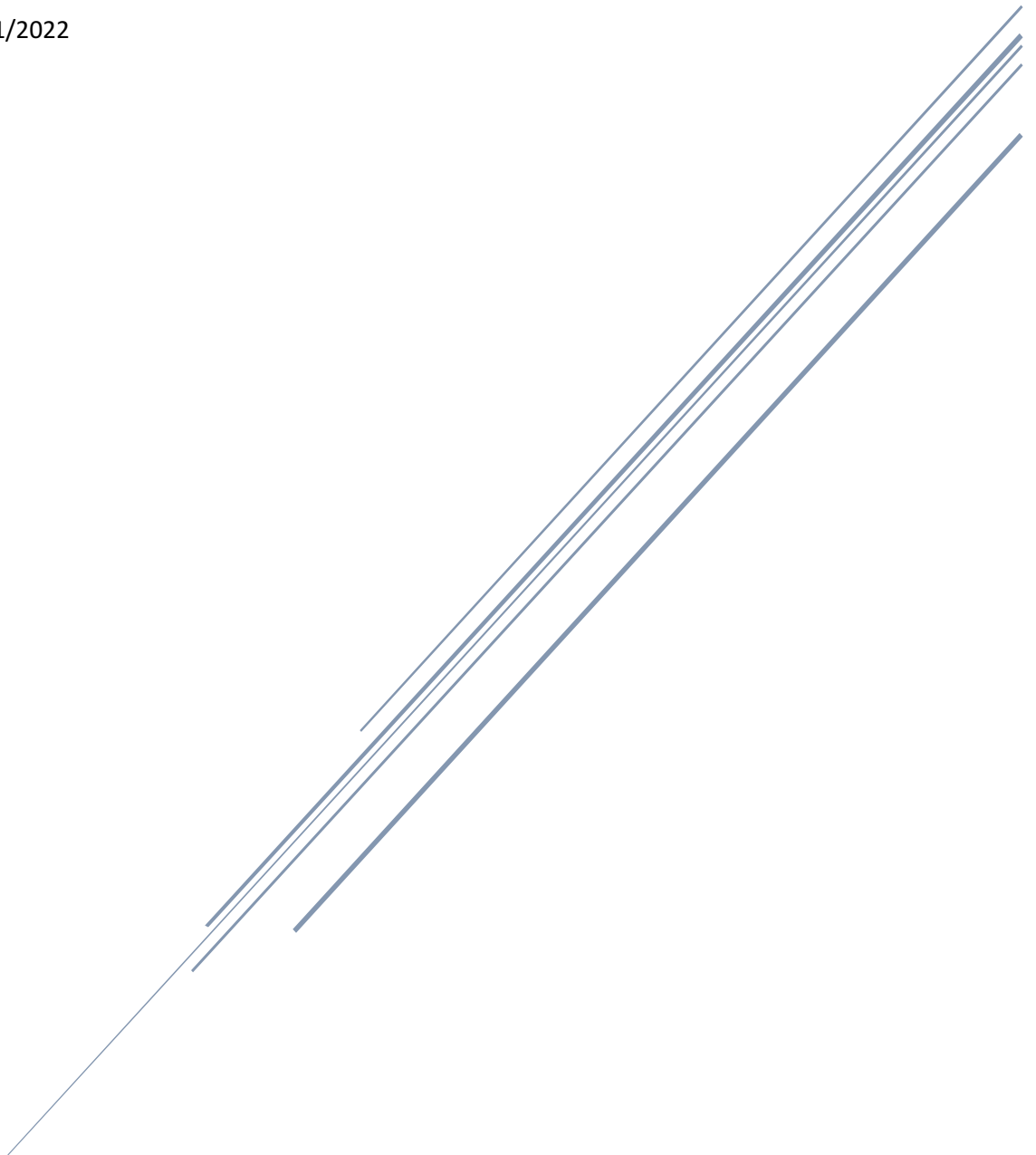
University of Wales, Trinity Saint David

Academic and Employability Skills

BMSW4001

Lecturer: Soban Sadiq

Date: 05/01/2022



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Introduction

Reflection emphasizes awareness of a person's knowledge, experiences, and behaviours. There are four models of reflection which help individuals to improve their strategies and provide the necessary steps for achievement. These are Gibb's Reflective Cycle, Kolb's Reflective Cycle, Schon model, and Driscoll's What model. This report aims to use Gibb's Reflective Cycle to guide my reflection on important topics like time management, paraphrasing, referencing, and public speaking and giving presentations. (Getting started with Reflective Practice, 2022)

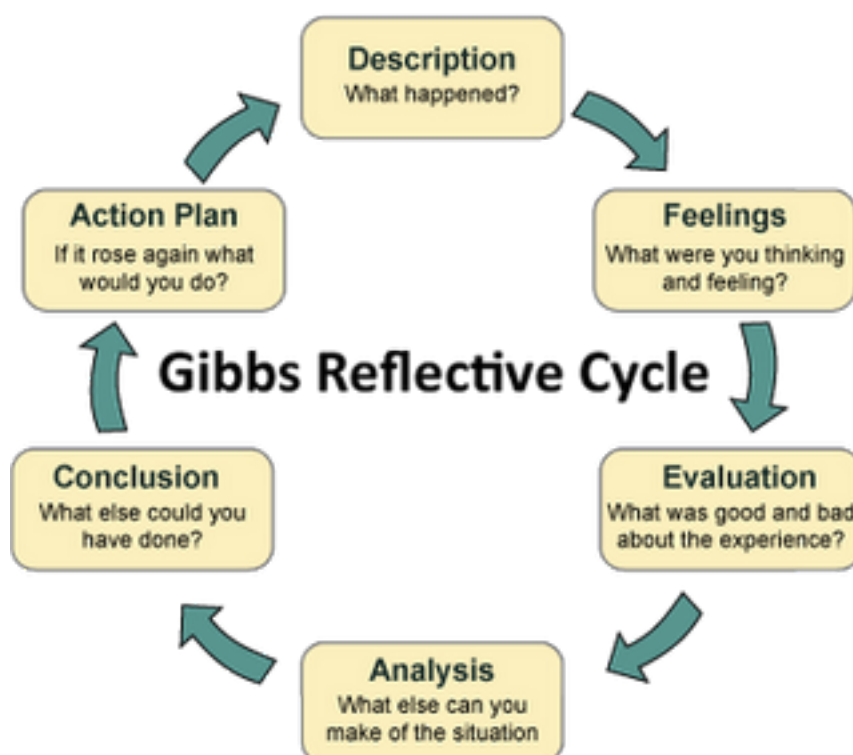


Fig.1. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

An Overview of Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

Graham Gibbs developed this model of reflection in 1988 in order to give structure to learning from experience. It allows you to learn both from things that went well and from things that did not go well. The Reflective Cycle covers six stages called description,

feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan. In the first stage, you describe the situation and the things that happened. In the second stage, you talk about how you felt during the experience and what emotions arose in you. Then in stage three, you should evaluate the situation and decide which approaches worked and which did not. In stage four, you have to make an analysis of the situation and think about what else you could have done. The fifth step is to draw conclusions about what happened. In stage six, you can advise on similar situations and talk about what you would do if you were again in this position. (Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, 2022)

Time Management

Time management is a process of planning and controlling of time that is spent on different tasks. It is done in order to reach effectiveness and efficiency when doing a certain activity. Time management includes balancing work, family, hobbies, social life, personal interests, etc. The goal is to be as productive as possible and comply with a due date. Five techniques might be very useful when doing your time management. The first one is to be intentional and draw up a to-do list, which will be quite helpful when doing the tasks. Then you should rank your tasks depending on your priorities. Moreover, it is essential to manage distractions and to be focused on the important things. It is crucial to time block your work, as well, because that way a particular task will not overtake your entire time. And lastly, you should be self-aware and track your time. (5 essential time management techniques, 2022)

A reflection on my time management

Throughout the semester I realized that time management is essential for a successful academic performance. When I joined college, I was assigned numerous tasks that needed time and effort to be done. At first, I did not know how to cope with them, and it was hard for me to do them effectively. I did not realise how much time was needed for every assignment and usually waited for the last minute to do them. However, I started to make plans and prioritize my tasks and daily life activities. It became easier when I had clear goals and I had more time for everything. I searched for many tips on the internet and from our classes about how to properly manage my time and I found a lot of useful strategies.

Personally, the strategy that I used most of my time was the 4 P's. They are Do, Defer (Delay), Delegate, and Delete (Drop). This method is used to place the different tasks under these categories. (The 4 Ds of Time Management, 2022) When a task would take only a few minutes I usually did it because it did not take much of my time. When a task was not urgent, I delayed it for later. If it was possible to be done by someone else, I delegated it. Lastly, if it was not necessary at all, I removed it from my schedule and proceeded with the others. Once you decide which task where it should be placed it becomes easier and more productive. In most situations, I put my university as a priority and my personal life in second place. That way I was more focused on my academic goals and tried to finish them before I turn to leisure and work. However, sometimes it was not possible because of urgent work tasks and lack of time, but I managed to balance my daily schedule and finish all of my plans in time.

In conclusion, I think that I managed to balance my time during the semester. I believe that with more practise I will become more productive with my time management, and it will get easier.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is an essential tool when writing assignments. It is used to convey the author's idea in your own words, in order to avoid plagiarism. Usually, when doing reports, the student has to make research on the particular topic and use various sources. The information that he/she finds should be paraphrased and not copy-pasted. Otherwise, the plagiarism percentage will be very high, which is a serious problem. There are numerous tips for paraphrasing like using synonyms, changing the sentence structure, breaking the information into separate sentences, etc. (Paraphrasing for Beginners, 2022)

A reflection on my paraphrasing

At the beginning of my university experience, paraphrasing was something new to me. I found it quite hard and confusing because I had never done something similar. Moreover, the whole process was taking me too much time and I needed to practise more. With time and experience, I became better at paraphrasing and my assignments started to look more academic and advanced. The plagiarism percentage was getting lower, and it was

beneficial for my grades. However, there is still a place for development. I think that more practises would have been useful it would have improved my skills.

In the future, I will continue with the good work and will try to improve my writing skills by practising and learning new strategies about paraphrasing.

Referencing

Referencing is crucial for every student's academic performance. While doing reports and assignments, students gain information from various sources, which need to be properly cited, in order to avoid plagiarism. These include ideas, theories, quotations, facts, diagrams, etc., which are generated by another person.

There are two types of referencing – in-text citation and a reference list, and many different styles – APA, MLA, Chicago, Harvard, etc. In-text citations are used in the paragraphs of the whole text, where other authors' points are presented. A reference list contains all of the sources used for the particular assignment, usually on the last page. You should provide full details about the sources like author, title, date, and place of publication, and more. In order to create a well-researched paper, a student has to have more references, which will demonstrate to the reader that you are familiar with the topic. (Massey University, 2022)

A reflection on my referencing

When I joined university, I learned about referencing and its importance. Previously, I have not done anything like that, and it was kind of complicated for me. There were so many different styles, and I could not memorize all of them. When I was given assignments, I had to properly cite the sources that I have used, with both in-text citations and a bibliography. As it was my first time doing something like this, I did not follow the guidelines and I have a few formatting errors. I thought that my assignment is well-written, but it turned out that my in-text citations were very few and the bibliography was not created in alphabetic order. The plagiarism percentage was quite high, and it was a serious problem. However, I learned from my mistakes and did the referencing on my second assignment quite well. I also checked a few citation generators on the internet, which helped me a lot to learn how to do them.

Unfortunately, some sources do not have full details and I have to search further in order to find the needed information.

Although my reference was not perfect this semester, I have learned from my mistakes, and I will try to improve in the future. This will happen with more practise and research on the topic. For future assignments, I will be careful when ordering the bibliography and I will make sure to use more in-text citations to reduce the plagiarism percentage on my papers.

Public speaking and giving a presentation

Public speaking and giving presentations are quite important in university. Every student will have to do a form of oral interaction at least once in their academic years. Usually, it is done in front of the class or a group of people, but sometimes it might be only in front of the professor. The major problems that might occur during the presenting are anxiety and nervousness. Many students feel stressed when talking in front of other people, which might result in unsatisfying performance. There are some tips and strategies for successful delivery of a presentation. The first one is to overcome anxiety by understanding that the audience wants you to succeed, by preparing and practising, and by focusing on the things that you are saying, and not the way that you are saying them. After all, the audience is interested in your ideas and does not pay much attention to your performance.

However, before public speaking, you have to make a successful presentation first. You can start by analysing the audience and the goals of your presentation. Then you have to make a plan and research, in order to organize your content. Make a few drafts and revisions of the presentation before the final project and do not forget to prepare speaking notes, which will be quite useful during the delivery. After everything is ready you can benefit from practising either alone or in front of family or friends. The experience will help you to overcome nervousness and be more relaxed in front of the audience. (Tips for Making Effective PowerPoint Presentations, 2022)

A reflection on my public speaking and giving presentations

When I had to give my first presentation during this semester, I had huge anxiety. I was quite shy and afraid to not mess up and fail. I practised by myself numerous times

before the real presentation. I tried to follow a few strategies that were going to help me in delivering a successful presentation. Firstly, I timed my speaking to see if I was achieving the needed time frame. In the beginning, I was speaking too fast, in order to finish quicker, which resulted in only 3-4 minutes of speaking. However, the presentation was supposed to be around 10 minutes and I had to slow down and relax while talking to the audience. After a few times practising I almost reached the goal of 10 minutes.

The second strategy that I followed was to engage with the audience and to pay attention to my body language. Although we were presenting online, we had to turn on our cameras, which was stressful for me back then.

In conclusion, giving presentations and speaking in front of people turned out to be not so stressful. After my first presentation, I saw that it was not that hard, and I even enjoyed it. In the future, I will try to reduce the stress to the minimum and to focus on my ideas, while engage with the audience.

Conclusion

In conclusion, reflection is an essential process in learning from our experience. The Gibbs' Model of Reflection is very useful in guiding the reflection process. During my first semester in university, I went through many new academic experiences like time managing, paraphrasing, referencing, and giving presentations. I plan to continue improving in these areas in order to succeed in university and reach my goals.

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