

REFLECTION REPORT

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Task 2- Reflection Report

Introduction

Academic and employability skills are individual abilities that enable students to be responsible for their own learning and they allow them to gain competence and confidence as effective employees (Dixit and Yadav, 2021). Skills such as reflection, time management and planning, teamwork, public speaking and giving presentations, and academic writing are key employability skills that students need to master. Reflection, in particular, is an essential skill that enables one to think about their past experiences, assess where they did well and identify areas that need improvement (Williams et al., 2020). Students can benefit greatly from the reflection process as they find an opportunity to evaluate their learning experience and how they can enhance their academic performance and prepare for their future career. The objective of this report is to use the Gibbs reflective cycle to guide my reflection on my experiences with time management, public speaking and giving presentations, and academic writing.

Gibbs reflective cycle

The Gibbs reflective cycle is an important model that guides an individual's reflection of their experiences. According to Williams et al. (2020), the Gibbs reflective cycle proposes six stages that are essential for proper reflection.

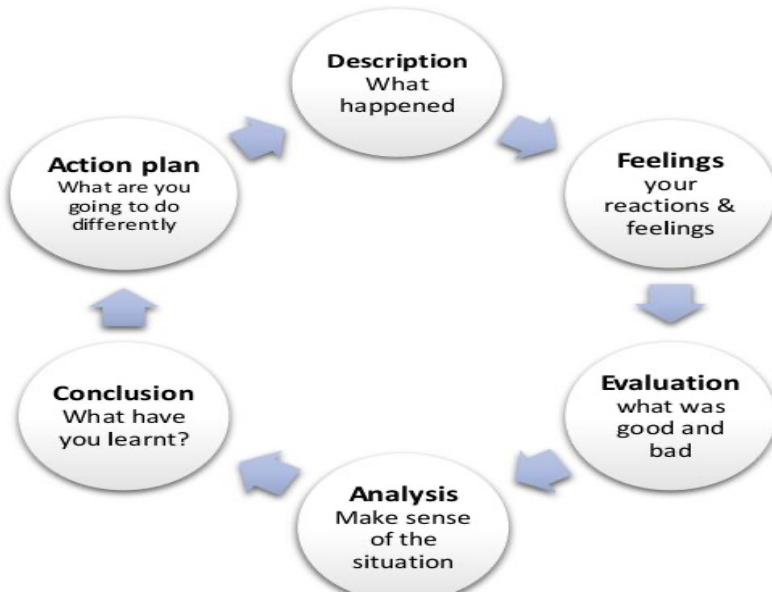


Fig.1. The Gibbs reflective cycle

The first stage entails giving a description of the experience by stating what happened and when it occurred. In the second stage an individual describes their thoughts and how they felt about the experience. The third stage requires an individual to evaluate the experience by stating the positive and the negative aspects of the experience. In the analysis step, an individual makes sense of what happened by using wider context and theory to develop understanding. Key questions revolve around what went well and what did not go well. In the conclusion stage, a focus shifts to what was learned, what can be done better, and how the situation could have been handled differently. The final stage requires an individual to provide an action plan illustrating how a similar situation would be dealt with in the future, or changes that are seen to be more appropriate (Williams, et al. (2020)).

Time management (Organizing study)

Time management entails organizing and planning how long an individual spend on given activities. According to Dixit and Yadav (2021), effective time management is helpful because it enhances productivity and efficiency and it minimizes stress on the individual. Managing time properly helps a student to organize their everyday activities. As a result, they are able to complete various tasks on time and stay engaged throughout. A student possessing strong time management is capable of accomplishing key academic and career goals and advancing in their academics. Failure to manage time well can have undesirable effects like increased stress levels, poor work quality, inefficient work flow and missed deadlines (Morris, 2011).

A reflection on time management

For many years, I have always experienced various issues with regards to managing my time in a more efficient manner. In particular, my inability to manage time well became evident when I joined University. At one time there were so many activities in college that needed my attention. I needed to complete class assignments, attend environmental club meetings, and do cleaning in my room. In most cases, I finished most assignments imperfectly and even got to a point where I left some work unattended to. Sometimes I felt stressed as the deadlines were approaching fast. I also felt embarrassed and upset by my inability to maintain my room in order. Due to my poor time management, I did not get good marks in some assignments.

Upon reflecting on this experience, I realized that I did not dedicate enough time on each task. I used to set goals or plan for my activities, but I failed to put deadlines or timeframe. I always kept procrastinating making me to lose track of time as I found excuses to avoid beginning my assignments or tasks. I also got diverted from my work by non-essential activities like surfing the Internet or watching television. My friends could also distract me as they invited me to attend their social events and more time was wasted in such meetings. In retrospect, I

would have said be the following differently. Most importantly, I would have developed a plan and set a timeline for each activity. I would have also avoided unnecessary activities like watching movies and setting little time for social events. This would have enabled to stay focused on my tasks (Levin, 2007).

Attending a lecture on time management and how to organize my study has helped me a lot. I have been introduced to various elements related to time management including setting SMART goals, proper planning, and identifying urgent and important tasks. In future, when I will be having a lot of activities on my to do list, Dixit and Yadav (2021) suggest that I will need to reduce the tasks to smaller and more achievable ones and add them to my to do list or to my daily timetable. To avoid distractions, I will consider finding a quiet place for my study like in the library and turning off my mobile phone. It is also important to plan my leisure time so that I will not feel resentful when studying or feel guilty whenever I take my free time (Levin, 2007).

Public Speaking and Giving Presentations

Public speaking is a form of interaction common in education and it entails giving oral presentations before a group of people or a class (Bradbury, 2006). It is important to develop public speaking skills because students are often asked to give a presentation at a certain point. Besides, their future career may also require them to give presentations on various topics before clients, in a conference, or in front of their fellow employees. Therefore, by giving presentations on class assignments, students are given an opportunity to strengthen oral communication skills that will be very valuable at their respective workplaces. According to Bradbury (2006), delivering a perfect presentation requires one to demonstrate confidence and understanding of the subject. This makes the individual able to contribute to the discussions and respond to possible questions raised by audience.

A reflection on public speaking

In high school making a presentation in front of a class often scarred me because I was among the reserved students. The same thing happened when I joining college. I dreaded the first day of every class, where students were expected to go in front of the class and introduce themselves by stating their names and their career interests. I recall the challenging part of public speaking for me was giving a PowerPoint presentation on a selected topic for about 8 minutes. When my time for presentation came, I got to the whiteboard and at first, I was nervous and anxious about how I was going to articulate my points before my professor and colleagues. I felt myself visibly shaking and I could not say my initial sentences in a coherent manner. Luckily, my fellow students and professor were quite understanding as they were aware I was not used to giving presentations and that I was nervous. I completed my session and sat down as I listened to the next presenter. I was convinced that my feelings were not unique to me because I could also watch my friends panicking as they went in front to give their presentations.

After the presentation session, I spoke to my friends about their own experiences and I felt much more positive. I learned that every person tends to feel nervous before their first public speaking sessions. This is also clear in the literature, as Greive et al. (2021) state, although a few individuals tend to be natural public speakers, a majority of people tend to demonstrate some level of stage fright or anxiety when standing before a group of people for the first time. I feel being nervous and developing anxiety before a presentation is attributed largely by my own actions and less by my personality. First, I should have prepared well for the presentation by thoroughly researching on the topic to gain confidence in what I was going to say. Also, I could have sent a transcript of the speech to a friend to give me some new insight on my subject (Dixit and Yadav, 2021). My friend could have had an opportunity to identify areas in my presentation that required improvement.

As public speaking become a norm in college, I started practicing giving presentations in class and in out of class events. I had to get used to articulating my points with good intonations and sense of flow. Since public speaking and giving presentations is inevitable in academics and at the workplace, I have learned that in future I will need to consider that following: - first I need to research the topic well and make proper use of visuals that keep the audience more engaged (Bradbury, 2006). Before the actual presentation, I will consider practicing giving the same presentation before my friend to judge my abilities and note areas that I would need to improve (Dixit and Yadav, 2021). Through these actions, I will develop confidence, minimize anxiety, and give a great talk.

Academic writing

Academic writing is a formal writing style commonly used in scholarly publications and in universities. Students can find this form of writing in books on academic subjects, in journal articles, and they are required to write their research papers, essays, and dissertations in an academic style. Chin et al. (2013), point out that academic writing is very unique in terms of style, structure, and content. It aims to convey information in a formal and unbiased manner. All arguments need not be asserted but supported with relevant and credible evidence. The writer is also required to cite in the text all sources of information being used and include a reference list at the end of the paper. When writing academic papers, the writer is required to use a precise and clear language to ensure that the reader is able to understand the information being presented.

My reflection on academic writing

I was introduced to academic writing when I joined college. Assignments are submitted in form of reports, essays, research papers, and presentations. In my first year, my lecturer gave us mid-term assignments that we were to complete adhering to specific guidelines. Each

student was to follow a certain referencing style, font size, and spacing. Since I had no prior knowledge of how to write academic papers, completing college assignments was a daunting task for me. I would spend most of the time researching on different referencing styles and how to paraphrase my work as we were cautioned not to plagiarize other people's work. In my first assignments, I did not get quality grades and I felt distressed as I was determined to getting good grades from my first year. Our lecturer noticed a gap in our writing skills as most students did not follow all the provided guidelines. We were encouraged to seek guidance from the university's writing centers, read broadly about the elements of academic writing, and practice regularly.

Upon reflecting on my previous assignments, I noted that I made several mistakes that denied me good marks. For instance, my papers had numerous grammatical errors and other typos because I could not spend enough time proofreading my work. Secondly, I did not understand how to paraphrase properly and include in-text citations following the right format. Thirdly, I could not arrange my ideas in a way that allows the reader to follow what I wrote keenly. Through practice and learning about Academic writing, I have gained proper insight on how to write academic papers including essays, reports, and preparing PowerPoint slides for presentations. As Fitzmaurice and O'Farrell (2013) suggest, any time I am give assignments, I will ensure that I read and understand all the instructions provided, use the required format, paraphrase, cite and reference my work, and proofread to correct any grammatical errors before I submit. I will also keep my writing formal and precise to allow the reader to easily understand the message I will be passing across.

Conclusion

Time management, public speaking and academic writing are skills that students should possess. These skills not only help students to succeed in their academics but they are also

necessary in life after college. The Gibbs reflective cycle has enabled me to reflect on my experiences on utilizing the three mentioned skills. I have noted that I need to continue practicing giving presentations, learning how to manage my time well, and writing quality academic papers. Most important aspect in academic writing I should put more emphasis on is using the write format, paraphrasing properly, and ensuring that I provide a reference list of all credible literature sources. Regarding time management, I need to learn how to prioritize tasks and avoid distractions.

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