

BMSW4001

Academic and Employability Skills

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Introduction

This is an academic report in which I have reflected on my learning in this module. I have used Kolb's experiential Cycle as a model of reflection for reflecting on my learning. I have discussed about four topics those have been covered by me during this term. After discussing those topics, I have reflected on those on the basis of their usefulness. I have reflected on how they have been useful and what I have learned. I have applied David Kolb's reflective cycle in each topic while reflecting on the topic. I have analysed some published literature related to those topics by using feedbacks in my class.

Main Body

In this report, I have provided a reflection on my learning or covered topics during the entire module. During the term, I have covered four topics which have been very much useful to me. Those four topics are Time management, CV Writing, public speaking and Giving presentations and Analytical and Critical thinking skills. I have learned these four topics and these four topics will be helpful to me in having success in my academic and professional life. For reflecting on these topics, I have used experiential reflective cycle.

Experiential Reflective Cycle

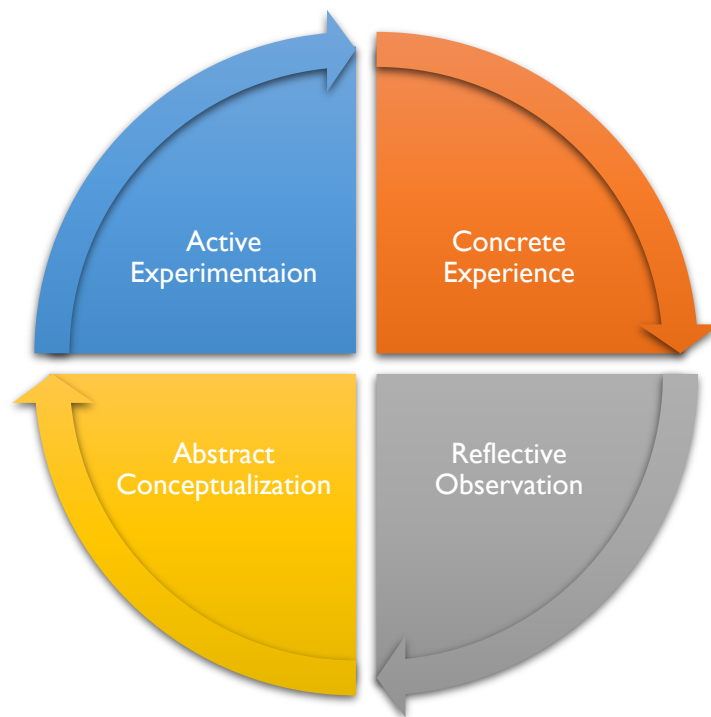


Figure 1: Experiential learning Cycle;

Source: (Iheanacho, 2016)

According to Ramesh et al. (2017), Kolb's reflective cycle is one of the famous reflective model involving an examination of a person's feeling and how they have influenced the situation and reflection of that experience. This is also known as experiential learning cycle. This model is mainly based on my own experience that is later reviewed, analysed, and evaluated in a systematic way.

By using this model, I have reflected on my learning by analysing my own feelings or experience for creating a structured analysis. During reflecting on my learned topics, I have used all four stages of this frameworks. Main four stages of this framework are Concrete experience, Reflection observation, Abstract conceptualization, and Active Experimentation (Peterson et al., 2014).

Reflection on Topics

I have provided a reflection of my four covered topics during the module. Those are illustrating underneath;

Time Management Skill

Based on the research analysis of Pauleen and Gorman (2011); for being successful in every aspect of life, this is needed for an individual to have proper management of time. Without having proper time management, this can be very problematic for an individual to organize activities in life. I have learned how to manage my time efficiently and productively during this module. While applying David Kolb's model of reflection for reflecting the covered topic, I have followed four stages of the model. At first, I have experienced the situation. Before learning time management, I always struggled to manage my time and do any work at the given time. I failed to submit most of my classwork and assignment on deadline which affected my academic life. This triggered the second stage of the model in which I wrote down my experience in which I understood the feeling which were triggered by the situation. After I realised the situation, I understand my lack of time management and I wanted to be more punctual. In the abstract conceptualization stage, I tried to improve myself by taking the lessons from the class to properly manage my time. In class, I learned about some tips of managing my time such as making a to-do list, a daily routines or a weekly schedule. Apart from my learning in class, I have watched some ted talks and videos on YouTube on improving time management skill. In the last stage, which is active experimentation, I have tested out my learning from the class and those videos. I create a to-do list and weekly schedule for myself. By making a schedule, I was able to keep track of my time and this helped me to complete my works in time. As I have improved my time management skill, I will be able to do better in my academic and professional life.

CV Writing Skill

Next topic I have covered during the module was CV writing. According to Indeed (2020), in this modern world, there is no alternative to apply for a job with a CV. A CV must be attractive and informative which can grab the attention of the employer. Without making or having an attractive an updated CV, it becomes difficult for a person to enter in the job market in this competitive world. I have learned to make an attractive CV in one of my class during this term. In the concrete experience stage, I have consciously experienced the situation which made me realise the need to learning CV writing. I was trying to apply for internship which needed me to submit an up to date CV of myself. This made me realise the need and triggered the next stage of reflective observation. I analysed my situation and need by writing them down. After that, I have asked myself a few questions which helped me to learn this skill. I understood that I failed to apply for an internship because I do not know how to write a CV. For this reason, I started taking the class. In the class, I have learned the way of making an attractive CV. My teacher taught me to include my career objective, educational background, experience, and personal interests in my CV. Apart from the classes, I have attended a workshop on CV writing. During the workshop, I was able to make CVs for myself with professionals which enhanced my CV writing skills. In the last stage that is active experimentation, I have successfully tried out my learned tips from the class and workshop. I was able to write an attractive CV. I used info graphics and included my career objectives, educational background, experiences, and my personal interests. All these information created an attractive CV, and I was able to apply for internships.

Public Speaking and Giving Presentation skill

Journal of Iftakhar (2013) on importance of public speaking mentioned; learning skills of public speaking is helpful for an individual to boost their confidence. An individual with confidence makes a better candidate for any job positions. Any companies usually hire those employees who are confident and can clearly speak in public (Osborn et al., 2014). In professional and academic life, a person has to give presentation on different topic. Before improving my public speaking and presentation giving skill, I had lower confidence. I was asked to give presentation in the class but, due to my lack of public speaking skill,

I was not confident to give presentation. As the presentation had marks, that affected my academic life. This was my concrete experience phase and this phase triggered the next phase in which I felt the need of acquiring this skill. I attended my classes in which my teacher taught me the tips and points of speaking publicly and giving presentation. Teacher gave me some information which helped me to learn the skill pretty quickly. There were few tips which helped me a lot to acquire the skill. In the class, I learned from my teacher to speak in clear and loud voice which can be heard by my audience, using appropriate body language during speaking, maintaining eye contact with my audience to grab their attention, using simple and understandable words to do the presentation, taking questions and answering those questions. These were few tips which helped me learn the skill. After taking notes of this tips, I practiced using those skill on my own in front of a mirror which helped me to boost up my confidence. In the last stage of the model, I tested out my skill. I used all these tips and information and applied these while giving presentation. I have given presentation in front of my classmates. For learning this skill, I only attended my classes. I have not used any other mediums to learn this skill. Now, I am able give presentation or a speech in public. This skill is not only needed in academic life, but also needed in professional life. In professional life, there will be many situations in which I will have present different topics or speak to the employees. In those times, this public speaking skill will be very helpful to prosper in my professional life.

Analytical and Critical Thinking Skill

McLeod (2012) has defined analytical skill is as the ability of deconstructing into smaller categories for drawing conclusion. There are different categories included in analytical skill such as logical reasoning, critical thinking, communication, research, data analysis, creativity skill. To excel in academic and professional life, this is essential for a person to have analytical skill. By achieving analytical thinking skill, an individual can have logical reasoning, and understand a situation better, communicate, make efficient decisions etc. Critical thinking skill is needed in case of making an effective decision or solving problems. During this module, I have covered this topic. This term has helped me to achieve analytical and critical thinking skill. I have applied experiential reflective model to reflect on my learning. In the first stage of this experiential reflective model, I have experienced

a situation where I had to use logical reasoning to solve a problem. But due to lack of my critical thinking skill, I was unable to solve that problem and reach to a conclusion. This helped to realise the need of learning critical thinking skill. I took notes about the experience on the reflection observation stage. I described my experience and analysed what was my situation and what could have been better to solve the situation. In this stage, I felt the need to achieve critical thinking skill. In abstract conceptualization stage, I joined the class in which my teacher helped to learn the skills. In the class, my teacher gave me some exercises to improve my critical analysis skill. I learned few things from my teacher which helped me to learn the skill. I became more observant during analysing a situation, I started learning to understand the core of the situation before learning the solution, and I started working on my problem solving skills. These all were helpful to learn analytical skill. Apart from taking the classes to learn the skill, I also attended some seminars by professional on developing analytical and critical thinking skill. In those seminars, I have spoken to some professionals and took some tips from them as well. Lastly, in the active experimentation stage, I successfully tested out the skill. While taking a decision, I use logical reasoning and critically analysed the situation. For further improving my critical thinking skill, I will build my mathematical skill, solve case studies, play brain games, and learn something new. These few steps will be helpful to me for further improving my skill.

In the above, I have reflected on some topics which I have covered during the module. I have developed few skills during this module. These developed skills will be very much helpful for me to achieve academic and professional success. Using experiential learning cycle was also very much helpful while learning these skills.

Conclusion

This is an academic report in which I have reflected on my few covered skills during the module such as time management, CV writing, public speaking and critical analysis skill. I have used David Kolb's experiential learning cycle to reflect on these skills. By using this model, I have reflected on my learning by analysing my own feelings or experience for creating a structured analysis. During reflecting on my learned topics, I have used all four stages of this frameworks. Main four stages of this framework includes concrete experience, reflection observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. My main source of learning those skills were my classes; but apart from taking classes, I have also attended some seminars and workshops along with watching some educational videos in order to develop those skill which proved to be effective.

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