

Course Name: Academic and Employability Skills

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Introduction

Reflection is one of the ways people evaluate if there has been any growth in their learning experiences. It is a vital tool and is used continuously, and sometimes used without the individual realizing that this is taking place. This academic report will be focusing upon the learning that I have received in The Academic and Employability Skills module, within the last two terms. To achieve this, five topics out of the numerous topics delivered will be examined, these are Public speaking, Critical Thinking, CV Writing, Harvard style of Referencing and Summarising. Two types of reflection models will be used throughout this report and these are The Boud Triangular Representation Model, and The Gibbs Cycle Reflection Model. These reflective models have been chosen to give the reflections structure.

Public Speaking

Public speaking was one of the topics which were taught in term two. It was a practical and a very interactive session which involved the whole class getting involved also, we all were able to explain what we felt public speaking was. Jackson et al (2017) explain that public speaking is often viewed as a highly threatening and anxiety inducing task. The reason for this is that often people that are speaking to a group of people that they are meeting for the first time, often hope that they are able to engage with their audience and hope that what they are saying is firstly interesting enough for them to listen to, moreover the message they are trying to put

across to their audience is being received the right way. Using the Boud Triangular representation model to reflect on public speaking, I would say that I enjoyed the fact that the lecture was interactive and allowed me to brainstorm and think outside the box, upon reflection I would say that I had not viewed public speaking as something that was so daunting, or was an art that needed to be perfected. I learnt that when undertaking public speaking it was better to answer questions after the presentation, in order not to lose your line of thinking. Baum and Boughton (2016) emphasize that public speakers often encounter difficult members of the audience that disrupt their presentation, it is therefore important to be able to manage such people in a manner that they do not distract other members of the audience. I also learnt that you could tell your audience that questions would be answered after the presentation.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is a topic that was taught in term two. I thought I was well informed about this topic before the delivery of the lecture. I was aware that it meant, the careful examination of a situation. Lai, (2011) states that critical thinking includes the component skills of analysing arguments, making inferences using inductive or deductive reasoning, judging, or evaluating and making decision. What I learnt during the lecture was data synthesis a word which I had never heard of and it was explained to be the ability to pull various information from various sources and put in them in your own words. Morgan (2017) states that synthesis is the ability to understand how one topic that is studied in a module fits into a much larger picture.

Utilising the Gibbs Cycle reflective model, It could be stated that critical thinking was taught by the lecturer for the class to understand its relevance to progressing in the academic world and also as an employee.

My feelings concerning this topic is that I learnt a lot more after taking part in the class exercise which we were told to write down two things we had learnt recently during the covid pandemic 19. I was able to ponder upon what I had learnt, during the months that I stayed at home. I realised I had learnt how to make two new dishes which I probably would not have had the time to learn if the circumstances were different.

The good thing about this topic is that I could see growth as a person, not only academically but also in my private live. To analyse this situation I would say that critical thinking is used more often than one thinks hence it important as it helps one to think rationally, for example an individual can make a choice to study Nursing or Law. For someone to make a rational decision all aspects will be considered. Firstly for a person that does not like night shifts, nursing may not be the best profession for the person or a person that is not able to put his or her point across to others logically and eloquently been a Lawyer would not be the best profession for the person. If the situation happened again I would be happy to study critical thinking again and not do anything different. In conclusion I believe critical thinking is important, I am more knowledgeable when it comes to critical thinking.

Curriculum Vitae Writing

Curriculum vitae writing was taught in term two. It is a topic which is very important because people need to send their CVs to employers for them to be considered for employment. Elsevier Global Communication (2013) explains that a good CV highlights an individual's academic and professional achievements concisely and effectively.

Upon reflection utilizing Boud triangular representation model, I can say that the experience I had as regards attending and being a part of this class has given me a new perspective as to how to write a curriculum vitae. Morgan (2017) defines a CV as a document aimed at convincing an employer that you are best suited for the job applied for.

The fact that the employee is not there in person to convince a prospective employer, it is paramount that one's CV represents the person as best as possible. Considering the reflective phase of this model I can state that I did not know that curriculum vitae should not be more than three pages. I had a CV before this lecture in class which was six pages long, this made me reflect that some of the jobs I had applied for before and was not shortlisted, one of the problems could have been the way my CV was constructed. I also understand why it would not be ideal to send such a long CV to any prospective employer as it would be too cumbersome, and it contained a lot of information that was unnecessary. Writing a good CV is one of the factors employers consider to shortlist potential candidates.

Referencing

Referencing was one of the topics that were taught in term one. In all the models that were taught at the begin of this course referencing and its importance was emphasised. Referencing is one of the characteristics of a piece of work which makes it academic, hence it is frowned

upon when, a piece of work is not referenced properly. It is a very important aspect in academia also when writing reports or giving presentations in a working environment in order not to be accused of plagiarism. Neville (2012) argues that plagiarism has been a dominant concern for higher education practitioners and the fact that there is a slight difference between plagiarism and poor referencing.

Bryson (2013) argues that there is nothing worse than reading a paper and not been able to locate the reference when searched for. Referencing is the process of acknowledging peoples work when used, by stating the authors name and year in which it is published. There are various kinds of referencing styles, however in University of Wales Trinity St David, The Harvard referencing style is what is taught and required for students to use in their assignments. Hofstee (2007) explains that The Harvard style of referencing is probably the most frequently used.

Upon reflection, utilizing The Boud Triangular representation model of reflection I would say that I was not very confident in using the Harvard Style of referencing, the lecture that was undertaken on this topic in term one was very explanatory and the lecturer allowed the class to practice referencing different kinds of pieces of works, such as, journals, books and articles taken from the internet, to make sure we understood how to reference, this was a useful and beneficial experience.

I can state that there is a big difference between what I know now and what I knew before being taught properly how Harvard referencing should be undertaken. It was highlighted that not only is it necessary to have reference list at the end of one's work but inside the text referencing is also needed. This was an information I was not aware of but now, it is much clearer to me.

SUMMARISING

Summarising is very important when writing academic pieces, this topic was taught in the term one. Summarising is the process of writing an article in a shortened form but making sure the key points are in it. Korsmo (2019) states that summarising provides readers with a short descriptive commentary, giving them some insight into an article's focus. Upon reflection using Gibbs Cycle reflection (1984).

The lecture of summarising was well taught, an exercise in class was undertaken, to practice how to summarise an article in our own words. This made me feel much more confident in summarising articles. When evaluating this situation before, this lecture I did not know how to summarise articles properly but now I am much better at it, and I feel very confident in carrying out this task. In analysing this situation one can state that the knowledge I received from this lecture was insightful, hence I will be able to use it not only in summarising for this model but for other models. If the situation was to arise again, I will be happy to participate in the lecture. In conclusion the summarising lecture was useful and I found the lecture very engaging and interesting.

Conclusion

Students are normally able to look back at what they have learnt in course, by actually thinking back to the knowledge they had at the begin of the term and at the end of the course evaluating their knowledge, to see if it has increased, or stayed the same. This academic reflective report has demonstrated the knowledge that has been acquired from the five topics that were discussed. The Gibbs reflective cycle and The Boud Triangular representation model were

used to reflect on each of the topics. These were used to demonstrate the usefulness of each topic reflected upon and how relevant they were to my learning and increasing my knowledge.

This assignment has shown how much I have learnt over the two terms. Before starting the course, I did not know what to expect and how much I would learn. This assignment has shown that the class exercises and discussions held in class have broaden my horizon. I have learnt a lot by listening to the lectures and by doing my own personal reading and studying. The confidence that I have, has grown so much, studying this model has made me to research on topics I would never have done, therefore increasing my knowledge. This knowledge can be built upon and used as I progress to the next term.

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