

## Gibbs Style Reflective Essay.

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This reflective essay will explore my experience working within a group, a common occurrence in many academic, professional and social settings. Through this reflection, I aim to analyse my thoughts, feelings, and actions in response to group work and identify areas for personal growth and development. Using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle I will examine my experience in a structured and systematic way, considering the description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action stages. This reflection will enable me to develop a deeper understanding of my strengths and weaknesses in a group and improve my future approaches to collaborative projects.

On the 3rd of March 2025 we began our new topic of Making a Difference, and we were informed it would be a group task. Although we were not told who we would be working with, this would be decided and explained later. A week later we were made aware of who we would be working with, within our group there was Bethan Griffiths, Natalie Fletcher and myself, Cloe Banner. We were separated into our groups on the 10th of March 2025, unfortunately Natalie was not in attendance on this day. In reflection the lack of our physical attendance and Natalie's absence may have affected our group forming stage. Which links to Tuckman's 5 group stages of development, with our first stage not being carried out fully may have affected the following 4 stages also. Bethan Griffiths and I started to look at different WICKED issues, we decided that homelessness or terrorism were 2 topics we were interested in. Following the lecture Bethan created a WhatsApp group where we would be able to communicate freely to discuss the project. Our first discussion began when I explained to Natalie, that Bethan and I had discussed homelessness and terrorism. We then decided as group we would look at homelessness as we felt it would be easier to find a solution. While we were all able to work alongside each other and come to agreements. None of us took a leading role or discussed our strengths to be able to use them to an advantage. Belbin's theory states that there are nine distinct team roles, although we were only a small group we could have had roles of our own. A leader, Implementer and a Finisher would have worked well for our small group.

When learning that the final project would be a group effort, I felt a sense of dread and discomfort. I have never enjoyed or felt comfortable within group work and the thought of collaborating with other on a project made me anxious. I worried about potential conflicts, differing opinions and the challenges of coordinating with others. When I found out who I was in the group with, my initial apprehension slightly subsided. I was relieved to find that I would be working with individuals who I perceived as more laid-back and who didn't seem to get too stressed or flustered. However, even with some

optimism, I still felt uncomfortable and uninterested in the project. I was concerned that our different work styles and communication approaches might lead to difficulties creating our end project. Although I knew when starting this project that I have difficulties communicating with others I was not as aware that I valued such control over my work and holding myself to a high standard. The idea of potentially having to compromise on my own ideas and goals to accommodate others worried me further which could have negatively impacted the overall quality of my work.

I feel that working together was successful in the way which we all completed our work and were able to submit on time. But I feel that we failed to successfully work together as a team. After the second lecture we decided on the topic of homelessness and came up with 3 areas for each of us to research and come together to share our findings. This is where our first miscommunication came, as I believed we would come together with our findings and discuss to focus more closely on one area of homelessness. Whereas the other members of the group believed that was their focus for the power point. Which lead to us not coming together to discuss our findings or exploring any different areas for research.

As we continued with the project, I was trying to find a solution to homelessness and understanding we needed to create more of a sales pitch to our idea than explain the facts and different types of homelessness. Although I voiced these concerns to the group, I was not firm enough and did not want to risk upsetting anyone and it was decided that we would ask when we had our catch-up session with Heike. On reflection I should not have held back due to worrying about causing conflict, Tuckman's theory states that conflict and resolution is a normal and needed stage of the process. A positive action which worked well for us as a group was Bethan taking charge of creating a power point, we can all work on together and see what everyone has added. This worked well for everyone and made it easier for submission and didn't leave one member of the group with the job of putting everyone's slides together. Although we were all able to work together on the same power point online, we never met in person due to family and work commitments, I wonder if we were able to have met in person or via teams rather than messaging would we have learnt to communicate better. I also feel that I should have had more input and involvement in the project. I feel that my contributions to the project were not my best efforts. I completed my own work and started to communicate more towards the end of the project. But at the start I was struggling with my mental health, this resulted in me having a very negative view on the project. I didn't want to have to communicate with anyone at all, least of all to communicate with the group when I felt they were going in the wrong direction and didn't want to waste my time. Which was not the right attitude, and I feel had my mental health been in a different place I may have stepped in and tried to communicate more and lead the group in the right direction. This could be linked to the Lencioni Model,

point 2. Which is lack of commitment. A team member not doing the work or do not follow through on tasks and can ultimately let their team mates down.

Through this group project I have gained insights into the importance of communication, working together and the need for leadership. Although I have reservations about working within a group initially, I have learned to appreciate the benefits. While reflecting on this experience, I realize that I would like to take on a more leadership role within future projects as I felt I had a strong idea of the direction the project should have taken and feel I could have made a difference in the early stages had I not been struggling with personal issues. I have gained insight into my own strengths and areas for improvement. I realize that I need to work on my communication skills, being more open to collaboration, and embracing diverse perspectives. To achieve this in future group collaborations I plan to practice active listening by making a conscious effort to hear and understand others. I will try to be more open minded and embrace different perspectives and ideas in future, but also be more confident to speak up when I know or feel I can truly contribute something important. I will also try to improve my communication and try to articulate my thoughts and ideas and be more receptive to others communication styles. By focusing on these areas, I aim to become a more effective team player and collaborator and be able to work better with others to achieve our goals. I am committed to personal growth and development which will help me personally, academically and in a professional setting through future endeavours.

#### References:

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