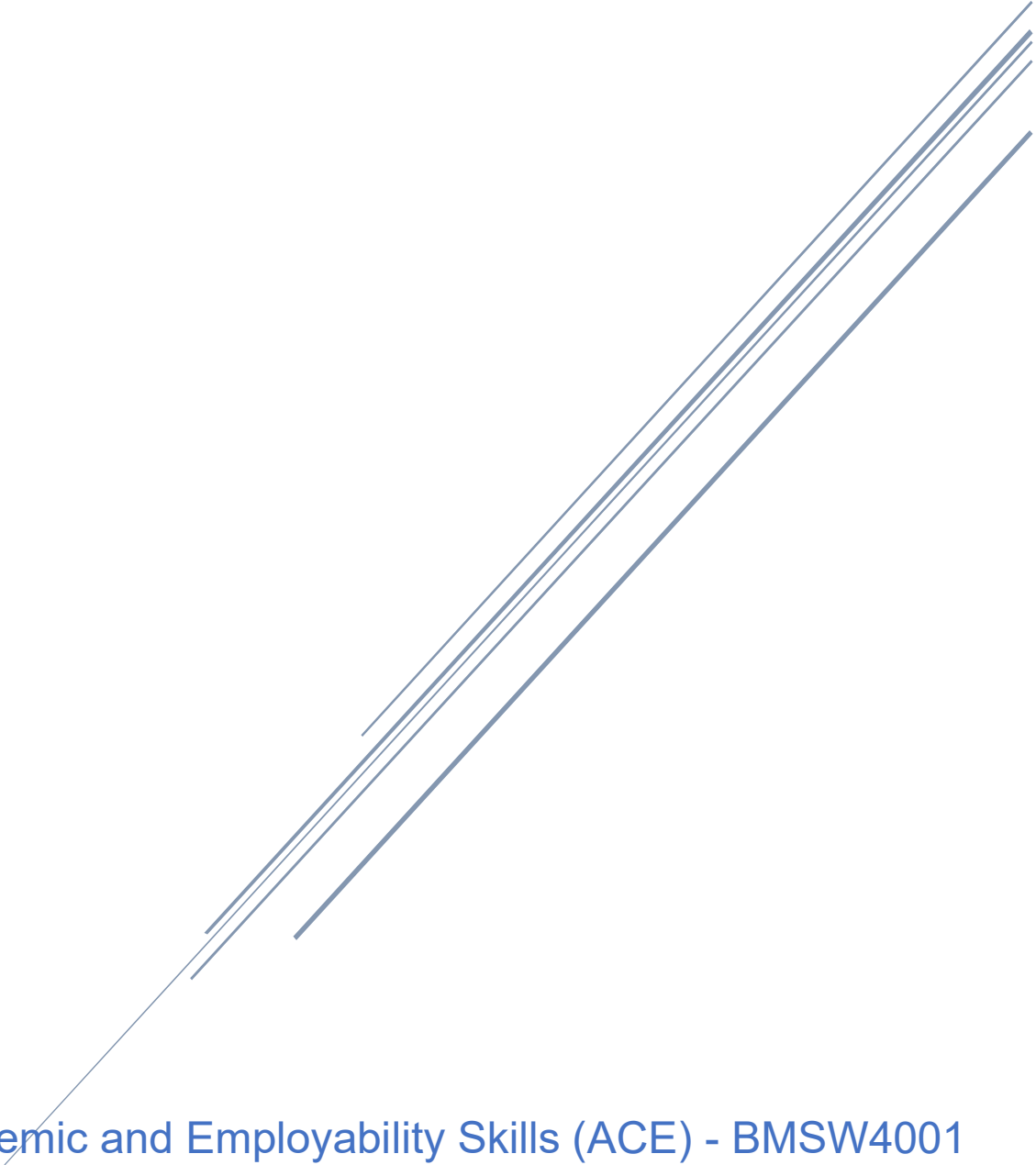


A PERSONAL REFLECTION REPORT

Using GIBB'S Reflective Cycle



Academic and Employability Skills (ACE) - BMSW4001
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1. Introduction

The following personal reflection report provides an overview of my personal experience as a student at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. I will argue with the help of Gibb's reflective cycle that being enrolled in the Academic and Employability Skills course helped me evolve on an academic and personal level.

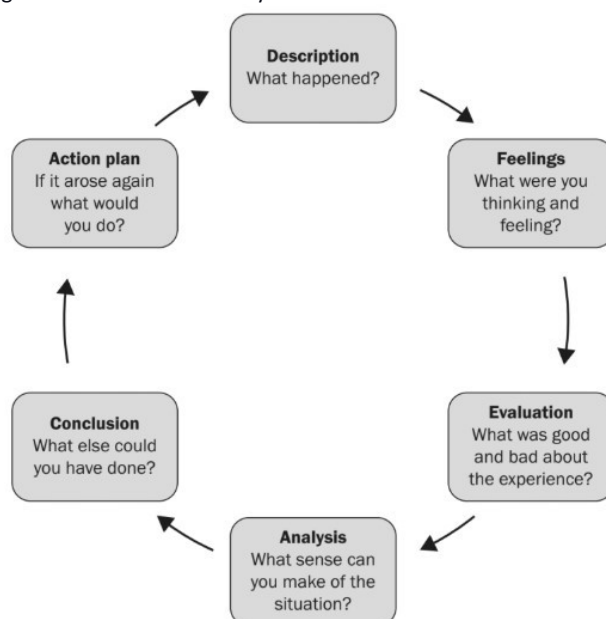
This report will provide an insight into my emotional state, how I tackled challenges and what I plan to do in the future. To obtain this insight, I will use the model mentioned above of reflection to help me contemplate over a few experiences.

2. Gibb's Reflective Cycle

I have chosen Gibb's reflection model as this is the one that made more sense to me. This reflective cycle allows the users to systematise their past experiences, emotions, and findings to support future learning and development. It is one of the most complex reflection models and is widely spread.

This reflection model has six consecutive phases that I will use to explore the following topics: Time Management, Public speaking/giving presentation and Online Learning Experience.

Figure 1: Gibb's Reflective Cycle



Source: Bottomley et al. (2019, p.23)

3. Time Management

3.1. Description

A year ago, I found myself in a difficult situation; I had lost my income due to the pandemic restrictions, I had no savings, and I was in debt. I was facing a problem that I did not experience before, and it was when I realised that something in my life must change. The time to act was now. I needed stability workwise and a steady income. As I started researching different topics that interest me, I decided to finish my studies to pursue a different career path.

3.2. Feelings

When I began this new chapter in my life, the first thought that came to my mind was, 'how am I going to do this?'. I felt excited about this new journey I was embarking but at the same time, I felt anxious cause I was not sure if I am ready for it. As time management was never one of my strong suits, I felt overwhelmed by improving my daily routine in order to incorporate my studies.

3.3. Evaluation

What was hard at the beginning started to ease as weeks went by. By attending the classes, I have managed to keep my timings better and became more organised. The course has provided me with a better understanding of time management and made me realise where my flaws are and how to improve. It helped me personally, as I am now more aware of the tasks I must complete and the time frame required.

3.4. Analysis

To succeed in my personal development, I had to appraise my strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as a future manager (Fleisher and Bensoussan, 2015). Now that I have a different approach to managing my time, setting my priorities, eliminating non-priorities, setting achievable goals, and forming the right habits has made me more confident. Since this internal shift has happened, I feel more contented about my daily life as I have extra time even though I am committed to more activities than previously.

SWOT Analysis

<u>Strengths</u> Acquiring a better understanding of time management helps you achieve a clearer mindset It helps to improve your timings and organizational skills	<u>Opportunities</u> It pushes you to achieve self-discipline Good time management makes you more productive
<u>Weaknesses</u> Tackling distractions Staying focused on the task at hand	<u>Threats</u> Procrastinating!

3.5. Conclusion

If I can manage my time to become more productive, expand the hours of the day by being more organised, I will be able to study, have multiple sources of income, deal with family life and house chores. I now know what I need to do to achieve a clearer mindset, have a list of priorities and specific goals to achieve.

3.6. Action Plan

Procrastinating was my main issue, and this course has helped me overcome it. I am grateful for this chance of starting over, and I am keen on keeping my new routine and maintaining good time management. I have practised self-discipline for the past month, and I can see positive results, physically and mentally. I will keep maintaining my focus and following my daily schedule without fail.

4. Public speaking and giving presentation

4.1. Description

Part one of this assignment consisted of a video presentation as part of the final mark for this module. The task of this presentation required me to talk about my employability skills based on my intended career.

4.2. Feelings

Initially, I thought that this is an easy task, and I should finish it in a few days. I was more scared of the fact that I had to give the presentation and talk in front of the camera. This realisation made me feel anxious, and I was dreading the moment. I am an introvert, and public speaking can be a daunting task, and having to face this feeling was the most challenging part.

4.3. Evaluation

The whole experience was engaging. First, I liked the topic because it made me think of the future and what I would like to do. Having this idea implemented in my head, I got excited, and I did not read carefully through the assignment description, and not prepared accurate information. Secondly, giving presentations is not my strong suit, so my body language and vocabulary did not represent my idea and what I truly wanted to express.

4.4. Analysis

I had to face a situation that I found unpleasant. This type of situation occurs because you did not prepare in advance for this type of task. I will treat this experience as a learning process and take the necessary steps to improve.

SWOT Analysis

<u>Strengths</u> Learning body language and how to address a public Able to read a mass of individuals	<u>Opportunities</u> Can bust your morale and confidence Can grow your network
<u>Weaknesses</u> Glossophobia, also known as the fear of public speaking	<u>Threats</u> Technical difficulties can put you off and distract the audience

4.5. Conclusion

As I experienced this turmoil of thoughts and emotions, I have realised that improvements are necessary to achieve my goals. I know now that I should have done more for my presentation and practice my public speaking. Therefore, I am taking this as an experience, and failures are there only to push us forward. In the end “Speech is power: speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel.” (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

4.6. Action Plan

My action plan regarding this matter consists of two steps:

- 1 – Pay more attention to the details of the assignments and gather more evidence/research.
- 2 – Practice public speaking with my partner, or whenever a challenge arises.

5. Online Learning Experience

5.1. Description

Deciding to resume my studies at the age of 28 years old was not easy. My previous experience as a student was in a classroom over ten years ago. Now I was facing an online environment, in a foreign language, in another country, and a completely different type of education system.

5.2. Feelings

As much as I enjoyed the online environment, I struggled to keep up with the tutor and understand the lectures. Not being in a classroom felt awkward initially, but I tried adapting as soon as possible. At the beginning of the module, I thought that I would not be able to study this way, but as time went by, I felt more confident, and information started to settle and make sense.

5.3. Evaluation

Experiencing online learning made me see its advantages but also disadvantages. I think that the online environment gives everyone more flexibility as it saves time from commuting. You can be anywhere in the world and have access to a platform of learning. At the same time, it can be damaging to human interactions. Moreover, I had a hard time fighting distractions and keeping my focus.

5.4. Analysis

Going thru this experience made me more aware of the technological advances in the academic field. As this year's literary work was done mainly online due to external factors all over the world, has pushed all educational institutions to make quick changes to their online platforms. Having access to such platform helped me in my studies and research. Having a library at one click away makes learning easier.

SWOT Analysis

<u>Strengths</u> Flexible Easily accessible Upskilling in new technologies	<u>Opportunities</u> Working remotely Academic collaboration
<u>Weaknesses</u> Human interactions Issues with assessments Handling distractions	<u>Threats</u> Reduced student engagement Diminished student – teacher relationship

5.5. Conclusion

In the future, I would personally keep online classes and offer in-class lectures once a week. This way, a balance will be achieved between online and offline, human interactions will increase, and the relationship between the student and teacher will improve. This way, teachers can see which students are gifted, and they will be able to push them forward and mentor them.

5.6. Action Plan

Adapting to the online environment was never easier due to the technological advancements done in the past decade, furthermore in the past year. As I am interested in such topics, I will allocate more time to online learning. I will do so by using the materials provided by the University platform and individual research. This engagement will prepare me for a more in-depth approach for the start of the next academic year.

6. Overall Conclusion

This report focuses on my learning experience and how it has impacted my life. Moreover, what benefits it brought to me and how it made me realise the importance of learning.

I have used Gibb's Reflective cycle to analyse three topics that I found challenging. Using this reflective model, I gained a deeper understanding of the concept itself and the topics discussed.

As opposed to other reflective models, Gibb's one is more complex and gives more depth, to the experience itself, by making you reflect on your emotions and thoughts. This model provides a helpful guide and makes a good starting place for reflection.

Reflection is a very personal process, and everyone has a different approach to it. I, personally, found it challenging to follow Gibb's Reflective cycle at the start of this coursework, but once you practice, it comes naturally.

7. Reflexion

As Gibb's stated, and I quote 'It is not sufficient simply to have an experience in order to learn. Without reflecting upon this experience it may quickly be forgotten, or its learning potential lost. It is from the feelings and thoughts emerging from this reflection that generalisations or concepts can be generated.' (Gibbs, 1988). It is not all about going thru an experience, you have to reflect and draw conclusions in order to form an action plan.

During this course, I have improved my academic writing, my vocabulary and punctuation. I have a better understanding of writing an essay or report and about the structure of paragraphs and sentences. Having this knowledge is beneficial to me daily and also on a professional level.

I have deepened my knowledge about my skills and discovered new ones. This discovery opened new doors to my employability status and drew attention towards which sectors I should research.

After a deeper understanding of creating a CV and writing a cover letter, I am now confident that the knowledge gathered will help me secure a job somewhere in the future.

Furthermore, attending this specific course made me realise the benefits of time management, how to tackle time and tasks. This information has impacted my life positively and generated extra free time that I can now use to my advantage.

Online learning offered me access to a new digital learning platform. It allowed me to juggle work, studies and my other responsibilities, which made everything easy and convenient. Having an online environment helps you study multiple degrees or additional courses, ranking up your employability status.

I can say now that the overall experience was enjoyable, helpful and challenging.

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