

Reflective Report for Academic Skills Assignment 2 2018



MARCH 2018

MODULE NAME:	ACADEMIC SKILLS M4X01434
PROJECT NAME:	CYFLE I DYFU
NAME:	JACKY ROBSON
STUDENT NUMBER:	1704545

CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
2. INTRODUCTION	2
2.1 REPORT REMIT	2
2.2 BRIEF BACKGROUND ON MY PROJECT	3
3. MODELS OF REFLECTION	4
3.1 MASTERCLASS SESSIONS.....	5
3.2 INFLUENCE OF MASTERCLASSES ON THE PROJECT	8
3.3 INFLUENCE OF THE MASTERCLASSES ON PERSONAL LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT	11
3.4 CONCLUSION.....	13
4. REFERENCES	13

List of figures

FIGURE 2-1 GIBBS G (1988) LEARNING BY DOING: A GUIDE TO TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS.	4
---	---

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Within this report I will be speaking about Motivation, Entrepreneurship and business start-up. I will be reflecting on the Gibbs 1988 and Cottrell 2010 models and incorporating them into my current studies, project groups and future business start-up. There will be referencing from all different sources that I feel are relevant in this report and that explain the theories I have incorporated.

I will be including two key speakers that we were involved in from our studies. They are Kate and Stifyn that have started up their own businesses and have become very successful.

I will be looking at how to motivate and work within teams.

What my current success and failures were in this first semester.

I will evaluate how this will benefit me and help me to gain more knowledge and a better understanding on future assignments, studies and the business environment.

INTRODUCTION

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 REPORT REMIT

This report will address my personal reflection on a series of masterclasses attended during my first semester of university and how these impacted the delivery of the project and my own personal development. This has been done using a number of reflective models as a framework, Gibbs (1988) and Cottrell 2010 to gain a wider understanding of how these models used in practice will help an individual achieve their goals. (2015, 2016)

Master class key aspects:

Some of the key concepts and principles that impacted me during the masterclasses are as follows:

- Motivation
- Entrepreneurship
- The starting up of a new business

My long-term goal once my studies have been achieved, will be to start my own business as an accountant, I am aware of how challenging this will be and am looking at all the skills I will need to make this business a success. (Clydesdale, 2009) This report will also include academic skills that have been taught throughout the semester, that will help me to achieve my future goals.

Within this report I will be explaining and including the project I was currently involved in, the organisation was Cyfle I Dyfu. This taught me some very important skills that I will take forward with me. The experience that I gained from working on this project helped me to understand certain skills I need to improve on for example my management skills in motivating other individuals, assessing different attitudes towards others in group work, time management. (Zimbardo, 1977)

For the above reason I will be aiming to follow the Gibbs (1988) reflective cycle and the Cottrell (2010) Core Prompt Model for this report.

INTRODUCTION

Within this semester I was fortunate enough to have been introduced to two individuals named Kate from Gower Cottage Brownies and Stifyn Parri Mr Producer, that gave a speech on their life achievements, **this** helped motivate me and made me feel that if you put your mind to something you can achieve it. This is what gave me the incentive to start my own business up.

Commented [JR1]: Who?

2.2 BRIEF BACKGROUND ON MY PROJECT

The organisation Cyfle Y Dyfu, is managed by a gentleman named Andrew. He started the organisation up for marginalised individuals who needed to learn new skills to gain employment after being an ex-convict, ex mis-substance user or an individual with learning difficulties. The organisation needs individuals to raise awareness for what they are aiming to do and what they want to achieve in the long term.

"Our mission is to support marginalised people to become active members of their communities. We achieve this by working with them to build their practical skills and enhance their employment opportunities." (Dyfu, 2018)

As a group of 5 we tried to raise awareness on social media and through the university we did a showcase that included some of Cyfle I Dyfu's work. They create wood pieces that they sell on at a non-profit price and put the funds back into the business. The organisation is a non-sociable enterprise who are currently trading in the areas of Swansea, Carmarthenshire and Cardiff. (Anon., n.d.)

I was fortunate enough to meet with Andrew in the beginning and gain a wider understanding of what they do within the organisation and was shown around the building where they craft all the products, that range from furniture to smaller products. The people that Andrew take on are given one chance to gain carpentry skills and he will only help those that want to help themselves.

INTRODUCTION

3. MODELS OF REFLECTION

In this section of my report I will be using the Gibbs (1988) reflective cycle to further my reflection on the project that I worked on. With this model I will be looking at the description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action plan.

"Gibbs' (1988) reflective cycle (see figure 2) is an effective tool to reflect after the event on 'critical' incidents; those events that have had a profound negative or positive impact on you – learning by doing. These can be events that have occurred in learning, practical or personal areas. Gibbs' (1988) cycle is considered useful for students who are new to reflecting as it has clearly defined sections." (Gaynor, 2013)

➤ Gibbs (1988) reflective cycle

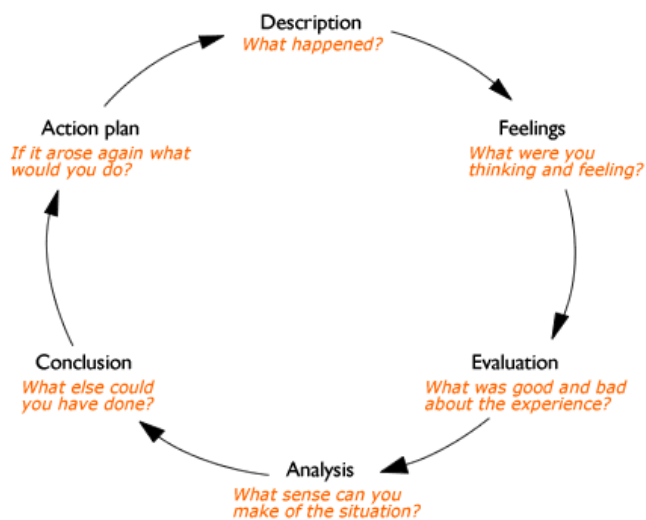


Figure 3-1 Gibbs G (1988) Learning by Doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods.

Commented [JR2]: Explanation of the model here.

INTRODUCTION

3.1 MASTERCLASS SESSIONS

Throughout the first semester of university, there have been individuals giving talks on their business ventures, how they started, what they aimed to achieve, how they constructed their businesses, what failed and what succeeded. These were interesting classes as it gave you an idea on how different methods worked for different individuals. The aim was to help the university students recognise certain aspects of businesses and what could be achieved. It was also put into place to let the students of Business and Finance have an insight into the starting up of their own business ideas, (Roper, 2013). How the business world works and how to keep it modernised (Butler, 2006). It helps to evaluate why the course is being taught and the key learning skills that come from doing this course, that will help to give the students a better understanding of what will be expected from them, in the business environment.

Two of the individuals from the masterclasses that really had an impact on my learning studies were:

Stifyn Parri – Mr Producer – From Stifyn the key aspects are that he is now the biggest Event Manager in Wales, he is an entrepreneur, that started his business off as small and over the years grew. He managed to convince people in the entertainment world to gain status and recognition for who he was, what he wanted to achieve and where he wanted his business to go. He started off at the age of 3 doing small plays in school where he managed to entertain the entire school and on a weekly basis he was given the stage to do all sorts of school plays. He moved through life knowing that his ambition was to have his own entertainment business and set out to achieve this. He now works in the Welsh Millennium Centre. His business started off well and for years he became a success, after many years the entertainment business started to become less popular and this is when Stifyn's business started to suffer. He had to come up with an idea that would help him. He decided to reinvent himself and started went back to running the business himself and to enjoy what he done. He recognised he didn't want to manage a huge organisation he just simply wanted to do what he enjoyed and is now presenting and entertaining. (Parri, 2016)

INTRODUCTION

The second individual that made an in impact on myself was:

Kate – Gower Cottage Brownies – Kate started off as a stay at home mum, who wanted to start working from home, in order to still maintain family life. Kate decided to start making brownies for the village that she lived in. She started off small and has now become one of the biggest brownie companies in Wales. She has progressed so much, that even her husband has quit his job and joined Kate in her business. Kate gave extremely good ideas about starting small, how to keep the prices down and to make profit from the business. (Rickman, 2005), (Kate, n.d.)

The main points that I have learnt from Stifyn and Kate are these

- Small beginnings lead to bigger things
- Let people know who you are
- Don't be quiet about your business or product
- Hand out free samples or give some free time
- Let your product or business talk for itself
- Don't be a one hit wonder
- Marketing strategies – don't put too much expense into this as social media and word of mouth are the best and cheapest form of marketing
- Keep it simple
- Appeal to everyone, try not to limit anything
- Give great service
- Keep it natural, don't make it to formal
- Do not bad mouth competitors
- Don't make it all about money, make it personal for the customer

With all the above listed, I learnt how important it is to do what you love and never give up, be passionate, give great customer service, treat people respectfully.

INTRODUCTION

There are so many different ventures out there that you can make it simple for yourself and following basic rules you will be able to make a success if you find what works for you (Mitra, 2012).

From the master classes I certainly learnt that you must use your skills whether they are personal skills or academic skills, to test yourself and always keep it modern.

I would use the Cottrell 2010 model theory to explain and put into practice the learning and development skills mentioned.

It would be best to describe the Cottrell model as a way of critical thinking. (Doyle, 2017)

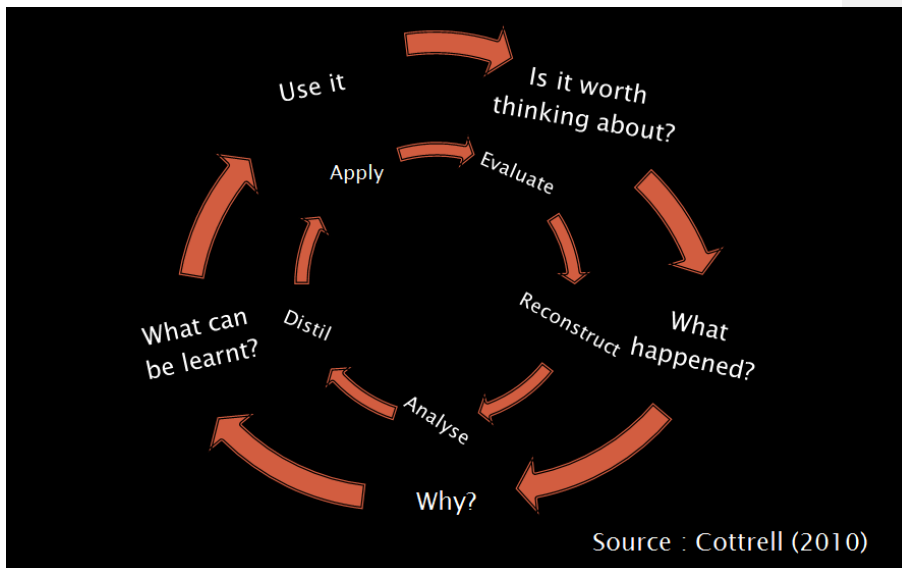


Figure 3-2 Cottrell 2010 model

Is it worth thinking about (Evaluate):

Yes, as both Kate and Stifyn had clear direction of what product or business they wanted to do. Would it benefit them, would it work.

What happened (Reconstruct):

They both started off small, and worked their way up, they made sure people knew what their product/business was and went out and made noise about it.

INTRODUCTION

Why (Analyse):

They wanted to start business ventures that would be of interest to them, that they were passionate about. They didn't want to work for anyone else doing something that would not be rewarding to them. It happened the way it did because they had clear plans and structure for what they wanted to achieve. They focused on their product/business and they didn't give up.

What can be learnt (Distil):

Don't give up, if you must start again, it's not failure its recognising something isn't working and how can you start again, or how can you keep it going without being a one hit wonder. Make sure you have a plan and structure, how will you progress. What have you learnt that you incorporate in the future to keep it a success.

Use it (Apply):

Use what you have, any skills that relate to your product or business use it. Anyone that can assist you, use them. There are so many aspects of marketing that don't cost the earth. Think for the future what can help, what can work.

I feel that Stifyn and Kate motivated me into never giving up. Working towards a goal, something that will be mine. I think they helped me to realise there are so many factors of pushing forward. Seek out opportunities, seek other people that are in the same business that can help you. Treat people respectfully and they will want to do more for you. Don't use high expenses you can later build up just keep your focus in mind.

3.2 INFLUENCE OF MASTERCLASSES ON THE PROJECT

3.2.1 Marketing Strategies

Within the master classes we were taught about marketing and how effective it is for the business and how simple you can keep it and cost effective (Wood, 2004). Within our group

INTRODUCTION

for our projects we implemented marketing with using social media, leaflets and using Unit 19 for our showcase. This helped to raise awareness for the project we were involved in. Cyfle I Dyfu, have done well with their own marketing throughout the years, therefore as a group we were limited to how much we could do for them. However, it was very useful to learn from Kate, how simple it was to achieve marketing she simply started off within her village and then expanded out gradually as time progressed.

The master classes and project that myself and my group worked on coincided, and there were situations that arose that I could take forward with me in the future. I feel that at the start I took pride in what the project meant and how it was going to help people. I thought it would be easy to just walk in and raise awareness with the team that I had been given to manage. I should have put into place a structure from the beginning with clearer vision. Listening to the masterclasses I could have taken more from what had been taught and implemented it into the group. I would use more motivation with the group, (Zeiger, 2000), it was not an easy situation to get everyone together over the forthcoming weeks, and time management would have been one of my main focuses. We were not able to meet up with Andrew the project manager as he was very busy with the Christmas period coming up and I was only able to meet with him on a one to one basis and then did not have much input with him after that. On reflection, I would have used the Gibbs (1988) model to source the work more effectively.

Description:

The class that are currently studying business and finance were given project groups for charities. There were 12 projects and 12 team leaders, and the rest of the class were given a choice on what project they wanted to invest their time and studies into. I was given a group of five individuals from my current study group to raise awareness for a sociable enterprise project that worked with marginalised individuals. We were asked to meet with the project manager and to learn more about the project.

Feelings:

I was elated to be given the responsibility of the team leader for the group. It quickly became apparent that people were not as invested in the group as I was and that they

INTRODUCTION

were given no other choices as the groups had filled up quickly and they were left with this group. I still felt motivated and felt that we could achieve our aim and work together well as a group.

Evaluation:

The good parts were that as a team we got to learn more about each other over the coming months. We did raise awareness for the project even though we had little involvement from the project manager. We managed to set up a group chat that we kept in touch with each other and managed to communicate ideas and thoughts. The downside was that due to not having much involvement with the project itself we were limited to what we could do, at times some lost motivation for the assignments that were given. As a group we lived fair distances away from each other so getting together was relatively difficult. We didn't do as much as we had set out to do and this was very disappointing.

Analysis:

I fully understood why we were given the chance to work with these projects as it was an insight into how to help people less fortunate than ourselves, that didn't have the opportunity that I currently have. It was to guide us on skills that could be used later for e.g., I was given the management position of the group therefore this will help me to learn to manage a team in the future.

Conclusion:

I feel there was so much more that could have been done, I could have used Stifyn's strategy to put myself and the group in a situation where the project manager had no choice but to meet with us. I should have motivated the team better, (Whiddett, 2002) came up with different ideas on how to raise awareness instead of just focusing on social media. I should have managed our time better, for e.g. When we were in our studies I should have got everyone together straight after lessons instead of letting everyone go. I could have pushed harder and made people listen more.

INTRODUCTION

Action Plan:

I doubt that there will be a chance to work with this project group again, but if we had that opportunity I would push harder, I would make it my motto for people to know who we are and what we want to achieve. I would focus more on all the individuals for my group instead of only concentrating on the ones that I wanted to for e.g. There was a team member who I thought had no interest in the group, when in fact he is a very shy individual who lacks confidence, I would make sure I involved him more, the ones that tried to push their views and ideas too much, I would listen, but I would push back more. (Wanke, 2002)

I think the Gibbs (1988) model is a very helpful tool for anyone in a situation that would like to start a business, manage a team or even someone that would like to have a goal to work towards as it helps you to reflect on the positives and the negatives and helps you understand where you have gone wrong, where you have gone right, what failed and what succeeded. It helps to look at you and your skills and what could be used more effectively. I feel that I was not as strong as I could have been, and that my ideas were too adventurous to start off with. As Kate from Gower Cottage Brownies said, "small beginnings lead to bigger things". Stifyn said "be focused on what you want" I think that was the best advice that I took from both. I feel I learnt valuable lessons from the master classes and will take the advice that was given out (Cameron, 2008)

3.3 INFLUENCE OF THE MASTERCLASSES ON PERSONAL LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

3.3.1 Motivation

I felt that attending university I would just want to gain my degree and get a job once I left, any job would have done, but since the masterclasses that involved Kate and Stifyn it gave me a desire to achieve more and gain rewards from the course that I am doing, I don't simply want to work for someone else. I want to make use of what I have learnt and extend it into my own business, they made me realise that anything is possible, and that I don't want to just sail through. I want to achieve more (Smith, 1992). Daniel Pink explains about how motivation works, and this really inspired me to look further into what I want and where

INTRODUCTION

I want to be in 5 years (Pink, n.d.). I feel I have gained useful information from the classes and individuals that have shared their experiences with me.

My goal is to start my own accountancy firm when I have successfully finished university. Therefore what I feel I need to do is concentrate on all the subjects that I am currently studying as starting university I couldn't quite understand why certain lectures were implemented into business and finance and now I understand the reasons for being taught this. I will be using management skills as my main focus, as I feel I have room for improvement on this. I feel sometimes I am too soft and relax too much, when it comes to running a business you must be clear and concise with your goals and actions. I have learnt that time management is very important as it is other people investing their time into you, how I will focus this on my own business would be that people will need things completed in a certain time scale and that will be my responsibility to do this. I have learnt that I will start a small business and eventually progress to a bigger proportion, although I would like to keep it personal to my clients therefore I will only want to keep it to a certain size. I will always be smart and think ahead, I will keep future plans and review them as often as needed. I will use all resources that come my way and use positive structures and no negative ones. I feel I still have a lot to learn but am gaining more skills as time is progressing.

I will be focusing on my weaknesses and working more on my strengths. I will be using more literature instead of internet resources all the time. I will be listening more instead of thinking everything I do is right. I will gain knowledge from my peers as they are always there to share ideas and listen and help. I will be more confident in what I do and when I set out achievement goals I will stick to them and focus more on the positives rather than the negatives. I have more faith in the business that I want to set up rather than finding reasons on why I can't do it, I will focus on why it will work. I will set targets and stick to them (Bos, 2010).

INTRODUCTION

3.4 CONCLUSION

I can conclude that my future strategies will be to focus on the Gibbs 1988 model of reflection for any future work that I must do. I know what my strengths and weaknesses are, and I need to focus on how to work on them. I have learnt from a lot from the masterclasses in this first semester and will be using all the information given to me, I will concentrate on finishing my degree over the course of the next two years and then focussing on my new business. I need to focus on literature more and try to incorporate this into any assignments.

4. REFERENCES

- 2015, M. s., 2016. *Guide to models of reflection – when & why should you use different ones?*. [Online]
Available at: <https://lifelonglearningwithot.wordpress.com/2016/05/02/different-models-of-reflection-using-them-to-help-me-reflect/>
[Accessed 12 March 2018].
- Anon., n.d. *Grantspace a service of foundation centre*. [Online]
Available at: <http://grantspace.org/tools/knowledge-base/nonprofit-management/sustainability/social-enterprise>
- Bos, P. V., 2010. *How to Set Business Goals*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.inc.com/guides/2010/06/setting-business-goals.html>
[Accessed 12 March 2018].
- Butler, D., 2006. Enterprise Planning and Development. In: *Enterprise Planning and Development*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 23-24.
- Cameron, S., 2008. *The business student's handbook [ebook] learning skills for study and employment*. 4th ed. s.l.:Harlow - Financial Times Prentice Hall.
- Clydesdale, G., 2009. *Entrepreneurial opportunity the right place at the right time*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Doyle, A., 2017. *Critical Thinking*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.thebalance.com/critical-thinking-definition-with-examples-2063745>
[Accessed 12 March 2018].
- Dyfu, A. C. I., 2018. *Andrew - Cyfle I Dyfu*. Swansea: s.n.
- Gaynor, A., 2013. *Andrea Gaynor and the Learning Quality Support Unit 2013*. [Online]
Available at:
<https://hhs.hud.ac.uk/lqsu/Sessionsforall/supp/Gibbs%201988%20reflective%20cycle.pdf>

INTRODUCTION

Kate, n.d. *Gower Cottage Brownies*. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.gowercottagebrownies.co.uk/about-gower-cottage-brownies/>

Mitra, J., 2012. Entrepreneurship. In: *Entrepreneurship, Innovation and regional development*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 21-30.

Parri, S., 2016. *Mr Producer*. [Online]

Available at: <https://mrproducer.co.uk/homepage/>

Pink, D., n.d. *Ted Talk*. [Online]

Available at: https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_pink_on_motivation

Rickman, C. D., 2005. *The small business start up workbook*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications Inida PVT. LTD. .

Roper, S., 2013. Entrepreneurship A Global Perspective. In: *Entrepreneurship A Global Perspective*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 46-49.

Smith, C. P., 1992. Motivation and Personality . In: *Motivation and personality, Handbook of thematic content anaylsis* . New York: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, pp. 89-90.

Wanke, G. B. a. M., 2002. *Attitudes and Attitude Change*. East Sussex: Psychology Press Ltd.

Whiddett, S. H. a. S., 2002. *The Motivation Handbook*. London: CIPD House.

Wood, M. B., 2004. Marketing Planning principles into practice. In: *Marketing Planning*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited, pp. 127-128.

Zeiger, S., 2000. *small business.chron*. [Online]

Available at: <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/theories-motivation-organizations-management-25221.html>

Zimbardo, P. G., 1977. *Influencing attitudes and changing behavior*. 2nd ed. London: Addison-Wesley.

