

Academic report - reflecting on our learning throughout this module

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Introduction:

I will be using Gibbs's reflection throughout my report as it prevents you from being overly descriptive. Gibbs's reflection allows you to structure your essay and reports in a good academic manner. Gibbs (1988) Reflective Learning Cycle encourages a clear description of a situation, analysis of feelings, evaluation of the experience and analysis to make sense of the experience to examine what you would do if the situation arose again.

(Reflecting on Individual Professional Practice with Gibbs, 2021).

In this report I will be focusing on the topics we have covered throughout the different modules. I will focus on the topics that have helped me the most. The 4 topics I have chosen are time management / organising study, academic Writing, reflection and online learning experience.

Time management / Organising study:

I always thought time management just meant ensuring all tasks are done before the deadline. The process of doing this was exhausting as I would cramp all my work up and regardless of the quality of the work I would submit it. After learning what time management really meant, I thoroughly enjoyed the module this topic was discussed in. I learnt time management meant prioritising tasks and knowing how much time to spend on a certain task. I learnt how important it was to be organised not only in university work but also in a day to day routine. Being organised prevents you from wasting time as it helps you figure out what you should do next.

When I first started organising my study, I struggled as I spent hours trying to figure out what to prioritise. I also found it hard to find techniques that work for me such as work calendars, timetable etc. However, after weeks of practicing I can now quickly differentiate between the important and less important tasks. Which means I waste less time deciding what to work on next. I learnt by assessing what needs to be achieved within a given timeframe, tasks can be rated according to their importance. Setting priorities for each day, week, month and year, can help us accomplish our goals. It also helps to ensure activities that are vitally important but not urgent – such as personal devotions, adequate sleep and exercise – are given precedence (auld, 2021). I also found that making a timetable allows you to organise your studies.

I understand the importance of time management and how falling behind in one task can have an effect on another and so on. Therefore after attending some of the incourse tasks, I have learnt to make timetables and work calendars which I believe will help me to stay focused and submit my work on time.

Academic Writing:

When I started this course I was not sure what academic writing is or what the difference between academic writing and everyday casual writing is. However, over time I learnt how important academic writing is. I learnt academic writing is supposed to be clear, to the point and structured. I learnt about the different models you can use.

Academic writing allows us to write our essays and report in a certain way, it allows us to convey our understanding, it focuses strongly on style and technique and it enhances critical thinking and objectivity (Importance of Academic Writing - IsEssay, 2021).

I enjoyed the module in which academic writing was spoken about, as I found it helpful hearing about what others did to improve. One of the common things I learnt was helpful is practicing academic writing, which is what I did until I was confident. But in the beginning I found it hard to practice academic writing as I was not sure if I was doing it correctly however after attending the online sessions and listening to some of the group discussions I now feel semi confident with academic writing. I believe this is not only helpful for university but also for any future business I decide to do or join. Academic writing not only includes essays and reports but also research papers, literature review, lab reports, dissertation etc because 'the formal style used in academic writing ensures that research is presented consistently across different texts, so that studies can be objectively assessed and compared with other research' (Base and writing, 2021).

Overall, I feel quite confident when attempting academic writing. I believe there is always room for improvement, however I am confident now that I understand the basic skills to write a decent academic report.

Reflection

Before starting university, reflection for me just meant looking back at what you have done to ensure no mistakes have been made and if there are mistakes how to prevent them from happening again in the future. However, since starting university I learnt the importance of reflection and how it can help you improve as a person. I learnt reflection meant not only preventing the same mistakes from happening again but learning from them. I also learnt that reflection is not always negative; it also allows you to see what you have achieved and what you have succeeded at. People instinctively reflect on events, perhaps to better understand what has happened and make sense of it; the idea of learning from the past, especially trying not to repeat mistakes is well established (Hyler, 2021).

A negative effect 'reflection' has had, is that I would spend a lot of time before bed reflecting on what I have learnt during the day which has affected my sleep schedule however reflecting on my day has made me realise how much I can achieve in a day. Reflection has helped me work on my long term goals as well as short term goals. Allowing me to feel powerful and motivated everyday, after achieving some small short term goals. Reflecting on my day has also made me more aware of why I am doing certain tasks every day.

Online Learning Experience:

I always struggled to keep up with the evolving technology, therefore when I first found out university was going to be all online I panicked as I was sure I would struggle to even do the bare minimum of attending my lessons. However, after attending the first few classes I not only learnt about our E-learning system but also how to work with digital platforms like word and powerpoint.

As a beginner I was only aware of the negative effects online learning had for example not meeting people in person or having random internet problems. However, online learning can be very beneficial as people that live far away can attend all their lessons from the comfort of their own homes.

Initially I did struggle as I was not aware of how to join live sessions or access the recorded lessons but having that extra support from my class fellows and teachers, I learnt quickly. I also managed to do some research in my own time, watching youtube tutorials on how to use different online platforms. After researching for a while I learnt how to make online learning

easier for myself, some of the most common ways I learnt were breaking content down into smaller pieces and practicing accessing different articles and lessons from the internet (Prossack, 2021). I also found a lot of people tend to struggle with online learning as they lack self motivation but according to an article 'building strong self-motivation and disciplinary skills is key to succeeding in an online learning environment. Additionally, face-to-face communication with professors can be substituted with online communication, and peer-to-peer activities should be promoted between online students similarly as it would be in traditional classrooms' (Tamm, 2021).

Overall, I found online learning has helped us with not only the technology but has allowed us to work from the comfort of our homes and take more responsibility. Which has allowed me to be more productive. I believe having group discussions and feedback sessions reduces the loss of being in person or onsite.

Conclusion:

Gibbs's report showed, having an effective report also means having a conclusion as it helps you tie together everything and allows you to question what you can improve for next time. As Gibbs's reflection focuses on the ability to self-reflect on one's actions with the need to engage in the process of continual learning (Wilding, 2008).

Having done this report has made me realise how much I have actually achieved and learnt during my time at university. I have not only learnt how to manage my time effectively but also have learnt how to professionally work with people.

In order to write this report I decided to do some research. I read different articles and watched several different youtube videos to ensure I understood this task. Having used Gibbs's reflection for each topic, helped me understand why each skill is important in education. It allowed me to reflect on my learning experience and better my knowledge on each module. I believe these skills will help me in whatever future career I decide to join. Whilst doing this reflection I had the chance to ask myself questions such as what I would like to improve on and what I have learnt so far on my course. I also learnt self reflection allows you to make sense of things and allows you to challenge your thoughts. It helps us track our progress, recognise change and increase self awareness which is something we should all be doing on a day to day basis with not only education but also other aspects of our lives.

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