

Academic and Employability Skills

Academic report

Reflection on my learning in this
module

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INTRODUCTION

The reflective report will provide an insight into the 3 topics that have been covered during the term. In this context, a reflective model will be used to describe the experiences that have been gained concerning the topic. Along with this, published literature associated with the topic will be discussed.

REFLECTIVE MODEL

Gibbs reflective cycle



Figure 1: Gibb's reflective cycle

(Source: ed.ac.uk)

Gibbs' reflective cycle was developed by Graham Gibbs in 1988. It is the reflective framework that can be used for examining the experiences. In addition, as the framework is cyclical; therefore, it provides the scope to examine the repeated experiences. This, in turn, provides the opportunity to understand the advancement made for that particular action (Adeani *et al.*, 2020).

Gibbs reflective cycle is made up of six stages that are described below:

- 1. Description:** At this stage, the experience gained is described elaborately so that an overview can be obtained for the situation when the experience was gained.
- 2. Feelings:** At this stage thoughts associated with the experience and situation are described.
- 3. Evaluation:** At this stage of the cycle, evaluation of the undertaken actions during that situation is done so that the action that went well and that did not go well could be identified. Thus, both positive and negative aspects of the situation would be evaluated.

4. Analysis: at this stage, the reason why things had gone well or did not go well will be assessed. Thus, it is the stage where a chance is provided to make sense of the things that had happened.

5. Conclusion: At this stage, the entire learning achieved from the situation is summarised and the areas of improvement are identified.

6. Action plan: Based on the identified areas of improvement, an action plan is developed so that weaknesses could be converted into strengths. This, in turn, will help an individual to react in a better way during a similar situation in the future.

APPLICATION OF THE GIBBS REFLECTIVE CYCLE

1. Time management: As per the study conducted by Wilson *et al.* (2021), time management is the process that aids in the processing and exercising conscious control of time so that the activities can be accomplished effectively without the deterioration of productivity and efficiency. As a student, time management is one of the crucial requirements such that assignments and the course could be completed within due time. One such experience that I had gone through was concerning a group assignment that had to be completed within 7 days. At that time, initially, I had a feeling of nervousness as time was short for the assignment that was provided. In addition to this, the other major concern was to do teamwork and divide the tasks within that stipulated time. This, in turn, had increased the feeling of nervousness further.

At that point, the thing that had gone well was that I was able to prioritise the activities that must be done for completing the project. This helped in saving an ample amount of time as everyone was aware of the tasks that need to be accomplished first. However, one of the major issues that were faced during the process was that one of the team members was unable to cope up with the speed with which work had to be completed. Thus, it caused to delay in the work.

The reason for which I was able to prioritise the tasks was that in one of the previous assignments due to my inability to manage the time, I was not able to submit my assignment timely. At that time, I had taken the action to improve my time management skills by learning to prioritise the tasks so that the assignment could be completed successfully. On the other hand, I could not provide the tasks as per the skills of the individuals that had led to a delay in the completion of the project.

From this experience, I had learnt that for effective time management all the tasks must be completed within the set time so that the overall assignments could be completed effectively. as suggested by Tokarčíková *et al.* (2020), in the professional world, time management is one of the most crucial that aids an employee of the organisation to complete the projects

effectively. Therefore, for effective time management skills, it is vital that an individual must have the ability to set goals and develop a conducive work environment such that all the associated members would be able to complete the tasks effectively without the deterioration of the quality of the project or assignment. Further, the study carried out by Sainz *et al.* (2019), an individual who is able to manage time effectively is able to achieve greater levels of performance as well as productivity. Effective time management helps an individual to identify the most crucial tasks of the project or assignment. In addition to this, it also helps in distributing the time as per the need of the activities.

Thus, as a part of improving time management skills, I would take action to divide the time as per the activities that are to be completed such that all the tasks could be accomplished properly without the deterioration in the quality of the tasks.

2. Referencing: Referencing is one of the most important parts of academic work. While doing an academic project or while writing a thesis, the works of other scholars are to be referred to. Thus, at that point as per ethics, it is crucial that the scholars must be provided with the credit for their work. This is achieved by doing referencing where the full citations of the literary work from where the concepts had been gathered are provided. Further, as per the study conducted by Pears and Shields (2019), the usage of references helps the reader to understand the sources from where the ideas have been collected and used in the assignment.

Referencing can be done in different styles such as Harvard referencing, APA referencing, Vancouver and Chicago style and others (Rechberg, 2021). Concerning referencing, I have come across many experiences but one of the major experiences was related to the usage of the APA referencing style. Previously I had mainly used Harvard referencing style but in one of my management-based assignments, I had to use APA style. At that time, although with the help of the referencing guidelines, I was able to incorporate the references appropriately but had faced major issues with the overall formatting.

The feeling associated with that experience is that at that time I was immensely confused as to how to structure the references in the APA style. Along with this, I was also excited as the assignment provided me with the opportunity to learn a new referencing style. This, in turn, will help me to accomplish future assignments with this referencing style properly.

During that experience, the things that had gone well was that I had prior knowledge about references as in my previous assignments I had used Harvard referencing style. Thus, it did not take much longer time on my part to become aware of the significance of in-texting or the format that is to be considered. However, while using APA referencing style, I had some issues concerning the usage of the appropriate format. This is because a significant difference prevails between Harvard referencing style and APA referencing style. In the case of APA

referencing style, the names of up to three authors can be texted. Additionally, symbols of 'and' is used after the second author and 'et al.' are not italicised (Rechberg, 2021). Further, one of the crucial requirements associated with APA referencing style is that either the link of the online journal site or DOI number of the used articles has to be inserted in the references, unlike the Harvard referencing style. Other than, other minute details were associated as to how to use the page number, colons, commas and others. I have faced difficulty in considering all the minute details while doing APA referencing. As a result of which, I was unable to complete the referencing in the APA style properly.

From this, experience, I became aware that for a perfect academic assignment, other than collecting relevant content, proper referencing must be also required. This, in turn, helps in improving the overall weightage of the paper. Therefore, it is vital that for better academic performance, an individual must have adequate knowledge about the different referencing styles.

As identified from this experience, that the major issue faced by me is associated with the availability of inadequate knowledge about different referencing styles. Thus, to overcome this weakness, I would take an online class that would help me to learn all the minute details that must be considered while doing references in different styles and the proper format that must be followed. As a result of which, it would be possible on my part to accomplish all the assignments properly.

3. Online learning experience: The advent of digital technology along with platforms like zoom and others have facilitated people living in different geographical locations to access and learn from their preferred lecturers or Universities without being physically present. Although many organisations provided the scope to the students to learn from a distance the outbreak of the pandemic had led all the academic institutions to use the digital platforms so that uninterrupted education could be provided to the students (Dhawan, 2020). I had also experienced online learning during the time of the pandemic. At that time, not only the classes were conducted online but also presentations and other group activities were conducted online.

At the time of this experience, I was excited as well as had a feeling of confusion as to whether it would be possible to learn effectively or not like the physical classes. This is because previously I did not have any experience of distance learning.

One of the things that had gone extremely well in the online classes was that they provided flexibility. As a result of which, it was feasible to carry out self-paced learning. Most of the classes were recorded and the teachers used to provide the presentations or recorded video, I was able to arrange my own schedule for accessing those videos such that other learning

material. This flexibility achieved by online learning provided me with the scope to participate in other skill development short-term courses. Henceforth, I was able to improve my professional skills such as IT skills and others.

Apart from this, as much of the time is saved while doing online classes, I was also able to access other literary sources related to the topic. This helped me to improve my knowledge further. Along with this, I was also able to improve my time management skills. However, one of the major concerns that I had faced during the online learning experience was that during the live classes, it would become difficult to clarify all the issues within the stipulated time. In addition to this, if any technical error occurs or in case the internet service is not of high quality then it affects the learning process due to disturbance. Along with this, often, lack of motivation or the relaxation of accessing the learning materials later had also affected the learning process as I would often become too relaxed.

From this experience, I had learnt that one of the effective parts that enhances the learning among the student is motivation. Lack of motivation affects the ability of an individual to study regularly during online classes (Mukhtar *et al.*, 2020). Thus, to overcome this issue, I would be preparing my own timetable so that all the activities could be done properly.

CONCLUSION

With the application of a reflective model like Gibb's reflective cycle, it not only becomes possible to reflect on the previous experiences but also helps in identifying the area of improvements such that necessary actions could be taken. Thus, it would help an individual to react in a better way to a similar situation in future.

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