

ASSIGNMENT TITLE: REFLECTIVE WRITING

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As an adult student, Joining University of Wales, Trinity Saint David, was a bold decision to make considering that the last time I sat in a classroom environment, was about ten years ago. I needed to do some studies to improve my career prospects. I contemplated going for an online course but after a self analysis, I concluded that, I would not successfully accomplish it. I needed some more push and motivation to kick start me. Just around that time of self-talking, a friend told me about the opportunities at the University of Wales, London campus in Oval.

I made a call and hooked an interview appointment and was unconditionally offered a place in the Certificate in Higher education: skills in the workplace.

The orientation to the course was greatly helpful in learning about the course content and what is expected of me as a student. I more of an independent student once I pick up the momentum. I always try not to be overly reliant on my lecturers to achieve my academic goals.

Through the in-class exercises, Peer presentations, assignments both individual and group, and self evaluation exercises on work-related activities, I have learnt a great deal about myself as a student and a future business manager.

Being a full time course, the in-class face-to-face lecture method has helped me to ask questions where I have not understood which has in turn helped me to grasp the experiences and skills expected of me upon graduation.

Other things which I have learnt from this class, are study skills such as paraphrasing and summarization that I can utilize in my current student life. Paraphrasing refers to the act of describing the meaning of a spoken or written sentence or sentences using other words to attain better clarity.

According to Kissner E. (2006), summarizing can also be described as presenting an idea or information one has read in their own words. It is an academic skill that involves noting all the important ideas in a given text then writing or putting them together in to a brief note.

It can also be explained as the identification of the important ideas in a piece of writing and restating it in your own words.

The purpose of summarising is to give a reader a smaller compact and objective account of the main ideas and features of a given literature.

Outside of the university, the skills for work place related activities such as power point presentations, project proposal and curriculum vitae writing, have exposed me to what the business is like in the real world. Business in the twenty first century module particularly gave me a comprehensive perspective of what it is really to be a student of business administration.

In addition to learning about Business in the twenty first century which tackled mainly business planning and management, I also learnt several digital skills such as Microsoft word and spreadsheet and research methods. In word, I learnt how to format documents such as letters and reports. In spreadsheet, I learnt how to create data graphs such as pie chart and bar graphs using a given data. On research methods, I learnt how to conduct a research using methods such as Questionnaires, Surveys, Experiments and interviews. Further more, I also learnt sampling techniques such as Random, cluster, stratified and systematic. I can not forget the feeling of satisfaction I had when I learnt the difference between a sample class and sample size which had disorganized my brain for some time.

Having a certificate in Higher education, opens doors to several further education and employment opportunities however, one must be grounded in the areas of critical thinking, problem solving, time management and communication, to mention but a few. These are skills that can be applied to many other areas of life.

When I joined the course, I was confident that I am good in most of these skills however, as the course progressed through the first term, I soon came to a realization that I was wrong. My critical thinking ability needed a lot of improvement, my problem solving ability was very basic and my communication

skill also needed a professional touch. By the end of first term, I had greatly improved in those areas which was evidenced by my ability to lead our group to complete assignments successfully. Problem solving in particular has immensely improved my performance at my work place. My supervisor recently commented that I am a better team player and proposed making me a team leader.

I have also learnt how to write an academic essay like this one. Literatures on Gibbs model of reflection was of utmost importance here. The name comes from the last name of the theory's author called Graham Gibbs. In 1988 in his book titled 'Learning by doing', this American sociologist and psychologist came up with a theory on thinking which termed as "the reflective cycle". The Cycle kicks off at the Description stage and progresses to Feelings, Evaluation, Analysis, Conclusion and Action plan, then back to Description again.

In the book, Gibbs asserts that, people should think in a orderly manner when reflecting on their experiences during a situation, activity or event at hand. He emphasized that, reflection on those experiences can be structured in stages or phases by using a circle.

According to him, reflecting this way usually make individuals meditate on an experience in a more detailed manner, creating awareness of personal actions and therefore much abler to change their behavior. He contends that people can learn by considering both the positive and negative consequences of the activity.

In order to attain these improvements, one must put in the time beyond just attending lectures in class or reading lecture notes.

I now poses a more confident outlook on summarizing and paraphrasing than when I had just joined the course. I can confidently write reports and summarize a piece of literature at ease without stress as much as I used to. These skills have also enabled me to improve on my note taking skills which in turn has improved my understanding the course. I have learnt to focus more on what the

lecturer is saying and less on what is on the PowerPoint. At the start of the course, I would spend a lot of time copying every word on the PowerPoint instead of listening to the lecturer. I have learnt that a balance between note taking and listening to the lecturer is vital in order to comprehend the material.

I also learnt the valuable skill of time management by creating a schedule and making use of to-do lists. Before joining this course, time management was a poor reflection of my personality because of procrastinating. I clearly lacked self determination on how to stick to a set work plan. I would make a program list then get distracted with other things like social media on the phone. In the end, this became frustrating on reflection so I knew that something had to change. Now I have learnt to stick to the plans I have set. Every day, I create a schedule for myself that breaks down what I have to do through the day, which keeps me on track.

Effective team working is also one of the course module I am taking. In this module, I have learnt about communication, the types of communication and its models such as the Shannon-Weaver mathematical model and Berol's model of communication. These models help us to communicate effectively. Shannon-Weaver model in particular taught me the effect of "Noise" in a communication channel. This module has helped me to improve on my communication skills.

Team-work is another skill I have learnt and improved on during this course. I have learnt about the Tuckman's team development model and the Belbin's team roles.

In 1965, Bruce Tuckman a psychologist by profession asserted that, team building evolves through five of developmental stages namely; forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. Each of these stages plays a vital part in the building of a high-functioning team. This starts from the time the said group meets for the first time up to when project is completed.

Team work is a vital skill both at the University and at work place because it promotes cohesion among employees. It also promotes productivity within and organization. I am now a better team player than when I joined the course.

Term one was a rather interesting time with lots of expectations and uncertainties. Meeting strangers from various backgrounds, with different personality traits. There was a lot political correctness which caused tension among classmates but as time went on, we nicely bonded and became a wonderful team.

Term two has also had its ups and downs. Firstly, our earlier class group that had bonded so well was broken up and members assigned to new groups with new lecturers. It felt like starting afresh. We had to form new assignment groups too.

The term has not run as scheduled because of the terrible Corona virus that broke out at the start of the year in Wuhan, China and quickly spread out into other parts of the world. London was not spared forcing the University to close its doors to face-to-face lectures following government advice and or directives. The University had to resort to Moodle, a virtual learning environment to conduct lectures. Moodle is an online platform where teaching is conducted through computers. This has helped to reduce loss of learning hours. It has been a very challenging term with a lot of assignments. Four in total and each requiring two thousand words. The most challenging of all the Digital skills assignment where we were required to conduct a research using a questionnaire methodology. This was because the university had closed due to the Covid19 pandemic which made reaching out to the respondents very hard. The respondents were strictly to be fellow students. Business in the twenty first century module assignment also gave me hard time because, it required doing some physical surveys on market competitiveness and product suitability. With London and the country at large on a lockdown, I had to devise ways of getting this information.

I am now looking forward to completing this term successfully then start the third and last term of the course.

After completing this course, my ultimate goal is to proceed to the graduate class and earn bachelor's degree in Business management then the masters class soon after.

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