

Reflective portfolio on Professional Career Development

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Introduction

I am currently working as a supervisor in a coffee shop and studying full time at UWTSD. I received a lot of excellent teaching as a student, which I found invaluable and would be an excellent progression in my studies.

For the past two years I have been on a learning journey to become an effective professional. Starting this course, I knew it would be a small but big important step to start my career, I am usually shy and very quiet during classes, I remember feeling scared and anxious, during the first term, I felt that I was not able to finish the course for my level of English. At first, I must admit that it didn't go well for me, it was very difficult for me, but with the passing of time and together with the excellent lecturers and classmates I've had, they've made me enjoy this course. Reflecting on my experience as a student to date, I can see my progress, I can say that I am now confident in my abilities.

Nowadays, there are many ways to determine the evaluation of students along with the methods they used to achieve the curricular objectives of the subject. This reflective portfolio will focus on providing an answer to show with tools learned in class how we as students understand the skills and knowledge necessary to work effectively, demonstrate employability readiness, and personal advancement through an understanding of personal strengths and areas for further development as well as setting employment goals and developing a personal action plan.

Reflection is considered an important part of learning, and there are many theories about what reflection is and why it is so important, especially in the development of experiential learning, professional practice skills, and metacognitive skills that promote learning. Kolb (1984: 18) for example suggests that the reflection allows the learners to form abstract concepts from their experience in order to guide active experimentation and further learning experiences. It is said that reflection helps to turn the experience into learning.

Reflective portfolios are a collection of evidence of personal and professional achievement and development through critical analysis and introspection. Professional portfolios may be required, for example, to promote and document continuing professional development and apply for accreditation.

Main body

SWOT Analysis

SWOT is a framework for identifying and analysing the internal and external factors of a project, it also has been around for decades and could lay claim to being the most widely used strategy tool in modern times. It is used by industry, commerce, and charitable and voluntary organisations. On higher education, SWOT is often in the curriculum of business studies and strategy training courses.

Through this SWOT, I will show how I can perform my activities better, resulting in adequate efficiency in my daily life. Another point to follow would be to increase the opportunities to leave my weaknesses below.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
• Responsible • Creative • Comprehensive • Honest • Gentle • Respectful • Loyal • Persistent	• Susceptible to getting fooled easily • Insecure or undecided • A little shy and show me nervous in some situations • Be able to get bored of routine	• To be able to teamwork • Willing to help others • Able to recognize my own mistakes • Ease to understand and understand things	• Know how to divide my time • Economic situation • Little socialization • Lack of motivation • Labor competence

Personal development plan (PDP)

Higher education already uses a variety of strategies to encourage students to reflect and evaluate their own learning experiences and plan their own development. A variety of terms are used to describe a learning review and registration process and action planning, p. Personal profile, personal and academic records, personal development plans (academics), progress archives, learning portfolios, learning records and daily. Many of these terms emphasize the

records that are the product of the process. The term personal development planning is used to emphasize that this is an active learning process carried out by individuals to improve.

A good personal development plan gives me an approach in addition to helping to draw a path to my success, allows you to make better decisions and prevents you from taking steps back. A good plan also allows you to create strategies and get back again when things go wrong. A clear plan is also beneficial to your mental health since a sense of determination can often help reduce stress and anxiety.

Personal Development Plan

Name: Nerea Cuenca R
Age: 20

Currently position: Full-time student
Part-time worker (supervisor)

Date: March 2023

Long term goal	Short term goal	Actions to achieve the short term goal	Support needed	By when?	Results
Become a diplomat, be qualified and confident to lead and contribute to a better society in my local community and be able to help others in critical situations by September 2026	Complete the course CERTHE level 4 without inconvenience	Attend the course and participating	Academic sessions, working with colleagues	May 2023	Attended and complete course, applying what has been learned in the workplace
		Do the assessment of each module	Academic sessions, resources for activities		
	Be admitted to complete the career of International Relations	Look for different university options that have courses available	Useful websites to get information of the courses	September 2023	Course successfully admitted, reach the advanced level of studies and put it into practice
		Submit the application online and be prepared for any interview	University websites to get in contact, personal information		
	Gain experience working or participating in areas related to my career	Looking for jobs available in my area	Job information, CV	March 2024	Improvement in personal and professional development which helps to make decisions efficiently
		Participating for exchange scholarships	Scholarship platforms/information		

Figure 1. Cuenca, N. (2023). Personal development plan. Infographic. Venngage.

Reflect on the learning styles theories

Learning styles refer to a range of competing and contested theories that aim to account for differences in individuals learning. The many theories share the proposition that humans can be classified according to their 'style' of learning, but differ in how the proposed styles should be defined, categorized and assessed. A common concept is that individuals differ in how they learn.

Below is a summary of the learning styles according to the most representative models learned in class.

1. David Kolb and Experiential Learning

Kolb identified two main dimensions of learning: perception and processing. He said that learning is the result of how people perceive and then process what they have perceived. He described two opposite types of perception:

- People who perceive through **concrete experience**, and people who perceive through **abstract conceptualization** (and generalizations).

As he explored the differences in processing, Kolb also found examples of both extremes:

- Some people process through **active experimentation** (putting the implications of concepts into practice in new situations), while others through **reflective observation**.

The juxtaposition of the two ways of perceiving and the two ways of processing is what led Kolb to describe a **four-quadrant model** to explain learning styles.

- Engage fully and without prejudice to the situations that arise, to be able to reflect on those experiences and perceive them from various approaches, generate concepts and integrate their observations into logically sound theories, being able to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems.

(Lozano, 2000, pp. 70)

2. **Peter Honey & Allan Mumford**

Both created an instrument to assess learning styles. To generate the instrument, they start from the theory and questionnaires of D. Kolb, returning to the circular process of learning in four stages and the importance of learning by experience. They are described below:

- Active style: Students with an active learning style adapt easily to new experiences, they tend to act first and then think about the consequences.
- Reflective style: Those who have a reflective learning style are characterized by being observant and analytical.
- Theoretical style: They think rationally, analyze and synthesize information. In the same way they can reorganize disparate facts into coherent theories
- Pragmatic style: Students with this learning style are practical and realistic, they like to see if ideas work in concrete facts.

3. **Neil Fleming & Colleen Mills**

Neil Fleming and Colleen Mills developed an instrument to determine students' preference in processing information from a sensory point of view. The authors do not talk about strengths, but about sensory preferences. The authors consider that people constantly receive information through the senses and that the brain selects part of that information and ignores the rest. His model takes the name of VARK, which will be explained below.

- Visual: Visual learners prefer the use of pictures, charts, diagrams, circles, arrows, and pictures when studying or learning new concepts. They prefer to have an orderly environment in the classroom.
- Auditory: Auditory students prefer oral presentations, lectures, discussions, and everything that involves listening. They use their voices and ears as the primary modality for learning. They easily remember what they hear and what they express verbally.
- Reading/Writing: Students of this style prefer everything that is related to reading and writing. When reading they vocalize the words, sometimes just moving their

lips and sometimes saying the words audibly. They repeat things out loud when they want to remember them, since oral repetition sticks very well in their memory.

- Kinesthetic: Kinesthetic learners prefer anything that involves experience and practice, whether simulated or real. They like to act or do a project with their hands and be physically engaged in learning.

The learning style models that I have presented here have long been the main reference for understanding the different ways in which human beings learn, but it is necessary to point out that in recent times they have been the subject of discussion, due to the fact that has pointed out its lack of scientific validity. In this sense, neurodidactics offers us another panorama based on more recent research and studies to understand how learning occurs.

Learning styles are constructs that we all have which affect the way of learning and teaching, therefore it is necessary to take them into account when planning, executing and evaluating classes. It is necessary to provide knowledge about styles, as well as to model the student, as a future teacher in the strategies, taking into account the characteristics of the audience, in this way they can consider the utility, through experience.

Through a test on learning style carried out in class, I have obtained the following scores, which has resulted in me being a visual learner.

- Audience: 30%
- Visual: 40%
- Tactile: 30%

In the professional field it has a great impact, since you process information quickly: people with this learning style tend to process a large amount of information and in a very short time, it is easier for us to read, relate graphs, study with notes, etc.

We can easily abstract ideas after reading, seeing a concept map or a note. This also makes it easier to solve mathematical problems, in addition to being able to plan in a better way.

Assessing the concepts using a reflective model

A reflective cycle is a cyclical learning process that alternates phases of action and reflection, and that leads to “the construction of a well-founded didactic knowledge of its own” (Esteve 2011: 31).

To evaluate the experiences in the classroom carried out, reflective observation was used and specifically the Gibbs reflective cycle (Gibbs, 1988), which is iterative and proposes that reflection should be done after the experience, in addition, it provides a guide to carry out the evaluation. reflection process through reference questions. The Gibbs reflective cycle focuses on learning from experiences that involve feelings, thoughts, and recommendations for future experiences (Husebø et al., 2015).

The Gibbs cycle is made up of 6 phases: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusions, and action plan (Gibbs, 1988).

- In description, the student must answer what happened during the module? without making judgments yet, nor trying to draw conclusions, it is simply describing in an objective, concise and relevant way what happened from the beginning to the end of the module.
- In feelings, you must answer what were your reactions and feelings? Regarding the various situations experienced, whether they were emotions of joy, frustration, stress, etc., for each one you must express how you felt. What did you feel at that moment? What did you think at that moment? after?
- In the evaluation, an answer must be given to what was good or bad about the experience. This part begins to make value judgments about what happened.
- In the analysis, an answer should be given to what sense did you find in what you learned? and what was really going on?

- In the conclusions, an answer must be given to what can be concluded from the whole experience? If it was positive or negative, what did you learn from the experience? and what else could you have done to improve the experience?
- The action plan should summarize everything that needs to be known and done to improve the next implementations, for this it must respond to What elements should be considered for future experiences? and what should be done differently next time?

Description:

During this module we were introduced on how we can create a PDP, SWOT analysis, improve self-awareness, writing CV's and facing interviews. As backup, on each class were reported what was learned in a personal blog based on exercises and tests.

Action Plan:

I will research more about personal reflection strategies, and practice more when I'm having interviews. Put into practice what I learned both in my personal and work life.

Feelings:

I felt nervous but at the same time excited for the last module, each class interesting for me and it was very gratifying to have a lecturer who was always willing to give us feedback on any task.

Evaluation:

Having three evaluations in this module I saw as quite practical, the three were different activities so they had to be carried out in a different way I had no problem doing the first and the last one but there is an exception for the mock interview, I was nervous and at time my mind went blank, and I didn't know what to answer.

Analysis:

I thought I was prepared for the mock interview; I practiced several times with my colleague the type of questions that they could ask us, however due to nerves I forgot several of the words that I learned to be able to speak properly during the interview.

Conclusion:

Despite the nerves and the small mistakes I had in the interview, I can say that I have improved a lot when communicating with someone, obviously I must work to avoid those moments of nerves but now I am more confident in myself and my abilities to work both in groups and individually.

Conclusions

This study shows several new and interesting findings, which allow us to show how reflective observation can improve the practice of university students. In other words, reflective observation becomes a key element in the teaching and learning processes because it allows us students to carry out an active and critical review of our work through the analysis and evaluation of the experience to improve it in the future. future (Jones & Alinier, 2015).

Finally, it can be concluded that reflective observation allows students to improve their practice through a process of reflection on what happened and what can be improved for future experiences, this process must be systematic, dynamic and iterative and the cycle de Gibbs complies with these characteristics, in addition, as evidenced in this work, the Gibbs cycle is a tool for students to evaluate their experiences and find the benefits and difficulties that arose during this module through an action plan to be able to potentiate the benefits and minimize the difficulties and thus generate significant learning environments and train people with the necessary skills to face the challenges of today's society, but it is important to understand that reflection is a process that must be carried out in all time and everywhere.

This course has taken me on an exciting and rewarding journey toward becoming a better professional. My knowledge and skills in the workplace, and my philosophy of personal development has been explored and challenged, as I have discussed in this reflective essay. As I progress in my career I will continue my involvement with courses that would help me to perform my best, I have gained confidence in my abilities as a student from my colleagues and lecturer's feedback and have enjoyed reflecting on my learning and performance through this reflective portfolio. I endeavor to continue on my journey to becoming a better professional throughout my career.

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