

ECIE4010

2511923

Cooper Jones

The aim of this reflective essay will be to use Gibbs' reflective cycle to reflect on my personal development during the process of making the group video. Through weaving in concepts of group work, design thinking and personal development into my insights to support my reflection.

The reflective cycle theory was developed by Professor Graham Gibbs in 1988; the concept of the theory is a structured framework for experiential learning categorised into six individual stages for the process of reflection (Simply Psychology, 2025). Each of the six stages relays a question to allow an individual to continuously revisit their experiences, allowing individuals to analyse their own experiences from different perspectives and angles. This theory proposes that by revisiting and analysing an individual's own personal experiences it will allow them to gain better understanding and improve their future actions and decision making (Simply Psychology, 2025). The following are the six framework stages along with the six questions relayed in each stage; Description- what happened during the experience? Feelings – what were your thoughts and feelings during the experience? Evaluation – what was good and bad about the experience? Analysis – what sense can you make of the situation? Conclusion – what did you learn from the experience? Action Plan – if you encountered a similar situation again, what would you do differently? (Simply Psychology, 2025). Throughout this essay I will be using Gibbs (1988) theory to structure and evaluate my own personal experience during the group work, to improve my professional development.

During this module I was required to participate in group work where my group was expected to produce a Pecha Kucha style video pitch presenting a solution to alleviate our chosen wicked problem within an educational context. As a group we discussed and arranged deadlines and responsibilities for each group member to ensure the expectations were set and that all group members were given an equal amount of workload. My contribution to the

group work was to discuss the idea, link the idea to relevant school curriculums and policies and discuss how the idea might be unsuccessful. Using the method of design thinking, which is described as solution-based approach to solving problems (Simon, 1969) my group was able to empathise, define, ideate, prototype and test our solution to alleviate the problem of childhood obesity within schools as our wicked problem. During my group work it was important that I used skills that I have gained during my year of studies such as time management, Covey (1989) proposed that getting the correct things done are more beneficial than getting more things done which helped me manage my work load and meet deadlines during the group work.

At the beginning of the module, I felt apprehensive of the idea of working within a group setting as everyone has their own style and approaches to working along with a range of different personalities and confidence levels. After being paired with group member A and B and having a brief discussion on the pitch idea we would like to produce, I began to feel more confident within my group and less apprehensive with the idea of group members not meeting deadlines or failing to deliver their own work. During the experience of group work I can confidently state that each group member including myself contributed equally to the group work. Group members A and B were able to effectively communicate with myself the outcomes of the assignment which I found helpful due to finding difficulty in understanding these in the beginning of the group work. (Tuckman, 1965) proposes that a team's development encounter five different stages, teams that encounter these five stages can operate at a high-level efficiency with gaining the skills of good communication, working collaboratively and navigating disagreements in a polite manner which are skills each team member can use for their future personal development.

During the group work there were several aspects that were positive, each group member communicated effectively with each other any concerns or feelings of uncertainty they felt during the sessions. I found this beneficial as I typically avoid voicing my opinion within work related issues to avoid confrontation and disagreements, therefore having a good communication system with group members A and B resulted in being able to voice my

opinion freely without worrying about conflict and disagreements. I can confidently state that during the group work each member stayed focused, supported each other and met expectations consistently, the outcome of these meant that our group was able to finish the video pitch idea within an appropriate time before the deadline allowing every group member to begin their self-reflective essay. In the course of working within a group, one challenge that surfaced was pressure from myself to produce work that aligned with the expected criteria of the assignment. I personally found the topic of the module 'Making a Difference' more challenging than previous modules therefore ensuring that I had revisited all lectures to gain knowledge was crucial to perform confidently alongside group members A and B.

Throughout the process of group work it was clear that group dynamics thrive off good communication systems as it helps overcome the potential of conflict, it allows individuals to work collaboratively rather than compete in an unassertive and uncooperative manner. As each group member contributed to both the planning and presenting of the work equally it ensured that members of the group did not feel as though they were shouldering the responsibility of others. I felt as though, by each group member receiving roles and responsibilities at the beginning of the assignment, it contributed to a clear structure that allowed my group to follow the plan that was in place. In the framework we allocated ourselves additional time to investigate how to alleviate our chosen wicked problem on childhood obesity without falling behind on the agreed timeline. I believe this worked to our advantage to keep us on track. *For example; when investigating childhood obesity, I took my time to read case studies, and thoroughly researched facts to ensure the data was accurate.* From working within a group setting, I believe that it has enhanced my skills and the ability to work alongside others in an educational manner which is a skill that I will use for future experiences.

I learned that the key to a successful group relies on the ability of all group members to have a clear structure, good communication system and to work actively alongside each other. The experience of working within a group setting has issued skills for myself such as, to acknowledge everyone's work ethic without dismissing opinions to avoid conflict and

unnecessary issues. Although no issues or conflict arose between me, group member A and B it is important that I consider within future scenario's that this may not be the case. As I have stated previously I tend to avoid conflict and shy away from voicing my opinion however it is important that I feel comfortable to voice my opinion rather than building resentment towards other members of the group. Throughout the duration of working within a group setting, it highlighted the importance of overcoming mental barriers such as self-limiting beliefs. During this period, it was important for myself to acknowledge my emotions and behaviours to allow myself to reach my full potential and achieving professional and personal success (Sills, 2023).

There are various strategies from this experience that I will ensure to include in future group work assignments such as allocating roles and responsibilities to each member alongside allocated time to complete the necessary work in order to keep a sustainable structure which will benefit the group positively in many ways. I will proceed to overcome the barriers of self-limiting beliefs to ensure I can confidently present work to the expected criteria within the group setting. To develop my confidence, I will use strategies that allow myself to work on voicing my opinion within work settings. I will also continue to ask group members for additional guidance on lectures and re visit lecture notes to ensure my understanding of the expectations are of standard.

Using Gibbs' reflective cycle has ensured that I have reflected on my personal development along with managing and assessing my own thought process. It is important to self-reflect as I have acknowledged my strengths and weaknesses which will provide me guidance on skills that I can offer during future group work projects along with skills to improve on. Understanding the metacognition process was essential to becoming aware as to why I was thinking of things in a certain way.

References

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