

Report

Reflecting-the ability
to overcome human condition

Module :Academic and Employability Skills

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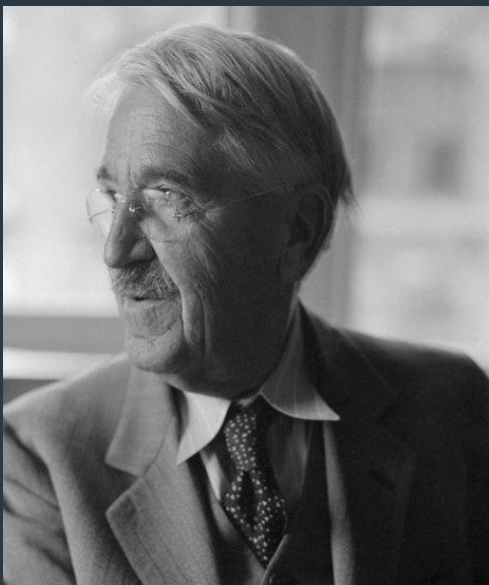


1.Introduction

In this report I will analyze the methods of reflection that I learned in the second semester. I will also present the difference between analytical and critical thinking, about their importance and how they help us to develop both personally and professionally. Another aspect that I will focus on in this is the CV, how important it is to know the employer's expectations, but also what aspects we need to promote in it. I will also analyze my academic career in the two semesters and how my personal SWOT analysis has been influenced over time. In the end of the report I will present a research I did with the help of my friends through a questionnaire about CV.

2.Methodology

My methodology include research and self-analysis of academic progress which is a descriptive, exploratory type and a mixed methodology was utilized for a better understanding during the first semester and the second . For example I review course material e.g. units on moodle and in class exercises like SWOT Analyse, reflections models, etc . Also I used information from books and I make my personal research .



“

We do not learn from experience. **We learn from reflecting** on experience.

John Dewey, Educator and Philosopher

edutopia

3.Reflections

Reflection is a major research focus for a range of disciplines, psychology and neuroscience, business, management and information. As a result, there are a number of definitions and may see the diversity of interests, conceptual unity and lack. Define available can be grouped into three categories. These are:

- Reflection can process information about an experience - certain definitions highlighted to reflect is a process of change that results from the processing of information about the derivation from previous experience;
- Reflection as a change of behavior - established definitions are concentrated when it is reflected that a behavior of some people changes after an experience;
- Reflection can change in behavioral mechanisms - definitions can be defined that reflect as changes in mental patterns or that can represent knowledge of events, after which they can have previous experiences.

For me the reflections are the impulses to be a better version of me. To learn from past experiences and not repeat them in the future. I often reflect on my educational process, how to improve it, what I did not do well and what strategies to apply for the future. Another part of the reflections are those related to my work. I am a perfectionist person and the reflections help me to tend towards this perfection even though it is relative



4.Models of reflections

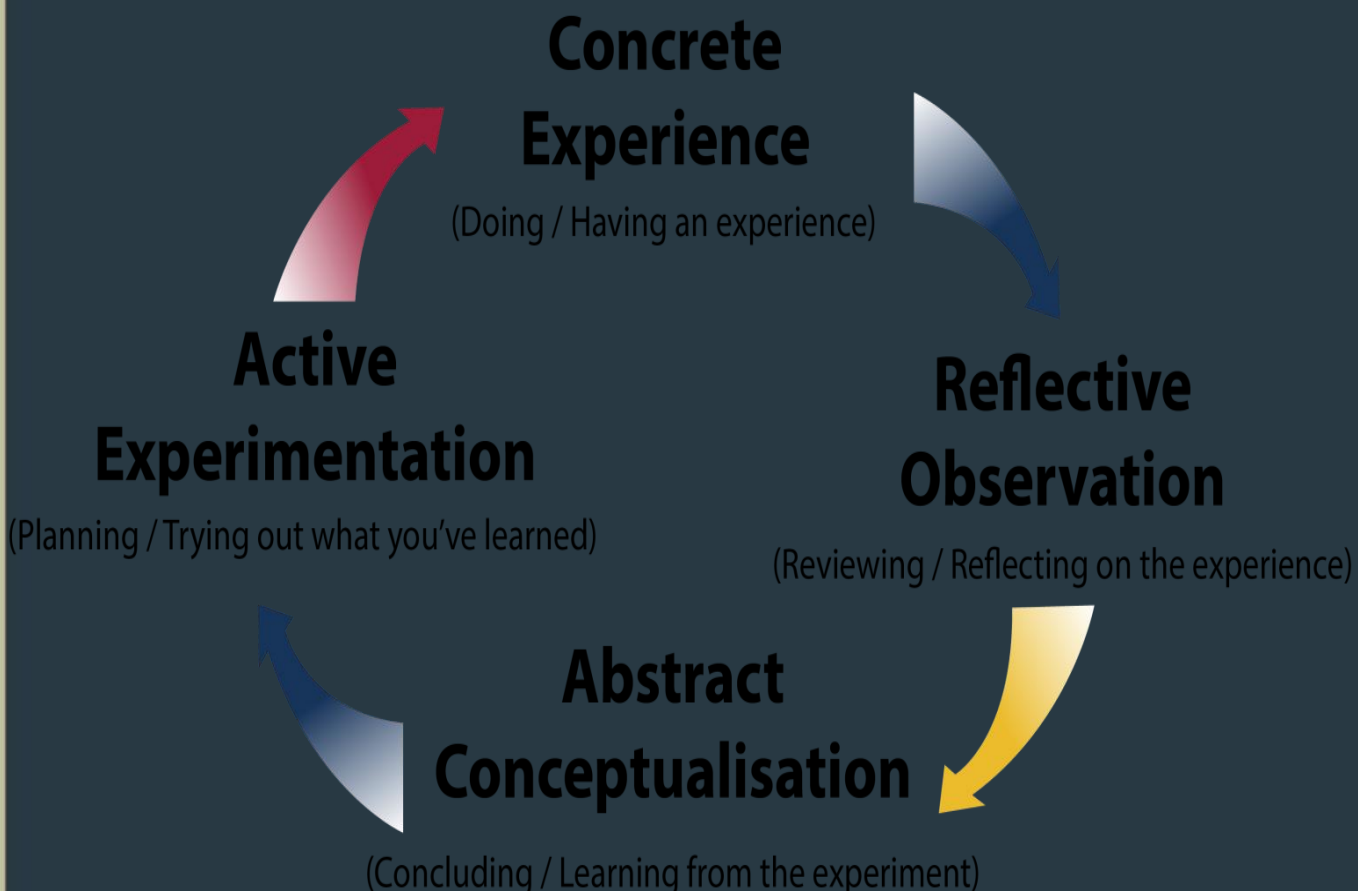
4.1Kolb's Model of Reflections

Kolb is theorist which proposed an important model of reflection proposed that learning follow a four-step model or cycle (see Figure 1). The first stage involves the existence of an experience. The second stage involves making observations and judgments about the experience (ie reflection).

This leads to the third stage, which involves conclusion, namely learning from experience (abstract conceptualization).

Finally, we have active experimentation, during which changes and new actions are planned. Kolb proposed that the cycle can be introduced at any time, but all stages must be followed in succession for learning to take place successfully.

Figure 1



Like any theory, it has strengths and limitations. Regarding the strengths, it is useful to identify the aspects of learning:

- Private or internal(steps1and2)and public or external(steps3 and4)
- Acquired through thinking(Step 2)or practical applicability (Step 4)
- Acquired through direct experience or understanding (Step 1) and knowledge or understanding (Stage 3).

However, Kolb's theory has been the subject of much criticism, due to the lack of empirical evidence used in its development, the language used, considered difficult, and the separation of learning from the social or cultural context in which it takes place.

4.2Gibb's Model of Reflections

In response to these limitations, Professor Graham Gibb proposed a reflection-based learning cycle. Gibbs added a stage in which the learner must consider feelings (see Figure 1.2). This step was added because:It is not enough to have a certain experience to learn.

Without reflecting on this experience, it can be quickly forgotten, being devoid of educational utility. From the feelings and thoughts that arise from this reflection, we can generalize or conceptualize, effectively addressing new situations (Gibb,1988).

Gibbs Reflective Cycle



The six stages of Gibb's reflection cycle are:

- Description of the experience
- Feelings and thoughts about the experience
- Evaluating the experience of what worked well and what worked less well
- Analysis of the understanding of the situation
- Conclusions about what you have learned and what you could have done differently
- The action plan for how you will deal with similar situations in the future or general changes that you may consider appropriate.

Table 1 presents a number of questions that can be used in applying the Gibb reflection cycle. These indications highlight that steps 1 - 3 refer to what happened during the experience, while steps 4 - 6 focus on how to improve the experience and results. Given that it refers to the key processes in the act of reflection itself, Gibb's cycle assumes some differences from Kolb's theory. For example, in Stage 2 of the model, introspection can be a challenge for some because it requires open and honest reflection on oneself. Reflection on experience can now bring feelings that the learner has apparently forgotten. Because Gibb's learning cycle provides a framework for examining experiences and, given its cyclical nature, is appropriate to repeated experiences, allowing individuals to learn from their own experience.

Both Kolb's and Gibb's theories can be used to improve the work of entrepreneurs, both operationally and strategically. They can be used to help the learner understand what they have done well and improve their future experience. For example, Table 1 presents a set of questions that can be asked by the learner during a business experience. This could be related to operational experience with staff, customers and suppliers or to strategic experience in launching a new product, introducing new equipment or machinery or entering a new market. In addition, they are useful tools for both mentoring and coaching.

I learned what problem I had in my volunteer experience and how to fix it. Gibb's method helped me reflect on this fact. (Appendix 1) Both Kolb's and Gibb's theories can be used to improve the work of entrepreneurs, both operationally and strategically. They can be used to help me understand what I did well and how to improve my future experience.

I learned that I must possess these main behaviors in order to be a good leader:

- To develop a visionary strategy for organizational change;
- To inspire trust and respect for group members;
- To set high expectations for group members;
- To stimulate by personal example; • Demonstrate self-confidence;
- To build a climate of trust and security in the group;
- Maintain effective interaction;
- To encourage the group in the direction of improvement;
- Sets the goals of the group;
- To give identity to the group.

5.Critical thinking

Critical thinking is the ability to think clearly and rationally, to understand the logical connection between ideas. Critical thinking has been the subject of debate and has enjoyed increasing attention since the time of the great philosophers of ancient Greece, such as Plato and Socrates, and has continued to be a topic of discussion in our modern age. Critical thinking can be described as the ability of an individual to engage in reflective and independent thinking. In essence, critical thinking involves the ability to reason. It is about active learning rather than just being recipients of information. Those with critical thinking research, rigorously question every idea, every hypothesis, instead of accepting them at their face value. They will always seek to determine whether ideas, arguments and findings faithfully represent the whole picture and at the same time are open to finding out that this is not the case. They will identify, analyze and solve problems systematically, rather than through intuition or instinct. Those with critical thinking skills can: □

- Understand the connections between ideas.
- Determines the importance and relevance of arguments and ideas. □
- Recognize, build and evaluate arguments.
- Identify inconsistencies and errors in reasoning. □
- Approach problems in a coherent and systematic way.
- Reflect on the justification of one's own hypotheses, beliefs and values.

Critical thinking is a special way of thinking in such a way as to arrive at the best possible solution in the circumstances that are provided to us. In everyday language, it is a way of thinking about anything that concerns your mind today, so that you can reach the best possible conclusion.

"Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualising, applying, analysing, synthesising, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action."

(Scriven & Richard ,1987)

More precisely, we must be able to:

□ Think of a problem in an objective and critical way. □

- We identify different arguments that exist in connection with a certain problem.
- We evaluate a point of view to determine how strong or valid it is. □
- We recognize weaknesses or negative points in evidence or arguments.
- We notice what implications might be behind a statement or argument. □
- We provide well-structured reasoning for an argument we want to make.

6. Analytical Thinking

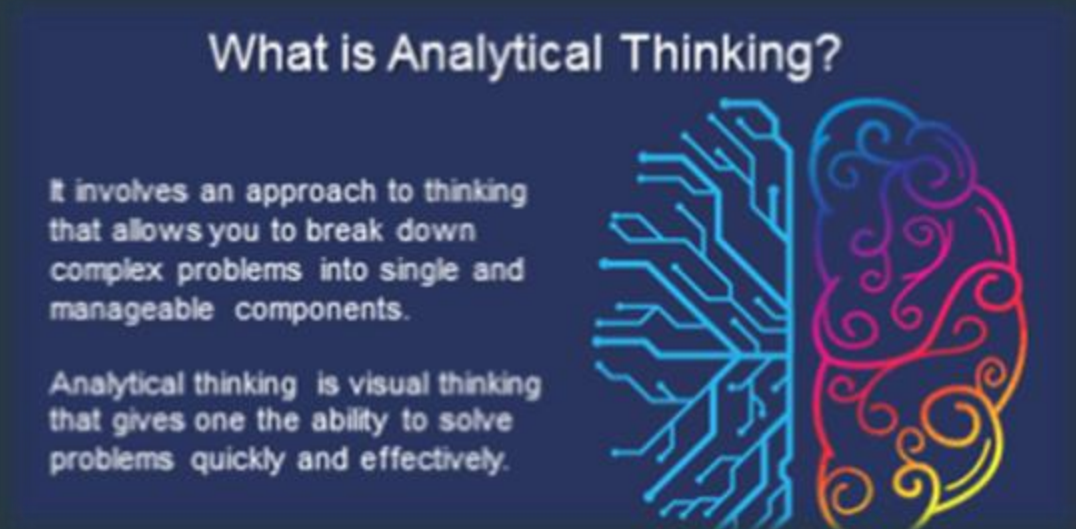
"Analytical thinking skills are an invaluable asset to have. They easily transfer and apply across many spectrums of our lives. Learning to negotiate and improve these skills can aid us in becoming better thinkers, communicators, and creators. They enable us to problem solve more efficiently and carry out solutions with better ." (Terrell, 2019)

The literature offers many definitions, including the following:

- "Critical thinking means the use of those cognitive skills and strategies that increase the likelihood of achieving a desirable result" (Diane Halpern)
- "Critical thinking is the process of forming logical inferences" (Simon and Kaplan);
- "Critical thinking is the questioning or investigation that we do when we come to understand, evaluate or realize" (Victor Maiorana);

Briefly analyzing the previous definitions, some constants are observed: evaluation of alternatives, elaboration of reasoning, formation of reasoned opinions, action and reflection. Critical thinking is the tool of effective learning that helps a person orient themselves in the world of possible alternatives and become aware of the mechanisms of their own thinking. The most important contribution of critical thinking is that it provokes action; anything in the agreement is followed by an action accordingly.

The capacity for reflection and critical self-reflection on learning experiences is materialized in the possibility to make an argumentative choice, based on valid evidence, on the directions of personal development.



7.How critical and analytical thinking influenced me

I always looked for my own solutions to problems and supported them with a convincing argument. I admit that there is more than one solution and I demonstrate why the solution I prefer is logical and practical. Good arguments admit the existence of competing arguments (counter-arguments), and I as a thinker admit or reject these different points of view. An argument is always stronger if one considers the existence of other points of view. Constructing such arguments provokes the authority of texts, traditions, majority and resistance to manipulation. This emphasis on the use of arguments in decision making is the strong point of many definitions of critical thinking.

7.1 SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is often I used to critically or analytically analyze a situation or actions (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) is a tool that helps us focus better on strengths to combat threats and opportunities to improve weak points. It has a pronounced qualitative character, allowing the formulation of a diagnosis on the past and present condition of its or its functional domains, based on the answers to the previously mentioned problems, outlining the long-term evolution perspectives. In the first semester I strengthened my knowledge about this method. In appendix 2 you can see the SWOT analysis from a few months ago and in appendix 3 the one made in semester 2. I will make an analysis on the objectives I set and what I achieved.

My Strengths and Weaknesses are changed much. First worked in English and started teaching online for children and I developed multilaterally not to care so much about the consequences and to act.

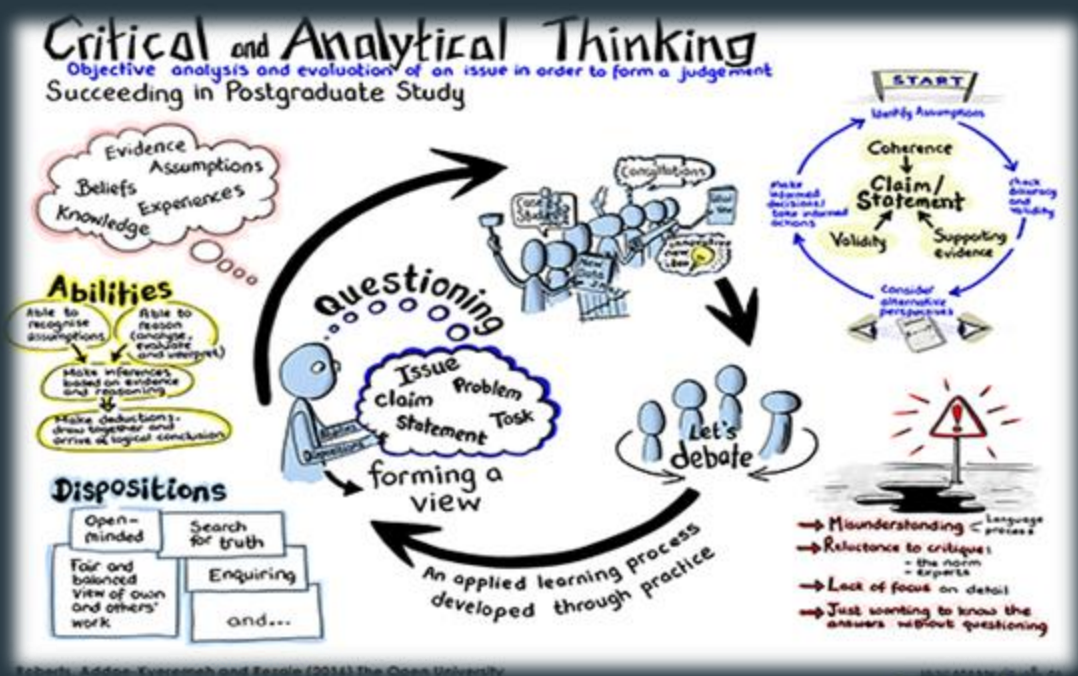
Following the recent swot analysis

I developed professionally and started to create new inspirations

7.2 Critical and analytical thinking at workplace

Critical and analytical thinking is extremely important in the workplace, it helps us make better decisions, using logical reasoning, avoiding mistakes and prejudices, and systematically working with options to identify the most relevant and rational solution. For example, at my place of work, it was a situation that was extremely discussed and heard by all the staff, I worked as a waiter, I was impressed by what happened. Anna, Josh and Hellen work for a mortgage company. with a local construction company, and most of their customers are home buyers or previous customers who need refinancing or moving. All three report to the president of the company; however, Aisha is the informal head of the department. Just evaluated the latest customer service report. It turns out that customer satisfaction has dropped dramatically in the last six months. Anna requests a meeting to discuss this with Josh and Hellen.

They used the stages of critical thinking quite well: examination, exploration, and evaluation. However, they should expand their options before implementing the solution. I memorized this procedure and I will always put it into practice, only I have to provide the options before implementing the solutions. Analytical thinking is what helps us solve the problems encountered, faster and more efficiently encountered every day at work. It involves a methodical approach, step by step, reducing complex problems into simpler components, often involving the assembly process. and organizing information, identifying key factors, drawing conclusions.



8. My personal research

A good exercise to do an analysis and reflection on your progress is to write a CV. From a position of junior, to a position of specialist and then of expertise, certainly, that in your professional course, besides the skills and experience gained, there were also the CVs that helped you get the desired job and that they marked a new stage in your career. Probably the question "How do you write your CV?", After you have accumulated 6, 7 or maybe 10-15 years of experience seems absurd. But, when after years of experience you are preparing to rewrite your CV, it is important to take a step back and think about what information you will include. I made a questionnaire where I asked my friends about the importance of the CV (was many questions, I selected the 3 most important) and the most frequently asked questions

The majority of respondents to the question:

What is the most common question answered?

"What can you tell us about yourself?"

The human resources specialist follows: the interlocutor tries with this question in the interview to find in what you say something interesting to connect with in order to dig and verify both your experience and your credibility.

Another question that is often asked is :

"Why did you give up your last job"

What the human resources specialist is looking for: the reason for leaving a company you worked for, what motivates you, if there is a risk that you will leave after a short period of employment. Recommendation answer to the job interview question: Tell the truth well!

Usually there is no single reason why we change a job. Here are possible reasons that can be mentioned: - I had a unique opportunity to take a position with more responsibilities and more development opportunities;

When asked if it was difficult to write
their own CV, the respondents they said:



Writing a CV seems as simple as it is complicated.

Self-knowledge, level of honesty, enough self-confidence to tell the truth are extremely important.

9. Conclusion

Thinking and mental activism are guided by questions. The questions represent the motive for the active involvement in the learning action. However, the classical school ignores the true potential of the question, offering students ready-made answers rather than well-formulated questions. The methodology for developing critical thinking has as its central element the question and the interrogation as a support for learning. The truth must always be sought, the courageous preoccupation with identifying the correct information, even if it attacks general or some prejudices, beliefs shared by the majority or are against one's own interest. Analytical reporting to reality is the process of examining the premises (beliefs, perceptions, preconceptions); interpretation and evaluation of evidence (contexts, values, arguments, facts), identification and exploration of alternatives (various perspectives and ideas) and development of reflective criticism, with the intention of formulating a conclusion.

The first step is to clearly define what your resume is. Curriculum Vitae is a short biography that includes data on your studies, your professional training.

You could call it your business card, which you use to stand out in front of employers. It is basically the story that speaks about you, about your professional history and about your abilities and achievements. Here you should highlight why you are the best person for a job. All this information must be structured in a form, in a CV template.

10. References

Gibbs, G. (1988) *Learning by Doing: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Methods*, Oxford Further Education Unit, Oxford

Scriven & Richard (1987) 8th Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking and Education Reform, Summer 1987

Shannon Terrell(2019)‘5 Ways To Improve And Expand Your Analytical Thinking Skills’
<https://blog.mindvalley.com/analytical-thinking-skills/> [accessed 25.04.2020]

11. Appendix

1

Stage		Questions	Reflection
1	Description	? What were the circumstances? What responsibility did I have?	It started as a joke In 2016 I started to volunteer, in the first stage I was a member of the youth council in my hometown(Calarasi) In half a year I managed to lead this council and participate in many events and I won projects. I had communication problems between team members
2	Feelings	The initial reaction? Did the feelings change in any way, what did I think?	Initially I thought I would not be able to be a good leader. But everything changed over time, I created a strong connection with my team .
3	Evaluation	What made me happy, what is important to me? Why?	This 3-year period was the most productive in my life that shaped me as a personality. There were times when I was under pressure, we were writing projects and

Stage		Questions	Reflection
4	Analyze	Compare theory and practice. What similarities and differences are there between this experience and other experiences? What choices we made and what effect they had	We often go to conferences and trainings where we learn how to communicate effectively in a team, etc. Sometimes we can't implement these techniques, but we found alternatives
5	Conclusion	What have we learned for the future? What else could we have done?	I learned how important teamwork is and what techniques need to be implemented.
6	Actions	A similar situation. What would you do?	I will first organize a teambuilding to get to know us and create a strategy



S

My experience in certain fields for example teaching, communication, leadership

Successfully completed projects and campaigns

Skills that differentiate me from others Knowledge of foreign languages (French, Russian and Romanian)

W

Disorganization sometimes, the fact of feeling comfortable when you have to speak in front of crowds, the tendency to postpone projects.

O

Just like in the first semester

T

Just like in the first semester