

Reflective Account

For this piece of reflective writing, I will be using Kolb's 1984 cycle of reflective practise. Based on four stages, concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualism and active experimentation. Starting with reflecting on the experience you have it aims that you take your learning through to new experiences, completing the cycle ready to start again. Indeed, I have already put Kolb's cycle into practise thanks to this assignment. I used my cover letter to successfully apply for a new position in my place of work. Within my application I reflected on my learning and included this in my letter and in beginning the position, I have been able to put into practise the theory I have learned and am now gaining more concrete experience to reflect on.

However, this is not my preferred cycle of reflection. That would be the second that I will mainly use that is one of Gibb's 1988. Difference in these two cycles is that Gibbs' is far more reflective of feelings. Reflecting about how you are feeling and thinking touring the experience, what you feel went well or didn't go so well. Evaluating what you did and what you could do differently in the future. Different ways of reflecting our good, as we all learn differently and need different amounts of time to process learning. This requires vulnerability. Not the kind of vulnerability that leads to over shearing or disclosing of personal information but vulnerability in being aware of your weak spots. Then in the moments where they are highlighted, not to shy away from addressing them but instead be brave and address them. as states Dawson (2006) "An important part of learning how to learn is the development of self-evaluation skills". When we think of the skills we are good at or have achieved, the reasons why they have been successful is because they have relevance in our lives, or it is of interest to us. Meaning we were motivated to learn them and achieve success. Being allowed the time needed to produce and complete work that you are actively involved in, in a comfortable environment where you feel at ease with the lecturer and their teaching methods. This is one of the areas I appreciate the most about my lecturers, feeling part of the learning process and the amount of discussion that takes place during the module. It is not the learning of facts past from lecturer to student but as Dawson (2006) states, "Although you may think of your tutor as an instructor or conveyer of knowledge, you should also think of them as a partner in the learning process". This is in line with Vygotsky's (1934) theory of learning through a more knowledgeable other and Dewey's (1896) beliefs that teachers should not just impart wisdom but inspire students to think critically.

At first sight of the new module 'Changemakers: Building your Personal Brand for Sustainable Employment', I was confused as to how it would benefit my learning experience and what it would entail. I wouldn't say that I was negative towards it but maybe quietly sceptical. Looking back, it was quite a momentous day, one indeed for the history books. I had a full day of working ahead and was apprehensive about the upcoming lecture later that day. It would be my first lecture in person and although I consider myself to be a very competent driver, I had no idea where the school was or how to get to it. This was at the back of my mind, along with the worries that the

spare key was in the hidden box for my children to get in the house after school and whether my husband would indeed remember that he was in charge that evening and not dawdle on his way home from work. After an hour's drive and arriving at the destination it was time for the lecture to start. I always sit at the front in these situations as my hearing is not great in one year and I struggle to filter out noises. This means that everyone is behind me and although we are all familiar with each other after working online so long, there is still a feeling of vulnerability and not being part of this small group. My scepticism about the module was quickly dissipated upon the lecturer's explanation of what was ahead. I felt confident in the variety that was provided in the upcoming assignment. My thoughts and feelings at the end of the lecture were ones of hope and positivity. Making a plan of study, looking forward to next week's career lecture and a little bit of self-doubt and worry about how vulnerable I would feel about the personal nature of the module. As we were getting ready to leave the news of the Queen's death broke, making us all reflect for a moment.

Unfortunately, I did miss a lecture during this module due to illness. I did catch up with the recording online once I felt better. When I am in lectures, I feel I participate and engage well in the class discussions, although sometimes I do feel that I may contribute too much and annoy others. The sound of silence though is too painful for me, if a question has been asked, I would rather say something so that the lecturer doesn't feel that we are all dis-engaged. I have concluded that I prefer to attend my lectures online. I think this is attributed to the COVID pandemic and that I have possibly become conditioned to studying in this way. Attending online lectures as I did, I received positive reinforcement in my grades. This is comparable to Pavlov's classical conditioning theory of 1897.

Learning about Bourdieu (1930) and our habitus joined many dots for me. Certainly, it confirmed that thanks to my strong foundation of cultural capital, I was able to change my social capital through my place of work and in working hard this has provided me with the opportunity to enhance my economical capital and further increase my social capital. Through talking to a fellow student about this in a lecture, I felt inspired by her. When she explained her habitus as a child and how she has been able to change it now as an adult. Giving first hand evidence that habitus can be changed and is not fixed, rather like mindset. I believe that your growth mindset is not an independent variable but one that works like the mechanisms of a clock, alongside Bourdieu's habitus and Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. If all of your physiological needs are met, enabling you to meet your safety needs, with a sense of belonging that boosts your self-esteem, you are motivated to have a growth mindset. Your habitus might be a less positive experience and this in turn may motivate you to have a growth mindset about changing that habitus, so that you may climb Maslow's pyramid. Changing your social and economic capital, further inspiring you to plan to achieve more with a growth mindset. As Dweck (2006) states of growth mindset people, "Their heads are not filled with limiting thoughts, a fragile sense of belonging, and I believe that other people can define them". So, whether you are the

underdog that has had a deprived upbringing, or whether you are fortunate enough to have a supportive family cheering you on, this does not define a person or their growth mindset. It may impact on it, but it does not define it. This is where I identify the most. Verifying what Dweck argues, in that growth mindset learners are motivated by their own inner desires to improve, not in external enticements. Although, it would be remiss of me to say that financial gain from gaining qualifications in university does not appeal or factor in my motivation. Motivating me to learn is a combination of self-improvement, career development, setting an example to our daughters and proving myself. Although I'm not sure that that last one should even be a thing. Maintaining motivation is not always easy and mine can be affected by my location. Living an hours drive from my place of study and access to the university library, can sometimes feel like a challenge before I even begin to understand the work ahead. but so has recognising the best environment that is most conducive to my learning. In order to study productively I need to be in a clean environment, reducing the mess around me reduces my stresses. Seeing the mess around me as another task to achieve on top of the task at hand, can lead to self-doubt about my capabilities to complete goals. The benefits of my studying impacts on my children in that I am a positive role model for them. Showing that they are not limited in their access to education, that there is no pressure for them to choose the path at a younger age that they can change direction later. Since studying I have learned to consider time management more closely. Although there always seems to be something that occurs to hamper my plans. Certainly, the dreaded call from Estyn on October the 10th did not help alleviate any pressures this month. However, by making more productive family routines, sharing responsibilities of childcare with my husband and parents has helped. All of this may lead to higher earnings in the household in the future, which in turn will provide the children with more opportunities, of experiences and less stress concerning debts. However, there are some negatives such as less time availability in the short term of studying, less support and monitoring of older children possibly, who don't wish to bother mum whilst she is studying. Having more demands on my time on top of work and family commitments, means I must ensure that I remember step 7 of Covey's habits. taking the time needed to acknowledge my well-being needs can often be at the bottom of the agenda but I think that I have learnt to prioritise it more so in the last few years. Whilst learning about covey's 7 habits, I found that they were amongst some of the most practical and achievable advice I have seen. The idea that becoming highly effective stems from a foundation of proactiveness and taking responsibility for your responses to stimuli, seems like much more of a logical approach to studying and life. Covey talks about proactive people carrying their own weather with them and I can't help but wonder what habitus these people came from. Is this a consequence of their culture or class? If you are brought up thinking that the sky is the limit, then I'm not sure if this is carrying the weather with you or merely having your head in the clouds. Either way it must be nice to have such confidence, that you are not affected by the situations/people around you. Having confidence in your abilities involves you identifying your action, character and thinking strengths and then you are in a better

position to set and achieve goals. This in turn produces positive emotions, resulting in increased self-efficacy, which in turn increases well-being and contributes to learning outcomes.

In conclusion I could have taken advantage of the opening to work with the careers advisor who lectured us on week two. The opportunity for advice and guidance in updating my CV is something that, in hindsight, I should have grasped with both hands. Again, this is something that Dawson (2006) talks about when we reflect on our prior experiential learning and the negative baggage we sometimes carry with us as adults. The most successful part of this module for me was the compliment I received during my interview, obtaining positive feedback on my cover letter. This boosted my confidence and fed into my reflective thoughts on this module, about how the learning I'm experiencing is impacting on my career. Had there been a need for a CV to apply for that position I might have been more motivated to select that option on the assessment and in turn engage with the careers lady. Moving forward, the knowledge that I have gained from this module, I feel, will not only be beneficial to me but also the young people that I work with. Covey's 7 habits could be used in groups of children to develop their friendship skills, by year 11 student unsure what path they want to choose after they leave school. With its foundation of proactiveness, promoting independence, good values, effective communication, ending in the all-important aspect of well-being, should be a prerequisite for the children of Wales. Especially if we want them to be "ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives", (Welsh Government 2017).

2,129 words

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