

MODULE NAME – Academic and Employability Skills

STUDENT NAME — Sean Ferguson

STUDENT NO. – 19166821

LECTURER NAME — Magdalena Wronska

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2000 Word Report

Personal Reflective Report

SUMMARY

This report has covered my own experiences. I have abstracted information that I have analysed and reviewed and made a conscious decision to make a change in either myself or what could be changed in the situation in order to learn from and develop a learning experience. The process which I have chosen has been conceptualised by David Kolb, who invented a model of reflection which allows the person to look at their past experiences objectively in order to make an improvement or change. I have incorporated this model in my learning experiences at university. Furthermore, I have attempted to make my own improvements in which I can develop my own learning method customised to myself.

INTRODUCTION

Reflective writing is choosing a moment, a situation, or a past event where I can analyse what happened looking at the different aspects from different perspectives. I will be looking at the way the situation played out and how it made me feel whilst also evaluating the circumstances that caused the situation. After I will abstract certain parts that I would like to examine to see what would be the most effective way of improving myself or changing something. After making that decision the last step is to remember for the time this situation can possibly occur and implement the changes; Then the cycle starts again.

In order to be able to learn something effectively reflection is vital. Without looking back at the past it would be impossible to make the future better or different as you wouldn't have anything to learn from. My reflection will speak about four different subjects that I have been taught on this module. They're some of my strengths that I feel can be developed more and also some of my weaker subjects that I would like to improve. I will be using Kolb's Method.

KOLB'S FOUR STAGES OF PARAPHRASING

This report has used **Kolb's Theory of Reflexion** and demonstrates how it has helped me to recognise and evaluate my strengths and weaknesses whilst learning subjects on this course so that they can be further developed.

David A. Kolb was an American educational Theorist that developed a theory called an **Experimental Learning Theory** (ELT). This model of learning was published in 1984, and its purpose is helping having an overlook about our own experiences which can be then reviewed, evaluated and analysed.

First Stage

The four parts of the model are designed to learn from an experience. The first part of the model speaks about **concrete experience**: this is a conscious and physical experience that you have done and that you can make a reflection on in order to be able to make a change. The situation can be something new or something you have done many times and that you may want to improve or develop or even just to not repeat a mistake.

Second Stage

The second part of the model speaks about **refection and observation** of the aforementioned experience. You may wish to change either by improving something or develop a skill for example, but first it's necessary to reflect upon what could be different in order to make that progression. Some essential questions are: "What went well or wrong?", "Why did I behave like this?", "Why did people react in a certain way?".

Third Stage

The third step is **Abstract Conceptualisation** that literally means abstracting the most important parts of the situation or experience and inquiring about what could be changed. Some useful questions are: "What could I have done differently?" or "How could things have been if I hadn't done that way?". Ask for a third party's opinion to look at it and think critically is really important to make it strategically better for the next time.

Fourth Stage

Active experimentation is the final step. The new found strategies are put into place and everything you have learnt from the concrete experience that has been abstracted and analysed can be made into a new situation or concrete experience hopefully with a better outcome or with the new developments from the refection made. This would be where the cycle starts over again and repeated.

PARAPHRASING

EXPERIENCE

The literal meaning of paraphrasing that I have extracted from the dictionary is

“To repeat something written or spoken using different words.” Cambridge University (2020) .

During the fourth week of the university’s online training program we were taught academic paraphrasing, how and when to use it. Paraphrasing is the changing of a sentence with different words keeping the same meaning. Even after changing the vocabulary and conserving the same structure, a reference to the original writer should be acknowledged.

REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION

This form of writing seemed to be a beneficial part of the course personally. Upon learning how to use a wider vocabulary to say the same thing I felt confident that I would be able to apply this to my work. Being English my mother language has given me an advantage of having a broader vocabulary than if it were my second or third language.

ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALISATION

After being explained by Magdalena Wronska, the tutor, about plagiarism, I immediately recognised that this was going to be essential. Plagiarism is copying someone’s work and not giving references, acknowledgements or recognition for the writer or their work. This is not permitted in any academic writing so in order to avoid this I would need to be able to use this technique as much as possible. My experience of this form of writing has overall been positive and beneficial and it will be applied in my future studies.

ACTIVE EXPERIMENTATION

From this style of writing I have gained a sense of confidence for my own academic studies to avoid plagiarism. Moreover it has built my vocabulary allowing a wider variety words to be utilised. It is a useful tool and has already been applied to all of my work and whenever required to help others that need assistance. In order to track my progress I will take into account any feedback from the tutors at the University and try to apply this to my work.

SUMMARISING

EXPERIENCE

A summary is a consolidation of information that allows for main facts and ideas to be easily transferred or understood using less words Bailey, S (2015) advises to Check the summary to ensure it is readable / accurate and nothing important has been changed or lost. He also states Summarising is a flexible tool. You can use it to give a one-sentence synopsis of an article. Bailey, S (2011)

REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION

I have used summarising a lot to make notes of the work we have done, I feel it is a great time saver which allows more time to focus on what is being taught than writing in detail. I have difficulties absorbing large amounts of information as I lose concentration, so this technique of abstraction of the essential information has needed to be developed.

ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALISATION

This tool was valuable to have when learning in class and taking notes as I would often have to later reflect on past notes. The downside I found is that sometimes in compacting the writing I may leave put some critical words losing the meaning of the information. Although summarising makes information more dense and supposed to be easier to read, sometimes when using this method sharing information such as note making may be more difficult as the other person may not understand all of the points made or some information may have been over looked when the summary making was made. I have come to the conclusion that summarising might be the best way of transferring data and information and will be perfect for note taking personally.

ACTIVE EXPERIMENTATION

In the future I intend to practice this more to enable me to become more proficient. I'll need practice in order to be able to keep the relevant information even when note taking. If I could go back to the beginning of university this would be the first thing I would want to be taught so as to save my concentration and keep the main points and facts about what is being taught.

CURRICULUM VITAE

EXPERIENCE

A curriculum vitae is Latin for "*course of life*" stated by Wikipedia. C.V writing is one of the most important factors to consider to get any job. It allows me to show off any skills, qualifications and past experiences that I have managed to gain throughout my working life. My curriculum Vitae is specific to myself and also needs to be written to get a particular role. I learnt how to make my C.V relevant to myself creating a picture of myself for any employer to look at to see if I am a suitable candidate for the role.

REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION

I felt this part of the course was not my most confident. My career has been vast with many different job roles all over. The career I have chosen to pursue will require education qualifications which I do not yet possess. In addition I do not have any practical experience to put into the CV. I have experience working in a gym but I felt that this may not have been enough. I have been taught to write in a way that I could extract other skills I have acquired and to modify them in a way that I can still be an attractive candidate even without the experience.

ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALISATION

I found that extracting information from previous work was difficult and also making a structure that would show off my essential skills and experiences. Fortunately my working background is wide, so after going through my past job roles with Magdalena I found that I was able to adjust the layout and also utilise my past acquired knowledges to my benefit showing potential to be a strong candidate even without having any previous similar experience.

The most important thing in order to apply for a job is that I could give the employer a positive image of myself.

ACTIVE EXPERIMENTATION

How to make the layout and how to structure a professional Cv made me very confident. I will be able to adapt it and change it to include other developments and qualification that are only reliving to that job role. I have realised that I do not just need one C.V but possibly a few different C.V's that incorporate different skills for different types of work that may be presented to me that can highlight various jobs I have already ensuring that each time I make one that it is updated and specific.

PRESENTING & PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS

DESCRIPTION

During my time in the army I was asked to make a presentation to the class. I failed to complete this task and the message I wanted to give was not received by people. I felt embarrassed at how bad the whole presentation had gone.

REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION

I felt so ashamed that all my prior notes and preparations hadn't been used to my potential that I felt the need to be able to do another presentation but stronger and with more preparation involved. My confidence was very low at this point and I was confused at what had gone wrong and how others had done well.

ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALISATION

The worst thing about it was that my voice was low and that when I came to speaking I couldn't focus on what needed to be said. Looking at other people's presentations I noticed that they had previous practice with this before and that they had different methods like having handouts and also how they had been making interactions with the other members of the class and making eye contact.

ACTIVE EXPERIMENTATION

For the next time I made sure to stick to a structure that would be easier to remember and use some of the techniques I had seen like having a program for the others to follow. I would practice my speaking and lesson with a small group in order to get feedbacks of how to make my presentation better in future..

Conclusion

In conclusion to how these four subjects have had an effect on my learning whilst being in a learning environment I have realised that they have all helped me regardless if I have been able to use them with confidence or not. Make use of them frequently during the term two, lessons has given me inestimate practice that will be developed further and applied effectively in my next term. The rest of my educational life will be a constant cycle of learning and with this model of reflection the process will be more efficient furthermore easier to see the progress of development.

References

Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus © Cambridge University Press)

Bailey, S. (2015) *Academic Writing for International Students of Business*. 2nd. Ed London:

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