

By using an appropriate model of reflection identify one aspect of your own practice or behaviour that you may choose to modify and how this would contribute to a more sustainable society. Your proposed change should be supported by reference to theories of sustainability.

Social consciousness regarding sustainable development has increased in recent decades (Brundtland, 1987; Pearce and Atkinson, 1998). Sustainable development means that actions must be taken in the present to ensure future generations are not compromised (Pearce and Atkinson, 1998). However, although awareness of sustainable development has improved, it doesn't necessarily mean everyone abides to it (Purvis, Mao and Robinson, 2018).

In order to act as a responsible global citizen, I aim to use Boud and others model of reflection to consider how reducing the amount I use my car for short journeys and how this will minimise the environmental detriment the practice creates (Boud, *et al.*, 1985).

Returning to experience

Since passing my driving test at the beginning of the year I have found myself using my car as my predominant form of transport, rather than walking or using public transport as I would have before passing. I have done this with no regard to environmental or health effects. I have been using my car for short five-minute journeys that are in walking distance from my home on average three times a day. Throughout the Sustainability and Equality module I learned that in the United Kingdom poor air quality is the largest environmental threat to public health, with air pollution contributing to between twenty-eight thousand and thirty-six thousand deaths annually (GOV.UK, 2018). I also learned that road transport and vehicle emissions are the most prevalent contributor to air pollution in the UK (Khalid *et al.*, 2020). This made me realise that I really should be evaluating whether all the car journeys I take are essential.

Attending to (or connecting with) feelings

Kugler and Jones (1992) explain guilt to be a feeling connected with one recognising that they have infringed moral or personal standard, an emotion which has the ability to make a person understand their own behaviours and motivate them to take responsibility and change. Through Kugler and Jones' (1992) comprehension I realise that understanding the public health crisis associated with emissions from vehicles, and the influence this can have on health made me feel a real sense of guilt that I could be responsible for contributing to this problem, and made me feel as if I should make some change.

Evaluating Experience

Prior to researching this topic, I did not appreciate the contribution I was making to air pollution. Daily, I would take an average of three, five-minute car journeys, meaning that over a monthly period, this equates to 7 hours and therefore 84 hours every year of avoidable, un-essential and environmentally damaging car journeys.

Approximately half of all car journeys taken across the UK are less than five miles, and it is thought that double the amount of air pollution is released in the first five minutes of a journey (Maibach, Steg & Anable, 2009). Walking or cycling these journeys would be much more beneficial for the environment and one's physical health and wellbeing, reducing the amount of short car journeys taken is thought to be a reasonable adjustment to being with (Silberston, 1995).

GOV.UK (2018) explain that a minor reduction in car use across the UK in the next eighteen years could prevent approximately four thousand lung cancer case and over fifty thousand cases of coronary heart disease, both illnesses prevalent through long term exposure to air pollutants, particularly nitrogen dioxide released by road transport. GOV.UK (2018) encourage individuals to walk all journeys less than a mile long to reduce air pollution and improve quality of life.

Using this research, I realise the difference I could make by reducing the amount of avoidable short car journeys I take. It would be reasonable for me to reduce these journeys to one a day by car and walk the other two. NHS (2019) explains that listening to music can increase motivation for walking, I could use this to motivate me to make these changes, and to stick to them.

Cognitive dissonance theory explains that it is human nature to often ignore the consequences which can be caused by the actions we take, even when we are aware that this ignorance is damaging (Brehm and Cohen, 1965). Establishing that because we as humans are creatures of habitat, we find it difficult to detach ourselves from social norms despite their damaging impact – like for example, driving a car for journeys which could be walked (Rees, 2010). In order to move away from this, I must confront these environmental realities and make a conscious effort not to ignore them (Wexler, 2006 *cited in* Rees, 2010). This has helped me understand that I

often subconsciously ignore the information I know about the environmental consequences of driving, learning this has assisted me in re-evaluating this process.

Instant gratification theory also explains that society is underpinned with a deep seeded “we want it now” attitude, and because of this engage in easy quick fix practices (Hansa, 2009). I believe this is true of myself, and that I drive for short journeys because it is easier and quicker, even though I understand the consequences.

What will I do differently next time?

My action plan will follow a SMART action plan structure, this will assist me in making a reasonable and achievable plan (Day and Tosey, 2011).

Specific: I aim to reduce the amount of short car journeys I take by two thirds, taking only one five-minute journey daily instead of three. I will replace the two car journeys with walking. This will reduce my emissions output and should have benefits for my health and wellbeing (Silberston, 1995)

Measurable: This goal is measurable, as if I am successful my yearly short journeys should reduce to approximately 28 hours a year, a reduction of 392 hours annually, therefore reducing emissions output.

Achievable: I know this goal is achievable, as previously I walked all my short journeys before I could drive, instant gratification has made me indolent (Hasna, 2009). I will listen to music to motivate me while walking (NHS, 2019).

Reasonable: My goal is reasonable as I am not expecting myself to eliminate short car journeys from my life all together, but to reduce the number of short journeys I take as recommended by Silberston (1995).

Timely: Walking my five-minute car journeys will be more time consuming however, not by much and not enough to make much impact on the rest of my day. I will begin this goal in the new year 1st of January 2021.

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