

Reflection of Online Learning

Reflection

For this reflection, I will be using the Gibbs' model (1988) (The University of Edinburgh, 2021).

Description

I am studying CertHE Skills for the workplace. I have lessons twice a week and each lesson last on average four hours a day. The first lecture was online with Laura on the 3rd of May 2021. Laura covered the topics we would be going through in the first term. She structured what we would be doing on a weekly basis. The whole class attended via MS teams. We were informed that any concerns or questions could be asked on the chat function. I found the outcome of the situation very informative as some of the tools were easily accessible through teams. In attending the initial lecture, I anticipated to get an idea of how to manoeuvre MS teams functions as I had not used this platform before. We were directed to watch tutorials online via Moodle and to familiarise ourselves with using the university Hwb.

Feelings

My feelings at the start of the process were that I was nervous as I was using teams for the first time. Academically I have only ever learnt through traditional methods which was in a class and having interactions in person. Also, I had never used the chat function before as a form of communication in an educational setting. I have always been highly reliant on face-to-face interactions when meeting people for the first time as opposed to meeting my peers remotely online which was a new experience. However, during the lectures there was a vast amount of knowledge to be taken on board, some quite overwhelming such as how to reference but I think the skills that I have been taught during this module will be helpful in getting me through my educational journey. Looking back at the experience now, I feel more confident in using these functions and I am fully embracing the new norms of using and communicating through technology.

Evaluation

On evaluation the good experiences include taking the initiative in getting back into education as a mature student and learning current skills that are required in facilitating my future goals. Another positive experience which I encountered was that I was not the only nervous

student in the class and through discussions I found that others were too nervous as I was and found academic learning a whole new world which needed developing overtime. The bad experiences encountered were having to refresh my IT skills as I have rarely used a computer over the past decade or so and my occupation does not require me to be proficient in computer literacy. I have managed to navigate through the university Hwb without much complication and through trial and error I have successfully used MS teams, accessed lecture slides on Moodle and have done work on Microsoft 365 (Microsoft Word). On a referencing activity I was unable to edit the document to include my answers. I then took the initiative to watch a YouTube video tutorial (isunshare, 2020) to overcome this issue on how to edit the document so I could complete the task. I have positively improved on using Microsoft office and receiving feedback from Laura has helped me make improvements on my work.

Analysis

I felt that after the first lecture my nerves settled considerably alongside my main worries as everyone were very friendly. Initiatives such as putting us into rooms on teams with only two or three people per group made me feel at ease. I felt that this went well as now I can attend future lectures with confidence. I have now made friendships within the class and as we had spoken amongst ourselves to get to know each other and realised that everyone was feeling the same in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. This gave me a sense of belonging. What is working for me well is that I am more comfortable with blended learning as we have all met in person too. But I still prefer to be in a classroom environment as my previous experiences in education, which was over 20 years ago, were having everything paper based, and classroom based. Forbes (2020) states that remote learning poses its own challenges as some students do not have the bandwidth of following online classes which can hinder the environment which should cater for a student's university journey. I think in hindsight this course has helped me become more computer literate. Although I have become more confident using online applications, I feel that I have a long way to go to become sufficient in IT. After complications in using Microsoft 365 office, I felt flustered and overwhelmed as I did not know how to resolve the issue in a timely manner. This did not go well for me, but I do realise that I need to adapt to blended learning and need to be pushed to a life which relies on virtual platforms. Adapting to changes in environment is always a push

and can be dictated into two options, one where it can leave a negative impact or two, response in acceptance can be a sign of welcoming change (Key, 2019).

Conclusion

In conclusion I have learnt that I am able to develop my computer and educational skills even at later age. I think this can have positive reflection on my life as it broadens my skills in the workplace and gives more opportunities career wise. Also, the module has helped me work alongside other people, be a team player and motivate each other to reach the end goal. In the future I need to be more proactive and see if I can help fellow students with knowledge I acquired and share with others. By being in a classroom setting I have gained confidence to talk to new people and gain from their knowledge by sharing experiences with each other. I think I could have talked more by mouth and not relied so much on the chat function and maybe answered more questions.

Action Plan

If I had to do it all again, I would watch more tutorial videos on YouTube alongside the ones provided by the lecturers to familiarise what the module requires. Also, I would ask for advice from previous students who have graduated to gain access on their experiences on the course and on university life to help with time management and academic research. To help develop the referencing skills required I would practice referencing online articles such as journals, online books and view videos on how to reference different sources.

Reference List

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