

Student: 2234570

Assignment: 1500 Reflective essay using Gibbs

Lecturer:

Reina Rose

(SWOT, SMART, VARK, JOHARI, PDP)

Muhammad Cassamo

University of South Wales, Haywood House, Cardiff

Professional Career Development, BMS4012

Assignment: 1500 reflective essay using Gibbs on learning methods

By Reina Rose - 2234570

Lecturer: Muhammad Cassamo

13th September by Special Circumstances

Professional skill development is essential not only for improving academic performance but also for achieving long-term success in the workplace. As we develop our skills, we become more adaptable, innovative, and competitive in an ever-changing job market. Through lectures and hands-on courses, I have gained a deeper understanding of the competencies required in today's workplace. These experiences have refined my career goals and motivated me to align them more closely with industry demands (Jackson, 2016). Using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988), I will assess my professional development by evaluating my experiences, identifying key learnings, and outlining actions to improve future performance. This reflection will explore my growth and future trajectory in light of industry requirements.

A SWOT analysis provides a valuable framework for assessing my strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. "My career has been shaped by substantial experience in retail, where I have developed strong skills in driving sales and working collaboratively with teams to achieve objectives (Gibbs, 1988; Gibson et al., 2012). Reflecting on these experiences through Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, I recognize how I intuitively identified sales opportunities and leveraged them to drive results. In the description and feelings stages, I recall moments when I used my instinct to spot customer needs and trends, which allowed me to act quickly and decisively in a fast-paced retail environment. Moving to the evaluation stage, I see that these instincts were key strengths, helping me to maximize sales without rigid strategies. In the analysis stage, I can better understand how this intuitive approach to sales not only enhanced my performance but also fostered a natural adaptability, allowing me to respond effectively to diverse situations. Reflecting on my recent experience using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, I gained valuable insights from my recruitment role at a private college, where I also managed their social media presence. This role required me to adapt my sales and communication strategies to a new context, confirming the transferability of my skills. Initially, I felt both excited and uncertain, but as I applied my intuitive communication approach, I became more confident, especially when I noticed a clear alignment between my skills and the work at hand, which strengthened my effectiveness. Engaging prospective students and managing social media were both highly rewarding experiences, reinforcing the importance of continuous

learning, tailoring communication strategies, and embracing diverse professional responsibilities. (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Reinforcing the importance of continuous learning, tailoring communication strategies, and embracing diverse professional responsibilities means recognizing the need to constantly update and expand one's skills, adapting communication approaches to fit different contexts, and being versatile in handling various roles. In my recruitment role, this involved staying informed about industry trends, customizing my communication to engage effectively with prospective students, and managing both recruitment and social media tasks. These practices highlight the value of ongoing professional development, strategic adaptation, and flexibility in managing a range of responsibilities. (M. O'Dea and Robert J. Rouse 2020)

Reflecting on my experience through Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, I observed that management's approach of adding new supportive hires to the team did not address the underlying issues with the existing members. According to Harris and Harris (2017), this approach only tackles superficial problems and fails to resolve deeper team dynamics. Initially, I felt frustrated because, despite raising concerns about team performance a three to four times over two years, these issues remained unresolved, reflecting Robinson's (2013) view that temporary fixes often don't address fundamental problems.

Using Gibbs' model, I examined these feelings and realized that my attempts to raise concerns, while well-intentioned, may not have been effective in a setting resistant to change. This reflection led me to understand that persistently pushing for changes in such an environment could be less impactful. Instead, Gibbs' cycle helped me appreciate the importance of addressing different working styles and managing conflicts constructively. As Rahim (2017) suggests, focusing on understanding and adapting to various team dynamics is crucial. This approach fosters a more harmonious and productive team environment and supports the achievement of KPI goals, emphasizing that effective conflict resolution and adaptation to diverse working styles are essential for long-term success.

At university, I blend VARK methods—aural, visual, reading/writing, and kinesthetic—to manage constraints like no recording and limited note-taking. To describe how I overcome this I will enlist what I do, I focus on listening and summarizing key points. Initially, I was inexperienced but then with practice, I was able to go back to class notes and make diagrams to aid. From my experience I can evaluate doing the above engages

multiple senses, improving retention. My analysis of applying this method is it is effective for learning under constraints. I conclude this is a very useful and helpful strategy. The action plan is to continue these practices and refine them, while looking to add other information retention or referencing techniques over time. In work, my observational skills (kinesthetic) are key for spotting opportunities. I observe trends and needs. This felt challenging yet rewarding. I can evaluate this as crucial for success. From the situation I can analyse, observations combined with insights enhance effectiveness. Persisting with this supports growth and effectiveness. I conclude I need to develop these skills further. Workshops and conferences to improve and boost the processes. Overall, using all VARK methods enhances my learning and performance.

Utilizing the Johari Window model for professional development has been a game-changer for me, showing me both my strengths and areas for growth. Let's dive into how Gibbs' Reflective Cycle can elevate this journey. Describing my developmental milestone, I've recognized that while my systematic approach and creative strategies are strong assets, there's a golden opportunity to enhance how I manage my time, energy, and focus. My feelings are, at first, acknowledging these blind spots felt a bit daunting, but it's exciting to see how addressing them can propel my growth. I evaluate tackling these areas is essential for boosting my efficiency and effectiveness, especially as I juggle career, education, and personal life. I draw upon the analysis that I have discovered that although I'm proficient with some technology, I need to choose and master tools that truly fit my needs and will stand the test of time. The conclusion is by embracing and improving these blind spots, I'm not just fixing weaknesses—I'm transforming my professional profile and capabilities. The action plan forward is I will focus on mastering time management and adopting reliable technology, while continuously assessing my progress to stay on track. This proactive approach, driven by Gibbs' reflective process, will supercharge my development and lead to seeking success. Another blind spot I will address using Gibbs is I was quite aware of my tendency to practice conflict avoidance. In our class, we explored conflict resolution styles through an exercise called 'Which Animal Are You?' This activity revealed that despite our diverse animal types, many of us shared a common trait: a tendency to avoid conflict. Comprehending this feeling underscored a significant area for growth in developing soft skills to enhance workplace collaboration and effectiveness. Initially, recognizing my conflict avoidance as a significant blind spot felt somewhat unsettling. However, the awareness that others also struggle with this issue, especially when we realised many of us

having overlapping animals or we share an animal with another it provided a sense of solidarity and motivation to address it constructively. In evaluation, i can say that by identifying this shared trait, it became clear that enhancing my ability to engage with conflicts directly could lead to better teamwork and more productive outcomes. Acknowledging this aspect is essential for developing more effective communication and collaboration strategies. Analysis: The exercise and subsequent reflections highlighted that conflict avoidance is not just a personal issue but a prevalent tendency among many professionals. This broader perspective revealed that improving my soft negotiation skills could benefit not only my own professional development but also enhance team cohesion and effectiveness. The Johari Window model further emphasized that while I was somewhat aware of this blind spot, understanding it in the context of shared behaviors among colleagues provided deeper insights into its impact and potential solutions.

In my personal development plan. I have identified my strengths and weaknesses through a comprehensive analysis using SWOT, SMART criteria, and the Johari Window model. My strengths include sales intuition, adaptability, and communication. These strengths allow me to effectively spot sales opportunities, adjust to new situations, and convey ideas clearly. However, I have also recognized areas needing improvement: time management, team dynamics, and technology mastery. To address these weaknesses, I will embark on time management workshops and implement a unique task management system, setting weekly goals and tracking progress to better organize and prioritize my tasks. To develop in Team Dynamics I could look at conflict resolution workshops and actively seek feedback from team members to improve team performance and foster a more collaborative work environment. For Technology Mastery I can Identify key technology tools relevant to my role and complete online courses or certifications to enhance my proficiency and stay current with technological advancements.

By addressing these weaknesses and leveraging my strengths, I aim to enhance my overall performance and achieve better results in my professional development.

In conclusion, my professional development journey, enriched by Gibbs' Reflective Cycle and SWOT analysis, has illuminated both strengths and areas for growth. My intuitive skills in sales and adaptability have been instrumental, yet addressing weaknesses in time management, team dynamics, and technology is crucial for

ongoing success. The application of VARK methods and continuous learning through workshops have been effective in overcoming constraints and enhancing performance. To further this progress, I will refine my time management by implementing a to start a simple digital task management system and setting clear weekly goals. Enhancing team dynamics will involve actively fostering open communication, and building upon experience by what worked and did not, and developing a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives to build a more cohesive and supportive work environment. Additionally, mastering relevant technologies through targeted online courses will ensure I stay current with industry advancements. This reflective approach not only builds on my existing strengths but also tackles areas for improvement, aiming to seize new opportunities with a more holistic. strategy.

References:

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

Gibson, P., Blackwell, C., Dominici, G., Stolz, A. and Zipfel, C., 2012. *Strategic Marketing for Competitive Advantage*. Berlin: Springer-Verlag.

Harris, M. and Harris, K., 2017. *Managing Team Dynamics for High Performance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jackson, D., 2016. Re-conceptualising graduate employability: The construction of pre-professional identity in the higher education curriculum. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 35(5), pp.925-939.

Kotler, P. and Keller, K.L., 2016. *Marketing Management*. 15th ed. London: Pearson.

O'Dea, M. and Rouse, R.J., 2020. *The Future of Marketing and Communication Strategies: Emerging Trends in a Digital World*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Rahim, M.A., 2017. *Managing Conflict in Organizations*. 5th ed. New York: Routledge.

Robinson, S., 2013. Short-term fixes versus long-term solutions: What works best? *Journal of Business Strategy*, 34(4), pp.19-25.

