

Joe Bloggs

2234252

Presentation Skills (KSNR4004_LON)

Lecturer – Pat Smith

Reflective Essay on Learning Group Presentation Skills

Introduction

Learning how to develop and deliver a group presentation is a vital academic and professional skill (Race, 2020). This essay reflects on two key learning experiences from a class focused on group presentation development. It evaluates the impact of these experiences on my understanding of collaboration, communication, and planning. In this essay, I explore what I learned and how I will apply it in future group work. I reflect on a peer feedback session and a role-play exercise.

Initial Learning Experiences

In one session, our tutor facilitated a peer feedback activity where each group presented a draft version of their presentation. We received constructive criticism on our structure, clarity, and teamwork. In another session, we participated in a role-play exercise simulating a real presentation scenario, including time constraints and audience questions. These experiences highlighted the importance of preparation, adaptability, and clear communication. For example, during the role-play, our group struggled to manage time effectively, with one speaker overrunning and another rushing through their section. These moments revealed gaps in our coordination and prompted us to reflect on our planning. Together, these sessions laid the foundation for deeper learning about group dynamics and effective presentation strategies (Brookfield, 2017; Race, 2020).

Evaluation of the Learning Experience

The peer feedback session was particularly eye-opening. Initially, I felt confident in our group's draft, but the feedback revealed that our message lacked clarity and our transitions between speakers were abrupt. According to Race (2020), feedback is most effective when it is timely and specific. It encouraged us to revise our script and rehearse transitions more thoroughly. For instance, we had not planned how to hand over between speakers, which led to awkward pauses. After the session, we created a shared cue sheet and practiced handovers, which significantly improved our flow.

The role-play exercise simulated real pressure, which exposed our group's lack of contingency planning. When one member forgot their lines, the rest of us were unsure how to respond. This experience taught me the value of rehearsing under realistic conditions and assigning backup roles. As Gibbs (1988) suggests, reflecting on emotional responses—such as the anxiety we felt—can lead to deeper learning and

improved future performance. These experiences helped me appreciate that effective group work is not just about content, but about process and preparation.

Analysis and Lessons Learned

Through these experiences, I learned that successful group presentations require more than individual preparation. They demand shared responsibility, mutual support, and clear delegation of tasks. Tuckman's (1965) model of group development—forming, storming, norming, and performing—helped me understand the stages our group went through. We initially struggled during the “storming” phase, particularly with decision-making and unequal participation. However, feedback and reflection helped us move towards “norming” and eventually “performing”. I also realised the importance of inclusive communication. During early rehearsals, two group members dominated discussions, while others remained passive. After reflecting on this imbalance, we introduced a rotating chair system for meetings, ensuring everyone contributed equally. This aligns with Brookfield's (2017) emphasis on democratic dialogue in collaborative learning. Bronstein's (2003) model of interdisciplinary collaboration also helped me understand the importance of interdependence and collective ownership of goals in group work. These principles were essential in improving our group's cohesion and productivity. More recent research by Mann, Gordon and MacLeod (2021) also highlights that reflective practice enhances not only individual learning but also group performance when embedded into team processes. This deeper level of reflection helped me identify not only what went wrong, but how to improve future performance through structured, inclusive, and proactive collaboration.

Future Improvements

In future group presentations, I will advocate for earlier rehearsals and clearer role definitions. I will also suggest using collaborative tools like shared documents and rehearsal schedules to improve coordination. Additionally, I plan to initiate a mid-project feedback session, allowing us to adjust our approach before the final presentation. These strategies will help us avoid last-minute stress and improve overall performance. I also intend to be more proactive in supporting quieter group members. Encouraging diverse voices not only improves group cohesion but also enriches the content of the presentation. As Schön (1983) argues, reflective practitioners continuously adapt their methods based on experience. I aim to embody this mindset in future group work. I also plan to use structured reflection tools, such as Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, more consistently

to evaluate both group and individual performance. By embedding reflection into the process, I hope to foster a culture of continuous improvement and shared learning within any future team I work with. These strategies will not only support academic success but also prepare me for professional environments where collaboration and adaptability are essential.

Conclusion

Reflecting on these learning experiences has deepened my understanding of effective group presentation practices. I have learned the value of feedback, rehearsal, and inclusive communication. These insights will not only enhance my academic group work but also prepare me for collaborative tasks in professional environments. Reflection, as Gibbs (1988) suggests, transforms experience into learning—and this process has been both challenging and rewarding.

Reference List

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