

1. A Catalyst for Growth: Reflecting on Reflection Skills (Gibbs Cycle)

Going Through the Motions: Initially, classroom reflection exercises felt like a monotonous chore. I often wondered why characters in the famous television show “The vampire Diaries” wrote on journals / diaries. Going through the motions of describing experiences and jotting down surface-level thoughts didn't seem particularly valuable. However, as I delved deeper and explored structured frameworks like the Gibbs Cycle, a transformative shift occurred. This approach prompted me to analyse situations from multiple angles – feelings, actions, outcomes, and lessons learned. This deeper reflection revealed areas for improvement I hadn't initially considered. For instance, reflecting on a recent presentation highlighted a tendency to speak too quickly under pressure. Recognizing this as a weakness, I formulated an action plan to practice pacing beforehand and utilize relaxation techniques to manage my nerves. Identifying personal strengths also emerged as a valuable outcome. Leading a group project revealed my ability to effectively organize tasks and delegate responsibilities.

Unearthing Insights: Through reflection, I realized the impact of my actions and thought processes on various situations. Identifying personal strengths and weaknesses became a springboard for self-improvement. Formulating action plans based on my reflections transformed them from passive exercises into catalysts for positive change. For example, reflecting on a team meeting where I failed to voice a crucial point during brainstorming led me to develop strategies for being more assertive in future discussions. This might involve actively seeking opportunities to contribute my ideas or practicing clear and concise communication of my viewpoints. Recognizing a tendency to procrastinate on assignments also emerged from reflection. To address this weakness, I formulated a plan to break down large projects into smaller, more manageable tasks and utilize time management tools to stay on track.

A Lifelong Journey: The journey of reflection is a continuous one. Integrating reflection into everyday life, not just for academic exercises, allows for ongoing learning and growth. Actively seeking feedback from others and journaling my experiences will provide further avenues for self-discovery. Feedback from a trusted friend might reveal blind spots in my communication style, while journaling a challenging conversation could help me identify areas for more assertive communication. A quote by my favourite author Paulo Coelho “If

you conquer yourself, then you conquer the world” makes more sense now. Additionally, reflecting on successes and failures in various aspects of life, from personal relationships to professional endeavours, will provide valuable insights into my strengths, weaknesses, and areas for development. Ultimately, reflection is a powerful tool for unlocking potential and navigating life's complexities. By embracing this continuous journey of self-discovery, I aim to become a more mindful and adaptable learner, constantly evolving and refining my approach to life's experiences.

Reference

Paulo Coelho – Author of Aleph (a novel):

<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/9086994>

The Vampire diaries – Television show: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Vampire_Diaries

2. Sharper Arguments, Stronger Writing: Reflecting on Academic Skills (Gibbs Cycle)

Lost in the Labyrinth: My initial foray into academic writing felt like plunging into a labyrinth shrouded in mist. Unfamiliar terms like "thesis statement" and a cacophony of citation styles buzzed around me, leaving me disoriented and overwhelmed. Constructing well-structured arguments supported by credible evidence seemed like an impossible feat. Frustrated and questioning my ability to master this intricate skill, I grappled with the complexities of crafting a compelling academic voice.

Transforming Through Practice: However, as I ventured deeper into this labyrinth, active participation in class discussions led by our professor Tim Hopkins and exercises became

my guiding thread. Analysing published articles by “The Guardian” proved invaluable. Disassembling these meticulously crafted pieces allowed me to identify key elements like strong thesis statements that clearly announced the central argument, and clear transitions that seamlessly weaved ideas together. This newfound knowledge became the foundation for crafting my own writing. Regular writing assignments, such as the one on reflective reporting served as practice grounds. Here, I could experiment with these newly acquired skills, solidifying them through repeated application. The professor's feedback, though sometimes challenging, served as a beacon in the labyrinth. Their keen eye pinpointed specific areas for improvement, from sentence structure and clarity to ensuring citation accuracy. Their critiques, while initially daunting, proved to be catalysts for growth. By meticulously revising my work, incorporating their suggestions, and resubmitting, I witnessed a gradual transformation in my writing. Each iteration became sharper, more focused, and more effective in conveying my ideas.

A Lifelong Pursuit: By the course's end, the once daunting task of academic writing had transformed into a powerful tool. I learned to appreciate its ability to effectively communicate complex ideas, not through mere assertion, but through a carefully constructed argument supported by credible evidence. This newfound skill allowed me to not only engage the academic audience but also to contribute meaningfully to scholarly discourse. Structured arguments, clear and concise language, and proper referencing became essential tools for conveying well-researched and compelling messages. However, this journey through the labyrinth doesn't end at the exit. This newfound skill of academic writing is a lifelong pursuit. Regular practice is key to maintaining and honing my abilities. Consultations with writing labs, like the university's Writing Center, will provide further guidance and refine my techniques. Additionally, actively engaging with academic journals in my field will allow me to stay abreast of current trends and styles in academic writing. Immersing myself in the work of established scholars will expose me to diverse writing styles and research methodologies, further enriching my own writing toolbox. By embracing these strategies, I aim to evolve into a confident and effective academic writer, prepared to tackle future research and scholarly pursuits. This journey wasn't just about mastering a technical skill; it was about empowering myself to articulate my ideas within the academic framework. As I move forward, I carry the lessons learned not just from the course materials but also from the process of navigating the labyrinth itself. The initial frustration and disorientation have been replaced by a

newfound confidence and a thirst for continuous learning. As I stand at the exit of this labyrinth, I am no longer lost but equipped to navigate the complexities of academic discourse with a sharper focus and a stronger voice.

Reference

The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk>

Tim Hopkins: Academic writing.

3. From Information Overload to Active Learning: Refining My Note-Taking Skills (Gibbs Cycle)

Information Overload: My recent foray into the world of digital marketing through Coursera's "Google Digital Marketing" course felt like being swept away in a digital tidal wave. The instructor, while undoubtedly knowledgeable, bombarded me with information during lectures. Slides whizzed by, packed with an overwhelming mix of statistics, campaign examples, and technical jargon. Determined to capture everything, I diligently scribbled away, but my notes quickly devolved into a chaotic mess of keywords and incomplete sentences. Reviewing these frantic scribbles after the lecture only amplified my frustration, the key takeaways remained elusive. Feeling overwhelmed and discouraged, I questioned my ability to navigate the complexities of digital marketing.

Rethinking My Approach: This initial experience became a catalyst for a crucial learning moment. Later, revisiting the course materials with a more focused approach, I noticed a key element, the instructor employed clear organization. Slides were meticulously structured, incorporating headings, visuals, and concise bullet points. This framework not only presented the information logically but also made it significantly easier to grasp. Comparing this organized presentation to my frantic notes exposed a glaring flaw in my note-taking strategy. Simply copying everything verbatim wasn't just inefficient, it actively hindered my

understanding. The focus on copying slowed me down, preventing me from actively engaging with the lecture content and critically processing the information.

Active Learning, Better Notes: This realization sparked a commitment to adapt my note-taking approach. Instead of the frantic scribbling of the past, I'll now prioritize capturing the key ideas, core definitions, and the connections between different concepts. Mind maps and digital note-taking apps like "Notion" have emerged as promising tools for this purpose. These platforms offer a visual and flexible structure, allowing me to organize information effectively and create connections between concepts. Furthermore, actively summarizing the presented information in my own words will solidify my understanding and ensure the key takeaways are truly embedded. By embracing active listening, engaging with the material on a deeper level, and adopting a more structured approach, I aim to transform my notetaking from a passive act of recording to an active strategy for learning and retaining valuable information. This course not only introduced me to the fascinating world of digital marketing, but more importantly, it equipped me with the tools and strategies to navigate the ever-increasing flow of information in today's digital landscape.

References

- Google Digital Marketing & E-commerce Professional Certificate – Coursera: <https://www.coursera.org/professional-certificates/google-digital-marketing-ecommerce>
- Notion – Note-taking web application: <https://www.notion.so/>