

ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

BMSW 4001

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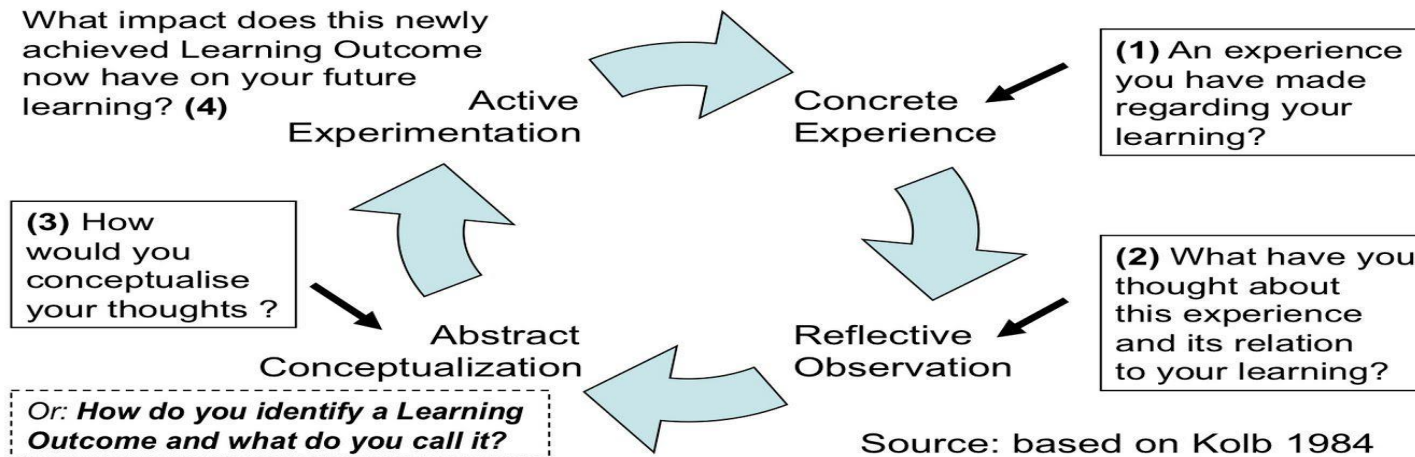
INTRODUCTION

Reflection can be described as a method of reasoned thinking or ideas. It lets the individuals to acutely assess and evaluate self and their attitude to practice (Shand, 2018). This report is going to discuss Kolb's Reflective Model to reflect on my learning experience on SWOT analysis, Personal Development Plan, Academic Writing, and Public Speaking and Presentation.

Kolb's reflective model (1984) is a practical learning theory focus on the significance of reflection. Kolb considered 'Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience' (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). So, it is our competence to enthusiastically indicate on our knowledge which simplifies our understanding and advancement. He believed that there are four stages of learning such as Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualisation, and Active Experimentation. These stages assist us to grasp the links between practices, emotions, opinions, and actions and pushes us to take comprehensive and routinely reflective assessment of our actions for targeting self-advancement (Kolb, 1984).

KOLB'S REFLECTIVE CYCLE

Kolb's Model for the Learning Cycle



Source based on Kolb 1984

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis is a technique used to describe individual's or organization's Strengths (core and positive qualities), Weaknesses (negative aspects need to improve), Opportunities, and Threats. Hence, opportunities and threats are the external influences (Cottrell,2015).

Concrete Experience

I heard about SWOT analysis before, but I was only understood the analysis aims on identifying the external and internal factors that impact the performance of company but not on assessing individual Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. During this module I started to know the important of this analysis for the individual progress. I remember our first class, the lecturers asked us to write about our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, but I did struggle to find these four components on me.

Reflective Observation

Conducting SWOT analysis was helpful in assessing myself. I was able to assess myself to look at my competence to meet the job's requirements or for seeking promotion. once I have known my strengths (I am time oriented, trustworthiness, and honest) and weaknesses (lack of confidence to speak in public places) helped me to pinpointing some gaps. And I was able to identify opportunities (improving my public speaking and presentation skills) that are beneficial for my development and neutralize and overcome threats (increasing market competition and COVID-19 pandemic) that could hinder me from achieving my goals and ambitions.

Abstract Conceptual

SWOT Analysis was first used to assess businesses. However, now it is often used by governments, non-profits, and individuals, which involve in analysing both internal and external factors (Addams and Anthony, 2013). Hence, Strengths and weaknesses are my core traits which are also my advantages, disadvantages, and points for improvement. While Opportunities and weaknesses involve with the external factors which I should either take for the improvement or completely prevent it. Therefore, I can be able to perform SWOT analysis straight away, but my strengths remain in my responsiveness and skilled application.

Active Experimentation

SWOT analyses helps me to realize my leanings and individuality character by expands my strengths and reduces my flaws. Also, it facilitates me to measures my opportunities of achieving my needed by enhances my personality and profession life, by overcoming the threats and external forces that faced me.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Personal development planning (PDP) is the method of creating a strategy focused on understanding, goal setting, ideals, reflection, and organizing for personal development in a career, education, relationship or for self-improvement perspective. (Maund,2017)

Concrete Experience

During my first day study this module was the first day I heard about PDP, and that day lecture asked us to create our PDP, but I was confused, and I did not how to start it because I was not come across with this before. However, I tried my best to follow lectures instruction and the feedback from the class discussion but still I was not able to catch up what they were talking about until I practice so many times alone, finally I got the hint.

Reflective Observations

After few lectures I started to realize that PDP is not just a mandatory something that my employer can makes me do, but it is also the strong pillar that can help my dreams and needs remain in sight. As Maslow on his hierarchy of need theory believed that people development depends on specific desires being met. So, one better need developed when other (previous) need is fulfilled (Maslow, 1976). So, I realised that I should have long-term and short-term plan which can allows me to manoeuvre and get back on direction when things go wrong in or der to achieve my desire needs. Also, I realized by having a good plan is very useful for my mental health, which can reduce my stress and anxiety.

Abstract Conceptualisation

A PDP is a self-reflection and improvement plan, which fulfil academic, personal, or career-based goals. It can be formed within the workplace or when studying by allowing individuals to generate their aims, acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses, and pinpoint the necessity for improvement (Rimmer, 2018). So, when I am creating my PDP, I have to make sure it correctly summarizes my personal goals (further study on health and social care field, work as childcare worker),

stating why these goals are important to me (because I felt blessed to work with the children and help them grow and develop their fully potential), and in what way I can achieve them (by finishing my Certificate course, apply for the level five and six health and social care programme, and apply for sign language and English language courses) . Hence, it describes and specifies my ideal future and areas of development which based on my short (six months) and long-term ambitions (two years). Also, it constantly acknowledged the possible obstacles (COVID-19 pandemic and financial availability) I could face, and how I can approach to overcome these obstacles (by becoming resilient for the pandemic and applying for financial support).

Active Experimentation

Learning PDP helped me to plan my career and develop on my current skills which push me to apply for childcare job that inspire me a lot, and by learning about the PDP I have been more careful on watching my career development plans about my career and qualification to make sure I am on the right direction.

It motivated me to study and accomplish level five and six for health and social care programme on next two years' time, and last week I applied for six months sign language course which will help me on working with disability children which are one of my career desires to work with these children.

ACADEMIC WRITING

Academic writing is structured, concise, clear, focused, and supported by evidence. Although it has a strict approach but it is not incomprehensible (Morgan, 2017).

Concrete Experience

I did not know writing academically is different from other writing. I spotted this difference as soon as I joined University and take this module. At the beginning, I was scared and wondered how I can be able to write academically, not only because I did not know how to write it but also, because of my English standard. But lectures after lectures gradually I was able to write by following academic strategies.

Reflective Observations

Through this topic, I understood that academic writing has specific facts in terms of structure, style, and content which is formal and unbiased, focused, clear, well-sourced, well-structured, precise, and correct and consistent. So, I can come across with all these in books, articles, and journal on academic topics, and I expected to write with academic style in all my essays, research papers, and dissertation.

Abstract Conceptualisation

As to know better about this writing style, I focused more on lectures, books and google search engine. I found out academic writing is designing and concentrating on responses the query of subjects' understanding which not involve the long sentences

usage and difficult vocabulary. (Morgan, 2017). Moreover, I tried to practice more by writing in coherent structure, reasonable order, brings together all related points, reveals understanding of the topic, supports my arguments with evidence, and referenced accurately.

Active Experimentation

To write academically is a critical skill for high learning students. It is also a skill that will remain to serve me if I plan to get academic career, or any field that involves analytical writing. Through this learning, I was able to write three assignments from my learning modules by making sure I followed my assignments instruction very careful; I researched my topic by using good sources (books from university library and university handbooks), credible journals(from University library), and professional articles(from university library and google scholars websites), I clearly organize my writing by providing short and clear sentences and paragraphs, and support my arguments with strong evidence by making citation and referencing the sources. Finally, I cross-checked the work and making any necessary edit to overcome any error before I submitted them. I have got merit marks from these modules' assignments. And it is my goal to do more better in my two other assignments from this semester and on my future career and academic life.

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND PRESENTATION

Public speaking is a soft skill which involves effective communication skills, passion, ability to attract the audience. So, public speakers can start make presentations with a small group to a large group of audience. However, the consistent competence setting and ability to ensure speech in public are essential regardless of the size of the group (Matthews, 2013).

Concrete Experience

One of my biggest weakness was lack of confidence to talk in public places, because I felt nervous and shaking to provide speech to the public. I remember my first presentation on my first semester module was not good because I was shaking and nervous. On second semester I learned about the public speaking and presentation, where I found out speaking in public is a learnable skill. So, if I want to be a good speaker and presenter, I should use the topic's strategies often.

Reflective Observations

Through this topic I know that many people struggle with delivering their message, so I was not alone. Therefore, it was a skill I need to learn and practice. During the learning of this topic, I realised that with sensible preparation and practice, I can conquer my nervousness and perform extremely well. Thus, good public speaking skills are important in other areas of my life as well (such as write emails, facilitate meetings, create reports, devise presentations, and debate with my colleagues), which can improve my reputation, boost my self-confidence, and open my countless opportunities.

Abstract Conceptualisation

Through this module, I learned that before the presentation I must explore the audience, this will help to know the qualities and characteristics of my audience. Therefore, most of the presentation I have done, after learning this topic, met and exceeded the audience's expectancies, and as a result audience gets what they came for.

Also, I learned that, to develop good presentation I must make sure that I prepare my communication (verbal and non-verbal). So, I followed Murphy suggestion that 7Cs (Completeness, Concreteness, Courtesy, Correctness, Clarity, Consideration, and

Conciseness) are a useful way to ensure about how I structured what I am going to say by making sure my messages were short, clear, polite, accurate and comprehensive (Murphy, 2000). Also, I used to rehearsal several times, that helped me to locate and remove errors effectively, decreased nervousness, and brought confidence on the presentation day.

However, not all occasions when I need to speak in public will be planned. So, I did some good unplanned speeches by having ideas and mini-speeches pre-prepared. This module at the end of the 2nd semester, the lecturer asked us to present our most achievement of our life. So, I was not much prepared for this presentation because I did not have idea that we are going to have a presentation that day. However, because I knew and understand the nature of my audience, I was able to present my most achievement in my life with positive and courageous feedbacks from both the lecturer and my classmates.

Active Experimentation

I was struggled with anxiety. The fear of public speaking is so overwhelming, that my mind fails to function. So, this is a good learning experience which helps me to provide a formula that bring a mindset shift that will ultimately bring out a great public speaker in me. Hence, It sharpens my mind by helping me to be more prepared to think on my feet, that will influence my position over the strength of program and sell my essential services to many audiences.

Public Speaking is a real game-changer for me because now I can make some presentations on my other module such as last term (2nd semester) module of Effective Communication and Team-Working, and this term (3rd semester) module of Problem Making and Decision-Making with positive feedback and good scores from the lecturers.

CONCLUSION

This is academic report that based on Kolb's four stages of reflective model which reflect on my learning experience on the SWOT analysis, Personal Development Planning, Academic writing, and Public Speaking and Presentation topics

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