

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to reflect on what I have learnt during this module. For the duration of this module I have learnt many things and in this essay I will explore what I have learnt and allow me to provide a reflection on some of the topics. I have also undertaken many different activities that have allowed me to provide a true reflection on what I have learnt.

Gibbs' reflective cycle

One new piece of information that I have been introduced to this is the Gibbs' reflective cycle. Its basic principles are based on how experiences have shaped a person and how that experience has helped them learn. It consists of 6 steps with the first 3 steps requiring you to focus on what happened and the second 3 steps requiring you to focus on how you can improve. To go into more depth these steps include:

1. Description
2. Feelings
3. Evaluation
4. Analysis
5. Conclusion
6. Action plan

Following these 6 steps properly allows you to truly reflect on yourself and what you have learned.

CV writing

One of the pieces of work we did this semester in this module was learning how to write a CV. This task essentially involved us talking all the skills and achievements we have collected over our life and how that may make us more appealing to employers. When I was first introduced to the idea of writing a CV I was nervous because I did not feel like I would have enough to write about on it. But, as it went along I started to get more confident and was able to put more and more details about what I have achieved. I found the easiest part was able to describe the skills and abilities I possess and it was more difficult to pick out the achievements however it gradually became easier once I created a plan. From then on I practised planning and typing up different forms of CV to have a collection that I could then critique and improve on. It is important to know what to include in your CV but it is also important to be aware of what not to include in your CV. Things such as age and date of birth does not affect your ability to do a particular job so it is not relevant to the CV. Employers are more keen on measuring someone's ability through their years of experience (Laura Slings, 2018)

Cover letter production

I have also had an attempt at writing a cover letter. This was similar to writing a big summary of everything I have achieved and my skills and I found it significantly easier than writing a CV. A key part of this was because the structure was more straightforward and presentation did not matter as

much. I was able to plot everything down easily and used my CV to support myself in doing so. I believe I have a strong CV created now that I can use to apply to any future jobs or placements. The important part of a good cover letter is to make sure that it is effective. This includes basic steps such as highlighting the purpose of the cover letter and making a summary of the main research findings and implications (Caryn Jones , 2016)

Reflective abilities

During this term we also learnt how to reflect on ourselves. I never truly knew how to properly reflect on myself but watching tutorials on how to use Gibbs' reflective cycle. Now I have become familiar with it. I am able to assess a situation and see how to react to it and act accordingly. The most difficult part of reflecting on yourself was to be able to properly critique yourself to see where you are going right and where you are going wrong. To do this I looked at my situation and then looked in depth and bits I struggled on and bits I did well in. From then I was able to specifically pick out my strengths and weaknesses. So from this experience I use it in everyday tasks and apply it whenever I can. I have even structured this essay where I apply the reflective cycle in each paragraph. To be good at reflecting at yourself you need to look at what you have done and ask yourself critical questions and see how good what you did was. This includes asking you questions such as:

- Why did I do it this way?
- Did it work?
- Would I do it again this way in the future?
- Is this the only way I could have done it?

By asking these questions you can produce a strong reflection on yourself which will help you produce a better standard of work (The University's Educational Development Unit, 2016)

Presentation and public speaking

Presentation skills are very important. There are many instances whereby you will need to produce a presentation of some sort and have to present in front of other people. This is important both in education and the working environment. For the duration of this course I know there will be plenty of situations where I will need to present and that is why when learning about presentation skills it has been proven to be very useful to me. I found the idea of presenting horrifying as I never really had to do before in my life. Standing in front of many people and public speaking made me feel very anxious and nervous. The idea was frightening. We were taught basic skills and important aspects to target in presenting such as body language has to be good and you can't read off the slides. It is then up to us to get to know our presentation well and to be able to follow some basic instructions. We learnt how to present essentially and now I feel more confident in presenting. To keep up with my ability to present I ensured that I have concise notes on how to present. I will then follow them before a presentation and learn it inside out so I can then carry it out successfully. A strong conclusion is important in presenting. You have to restate the main objective and key supporting questions and refer back to them once you think you have finished. A key summary of the main elements of the presentation and how they relate to the original objective will allow the audience

know what the presentation is for and what it is about and in doing so will keep them on track and focussed (Robert Dolan, 2017). One task required us to prepare and deliver a short presentation on the 3 biggest achievements of my life. Since I had a CV prepared it was easy to access my best achievements and from then on I was able to deliver the presentation with confidence and elaborate on all my life experiences. However, this presentation was behind a computer screen so it was going to prove to be slightly easier and to get a better reflection I must present live in front of an audience.

Analytical skills process

I learnt what analytical thinking skills are during this semester. To understand this first we were introduced to the definition and examples of analytical skills. We were then taught what processes are involved in analytical thinking skills and steps involved. As well as this the benefits of critical thinking were highlighted and this was important because it gave us motivation and reason to learn those skills. We were then introduced on how to improve our analytical thinking skills. I set off to practice these skills by following the advice given and I feel myself becoming more analytical every day during everyday tasks such as cooking or reading. We were set the task of working in small groups to ask analytical skills interview questions to each other and to attempt to answer those questions. I found those questions slightly difficult and more complicated than usual interview questions but after hearing the answers from my peers I started to better understand how to go about answering these questions. We were also set a task where we have to connect 9 dots with 4 continuous lines without pass through the nice dots without lifting the pen from the paper. I was one of the few in the classroom who were able to do it successfully. I had to think outside the box and use everything I learnt from the lecture and was successful in doing so. To be analytical you may need a range of different sources in order to research the problem and then propose the most suitable solutions. This also supports the idea that you need to have excellent research abilities too because you need to be able to find information from different sources (Morgan Masters, 2009)

How to critically think

Critical thinking was another aspect we were looking at. In a similar way it started off with the definition and we were set examples of situations where you can apply this critical thinking. It was exemplified using Bloom's Taxonomy of Intellectual Behaviour. There are 3 steps to this procedure. They include analysing the causes and results of events, evaluating situations and producing opinions from them and creating a combination of information. Critical thinking is important because you need to be able to think about a topic in an objective away. One of the tasks involved us attempting to be critical by thinking of something that someone has told us and then asking a list of questions to attempt at being critical. These questions then became the basis of my critical thinking and then I applied these to real life scenarios. Critical thinking is comprised of many different abilities. These involve:

- Observational abilities. General abilities of noticing what is going on.
- Emotional abilities. The emotions usually involve perplexity and puzzlement.
- Questioning abilities. Perplexity has to be transformed into a question.
- Imaginative abilities. Creativity is essential because it creates questions in your head.

- Inferential abilities. Essential to draw conclusions from given information.
- Experimenting abilities. Knowing how to design and execute an investigation is important in research.
- Consulting abilities. To be able to look at information and decide if it is good or not.
- Argument analysis abilities. It is important to judge your own information and produce arguments against it.

These collective abilities will help one become more critical and in doing so will have a person thinking more critically with whatever they do (John Dewey, 2018)

Conclusion

Overall this term I have learnt many things during the course that I will be able to apply in real life. As well as this I took part in many activities such as CV writing and cover letters that I will be able to use when applying for jobs. The greatest thing I learnt in my opinion was how to properly reflect on myself to help improve and progress.

References

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