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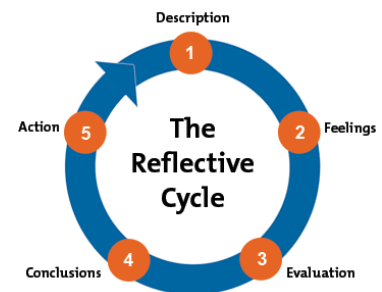
Signed: *N. Williams*

Date: 13 January 2022

Section 1

1.

Gibbs' reflective cycle includes 6 stages (Gibbs, 1988). These stages will be used when reflecting on how the CIPD professional standards supported me in delivering effective service during the pandemic crisis within Coleg Sir Gar and Coleg Ceredigion (CSG&CC) (Coleg Sir Gar, 2022).



The CIPD professional map includes areas relevant to all people professionals such as purpose, core knowledge, core behaviours and specialist knowledge (CIPD, 2021a).

Management training

Employees at CSG&CC never experienced home working before the pandemic. This came with managerial challenges as they were uncertain on how to manage remote working.

The learning and development, specialist knowledge of the CIPD map helped me when it came to delivering training on managing remote teams. According to CIPD (2021c) managing teams successfully can bring benefits such as an increase in productivity, motivation and engagement.

Organisational surveys previously highlighted that managers were either micro managing employees or were not in contact at all. It was important to address the micro-managing culture as this can generate tension and decrease productivity as mentioned by Wedell-Wedellsborg (2020).

At the chartered member level of this standard, I created a management training session on managing remote teams (CIPD, 2022).

Description - This training was delivered to 35 managers over Google Meet and it was the first time that I had delivered training to a large group of people.

Feeling - Before the training, I felt anxious however, these feelings quickly eased as the training started and when managers were interacting with the session.

Evaluation - Evaluation forms were provided at the end of the session where feedback suggested that the training was beneficial to managers to understand how best to manage remote teams and foster the 10 top tips by the CIPD (2021b). They were also more aware of the benefits as identified by Gleeson (2020).

Analysis – The session was successful and the factors that contributed to this success was the preparation into the research. When an additional survey was sent out to employees a few months later the need for management training on managing teams remotely reduced which suggests that the training was successful.

Conclusion – This session allowed me to build my confidence to deliver a training session. To develop my confidence further, I will need to deliver more training sessions and step out of my comfort zone.

Action Plan - As well as delivering more training sessions, I would benefit further by attending public speaking training as part of my CPD delivered in-house by CSG&CC (Coleg Sir Gar, 2022).

Wellbeing Survey

The pandemic has also caused an increase in mental health and as a result employee wellbeing has been impacted (Mind, 2020). Valuing people is one of the core behaviours of the CIPD profession map and one standard on how to improve this in the organisation is by considering the wellbeing of others in work. By focusing on improving wellbeing can result in productivity, engagement and commitment (Avis, 2019).

Description – An employee wellbeing survey was distributed via google forms and issued to the organisation to measure wellbeing and find ways to improve it.

Feeling –There was a worry that I would not receive a large pool of responses that captured valuable data.

Evaluation - After sending the survey out to 850 employees 221 responses were captured and the information gathered was useful. Common themes captured were the desire to have the option to work from home when returning to the office and the need for yoga, running clubs and a wellbeing site.

Analysis – Overall the survey served its purpose and valuable data was gathered. This demonstrates that there was a need to improve wellbeing in the organisation which corresponds with the research that was conducted.

Conclusion – Skills that were developed from this were my skill in analysing the results and drawing up common themes in data.

Action Plan – To continue to improve my skills on analysing results from organisational surveys and drawing on common themes and implementing change.

To summarise, the CIPD professional standards therefore, supported my delivery in the above activities. Both were effectively carried out.

2.

According to Northouse (2016) leadership is defined as “*a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal*”. Ansell and Trondal (2018) describe turbulence as “*situations where events, demands, and support interact and change in highly variable, unexpected and unpredictable ways*”. Turbulence is produced by external factors such as the pandemic. VUCA can be used to describe this environment of constant, unpredictable change (Adani, 2021).

Organisations need a leader that easily navigates in this environment. According to Fries (2018) some qualities of a leader consist of integrity, honesty, determination and decisiveness.

Complexity leadership

According to Uhl-Bien and McKelvey (2007) complexity leadership “*is operating in complexity environment where there is a range of forces competing and complementing each other where action and change may emerge to produce new patterns of behaviour/ways of operating*”.

Complexity leaders foster societal creativity, learning and, adaptability. Leaders will recognise that several types of leaderships may coexist and they recognise that knowledge is at the core to create competitive advantage and for the business to thrive and survive (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2016).

Adaptive Leadership

Adaptive leadership is similar but it is a practice not, a characteristic. Adaptive leadership according to Anzsog (2017) is “*when the power is dispersed and it is about addressing problems that lack solutions*”. According to Heifetz et al (2009), there are six principles of leading adaptive work:

- ***Getting on the balcony*** – leaders need to have distance to see the big picture.
- ***Identify challenge*** – Leaders need to identify the adaptive change and address it.
- ***Regulating distress*** – It is important to protect people from any stress they experience from adapting to the change. Heifetz et al (2009) believe it is important for leaders to show the importance to adapt to changing environments.
- ***Maintaining disciplined attention*** – Leadership involves getting people to draw out conflicts in a productive way.
- ***Giving work back to people*** – Getting others to assume responsibility and give them confidence through encouragement/support and getting them to be part of the change
- ***Protecting voices of leadership from below*** – Hearing all voices from the organisation and keeping an open mind.

The advantages of complexity and adaptive leadership is that it has been shown to improve team performance, motivation and increase the ability of the organisation to adapt and innovate. Giving employees space to come together and learn and interact will result in employees engaging in tasks and coming up with solutions to problems. These types of

leaderships are highly relevant to organisations facing complex challenges (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2016).

Authentic Leadership

Authentic leaders are sympathetic, understanding, and compassionate, lead with their heart, and enhance trust, job satisfaction, motivation, and job performance (Buckley, 2020). This type of leadership can be problematic if the leader has flaws in their personality such as non-communicative. Authentic leadership can be appropriate during periods of complexity such as the pandemic because of the number of death rates and illnesses caused by COVID-19 which involve being sympathetic and compassionate (Leroy, 2015). Based on the literature, adapting traits from other leadership styles such as complexity and adaptive would be beneficial during times of crisis (Harvard Business Review, 2011).

Trustworthy leadership

This type of leadership involves establishing trust with employees to implement an effective workforce. Ways this is done is through creating positive relationships by checking in with employees and demonstrating expertise and Judgment (Ouslis, 2018).

The benefits of trustworthy leadership are that employees will feel comfortable to open up with leaders which will increase job satisfaction and commitment. Unless otherwise established before the pandemic, building trustworthy leadership would be difficult within the pandemic circumstances especially with circumstances such as furloughing staff. If trust was established before the pandemic, this leadership approach could be suitable to maintain the relationship and to remain trustworthy (CIPD, 2014a).

Trustworthy leadership should be used when building up the workforce to where it was before the pandemic in order to create a trusting workforce in readiness for a similar situation in the future (SHRM, 2021).

The best leadership style to lead in complex environments such as the pandemic is complexity and adaptive leadership which already uses elements of trustworthy leadership within by giving employees space to come together to come up with solutions.

3.

Formal organisation is a design structure which is visible. It includes job descriptions and values. This type of structure sets out tasks such as, responsibilities and line management.

An informal organisation is what actually happens in an organisation which can be different from formal. These can include attitudes, and our own values (Diefenbach and Sillence, 2011).

Formal structures such as pay is a basic physiological motivational need. During the pandemic having a stable income and a job was highly important to survive during a time of uncertainty.

Depending on an employee's role within the college this either hindered or helped with the management of employees. It hindered the relationship of those employees (cleaners) who were placed on furlough as it resulted in a lack of trust but it helped other employees that could work from home because it became motivational as the employees were meeting their "safety needs" of the Maslow's hierarchy of needs e.g. employment (McLeod, 2007). As well as the formal pay structure, informally it became clear that building relationships during the pandemic became important whilst working from home to reach the love and belonging need of the hierarchy of needs (Mental Health Foundation, 2021). The pandemic resulted in informal relationships to be built with the use of informal meetings. This helped those that were struggling with lone working and helped to improve their wellbeing. This *helped* the management of people during the crisis as teams were motivated and engaged because of the development in relationships.

Formal structures such as hierarchy have also hindered the management of people during the pandemic in terms of the communication from top management to down the organisation as

information at the beginning of the pandemic was slow and decisions towards furloughing were also delayed within CSG&CC. This resulted in a disconnect between managers as employees become annoyed with the lack of communication (CIPD, 2014b).

As well as this CSG&CC have formal 9-5 working policies however during the pandemic working from home brought an element of flexibility that employees had not experienced before. Employees welcomed this flexibility and a new way of working. When lockdown restrictions eased, there was an expectation for all employees to return to on-site working. This brought challenges as employees wanted to remain with the new ways of working. In this case, the formal structure hindered what employees actually wanted and therefore impacted negatively on the management of people. The decision for employees to return to work also did not align with the organisation's formal value to be "flexible". This decision resulted in the increase in sickness and turnover rates with people seeking employment elsewhere where homeworking flexibility remained.

HR can help with demonstrating the importance of maintaining homeworking to the Executive team and showing them the effects, that back-to-site working is having on employees.

Netflix is an organisation that has formal values in place. They use these values to recognise and reward great employees. Employees who embed these into their work are more likely to receive a promotion (Netflix, 2022). At CSG&CC these values can be seen as "for show". There is a disconnect between formal structures such as values the organisation has in place and what actually happens in practice. These need to align to achieve organisations goals and create a successful company like Netflix. This supports the case study "*formal structure may*

be unchanged but the informal structure has been disrupted.. needs to be realigned or rethought” (Wedell-Wedellsborg, 2020).

4 a)

When returning to work CSG&CC paid attention to *“the small stuff”* as experienced within the article. This will be reflected by using Rolfe et al’s (2001) reflective model where it is based on three questions.

When restrictions eased in September 2021, employees were asked to return to work. The below actions were taken:

What?

Before returning to the workplace, a wellbeing survey was created for the workforce to measure employee wellbeing and to find out how employees felt about returning to work for the organisation to support employees and put mechanisms in place. This form was created via google form and was distributed to 850 employees. This survey evoked both positive and negative comments. The majority of employees expressed their desire to keep home working. Employees were fearful that returning to work would mean home working would end. Employees stated that they were more productive, engaged, and motivated when home working. Other common themes from employees were the fear of catching COVID-19 in the workplace and the fear that the organisation would not follow COVID-19 guidelines. Employees also stated that they did miss social activities such as running/ walking clubs. Investing in these informal activities will help employees find joy in routines as mentioned in the case study.

In response to the survey, A COVID-19 policy was developed by myself which included guidelines for all employees to adhere to such as the use of face-covering, use of screens, and information on one-way systems. This was a similar approach used within the case study with the use of face masks/screens adopted(Weddell-Weddellsborg, 2020). Regular cleaning was also organised as well as COVID-19 risk assessments. These were created in line with Government policies (GOV.UK, 2021) and to ensure that employees were safe to return to the organisation. The expectation from the Executive level was for all employees to be back in the office. This brought challenges such as the increase in sickness and turnover rates.

So, What?

The attention to the small stuff such as COVID-19 rules was implemented successfully and it did address the fear of returning to work however, I acknowledge that as a HR professional I should have challenged the executive members when it came to the expectation for all staff to return to work by explaining the benefits of hybrid working from academic research by CIPD (2021d) and Personnel Today (2022). Employee experience is one of the specialist knowledge of the map and I failed to use tools and approaches such as hybrid working to drive employee engagement (CIPD, 2022). Research suggests that hybrid working will be the new way of working which has a positive effect on employee motivation, commitment and engagement. This is said to reduce sickness and turnover rates. Hybrid working also allows for a smoother transition from home working back to the office (Personnel Today, 2022), (CIPD, 2021d). Maintaining the element of flexibility would have been beneficial should there ever be another lockdown.

Now what?

Another wellbeing survey should be created to measure employee wellbeing now that they have returned to work. The answers provided should then be taken to board along with sickness and turnover rates. This will allow me to discuss the benefits of maintaining an element of homeworking for employees and how it can help achieve excellence within the organisation.

Section 2

2.1a

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) to be precarious is “*to be vulnerable to the will or decision of others, dependent on chance/circumstance*”. This definition suggests that precarity creates two circumstances: wellbeing and security which are out of the worker’s control and the experience of danger and risk.

Precarious work is defined as “*employment involving contractual insecurity*” (Cassells et al, 2018). Precarious living is something that only a small minority experience (Butler, 2017). Examples of precarious work consist of zero-hour contracts. Those people that tend to be precariat are migrants, young people, women, working-class men, the elderly, disabled and the unwell. Argos and Tesco are examples of organisations that use temporary agencies to cover seasonal work as well as Deliveroo (Booth, 2016).

Disadvantages of precarity:

Zero-hour contracts can lead to insecurity as the amount people will earn each week will vary as they will not know when and if they will be needed in that work again. “The Gig Economy” is a status used for precarity work which means there is an erosion of rights such as sickness, holiday leave, and pension. The lack of insecurity, uncertainty, and the erosion of rights the employee will experience will therefore impact negatively on their motivation, wellbeing, and engagement. This type of work can lead to stress and has been linked to an increase in mental health (Pagell et al, 2021). Precarious work means that there is a lack of progression and autonomy. Precarity has been linked to discrimination against race and ethnic background

such as migrants (Russel Sage Foundation, 2016). During the pandemic, inequalities have shown that those less fortunate were placed on furlough.

Advantages of precarity:

There are some positives to precarious work from the employee's point of view as it can offer flexibility and it can be a stepping stone to other work. CSG&CC offer casual hours in most roles within the college when there is a need to cover sickness. This allows for those employees to gain experience and build confidence before potentially applying for a permanent role in the future. It is also an opportunity for them to see if they enjoy that type of work first (Booth, 2016).

Positives of precarity for Leaders:

From the employer's perspective, the benefits of this type of work are that it is easier to terminate and it is a flexible and quick way of getting staff in to deliver a service (Booth, 2016).

Impact on leadership:

According to Benassi & Tekeste (2018) precarious work can have an impact on leadership as it is hard for the leader to develop trusting relationships with these workers as there is an erosion of rights. It can be difficult to manage as these types of workers tend to experience disengagement because of the lack of training and supervision. It is hard to build relationships with these workers as they do not view their leaders as trusting.

2.2a

HRM and HRD have a critical role to play within organisations. According to Storey (1995)

HRM is *“an approach to employment management to achieve competitive advantage through strategic development”*. Stewart and McGoldrick (1996) describe HRD as *“the activities and processes which are intended impact on learning of the individual and organisation”*.

The CIPD professional map demonstrates this as the map includes areas that are relevant for people professionals. This is made up of the purpose, values, core knowledge, core behaviours, and specialist knowledge. Depending on the level you are at, the map identifies the knowledge and behaviours required to improve. The purpose of HR is to “champion better working lives”. Having shared values and standards allow building trust and credibility in the workforce. Shared values consist of being principle-led, evidence-led and outcome-driven (CIPD, 2022).

The core knowledge of the map is made up of six areas of knowledge to create value and drive change in the organisation. Examples consist of people practice and culture and behaviour. The theory on the core knowledge underpins the people profession. Theory includes ACAS guidelines on how to deal with changes in employment law such as furlough which is then implemented into the organisation (ACAS, 2022). This is related to the people practice area within the core knowledge of the map (CIPD, 2022).

The professionalism knowledge section includes the eight behaviours needed to empower and create value for people and organisations. Some include ethical practice, valuing people, and passion for learning (CIPD, 2022). HR professions have a critical role to play in ethical

practice where they develop and embed policies in areas such as recruitment and selection (Harris, 2016). HR role is to also make sure that the behaviours within the organisation is aligned with the values and ensure that best practice is followed and decisions are made on good principles such as redundancy. Even though redundancy is not a nice situation to be in, HR have a crucial role in making sure that the correct process is followed (CIPD,2022).

The specialist knowledge section includes nine specialist disciplines. Some include employee experience, employee relations, and learning and development. HR professional has a critical role to play in L&D by designing and delivering a culture of continuous learning (CIPD, 2022). For instance, at CSG&CC we deliver staff development training sessions on areas such as mental health and how to effectively manage this.

Throughout the pandemic, HR have shown that they have a critical role to play within organisations for instance implementing COVID-19 policies, furloughing staff, redundancy and facilitating change such as wellbeing initiatives (Powell, 2021).

According to Wang and Shyu (2008), HRM/HRD strategy, HR practices, and organisational strategy is paramount to the success of the organisation which demonstrates the importance of HRM and HRD in contributing to organisational goals.

Ahmed (2003) challenges Greg Jackman's statement (Unleash,2021) and believes that HRD and HRM are linked to trust, employee outcomes, and organisational performance which corresponds to the benefits highlighted by Bhagria (2014).

2.3b

There is an increased pressure for HR to act ethically and sustainably within organisations.

According to CIPD, (2022) ethical values provide the “moral compass” by which HR lives and make decisions for instance, “doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do and not for financial gain”. According to CIPD (2022) ethical practice is *“building trust by role modelling ethical behaviour and applying principles and values consistently in decision making”*.

Making wrong decisions can impact people’s lives and the reputation of the organisation. HR makes decisions based on good practice. Ethics is one of the core behaviours of the CIPD professional map. HR professionals must know what ethical practice is and identify when others are not acting ethically and address them. Unethical behaviour can include bullying, harassment, and financial gain (Brown, 2015). At CSG&CC ethical practice is used within recruitment and selection, where managers must shortlist based on the application form and not on other factors such as age or gender.

The CIPD research report (2019) includes nine areas that employers need to prioritise to act ethically. 8 lenses can be looked through when making ethical decisions are seen in the diagram (CIPD, 2015).

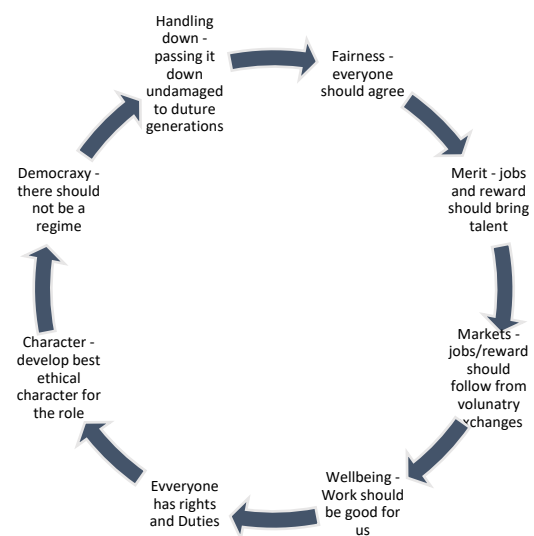


Figure 1 – 8 lenses to make ethical decisions (CIPD, 2015)

Open culture, improves morale and good relationships with customers lead to a good reputation. Organisations that act ethically always outperform competitors that are acting unethically. This means they develop a competitive advantage and gain a positive impact on financial performance (CIPD, 2022) (Kew and Stredwick, 2010).

Acting unethically can also harm recruitment, as people will not want to work for an organisation that is not acting ethically, and similarly, customers will not want to buy products from an unethical company. The values and behaviours of the organisation must align with the actual behaviours that the organisation demonstrates otherwise it can result in a breakdown in trust and lead to high turnover rates (CIPD, 2022). An example of a company that operated unethically is Shein (Moudles, 2020). It was shown that employees were working in unsafe conditions and were using child labor (Crumble, 2021). Unethical behaviour can lead to a decrease in motivation, engagement, and performance. With the increase of automation of work, there is a greater risk of unethical practice existing as automation could discriminate when it comes to short-listing for recruitment. Although this is a faster and cheaper way to perform some roles, it could lead to greater unethical problems (CIPD, 2022).

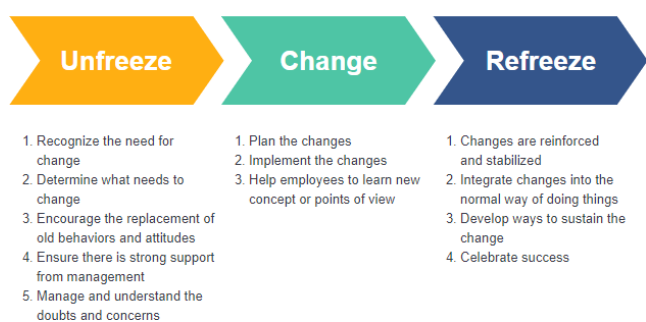
There is also an increased focus on sustainability and the environment due to climate change which is affecting the way people behave and view things. Similarly, advantages to increasing focus on this includes good reputation, outperform competitors and gains competitive advantage (Deloitte, 2021).

It is therefore important for HR and organisations to develop an ethical and sustainable organisation to keep up with the pressures of the external environment.

2.4a

According to Stuart and Kringas (2003), planned change is deliberate and structured where a process can be actively managed and planned to facilitate movement from one condition to another. The pandemic is seen as an emergent change where it evolved naturally. HR has a role to play in change by being facilitators of change and contributing towards key strategic decisions such as advising project leaders and involvement at the initial stage (Warren, 2009), (CIPD, 2021b).

Kurt Lewin's (1951) managing change three-phase model focuses on the psychological aspects of behaviour modifications. There are three stages to this model:



Unfreezing – This is when the organisation recognises the need for change, determines what needs to change, and gets ready to change. At this stage employees need to be involved in the change to accept it. There needs to be strong support from managers at this stage.

Change – this stage is about transitioning and developing new attitudes to encourage the behaviours needed to change. At this stage employees have unfrozen and are moving to the new change. It is important for leaders to communicate and share knowledge and involve people in the process.

Freezing (Refreezing) – This stage is about finding stability in the organisation after the changes have been made. It is important to develop ways to sustain the change by supporting and reinforcing the new change conditions otherwise people will go back to how it was before. Important to celebrate success.

There are many criticisms of this model. Bartunek and Woodman (2015) describe the model as being simplistic, linear, prescriptive and lacking a cognitive dimension which corresponds to the statement above *“that it is quaint and too simple for the modern era of constant and rapid change”*. He believes that the model lacks the flexibility to fit the chaotic processes of changes such as the pandemic. This model assumes that change is linear when in fact it can be chaotic. Another criticism is that the world is changing at a pace so there is no time to settle and constantly refreeze after a change process has been implemented as culture is an ongoing change and therefore it is always going to be evolving.

In contrast to Bartunek and Woodham (2015), Burnes (2020) argues that the unfreezing element allows for the fluidity necessary for change and that Lewin believed that the learning gained better equips people for future change. Burnes (2020) argues that what freezing does is stop people going back to old behaviours, cultures, policies, or practices.

This model is simplistic and works for some scenarios but it does not allow for the predictability of change and the flexibility you need at the freezing stage for instance, it is hard to freeze behaviours.

To conclude, change can emerge in a non-linear way due to changes in the external environment. This change model is better suited to planned changes such as a new HR system as opposed to a complex change like the pandemic.

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