

ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Time management
Organising study
Reflection

Report (Resit/Rework)

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Academic and employability skills (BMSW4001_LON)

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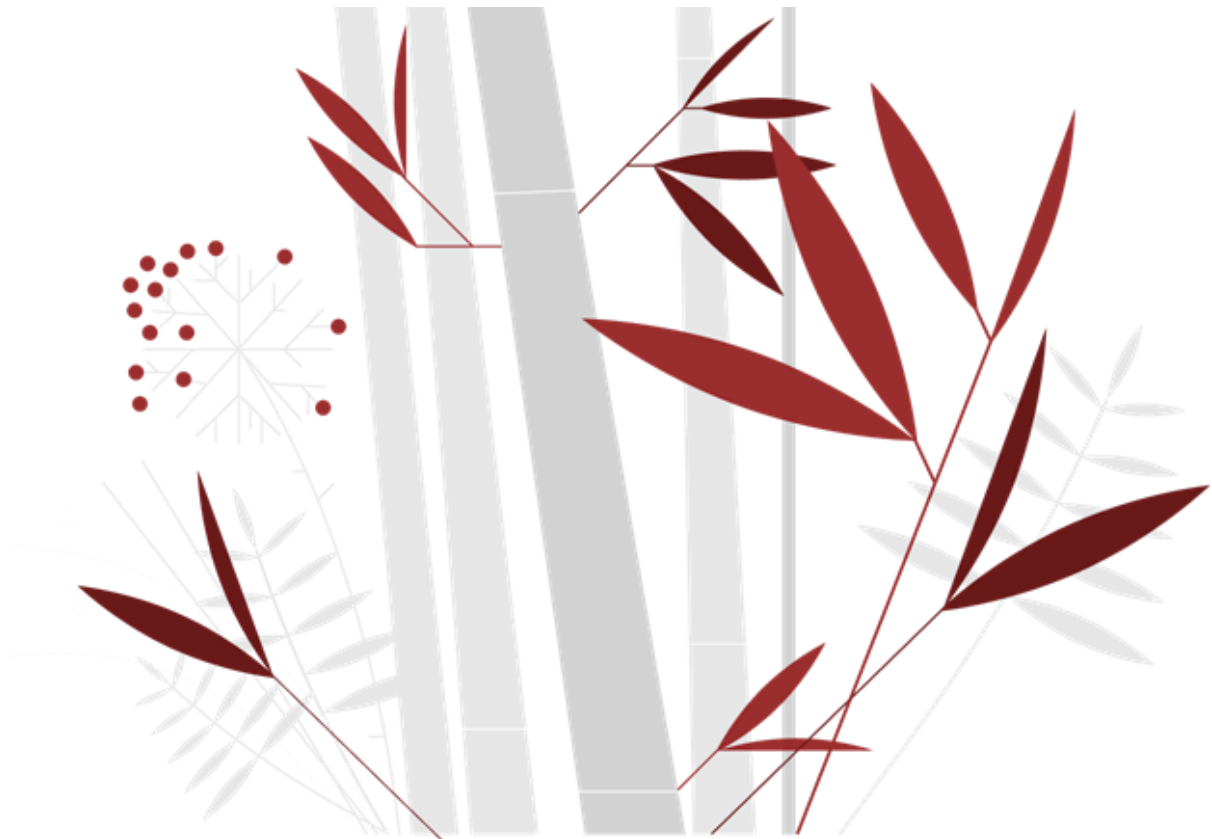


Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Time management.....	3
Organising study	4
Reflection–Gibbs’ Model	5
Public Speaking (Individual Presentation Reflection)	5
Conclusion.....	6
References.....	7

Introduction

The following report is a resubmission of my first reflective report done based on what I have learned throughout the “Academic and Employability skills” module at university. Reflecting will be done using Gibbs’ reflective cycle method and cover 4 topics. The first is “time management,” the second is “organising study,” the third is “reflecting” and finally a reflection on “public speaking” and, more specifically, my presentation for this module. I have chosen Gibbs’ reflective cycle as a model for this reflection, as the stages outlined by Graham Gibbs provide structure when reflecting on learning from experience.

Time management

In the Academic and Employability Skills module, we had lectures on time management. As defined by (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022) time management is “the practice of using the time that you have available in a useful and effective way, especially in your work”. We learned about prioritising tasks using the “Eisenhower Method,” which helps differentiate the importance or urgency of tasks, also teaches how to efficiently maximise your time, and reduce unneeded energy expenditure. Further we learned about setting SMART goals and how to best achieve them through time-logs and to-do lists. (Entrepreneur Handbook, 2018)

Before the lecture, I did not think it would be particularly helpful, as I viewed time management more as a character trait than something that could be structured and improved. A thought that was also shared by my friends. After the first half of that lecture my feeling changed, as I began to do the in-class activities of creating to-do lists and time logs, using the abovementioned theories and methods. At this moment in time, I am glad I learned how to set SMART objectives, as in the past I had trouble with measuring success and viewed it as subjective, rather than specific or rational. (Entrepreneur Handbook, 2018)

It was good that this lecture was one of the first, as it provided me and my colleagues with at least four valuable ways to ration time to work smart, not hard. I believe the reason for categorising the above as either good things or bad came about because

of my initial inability to see how all methods described above can be practiced interchangeably, for the best possible outcome.

I must learn to make better use of all time management methods, not just the SMART and Eisenhower, which were the ones I enjoyed most and saw as most useful for the future. I reached this conclusion, because of not achieving a pass on my first submission of this report, as I had not planned my time well enough to be able to cover all sections of the reflective cycle for each topic. I will set SMART objectives' targets based on an analysis of my situation and workload, done in tandem with the Eisenhower method, as when using both it allows more time for mistakes, setbacks, and other unforeseen circumstances which I had not planned for before this.

Organising study

When the exam results came out, I learned I had not passed the report part of my assignment for this module. The feedback given by the teacher focused on poor academic writing and improper referencing. Academic writing is "clear, concise, focussed, structured, and backed up by evidence. Its purpose is to aid the reader's understanding. It has a formal tone and style, but it is not complex and does not require the use of long sentences and complicated vocabulary." (Leeds Library, 2022) Not passing was never in my mind. However, after this, I read the feedback and began reading literature on the matter, such as the one quoted above.

I was distraught at first, but now view the situation as beneficial. I will not get the full grade for this assignment, however, failing pointed out what I need to work on further. It also gave me the opportunity to rethink how I structure my time, as I had not planned for a resubmission.

The first part of the assignment for this module was a presentation where I did not receive consistent feedback on my work, meaning that the first time I showed my work I was told at one stage that my work was good but later that the same work is bad. Therefore, when I prepared my report, I did not present it in advance.

Not being able to pass on my first submission means that I must work on academic writing, research, and referencing skills they prove the direct transferability of these, to employability skills. I did not satisfy the minimal criteria for passing, due to a lack of time management and subsequently not paying much attention to my style of writing. Thus, not being able to reflect in-depth without missing the deadline for this assignment submission and writing without a clear structure. I did not look up sufficient

literature on how to best do a reflective report in an academic style. I have since attended online courses on this topic.

My aim from now on is to always submit assignments for feedback in advance of the deadline date while continuing to attend courses to improve my English and academic writing skills.

Reflection–Gibbs' Model

Graham Gibbs' model applied in this report is an effective way to reflect on learning from experience and to analyse what is good and what needs improvement (Gibbs, 1988). Reflective thinking is fundamentally the idea of being conscious of one's own knowledge, presumptions, and past experiences. It is a way to evaluate yourself, the way you work and the way you study.

Initially I did not find value in reflecting upon past experiences, however, all these methods taught me to appreciate analysing mistakes and positive aspects of situations, as I feel like if I repeat the actions of my own success, I will continue to be successful. My tutors emphasised how important it is to reflect in a structured manner, to identify gaps in my skills more easily, and proactively work on myself based on this.

In my first attempt at authoring a reflective report, was failed by my tutor, as the report did not satisfy the assignment brief requirements. I used Gibbs' model to reflect on the feedback given to me and use it to write my resubmission up to the standards which were not achieved in the original submission. I chose Gibbs to make sense of the situation and form an action plan.

Overall, the experience has been beneficial, and I am grateful after the fact that I get to resubmit the report and do it right when compared to the first submission. All the structured methods of reflection enabled me to do this efficiently and to the best of my abilities.

For the completion of this assignment, I will make sure to follow all steps in Gibbs' reflective cycle, by thinking about each stage I am more likely to engage critically with my learning experience.

Public Speaking (Individual Presentation Reflection)

In week 10 we had to present a power point in front of class and my tutor. This is a form of public speaking, which is “1. the act or process of making speeches in public. 2: the art of effective oral communication with an audience” according to (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2022) Everything I wanted to happen, happened, as I passed the assignment due to following guidelines of the assignment brief and lectures on the subject throughout the module.

I was confident in my presentation, but not so much in my verbal communication skills. I felt like SWOT analysis and my PDP (personal development plan) were not as in-depth as it would have been beneficial for me at that time. Now after the fact I feel confident that due to the reflective report I will not allow this in future endeavours and always plan using methods to alleviate anxiety when presenting in front of people.

Everything went well, regardless of my concern. I read about a technique that most speakers used, which was to not focus on one person during the presentation, but to look directly above everyone's line of sight so that it seemed like I was addressing the whole room. It did not help me. The presentation was online.

By using websites like “Virtual speech” I was able to further my knowledge of presenting and public speaking. That is where the above-described techniques come from and utilising them in the future, will enable me to be able to look at people in the audience directly in their line of sight and not feel anxious, as with practice comes confidence. (Lucas, 1989).

Overall, I am satisfied with the way my presentation went. Being able to transfer academic skills to the workplace will be vital for me. The topic of the presentation forced me to analyse what I must improve on in order to be more appealing to an employer. Verbal communication and public speaking demonstrate great confidence to an employer and will help me on my career path. (Lucas, 1989).

My action plan is to practice more not only online, but in front of the mirror, so I can become even more confident. I must rework the PDP from the presentation to be more detailed and by using SMART goals.

Conclusion

To sum up my experience, this module helped me learn a lot about myself and how my skills are viewed by employers. By analysing existing literature relating to time management, reflection, academic writing, and public speaking, I can better my employability chances. By using the feedback given from my lecturer on the first

reflective report, I believe this fully satisfies the standards for a better grade than a pass. Unfortunately, that is impossible right now, but this experience taught me that all the in-class activities are important to do, with your tutor, rather than at home alone and to also, use external sources too when producing a piece of academic writing.

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