

L1.STUDY SKILLS

Lesson1: Reflective Learning

By Ms.Khadidja Belmokhtar

Introduction

Reflection is a natural human activity and we tend to reflect on our daily activities, our successes and failures, relationships and careers. Reflective learning involves students thinking about what they have read, done, or learned relating the lesson at hand to their own lives and making meaning out of the material. It's more than just memorizing some facts, formulas or dates. It is important as it enables us to learn from our experiences – both our failures and successes. This helps us to improve our skills and practice. Thus, the benefits of reflection include:

- Improved performance, for example in assignments
- Increased motivation and confidence
- Better understanding of the links between theory and practice

Getting started in reflection

➤ How to reflect

Reflection is a very good tool for helping you to develop and improve your study skills. All it requires is a little time and a method of recording your thoughts such as pen and paper or a cassette recorder.

Different people will prefer to reflect in different ways and it is very important to record your thoughts. Many students use a diary or exercise book to do so, some students like to tape record their thoughts while others may prefer to word process them. The important point is to keep a record of your reflective practice. There are many different ways of reflecting on your experiences and the following three examples are regularly used by students. It is worth noting that each of these methods includes identifying what you will do differently next time that is, producing an action plan.

Example 1

The easiest way to start reflecting is to spend five minutes after a study period answering the following questions: What went well? What didn't go so well? What did you learn? What will you do differently next time? The final question is vital as it enables you to identify and plan improvements to your approach.

The following example was completed by a student after an independent study session. She used the four questions and notes down her responses as illustrated in the example.

What went well? Understood the key readings Managed to find most of the references on the Internet Made really good notes	What didn't go so well? I was tired and seemed to be struggling to stay awake at the end of the session.
What did you learn? I can find my way around the Internet but perhaps could learn some short cuts Using a colour coding system made it easier to make notes - they look good	What will you do differently next time? Time it better! Working in the evening after a full day of lectures was no fun. Next time I'll do this kind of session on a 'light' day.

Example 2 Critical incidents

Critical incidents are those that often generate emotions or strong feelings, for example, you may be working on a group assignment and there are major problems between two students, you may obtain an unexpected low mark for an assignment, or you may find a piece of work very challenging. The following questions may be used to reflect on a critical incident: Select a critical incident, briefly describe it, what contributed to this situation? What was your role in creating this situation? What do you need to do differently in future?

Example 3 Personal responses

Another useful source of reflection is your own personal response to a situation or process. The following questions may be used to reflect on your personal responses: How do you feel about this task, activity, group, or module? What are you enjoying? What do you dislike? What do you need to do differently?

➤ When to reflect

It is a good idea to identify a time when you will reflect on and identify ways of improving your academic practice. You will find it useful to reflect at different times during your programme. For example, at the start of your programme you may want to reflect after each new experience: lecture, seminar, library session, or ICT session. It is always important to reflect after completing an assignment when you can think about your process in producing the assignment. Once your assignment is returned then you can reflect on the feedback you receive from your tutor and identify ways of improving your next assignment.

➤ Learning journals

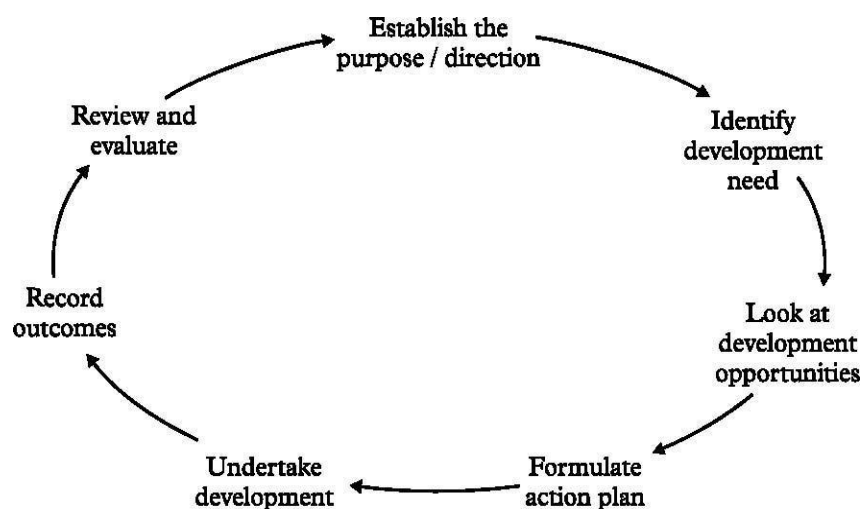
Some academic programmes of study and modules ask you to keep a learning journal and this is a specific example of reflective practice. If you are asked to keep a learning journal as part of an assessment activity then you will be given guidance by your tutor.

According to Jenny Moon (2000) a good quality learning journal characterized by:

- Honesty and self-assessment
- Thoroughness of reflection and self-awareness
- Deep, clear and detailed reflection
- Evidence of creative thinking
- Representation of different cognitive skills (synthesis, analysis, evaluation etc)
- A match of the content and outcomes of the journal work to module aim and outcomes

Personal Development Planning (PDP) is the process of:

- Establishing aims and objectives (or goals) - what you want to achieve or where you want to go, in the short, medium or long-term in your career.
- assessing current realities
- identifying needs for skills, knowledge or competence
- Selecting appropriate development activities to meet those perceived needs.



The Personal Development Planning Cycle

1. Establish your purpose or direction

The purpose of any development activity needs to be identified. This involves Gaining an awareness of your current standing and future potential within your chosen field and a measure of what you are good at and interested in (because these things will motivate you.)

2. Identify development needs

The identification of development needs may emerge from intended or actual new tasks or responsibilities or from dissatisfaction with current routines. Various instruments such as self-assessment tests and personal diagnostics are available to help you assess your skills in a structured way.

3. Identify learning opportunities

As a result of one, or several, of the assessment processes above, draw up a list of the skills or knowledge you need to acquire, update or improve. Compare this list with your current skills and knowledge base and identify the gaps.

4. Formulate an action plan

For each of the skills and knowledge gaps you identify, set yourself development objectives. These need to be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. There must be an element of challenge in them so that they stretch you as an individual and carry you on to new ground.

5. Undertake the development

Put your plan into action- what you do and how you do it should be your choice in addition to training courses.

6. Record the outcomes

Keeping records will help you to focus on what you have got out of your development activity. Record the date, the development need identified, the chosen method of development, the date(s) when development was undertaken, the outcomes, and any further action needed.

7. Evaluate and review

Evaluation is the key stage in the self-development cycle. There are two issues you should reflect upon: whether the development activity you have undertaken was appropriate and worthwhile; and whether and how your skills or working behaviour have improved as a result. Evaluating development activities also involves asking the following questions:

What am I able to do better as a result?

Has this experience thrown up further development needs?

How well did this development method work?

Could I have gained more from this activity?

Would I follow this approach again?

Conclusion:

Learning from your experiences will help you to improve your study skills and become successful both as a student and also in the workplace.

Practice 1: Reflective Learning

By Mrs. Maria Abdelmouman-Touil

Exercise 1 –Free writing

Take one of the pictures below and use this as a prompt to start writing. Write continuously for five minutes or until you fill the page. It doesn't matter what you write and you don't need to worry about sentence structure, grammar or spelling.







Some prompts to get you started:

“What could be happening?”

“What is going on around them?”

“Why are they doing this?”

“What do they look like?”

“What might happen next?”

Exercise 2

Who am I?

1. Complete as many or as few of the following sentences as you wish:

a. I am...

b. I believe...

c. I want...

- d. I know...
- e. I think...
- f. I wish...
- g. I hope...
- h. I understand...
- i. I wonder...
- j. I imagine...
- k. I'm surprised that...
- l. My dream is...

2. Reread with care. Choose one to write more about

Evaluation

1. Thinking about your work, answer the following questions:
 - a. What was most helpful?
 - b. What were you surprised by?
 - c. What will you take with you, for the future?

Learning observation

1. Think of a teacher, tutor or lecturer from any time in your life, whom you admire.
2. Describe them; include all characteristics negative and positive.
3. Write a narrative about an occasion of their teaching you remember well.

Lesson 2: Study Group

By Ms. Ismahan BENSALFIA

Introduction:

Studying and learning at college or university can sometimes feel like an isolated, individual, lonely process. But learning is deeply social. From the very beginning of our lives, we learn better by interacting with other people, at least some of the time. Group work can be really good fun, and very motivating, but it can also pose a few challenges.

Working in groups

Study groups are formed when 3-6 students agree to meet on a regular basis to study. When forming the group, it is important for its members to take time in order to discuss how the group is expected to act and work. Not all group members share the same expectations. Hence, each member has to voice his/her own expectations.

1-Group size and location

It is highly recommended that the number of members in study groups should not exceed five. In order to prevent the group's vulnerability in terms of illness and absences, it is preferable that the group has more than three members. When having a group of more than members, it is primordial to hold disciplined meetings in which a chairman is elected.

As for the location, group members should choose a quiet and suitable place that keeps them motivated without being interrupted. The university's library may be the best place to consider in this case.

2-Preparations on an individual basis

It is important for the group members to prepare individually for joint discussions in the group. In discussion groups, for instance, it may prove beneficial to make an agreement regarding distribution of work to ensure that at least one person has assumed responsibility for the review of a certain text or theme which is to be taken up for discussion. This is best way to each group member active during the discussion.

In a project group, it is necessary to distribute work is a necessity. Also, each meeting should end by agreeing on what each member of the group must prepare for the next meeting. It is also a good idea to choose a coordinator or chairman in order to call the group member concerned. This group member must handle all general coordination of the work to ensure that tasks are distributed between the group members. In order to insure the distribution of responsibility between group members, it is advisable to take turns at the role of chairman.

3-Rules to prevent unproductive conflicts

As each member of the study group has his/her own way of thinking, conflicts are very likely to take place. Conflicts are tiresome and often cost a lot of time unnecessarily. Many conflicts within groups are the result of annoyance caused by breaches of agreements or misunderstandings, which can be avoided. Conflicts may also arise as a consequence of the fact that several group members assume identical roles, e.g. as chairman. This may result in ongoing arguments about who is in control. By following six simple rules, it could be possible to prevent a long series of unproductive conflicts:

1- establish a joint level of ambition

One of the most frequent causes of conflicts is different levels of ambition. It is necessary to have a (more or less) joint level of ambition in order for the group to function. This is even more important if you are writing a joint research paper. And once again, you must address the subject verbally. The result is a kind of social contract to which the members of the group may refer, if disagreement concerning the framework of the group arises at a later date.

2-agree on time spent

It is important to clarify how much time the group members are willing to earmark in advance. Of course this is impossible to say precisely in hours or minutes; however, if one group member is simultaneously attending several courses or is planning to travel two months during the semester, it is fairly certain that this individual is unable to earmark the same amount of time as a full-time student who does not have any other obligations. Agree on the amount of time that you are willing to invest in the group. If you are part of a project group, it is also important to establish provisional deadlines.

3-keep appointments

Agree in advance to keep appointments or deadlines. It may seem fairly obvious to do so, however, if things start to turn sour in the group, it might set off a chain reaction which results in the fact that the group parts in anger. Therefore, make sure that all of you comply with appointments and deadlines.

4- concentrate on academic matters

You spend a lot of time together in the group, so it is important that you get along well. However, you need to concentrate on academic matters, and it may therefore be a good idea to choose group members with whom you are not too close friends. If you have already established a friendship, it may be difficult to disregard this and make demands of each other's work and performance.

5- communicate in a proper manner

Disagreements are usually caused by failure to communicate. Express yourselves as precisely as possible, especially if the discussion is developing into a conflict. Make sure that the others have understood you correctly, perhaps ask the others how and if they have understood that which you have said or written. Emphasise that you are only speaking for yourself by using expressions such as "I think..." instead of "one might think..." or "everyone is able to see that...". Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between academic disagreement and personal conflict. If a disagreement is conceived to be personal or if the discussion turns sour in any way, it may create unproductive conflicts.

6-make ongoing evaluations

stop conflicts before they start Make ongoing evaluations of the group's way of functioning. What is good? What can be done better? It is the responsibility of all the group members to be aware of unsatisfactory features, and do not postpone addressing the problems until the group work has come to an end.

Conclusion:

Working in groups is a beneficial process that is said to sharpen the critical and creative thinking skills. It can help group members to become more versatile communicators and can enhance their knowledge in a range of different ways. Groups are great for keeping you motivated and on target to complete the task at hand as it is harder to procrastinate when working with others.

Practice 2: Study Groups

By Ms. Mounira Bouhafid



Lesson3: Presentation Skills

By Ms. Ilhem Bendahmen

Introduction

Nowadays presentations skills became very essential for both professional and everyday life , however in order to produce a well done presentation there should be some elements and skills for a successful presentation , whether at the level of studies or formal events , such as seminars , conferences , occasions and so on. Presentation skills allow you to have a certain influence on people around you , hence the way in which you present your work will determine how successful your career is going to be. Therefore, presentation are common during interviews in which you are obliged to produce a formal presentation , that is why it is a must to be able to design and develop your presentation skills .Thus in some instances you are required to work on presentation during your studies, it can be individual or in a group work, here you have to manage the skill on working in a group and alone at the same time.

Techniques for Successful Oral Presentation

Preparing a Presentation

Preparing a presentation is an important process for the success of your performance, that is why you should make enough time for research and preparation while working on a topic, these are some of the questions you need to ask yourself when dealing with preparation:

Who is the audience ?

What is the objective of the presentation?

What is the topic?

How long is the presentation?

What audiovisual aids will you use, for example , Power Point presentation or Internet demonstration ?

Making a Research: this involves elements such as the title , the objective of the presentation, also identifying key topics and themes.

Planning the Presentation

This involves making a plan for your presentation ,taking into consideration the order of ideas and the issue you want to address as the center of your work, a good presentation should be planned as follows:

- Introduction. You. The topic. The presentation – its structure and organization
- The reasons why the presentation is important or relevant to the audience
- The actual topic – this may be broken down into a number of sub topics
- Implications for practice (if appropriate)
- Summary
- Conclusions

- Thank the audience for listening

Using this plan can be an identification of what is the most important point and the additional ones moving from general to specific .

Making it Interesting

The way you present your work will deem the level of interest for the audience , sometimes student deal with fascinating topics but the lack of presentation skills will make it boring and irrelevant because the performance is the key factor of the success of the presentation. Additionally, if you do not know how to spark the audience's interest , you have to find interesting ideas and techniques to develop this skill , for instance you can watch Ted Talks videos and try to imitate the way candidates present their works in front of a large audience.

Try to bring examples into your work , it can be videos , images , statistics(if the topic requires), Make the presentation more interesting by providing summary or basic information using PowerPoint. You can also use these facilities to present a graph, cartoon or a picture containing information that is most easily presented as a visual image. Don't present too much information on each slide. Power Point stands only as a back up to your presentation , you are not allowed to read from the slide during the whole presentation, you can read for example quotes , notes and therefore explain them with your own style. A general rule is that each slide should contain no more than seven lines of information and seven words per line.

Other forms of presentational resources include a flip chart or a white board (if you wish to talk and write at the same time), hand-outs for your audience, a short video clip, a demonstration, or even interactive role-plays.

Group Presentations

If you are working on a group presentation make sure the team is well organized and all the members are active , contribute to the work otherwise your presentation will be unsuccessful which is going to be apparent when you perform it in front of your teacher and friends.

You must work hand in hand , you can divide the work , each one of you would have a part to work on at the same time there is interaction between the members , sharing ideas and discussing what should and shouldn't be done , you should also give equal time to all members while presenting even the way you dress is important make sure to be dressed properly and informally if possible . This way you insure the success of your presentation and most of all you will be organized .

Rehearsing

When you finish preparing your presentation it is quite important to rehearse and perform your work , in front of your friends for example or even in front of the mirror .This means you will be more comfortable and confident about it , you can also check and adjust your timing especially if the teacher asks you for a specific period to present , be aware of the time and try to respect it by not exceeding the timing. The more time you put into preparing your presentation then the more successful it is likely to be. In case you are working on a group presentation it is particularly to practice and make sure your work is integrated and well organized.

Giving a Presentation

- Prepare yourself. Have a good night's sleep. Eat a proper breakfast or lunch. Arrive in plenty of time.

- Organise the room. Some people feel more comfortable using a lectern or table. Think about how you want the audience to sit. Do you want a formal or informal seating arrangement? Do you want the chairs in theatre style, circle or a horse-shoe shape? Once you have organised the room then sit in different locations so that you can check how different members of the audience will view your presentation.
- Check how things work: light switches, electric sockets, heating, windows, blinds and computers , data show.
- Take your watch off and place it on the desk in front of you. Check it regularly (although without making it obvious) to ensure that you are keeping to your schedule and not running out of time
- Do not begin until your tutor and audience are settled and ready to begin listening. • If you are nervous then do some deep breathing.
- Let the audience know when you want to receive questions – during the presentation or at the end of it.
- Try to bring vitality and variety into your speech pattern. Vary your tone. Use your hands and face to make expressions either to stress a particular point or to raise doubt over somebody else’s findings.
- If you have practised your presentation sufficiently, you should be able to remember your main points without having to read or refer to your cards. This will give you the opportunity to talk to, rather than talk at, your audience, which will make you seem more interesting and will capture your audience’s attention.
- Maintain regular eye contact with your audience. Remember to look at the whole audience not just the tutor. If you feel uncomfortable doing this, choose a few people in the audience and glance at them at regular intervals. Raising your head and looking out to your audience throughout your presentation is better than standing, head down, reading from your cards.
- Try not to rush your presentation. If you have prepared it thoroughly you will have enough time to cover all that you need to in the given time. Take a moment to catch your breath after each postcard – this also gives your audience time to consider the point that you have just made. Many presenters speak too quickly. Try to make sure that you speak more slowly than you would in normal conversation.
- If you are part of a group presentation, thank the person who spoke before you and when you have completed your section, present the next group member to the audience.
- When it is time for questions handle them with confidence. If you do not know the answer to any question then be honest and say that you will find out. When you want to close the question session then signal this to your audience by saying ‘We have time for one more question.’
- Thank your audience when you have finished your formal presentation. Do not finish your presentation with your last sentence, quickly gather up your Hull University Business School 73 material and rush to sit down. After you have thanked the audience and ended your presentation, then calmly collect your material and sit down.

Conclusion

Presentation skills are essential for your studies and professional life in the future as well. As much as you practice these skills as much your work will be highly qualified , these skills allow you to have a better understanding of your topic and makes you feel confident ,the key for any successful presentation

is planning and preparation , it enables you to gain respect among your friends and make an impact on the audience.

Practice3:

Form groups of about four to five students, select a topic related to one of the modules you study and prepare a short research paper that you will present in front of your classmates.