Analysis Of Different Study Skills

Introduction

This reflection is about my journey after re-entering education after thirty-eight years out of a classroom setting. Study Skills that will be reflected upon are, Reflective cycles, Referencing, and Working in a group. Gibbs's (1998) Reflective Cycle will be used to complete this essay.

Discussing and critically analyzing principles relating to, the above-mentioned and how planned learning needs to be implemented. During this reflection, other learners or lectures may be mentioned, however, for confidentiality their names are changed to protect disclosure of personal and private information. (NHS England, 2016).

Description

Now a university student, during the first semester my approach towards academic learning was outdated and stale, due to not having been in education for a number of years also reading was not a pastime of mine. Being from a retail management background which is mainly hands-on learning and targets, I knew there would be difficulties, figuring out what and how was the best way to learn would be challenging. After completing the VARK (2020) questionnaire it told me something already known, I was a kinesthetic learner (learn by doing).

Sometimes I lose the motivation or lose direction of what I am supposed to be working on, where to find information and how to paraphrase the information found.

Distraction at home can be overwhelming, the television, the need for rest after a busy day at work. Studying becomes a struggle at times. Writing reflective essays I am discovering is hard as this is new. I appreciate I must find a way of studying that suits me, also manage time, stated in The Study Skills handbook (2019 5) allowing time to think about what learning is will result in better academic conclusions. Not believing in myself enough, gaining confidence and self-awareness will have an effect on my learning. To help gain familiarity and enhance my study skills I have purchased several books which may have been demonstrated to be beneficial.

Feelings

Walking to the lecture room, I was quite nervous also slightly scared. Running alongside this course I had to achieve a Level 3 Care Certificate, Maths, and English both level 2. Having not studied for a very long time, then to have taken on four courses at once was overwhelming. At fifty-four years old, was I too old to be entering education again?. This is a question I have asked myself over and over since starting to study with Oxford Brookes University to gain a Foundation Degree for Assistant Practitioner.

My knowledge was not as great as my experience, and as Sara (Lecturer) started to explain what the course would entail I started doubting myself, will I have time for all of this? Where will I find the time to study? HELP! I have to write essays, I have nowhere quite at home. Would I

fail this course? My heart sank, had I taken the right path, it was more like a cliff face waiting to be scaled.

During the first few weeks, the feeling of being settled came over me, then Sara selected groups and advised that we were to do a presentation on an article she had provided. Then I started to worry, standing up and presenting in front of the class was not my idea of fun, what if I miss heard a question and gave a random response, would I look foolish?. After going home and discussing with my family, my son advised that if I can go from a hearing world into a non-hearing world and achieve, standing up and presenting would be applaudable.

Sara and Reg (lecturers) were on hand to give advice, and group working supported my loss of hearing. After completing the presentation I may settle back to the course.

Learning something new at an age where one should be looking to retire is quite daunting.

Evaluation

I truly didn't appreciate the magnitude of learning that would be involved in conjunction with this course. The negative aspect is time management, quality of study, knowledge, and stress centered around studying at home. I do become frustrated when I am struggling to understand what is required from the essay and the quality of work that is essential to delivering good grades. Another negative aspect of this experience is my hearing loss. Hearing ability is critical to communication, development, and learning, (Kumar. R 2020) having to concentrate on the lecturer's voice and discard background noise, I find this tiring and sometimes stressful. My lecturers are understanding and provide positive support, knowing I have this makes a vast difference. The positive aspect I would be gaining a qualification, be able to research, cite, and write essays and gain a considerable amount of knowledge that would benefit me within my profession. My time management will improve, I have gained valuable knowledge from the book The Study Skills Handbook (2019 5). I have also purchased other material from the reading list which I hope will help me to study. I need to break down the task into manageable sections and keep my end goal in mind. A study routine would be advantageous and learn to take breaks when studying as to not numb the mind, try different types of learning to find one that I am suited to. (Study Skills You Need 2020).

Analysis

In the Lecture, I identified 4 learning cycles, as a team we discussed why Oxford Brookes uses Gibbs (1998). Based on what I know and have researched:

Kolb (1984) – is based on learning from new experiences and dividing them into 4 stages, Actual Experience (a new experience/life changes), insightful observation (is their regularities or contradictions within the experience), Nonconcrete Conceptualization (What new ideas does this give you) and Experimentation (putting ideas into practice)

Kolb(1984) stated, "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). My thoughts are if a person has not experienced all of the stages then how can their plan be effective.

Sch?n (1991) – has two stages - “reflection in action” (while the action is happening), “reflection on action” (After the action has happened).

Sch?n does not break the cycle down sufficiently, hence you could become perplexed of what your essay would define, leaving you open to plagiarism.

Driscoll (1994) – Is based on the question “What?” (happened? did you witness?), “So What?”(feelings, positives, and negatives), “Now What?” (Ideas and execute, would you do things differently?). This is a three-stage cycle, again you could easily become confused and lose your focus.

Gibbs (1988) – separated into 6 stages – ‘Description’ (What happened?), ‘Feelings’ (feelings, opinions at the time), ‘Evaluation’ (positives and negatives), ‘Analysis’ (understanding of the event), ‘Conclusion’ (is there anything else you could have done?) ‘Action Plan’ (formulate a plan if it were to happen again).

I would have chosen Gibbs(1988) to reflect as it is easier to understand, and gives you a definite path to follow. To plan your essay you can put question alongside each stage, encouraging you to write more in-depth of you subject matter.

Graham Gibbs an Oxford University Professor, referring to Kolb’s cycle stated, 'It is not enough just to do, and neither is it enough just to think. Nor is it enough simply to do and think. Learning from experience must involve linking the doing and the thinking.' (Fiechter. K 2020), I find that I am in agreement with Gibbs.

While learning to reference, I struggled to cite correctly. The number of different references was hard to comprehend. As suggested in the Study Skills Book (2009 236-237) I needed to look at what I actually wanted to research, investigate a variety of views. Use the internet, library, eBooks, journals. I needed to decide what was essential, what time I needed to dedicate to reading. Also, citation/referencing will give credit to the original author, show that you have understood, as some references can be false or contradict other sources. Not citing/referencing can lead to unintended plagiarism, which can be described as stealing another’s words.

Group working had brought its own complications. We had difficulty in getting started, different views and understanding of the task, and only seeing your group once a week can lead to unequal participation, taking longer to reach a conclusion after discussion, it can also bring conflicting knowledge. Having said that it also brings advantages (University of Birmingham 2020). Group working can be more productive, which results in getting better ideas, it is easier to solve problems and complete complex tasks. You can also improve your knowledge and communication skills, as teams will have people from different backgrounds and careers. Making an effective team needs understanding and committing to certain tasks. Maintaining a balance of essential information and learning to disregard information that is not relevant. Working in a team can be creative and enhance your experience of learning.

Conclusion

During my study journey, I imagine there are many ways to achieve effective studying. Heinrich (2018) believes stepping away from study and evaluating what I have achieved so far, will

improve the standard of study and retention of knowledge.

Setting myself a study timetable would enable me to manage time effectively and to prioritize my study (UCAS 2108). Feeling the need to ask questions will enable to me understand the subject being studied and give me greater clarity and focus on the given tasks ahead. Making time to read and research would also help my learning. Also having a designated space at home would help with concentration this may also stop me from getting frustrated or stressed with trying to compete with the distractions of home life. Planning and gathering information from different resources, having time to filter out non-essential information before starting a task would preserve energy and improve motivation.