

Assignment 3 - Reflective Journal

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Gibb's reflective cycle model

Learning Experience 1 – Doing Research Investigation with Intelligent Research Cycle (A1)

The experience

This is the first assignment given to me in this unit and it was to be done individually. At first I thought it was a simple and straightforward task where I just have to produce a report that fits within the word limit. However, as the Intelligent Research Cycle was introduced to me in Week 3, I noticed that this was not at all a trivial assignment. In fact, it taught me an indispensable skill that I can make use of in my future endeavors as an active fellow in the IT field. The two topics I had to choose from are ethical issues pertaining to 'Deep Fake' and 'ChatGPT'. Considering it to be a recently released and popular topic, in addition to me finding it intriguing, I chose 'Ethical Issues Pertaining to ChatGPT' as my report topic. Me being confident with my Google searching abilities, I expected myself to be able to gather information quickly, however this is not the case. Not only does the assignment require me to collect information, I also have to ensure that I find primary, secondary and even tertiary sources to support my writing. The first obstacle I faced is how to categorize the sources. I found it confusing to differentiate at first but I tried to seek help by asking my tutor, Mrs. Arini, and conducted self-learning using the resources provided on Moodle. In the end I was able to properly categorize the sources and included sufficient citations to produce a convincing report. Another challenge I faced was the overwhelming amount of information. At one time I had over 20 tabs of different websites open and I tried to assimilate all the information at once. The sheer amount of text on the screen stressed me out and I had to take a break right then. After that, I tackled the assignment using a different strategy whereby I opened the pages one by one, noted down only the important details before moving on to the next. Fortunately, I am able to finish the assignment on time and achieved a high HD result.

The feelings

In the beginning, I felt very confident in being able to finish the assignment quickly because I am in my second semester of my second year, taking on a unit that was supposed to be enrolled in during my first year. Considering that this unit is not related to programming, I underestimated the first assignment. This led to me being shocked at the fact that I am unable to conduct the Intelligent Research Cycle in an effective manner, and also my inability to differentiate the sources. However, I noticed that I am not alone. Quite a number of classmates around me also found categorizing sources a challenging task, and I could sense the similar feeling of anxiousness of not being able to write a decent report in them as well. Therefore, I acknowledged my feelings that it is normal to feel stressed about an assignment, no matter the unit. I also convinced myself that the unit is fair to everyone, so what I'm going through must have been

experienced by many others. Feeling spurred, I managed to relax mentally and finish the report. Having submitted a few days before the deadline, I felt very relieved and grateful to the people who had helped me along the way.

The evaluation

My start on the assignment was rough but eventually I learned how to do things at a slower and steadier pace, which led to a highly rated final product.

A good thing about this experience is that I have acquired a useful skill, which is conducting research using the Intelligent Research Cycle. This method of gathering, analyzing and assimilating information proved useful for researching and writing reports in my other units as well. I used to think that the researching is a linear process. After being exposed to the Intelligent Research Cycle, I now know that it is an iterative process instead, which allows me to refine my research and narrow my focus to produce even better reports. My usual method of writing worked well in this assignment as I am able to produce a cohesive and logical report.

On the contrary, a bad thing about this experience is that I tend to underestimate the tasks at hand and attempt to rush everything all at once. My overconfidence eventually led to my own demise and nearly stressed me out. I feel this situation arose because in most cases I am able to finish my assignments way before the deadline, and thus I had the intuition of being able to do so in this assignment as well before even trying to attempt it. However, this is the very fact that made me realize I am not as competent as I thought I was, especially during the period that I got confused on analyzing the sources.

The analysis

I found out that the scenario of me learning the Intelligent Research Cycle is related to the Theory of Constructivism (University of Buffalo, n.d.). It is a learning theory that emphasizes the active construction of knowledge through personal experiences, reflection, and interaction with the environment instead of passively taking in information. Initially I held a belief that researching is a linear process, but along the way I actively constructed new knowledge about the research process by engaging in it and reflecting on my experiences. With this new skill, I think that it can also be applied to other areas of my academic life studying in Monash, or even in my professional life when working in IT industries in the near future. This is because as a programmer, there is no capacity to learning new things and keeping up with the latest IT trends, therefore the research never ends.

Of the things that went well, I believe that my ability to write in a fluent and logical manner takes root in my high school days, where I always chose to write debate-related topics for essays. These essays usually require a lot of critical thinking and logical reasoning, thus contributing to polishing my skills in this department. Another reason may be me being a relatively rational-over-sensible person, therefore I am able to provide objective insight and a logical analysis of situations and events. This correlates to the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1975), which suggests that individuals are more likely to engage in a behavior when they have positive attitudes towards it. In my case, my past experience with writing essays that require logical statements and presentation of facts demonstrates my positive attitude towards the assignment. Additionally, my inclination towards rationality gives me the ability to provide logical arguments and analysis. These factors will continue to shape my approach to writing during my academic years, especially when writing the report for my final year project. My way of thinking may also prove useful in problem solving when I become a professional in the computer science field.

After research, the things that went badly can be explained using the Dunning-Kruger effect (Duignan, 2023). It is a cognitive bias whereby individuals with low ability or knowledge in a particular area tend to overestimate their competence. Due to my lack of self-awareness, my prior experience of finishing assignments early gave me a false sense of confidence in my abilities, which led to stress and confusion when I was trying to rush the assignment and found out that I underestimated the complexity and time required to finish it. This prompted me to reassess my self-

perceptions and helped me develop a more realistic understanding of my strengths and weaknesses. I now know to fully assess and respect any task given to me no matter how easy or difficult I perceive it to be at first glance.

The conclusion

To conclude, I learnt that I should adhere to the Theory of Constructivism whenever I am learning something new, such that I do not absent-mindedly take in information as is, but instead actively construct knowledge and correct any misunderstandings I may have along the process. Additionally, I learnt that the reason of me being able to produce logically coherent reports resides in the Theory of Reasoned Action, and I will continue to sharpen and apply my critical thinking and logical reasoning skills to my everyday life. I also learnt that for whatever task I am doing, I have to consciously make sure that I do not fall victim to the Dunning-Kruger effect by ensuring that I am competent and confident enough to finish the task at hand respectfully.

The action Plan

Next time when I start learning a new topic, for example the four new units I am about to enroll in for the next semester, I will try to learn actively in class by preparing for the weekly topics beforehand to have some basic knowledge. This is to prevent me from learning in a passive manner whereby I do not have relative knowledge to a new topic and I am forced to take in whatever I am presented with. When I am conducting research by myself, I would make sure that I do so by applying the technical skills of the Intelligent Research Cycle to iteratively improve my learning progress. Besides that, I should also set small, doable goals that progress to the final goal instead of being overly confident trying to finish the task rashly. By doing so I will avoid experiencing the Dunning-Kruger effect which may come around to negatively impact my progress in the end. The values I learnt through this experience are humility and efficiency. I should be humble and not overestimate my abilities in future projects, and I have to avoid setting unrealistic goals to be able to complete tasks efficiently. This experience definitely serves as a core memory that I will look back to reflect on myself when doing my future research-based projects.

Learning Experience 2 – Working with a Team (A2a and A2b)

The experience

This is the second assignment in the unit, but it is required for me to work with a team of 6 members. Working on an assignment individually and as a group are completely different, as various people have their own ways of doing things, and they have different priorities as well. With me being assigned the group leader, this posed as a problem because I have to respect every group member's schedule to plan on when to have a meeting, and setting the action item deadlines. Whenever a situation of my proposed schedule clashes with a group member's other tasks, I would hold a discussion to seek a workable compromise. For instance, there was a week where half of my group has an assignment deadline of another unit coming up. The event clashes with the original scheduled meeting where we have to deliver our results of conducting research. Therefore, I had a discussion with the group and decided on a compromise where we preponed the deadline to a time where everyone agreed on. Another difficulty I faced is the communication within the team. The inefficiency in team communication is evident in a few situations. One is during task delegation, everyone did not express any preference towards the roles, or even the tasks for the assignment. I tried asking for their individual strengths and weaknesses, but all I got was a very general answer from each of them. In the end everyone just agreed with the tasks I allocated to them. I made sure that none of the group members were unhappy with their roles throughout the assignment, because I wanted everyone to have a pleasant time working together. I feel that communication is lacking in the team as most of the time it is just me prompting replies from the others during team meetings as well as in the group chat.

The feelings

I felt pretty awkward during the first group meeting, which was held during the tutorial. Everyone in the group were quite introverted and didn't speak up unless spoken too. Therefore, I took the initiative to break the ice within my group, where I proposed that we have a short self-introduction. I'm glad that my plan worked out and we had gotten to know more about each other by the end of the meeting. At one time when half of my group had a deadline clash with A2a, I felt really worried that we would not be able to finish the assignment in time. I acknowledged that it is normal for me to feel this way as the group leader because I have to make the correct decision so that we can finish all our assignments on time and without hindering one another. Noticing that my group members are feeling anxious about their other assignments, I decided to try and finish A2a early and asked for their opinions. Fortunately, everyone thought it was a good decision and in the end we were able to finish early. I felt a wave of relief as this means we can now focus on other assignments without being distracted. Throughout the duration of Assignment 2a and 2b, I've had moments of frustration because most of the time my groupmates are passively participating in the meetings and collaborative work (writing the report for A2a and making the prototype for A2b). Despite that, I decided to not voice out my thoughts because I think that it would create an unpleasant atmosphere in the group chat and even disrupt the chemistry we had going on. All in all, everything worked out fine, and I'm grateful to have cooperative team mates although they behave quite introvertedly.

The evaluation

My group had a bumpy start as nobody had a clear sense of what to do for the assignment, but gradually the fog cleared out and we progressed smoothly throughout both parts of the assignment. Overall, I enjoyed working with the team despite having brief unpleasant moments.

There are a few things that went well for this assignment working as a team. During meetings, I made use of what I learnt from the unit's textbook provided by Dr. Nailah. I adopted the go-around method (Nailah 2022), which is the procedure of taking turns to speak. For the discussion and info sharing sessions, I prompted all of my group members to speak in turn to make sure that everyone was actively participating and are well on track throughout the meeting. Another good thing is that I made sure that any research that had been carried out was followed by an info sharing

session, whereby the person-in-charge is responsible to give information about the topics they conducted research on. This is to benefit all of us in the group because we are able to learn exponentially quicker. The final thing that worked well is the meeting minutes. Thanks to the Recorder, which is the role appointed to Shun, he made concise yet detailed minutes of every meeting, and always promptly delivered it to the group chat so that everyone can be on track of the goings-on. An example would be, he always wrote down the important points that were discussed in the meeting, and also included a table of action items corresponding to the person that was responsible for it. All of us were able to refresh our memory on what to do before the upcoming meeting and this kept us on schedule for the whole assignment.

One of the things that did not went well is the punctuality of group members. Most of the time I could not start the meeting at the scheduled time because some of the group mates were either absent or would be late. At times most of us are waiting for one or two people to join the meeting, and I felt like it was a waste of time as we could already be discussing and moving on with the assignment. Besides that, the uneven participation rate of the group members is also not a good thing. Some group members are very active with the assignment and they will finish their part relatively quickly, and even helping other members do their parts as well. Those that contributed less did not try to take back the initiative of completing their respective tasks by themselves, to which I felt unjust for the group mate that tried to do more for the team.

The analysis

I believe that my ability to lead dates back to my high school years, where I was appointed the president of the Piano Society in my school. Having led a group of approximately 60 people for two and a half years, I think that I have accumulated quite a bit of experience in the leadership field. I understand that as a person who holds the leadership role should be assertive at times, but not all of the time. I learnt to be compassionate and emphasizing towards the people I am working together with, such that I do not rule by asserting dominance but in fact work alongside my peers, treating them as my equal. This invaluable experience turned out to be very useful in this instance where I took on the leadership role yet again, which is reflected in my group mates' positive reviews of me that are released in Moodle.

Upon researching, I found out that my implementation of the go-around method and info sharing sessions are associated with the Social Orientation Theory (Cuncic, 2023). This theory asserts that the presence of others enhances another individuals' performance. By prompting all group members to contribute and actively participate, I had created a positive environment that fosters collaboration and engagement. Additionally, the practice of info sharing sessions after research and maintaining meeting minutes contributes to the facilitation of collective learning and coordination within the team. By enforcing social interaction, shared knowledge and coordination within the team, it positively influences our individual and group performance. This outcome is visible in the observation that we are able to produce a decent solution and finish the group report ahead of time.

The punctuality issues and uneven participation rate within the group can be seen as manifestations of a psychological phenomenon known as Social Loafing (Wooll, 2022). This phenomenon occurs when individuals exert less effort or lower their performance in group settings compared to when they are working individually. It may be caused by a diffusion of responsibility, whereby individuals feel less accountable for their own contributions and rely on others to carry their workload. Due to me not stepping in and questioning those that were late or absent to group meetings, they feel less guilty and this might also make them prone to making the same mistake in the future. The more active members also feel that it is just minor effort to help the others, thus further demotivating those with less participation to take the initiative or responsibility for their own assigned tasks. Although it is not a major issue in our team, such behavior may have negative impacts on team cohesion and productivity, and also conflicts may arise because not all people perceive fairness in the same way.

The conclusion

In conclusion, I learnt that I should apply the Social Orientation Theory while working in a group, whereby creating a positive working environment boosts another cohorts' performance, as well as alleviate team morale as a whole. The notion of info sharing and meeting minutes are crucial for teamwork projects because it allows the group to keep track of their progress, their to-do lists, as well as shared information. I also learnt that I should continue to take on leadership roles to sharpen my skills in leading, which will prove useful in the near future as I plan on being the leader for my final year project as well. Last but not least, I now understand that I should pay more attention recognizing the presence of Social Loafing within my group and ensure that nobody is slacking such that a fair and just working environment could be established.

The action Plan

From now onwards, I will try to actively learn how to be a better leader and a better teammate so that my presence can benefit all of the people working with me as a team. I plan to watch interviews with prominent leaders to study their traits in being an exceptional leader, as well as those who are working under such leaders to learn about soft skills of serving under people. Next time when I'm working in a team, which is right the next semester where I'll be enrolling in my final year project unit, I will make sure to fully utilize the skills that I have learnt in this unit. These include but are not limited to leadership skills such as implementing the go-around method for group discussions; and interpersonal skills such as being empathic and understanding towards others. I will also pay attention to noticing Social Loafing behaviors within the team and carry out the required actions to prevent it such as giving out warnings or raising the issue in private with the individual. Some important values that I took away in working as a team are punctuality and responsibility. I now understand better that I have to be punctual to group events so that I do not waste precious time of other members and increase team efficiency. I also learnt to be fully responsible for the task that I am allocated to and only seek advice, not help from other members of the team.

Learning Experience 3 – Applying the ERF for Critical Thinking and Decision Making (A2a)

The experience

In the second assignment, I had to apply the Ethical Reasoning Framework (ERF) with my team to come up with a solution that addresses our chosen ethical issue pertaining to ChatGPT – Misinformation and Disinformation. A main problem that my team faced is that none of us had a solid understanding as to how to apply the ERF into our workflow. I felt that I should step up as the group leader to thoroughly learn about the framework and convey my findings to the rest of the team. Eventually after a few sessions of self-study and consulting with Mrs. Arini during the tutorial, I finally grasped the main concepts on how to apply the ERF into our assignment. I then shared about what I learnt during a group meeting and things progress smoothly afterwards. Another issue that I faced is the uncertainty of my group members' progress. Throughout the duration of the assignment, I assigned several research tasks to my group members, such as the factors contributing to the ethical issue, the ACM codes violated, etc. However, I don't see any form of discussion in the group chat, nor did I see any updates of my group mates' progress. I wanted to ask about how each of them was doing for their respective task, but I backed out considering I may be disturbing them. Fortunately, everything turned out fine as all of my group mates finished their own tasks responsibly before the deadline and are able to deliver great results during the group meetings. This made me reflect on myself that I should be more assertive as the group leader to make sure that all of the group members are on board and are able to finish their respective tasks before the designated deadline.

The feelings

Initially, I felt intimidated by the assignment requirement to apply the ERF to come up with a solution especially the application of ethical theories, as this is my first encounter with such a decision-making framework. I did not know that there exists such a series of steps for one to be able to come up with a robust and critical solution addressing the problem at hand. After having a walkthrough of the framework in the tutorial, things slowly made sense to me, and my original feeling of dilemma on where to start vanished. I felt indebted to Mrs. Arini for patiently guiding me until I fully grasped the concept of applying the ERF in the assignment, and decided to give my utmost effort into producing the best solution and report. I also felt dejected because I voiced out my concerns of my inability to understand the ERF in the group chat, but nobody responded or even tried to discuss with me. However, I believe that my group members were not ignoring me on purpose, and they were as clueless as I was. Subsequently, I took on the responsibility to learn what exactly is the ERF and how to apply it in the assignment, as well as teach the concepts to my group members so that they can contribute to the assignment as well. I feel thankful for my group mates because they paid attention to my sharing of what I learnt and applied the ERF in their part of the assignment. Eventually everything worked out well and we were able to incorporate the ideas of the ERF into our process of coming up with a solution – the ChatOverflow website.

The evaluation

Learning about the ERF and applying its concepts into the assignment did not start off well. However, after my efforts to learn and teach the others about it, the group eventually came together and we successfully implemented the ERF in our production of the final solution.

A good thing that had happened when applying the ERF for A2a is the brainstorming session. In before the actual date of the ideation meeting, I distributed the task to everyone in the group such that we are to come up with several principles using the ethical theories taught in the unit as a guideline, and each of us has to think of at least one solution to be presented. During the actual meeting, everyone came prepared with their own thoughts and solutions, and we had a very effective brainstorming session where all of the group members participated in generating ideas freely and

openly, without involving any form of deliberation. This allowed us to quickly ideate multiple innovative and interesting solutions, which served as a rich option bank to choose from for our deliberation process later on.

An unpleasant thing that had happened in this experience was me trying to understand the ERF alone instead of working as a group. Despite me reaching out for help, there was only an awkward silence within the group, as if everyone thought that I would be able to pull through, and were taking my efforts for granted. However, after reconsidering our situations, I concluded that I may be overthinking and they were simply as helpless as I was, and they did not want to acknowledge their incompetence by keeping quiet. Therefore, I decided to be the one to steer the group towards a common understanding, and things worked out in the end so all is well.

The analysis

I think that the reason I am able to face the challenge despite being intimidated by it is due to my nature of not easily giving up. I tend to hold an optimistic belief that things will eventually work out for the better, no matter how difficult it may seem to be. My mental tenacity takes root in my early years where my parents will always tell me to not give up whenever I feel that I am not competent enough. For instance, I once made up the decision to give up learning the piano, but my mother insisted that I should not give up and continued bringing me to class. I eventually learnt that I loved learning the piano and I am glad that I followed my mother's advice to persist through the tough times.

After conducting research online, I found out that the techniques we used to brainstorm ideas is actually called the Nominal Group Technique (ASQ, n.d.). It is a structured method for group problem-solving method that encourages equal participation and generates a large number of ideas. It allows each group member to independently contribute their ideas before engaging in group discussion and decision-making, which is what we implemented during our ideation session. This leads to a more inclusive and productive brainstorming session, as demonstrated in my experience. I believe this benefitted all of us in the group whereby we don't spend unnecessary time arguing and debating on ideas during a session that we are not supposed to. This also facilitated our assignment workflow whereby we could progress smoothing onto the next steps of the ERF, which are deliberation and solution production.

For the case of my unpleasant experience, I learnt that my group members' behavior is closely related to a social psychological phenomenon known as the Bystander Effect (Blagg 2023). This effect shows that, individuals are less likely to offer help or intervene in an emergency when there are other people present. This is often attributed to the diffusion of responsibility, where individuals assume that the others around will take action and therefore feel less personally responsible to act themselves. In my case, the group members assumed that someone other than themselves will provide the necessary assistance to me in learning about the ERF, and this resulted in the lack of support and acknowledgement of my struggle to understand the ERF. I learnt that to break this negative cycle of the manifestation of the Bystander Effect, someone has to take on a leadership role to facilitate a common understanding.

The conclusion

To sum up all of the above, I learnt that I should keep up my positive mentality and toughen up even when I am struggling at times. This optimistic approach proved useful throughout this experience as I am able to pull through for my team and successfully completed the assignment. I think that if I had given up right then and there, we would not be able to produce a decent solution or report. I also learnt that the Nominal Group Technique is very beneficial to a group brainstorming session where the objective is only to generate as many ideas as possible. I will keep this technique in mind and propose this method whenever there is an ideation workshop happening around me. Besides that, I also found out that the Bystander Effect can be devastating to a group project, therefore I will try and take the initiative to prevent the group's progress to be at a standstill.

The action Plan

The next time I am participating in group work, I will try to tackle the tasks and face the issues in an optimistic manner, but by no means am I blindly believing things will always work out without making any effort to improve. I will also bring up the Nominal Group Technique to catalyze the ideation process during group brainstorming whenever possible. In the case where a conflict arises that sparks a debate amidst idea generation, I will attempt to suggest putting off the argument until the deliberation step to not hinder the group's progress and preserve harmony. Last but not least, I will be mindful of any instances of the Bystander Effect taking place. If I am the victim, I will make sure to voice out my opinions, or even seek guidance elsewhere. If somebody else is the victim, I will make sure that I do not contribute to the phenomenon and reach my hand out to them. This will prove crucial in my upcoming final year project as I will be working in an even smaller team of 3 people, the Bystander Effect could potentially break the team apart if overlooked. The values that I learnt in this experience are cooperativeness and empathy. I understand that I have to be a cooperative team member in order for the team to promote harmonious relationships, effective teamwork, and ultimately propelling the team to achieve its common goal. Empathy is also an indispensable value where one can understand the hardships faced by others, as well as being able to put oneself in others' shoes to reduce conflicts sparked by battles of self-esteem.

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