**Reflective Review of the Research Methods and Professional Practice**

ePortfolio website: <https://craig-watts.github.io/CraigWatts.github.io/index>

Page location: <https://craig-watts.github.io/CraigWatts.github.io/RMPP.html>

I started the module in a positive frame of mind; however, I quickly struggled with my time management. The lack of time for me to work on the module was not apparent at first, but it became more evident as I progressed. The culmination of this realisation was when I put together the e-portfolio requirements and realised that it was not as detailed as possible.

I decided to reexamine my learning to date and see where I may have gone wrong. I discovered Gibbs's Reflective Cycle during this reflection, as shown in Figure one below.

Figure 1: The Reflective Cycle



Source: Gibbs, 2013

Utilising Gibbs' reflective cycle as a tool, I have analysed this module and countered that with my recollection of past modules and where perhaps I have gone wrong in my studies.

My initial expectation of this module as a whole was one of confidence in the outcome. I had already completed several modules, although a lot of work all were completed competently.

I had misplaced confidence which was borne out when I completed my literature review and did not get to the required depth of discussion needed within the essay. Analysing why this was so, I have fallen back on why I did better or felt I had a better experience in my recent past modules. Working in a team, I discovered that we worked to deadlines; analysing the Trello boards that I had created, I found that I had made deadlines and measured my progress week by week. In this module, however, I started with no work plan and thought I could quickly work through it week by week with no deadlines or measures of success. In conclusion, I have found that I need to understand the required work, set deadlines and measure my progress weekly. Transposing this to my strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) document, I have identified threats that I need to know about and what I can do about them. This evaluation has led to forming my action plan of what I want to achieve in the next module and dissertation.

The presentation part of this module was instrumental in several ways. Again, I have utilised the Gibbs reflective cycle to examine my thoughts on what I experienced during the research project.

Again, my initial thoughts were that this presentation would not be an issue as I carry out online presentations several times a week and have previously presented in-person to small and large audiences. However, when I looked at the format suggested by the coursework. I discovered two things; one, that it would be more in-depth and comprehensive and two, that it would take a lot more time than I had allocated just for the research phase, let alone the actual creation and recording of the presentation. I found these two issues helped in the end product of the presentation. First, I needed to create a formalised presentation with clear aims and objectives. Second, I needed to explain what I was trying to achieve with the presentation; even though this was a subject I was very comfortable with, I needed to explain my intent and the facts of the presentation. This presentation let me formalise my thinking about what I wanted to use for my dissertation. This formalisation led to an understanding of what skills I need to improve and what new ones I need to gain. These several elements have been entered into my SWOT and my action plan for future work. I have also examined my professional skills matrix and looked at the skills I need to work on in the future.

Although I have mentioned them above, I have not gone into detail about the several documents that have been created, including the SWOT analysis, action plan and professional skills matrix.

Using Gibbs's reflective cycle and these tools have enabled me to work within a framework of sorts. Gibbs gave me an analytical tool to look at how I have worked in the past and see what has worked and what has not. The individual tools have enabled me to work my way through them, filling out the various sections and building a complete picture of my current state and what is required to achieve what I need to complete the course.

In conclusion, I have to acknowledge that for myself, I need a plan of action for any work that I am going to undertake, with clear milestones along the way and deadlines for various distinct sections.

This will then enable to me have the success that I have achieved in past modules for future ones.

References:

Gibbs, G (2013) Learning-by-doing. Available from: <https://thoughtsmostlyaboutlearning.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/learning-by-doing-graham-gibbs.pdf> [Accessed 10 April 2022]