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Summative 5: Becoming a Reflective Practitioner

Individual Reflective Essay

Introduction

This individual reflective essay discusses the personal experiences that were undergone during my engagement with the various projects and responsibilities undertaken in my University years. The purpose of this self-reflective assessment is to reflect on the skills and learning acquired through engaging with the various projects. This will lead towards a determination of considering how to develop skills and learn further to achieve long-term career goals.

Discussion

Kolb's learning cycle will be used for performing this reflective self-assessment. The cycle is structured across four stages (Chiu, 2019), and therefore the self-reflection will adhere to this convention.

Concrete Experience

Throughout my engagement with the University, I was a participant in numerous projects that were related to developing the students' skills in management consultancy. The primary project of note in this was related to developing research skills, which I fulfilled in a separate study of its own. It included a basic understanding of the concept of research skills, followed by a practical explanation of the various areas where research skills can be useful in a management scenario. The client project work was summarily developed as part of a separate assessment, which depended on the project design and solving real-world business concerns. This was followed by the client presentation as another separate summative work, where a presentation was performed to provide recommendations to the client. The fourth summative was a reflective essay on working as a problem-based team, which involved reflecting on the individual successful contributions to the client project.

Reflective Observation

In reflecting on the experience, I can express that it was a valuable experience to take part in the various individual summative works as a part of my learning experience. I was able to learn through practice the significance of teamwork and creating a value-based approach to teamwork execution which was able to meet the requirements presented by the client (Jewell et al., 2019). It was followed by the learning between team members, as we were able to engage in peer feedback assessment to present an honest and perspective assessment of each other's contributions towards the client project (Burgess et al., 2021). This allowed us to grow as a whole by acquiring learning experiences which are relevant to our long-term growth as learners

and professionals in the workplace environment (Delice, Rousseau and Feitosa, 2019). The importance of skills such as researching was made evident in its applicability beyond the academic environment, as researching is a valuable component of performing different professional jobs and responsibilities across different team roles.

Abstract Conceptualisation

Having reflected on the experience in a prior manner, the scope for learning from it becomes empowered to the reflective learner. In learning from the experience, I, therefore, appreciated the various nuances of teamwork which I experienced personally across the different situations in the summative works. This was a valuable learning process, as I was able to understand practical applications of theoretical teamwork models such as Belbin's Team Inventory. As our group was small, we were able to fulfil different team roles across different contexts owing to our awareness of the team roles presented in the Belbin framework (Swailes and McIntyre-Bhatty, 2002). This allowed teamwork to become more efficient, effective and representative of how collective team-focused outputs are capable of focusing individual efforts towards achieving organisational goals (Oyefusi, 2022).

It was another learning experience where my understanding of teamwork formation and dynamics was formed through practical experience, as understood through Tuckman's Model of Team Development (Kumar, Deshmukh and Adhish, 2014). While I had a cursory knowledge of the model and its relevance, it was through personal experience that I acquired the opportunity to learn and grow from it. I understood that it was useful to understand team dynamics in such a manner as it would be useful for my professional growth as well. This is owed to the awareness of team dynamics that allows new team members to become integrated with the team more efficiently. In conjunction with Belbin's Team Inventory model, I understood how an awareness of team roles was intersectional with team development stages (Swailes and McIntyre-Bhatty, 2002). Therefore, as the team formed, I was able to express my skills and capabilities across different moments that required me to contribute to my extent in client projects. Ultimately, this was a practical confirmation of valuable theoretical knowledge that I had acquired throughout my learning experience.

Active Experimentation

In expressing my experiences and determining the subsequent learning from them, I become capable of participating in active experimentation. For this, I will aim to develop key skills over

the next 5 years, which will allow me to gain future advantages in this matter. I will focus on developing my capabilities in learning agility, as the modern workplace environment and the corporate world requires a higher degree of personal leadership effectiveness (De Meuse, 2022). This is necessary to remain employable, productive or otherwise valuable throughout dynamic shifts in the business environment, such as the ongoing integration of digital technology within organisations. For acquiring learning agility, I will utilise a two-fold approach of mindfulness meditation and mnemonic practices for informal learning. Mindfulness meditation has been shown to increase cognitive response and enhance the capability of learning and retaining information (Tang, Hölzel and Posner, 2015). Similarly, mnemonic practices such as the Method of Loci are instrumental in creating a stronger memory that aids in learning and information retention over time (Twomey and Kroneisen, 2021). Through this approach, I will become empowered to learn of new changes in the workplace environment and reskill or upskill accordingly (Pedota, Grilli and Piscitello, 2023). This in turn preserves my long-term employability and value in the growing organisation.

Conclusion

The essay has discussed the personal learning experiences that were acquired across the different stages of summative assessments. Through this, the scope for personal learning and skills development was underlined in the discussion, as self-reflective practice creates this opportunity of learning from experience. This was achieved through the use of a standardised reflective model i.e. Kolb's Learning Cycle, which permitted the discussion to develop across the course of the model's four stages. In determining the long-term approach for continued development, the choice of learning agility ensures that other associated skills that are developed become retained to a fuller extent.

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