# Nursing: Personal and Professional Development Reflection

## Brief introduction

The study aims at discussing my learning my experiences as a student. The Gibbs reflective cycle helps think systematically of steps in an event (Tullis & Albert, 2008). Gibbs reflective was coined in 1985 when life-long learning did not have much meaning. These days, the term is used widely especially in higher education when reflecting on learning experiences based on its steps: Description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action plan.

## Developing Effective Study Practice

***Effective dissertation research***

**Description –** During my time in the program, I learned many things. I was a nurse on attachment in the center. A patient was admitted to the hospital with an open wound. I was put in charge of taking care of the patient by the nurse in charge. At the time of working, I had a mentor, who set examples for me to follow (Ayres & Hopf, 1993).

**Feelings** – One day, as I was in the surgical ward before the operation of the wound, I witnessed the doctor came to examine the status of the patient (Thomas, 2006). I noted that he did not practice hand hygiene when touching the patient’s wound.

**Evaluation** – Since I was a volunteer nurse, who did not want to lose the position in the facility as retaliation in case if reacted to the doctor’s lack of concern for hand hygiene, I decided not to talk to the doctor. When the doctor was done, I approached my mentor and discussed every incidence with him (Miller, 2015). He promised to talk to the doctor about the situation and promised to protect me from retaliation. After talking to the doctor, he admitted that he had made a mistake since he was busy and occupied. He promised never to repeat the same mistake. I was not fully contented with the matter since I would have addressed it before touching the patients wound. I was glad to solve a problem although, taking longer steps.

**Analysis** – The event in the hospital made me wonder if doctors, who have spent much time learning and gaining skills should have such mistakes (Kuypers, 2001). Some petty mistakes should not be carried out by doctors as they are the one to set examples for the junior physicians and nurses.

**Conclusion** – One of the major reasons that result in infection in the patient is unclean hands or tools used to handle the patient (Renz, 1999). A patient should have trust in their doctors and nurses as well.

**Action plan –** The study above shows that there is a probability of the worker to have more complications than he or she came with to the hospital (Yeo, 1995). Some of the infections are caused by the ignorance of the doctors or nurses, who are taking care of the patient. One of the ways that causing more infections can be prevented is by adhering to the hand hygiene diligently.

## Techniques for getting organized

***Barriers to Managing Time***

**Description** – As a nurse on attachment in ABC healthcare (not the real name), I had to complete various tasks in a given day. The tasks were outlined in the previous day by the nurse in charge. For the attachment to be successful, the nurse had to make sure I had finished the assigned tasks to sign for me. However, at times, I found myself getting late with tasks or even postponing some tasks. My supervisor kept on urging me to learn how to keep and manage time.

**Feelings** – It went on for sometimes until I felt like leaving the facility as I felt there was a lot of work. The supervisors insisted that I was given training that was important to me and what is important in the real world. I was informed that the experience I was going through was what nurses go through in their day to day job as they have to be active and efficient. At times, I found myself going through social media during work time an act which supervisor condemned.

**Evaluation** – The supervisor kept on telling me that the patients’ lives depended on us and it is our role to keep them alive in every way we can. During the time, I felt intimidated by the nurse in charge, who also happened to be my supervisor.

**Analysis** – I felt that they were pressuring and did not appreciate even a single contribution I made to the organization. The report of my attachment described me as an average in a workplace. The results made were good as I had been slow throughout. I felt as if they were not fair enough as they had a major contribution to my final grade and could affect the grade negatively.

**Conclusion** – I learned many things while in the attachment. First, in anything that one undertakes, one needs to set goals ahead. If I had goals to be achieved daily or during the end of the period, the result of the attachment would be better. Also, next time during a similar event, I will make sure to avoid timewasters, such as phone during work.

**Action plan** – Mobile phones are one of the major distracters during work. One should get used to using the phone during breaks unless faced with an emergency. I will also develop a positive attitude towards my job. That will help in doing an effective work without being forced.

## Making effective presentations

Presentation in nursing can be used to present projects and seminar papers. For an effective presentation to be achieved, one has to use public speaking.

***Public speaking***

**Description** – During the visual arts festivals, I was one of the participants in the public speaking. I was nervous when facing the big crowd in front of me. When the time came to start, I ran out of points, despite the fact that I had rehearsed for an entire month. The room was silent that I became more nervous. I started hesitating and stammering in my presentation. The crowd became impatient that they started murmuring. Some even started making intimidating laughter and booing me. Though I finished the presentation, it was not according to my expectations. When the results were announced, I was last on the list. The judges pointed some common mistakes noted, which included that I was not confident. They also pointed out that they had noted that I had not practiced fully according to the set standards and expectations. In my mind, I was thinking as the victim, who is being analyzed as all the negativities pointed out reflected me.

**Feelings** – I was so embarrassed that I did not want to speak to anyone. My fellow students, who were also participants in the festivals, were not very happy with me. Teachers, who were also there, were disappointed (Wang, 2013). The experience was good because I learned some of the important presentation lessons.

**Evaluation** – It was bad because it turned my day into a miserable one. The level of embarrassment felt that day was more than any other I have ever faced in any day of my life. I nearly vowed to never participate in another presentation again. However, the experience is the best teacher.

**Analysis** – One should not be brought down by the difficulties faced in their lives. They are meant to boost you and make you stronger. During the next presentation, I would need more time than one month of practicing. One of the key factors that help one during a presentation is getting used to embarrassments. During my free time, I will spend time practicing imagining a large audience in front listening to me. When a similar situation arises, I will make sure to engage the audience. When I feel as if am about to forget points, I would ask some rhetorical questions, which will help me get back to the presentation by remembering the forgotten points.

**Conclusion** – Body language is another vital factor in the case of public speaking. Next time, I will make sure to stand still during the presentation. Constant eye contact with the audience will also help me boost my courage. When I feel nervous, taking deep breaths may help to relieve me.

**Action plan** – As I am a victim of losing courage while performing on stage, I will make sure to watch other speakers, who are more experienced than me. Watching my last speeches including the messed presentation will also take a big part in helping me.

## Team Working

**Description** – When our university community team decided we should organize a community volunteering project, I felt it was absurd and impractical for the team to complete the project in a day. My reason being, it is impossible for a 20-member team to clean and plant trees in a five-acre field in one day (Hu, 2003). Surprisingly, the team managed to complete the project in one day. The team leader split the team into groups of four each covering one acre (Lema, 2012). One acre covered by four individuals is manageable than five acres covered by 20 individuals. Of the four members, two were instructed to collect waste, and the other two were to plant trees (Melymbros, 2016). Each of the 20 individuals had a role to play in the team. Each of the five teams was represented by a team leader, who was supposed to report to the head team leader for the 20 individuals after covering half an acre. This was meant to access the team’s speed, and in case of a problem, it was easily identified earlier and therefore saving on time.

**Feelings** –Teamwork is a topic I understand well from sports I take part in the school. Despite believing in team working skill, such as dividing workloads, the idea of 20 members covering 5 acres was impossible to me. It is possible to feel underpowered when assigned with tasks as a team (Brower, 1986). Dividing the workload was the main reason the community team managed to complete the project in a day.

**Evaluation** – According to Belbin’s team role management approach, a team should consist of different roles, which in turn produces maximum performance (Gordon & Felman, 2014).

**Analysis** – The team leader of the university community team was aware of that. Therefore, he divided the project into different roles an allocated each team member to each role. This enabled maximum performance in the team. Working as a group was motivating to the team members. Another plus for the team was the leadership skills shown by the leaders. The team leaders took roles in the project despite having other roles, such as monitoring the group’s performance.

**Conclusion** – Individuals working as a group will be highly motivated not to let down other group members thus they will produce maximum performance (Brehm, 1998). These individuals also a realized that it waseasier to achieve life goals when working as a group than working alone. From the above reflection, we concluded that certain specific skills are necessary. They include managerial skills and interpersonal skills (Isaac & Curson, 2012).

**Action plan** – These skills help in the smooth flow of the work without noticeable conflicts. The above reflection is a good example of the efficiency of team working skills. However, the motivation levels could have been boosted by sharing a meal together. Moreover, the team members were fatigued; they needed a moment together to cheer them up for future demanding projects (Heindrich & Wall, 2016). The same method is recommended for future team project as it proved to be effective on this day.

## People skills

**Description** – In the university, we have formed study groups that comprise of ten members. Each study group has a group leader. I am a group leader of one of the groups. We meet on Saturdays and weekends at 2 p.m. Group commitment is essential in managing tasks (Honey, 2001; Thompson, 2015). Recently, part of the group has not been attending the group meetings. They do not take part in the weekly reports that we submit to our lecturers and benefit from marks I think they do not deserve. Therefore, I decided to call for a mid-week summon where I would question them for their absence in the weekly meetings. However, only 8 of the ten members attended and of the 8, 7 of them have been attending our usual meetings in the weekend. As a team, we talked to the member present, who have not been attending the weekend meetings, and he decided to write an apology to the members and attend any other meetings held by the group. It turned out that he had no reason for missing the group meetings, but because of attending the meeting, the group decided not to punish him, and I agreed with the decision (Wainwright, 1993). However, he went on and wrote the apology where he explained his regrets for missing a lot during group discussions and taking advantage of the group’s marks (Mintron, 2003). The group accepted the apology, and the marks stood for the weeks he had been missing. The other two members, who have not been attending the usual weekend discussions and missed the meeting, were removed from the group by the members, and I agreed. On top of that, their marks for the missing weeks were withdrawn. I discovered later on that the two members were facing social problems, but their lack of communication led to serious actions from the group.

**Feelings** – It is clear that leaders should focus on developing their people than self-development. On the above reflection, allowing the group members to make decisions that can change the structure of the group is involving (Davidson, 2001).

**Evaluation** – The good thing about the situation is the fact that the group managed to conclude without any difficulties despite not involving everyone. The bad thing is that the group could not involve every member in decision-making. However, it was impossible to involve the entire members as some were not cooperative, which leads to stress (Smith, 2002).

**Analysis** – The group managed to create a rapport with the cooperative member. Calling the two members would probably have solved the problem in a win-win situation, where I would learn their problems, and they would not lose their position in the group and weekly group marks, which proves our efforts for the success of everyone (Thomas & Caddle, 2012).

**Conclusion** – As much as the final decision is made by the group leader, I asserted that the two members had deserted the group and the punishment upon them was deserved.

**Action plan** – In case of a similar situation, the group leader should put more effort and talk to the members, and in that way maybe it will be easier to deal with “difficult people” and realize they are not difficult because they are only experiencing problems that put them in that situation.

## Dealing with stress

**Description** – Stress is a reaction to the demand and pressure that we experience in life. It is common in everyone’s life. Life in the university turned out to be stressing for my friend due to the inability of his parents to pay school fees in time. On top of that was the pressure to graduate from the university, failure and according to him, his life would be deemed unsuccessful. This led to a work-study program that he took part in to help pay for his university fees and sustain his day to day needs (Boss, 2002). After a few weeks of work study, he experienced depression, headaches, chronic insomnia, anxiety and lack of concentrations during his classes. He later realized they were stress symptoms, which affected his main exams results. Low exam marks led to low self-confidence and low self-esteem, which are the long-term effects of stress (Gregson, 2000; Ireland, 1974). Later on, he put learning on hold, started a saving scheme and then rejoined school after two years, and he is doing well with school work.

**Feelings** – I was pitiful for my friend as it was almost impossible for him to continue with his studies at the university. The pressure to make his life successful by graduating was off his shoulder the moment he rejoined school. However, his plan worked well, and he rejoined school, paid for his fees and sustained his daily needs. It is possible, with hope to rise again (Linden, 2005).

**Evaluation** – The good part about the above reflection was that my friend rejoined school and paid school fees. The bad part was for the time wasted that he put learning on hold (Greenberg, 2008).

**Analysis** – My friend benefited from his plan as he is on the path to graduation, which will help boost his self-esteem and self-confidence. Moreover, his life can be stated as successful. An alternative solution to the above situation is to come up with a way of managing work and study. By doing so, he would have saved in the two years he put on hold. Stress was from fatigue and if he found out a good method to fight fatigue then possibly continuing with the work-study program would not have caused any issues at all (Adamson & Right, 2007).

**Conclusion** – Stress management is a difficult method to solve problems as already one are under pressure from the stress and therefore it can turn out to be difficult. However, it is the best method of problem-solving as alternatives can prove to be costly (Lehrer & Wolfolk, 2007). Also, a friend can help through stress management.

**Action plan** – In case of a similar situation, I would encourage the person to hold on and overcome stress. Slowly, one will get used to the schedule.

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