

The self management competencies



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INTRODUCTION

Competencies are underlying characteristics that lead to superior performance in an individual. They include qualities, skills, attributes and traits that help people to be successful. Competencies are capable of being developed in people rather than being fixed. This competency development is mostly developed through Personal & Professional Skills. Personal & Professional Development is essentially an avenue of teaching professionals how to develop their professional skills, focusing on what we do and how we do them. Personal and Professional Development is vital for the development professional abilities in every individual and I am not an exception. This is because in professional development, a person's security does not lie in the job or organisation they work for but in the skills, knowledge and experiences that they have within themselves (Megginson & Whitaker 2007). This shows the necessity to increase one's knowledge through specialised and consistent education in one's profession. This work will show how the module Personal and Professional Development has affected my professional skills. In doing that, we shall discuss briefly how the five competencies have affected my professional skills but there will be in-depth explanation on self development competencies. The reasons for choosing self development competency are due to its importance in the development of my professional skills and because I noticed after the study of the module that I need so much improvement in the competency.

In my learning analysis, I will critically examine the module and show how it has impacted on me positively or otherwise, identifies my areas of strengths

and weaknesses and develops action plans to improve on my strengths and do away or at least improve on my weakness and thereafter conclude.

ANALYSIS OF MY LEARNING ON THE MODULE

Before the analysis of my learning in this module, I will briefly define learning. Learning is an acquisition of knowledge or skill that enables us to realise something new, or be able to do something we haven't done before (Diana Winstanley, 2005). Learning is acquiring facts, skills and methods (Säljö 1979) and it is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (Kolb 1984). According to Honey and Mumford (1986), there are four different learning styles (activist, pragmatist, reflector and theorist). Learning is also transferring knowledge into action- it is about developing competence and being able to put the knowledge into practice. I will also highlight what is expected in all the five competencies and relate it to my learning in the module.

SELF-MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES

Under this competency, we have learning preferences, perception, values, managing stress and personal resilience. In learning preference we mean how do you want to learn best: listening, reading on your own or other means. Perception simply means the way you see things. Values according to Rokeach, 1973 are desirable, trans-situational goals that vary in importance as guiding principles in people's lives. Personal resilience is our ability to bounce back, or even grow, in the face of pressures and threats. Stress is defined as “ the mental and physical condition that results from a perceived threat or demand that cannot be dealt with readily” (Furnham 2005).

INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCIES

Interpersonal competency is the ability to relate and understand others. Here learners try to see things from other people's point of view in order to understand how they think and feel. An interpersonal competent person tries to maintain peace in group settings and encourage co-operation. An interpersonal competent person is Self-confident, assertive, Influence and persuade others, handles emotions and conflicts very well and above is a team builder.

SELF DEVELOPMENT COMPETENCIES

When we talk of self development competency, we mean competency in developing one self. Some of the things that come to mind there are setting achievable goals, receiving feedback, motivation, self disclosure and reflective thinking.

PERSONAL LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

Here we talk about what is in a person that make him or her a good leader. Its competencies include power ie power to lead, influence and trust (Being able and prepared to adopt a number of ways to gain support and influence diverse parties, with the aim of securing improvements), empowerment (striving to facilitate others' contributions and to share leadership, nurturing capability and long-term development of others), emotional intelligence ('the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own feelings and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions' (Salovey and Mayer 1990, pp. 5)) and leadership style.

ENGAGING WITH OTHERS COMPETENCIES

In engaging with others competencies, we have valuing diversity which made me realise that people are different. Valuing diversity is important, because the increasing globalization in the world requires more interaction among people from diverse cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds than ever before. Also cultural awareness comes to mind as culture is a major source of individual differences, which results in different personalities.

Professionalism and ethics are competencies that a professional cannot play with. The simply means dos and don'ts in the profession, this module shows me that what keeps me in the profession aside my personal knowledge and interaction, developing self, leading well is to know when I am either doing short of what is expected of me or when I am over doing it.

This module at first seemed meaningless to me, the only reason why I listened was that I was curious and that it is part of my module, though I questioned its usefulness. But as time goes on, it started sinking, started becoming interesting, I started becoming aware of my developmental needs.

The first class I attended was very boring initially, but when class activity on learning preferences was given, I realise that I needed self-development and personal change; which means that I had been in phase 1 of my personal and professional development (being unconscious and incompetent; Straangard, 1981). Nevertheless, I immediately chose to develop myself because deep inside me I was motivated to learn and succeed (Megginson et al. 2007). In the course of my learning, I discovered so many things about myself that I did not know before. Typical examples are that I now know how to use feedback to develop myself effectively. I also now know what it means

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to set a realizable goal within realizable time frame. Furthermore, my participation in group work as far as I know has now made me whole by making me know how to work in a team with different people as the module boosted my self-confidence.

The module has helped me to know my learning preferences as a reflector (good listener, thoughtful and analytical, adopts a low profile and likes to procrastinate) which I discovered after taking the test on 'knowing your learning styles'. The benefit of knowing this my learning style is that "...it shifts the emphasis towards encouraging a balanced approach to learning and, perhaps more importantly, an explicit awareness of the range of approaches available to me the learner"(CIPD 2006). What I have achieved in the way I see things after this module cannot be underestimated. The module has taught me how to see things not only from my point of view but other people's own too. In terms of values, my value systems have changed. In the module, I saw what Kohlberg (1981) came up with as three types of personal values namely; Pre-conventional values -punishment, obedience and self-interest; Conventional values- expectations and conformity; and Post-conventional values -universal ethical principles. I also improved on stress management either my personal or people's stress after analyzing its definition by Ivancevich et al. (1990). They defined stress management as "Any activity, program or opportunity initiated by an organization, which focuses on reducing the presence of work-related stressors or on assisting individuals to minimize the negative outcomes of exposure to these stressors."

As regards my interpersonal skills, the group work in this module improved my self confidence. We were given group work on individual differences and to my utmost surprise; my group chose to represent the group. At first, I shivered and even said no, but after encouragement from the group members, I summoned courage and represented. The feedback I got was very encouraging positive and I picked up from there. Thereafter, I have been able to talk or represent other groups in the class in many occasions. The group work I have involved in this module has made me to know that I am not assertive enough even when I know it all. It made me to understand clearly what assertion (stating clearly what I mean) means as against submission or aggression (forcing). I like taking a looking position, and this is one area I need to improve on. As regards influence and persuasion, I noticed that I am not a very influential person, I just do my things my own way, but the module made me to understand that as a professional I need little of influence to succeed. Ironically, the module brought to fore my ability to handle emotion and conflict. During our class discussion on individual differences, one of my group members was emotionally touch when he was told to be too aggressive; I was thorough and careful to understand his emotion in order to resolve his emotion. My effort to control his emotion showed me my ability to handle emotion and conflict. In building my team skills, I listen carefully and avoid interrupting others. Considering the class activity on ' Team role, self-perception Inventory', using Belbin, (1981, 2007) concept of team roles I discovered that I am a team worker -co-operative, mild, listens, perceptive and diplomatic but indecisive in crunch situations. This module's first class group work activity made me to reflect on my team skills. I sat back and carefully listened and I only made impact after careful

consideration of other people' side of reasoning. One area of teamwork that gives me concern after the module is that I am reluctant to delegate. This module has actually opened my eyes on how to do team work. As a result, my team skills have improved and feedback from friends and classmates have confirmed it.

I need to work more on my goal setting because it is very important to my success in anything I do. It is really an area of weakness for me. The first group work activity in class on this module made me realise that. We were given a time frame which I nearly missed because the goal I set was not within the time frame. Notwithstanding, I chose to develop my goal setting and I set targets for achievement. Also, there is need for improvement on feedback. This is discussed in detail below.

The study of PPD module has impacted on me how to use my power. My class group that I spoke for group proves that. Before that group work, I hardly stand in front of people, not to talk of leading a discussion.

Interestingly, I found out that my influential power is nothing. The module also gave me an insight about my empowerment capabilities. I found out that I have interest in long-term development of others. My emotional intelligence ability was brought into fore with the study of this course as could be seen in our group when someone was hurt for being branded aggressive.

This module made me aware of the concept of leadership and I decided to know my leadership style by taking a leadership test online (' what is your Leadership Style'). I found out that my leadership style is participative and

non-assertive. What I do is to listen more from the people I lead and talk less. My leadership competency and skills lies on my ability to carry everyone along by allowing anybody that wants to contribute to do so before I arrive at a conclusion. During our class discussion on attitudes and values, I was carefully and thoroughly detailed our group points of view before my presentation.

Valuing diversity made realise that people are different when we were given group assignment. I encourage other people's view, is not great surprise to me working together with my group on class discussion with careful and thoughtful manner in topic we are meant to discuss, I use the opportunity to put everybody together although we are from different background and culture also share some similarities.

COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT: SELF DEVELOPMENT COMPETENCIES

This competency is selected because of its importance in professional skill development and I have needed to develop more here.

According to Wikipedia, personal/self development refers to activities that improve self knowledge and identity, develops knowledge and potentials build human capital and employability, enhance quality of life and contribute to the realization of dreams and aspiration.

When we talk of this competency, the things that come to our mind are setting well-defined and realistic personal goals; displaying a high level of initiative, effort, and commitment towards completing assignments in a

timely manner; works with minimal supervision; is motivated to achieve and demonstrates responsible behaviour.

Goal setting is a powerful technique that appears to work by providing a direction for our efforts, focusing our attention, promoting persistence and increasing our confidence (providing we achieve the goals we set). Setting goals as my strategy for self- development is worthwhile and that is why I chose this competence. Before this module, I normally set goals which I noticed were not achievable, with completion of this module, I realised that my goals need to be SMART in order to be achievable. The SMART method assumes that goals should be Specific; Measurable; Attainable; Relevant and Time bound. This module has made me to know that I can set ambitious targets and has helped me to show determination to meet the goals as set. With the SMART method, I now take necessary actions to meet my goals; identify and apply measures to track and quantify achievement, overcome obstacles to achieving goals and even use failure as an opportunity to learn.

Self awareness/disclosure: This is ability to self-reflect and be aware of one's inner state of being like inner feelings, dreams, relationships with others, strengths and weaknesses. McCarthy & Garavan (1999) defines Self-awareness as, “ the image that an individual has about him/herself and whether or not that image is accurate in comparison with how others perceive that individual”. It involves self-efficacy, self-actualisation and self-concept. Self-efficacy is the extent to which a person believes he/she can perform the behaviour required in any given situation (Arnold et al., 1991; Bandura, 1989), self-actualisation is an active striving for personal development which might involve exploring one's talents, educating oneself

and/or perfecting physical skills (Rogers, 1961) and Self-concept, as defined by Hayes (1994) is the evaluation that individuals make about their traits and personalities and the image that they have of themselves. My research in the module showed me what it means for an individual to develop an image of him/herself and certain core aspects of it as explained by Whetten & Cameron (2007). The self disclosure skills I learnt from the module include: Recognizing own strengths and weaknesses, reflecting and analyzing oneself, awareness of inner feelings, desires and dreams, evaluating thinking patterns, reasoning with oneself, understanding role in relationship to others. However, my learning on self-awareness, prompted me to use the johari window by (Luft & Ingham 1955) to know more about my personality by getting feedback from friends. The feedback about my blind self was shocking to me because I never imagined any of them; however, it gave me insights on some of my strengths and weaknesses. I really found out that I need to work on myself disclosure after receiving the feedback.

Receiving feedback: A Person who has this competency seeks feedback on strengths and weaknesses and initiates activities to increase or enhance knowledge, skills, and competence in order to perform more effectively or enhance career. The person receives feedback in a constructive manner, probes for concrete examples and suggestions to improve own performance. The person spends time learning new information or ideas and applying them effectively, keeps up to date in knowledge and skills and learns from successes and failures Receiving feedback include consulting relevant sources (e. g., appraisals, reports, videos, customer feedback) to get insight into own performance. Feedback is necessary because it is a moderator of

goal effects in that the combination of goals (Bandura & Cervone, 1983; Becker, 1978; Erez, 1977; Strang, et al. (1978).

With this module, I found out that I need to do much more on receiving feedback. Before the module, I ask for feedback without knowing the strengths in receiving it. Completion of the module show me how I can effectively make use received feedback in the following ways: I will learn from both successes and failures, Initiates project debriefs to clarify learnings-both what worked well and what could be done more effectively in the future, Seeks both formal and informal development opportunities, Demonstrates a desire to perform above and beyond the requirements of my position, Coaches others to focus on self-development, builds a culture that encourages learning and continuous improvement and self-critical by identifying both my strong and weak points.

Reflective thinking:

Reflective thinking involves personal consideration of one's own learning. It considers personal achievements and failures and asks what worked, what didn't, and what needs improvement (Given, 2002).

It is a part of the critical thinking process referring specifically to the processes of analyzing, evaluating, and making judgments about what has happened. The module made me to find out that this attribute was almost lacking in me. I naturally set goals, ask for feedback and is even motivated, but this module made me understand that most of my failures are because of absence of reflection. If you not sit down to analyze what went wrong you

keep on making same mistakes. With completion of this module, I now have effective tool of combining reflection with feedback to get my utmost result.

Motivation according to Robbins and Judge, (2009) is a process that account for an individual's intensity, direction and persistence of effort towards attaining a goal. Motivation Shows determination to achieve goals over time; resists any pressure to be deflected from this attainment. Takes calculated risks, based on learning and experience, to achieve longer-term service improvements.

CONCLUSION

The importance of this module to my professional development cannot be underestimated. It is like an eye opener. It shows me what to do and what not to do as a professional, It shows me where to improve my skills to be great in my profession. In fact, I now understand that the road to professional success is not just based on knowing what to do, but knowing how best to do it to get utmost result.

I am particularly happy about my present and likely future improvement on myself based on what I now know about goal setting, self awareness, feedback, motivation and reflection.

Conclusively, with the course in general, I am now more equipped for the challenge ahead not as a student but as a professional.