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Reflective Report – Academic Skills Module

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1. Introduction

My Reflective report describes my learning challenges in the Academic Skills module in the course of the Certificate of Higher Education in Business Skills to the Workplace. With the help of assessments and classroom tasks, I learned to work with references, take notes, paraphrase my words, and manage my time appropriately. I was also able to self-learn and develop my self-awareness due to these experiences. Reflecting, as Cottrell (2024) points it out, contributes to lifelong learning, which is critical to academic development, as well as professional one (Cottrell, 2024).

2. Description of Experiences

During the Academic Skills module, I was involved in various tests and classroom-based exercises that played a major role in developing my educational progress. Task 1 consisted of a 45-minute academic skills quiz, which consisted of testing my knowledge of the necessary subjects including time management, referencing, note-taking, and academic misconduct. This kind of quiz was especially helpful to me as it helped me see what are my strengths and weaknesses when dealing with academic material.

Task 2 was a practical application session of 90 minutes where I was required to make structured notes out of a small academic text, paraphrase some sentences and write a brief academic style paragraph. The assignment contributed to my utilization of theoretical information in the self-regulating environment. It enriched me with knowledge about the academic writing rules and helped me understand how important being clear and correct in my paraphrases can be.

In addition to the assessments, I participated in classroom interactions including using the Eisenhower Matrix as a time management tool, group discussions of the issues of plagiarism, and reading conferences. I have found out that the Cornell style of note taking is most suitable to my learning style. But as Race (2001) points out, the active involvement is paramount to the skills development- it became clear to me that I still require some improvement in my skills of paraphrasing so as to retain more meaning (Race, 2001).

3. Analysis and Personal Reflection

3.1 What Went Well

Another important academic achievement that I had in the Academic Skills module was that I performed well in Task 1 and that I produced a good knowledge of the concepts of Harvard referencing and academic misconduct. Regarding plagiarism and proper source citation, I was sure that I could recognize it and formulate properly to have the upper hand in an exam where there is time. Also, utilisation of Cornell note-taking technique in this task and lectures allowed me to organise the required information and memorise it in a structured way. It was easier to revise the text as it divided main ideas and supporting points. Time management techniques such as prioritisation of tasks were also applied and it enhanced my concentration and effectiveness in doing tests (Cottrell, 2024).

3.2 What Did Not Go Well

Even after my strengths, I was also challenged at paraphrasing Task 2. I had difficulties with paraphrasing the material and used some false formulations or referenced the original one. In order to prevent plagiarism and demonstrate the understanding, as it is emphasized by Neville (2016), providing a proper paraphrasing and citation is required. In-text citations were also misunderstood by me when I thought that only a reference list was needed. Also, earlier during my research, I over-utilized non-academic resources in the form of blogs, instead of peer-reviewed journal sources, which influenced the quality of my research (Neville, 2016).

3.3 Lessons Learned

Overall, with the help of peer responses to my work and general discussion in the classroom, I managed to be more critical of the sources, focusing on treating academic journals, textbooks, and official websites as better sources than just random information on the Internet. I also gained a better understanding of academic writing rules, e.g., the use of a formal tone, keeping ladies and gentlemen together, not referring to first-person pronouns, with few exceptions relating to reflective writing. With frequent practice using Harvard referencing, my citation became accurate and I felt confident in doing it. Also, annotated practice on reading helped me to become better at finding major arguments and evidence, which in turn has helped me in a variety of tasks helping me to improve in paraphrasing and summarising (Tribble, 2009).

3.4 Personal Growth and Development

This module has had a major impact in increasing my confidence as well as developing me as an individual. I have learned to be self-reliant in the way I handle my studies by setting up planners

and schedules to set priorities and keep to deadlines. I have also gained a better awareness of academic integrity, namely citing all the sources correctly. The assessment types that are time-based also trained me to withstand stress and be prepared to face the real world challenges. Reflective learning brings together the thoughts of experience and theory into a better understanding of oneself (Moon, 2013). The practice has given me the motivation to review my learning strategies and learning behaviours visiting to improve my performance as I become a lifelong learner (Moon, 2007).

3.5 Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Strengths:

I believe my main strengths lie in **referencing, critical thinking, and note organisation**. I actively participated in group discussions and contributed confidently to academic debates, showing engagement and willingness to learn.

Areas for Improvement:

Paraphrasing is one of the areas that need improvement. The practice that I intend to engage in will involve writing a summary of academic research works and trying to improve my writing organization and vocabulary. I also want to regularly select and compare the sources, paying more attention to qualitative academic sources to achieve more credibility and scholasticity.

4. Conclusion

To conclude, the Academic Skills module has helped me develop my skills regarding referencing, note-taking, and critical thinking. In addition to this, my competencies have enhanced my academic life and contributed to my confidence with regard to learning independently. I now understand the need of being in constant development and reflection on self to succeed in the long run. These acquired skills are not only applicable in future academic work, but also are extremely transportable to the professional work-life: writing coherent business-related reports, organizing information in an effective way, and communicating in a work-related setting with self-ownership and responsibility.

Reference

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