

ACS report

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1 Introduction

Reflection is the process of thinking carefully and deeply about a particular subject, normally involving past lessons and experiences (University of Hull, 2024). It is said that 'Reflection in learning is necessary for students to revisit what they have learned for improvement and for in-depth learning' (Chang, 2019, p. 2).

I will reflect on two key experiences this term in the academic skills module which were writing paragraphs and referencing. They were a significant part on my studies, as English is not my first language, I find it hard to translate certain academic words and put them in a paragraph. This made me realise my English vocabulary is something that I would need to improve in order to be able to feel more confident. I will first talking about my experience, I analyse my experience and to conclude what I will do to improve myself.

2 Description of Experiences

The first academic skill is paragraphs. 'Paragraphs are blocks of text which serve as a way of organising information both for you and for your reader, adding one idea at a time to your broader argument, they are the building blocks of your writing and the foundations upon which academic writing is built' (National College of Ireland, 2025) In week 6 we learnt about paragraphs. To prepare ourselves the lecturer gave us a lot of homework which I did understand how to highlight the different areas for Topic, Explanation, Evidence & Link (TEEL) and write a paragraph with no time limit. Also TEEL check list, how many main themes a good topic sentence should have, how to recognise when they were strong or weak paragraphs. However, once I was in the real task in class I found it extremely hard as I am not confident with my writing or working under pressure. I understand TEEL however when I had to write a paragraph on TEEL in the exam I really struggled.

The second academic skill is referencing. Harvard referencing is used to use information from other academic literature in your own report to support your learning and writing (Pears & Shields, 2022). In class when I learnt about referencing, there was a lot of information to take in, in a short time. In week 3 when the lecturer introduced the referencing templates, I found it hard to keep up and my colleagues also had a lot of questions about this topic. We learnt what is referencing, how to acknowledge the source of information we have used, havard referencing, citations VS full references, references list when to use 'ET. AL.', the difference between in text citation and reference list, plus the difference between the reference for book, journal or website, there was a lot of details to learn.

3 Personal Reflection

3.1 Evaluation

When I wrote the paragraph with TEEL in class, I felt overwhelmed and anxious so I couldn't deliver my best. As the writing is what I think I'm not good at plus I don't work well under pressure, everytime I looked to the time my brain froze. I believe because of this I couldn't put my thoughts clearly in words, so I spent more time on other areas which I felt more confident with.

Even though I really struggled in the class with too much information, when the lecturer provided the week 3 worksheet it helped. This had a lot of questions with TRUE or FALSE and texts with referencing and examples so I started to feel more confident to understand the difference between the types of references and how to recognise when it was a book reference for example. When I got the result for my task 1 which has a few questions about referencing I was really happy as I think I did well which I think the lecturer's homework had a big impact on my learning about how to analyse different types of reference.

3.2 Analysis

I feel like the homework for writing paragraphs went well as there was no time limit and I got a lot of help from the lecturer, for example the template of the academic words for contrast and sequence. However I was really struggling on task 2, I was really nervous shaking so much, my mind was telling me that I wasn't able to do it on the time requested. Markovic (2022) describes paragraph writing as a skill which sometimes students find too demanding, as it is often time-consuming and detail-oriented, I found it very time consuming myself especially under a time pressure. Improvements I need to make are learning more academic words, trying to avoid writing my opinions and putting my thoughts in words in order when in an exam. Work on my anxiety to perform better under time pressure and be more kind with myself.

Talking to my colleagues we agreed there was a lot of information to take in in a short time as none of us have ever experienced referencing before. However we have a whatsapp group where we tried to help each other to overcome the difficulties of referencing, by working in a group with the classroom has been shown to increase student achievement as well as promote a more positive attitude toward the subject being studied (Springer *et al.*, [1999](#)).

3.3 Further Actions

To improve my confidence with my academic writing, I am planning to read more articles and rewriting them to feel more confident when I have to write things. I am pretty confident to write on laptops because they correct my mistakes, so I need to spend more time in hand writing and make sure I get feedback. Also I am currently doing therapy to work on my anxieties and to help the feeling of I'm not good enough. Research shows to improve paragraph writing students can ask for feedback and revise academic words more.

To improve my referencing skills I plan to look at more academic reports and pay more attention to where references are used. I need to spend time practicing writing a reference list. To improve referencing skills students can refer to guides such as the one I previously mentioned by Pears and Shields and to revise existing lecture content such as powerpoints and study tasks.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, this report highlights my experiences in the academic skills and focused on writing paragraphs and referencing which I struggled with. The report also acknowledges a few points how I improved myself during this first term and describes how I can improve further. I am leaving this term

knowing how I can learn better and feeling more confident. This will help me with how to prepare myself for the next term which I believe will be harder than the first one.

References

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