

Title: Academic Skills Report

Name: Husna Sahak

Student Number: 2414398

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Lecturer: Tim Hopkins

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1 Introduction

This report looks at how my academic skills have developed during this module, focusing on paraphrasing, note-taking, and reflection. These skills are important because they help me understand information better, organise my ideas, and communicate them clearly. Throughout the module, I took part in activities that helped me improve these skills, and in this report, I will explain how they have supported my learning.

For this reflection, I have chosen Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988) as a guide. This model helps me reflect more deeply by breaking down my experiences into six steps: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan. By using this cycle, I will look at how I have improved each skill, the challenges I faced along the way, and how I can keep improving in the future. Gibbs' model is helpful because it helps me understand my experiences and figure out practical steps to keep growing.

2.1 Paraphrasing Skills

In this section, I will reflect on my paraphrasing skills using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, which includes six stages: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan.

Paraphrasing involves rewording someone else's ideas or information while keeping the original meaning. In this module, I focused on paraphrasing academic content. One of the tasks required me to read an article and then express it in my own words. Afterward, I compared my version with the original to ensure I had not altered the meaning.

At first, I was not sure about paraphrasing. I was worried that I might not capture the meaning correctly or that I might accidentally copy too much from the original text. It felt challenging. But as I practiced more, I started feeling more confident. I realised that paraphrasing is not about changing a few words, it is about really understanding the text and then explaining it in my own way.

The paraphrasing exercises were tough but useful. One thing I did well was finding the main points in the text, which helped me when I rephrased it. The hardest part was making sure my paraphrasing was different enough from the original to avoid plagiarism. Getting feedback on how I could change my sentences more was helpful in improving my paraphrasing skills.

The main problem I had was not feeling confident in my ability to put ideas into my own words. I often ended up writing things that were too like the original text. But as I kept practicing and followed the strategies given in class, I became better at expressing ideas without copying. The module taught me that paraphrasing is not just about swapping words, it is about really understanding the content and rewording it clearly.

In conclusion, I have really improved my paraphrasing skills through practice and thinking about how I do it. At first, it was tough to keep the meaning while changing the wording, but with feedback and lots of practice, I feel more confident now. I learned that it is not just about finding different words; it is about really understanding the original content and saying it clearly in my own way.

To keep improving my paraphrasing skills, I am planning to practice more by rewording academic articles outside of class. I will also work on using different sentence structures and adding new vocabulary to make sure my writing does not closely resemble the original. In the future, I will pay closer attention to understanding the main ideas of a text before I try to paraphrase it, as this will help me create more correct and varied versions.

2.2 Reflection Skills

In this section, I will reflect on my Reflection skills using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, which includes six stages: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan.

The lesson introduced me to Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle and Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, which are structured methods for reflecting on experiences. Before this, I was not familiar with these models at all. As part of the lesson, we had to analyse a learning experience and use these models to break it down step by step. At first, it felt challenging because I was not used to thinking so deeply or critically about my own experiences.

When I first came across these models, I felt a bit overwhelmed because they were entirely new to me. I was not sure how to use the cycles properly and worried that I might overlook important parts when reflecting. However, as the lesson went on, I started to feel more at ease. I began to understand how these tools could help me think about my experiences and learn from them. By the end of the session, I felt much more confident about using them in the future.

Kolb's and Gibbs' cycles were extremely helpful as they provided clear, structured ways to reflect on my learning. Gibbs' cycle guided me step-by-step, while Kolb's model showed me that reflection is an ongoing process. The practical exercises helped me understand how to apply these models to real-life situations, improving my ability to learn from my experiences.

Looking back the most valuable part of these reflective models is their structure. Breaking reflection into stages made it easier to see what went well and what needed improvement. Using Gibbs' cycle, for example, helped me assess my confusion, evaluate what I learned, and plan how to improve. This step-by-step approach stopped me from jumping to conclusions and helped me analyse the experience more thoroughly. These models will be a key tool for my academic development, especially for writing reflective reports.

Using Kolb's and Gibbs' cycles has significantly improved how I reflect on my learning experiences. Initially, I found it challenging to reflect deeply, but these models have helped me break down my experiences into manageable steps. This has made it easier to find what went well, what did not, and how I can make improvements in the future.

To further develop my reflection skills, I plan to use both Kolb's and Gibbs' cycles regularly after classes and assignments. I will concentrate on the analysis phase, asking deeper questions about how to apply my learning. By practicing this consistently, I aim to make reflection a habit and continue improving my academic skills.

2.3 Note Taking Skills

In this section, I will reflect on my Note-Taking skills using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, which includes six stages: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan.

During the module, I watched a video about the psychology of motivation and procrastination. I used this opportunity to practice my note-taking skills by summarising key points and organising the information clearly. I employed strategies like using bullet points and headings to make my notes concise and easy to understand.

At first, I felt uncertain about how to structure my notes effectively. I worried about missing key details, but I also wanted to avoid overloading my notes with unnecessary information. As I started applying the note-taking strategies discussed in class, I began to feel more confident. I realised that it was more important to focus on the key ideas rather than writing down everything.

The experience of taking notes while watching the video was useful. By concentrating on summarising the main points, I created notes that were both organised and helpful for reviewing later. This exercise showed me the value of prioritising key details and structuring my notes in a way that was easy to follow. However, I found it challenging at first to filter out less valuable information, which is an area I want to keep working on.

The main challenge I had was finding the right balance between keeping things short and including enough details. I realised that good note-taking needs both clear thinking and organisation. Using things like headings helped me manage this. With practice, I got better at focusing on the important information and not getting caught up in small details.

This experience significantly improved my note-taking skills. I learned how to create notes that are well-structured, easy to review, and focused on key ideas. This skill will be particularly useful for lectures, assignments, and revision in the future, as it enables me to process and keep information more efficiently.

To keep improving my note-taking skills, I plan to practice often by summarising information from videos, readings, and lectures. I will try out different methods, like mind mapping and Cornell notes, to see which works best for me. I will also review my notes after writing them to make sure they are clear and complete, which will help me understand the material better.

3 Conclusion

To sum up, reflecting on my academic skills during this module has been helpful. By using models like Gibbs' Reflective Cycle and Kolb's Learning Cycle, I have been able to understand how I can improve in key areas like paraphrasing, note-taking, and reflection.

When it comes to paraphrasing, I have learned that it is not just about changing a few words. It is about understanding the meaning and putting it into my own words. As I practiced more, I became more confident and was able to avoid copying directly from the source.

For reflection, I initially found it hard to think critically about my experiences. But with the help of Gibbs' and Kolb's cycles, I was able to break down my learning into smaller parts and see what went well and what I could improve. This will help me a lot in the future, especially when I need to write reflective reports.

Note-taking was another skill I focused on. I struggled at first to decide what to include in my notes, but with practice, I learned to pick out the most valuable information and organise it clearly. These techniques will help me stay organised and understand my lessons better in the future.

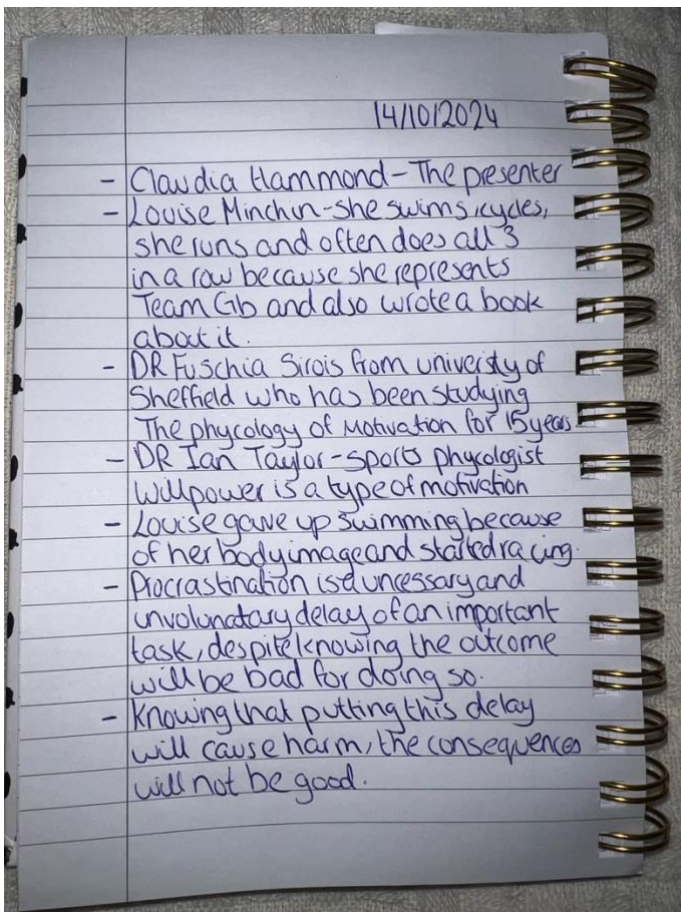
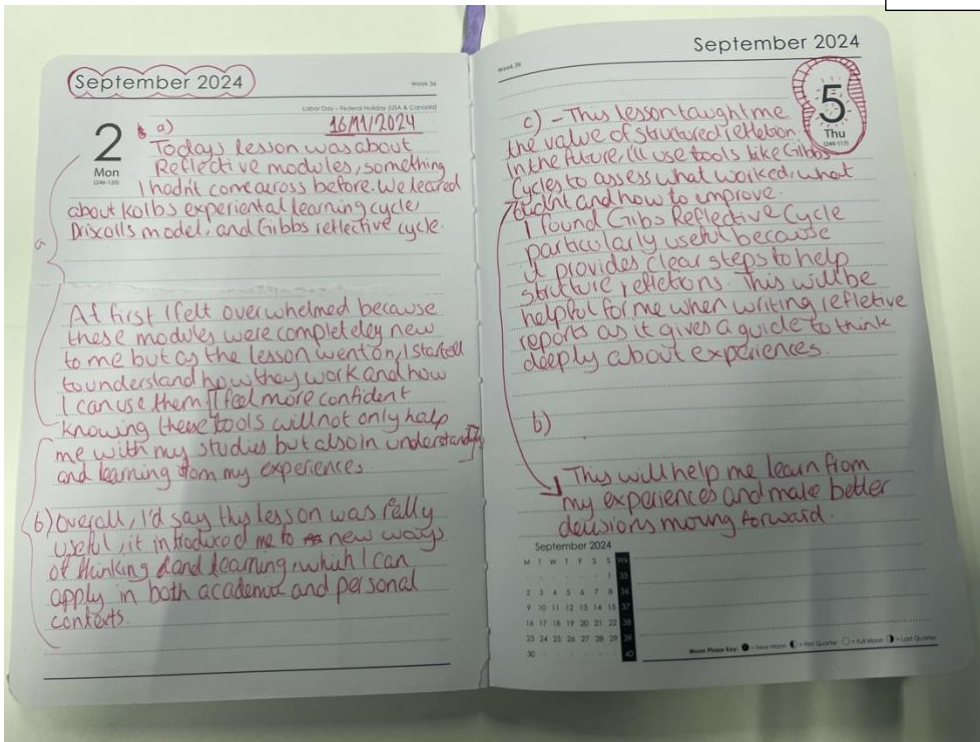
Overall, looking back on these skills, I can see how much they have helped me. I am going to keep practicing them to get better and make sure I keep improving as a student. These skills will help me in my studies moving forward.

4 References

BBC. (2019). The psychology of motivation and procrastination. BBC Sounds.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0005t4x>
(<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0005t4x>)

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