

Name: Ottavio Altana

Student ID: 2331607

REFLECTIVE REPORT (Gibbs Reflective Cycle)

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Lecture's Name: Peter Allen

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REFLECTIVE REPORT (Gibbs Reflective Cycle)

Introduction

Since I started studying at University of Wales Trinity St. David, I have studied many different Academic skills, in this reflective report I would write about only three of these skills and share my experience on learning Paraphrasing, Note taking and Academic writing skills and how they have helped me the gain more knowledge. I have chosen these three skills because are the skills that I liked the most and I think that they are the most useful for me.

Paraphrasing

For me paraphrasing is a new skill, in class we have done many different exercises to have a better understanding on paraphrasing. We have used different techniques of paraphrasing exercises. Which are: using synonyms, using different word form and changing from active to passive voice. At first, I thought it was difficult however, I was also interested in learning this skill. For me, the most important aspect was when the lecturer spoke to us in class and he explained what paraphrasing is, also doing exercises in class and confronting with the rest of the class. When the lecturer was explaining, I did not know what he was talking about in that moment because for me it was a new experience. I have never done or listened someone talking about paraphrasing before. I was curious, I have tried to ask as many questions as possible in class. The lecturer gave us some exercises to do, one of them was a multiple-choice exercise where we had to choose from three paragraphs, which one was the better one for paraphrasing. We have also read some paragraph and then tried to understand it properly so we could write in our own words keeping the same meaning. We have also done an exercise where we had to find synonyms and change the words order. It was challenging because I do not really know many ways to say the same phrase, so I had to check online to find some synonyms that I could use in the exercise. Then I have asked my classmates about the lessons, if they were understanding it or if they were having maybe the same difficulties as me, I have confronted with them. I have researched online for books and articles, to improve my knowledge on paraphrasing. As Campbell (1998) reported that expressing a particular idea that was originally written or stated by another person using alternative words and phrasing (needing reference) in order to integrate the other person thoughts into one's own words. While studying paraphrasing I realised that I need to improve this skill, I must improve my vocabulary and learn how to say the same phrase in different ways. I will keep practising the techniques that we have learned in class to improve my paraphrasing skills.

Note taking

When we started talking about Note taking in class, we have done some exercises such as listening and take notes and highlighting exercises. We have spoken about different techniques of note taking, and we have learned what Note taking is and why it is important. For me it was difficult but at the same time I felt interested and curious about learning this skill. I think the most useful experiences were doing the exercises in class and confronting with my classmates about what we were learning. I had some issues with note taking because for me was not easy to listen to the lecturer speaking and take notes at the same time. My notes were not organised properly and not written correctly because I was writing quickly. We have done different kind of exercises, one of the exercises was to listen a podcast and try to take note, then we have discussed with the rest of the class. Another exercise was reading an article and highlight all the important information and then speak with our classmates to see if we have highlighted the same information. The last exercise that we have done was reading an article and only highlight the information related to “motivating staff”. During class time, I have always tried to speak to my classmates, I have asked them how it was going, to see if for them it was difficult as it was for me, most of them they had the same issues as me. The lecture has explained to us different methods of taking notes, one of them is called Diagram note, where there is a topic, then main points and followed by sub-points. Then we have spoken about other methods of taking notes, such as the linear notes, the tabular note taking and the Cornell method. To improve my knowledge and to have a better understanding on Note taking, I have read an online book that speaks about developing note taking skills in a second language, I found it very interesting because for me English is my second language, so I think it is more difficult to take note. The person listening must recognise the sounds they hear, break the spoken word streaming through meaningful segment of information, and collect the information to produce a bigger meaningful structure, Siegel (2020). I have also read an online article called “The pen is mightier than the keyboard”, Previous research indicates that computers (particularly those with internet access) can distract students, Mueller and Oppenheimer (2014). I think I have now improved on how to take notes, however I still need to improve, especially when the lecturer explains I must be quicker on writing only what I think is relevant for my studies.

Academic writing

In class we have spoken about what Academic writing is and why it is an essential skill. We have learned the characteristics of Academic writing, the difference between essays and reports and the differences between student academic writing and expert academic writing. We have also done different exercises to practice on Academic writing. When we began talking about Academic writing, I knew that it was going to be the most difficult skill for me, because English is my second language, and my vocabulary is not great. In class we have done some practice and some tasks, we have read paragraphs in academic writing to see the difference from normal writing. Then we have read another paragraph and we had to rewrite it to be more formal, it was not easy changing the words because it is not how I speak or write every day, sometimes I had to check online to find different words to use. During my research I found some interesting material that helped me understand better what academic writing is. According to the University of Sheffield (2024), Nobody is born knowing how to write academically. Understanding your discipline's standards, as well as the special features and conventions of academic writing, could help you to gain confidence and improve your written work. Academic writing is part of a complicated process that includes gathering, assessing, and evaluating material, planning, organising, editing, and proofreading your work, and reflecting on feedback, all of which support written assessment at university. Understanding what Academic writing is, I have realised that I must improve my English, written and spoken, I must read more books so I can learn new words, and I can practise doing some exercise to improve my Academic writing.

Conclusion

To sum up everything has been said, I understood that all these skills are very important for studying, I have learned that paraphrasing is an essential skill for writing reports and essays, to write what somebody else already said in my own words. It is also very effective to improve my vocabulary and my writing skills. Note Taking is important to write down what the lectures explain so that I do not miss anything, and I can have a look whenever I need to. Studying Academic writing I have learned that this skill is needed to write in a certain way, and to speak to some people in a more professional way.

References

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