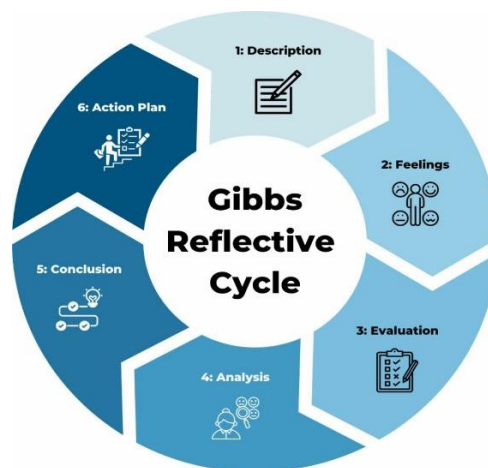


Assignment 2

Introduction

Throughout this module, I have developed critical academic skills that have significantly enhanced my ability to engage with and produce scholarly work. My academic writing, note-taking, and paraphrasing skills have improved significantly allowing me to approach academic tasks with greater confidence and effectiveness. This reflection will employ Gibb's Reflective Cycle to explore how these skills have developed and their impact on my academic growth, providing a structured analysis of my experiences.



Gibb's Reflective Cycle (Channell, 2023).

1. Description

This module provided a comprehensive introduction to essential skills as I engaged in various activities aimed at improving key academic skills. These included writing assignments, attending lectures, and participating in group discussions. Beginning with academic writing, focusing on how to structure essays and reports, use formal language, and incorporate evidence from scholarly sources (Week 3a - Intro to Academic writing). I was introduced to different note-taking techniques, emphasizing the importance of capturing key points efficiently while listening or reading (Week 2a - Notetaking). I practiced paraphrasing complex academic texts, learnt how to rephrase original texts while maintaining the original meaning which is a crucial skill for avoiding plagiarism and improving comprehension. The application of these skills in real assignments allowed me to see their practical benefits.

2. Feelings

Initially, I felt overwhelmed by the rigorous standards of academic writing. The transition from everyday writing to academic writing seemed daunting, with its strict requirements for structure, objectivity, and evidence-based arguments (Week 3a - Intro to Academic writing). However, as the module progressed, I began to appreciate the importance of these skills in communicating ideas effectively within the academic community. Note-taking was another area where I struggled, because I was uncertain about my ability to capture essential information accurately during lectures and readings. Paraphrasing was also challenging as it required me to accurately convey ideas in my own words without altering their meaning and avoiding plagiarism. However, as I practiced and received feedback, my confidence grew and I began to see these tasks as opportunities to deepen my understanding of the subject matter.

3. Evaluation

My initial struggles with academic writing were largely due to a lack of familiarity with its conventions. The module's emphasis on structure, clarity, and evidence-based argumentation was particularly helpful. For instance, I learned that academic writing requires not just presenting information but critically engaging with it, balancing different viewpoints, and drawing well-supported conclusions (Week 3a - Intro to Academic writing). This knowledge transformed my approach to writing essays and reports.

In terms of notetaking, the module highlighted the importance of organizing information effectively and using techniques like highlighting and summarizing to make notes more useful (Week 2a - Notetaking). Previously, I tended to write down everything I heard or read, leading to an overload of information that was difficult to review. The module taught me to focus on key points and use my notes as a tool for deeper understanding, rather than just a record of information.

Paraphrasing was perhaps the most challenging skill to develop. Initially, I found it difficult to rephrase complex academic texts without losing the original meaning. However, through practice and feedback, I learned techniques such as changing the structure of sentences, using synonyms, and understanding the underlying ideas before attempting to paraphrase (Week 3a - Intro to Academic writing). This skill has become invaluable in my academic writing, enabling me to integrate sources effectively and ethically.

4. Analysis

The development of these academic skills is interrelated has been instrumental in improving my overall academic performance. Academic writing, for example, is not just about following a set of rules, it is a process of constructing knowledge. The skills I acquired in this module, such as critical thinking and structured argumentation, have allowed me to engage more deeply with course materials and express my ideas more clearly and persuasively.

Academic writing requires a strong foundation in both notetaking and paraphrasing. I've learned to construct more coherent arguments, use appropriate academic language, and properly cite sources. This aligns with research showing that explicit instruction in academic writing can lead to marked improvements in student performance.

The note-taking strategies I learned have made my study sessions more efficient and productive. By focusing on key concepts and organizing my notes in a way that aids review and comprehension, I have been able to retain information more effectively and perform better in assessments.

Paraphrasing skills allowed me to synthesize information from multiple sources, which is essential for writing well-supported arguments. I now approach paraphrasing with a clearer understanding of its purpose, not just to avoid plagiarism but to demonstrate comprehension and the ability to communicate ideas in my own words. This module highlighted the iterative nature of learning, where each skill builds upon the others.

5. Conclusion

Reflecting on my progress, I realize that my initial anxieties about academic writing, note-taking, and paraphrasing were largely due to a lack of confidence and understanding of these skills. These skills are not just academic requirements but essential tools for lifelong learning. The consistent practice and application of academic writing, note-taking, and paraphrasing have equipped me with the ability to engage more deeply with course material and produce higher quality work. The module has provided me with the tools and strategies needed to approach these tasks more effectively. While I have made significant progress, I recognize that there is still room for improvement, particularly in refining my paraphrasing skills.

6. Action Plan

Moving forward, I plan to continue refining these skills.

- a. For academic writing, I will focus on developing my critical analysis by engaging with more complex texts and practicing structured writing, focusing on areas where I still need improvement.
- b. To improve my notetaking, I will experiment with different note-taking techniques such as mind mapping and tabular notetaking to find the methods that work best for different types of content. I will also review my notes regularly to ensure they remain useful tools for revision.
- c. I will keep practicing and engaging in regular paraphrasing exercises, starting with simpler texts and gradually moving to more complex academic materials. I will also compare my paraphrased texts with the originals to ensure accuracy and fidelity to the original meaning.
- d. Seek more frequent feedback from instructors and peers to identify areas for continued growth.
- e. Apply these enhanced academic skills across all my courses to reinforce and further develop them.

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