

ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

BMSW4001

ACADEMIC REPORT

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Introduction

Student preparedness for future careers has been a debate at institutional and national levels. The implications of such readiness assessments is the ultimate effort through policymaking calling for high schools and colleges to competently prepare students for future careers. For a student to be considered career-ready, the three primary skills and competencies required are essential academic skills, the capability to apply the skills in real situations, and work set preparedness for the day-to-day tasks in the career. This paper will apply the Graham Gibbs reflective cycle as the model for analysis on how academic competency such as paraphrasing, academic writing and referencing skills learned throughout the course are essential in developing academic and employability skills (Jasper, 2013).

Summary

The two terms have been very crucial in learning, as the module perfected what I already knew prior the terms and introduced broader concepts. Throughout the two terms, the lecturer has emphasized on important topics such as paraphrasing, referencing sources, academic writing skills and summarizing..., which made learning both exciting and breath-taking. The lecturer has also emphasized the significance of employability skills such as critical thinking and technical abilities. Critical thinking and responsibility enhance role identity in the career aspect and distinction in a specific career path (Skills for Learning, 2018). In this reflective paper, the foundational academic knowledge for survival in the modern economy and workplace environment has been imparted. I feel very ready to face the professional field due to the technical preparedness that the lecturer has emphasized over the two terms.

Topics

Paraphrasing: Paraphrasing has been an essential skill that the lecturer imparted throughout the course. I enjoyed the lessons in which I learnt to point out the important information from a source. I have mastered crucial paraphrasing steps through practice such as exercising. Learning paraphrasing has been an essential skill through which other sources have avoided plagiarism. Paraphrasing and correctly citing the source has been an essential skill in writing, which has been adequately imparted.

Summarizing: The skills of summarizing from sources have been essential in the essay and report writing, which is a positive impact of my learning over the two terms. I have learned to take notes throughout readings and lectures, analysing information sources, determining good scholarly sources, and different approaches to sources both in books and websites. The lecturer explained that summarizing information enhances precise and straightforward data, which can be used as quick access to study. Summarizing is a skill that I have applied during study and revision and, therefore, very essential.

Academic writing: The lecturer also ventured into teaching fundamental academic writing skills in research. Important personal assessment in writing and source evaluation has been nurtured as a core skill to academic excellence. Through the skills taught, I have essentially understood academic research, the steps of the research writing process, and the differences between primary and secondary sources. Academic language use and proper grammar, vocabulary use, sentence development, and paragraph structuring have been expansively taught (Vandergrift, 2007). I have learned the topic selection techniques for research as academic development. The concepts of reflective writing have also been familiarized, in which narrow or broad research topics have been comprehended. The data

gathering skills for report writing have been taught for thesis, essays, and dissertations. The lecturer further taught professional writing for job application cover, designing a professional curriculum vitae, and responding to interview questions.

Referencing: The lecturer also introduced the different styles of referencing for which cited sources are acknowledged. The critical role of referencing as an academic writing skill has been realized during the coursework. The lecturer dwelt on the latest styles of Harvard referencing, American Psychological Association Style (APA), and the Modern Language Association (MLA), among other essential referencing and citing sources in writing. The referencing exercises that have been undertaken have helped with the practical distinction of the various styles of referencing. Through the teaching, I learned that using other people's information without acknowledgment is an offense, and therefore the importance of citing and appropriately referencing.

Graham Gibbs Reflective Cycle (Model)

The Gibbs Reflective Learning Cycle was developed in 1988 to structure experiential learning through an examination of experiences in a cyclic nature, thereby enhancing an individual's learning and planning for the identified gaps. The model entails a process of six stages. The stages include describing the experiences, reactions (thoughts and feelings) on the experiences, evaluating the experiences, analysing the situation, the conclusion of what is learned and gaps identified, and setting an action plan for future experiences (Gibbs, 1988). The paper will also use the model to identify deficiencies in the academic skills and plan on how to improve through recommendations.

Description

In the course of the two terms, the lecturer has taught essential skills for academic merit and career preparedness. The lecturer taught academic writing proficiency while going a step further to discuss professional preparedness in real life. The lecturer taught essential professional skills such as speech, presentation, and management styles and approached. The essential academic skills discussed are paraphrasing, academic writing, referencing, and summarizing as keys to competency and career preparedness (McKay & Devlin, 2014). The experience of learning in the two terms was exciting for me and very important to my academic and professional development. I feel empowered and motivated over the learning in the two terms

Feelings

I have had controversial feelings towards the academic and employability skills learned throughout the two terms. In academic writing, I feel that writing is very important, although very complicated. Students require a deeper understanding of vocabulary, proficiency in grammar, and a unique development style for advanced outcomes during academic writing classes. I have understood that academic writing is unique and objective, unlike other forms of writing. The writing requirements in academic writing, such as sentence development, grammar and grammar, sentence clauses, and paragraph structuring, are unique and purpose-driven. The different types of writing demand varying formats beyond the standard practice in writing. In the learning process, I learned that a student has a variety of approaches to take in academic writing. My detailed study details that there are various writing techniques and stages that must be applied in academic writing. I have also

discovered that students can be easily confused in academic writing projects due to a lack of insights and misappropriation of the writing skills and language address purposes.

Citation and referencing have also proved to be sophisticated and difficult for students. The style and correctness of the borrowing from other sources and referencing validate or corrupts the academic paper. Failure to cite an author's work is plagiarism and could be a serious chargeable offense when no acknowledgment of the author is available. This may lead to termination and penalization by the institution for cheating. I have learned that the references and citations are a backup to the arguments and claims in the academic paper, making it credible. It also reveals that adequate research on the subject has been carried out and that other scholars' views are significant, hence acknowledged. Online and academic sources have to be therefore recognized, allowing both the writer and the reader to track and identify sources used. They also list them in references, bibliographies, and works cited in the appropriate format.

Evaluation

Personal assessment of my skills in academics and employability has indicated that the course has been essential in my personal development. My knowledge of grammar, vocabulary use, sentence structuring, and paragraph construction has advanced significantly. I also find it easy to formulate a research topic, unlike before taking the course. After developing a research topic, I can further narrow it down and concentrate on a definite research question. It is also easier to identify relevant sources for the research paper and apply them in the research paper with proficiency. I have also become more passionate about research and academic writing due to the knowledge and skills imparted on the development of sentence clauses and paragraphs. However, I still find it bumpy with referencing and in-text citations. The major emphasis on referencing during the coursework was the Harvard

referencing style. Therefore, I am sometimes confused about establishing the correct format for a specific paper with various other styles. Other styles of referencing such as Chicago, MLA, and APA, which are dissimilar in nature of writing, cause a format confusion in writing and citing information.

It is also common to find an author's work sophisticated and incomprehensible in various sources. Such confusion and misunderstanding cause a problem when I summarize or paraphrase evidence as per the author's intended meaning. Fascinatingly, the distinction between scholarly sources and undependable sources causes me difficulties. When information from a source conforms to my subject and sustains my claims and ideas, I apply the source without consideration. Although the information is critical, some sources are inconsistent and unreliable, which may be problematic to differentiate. Identifying the suitability of a source during author acknowledgment is an area that needs further development.

Analysis

After a keen evaluation of personal development from the course, I have found that my academic and employability skills have improved. The art of writing may be frustrating due to the technical and intellectual demands, and with the course, I have navigated with competency through the writing provisions throughout the terms. The skills to brainstorm, examine relevant sources' information, formulate drafts, outlines, and essentially edit the final paper have been supported. I have also advanced my understanding and timing for academic papers, unlike before this course. Furthermore, my examination and determination of assignment requirements and research sources for relevant evidence have become an

efficient process. My recent evaluation of academic papers reveals that the essays conform to the designated sources, providing clear validation of arguments and a strong conclusion on the topic. I have regained interest in academic writing, which has minimized procrastination and enhanced a conducive writing background. The teachings on grammar, sentences, and vocabulary development have further enhanced my understanding of the standard academic writing structure and styles in writing. However, I have identified gaps that need keen attention for improvement and perfection, especially in referencing. I also need to engage more in studying acceptable scholarly sources and distinguish them from the inconsistent and unreliable sources.

Action Plan

Time management in academic work will improve my professional management skills for productivity in the career. My action plan is to engage in the different writing styles to improve my referencing in APA, Chicago, and MLA styles. More studies on the styles that I am weak at will improve, while practice and exercises will advance my knowledge of the styles (Turabian, 2019). The referencing styles have been one of my weak areas, and therefore further learning of APA, Chicago, and MLA referencing formats is planned. I should engage in more exercise and practice writing different formats for structuring, in-text citation, and referencing advancement.

Conclusion

The above discussion on the module on academic writing and personal development with the coursework has been a crucial reflective assessment. From the discussion, I can identify my weak areas in academic writing, research skills, and referencing methods. My

skills in managing time and applying learned skills in real life have had a great experiential impact. From the evaluation, my skills and professional mentality have improved, enhancing scheduling the execution of my activities as a management skill. Such skills enhance exposure to a professional setting, therefore preparing students for the career and workplace environment. I can also relate situations to real experience through the academic skills imparted, therefore an effective preparedness for the career setting. The lecturer advanced teaching in critical thinking, reflective, and analytical assessments, which are essential for problem-solving at the workplace and applicable to real situations. Research-based evidence also enhances effective communication, which can be applied in writing academic papers and professional reports. From the reflective report, self-assessment on the concepts learnt in the two semesters reveals that the lectures were successful and that individual efforts could improve my weak areas. The biggest problem for me throughout the two terms was referencing, which therefore must be solved in the action plan. More discussions on the semester learning's will be done with other students to improve what the lecturer may not have clarified at an individual level.

Recommendations

From my experiences in the learning over the two terms, I recommend that the students should engage in discussions and practice to help each other improve their weak areas. This may be done through group work. The lecturer is also recommended to figure out the common problematic areas for students and engage more, which may include changing the teaching strategy and approach into a more encompassing perspective. Students on their part are recommended to engage in more personal assessment after classwork, in which the

evaluation will give insights on the unclear topics. Engaging in more practice and exercises after classwork will help to improve the students' learning. I also recommend that the learning sessions should be interactive and engaging between the lecturer and students to address learning issues as they arise.

References

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Appendices

List of Topics

Summarizing, Paraphrasing, Academic writing and referencing are all the topics that have been addressed in the report.

Gibbs Reflective Learning Cycle is a reflective structure developed in 1988. The six steps of the cycle are description, feeling, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action plan for a reflective learning template.

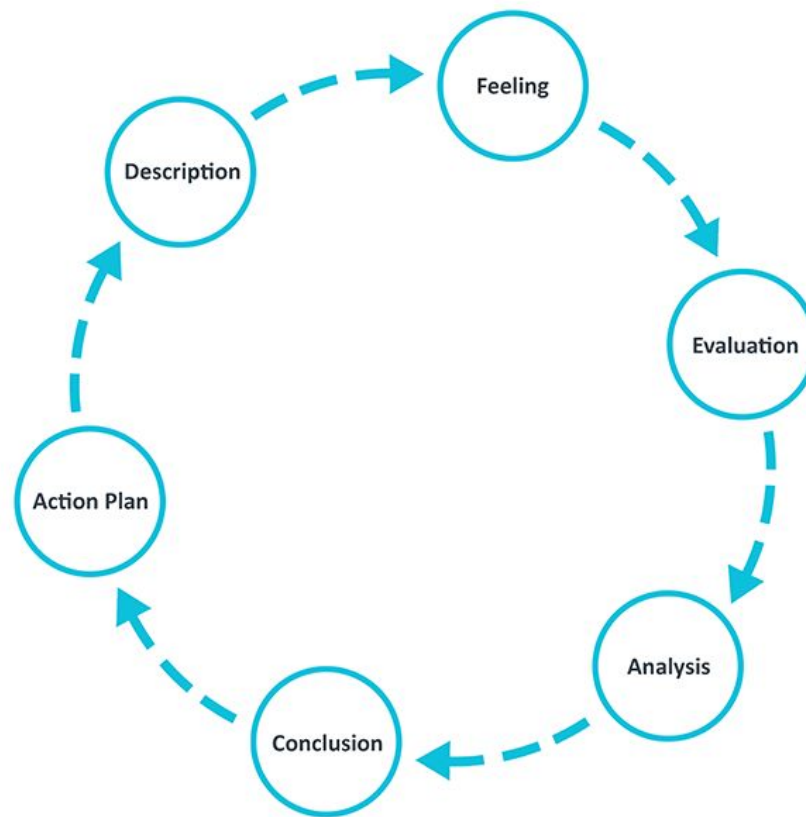


Figure 1 Gibbs Reflective Learning Cycle (Gibbs, 1988)