

reflective report

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Submission date: 13-Apr-2025 12:25PM (UTC+0100)

Submission ID: 255601767

File name: 62009_Erlina_Aligato_Geronimo_reflective_report_645564_401841645.docx (42.42K)

Word count: 1145

Character count: 6794

ACS Report

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Module: Academic Skills

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1. Introduction

The Writing at a University Level module, part of the Certificate of Higher Education in Business Skills for the Workplace, has been a crucial step in developing my academic writing abilities. This course aims to strengthen skills in writing, research, and critical thinking, which are essential for success in higher education. Throughout the module, I engaged in various activities such as essay writing, peer review, and learning citation practices. This reflection will discuss my experiences, highlight the challenges I faced, and examine how the skills I gained have contributed to both my academic and personal development.

2. Description of Experiences

Throughout the Writing at a University Level module, I participated in several key activities that significantly improved my academic writing. One of the most impactful was practicing essay writing. Early in the course, I struggled with structuring my essays effectively and creating strong, evidence-based arguments. However, with continued practice and feedback, I developed better organizational skills and learned how to present clear, coherent arguments. A particularly helpful activity was the workshop on outlining essays, which helped me organize my ideas before I began writing.

The "Writing Paragraph" exercise was another essential part of my development. This focused activity helped me break down writing into smaller, more manageable parts, emphasizing the importance of topic sentences and supporting evidence. By concentrating on the structure of individual paragraphs, I learned how to create more focused and concise arguments.

Additionally, peer review sessions provided me with valuable insights. Reviewing others' work and receiving feedback on my own helped me identify areas of improvement, particularly in clarity and argumentation. Lastly, learning proper referencing and citation practices, especially the APA style, was a critical skill that I initially struggled with but gained confidence in through practice and tutor guidance.

3. Personal Reflection

3.1 Evaluation

Reflecting on my experience in the "Writing at a University Level" module, I have gained invaluable skills that have significantly improved my academic abilities. The module helped me develop a more structured approach to essay writing, which was a challenge at the beginning. I initially struggled with organizing my thoughts and crafting clear topics, well-supported arguments. However, the exercises and assignments, particularly the "Writing Paragraph" activity, were key in teaching me how to write cohesive paragraphs and maintain focus on the central argument. The critical feedback I received from my tutor played a crucial role in shifting my approach, especially in moving from summarizing material to critically engaging with it. This shift allowed me to create more thoughtful and insightful essays.

Additionally, the workshops on referencing and citation were highly beneficial, improving my ability to correctly attribute sources. Time management was another challenge, but by using a time management tool, I became more efficient and produced higher-quality work. Finally, peer review sessions helped me sharpen my critical thinking by allowing me to identify weaknesses in my own writing. Overall, this module has had a profound impact on my academic confidence and skills, equipping me with essential tools for future success.

3.2 Analysis

The "Writing at a University Level" module provided a comprehensive learning experience that helped me identify both my strengths and areas for improvement in academic writing. One of the most significant aspects of the module was the shift from descriptive writing to critical engagement with material. Early on, I relied heavily on summarizing content, which limited my ability to present well-rounded arguments. The feedback from my tutor encouraged me to engage more critically with sources, helping me realize that academic writing is about offering original insights and connecting ideas

meaningfully rather than just recounting information. This shift was key in strengthening my writing.

The "Writing Paragraph" exercise was also a pivotal part of my development. Before the module, I struggled with writing cohesive paragraphs that directly supported my argument. This exercise taught me the importance of having a clear topic sentence and supporting evidence in each paragraph. By eliminating unnecessary digressions, I was able to create more focused and organized paragraphs that enhanced the overall clarity and structure of my essays. This skill proved essential for making my writing more direct and impactful.

Referencing and citation were initially daunting. Early on the course, I made several errors in formatting and citation, which made me anxious about the academic integrity of my work. However, through workshops and feedback, I gained more confidence in referencing and understood the importance of correctly attributing ideas. This process not only improved my technical skills but also reinforced the importance of academic honesty.

Time management was another challenge, especially balancing academic work with personal commitments. The pressure of managing multiple tasks led to rushed assignments, affecting the quality of my work. After struggling with time constraints in my third essay, I adopted a more structured approach using time management tools. Breaking assignments into smaller, manageable tasks and setting realistic deadlines allowed me to allocate more time for each stage of the writing process, which improved the quality of my work and reduced stress.

Finally, the peer review sessions were an unexpected but valuable part of my learning experience. Initially apprehensive about receiving feedback from classmates, I soon realized that reviewing others' work sharpened my own critical thinking. It helped me identify common writing pitfalls, such as weak arguments or unsupported claims, which I could avoid in my own work. Over time, I became more receptive to both positive and constructive criticism, further enhancing my writing skills.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Writing at a University Level module has been instrumental in improving my academic writing skills. It has enhanced my ability to critically engage with sources, structure my essays effectively, and adhere to proper referencing practices. The course has also taught me the importance of time management and the value of peer feedback. While I have faced challenges, particularly in the areas of critical analysis and referencing, I have made significant progress during the process. Overall, this module has boosted my confidence in academic writing and equipped me with essential skills for my future studies and professional endeavors.

6. In-Text Citations:

- Cottrell (2019) emphasizes, "Writing at a university level involves integrating multiple perspectives and critically assessing information to build well-supported arguments" (p. 45).
- Bacchus (2010) states, "Identifying your transferable skills is essential for a smooth career change, as these skills are often overlooked" (para. 4).

7. References:

- Stella Cottrell (2019). 'Writing at a University Level' *The Study Skills Handbook*, 5th Edition, Red Globe Press
- Bacchus E (2010) 'Changing your career: How to identify your transferable skills' *The Guardian*, 29 June 2010. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/careers/careers-blog/changing-your-career-how-to-identify-your-transferable-skills>
- Gibb's (1988) 'Reflective Cycle' <https://lukeshrblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/04/reflecting-is-the-pathway-to-growth/>