

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Academic and Employability Skills
(BMSW4001_LON)

Marco Gizzi (2117750)

Sylvia Hoffmann -
Lecturer

19th April 2022

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Paraphrasing.....	3
2.1 Reflection.....	3
2.2 Conclusion.....	3
3. Reflection	4
3.1 Reflection.....	4
3.2 Conclusion.....	4
4. Referencing.....	5
4.1 Reflection.....	5
4.2 Examination.....	5
4.3 Conclusion.....	5
5. Public Speaking and Giving Presentation.....	6
5.1 Reflection.....	6
5.2 Presentation reflection.....	6
5.3 Conclusion.....	6
6. Conclusion	7
7. Reference List.....	8

1. Introduction

In this report I'm going to illustrate my personal reflection on some specific topics applying Gibb's Reflective Cycle. At the beginning everything was confusing, I didn't know where to start or what to do for the following tasks. Reflection is essential in the university environment, to develop new skills and review their effectiveness (The University Library Research Skills and Critical Thinking, 2022). Therefore, after gathering information from different sources, I realised how important this work's material was to me. Acknowledging the topics, generating experience and skills I was lacking on. Paraphrasing, Reflection, Reference, Public speaking and giving presentation are the main topics my reflective work is based on.

2. Paraphrasing

In class I have been introduced to paraphrasing, a topic that was new to me and it was interesting in different aspects. I could use different techniques that allowed me to write the ideas of another person using my own words to support my view. I had to be accurate in changing the words and the structure of an idea considering that the meaning must be the same. It was a challenge at the beginning as I didn't know how to use synonyms correctly or change a word class. I was struggling in reflecting the ideas with the right tone and emphasis of my sources.

2.1 Reflection

I started to be more confident later after I did more research and read different articles on the topic learning how to construct a paraphrase. As mentioned in Pilgrim Library (2022). There are few steps to follow to do so, first I need to focus on reading until I reach the complete understanding of the paragraph and the author's work idea. Placing the content of the source aside and write the acknowledgement, then reviewing the two paragraphs to avoid lack of understanding on the original idea that the author wishes to deliver to the reader. But mostly, I had to be specific in where I could demonstrate to have understood the contents of the idea.

Paraphrasing can be used in many contexts but always with attention to details and appropriate citations. In my opinion it is useful when I want to try to express another person's thought, but I can't rely on it to complete my work. After all, I'm just writing in my words an idea that doesn't belong to me. As mentioned in an article from Muhlenberg College (2022). In many different disciplines paraphrasing is considered plagiarism and if I use more than one quotation I may interfere with the flow of my writing.

2.2 Conclusion

At last, at the beginning of this journey, my discussions and little daily talks had a different character. During these past few months, I've been facing work-related situations where I was required to step up and take action into various circumstances. My word and attention was needed, and I felt I could not express the entire consistency of my judgement properly. After the studies and reflections undertaken during this term, I feel the concrete difference while speaking and manifest myself. Furthermore, going forward with my journey the confidence in standing out while facing diverse situations, will increase consistently. I feel I'm gaining the tools to bring the conversation to a further level, exploring the variety of solutions and critic thoughts that can lead to quick effective actions. Diving into Paraphrasing allowed me to achieve great improvement into the way I was listened and perceived.

3. Reflection

I've been introduced to Reflection when I had the opportunity to gain experience about reflective writing. I was really enjoying the class and it was something I could use in the near future like on a report. On the other hand, the lecturer time is limited and there's a lot to be covered. In this case I had to do my own research and learn from it. In this situation I could get a better understanding on how to write a personal reflection.

3.1 Reflection

I struggled at the beginning. One of the barriers of reflective practice and reflective writing could be, as said inside the work from 2009, Otienoh, "lack of time" (as cited in A Sen, 2014 page 5), or as A Sen (2014, page 5) quotes Sanders and McKeown (2007) when they say, "unfamiliarity with techniques and lack of confidence".

I analysed my reflection applying Gibb's 'Reflective Cycle' (1988) where he describes, feels, evaluates, analyses, concludes and generates personal action plans. I think Gibbs' description is crucial to incorporate structure to the reflection I'm writing. From description we move to feelings, where I empathize with the subject by putting together the critical thoughts and the positive aspects of it. Then the evaluation process requires a little extra attention, bad and good aspects will be brought together with critical points of view to make the reflection efficient. When efficiency is there, that's when evaluation evolves into analysis, where I need to explain what is actually happening.

3.2 Conclusion

What will conclude my reflection is to write on my personal learning and summarize what I could possibly have done differently. At this stage I have the information I need to generate an action plan where I can express what's important for me and write the solution on how I can improve from that point forward. (The University of Edinburgh, 2020).

This class helped me understanding my situation, and I started to adjust the concept of action plan and covers the time management of calendars and schedules, with familiarization of reflective techniques.

4. Referencing

Referencing in academic writing is essential and it will always be followed from in-text citations. Referencing allows the reader to understand where I borrow the idea that I'm writing about and helps me to not commit plagiarism.

4.1 Reflection

First, we need to assess the real meaning and definition of Referencing, to differentiate and point out details that might develop into confusion. I wasn't sure how to handle the reference in specific, with the correct structure and punctuation or understanding how to use others' work to improve my perspective. Going forward with the research and learning more on the topic I generate confidence in applying references and acknowledging works from different authors. There are not many negative aspects on the Referencing but just the challenge to improve my skills.

4.2 Examination

Furthermore, there are many Reference's types but in this particular situation I'm going to discuss about the Harvard style of reference. From my point of view there is a general confusion between the difference on the in-text citation and reference. The concept is similar, but the structure is different. 'Citation in the text is the brief indication of the source within the text of your work immediately following the use of the source whether quoted or summarised; a Reference list is a complete list of all the cited references used in your work with full bibliographic details, to allow the reader to follow up these references and find the original text' (The University Library Research Skills and Critical Thinking, 2022, p. 4).

4.3 Conclusion

With the definition just reported above I could understand that citation and references are really important for the academic writing. When these are used for example in a report, I can acknowledge the real author's intentions always of course with my own words.

Thus, in this way I can create a strong and founded text in my actual and future works.

Starting to engage with references will help me to prepare myself for the next years of studies and to develop my perception of how to incorporate them into my works. After all, this type of text requires a different use of the reference text compared to other categories such as presentations, reflections and thesis. In conclusion, referencing demonstrates the real attention to details that this kind of report requires.

5. Public Speaking and Giving Presentation

In this chapter I'm going to reflect on the experience I had in the presentations I've delivered in this class. This is a topic that in the university environment will be embraced quite often. Presentations and public speaking are used in almost all the school subjects, and it helped me to present and explain the work I presented on the ninth week of the first term.

5.1 Reflection

I was anxious by the idea that I had to talk in front of a full class and my lecturer, I didn't know how to start my speech or how to structure my reflection in a way where my audience could feel engaged and incorporated in my thoughts.

Often the preparation process is challenging as well, and sometimes is difficult to generate a synthesis from different sources or authors. Thus, I tend to be more discursive, and it took me two weeks of reflection and elaboration to start seeing the difference in giving an order to my thoughts. Later on, I slowly noticed that ideas came in order and in progression and I could categorize them more efficiently. The experience I gained diving into this topic has been essential for my future works, I understood how difficult it is to talk in front of so many listeners. This developed my skills in presenting and improved my confidence, even though there's still a lot to learn.

5.2 Presentation's reflection

An interesting example to be brought up is the presentation I did on Week 9. At first, in my mind I was ready for it. I prepared myself by repeating the speech many times in front a mirror, but as soon as I heard my name from the lecturer I froze, and words were not coming out from my mouth. I started to panic at the beginning of the speech and all my thoughts were blending. Thus, I didn't expect such a situation could happen after all the preparation I went through. Even though it was my first one. Understanding the concept that I have to expose in front of a class, and by simplifying it in a way that is immediate for the listeners, could help me in a future presentation.

5.3 Conclusion

I think that from this point forward, having in mind these concepts, every problem-solving situation I'll be facing will be way more manageable. The possession of language is developing, as the impact of my words and actions in my every day life.

A further action plan is to bring the practice of presentation to a daily level. This is intended as a real daily talk about different topics, with flatmates or colleagues. Even fifteen or twenty minutes a day could be enough to start presenting without pre-elaboration. Critical thoughts and ideas will run as a natural flow.

6. Conclusion

The elaboration of this report is my personal reflection on those topics discussed over the past few weeks. And after all, I feel I reached an upper level of confidence in writing and presenting in front of an audience, even though there's still a lot of practice to be done.

With Paraphrasing I've started to learn how to communicate concepts in different ways, adapted to the specific situation and/or person. Which represents a great step up into day-to-day assignments and discussions.

Reflection allowed me to introduce into my learning methodology a real escalation of concepts and steps to follow when a situation must be analysed or investigated properly.

After diving into Referencing, I understood how important it is to give consistency to the text with concrete sources, not only for readers and listeners but also for my own personal confidence.

Public Speaking and Giving Presentations gave the final touch to the whole elaborate and to the overall experience. Following all other paragraphs, it is intended as a result of all reflections made previously. And this has been made intentionally, to validate every single topic with a practical action.

7. Reference List

A Sen B. and Greenall J. (2014) *Reflective practice in the library and information sector*.

[Web] Available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280770777_Reflective_practice_in_the_library_and_information_sector (Accessed: 15th March 2022).

Muhlenberg College (2022) *Inappropriate Paraphrasing*. [Web] Available at:

<https://www.muhenberg.edu/academics/psychology/studentportal/inappropriateparaphrasing/> (Accessed: 20th March 2022).

Pilgrim Library (2022) *Study Skills: Paraphrasing*. [Web] Available at:

<https://library.defiance.edu/studyskills/paraphrase> (Accessed: 20th March 2022).

The Open University & Union in Partnership (2022) *Improving Education and Learning for all*

Available at: <https://www.open.ac.uk/choose/unison/develop/my-skills> (Accessed: 4th April 2022)

The University of Edinburg (2020) *Gibbs' Reflective Cycle*. [Web] Available at:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/gibbs-reflective-cycle> (Accessed: 21st March 2022)

The University Library Research Skills and Critical Thinking. (2022) *Harvard referencing*.

[Web] Available at:

<https://www.librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.html#top> (Accessed: 21st March 2022).