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REFLECTIVE REPORT ON ACADEMIC SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

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LCLM4001_LON

Academic Skills

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1. Introduction

Reflecting on personal development is essential for improving academic skills. This report will use Gibb's Reflective Model to evaluate how I have developed three key academic skills during this module: **note-taking skills**, **finding information/research skills**, and **paraphrasing skills**. These skills are fundamental for academic success and have significantly improved my confidence and abilities in handling various tasks. By analysing each skill, I will highlight my progress, challenges, and strategies for continued improvement. Developing these competencies not only enhances academic performance but also prepares me for professional growth and lifelong learning.

2. Note-Taking Skills

At the beginning of this module, note-taking was a challenge for me because I often struggled to identify the key points during lectures or when reading academic material. During class, I learned structured methods such as the **Cornell Note-Taking System** and techniques to actively listen for main ideas. One specific task was summarizing lecture content in real-time, which forced me to focus and prioritize important information.

Initially, I felt overwhelmed when trying to capture everything during lectures, which led to cluttered and ineffective notes. However, after practicing the Cornell method, I began to feel more confident. I was able to differentiate between key ideas and supporting details, which made my notes clearer and more concise.

The structured approach to notetaking helped me organize information logically. For example, dividing notes into main ideas, supporting points, and summaries allowed

me to review and study more effectively. I also found that summarizing my notes at the end of each session reinforced my understanding.

By developing my note-taking skills, I realized how much more efficient and productive I could be during lectures and independent study. My notes now serve as a valuable tool for revision, saving me time and stress before assignments. I have seen significant progress in my ability to take clear and organized notes. Moving forward, I plan to continue using the Cornell method and apply it to other areas, such as note-taking for research articles and textbooks.

3. Finding Information / Research Skills

Finding reliable academic sources was initially challenging for me because I did not fully understand how to navigate databases or evaluate source credibility. During the module, I was introduced to the **CRAAP method** (Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose), which provided a structured approach to evaluating sources. For one class activity, I had to research sources for an essay topic and apply the CRAAP criteria to determine their quality.

At first, I felt frustrated because it was difficult to filter through irrelevant information. I often wasted time on sources that were not academic or credible. However, as I practiced using the CRAAP method, I became more confident in assessing the reliability of information.

The CRAAP method helped me focus on key aspects of each source. For instance, I would check the **currency** to ensure the information was up-to-date, assess the **relevance** of the content to my topic, and verify the **authority** of the author or publisher. I also reviewed the **accuracy** of the claims and ensured that the **purpose** of the text was academic rather than biased or commercial. This approach significantly improved the quality of the materials I used for my assignments (Benedictine University Library, 2024).

Improving my research skills has strengthened my academic work, as I can now support arguments with credible evidence. This skill has also enhanced my critical

thinking, as I can analyze and compare different perspectives from scholarly sources. I have learned that research is a systematic process requiring patience and strategy. I will continue to use the CRAAP method to critically evaluate all sources I use in future assignments.

4. Paraphrasing Skills

Paraphrasing was another skill I needed to improve, as I initially found it difficult to rephrase academic texts without changing the meaning. During class, we practiced paraphrasing techniques, such as using synonyms, changing sentence structures, and breaking down complex sentences. One task involved paraphrasing a paragraph on Switzerland, where I had to retain the original meaning while writing it in my own words.

Initially, I felt unsure about paraphrasing correctly because I was afraid of unintentionally plagiarizing or altering the original meaning. However, as I practiced, I felt more confident in using the strategies taught in class.

Learning paraphrasing techniques has been invaluable. Breaking down sentences and identifying the main ideas before rephrasing helped me avoid copying. Using tools like **synonyms** and changing sentence structure allowed me to express ideas in a unique way while maintaining accuracy.

Paraphrasing is crucial for academic writing, as it demonstrates understanding of the material and ensures originality. By improving this skill, I have become better at integrating sources into my essays without relying on direct quotations. I will continue to practice paraphrasing when working with academic texts. To further improve, I will seek feedback on my paraphrased work and use tools like plagiarism checkers to ensure originality.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this module has been instrumental in helping me develop three essential academic skills: note-taking, finding information, and paraphrasing. Using Gibb's Reflective Model allowed me to critically evaluate my strengths and weaknesses, as well as identify practical solutions for overcoming challenges. I now feel more confident in my ability to organize information, conduct thorough research, and integrate academic sources effectively. These skills have not only improved my academic performance but also provided me with strategies that will be valuable in both my education and future career. Moving forward, I will continue to apply the techniques I have learned and seek opportunities for further improvement, ensuring continuous growth and success in my academic journey.

6. References

Benedictine University Library (2024) *Source Evaluation: CRAAP Method*. Available at: <https://researchguides.ben.edu/source-evaluation> (Accessed: 17 December 2024).

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