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Module Code: LCLM 4001\_Lon

Module: Academic Skills

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# Task 3 - Reflective report

## Introduction

Reflection is the process of carefully analysing and evaluating one's experiences, thoughts, and actions to gain insights and improve future performance (Merriam-Webster, 2024.). It involves stepping back from a situation, considering it from different perspectives, and identifying key lessons that can be applied moving forward (Vocabulary.com, 2024.).

Reflection is a super important skill for both academic and professional jobs. In an academic context, reflecting helps students really understand what they're learning, figure out how to improve their study habits, and develop critical thinking skills (UCL, 2018.). For professionals, reflecting on their experiences allows them to learn from what they've done, adjust their methods based on what works, and keep getting better at what they do (Britannica, n.d.). This report looks at how I developed my academic skills during the module, using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle as a guide. I'll focus on my academic writing, paraphrasing, and research skills, sharing specific activities I did, my thoughts on those experiences, and how they helped me grow academically.

## Reflective Analysis on Academic Writing Skills

### Initial Experience

During the module, I was assigned to write an academic essay for the first time. This was a new experience for me, as I had to follow specific rules and formats, such as having a clear introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. I also needed to use proper academic language and structure my arguments logically (Scribbr, 2019).

### Description

The assignment required me to draft an essay that included an introduction, several body paragraphs, and a conclusion. I had to research my topic thoroughly and find credible sources to support my arguments. This meant using academic journals and books instead of just random websites (Scribbr, 2019). I also received feedback from my classmates and teachers,

which helped me improve my writing. The process involved writing multiple drafts, where I focused on making my ideas clearer and more organised (Caulfield, 2020).

## **Feelings**

At first, I felt quite anxious about my writing skills. The pressure to meet academic standards was overwhelming, and I worried about whether I could express my ideas clearly. However, as I received constructive feedback and revised my work, I started to feel more confident in my writing abilities. Finally submitting my essay felt like a big achievement, and it really helped reduce my initial stress.

## **Evaluation**

Writing the academic essay had both positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, I learned how important it is to have a clear structure in my writing, which helped me organise my thoughts better. The feedback I received was incredibly helpful. It pointed out specific areas I needed to work on, like improving my thesis statement and ensuring my paragraphs flowed well together. However, I did struggle with clarity in my first drafts, which made the revision process take longer than I expected.

## **Analysis**

From this experience, I concluded that effective academic writing takes practice and a willingness to accept feedback. My initial difficulties with clarity showed me how important it is to revise and refine my work. I learned that writing is a process, and each draft brings me closer to expressing my ideas clearly (Caulfield, 2020).

## **Personal Action Plan**

To improve my academic writing skills further, I plan to practise writing more often, trying out different styles and formats. I will seek feedback from my classmates and teachers on my drafts before I submit them to enhance clarity and coherence. Additionally, I will explore writing resources, such as workshops and online guides, to develop a better understanding of academic writing conventions and improve my overall writing skills.

# **Reflective Analysis on Research Skills**

## **Initial Experience**

During the module, I was introduced to the process of conducting academic research for the first time. This involved learning how to find, evaluate, and use credible sources to support my arguments in essays and projects (University of Maryland Global Campus, 2024). I had previously relied on general internet searches, but this module taught me the importance of using academic databases and libraries.

## **Description**

The research tasks required me to identify a topic, develop research questions, and locate relevant literature. I learned to use various academic databases, such as JSTOR and Google Scholar, to find peer-reviewed articles and books. The assignment involved taking notes, summarising key points, and organising the information to support my writing (McCombes, 2023). I also had to evaluate the credibility of my sources, which was a new skill for me, as I had not considered the reliability of information in my previous research.

## **Feelings**

At first, I felt overwhelmed by the amount of information available and unsure about how to start my research. The idea of evaluating sources also made me anxious, as I was worried I might use unreliable information. However, as I became more familiar with the research process and received guidance from my instructors, I began to feel more confident in my ability to find and use credible sources. Completing my research and compiling my findings felt rewarding and boosted my confidence in my research skills.

## **Evaluation**

The experience of developing my research skills had both positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, I learned how to navigate academic databases effectively and found valuable resources that enhanced my understanding of my topic. I also gained skills in evaluating the credibility of sources, which is crucial for academic writing. However, I struggled with time management, as I often spent too long searching for sources and analysing them, which made it challenging to complete my assignments on time.

## **Analysis**

From this experience, I concluded that effective research skills are essential for academic success. I learned that research is not just about gathering information but also involves critical thinking and analysis. My initial struggles with time management highlighted the need for better planning and organisation when approaching research tasks. I realised that setting specific goals for each research session could help me stay focused and efficient (Research Leap, n.d.)

## **Personal Action Plan**

To improve my research skills further, I plan to practise using academic databases regularly to become more comfortable with the search process. I will also create a research plan for future assignments, setting clear deadlines for finding sources and evaluating them. Additionally, I will seek out workshops or resources on research methods to deepen my understanding of how to conduct effective research and manage my time better.

# **Reflective Analysis on Paraphrasing Skills**

## **Initial Experience**

During the module, I was introduced to the concept of paraphrasing for the first time. I learned that paraphrasing involves rewording and rephrasing text while maintaining the original meaning. This skill is crucial for academic writing, as it allows me to incorporate ideas from other sources without plagiarising (Scribbr, 2024).

## **Description**

The paraphrasing exercises included rewriting sentences and paragraphs from various academic texts. I practised taking complex ideas and expressing them in my own words. This process involved understanding the original text thoroughly before attempting to rephrase it (Scribbr, 2024). I also learned the importance of maintaining the original meaning while changing the structure and wording. The module provided examples and exercises that helped me practise my paraphrasing skills in a supportive environment.

## **Feelings**

At first, I felt unsure about my ability to paraphrase effectively. I worried that I might accidentally change the meaning of the original text or not change it enough, which could lead to unintentional plagiarism. However, as I practised more and received feedback from my instructors, I began to feel more confident in my paraphrasing abilities. Successfully paraphrasing complex ideas felt rewarding and helped me understand the material better.

## **Evaluation**

The experience of developing my paraphrasing skills had both positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, I learned how to express ideas in my own words, which improved my understanding of the material. Paraphrasing also allowed me to integrate sources into my writing more smoothly. However, I found it challenging to balance between changing the wording enough and retaining the original meaning. Sometimes, I struggled with finding the right words to convey the same idea differently.

## **Analysis**

From this experience, I concluded that effective paraphrasing is a vital skill for academic writing. It requires a deep understanding of the source material and the ability to express that understanding in a new way. My initial difficulties highlighted the importance of practice and feedback in mastering this skill (Gahan, 2022). I realised that taking notes while reading could help me better fully understand the content, making it easier to paraphrase later (The Art Of Paraphrasing: Mastering the Skill of Rewording | LogicBalls, 2024)

## **Personal Action Plan**

To improve my paraphrasing skills further, I plan to practise regularly by summarising articles and rewriting key points in my own words. I will also seek feedback from my peers and instructors on my paraphrasing attempts to identify areas for improvement. Additionally, I will explore resources on effective paraphrasing techniques and strategies, such as using synonyms and changing sentence structures, to enhance my skills.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the module has significantly enhanced my academic skills in paraphrasing, research, and writing. By practising these skills and receiving constructive feedback, I have

gained confidence and improved my ability to express ideas clearly and effectively. These skills will be essential as I continue my academic journey.

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