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A Reflective Analysis of My Learning Journey in the Academic Skills Module

ACS report

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1 Introduction (~100 words)

The idea of this report is to critically reflect on my learning experience throughout the Academic Skills lessons. Reflection allows me to analyse my progress, identify the strengths and weaknesses, and link classroom experiences to my personal, but also academic development. Following Gibbs' (1988) reflective cycle, I will evaluate key activities, including Task 1, Task 2 and classroom interactions, to understand how these experiences shaped my learning journey. By actively engaging concepts such as Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, the Pomodoro technique (Cirillo, 2006), and diagrammatic note-taking strategies (Buzan, 2010), I will show how this module has drastically influenced my growth as a student and prepared me for future academic success.

2 Description of Experiences

Throughout the module, I have taken part in a multitude of tasks and activities created to strengthen my academic skills. In Task 1, I was required to sit a multiple choice exam. Highlighting my initial challenges with referencing.

In task 2, I had the opportunity to sit writing focused exam. This encouraged me to develop more efficient note-taking skills and paraphrasing techniques in order to prepare. Additionally, classroom discussions played a significant role in my development. As an example, during the debate about banning phone in schools for the well being of students, I realised the importance of listening to different perspectives.

These experiences, although hard at times, provided valuable opportunities to practice by applying theoretical knowledge, showing Kolb's (1984) view that learning is a continuous cycle of experience, reflection and experimentation.

3 Analysis and Personal Reflection

3.1 Strengths Developed

One of my key strengths was my adaptability in a group work. Engaging in collaborative tasks improved my communication skills and ability to contribute meaningfully to discussions. This aligns with Schön's (1983) idea of "reflection-in-action," where learning occurs through actively responding to challenges.

I also developed stronger time management skills. At the start of the module, I often procrastinated, but after applying the Pomodoro Technique (Cirillo, 2006), I was able to break large tasks into manageable chunks. Research supports this strategy, as Koch (2010) explains that structured intervals increase focus and productivity. By combining this with Zimmerman's (2002) theory of self-regulated learning, I learned to set goals, monitor my progress, and evaluate outcomes more effectively.

Another strength I gained was in note-taking and organisation. Initially, my notes were linear and sometimes confusing. By using mind mapping (Buzan, 2010) and diagrammatic structures supported by Mayer's (2009) multimedia learning principles, I created visual notes that were easier to review and recall. This not only improved my revision process but also enhanced my ability to connect ideas across different topics.

3.2 Areas for Improvement

Despite these strengths, I recognised areas needing further development. One major challenge was academic writing, particularly integrating sources and applying referencing consistently. While I improved throughout the module, I often struggled to balance my own voice with supporting evidence. Cottrell (2019) highlights that critical writing requires both analysis and synthesis, not just description. This is an area I plan to continue working on by practising paraphrasing.

Another area for improvement was confidence in contributing to class discussions. At times, I hesitated to share my ideas due to fear of being incorrect. This limited my participation in peer learning opportunities. Gibbs' (1988) reflective cycle encourages learners to consider feelings during learning experiences, and through reflection, I realised that my lack of confidence was a barrier to a more deeper engagement. Going forward, I want to adopt a growth mindset and remind myself that making mistakes is part of the learning process.

Overall, the module has had a significant impact on both my personal and academic development. Academically, I gained a stronger understanding of research methods, referencing, and effective study strategies. Personally, I developed resilience and problem-solving skills by tackling challenges and adapting my learning approaches.

Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model is relevant here, as my growth followed the cycle of experiencing, reflecting, conceptualising, and experimenting. For instance, in Task 1, I experienced difficulty in time management; reflecting on this led me to explore the Pomodoro technique, which I then applied successfully in Task 2. This shows how reflection translated into action and long-term improvement. Furthermore, the emphasis on transferable skills, such as teamwork, communication, and independent learning. As Moon (2004) argues, reflection is not just about looking back, but also about planning for future development. This aligns with my goal of becoming a more independent, critical, and confident learner throughout my degree programme.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, this report has reflected on my learning journey throughout the Academic Skills module. By analysing my experiences in Task 1, Task 2, and classroom activities, I identified strengths such as time management, note-taking, and adaptability, as well as areas for improvement in academic writing and confidence. Through engaging with theories of reflection (Gibbs, 1988; Kolb, 1984), self-regulation (Zimmerman, 2002), and practical strategies such as the Pomodoro technique (Cirillo, 2006) and mind mapping (Buzan, 2010), I demonstrated how reflection transformed my approach to learning. Ultimately, this module has not only enhanced my academic skills but also supported my personal growth as a learner prepared for future challenges.

5 References

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