

LCLM4001_LON Academic Skills
ACS report 1

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Introduction

Reflective Report: My Learning Journey in the Module on Note-Taking, Referencing, and Academic Writing Skills. I have experienced significant growth in my academic abilities through this module. This report will follow an assessment framework to track my progress, address the challenges I encountered recently, and explore my strategies for overcoming them using Gibb's Reflective Cycle. Additionally, I will highlight specific activities and tools that have been instrumental in enhancing my academic skills. By sharing my experiences, I hope to illustrate how these skills have equipped me for my future academic and professional pursuits.

Note-Taking Skills

Prior to this module, my note-taking approach was rather basic. I relied heavily on linear notes, creating lengthy lists in freeform text. This method often left me confused, as I struggled to grasp the overarching themes and frequently felt overwhelmed without a clear understanding of the main points. I would spend hours poring over my notes, only to close my notebook feeling lost about the key ideas. I lacked the ability to prioritize information or employ techniques that could streamline my studying process, making note-taking feel like a burdensome task instead of a valuable resource. The module significantly transformed my approach by introducing various note-taking techniques. One of the most impactful resources was the BBC podcast on motivation and procrastination (2019). We were encouraged to experiment with diverse note-taking formats, such as tables, mind maps, and Cornell Notes.

Techniques I Learned:

Tabular Note-Taking: I adopted the Tabular Note-Taking format to categorize information effectively. For the podcast recap, I created a table featuring three sections: “Challenges,” “Solutions,” and “Key Quotes.” This layout enabled me to visualize concepts side by side, clarifying the relationships between ideas. It also streamlined my review process.

Mind Maps: My initial attempt at creating a mind map felt unfamiliar, as I was accustomed to writing in linear formats. However, I soon discovered that mind maps excelled at illustrating connections among various topics. For instance, I developed a mind map linking memory-supporting techniques, associating repetition and active recall with their benefits. This approach helped me understand the interconnectedness of concepts and how they contribute to a larger framework.

Cornell Notes: I learned the effectiveness of dividing a page into three sections for questions, main notes, and summaries. This method encouraged me to engage critically with the material, enabling me to address questions that fostered a deeper understanding.

Reflection:

These activities highlighted that note-taking extends beyond mere transcription. I learned to appreciate how tables and diagrams can enhance thought organization, while identifying relevant content and crafting concise conclusions made my notes more useful. These techniques alleviated my stress during study sessions, allowing for quick access to essential information.

Referencing Skills

Initially, I found myself lost and somewhat intimidated by the concept of referencing, as I had no prior experience. Uncertainty about how to accurately cite sources or which citation style to adopt led to anxiety regarding potential plagiarism. My initial submissions contained missing information or formatting errors.

To develop my referencing skills, I began by summarizing and citing an article about the negative impact of poor management practices on employee motivation (CMI, 2021). This task required the use of the Harvard referencing system, which posed some challenges initially. However, I gradually realized that referencing was a skill I could practice and improve.

Challenges Faced:

I struggled with citing various reference types, such as journal articles, books, and websites. For example, I was unsure how to reference online articles that lacked an author.

I often forgot to include essential details, such as page numbers or publication dates, resulting in incomplete references.

Strategies for Improvement:

I utilized the module's referencing guide, which provided clear examples and templates for citation formatting. Websites like Cite This For Me were helpful for cross-referencing, ensuring consistency in my work. Participating in peer reviews allowed me to compare my referencing style with that of my classmates and learn from their feedback.

Reflection:

By the end of the module, I felt more confident in my ability to cite sources. I recognized that proper referencing strengthens arguments and shows respect for others' intellectual property—an essential skill for my future writing endeavors in both academia and my career.

Academic Writing Skills

At the beginning of the module, I found writing academic pieces to be particularly challenging. I often struggled with structuring my essays, logically conveying my ideas, and maintaining a formal tone. My initial drafts were often incoherent and difficult to follow.

Methods I Implemented to Improve:

Essay Planning: One of my initial learnings was the importance of planning essays. I used Cornell Notes to break down the essay into three main components: Introduction, Body, and Conclusion. I outlined each section, detailing key points and supporting evidence, which significantly simplified the writing process.

Paraphrasing Practice: We practiced paraphrasing complex academic texts, which proved to be a valuable exercise. For example, I rephrased a paragraph explaining motivation theories into simpler language while retaining the original meaning. This exercise taught me how to avoid plagiarism and communicate more clearly.

Accountability and Feedback: Feedback from my tutor was transformative. I learned that my essays became less readable when I included excessively long sentences. The tutor advised me to shorten complex ideas and use transitional words between paragraphs. These minor adjustments greatly enhanced the flow of my writing.

Reflection: My academic writing skills have shown noticeable improvement. I feel better equipped to articulate my ideas clearly and provide quality evidence. I have learned the importance of revising my work to ensure coherence and smooth transitions. Writing has evolved from a daunting task into a platform where I can showcase my analytical abilities.

Competencies: Demonstrating Skills

I have actively applied the skills acquired from this module in various tasks and assignments:

A screenshot of a lecture on Working Memory and learning, showcasing my note-taking and mind-mapping techniques. This experience deepened my understanding of memory techniques and their application in learning, which I later discussed in class.

In my final essay, I referenced multiple sources, including an article from CMI (2021) and lecture materials, ensuring that all citations adhered to the Harvard style. This attention to detail elevated my work to meet academic standards and effectively integrated research into my arguments.

I incorporated the planning and paraphrasing skills I learned while working on the reflective essay assignment. The feedback I received highlighted improvements in my writing style and organization, motivating me to continue enhancing my skills.

Conclusion

In summary, this module has been transformative for my academic journey. I have progressed from struggling with basic academic tasks to confidently performing advanced skills in note-taking, referencing, and academic writing. The challenges I faced motivated me to cultivate resilience and embrace feedback, while the solutions I discovered equipped me with tools for future academic and professional success. I have learned to take ownership of my studies.

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