

Module Name: Academic Skills in the
Digital Era

Module Code: BMSW4013

Assessment 2: Reflective Essay

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Word Count: 1500

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work.

I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

The transition to university requires students to develop both academic and digital skills in order to succeed. During the first term, students are expected to become more independent and take responsibility for their own learning. Skills such as referencing, using online platforms like Moodle, research, communication, and presenting are all important. This reflective essay uses Gibbs' Reflective Cycle to explore how my academic and digital skills have developed during my first term at university. The reflection focuses on my experience of learning Harvard referencing, using the online library and Moodle, taking part in a group activity, and completing a presentation in my digital skills class.

At the start of my course, I was introduced to Harvard referencing during lectures and was asked to use it in my assignments. This took place in the first few weeks of university. I had never used referencing before, so everything felt new to me. I also had to complete tasks on Moodle, such as referencing basics and academic integrity, which helped me understand the importance of avoiding plagiarism. In addition, I was introduced to the online library, where I had to search for academic sources and learn how to check if they were reliable using tools such as the CRAAP test. During one lesson, we completed a group activity where we had to find references and present them in the correct format. I was paired with someone I did not know, which made me feel uncomfortable because I am a shy person. I also completed a presentation in my digital skills class, where I created a PowerPoint and presented it in front of the class. These experiences helped me develop both academic and digital skills over time.

At the beginning, I felt very nervous and unsure about my abilities. I found Harvard referencing confusing because there were different rules for different sources. This made me feel quite stressed and confused at that point, as I was worried about losing marks. Using Moodle and the online library also felt difficult at first because I was not used to these digital systems. During the group activity, I felt anxious because I was working with someone I did not know. As a shy person, I usually find it difficult to communicate at first, so I was worried about how the task would go. When it came to the presentation, I felt even more nervous. I thought I would be stiff and shy while speaking, and I was worried that I might make mistakes. However, as I continued, my feelings started to change. During the group task, we began to communicate more, which made me feel more comfortable. During the

presentation, I noticed that people were smiling and reacting positively, which helped me relax. By the end, I felt proud of myself, especially when my lecturer complimented my PowerPoint and said it was very good and colourful.

There were both positive and negative aspects of this experience. A positive aspect was that I improved my understanding of Harvard referencing, which is an important academic skill. I also developed my digital skills, especially information literacy by learning how to find and check sources using the CRAAP test. I improved my digital learning by using Moodle regularly, and my digital communication and collaboration skills during the group activity. In addition, I developed my digital productivity skills by creating a PowerPoint presentation. Another positive point was that I improved my confidence. Even though I am shy, I was able to communicate with my partner and complete the group task successfully. I also managed to present in front of the class and received positive feedback, which made me feel proud. However, there were also some negative aspects. At the beginning, I lacked confidence, which made the experience more stressful. I also found referencing difficult and confusing, which slowed down my work. In addition, I felt very nervous before the presentation, which affected my preparation. One unexpected outcome was that I performed better than I expected in the presentation, which showed me that I am more capable than I thought.

This experience happened in this way for several reasons. Firstly, I had no previous experience with Harvard referencing, so it was difficult for me to understand at the beginning. Secondly, my personality had an impact on my experience. As a shy person, I found it difficult to communicate and present in front of others, which increased my anxiety. However, the learning environment helped me improve. Tasks on Moodle and support from lectures helped me understand key concepts such as referencing and academic integrity. The group activity encouraged communication, which helped me feel more comfortable over time. The use of digital tools also played an important role. At first, I was not confident using the online library or creating presentations, but with practice, I improved. I also completed a digital skills self-assessment, which showed that my digital wellbeing was strong, but my digital learning skills needed improvement. This explains why I found it difficult at the beginning to use Moodle and the online library. However, as I practised more and completed tasks, my confidence improved. The positive reactions from others during my presentation also helped me feel more confident. In addition, the feedback from my lecturer motivated me and made me feel proud of my work. This shows that practice, support, and confidence all play an important role in developing new skills.

Looking back, there are several things I could have done differently to improve my experience. Firstly, I could have been more confident from the beginning and made more

effort to communicate earlier during the group activity. As a shy person, I tend to wait for others to speak first, but in this situation, starting the conversation earlier would have helped me feel more comfortable and made the task easier. It would have also helped build a better connection with my partner from the start. I also think I could have taken more responsibility during the task instead of sometimes relying on my partner, which would have helped me develop my skills further.

In terms of my presentation, I could have practised speaking more before delivering it. For example, I could have rehearsed in front of a mirror or practised with a friend. This would have helped reduce my nervousness and made me feel more prepared and confident. I also could have focused more on my speaking skills, such as maintaining eye contact and speaking clearly, instead of worrying too much about making mistakes.

In addition, I could have spent more time learning Harvard referencing earlier in the term, instead of waiting until assignments were due. This would have helped me understand the rules better and reduced the stress I felt when completing my work. I could have used more resources, such as online guides or support from lecturers, to improve my understanding more quickly.

Another area I could have improved is my time management. At times, I spent too much time worrying about the tasks instead of actually completing them. I could have planned my work more effectively by breaking tasks into smaller steps and starting earlier. This would have helped me feel less overwhelmed and more in control of my workload. Overall, although I made good progress, there were clear areas where I could have taken a more active and organised approach to improve my learning experience.

In the future, I will take steps to continue improving my academic and digital skills. I will practise Harvard referencing regularly so that I become more confident and make fewer mistakes. I will also continue using Moodle and the online library to improve my research skills. In group work, I will try to communicate more, even if I feel shy at the beginning. I now understand that communication helps make tasks easier and more successful. For presentations, I will practise speaking before presenting and focus on staying calm. I will also continue improving my PowerPoint skills to make my work clear and engaging. In addition, I will manage my time better by planning my work and starting tasks earlier. By doing this, I will feel more confident and prepared in the future. This experience has shown me that even though I may feel nervous at first, I can improve and succeed with practice and effort.

SMART Action Plan

Specific: I will improve my referencing, research, presentation, and communication skills by practising weekly and completing Moodle tasks.

Measurable: I will complete at least two references each week, practise presentations, and track my progress through feedback.

Achievable: This is realistic because I can include it in my weekly study time.

Relevant: This will help improve my academic performance and confidence at university.

Time-bound: I will achieve this by the end of my next term.

References list

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