



A Reflective Report on what I have learned during my Academic module

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1. Introduction

Reflection is an important process that can help individuals revisit past events and learn from them. According to Health and Care Professions Council (2021), Reflection is the technique used to look back on the past and analyse those actions.

The academic module is to assist in the basics of our overall course. Academic skills is a tool you can use to help understand, distribute, and examine new knowledge (Gaast and Koenders and Post, 2019)

This report will discuss what I learned during my academic skills module and reflect on 3 topics I learned during the lessons. This will be explained using 'Kolb's reflective cycle.'

2. Research Finding

Concrete Experience

In week 3 we learned about research finding. Research is a knowledge-based method of answering a research question (Kabir, 2016). Knowing where and how to get information is crucial in academic writing. Using a method called 'CRAAP test' (Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, Purpose) Can help decide on what sources to use.

Firstly we were given access to the University library. Everything they hold is mostly online and has been verified by qualified personnel who have spent the time sourcing them out.

Google Chrome is a browser that holds a diverse place for information, but places such as Wikipedia and other biased websites can often be misconstrued. By searching 'Google Scholar' you will be taken to a Google browser which helps you find trusted sources and PDFs

Finally, the easiest way to research is to simply search for your topic, and add 'PDF' at the end of the search. By adding this keyword, your search will be filtered to show PDF files, which typically are used for articles and other researchers.

Reflective Observation

Before the lesson, I had thought research finding would be as simple as inputting the keywords onto the search bar when in reality this was much more complex. Finding factual information is something that needs to be learned and can still be questioned (using the CRAAP test). However, following the methods in this lesson will make my research more factual.

Abstract Conceptualization

I found that during the lesson, there was so much to remember. The content seemed overwhelming, but once we were given a hands-on experience, this made it much easier. My classmates also learned a lot from this lesson, in particular, using Google Scholar.

Active Experimentation

Using the skills I learned during the class I knew how to find trusted sources. In particular, adding 'PDF' to the end of my keyword searches and using Google Scholar. Practising these methods will help develop my research-finding skills.

3. Note-taking skills

Concrete Experience

Note-taking can be a vital skill to help record information more effectively and is useful for everyday life and work life. We also learned about the working memory. Working memory is the amount of memory and information you can store and process in your brain (Pezzulo, 2007).

In week 2, we discussed 4 different ways to take notes:

- Linear notes - these are usually regular notes that are often written in bullet point sentences. It is the most common type people use to write information down.
- Cornell notes - this has a structure where the left side of the page was for writing the questions (what you needed to learn) and the right side was for notes and keywords. Cornell notes would typically have a title at the top of the page and a summary at the bottom.
- Diagrammatic note-taking – we had to use this structure for our second assessment, which was to write a key topic in the middle of the page and then link it to your main points and sub-points. This is useful to help write information quicker and make links to your notes. There are different types of diagrammatic notes such as spider diagrams, or mind maps
- Tabular notes – this type of note-taking uses a table to write down information. It is typically used to summarise information and compare different viewpoints.

Highlighting key information, was also another method that helped source out keywords and information.

Reflective Observation

Before the lesson, I knew about 2 of the 4 types of note-taking, linear notes and diagrammatic notes. During the lesson, even though I knew about diagrammatic notes, I hadn't used this knowledge to its full potential. It was in my opinion, the fastest and easiest way to write and summarise information. Our lecturer had told us that during her time studying at university, she said Cornell notes were her favourite, and helped her revise much more effectively.

Abstract Conceptualization

During the lesson, we had an exercise where we listened to a voice recording and had to write down as much information from the podcast as we could. I used linear notes to make notes and once the recording ended, we had to answer questions to test how much information we had written down. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to write everything as the presenters were talking very fast and my type of note-taking was not the best in terms of pacing. This made me realise that linear notes were not a good way to retain information unless you had the time to write them.

Active Experimentation

Learning different ways to take notes broadened my scope of recording information. I realised that linear notes were not the most productive, and I would need to use the right method of note-taking for the right situations, for example, using diagrammatic notes when I needed to write down information fast or using tabular notes to help me summarise information.

4. Referencing Skills

Concrete Experience

Referencing is a method to share and provide proof of where you take your knowledge (Shibly, 2016) In weeks 3 to 5, we learned about the importance of referencing, how to reference and the different methods to do this. Throughout our academic module, we were given refreshers on referencing and many different exercises to complete.

Referencing is important in academic writing as it backs up your information and gives credibility. We were given access to a website that helps you reference all sorts of research, called Cite Them Right.

When writing essays and reports, we needed to reference twice: in-text citations and a reference list.

Reflective Observation

During the class, I felt very overwhelmed as there was so much to remember. The difference between referencing books and journals, even though small I felt I would easily mix up, even if they had different information to include. When I was introduced to Cite Them Right, this helped me and made it much easier. After doing plenty of exercises during the class, I had a better grasp of the topic.

Abstract Conceptualization

Small rules such as making sure the reference list had to be in alphabetical order, and making sure to write certain parts in italics and comma placements, were going to be difficult to remember, however, I learned the best way to improve is to practice. Keep doing exercises and revise the topic so I can be more confident in this.

Active Experimentation

In future, I will be using Cite Them Right to assist in referencing my work. This will help make sure my work is accurate and I can use this website all various types of research. I will also practice this skill whenever I can, making sure I don't forget the rules and go back to the notes I made during class.

5. Conclusion

To sum up the topics I learned, I felt all three were equally important in terms of our academic module. I think Referencing was the most difficult of the three, as It was a new skill and there was a lot of information that I had to memorise. The most insightful topic was research finding, as beforehand I would only use Google search, I had learned many other ways to find more trusted sources of information. Note-taking skills taught me that there were many diverse ways to digest information and not only take linear notes.

6. References

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