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As we all go through different paths in this life, it is important to take a step back and observe those paths in order to make the journey a bit easier. Whether you have your own business, or you are just a student trying to figure out your future, it is imperative that we all adopt this very helpful skill of reflecting on our experiences, that way we can be more prepared for other challenges; that we may, and most likely will face in our lives. In this assignment, I will be going in depth about chosen topics which have raised out from the others that I have been learning throughout this course.

This reflective writing will be incorporated with the Gibb's Reflective Cycle, which contains five different cycles; Description, Feelings, Evaluation, Conclusions and finally an action that must take place to help better analyse how time management, referencing, and paraphrasing have been the skills that I have improved at the most so far throughout this course. Time management, referencing and paraphrasing are all very useful skills that that have greatly improved my abilities to use the time that I have wisely, as well as my ability to express something and get my point across in a more accurate way.

Stated earlier, we all live different completely different lives. For some, time can be a very difficult thing to manage. Whether it is setting up your alarm an hour early for a meeting the next day, making sure that you turn in an assignment on the due date, or just showing up on time, some, if not all of us struggle with this skill from time to time. Time management was always something that I could improve on.

Given that time management shares a strong empirical relationship conscientiousness (McCann, Fogarty, Roberts 2012), Improving this aspect could have many benefits for me. Being a manager of a restaurant already takes plenty of my time and energy as it is. There are many aspects of that job that require my full time and attention like making sure the staff are doing what they are supposed to be doing or sending out food orders at the right time. I knew that deciding to go to university would not be an easy task to balance with my work that demands much from me, and on top of that, start studying a whole new course at the same time.

The first few weeks of this course were the most difficult in terms of finding the right time to study and do my assignments. As the weeks went by and as I was learning more about ways to better manage my time, I noticed that things started to get a bit easier in terms of revising notes, starting an assignment and setting some study time aside. The more of a habit I adopted of just starting things a bit earlier, I would end up finishing earlier or having a bit more time at the end for things like revisions. In a way, things started to become second nature because I was starting to build a habit.

Although this may be a difficult thing to accomplish, it is not impossible. In order to better manage my time, I know I must get out of my comfort zone and just get on with things that need to be done. With that being said, I hope to continue having the courage to start things ahead of time and do things that are necessary for my growth.

Being a new student, I realize how critical this next skill would be in order to have a more successful experience here at university. With all the assignments I currently have, and the others that are to come, it is imperative that I improve my skills at paraphrasing. To paraphrase someone essentially means that you are analysing someone else's writing and explaining or narrating the message or idea in your own words. When paraphrasing though, it is essential to keep the main idea and message, in order to keep the original facts and points accurate.

During the start of this course, I have noticed that this skill needs to be improved as well. This skill allows for the creation of more varied and fluent text. (Callison-Burch 2006) For example if the reader does not understand a text, the paraphrasing will be a way to break a text down to make it more relatable. With English not being my first language, I sometimes find it difficult to clearly send my point of view through writing. I feel like doing these assignments where I must really focus and be attentive to the things that I read. Having to paraphrase for a certain assignment forces me to adopt a better learning attitude when it comes to clearly reading and understanding what a text is trying to say, since it will be turned in and graded.

One aspect of paraphrasing that I found very helpful when analysing a text is to take a few words from a text, that I can easily understand and make a meaningful sentence out of and go on from there. I found that this technique while reading is boosting my knowledge and writing skills. Not just for an assignment to turn in, but also in my everyday life. Paraphrasing is not only exclusive to the classroom, but I can carry this skill wherever I go. For example, I can accurately decipher what someone is telling me through a text, email or article and I find it much easier to understand the text by taking notes, paying attention during the lectures and finally, applying it to my own assignments that I must turn in.

Referencing is a skill that should be taken very seriously, especially in the academic side of things. This skill is important to get used to using if I want to get the right marks that I want on the assignments. Essentially, it is the practice of acknowledging in an academic text the intellectual work of others. (Neville 2012) There are also some consequences to not correctly referencing your work. To put it more simply you cannot take someone else's work and claim it as your own. Essentially, that is what is taking place whenever there is no reference list at the end of your work. There have been many cases of students getting failing grades or removed from university for things such as plagiarism. That is what happens when you do not reference your work. With most skills that I need to develop, I find that these shares similarities with the rest of them; it also takes a lot of time and effort in order to get better at it. In terms of time, I find myself spending hours looking through articles that share my same point of view or an article that is covering the topic we are learning about in class.

I believe I can get much better at this part of academic writing, I can also improve my reading skills so that way I don't have to look at texts longer and I can just skim through, while still having a deep understanding of what I am reading. Once I have a good idea of what I have read, it is much easier to pick out what I have learned from my reading, and incorporate into my own writing, while at the same time remembering that it was not from my own work, which is where the referencing comes into play. For the rest of this course, I plan to carefully look through texts that I am reading, take better notes during lectures with anything that has to do with referencing and put it to practice.

Ever since I have enrolled in university and have taken this class, I now realise all the very useful skills that I have been missing or that needed some work. I realize that all these skills are vital to growth as a student and as well as a manager at my work. Before starting university, I knew very little about the academic side of things, due to the other things that were taking place in my life. From the get-go, I was very surprised to realize that there are many things I must learn. Even the skills that I already possess can always be improved as well. Time management, paraphrasing and referencing are all vital parts of being able to present a case, action, story and so on. Just a few months ago, before joining this course, I could not relate to this and see how it could be to my personal benefit. Now though, I am starting to realize what I am capable of. The most important of

the steps I must take now is to continue practicing and revising everything I have learned on a regular basis, but also try to apply those same concepts and skills whenever I am doing my own research outside of university. One interesting thing I learned, is the Gibb's Reflective Cycle was originally created for use in higher education as a way for teachers and students to connect theoretical learning to experiential practice to reinforce the knowledge and skills they have acquired using real-world situations. **As Gibbs said:**

"It is not sufficient simply to have an experience in order to learn. Without reflecting upon this experience, it may quickly be forgotten or it's learning potential lost. It is from the feelings and thoughts emerging from this reflection that generalisations or concepts can be generated. And it is generalisations which enable new situations to be tackled effectively."

It is not enough just to do, and neither is it enough just to think. Learning from experience must involve links between the doing and the thinking. This journey so far has been very beneficial to me, Things that I never thought I would need to learn or never even thought of are now being used by me daily. I can notice my writing and reading in context have improved. I am looking forward to continuing this course and improving my overall academic skills.

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