



ACADEMIC SKILLS



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Module Code: LCLM4001

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Submitted on:17th december 2024

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Introduction

According to Mia 2023, reflection is a systematic and analytical method of expression in an English for Academic purpose course, that enables students to examine their ideas, emotions and experiences. It entails self-reflection, critical thinking and evaluating events from different point of view. Self-reflection on prior experiences and how they influence one's ideas, feelings or behaviour is another aspect of reflective writing. Using the GIBBS reflective cycle, I will highlight three key abilities in this report which are Note-taking, paraphrasing and referencing.

Professor Graham Gibbs developed the six-stage experiential learning approach known as Gibbs' Reflective Cycle in 1988. It places a strong emphasis on going back over past events, evaluating them, and applying the knowledge gained to guide future decisions and actions (McLeod 2024)

This module gave me a chance to develop numerous academic skills that are important for academic writing and higher education. The three most important skills I worked on were note-taking, referencing and paraphrasing, as these are crucial resources for research and writing in academia. Moreover, I have learnt how these skills would raise both the standard of my work and my overall academic performance.

Skill 1: Note Taking

Notetaking is the act of recording, typing, or creating a visual representation of information for future use. Taking notes encourages information encoding and creates a written record for future study (Erin 2023)

At the beginning of this module, I discovered my note taking skills were poor and unorganised. I struggled making notes without considering its relevance to current tasks, which later turned out difficult to decode

At the start of this module, I felt a sense of fright about my capacity to develop these skills. Note-taking was an area where I struggled the most, since I was used to the habit of recording material exactly which turned out to be unhelpful.

At first, I found it difficult to properly arrange my ideas when taking notes. It was challenging to pinpoint important elements in my lengthy, unstructured notes since I would frequently jot them down without editing. But I quickly saw that a more methodical approach was required. I began to use Cornell Notes, which made it easier

for me to organise important concepts, definitions, and queries. I was able to swiftly recognise the primary points of dispute in the readings and interact with the content more critically. To concentrate on the most crucial details and lessen my desire to record unimportant details, I also started summarising readings before taking notes.

Good note-taking is essential to producing high-quality academic work since it enables me to gather and arrange pertinent data for my essays and research assignments. Instead of merely writing down facts, I was able to create a framework for critically interacting with the content by employing the Cornell Notes method. I gained a deeper comprehension of the material and found it simpler to remember important ideas when composing my projects thanks to this active learning style.

Skill 2: Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is a way of using words and phrasing of words to portray similar ideas it is used with text having short sections like sentences and phrases UNSW (2022) .Paraphrasing also got simpler as I understood how to express context in my own words without changing the original meaning. At first, I found it challenging to paraphrase concepts without distorting their original meaning. I would frequently utilise the same quote without considering how it would fit into my argument, or I would paraphrase too closely to the original text. After getting criticism, I realised how crucial it was to change the original text's organisation and language while maintaining the essential idea. I began improving my paraphrase skills by rewriting paragraphs or articles and then comparing them with the source material. I learnt how to express concepts more organically while still giving credit to the original author.

Paraphrasing allowed me to convey ideas from others in a way that supports my own position without overly depending on direct quotations. At first, I found it difficult to paraphrase and frequently turned to quotations out of concern that I would misunderstand the original text. But as I grew more at ease with paraphrase, I saw how useful it was for creating fresh, distinctive content. I may incorporate many viewpoints into my writing while keeping a consistent voice via paraphrasing.

Skill 3: Referencing

Referencing is recognising the references used or referred in the work by providing information or quoting their work .About referencing, I had trouble with the technical part of sourcing correctly and was inconsistent with the citation styles. I felt more at ease with citing and learning how important it is to maintain consistent referencing for

academic integrity. However, I was inconsistent in my original approach to referencing. I occasionally used incorrect citation styles or forgot to cite sources. Due to my lack of knowledge about how to properly credit various sources, including books, journal papers, and internet pieces, I found referencing style Harvard to be especially difficult. But I gained confidence after going to GBS library and help from peers. Additionally, I worked on citing in a variety of tasks, which strengthened the guidelines. I now realise that using appropriate reference is essential for exhibiting academic seriousness, preventing plagiarism, and participating in the academic discourse.

Reference skills are equally important for academic success because they demonstrate my capacity to interact with previous research while properly citing sources. I initially thought of reference as a technical and perhaps boring activity, but I quickly came to see that it is an essential component of professionalism and academic honesty. My work grew much clearer and more credible because of my constant practice utilising different citation styles and reference requirements.

Conclusion

The experience of learning and developing these academic abilities during the module has been priceless. I first had trouble structuring my ideas and making good use of sources, but with time and practice, I've greatly improved. I now approach texts with greater clarity and focus because to organised note-taking. My confidence in academic writing has increased as a result of my improved accuracy and consistency in referencing. Lastly, I have been able to summarize knowledge and present it in a unique way that is relevant to my arguments thanks to my skill to paraphrase.

I recognise that even though I have come a long way, I can always do better. I still occasionally have trouble managing the time required to take detailed notes during lectures or maintaining the originality of my paraphrases. But now that I am more conscious of these difficulties, I feel prepared to keep practicing these abilities in my upcoming coursework.

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