

Reflective Report

Module: Academic Skills (LCLM4001)

Student Name:

Student ID:

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Introduction

This reflective report explains how the Academic Skills module supported my development as a university learner. I will discuss the main experiences from classroom sessions, Task 1 (quiz), and Task 2 (writing exercise). These activities taught me how to paraphrase, manage time, reference sources, and reflect on mistakes. These were very new skills to me at the start. The report will also examine my learning process and the strengths I developed. Schön (1983) explained that students develop deeper understanding through reflection on action. That idea shaped how I reviewed my learning and changed my habits during the module.

Description of Experiences

In Task 1, we completed a quiz that tested our knowledge about referencing and academic integrity. I got confused between indirect and secondary referencing. My answers were mostly incorrect in that part. However, I clearly remembered what the tutor showed in class about direct and indirect quotations. I used that memory to revise the rules later using Cottrell's (2019) guide.

In Task 2, we had to paraphrase a short text and write a paragraph. I found this task very hard because I did not know how to change sentence structures. In class, the tutor taught us to use synonyms and change sentence order. I started applying those strategies. According to Flavell (1979), learners improve when they become aware of their own thinking. This made sense when I saw my paragraph improving.

We also worked in small groups where we discussed academic problems and shared strategies. I received helpful feedback about my weak sentence structure. One classmate told me to avoid repeating phrases. This helped me become more careful. The session made me realise that peer support plays a key role in learning. The whole experience improved my confidence, especially when writing under time pressure

Analysis and Personal Reflection

The quiz in Task 1 showed that I did not understand citation styles well. I knew what plagiarism meant, but I did not know how to write proper in-text citations. I was guessing in the quiz. According to Cross and Paris (1988), many learners fail because they don't reflect on their study techniques. I took this seriously and made a study plan. I used online examples and learned to use the Harvard referencing style correctly.

One major mistake I made was not reading the quiz questions properly. I lost marks for rushing. I later discovered the Pomodoro technique and used it for practice. Chang (2019) stated that short, timed study blocks can improve focus. I now use 25-minute blocks to practise writing tasks, followed by short breaks. This helps me stay focused and avoid rushing through work.

Task 2 was very helpful in improving my academic writing. At first, I copied too much from the original text. I didn't change the structure. After feedback, I learned how to paraphrase better. I used a four-step method: read, note, write, and check. This method made paraphrasing easier. Tanner (2012) noted that students can improve performance through regular self-checks and guided feedback. That worked well in my case.

One of my strengths was note-taking. I used bullet points and highlighted key words from texts. This helped me stay organised. Brown et al. (2014) mentioned that note-taking supports memory and helps learners retrieve key information later. I used my notes to write a better paragraph during Task 2.

However, I struggled with sentence structure and grammar. I sometimes wrote run-on sentences or missed proper linking words. I started reading more academic texts and noting how they were written. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) believed that learners improve when they study examples and apply them to their own writing. This strategy helped me correct my sentence flow.

During a group activity, I also learned the importance of listening to others. A classmate told me my sentence was too long and confusing. I shortened it. That improved the clarity of my writing. According to Schön (1983), professionals develop through reflecting on real problems. That moment helped me understand how peer feedback improves academic writing.

Another skill I developed was time planning. Earlier, I always finished work late. But in this module, we had to submit tasks quickly. I started using a calendar and weekly planner. I also used alarms and post-it notes. This helped me submit work on time. I became more responsible with deadlines and class preparation.

I now reflect more after every class. I write short notes about what I learned and what I found hard. This reflection helps me make action plans. For example, I now practise paraphrasing every week using articles. I choose a short paragraph and rewrite it in my own words. That helps me gain confidence for future essays.

Finally, I have developed as a more confident learner. I now take responsibility for my growth. I ask more questions and practise more outside class. I use online tools to check my referencing and structure. I believe this will help me in future university assignments.

Conclusion

This module has helped me gain key academic skills such as referencing, paraphrasing, and time planning. I also learned to use feedback and peer support for better writing. I now understand how to reflect on my work and make plans for improvement. These experiences helped me grow into a more active learner. I still have weaknesses in grammar and structure, but I know how to improve them. As Brown et al. (2014) explain, deep learning comes from spaced practice and reflection. I will continue using these strategies. I feel more ready for future university tasks and independent study challenges.

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