

LCLM4001 Academic skills
Reflective report on Academic Skills
development
Betti Domenico
Student Id: 2322901
Lecturer: Sylvia Hoffman

Introduction:

In this reflective report I am going to discuss what I have been learning throughout the Academic skills course here at UWTSD, London Campus.

I have been using as a scheme: “Graham Gibbs’ Reflective Cycle”, mostly to help me develop the structure for this work.

I have been following his technique as described by The University of Edinburgh, (2024).

I will discuss what have been personally most interesting, challenging and what actually I believe to be more helpful for myself for my academic career and further on within the workplace.

More in details, the topics that will be analysed will be the following three:

1. Note Taking skills.....	pg. 3
1.1 Diagram.....	pg. 3
1.2 Linear Note.....	pg. 4
1.3 Tabular Note.....	pg. 4
1.4 Cornell Method.....	pg. 5
2. Summarising skills.....	pg. 6
3. Paraphrasing skills.....	pg. 7
4. Analysis.....	pg. 8
5. Reference list.....	pg. 9

1. Note taking skills

Throughout the course our lecturer guided us through few different techniques on how to take notes, we have also been doing some exercises in class in order to get confident with those tools.

Some form of notes discussed below are:

1.1 Diagram

1.2 Linear note

1.3 Tabular note

1.4 Cornell Method

1.1 Diagram

A Diagram technique or in some specific cases called “Mind mapping” or “flowcharting”, as stated by [Yasemag \(2023\)](#) it is a tool that come handy when we want to summarize and make a complex topic more visual, this will help you to put events in sequencies and create a visual flow of some sort of information.

You have to basically use boxes (or any other shapes) and arrows in order to put ideas in sequence.

I did have couple of exercises in class suggested by our lecturer Hoffman, S.

One was about Academic writing, using Diagram note I connected to the main central topic all different sections such as: Evidence, Structure, Formal, Balanced, Objective, Precise, Critical.

Under every single of the above topics I have briefly described what which one it is about.

Another exercise I did in class it was about an article called: “Whose health is it anyway?”.

I have used this as the main topic adding: “Can we control it?”.

Around this main topic I have drawn the different argues like: Stress, genes, genetically engineered food, atmospheric pollution.

Under each topic I have written some brief examples to describe each one of it.

Using a Diagram technique helped me to put all these information together and helped me picture it in a visual way.

I have found this quite helpful when studying about a main topic with multiple sub topics.

1.2 Linear Note

According to Newcastle University (2024) this method it is helpful when one would like to keep taking useful information following the flow of a text or a lecturer, keep writing down key points and summarize them.

We can break down ideas into sections and then add bullet point or further notes.

As the word suggests it is a linear and consequential way of taking notes.

Linear note it is what I actually tend to use on daily basis at work, where I basically write down different tasks that occurs to me throughout the day, in this way when I go back to check them I try to organize and finish them one by one.

1.3 Tabular Note

As observed by the Open university (2024) Tabular note technique is helpful in comparing different thoughts, point of view and help to compare them in a schematic way in a table, as suggested by the name.

Ex: To compare pro and cons of a specific topic from different people point of view.

I find this quite handy when perhaps in front of numbers or for topics with not so many connections.

An exercise I did in class was about time management in order to calculate the actions and the relatives hours spent on each one throughout my day.

In this way I could see the spare hours and reorganize it to manage time in a more efficient way.

1.4 Cornell Method

The Cornell Method it is basically a technique where you divide the page in two column where the right hand side it is used to take notes, while the left side column it is used to write down thoughts, key words and any useful information that could help to understand, analyse and put the topics together answering questions about it, as being suggested by the Newcastle University (2024).

After practising in class and then at home about my personal life, I then started to apply this useful technique at work as well.

For instance, being an Head Chef I am constantly planning new menus.

Once the dishes are planned I have to write down recipes, calculate costs, then decide the selling prices according to the food cost budget.

In the meantime organize tastings, training, allergens lists.

Each of these tasks don't have to follow a specific time frame, however the whole packet needs to respect a specific deadline.

That is the reason why the Cornell Method helped gave me the right tool in order to deal with all these tasks, trying to prioritising day by day what it gets more urgent and postpone the other ones accordingly and then get it sorted at a later stage, still meeting the deadline of the new menu launching.

2 Summarising skills

Summarising skills it is what I believe to be a crucial expertise to master to succeed in an Academic environment and perhaps put it in practice for work related matters.

In order to do that, certain exercises that have been done in classroom made me better understand the importance of it.

The essence of summarising it is the process of acknowledge a topic, process it and put it down (usually using 1/3 of the original words) in more simplified and schematics terms.

Empathize the main points and clarify those in fewer words it is the goal of summarising.

To help master what I believe to be the “ Art of summarising ”, I reckon that note taking it is an essential tool to be confident with.

In an exercise I did in class I had to read an article called: Whose health is it anyway?

As mentioned before (see: pg.1 about diagram note), I had read first the whole article.

While doing that I actually start to take some linear notes about main topic, consequently created the diagram note in order to have a visual better understanding of the whole article, the various interconnections.

Taking this note helped to go deep and get right what the main topic of the article was.

I then summarise this in a shorter written explanation of the author main argues, data and the conclusion extracted from it.

It was personally quite an helpful exercise where I combined two recently learned techniques and produced something interesting having the tools to fully understand the main points from this text.

3. Paraphrasing skills

Academic writing skills are a set of techniques put together in place in order to write for example a report or in general a work at an academic level.

As suggested by Read, S. (2018), through practice and studying one will develop a personal and effective academic style to express someone else's ideas in the right university context, being formal and objective; this will help one succeed in the academic world.

Once mastering this set of skills, create and build up our own style, which one of the most important skill I believe to be paraphrasing, one can write at a good Academic level.

One exercise I have found personally quite helpful to me it was a Paraphrasing exercise where I have been given 5 sentences and for each one 4 different possible paraphrase where I should choose one among those.

Following this I had 5 sentences where I had to paraphrase them.

This exercise helped me get more confidence in building my academic skills set and have a better understanding of it.

When paraphrasing looking for synonymous (Thesaurus.com it is one of the top tool), changing words order and form, changing to a passive or active voice or express in a positive rather than negative way, all of these skills helps to paraphrase avoiding plagiarism.

4. Analysis

As I am now at the end of this course I can look at this ten weeks back with a good and positive amount of skills learned that I will keep with me and use it straight away in my work and as well for my future projects I am about to start.

I truly believe that any skill, once learned, requires a good amount of practice in order to master it and that is the path I am leading to from now on.

Once have learned the different note taking techniques, paraphrasing and summarising, I then start to put those in place.

Referencing has been quite challenging to learn, mostly to remember the different ways according to the Harvard style we are using.

Develop good paraphrasing it is challenging, however can be quite enjoyable once put together a pretty good well written paragraph.

My overall review of this course it is quite positive, some topic might have look boring in first place but still enjoyable at the end of the process.

I am pretty confident at those skills will be further developed and will stay with me throughout my academic course and support me in my actual job and my future business challenges I am ready to face now with more confidence.

5. Reference List:

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