

LEVEL 4 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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Programme:	Certificate of Higher Education in Business Skills for the Workplace		
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Module Lead:	TIM HOPKINS	Internal Verifier:	Anita Nan
Assignment Title:	Academic Skills Task 1- Academic Skills Quiz Task 2 - Application of academic skills tools exercise Task 3 - Reflective report	Word count (or equivalent):	Task 1 – 30mins Task 2 – 45mins / 500 words Task 3 - 1500 words

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Introduction

In this reflective report, I will scrutinize my personal achievement of the valuable academic skills learned by the "Academic Skills" module using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle as the core for analysis. This model enables a systematic analysis of the manually through these phases: description, feelings, judgement, analysis, conclusion and plan of action (Kellogg et al., 2022). The focus will be on three specific skills that have been most transformative and relevant to my studies: study writing, note-making, and research skills. Through the consideration of these aspects, I actually hope to understand a deeper learning level of mine and if there are any strategies left to improve my studies.



Figure 1: Model of Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

Source: ResearchGate, 2021

1. Description

In this reflective report, I employ Gibbs' Reflective Cycle to analyze my development in three fundamental academic skills—academic writing, note-taking, and research skills—gained through the "Academic Skills"

Academic Writing: Indeed, it was the process of composing a structured academic essay on corporate ethics that truly sharpened my essay-writing skills. This task called for a convincing argument that was well-structured with a strong critical thinking approach; everything considered in an academic culture. The assignment tasked me

with the skill of writing complicated concepts precisely and accordingly. The argument must have the clear logical flow and gather the reliable resources.

Note-Taking: I had attention deficit especially during the activities that was interactive but mainly theoretical frameworks where I was unable to grasp the theory properly without taking notes. I don't waste time to jot notes anymore but, I dug in my old faithful Cornell note-taking method handy to lead me to outstanding penmanship in scribing the key points and small, but vital details during the fast-paced lectures.

Research Skills: Assigning a class project on analysing market was the first thing that brought new research approach that I used. Data gathering was a critical part of the job (Walters and Sahli, 2022). Apart from academic journals I also used the analysis of market reports and publications to provide essential information. Through this process, I learned not only to identify key points in the information I am exploring, but also to develop a critical vision by choosing appropriate and trustworthy sources.

2. Feelings

At first, my emotions were like a combination of excitement and anxiety immediately when I reviewed the content "Academic Skills Module". The academic writing assignment made me particularly worry as the rigor of structure, reasoning, and source integration was too high. I almost felt that there was no chance of achieving this goal which seemed so difficult back then.

When it came to active listening and brief notes during lectures, I doubted my effectiveness. The speed of delivery frequently gave me too little time to write down significant points, which made me stress about not being able to get this information that could play a crucial role in my understanding within the control and my success in the exams.

The confidence related to the research skills needed in the group project was developed through former experiences, but the sophisticated analytical and critical thinking involved in this module was significantly challenging and so different (Raimes and Miller-Cochran, 2023). I was somewhat equipped for this job, as I wanted to strengthen my talents but worried that my strategy would not be suitable for academic requirements.

3. Evaluation

What Went Well: Feedback sessions with my instructors were invaluable and above all; they were the highlight of Academic Writing. Positive feedback helped build up my categories of thinking during the college period, especially my ability to convince opponents by providing reasonable evidence. I surfed better the Cornell method and this was the turning point which makes me smart in note-taking organization and reviewing. It was a pivotal moment for my revision sessions, in that my retention and comprehension increased to the maximum.

Challenges: In academic writing, my argument were on the verge of not being convincing due to my inability to integrate reliable sources into my writing. I had a hard time to balance my tone in the tone of voice of the text I was writing and the ones I required to give strength to my arguments. Studying Source was my first-class that I totally struggled with at the very beginning because I dint know where to start from the result of too many choices of sources. The most important part of selecting the resources was determining which ones best addressed the issue of our project.

Environmental Influence

Instructor Support: Meanwhile the teaching and the assigning of the instructor were key to overcome these obstacles. Their individual approach to teaching which consisted of additional workshops and thorough response to assignments did make the difference in increasing my academic performance.

Resources Available: The university library's huge digital archives not only facilitates my research but also gave rise to information overload as a problem. Figuring out how to use saving filters actually form a steep part of curves that then ended up becoming a point of my research efficiency.

4. Analysis

Academic Writing: According to "Writing as a process" theory developed by Murray (2020), which promoted a greater focus on revision, my experience is fully in line with it. Originally, my writing process is a mixture of generating ideas and drafting, resembling Murray's "prewriting" phase. The repeated revisions of my last submissions, where I receive feedback to improve, helped to make them more

organized, which is an important part of academic writing as Fix and Flower describe in 2021.

Note-Taking: As stated by Kiewra in his study (2018) effective note-taking implies more than just recording information, but it is how the data is organized that contributes dearly to learning. The way Cornell note-taking is structured, which I took advantage, is meant to simplify the process for students by dividing notes into cues, notes, and summary sections, which greatly improved how well I comprehended, remembered, and applied the materials.

Research Skills: The theory of information processing, which illustrates the process of informational search by means of a computer, helped me comprehend how I was struggling with choosing reliable information from rich sources. This well served when I needed to prioritize relevant articles, a feat that is similar to upgrading the software in my research.

Practical Applications and Previous Understanding

Previous Experience: Complementary aspects of my background from basic research activities and writing at a collegiate level gave me a base, however I had to learn to write and gather information to meet the very high standards. In the beginning, I expected it as a down-to-earth topic, but afterwards I realized that it required more critical thinking to master the level of research undertaken at the university.

Learning Curve: It obviously helped to go from just writing down the lecture content to actively note-taking that is even much more advanced in terms of actively synthesizing the information, if we refer to the point made by Biggs (2021) suggesting that constructive alignment is useful especially for higher education.

Adaptation and Improvement: Through the years, I made subtle adjustments to my approach as I got feedback and did personal reviewing, which is the main goal of the experiential learning, as explained by Kolb (2018). It is undeniable that my feasibility has played an important role in increasing my abilities through allowing me to demonstrate the applied part of the learning-by-doing principle.

5. Conclusion

I've been greatly honoured to describe the "Academic skills" module and I've developed significantly in writing, note taking, and research in my studies. Now, my writing skills have gotten to a level where I use structured arguments and objective research efficiently and can exceed the expectations I had. Using the Cornell method replaced my handwritten note-taking by a beneficial overview of the information collection which also helped me to efficiently process my notes. In the process of research I did last term, I outlined a practical methodology for dealing with massive information loads since this is a vital skill required throughout the whole semester. I could have developed my competencies more quickly if I had dealt more with requiring my peer reviews and setting a practice to organize notes and reviews. Concluding this, I can ensure you the presence of the restructuring via using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle has not only enhanced my academic skills but also added a knowledge of permanent reinvention.

6. Action Plan

Skill	Current Strategy	Planned Improvement	Expected Outcome
Academic Writing	Utilize feedback to refine arguments and integrate research.	Participate in writing workshops to enhance style and coherence.	Produce more sophisticated and polished academic papers.
Note-Taking	Use the Cornell note-taking method.	Implement digital tools for organizing and revising notes.	Increase efficiency in study sessions and information retention.
Research Skills	Apply strategic approaches to manage extensive information.	Develop advanced filtering techniques and use of analytical software.	Improve precision in research and enhance quality of data used in projects.

Reference

- Biggs, J. (2021) '*Constructive alignment in university teaching*', HERDSA Review of Higher Education, 1, pp. 5-22.
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Appendix

Appendix A: Evidence from various tasks that have completed during class

Academic Writing:

1. Submission of an essay on business ethics.

Business Ethics in the Business World

Ethics

Ethics “focuses on morality and the way in which moral principles are derived and applied to one’s conduct in daily life” (Miller 184). From a very young age, we are taught the difference between what is wrong and what is right, and as we grow, we develop our own sense of morals. The law cannot make ethical decisions, but there is a moral minimum that assumes we have a basic sense of ethical behavior we should use in society. Ethics are complicated, every individual has their own concept of what they consider to be ethically acceptable.

Business ethics focuses on the ability to make honest and ethical decisions in the world of business. “Ethics is important in making business decisions” (Miller 185). Making ethical business decisions is important because these decisions can have a legal effect. Consumers and employees have the power to continue or stop supporting a business. Businesses that are not applying ethical decisions can ultimately face financial issues. If a business makes a questionable decision their business can be affected negatively. “An action that is legal is not necessarily ethical” (Miller 187). Understanding business ethics is important but making decisions on legal actions is crucial. Making ethical business decisions is not a simple task because legal issues are involved. Differentiating between good and bad becomes more complicated when something is legal, one can assume it would be a right and ethical choice but there is more to know than just that. The details must be examined before making such a decision.

Ethical issues tend to arise from an attempt to maximize profits, profits may be maximized in a short-run or long-run profit. The difference between the two is that in short-run profit, products that are defective will continue to sell in order to increase profits. Long-run profits on the other hand will suffer the consequences of such questionable ethics. For maximization to be consistent and ethical it must comply with the use of long-run profit. The image and the way a business or corporation is perceived can also cause issues. Businesses that are known to “exploit” their workers have had to deal with the negative implications of these wrongful actions. Some companies create codes of ethics, they are rules to implement policies and list expectations of employee conduct. These codes only work if they are enforced and practiced by leaders and the company.

Ethical standards have a major role in the hiring process of potential employees. Social media can be a good thing, but it can also create issues. Employers can conduct online searches on a potential employee to see what he or she posts on their social media sites, this can show employers a little about who they are. Others consider this to be unethical, and an invasion of privacy because what an employee does outside of work should not determine whether they are hired or not.

Note-Taking:

2. Notes taken during lectures using the Cornell method.

CORNELL NOTES
CUE COLUMN

This section should include key words or phrases as well as vocabulary terms and potential exam questions.

This column is for the:

WHAT'S
WHO'S
WHEN'S and
WHERE'S

NOTE TAKING COLUMN

This section of your page is dedicated to lesson time and in-class note taking. You might want to include:

- main points
- diagrams, graphs, sketches, drawings, or charts
- Bullet points
- Concise sentences
- Shortened abbreviations/symbols / paraphrasing

Also try to leave lines between points so you can go back in and add any brief notes you may have missed. This extra space will also give you a sense of clarity.

You don't have to use a ruled line version - try one with a blank note taking section to experiment with mindmapping or doodles - whatever tickles your fancy. Make it personal!

You might say this column is for the WHY's and How's with some of these guys thrown in!

SUMMARY SECTION

This section should be written last! It should also only really contain a basic condensed summary of your notes in the cue column and important details of your main notes. It is used to quickly find and digest info later.

Research Skills:

3. A group project on market analysis.

