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Introduction

This reflective report shows my learning and development during the academic skills module, focusing on how these lessons have improved my academic performance and confidence. This report will analyse my experiences with time management, note taking, referencing, paraphrasing and academic writing linking these to my strengths, areas for improvement and transferable skills. Throughout the module I have applied these skills to real assignments such as my digital skills task and written tasks allowing me to understand the importance of planning, researching reliable sources and referencing correctly. The report will demonstrate how these experiences have contributed to my growth as a learner and how I plan to continue developing these skills in future academic work and everyday life.

Description of experiences

In week 1 I learnt about time management skills and explored different techniques including the pomodoro technique (Cirillo,2006). We spoke about how we could use this in our daily lives and made weekly calendars to show how we use our 168 hours a week. I used the pomodoro technique while doing my digital skills task 2 which I found helped me stay focused, avoid frustration and complete work more efficiently.

In week 2 we explored note-taking and understanding assignments I learnt how to use diagram based note-taking methods to organise ideas more effectively, which I found really helpful when planning a written task. Week 3 focused on research skills and the difference between reliable and unreliable sources we learnt how to use the CRAAP test (Blakeslee,2004) and from this I also started to understand the importance of Harvard referencing and avoiding plagiarism. We also learnt about Harvard referencing which was completely new to me. Before this lesson I thought that referencing was the same thing as using a quote, but now I understand that it is about giving credit to the source.

In week 4 we learnt about academic writing and linking paragraphs. This was helpful because I hadn't studied this topic since school. We looked at different texts to decide if they were academic writing and discussed avoiding slang words and abbreviations. I found this helpful because it helped me understand how essays and assignments should be written in the future.

In week 5 I was introduced to paraphrasing which is writing the ideas of another person in your own words. At first I struggled with this in class as I was paraphrasing the texts the complete wrong way, but when revising for task 2 at home I found myself understanding it and testing myself, over the next few weeks my confidence improved and now I feel comfortable using paraphrasing in my own work.

Analysis & personal reflection

In week 1, learning about time management particularly the pomodoro technique (Cirillo,2006), helped me identify ways to improve my focus and get more things done. This technique especially helped me because it breaks work into smaller sessions with regular breaks. Before this I used to try and get everything done in one go, which would make me stressed and tired using shorter sessions made work feel less overwhelming and gave me the time to rest without losing focus. I still find it hard to always follow my schedule outside of class so I know I need to work on sticking to it I plan to keep using the pomodoro technique to help me manage my time better at university.

In week 2 when learning about note-taking and understanding assignments I liked learning the diagram method because it helped me organise my ideas and plan my work my clearly. Cottrell(2019) talks about how note-taking helps breakdown difficult ideas

and I've found that to be true myself when I was preparing for this report. At first I didn't always know what to write down but I've gotten better at spotting the most important points. This has made me feel more confident when I start new tasks and I will definitely carry on using this approach.

Week 3 was about research skills and learning about CRAAP test according to Blakeslee (2004), the CRAAP test helps check the reliability of information by looking at currency, relevance, authority and purpose. This helps me check if the information I find is reliable and relevant before this I would just use whatever came up first in an internet search without thinking about the quality. Using the CRAAP test on my digital skills poster meant I could use better sources to back up my work.

We also learnt about Harvard referencing which I had never used before. I used to think that referencing was the same as putting in a quote, I also did not understand the difference between an in-text citation and then the full reference at the end. I now understand that an in-text citation is what you include in a text and then you reference where the source came from after. I now understand that referencing is giving credit to the source I use Pear and Shields(2019) explain that correct referencing avoids plagiarism and makes academic work stronger and now I make sure to include it in all my assignments.

In week 4, we looked at academic writing and linking paragraphs this showed me how important it is to write in a formal and structured way. In the past I sometimes wrote in a casual style without realising. We learned to avoid slang and abbreviations and to make sure paragraphs link well to each other. This has made me more confident about writing essays and reports that meet university standards. I now check my work carefully to make sure it has the right tone.

In week 5 I learned about paraphrasing at first I struggled changing someone's ideas into my own words without copying too much. However, whilst practicing at home and testing myself revising for task 2 made me realise that paraphrasing helps me understand the material I'm reading better as well as avoid plagiarism. I now feel more confident about rewriting ideas while still giving credit to the original author.

Conclusion

Overall, the Academic skills module has helped me develop important skills that I can use throughout my studies and beyond. I have learned how to manage my time better, take clearer notes, find and reference reliable sources, write in an academic style, and paraphrase effectively. These skills have made me more confident in my ability to complete university assignments to a high standard. I plan to keep building on these

strengths in future modules and use them in my everyday life to stay organised and communicate effectively.

References

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