

MODULE NAME: Academic and Employability Skills-Health & Social Care

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TOPIC: Reflective Academic Report

LECTURER: Dr. Gregory Cowan

REFLECTIVE ACADEMIC REPORT

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INTRODUCTION:

This academic report is a reflection on how I felt before I started the university and how I feel now. The lecturer has thought us so many topics on the personal development planning (PDP) slides, but I would like to write on four of them because I believe I have gained more knowledge and insight than I thought I knew. These four that I would like to write on are Academic Writing, Time Management and Organising study, Referencing and Summarising.

Academic Writing:

I chose this course (health and social care) in which one of its modules is academic and employability skills because, I enjoy caring for people no matter the age, status in life or their race. I have empathy and always want to be there for others in any way I can to make them feel comfortable and belong. I know it will come with some challenges as my self-esteem and confidence is very low. I have always had a low esteem and extremely shy so that alone stops me from doing so many things that I am interested in doing. However, I was not going to allow that to stop me from going higher in my education or achieving my dream.

On the first day, the lecturer introduced himself and started talking about the module descriptors. The lecturer then asked each one of us to introduce ourselves. I was a bit sceptical at first, but I was not going to let the shyness hold me back. We all introduced ourselves and got to know a little background of each other. I then felt confident because the lecturer (Mr. Gregory Cowan) somehow made me feel comfortable and welcome. He sounded nice, very polite and understanding, not intimidating at all.

On the first day, we were introduced to the module on how to learn and organise our studies. These includes time management tools and techniques, organising space, organising resources and academic writing and urged us to read about the Cottrell's study skills handbook.

Firstly, I got to know that academic skills are a talent or habit that a student adapt to study and how the student manage their time effectively. I did find that interesting and fascinating as the lecturer explained into details what it really means. My initial concept of academic skills was about writing easy but, it was much more than that. I got to know that through academic skills you learn how to do research, report writing and presentation. Academic skills will help me to plan, communicate, analyse and some technical skills as well. When a student adapts the method of academic skills, I can boldly say it makes everything very easy and systematic. A typical example will be writing an academic essay. Due to the acquired knowledge and skills, student can plan and organize their work well, which will help to avoid spending too much time on it. With the academic essay, the lecturer explained that it answers questions that can be

argumentative. Before answering any essay question, I must read all the requirement and understand what the content is about. Reading all the content will give me the required information and where to find any information evidence to support y argument the topic. I now understand that I need to write down all my point for the topic before I start writing the paper. This will be my quid in whatever I want to write to make my work well organized. I also got to know that I need to arrange my points and in a formatted form as instructed. After writing the essay, we were told by the lecturer to incorporate all our information, ideas and references from all our sources. Listening to the lecturer and the way he was explaining things was amazing and my confidence boost a bit. It was enfacing that before we submit an essay, we must make sure that all the information's, evidence, references are in. I got to understand that I must read through my work and correct all mistakes before submitting it. Academic skills are not only used by students, but lectures also apply the same skills into their teaching so, I believe it will help me in my carrier. I must say the first week for the lectures was a mixed feeling for me. A lot of enthusiasm was put on my part, and I felt I was on the right track. After the lectures, I did a lot of revisions and research so that I can remember everything that the lecturer explained.

When using academic skills, it is also important to incorporate the skill of note taking, brainstorming, critical thinking, research and many other more. I did a little bit research on note taking and I was amazed at the things I read. I found out that note taking is the practice of recording information's from different sources either by writing your own ideas or recording it. I got to know that there were different types of notes taking, that is the visual note taking, the outline note taking and the Cornell note taking which I didn't know. During the lectures, I got to understand the reasons why note taking should be done. An example of the benefit for note taking is, it helps me to understand what is written. It also creates a condensed record for study, and it also engages the mind. There are also different type of note taking and that is the linear notes or the diagram note. Linear note taking are the ones that you write down in your own words and understanding. There are however advantages and some disadvantages in linear note taking. Some advantages of linear note taking according to our lecture is that it is very clear to read especially when it is well structured. It is also neat and easy to follow later when needed.

Time Management and Organising Study:

When we started with the lecture for Time Management and Organising Study, I was very eager to know what it entails and how best I can apply that into my daily life, especially into my academic work. From what the lecturer said, time management is when one can organize and plan on how best to divide their time between specific activities. I believe time management and organising study skills is the best of all the skills. Good time management

as a student will enable me to have enough time to do my assignments and present them on time. Another reason why time management and organising study skills is important is that it makes the student work smarter and not harder because you have managed your time well and therefore do not have to work harder. "The essence of time management is to be effective in whatever one does" (Onuka, A. 2021, p. 5). However, if I do not plan my time well, I will not be able to do and submit my work in time and that will have an adverse effect on my education and results. I also got to know that not managing and organising my time well will result in me rushing and making mistakes when especially there is a deadline for assignments.

As a student, managing my time very is precious and I need to do a few things before I could manage my time well by scheduling a roster for my studies, prioritizing tasks that are more important first, setting up a goal that are achievable and as to where I want to reach, work strategically and many other more. During the lecturers I got to know that time management and organising study are quite similar, because you would also have to prioritise what is important first, set time limits and create a study time.

Referencing:

Another subject that our lecturer thought us was referencing. Before the lecturer delved into the subject, I did not think much of reference. I thought it was just to quote and nothing more of it. I got the understanding that, referencing is when you quote someone's work by writing down their name and when it was written (year). With referencing, you must be able to show which ideas belongs to you and that of the authors. The lecturer explained to us that we can write the page number and maybe one sentence that states in the page. An example is quoting "in page 5 line 4, the author explained that the food vendor sold everything" and write the year and name. You do not have to write word by word.

Referencing correctly is very essential. You must always acknowledge the authors work when writing an assignment and using their material. The lecturer explained that if everything that I write without a reference is considered as my own. As the lectures was going on, I was really fascinated at the depth of how referencing could be and the importance of it. I got to understand that my university (University of Wales Trinity Saint David) uses the Harvard style of referencing. I now know that Harvard uses the in-text citations. If referencing is not done correctly, it could turn into plagiarism because, the actual work is for the author, and it has been used without any recognition.

There are however some advantages of referencing when you do your assignment and add to it. When you do reference, it shows you understand the topic. This will make the lecturer know that you know exactly what you are doing and that you have done a proper research. Another reason why reference is good is because it helps the student by avoiding plagiarism.

My own ideas must be different from the author. Reference also gives supporting evidence opinions, ideas and argument. When a reference is done, people are also able to identify the source (author or writer) that you have used and by giving proper credit to the writers.

Summarising:

Here we are in week four and the topic for that day was summarising. Summarising to my understanding before we started with it was just to make a short sentence out of a long statement. But I also got to know during the lectures that, it is the act of identifying the most important information from a text or sentence. In PDP slide of summarising page 2, it states that "summarising is equal to paraphrasing but whereas summarising is a short sentence, paraphrasing is longer than that" (Cowan, 2021). During the lectures I asked myself a lot of questions as to why we summarise and how important it is. I got the understand that, writing a summary is very useful because one can identify what is important, analyse and evaluate information's and remember what you read or heard. Summary should be accurate and short in order to be able to digest the information's when needed.

There are however ways to summarise and the first one is to read the content of the text carefully. This can help get the understanding of what the author means. It is important to make notes or underline the important things in the passage so that I do not forget. I realised that I should also write down the main points if the passage of the content is long. When summarising, I should compare what I have drafted to the main source to make sure that I do not loss the main points of the text. It is very important to also quote from the text or passage, it should not necessarily mean the same words.

There are some pros when it comes to summarizing either a whole book or a paragraph. One of that is it makes the student determine or eager to learn essential ideas and solid details that are important to support them in their assignment. It also enables student to focus on the key words and phrases of the assigned content.

Conclusion:

Reflecting from where I was before I started the University and where I am now, I can see a massive change in me. My confidence has boost and I am very happy about that. I must also admit I have learnt and gain more knowledge in the subjects that the lecturer has thought us. There were certain topics like summarising and referencing that I did not think much of, but I got to know of the depth of that. Knowing my short coming, I have also made use of the SWOT Analysis, and that is (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) into my daily life, especially that of my education.

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PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PRESENTATION

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PRESENTATION

By: Leticia Siaw Akoto

INTRODUCTION

- My Self
- Carrier aspiration and Reasons
- How to achieve them
- Reference

MY SELF

Name

Age

Background

Current Occupation



HOBBIES

- Listening to music
- Listening to news
- Spending quality time with family
- Reading books, magazine



CARRIER ASPIRATION AND REASONS

- This class is a foundation for me to become a nurse in the future.
- Helping others in need.
- Having a sense of purpose and for filling life. “Nursing isn’t just a job – it’s a vocation” (Randstad, 2019)
- Different opportunity in nursing, example: midwife, health visitor, neonatal nurse, prison nurse, nurse educator etc.

HOW TO ACHIEVE THOSE

- Gaining skills and knowledge for effective learning to pass all my exams through:
 1. time management
 2. Proper planning
 3. Group studies
- Using SWOT analysis (Cowan, 2021, p.10).
 1. Strength for not giving up easily no matter how hard it may seem. Using my leadership quality at work to help me through toughest time as a student.
 2. My weakness is being an Introvert person. This prevents me from even asking questions or engaging in tough discussions. I always want to avoid confrontation.

CONT:

3. Opportunities: Nursing has a broad area to work. This course also enable one to become social worker or even phycologist.
4. Threats: Due to massive shortage of healthcare workers, nurses easily get burned out and that can affect them mentally, physically and socially. "The government will need to exceed its target of 50,000 new nurses in England by 2024/25 if it wants the NHS to fully recover from the coronavirus pandemic" (Ford, 2021).

CONCLUSION

I believe with the exposure I have received and about to receive by being part of this university, I can make my dream come true.

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- Ford, S . (2021) *The UK nursing crisis – 2021 and beyond*. Nursing Times
- Randstad. (2019) *why become a nurse?* [career-advice/career-options/why-become-a-nurse/](#)
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PORTFOLIO (CLASS PERSONAL NOTE)

Week 3A Note Taking:

Note taking is the practice of recording information from different sources and platforms either by writing your own notes (ideas) or recording it. There are different types of notes taking, we have the visual, outline and Cornell notes. The visual and outline note taking are quick up front but require more work after class to make it effective. Cornell notes take the most work up front but are the most useful.

One would ask why it is important to take note. Taking note is very important as it helps students, and the reasons are as follows.

- *It engages your mind: because the student must make notes, they listen very attentively in order to have a clear understanding of what is being talked about so that they can write down what they heard.
- *It helps you to remember, the reason is because you are the one making the notes, so it is easy to remember.
- *It helps you to understand when a student makes notes, it helps them to understand well because they write their understanding in a way they can remember.
- *Another reason why taking note is important is because it emphasizes and organises information.
- *It also condensed record for study, because you only make note of your understanding into a summary form.

How do you take note?

- *When taking note, it should be visually clear concise, organised and well structured so that it will be easy to read and understand. When notes are written clearly and well structured, anybody can pick it up read and understand.
- *You can also make notes by using symbols and abbreviations of writing a whole sentence.

When do you take note?

- *You must think of what you have learnt and how you will write them.
- *Listen and write in symbols and abbreviations that you will understand.

Note taking for books and articles

- *It should not be a shorthand version of the text
- *We should also avoid copying chunks of the text
- *We should provide the arguments or ideas presented
- *We should pick out the key ideas and concept
- *Use consistent abbreviations and summary system

Linear Notes

Linear notes are a note that you write in your words. It is a chronological outline of a lecture or text. This type of note, you need to listen attentively and write down your own understanding. Attentive listening plays a vital role when taking notes. Notes that are written or well-structured are very easy to read and understand. There are however advantages and disadvantages of linear note taking.

Advantages of linear notes taking

- *Linear notes are very clear to read especially when it is well structured

*Linear notes are easy to follow at later date

Disadvantages of Linear Note taking

- They are not interesting as the diagram or visual pattern

I prefer the linear note taking because it helps me to focus, be attentive and write exactly what was thought.

Reflective writing 3b slide

Reflection is when a purposeful activity in which you analyse experience's or one's own practice or skills in order to learn and improve. However, reflection is the analytical practice in which the writer describes a real or imaginary scene or event and add their personal reflection on its meanings.

Why do we reflect?

The purpose of reflective writing is to help one learn from a particular practical experience. Reflection helps you to connect with what one is taught in theory and put in practice. You reflect upon it so that you can learn. There is different perspective in reflective writing. This is because whilst your reflective writing is based on personal experiences, you also need to draw from other sources and types of evidence so that you could have a better experience. We reflect because without reflecting our experience's will be forgotten quickly or lost. As Gibbs stated " it is not sufficient simply to have experience in order to learn " (Gibbs, 1988) Gibbs reflective description of reflection is

*Description, this is when you reflect on what happened but not making judgement or draw conclusion.

*Feelings, this describes your reactions or how you felt and again not making any analysis yet.

*Evaluation is to evaluate whether it was good or bad and then make judgement.

*Analysis, this is the ideas you made from elsewhere.

*Conclusion in general is what you concluded with from your experiences and analysis

*Personal action plan is what you will do differently in the next situation.

Kolb's also gave a description of reflection.

*Gathering concrete experience

*Reflective observation

*Abstract conceptualisation

*Active experimentation.

There are different sources of gathering evidence for reflective writing. These are:

*Personal aspirations and that is the things that an individual would like to attain in his / her life

*Other things I know

*Work based issues

*Application to other modules and learning

*Academic theory.

Week 4A Paraphrasing:

Paraphrasing is the ideas of another person in your own words. It is useful when you are using the work for others to support your own view. When you want to paraphrase, you need to use the words and structure and but also keep meaning the same. When you paraphrase someone's work, you must also acknowledge their work by paraphrasing a reference.

There are techniques used in paraphrasing to present the same meaning differently. Examples are:

- *Using synonyms

- *Changing word class and that is making any other necessary changes

- *Changing word order (making other necessary changes)

Examples of using synonyms:

- *Argues (claims)

- *Wages (labour)

- *Save (economise)

Paraphrasing changing word order:

Example: The best explanation for the British location of the industrial revolution is found by studying demand factors.

Paraphrase: A focus on demand may help explain the UK origin of industrial revolution.

When paraphrasing remember that your sentence must.

- *Retain the meaning of the origin

- *Be grammatically correct

- *Have correct spelling

When paraphrasing a text

- *Read and understand the text

- *Make a list of the main ideas.

Week 5A Referencing:

Here we are in week 5 and the lecturer Dr Gregory Cowan brought out some academic words that he wanted everyone to pick one and explain how they understand. After hearing from all the student who were present, the lecture brought up the topic Referencing.

Referencing is when you quote someone's work by writing down their name and when it was written (year). When referencing, you should be able to show which ideas belongs to you and that of the authors. When referencing, we can write the page number and maybe one sentence that states in the page.

Referencing correctly is very essential. You must always acknowledge the authors work when writing an assignment and using their material. The lecturer explained that anything

that I write without a reference is considered as my own. During the lectures, I was very fascinated with the things I was hearing because I never thought much about referencing, I thought it was just to quote and nothing more of it. I also got to understand that the University of Wales Trinity Saint David only uses the Harvard style of referencing.

Also, the lecturer explained that if referencing is not done correctly, it could turn into plagiarism. We also watched a ten-minute video about referencing. In week 5a of the referencing videos, in capture 1, the video was about Harvard citing and referencing style in the slides. We also watched a sixteen-minute video about Harvard referencing (in-text citation):

Week 5B Incorporating source:

Incorporating sources in academic writing is when you combine your ideas with that of the authors. There are different types that one can use to incorporate other people's work into my own work. Examples of methods used to incorporate sources are as follows:

- *Paraphrasing and that is when you express an author's ideas from a source but is written by using your own words.

- *Summarizing, is when you write a brief description of the main idea

- *Quoting, by copying out words, text or speech with the indication that is not an original author.

- *Synthesising, which involves combining ideas from different sources in order to make them present a common idea.

Week 5b of slide 5 and 6 talks about how to directly quote from another people's work. Slide six is also about how to paraphrase others work and examples.

Week 6A Report Writing

Before the lecturer talked about report writing, we did some academic words lessons and we all picked up a word and explained in details of how we understand it .

Report writing is a report documented that elaborate on a topic by using facts, charts and graphs to support its ideas and findings. Before writing a report, you need to follow a few steps and instructions by:

- *Gathering all your information

- *Discuss the different points that you have

- *Conclude on the meanings of your information that you have gathered.

- *Also make recommendations.

Before beginning with a report, you need to know who you are writing the report for, what the content is about, what to expect from the outcome, what information you need and planning your structure very well.

Aims of Report Writing are:

*To communicate your finding

*By just writing a summary of what you read/ investigated

* By analysing your findings

*Making recommendations.

The purpose of report writing is to inform and to provide a basis on which decisions will be made.

The weeks ahead we continued with the academic words and shared our ideas on how it relates to us in our health care too.

Week 7 and 8 the lecturer talked about presentation, public speaking practical's, employability CV writing and cover letters. We also talked a bit about our assignments and any questions we have regarding that.

Week 9 Carrier Development Plan Day:

Today is a personal presentation day for carrier development for Academic and Employability skills and I must say I was very nervous. Mr Cowan invited one of the assessment team members called Diya. I was the 8th one on the list and as we started with the personal development, I felt a bit relieved upon hearing some of the students.

It got to my turn and my page wouldn't upload I started panicking so Mr Gregory and Miss Diya went through it with me, and I was able to do it. I must say I did very well during my presentation. There was no pressure and I delivered it perfectly.

After my presentation, Dr Gregory Cowan and Miss Diya gave me their feedback. Dr Cowan complimented me of saying a bit of my personal life, showing a picture of my son. He also complimented me on even showing the map of Ghana and complimenting on one of my references about Randstad saying "Nursing is not just a job but a vocation". Miss Diya also liked the idea of the Randstad saying "Nursing is not just a job but a vocation". She also complimented me on how I was able to follow instructions when my work wouldn't upload. Miss Diya said I gave eye contact and was confident throughout my presentation.

Week 10:

A chance was given to those who couldn't present their presentation in week 9. Mr Gregory this time was with Miss Barbara Chinyani who was also one of the assessment team who explained the importance of doing the presentation as that alone carries fifty percent of the total mark. Miss Barbara explained that assignment two and the portfolio which is the class note alone cannot give you the pass mark, so she was urging the other students who hadn't done their to do it. We were then asked to leave the class around 10 am for those of us who

did our presentation in week 9. I then said goodbye and thank you to Dr Gregory Cowan for all the support he gave us in class.

I just can't wait to go back to campus.