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REFLECTIVE REPORT



**GIBBS REFLECTIVE CYCLE WILL BE
USED IN THIS REPORT**

MODULE NAME: ACADEMIC SKILLS

MODULE CODE: LCLM 4001_LONDON

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Reflective Report on Academic Skills Using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

1.Introduction

In the following reflective report, I will use the Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988), consisting of six stages I will operate with hereafter, an organised plan for examining experiences and extracting helpful data by introspecting, to introduce you to the way the learning in this module has enhanced my understanding of the academic world, and improved a set of personal skills out of which, I will stop and pay the well-deserved attention to researching to find information, note-taking and reflecting skills, undoubtedly all three being key stages to follow towards developing the accuracy and quality of the academic writing skill.

According to Sam (2013), learning is the procedure that leads to obtaining new information, or a structure we can use to build on previously gained knowledge and as mentioned by Gibbs (2013, p11), the majority of education providers seem to be convinced that you learn best by doing, therefore I will proceed with my first academic contextual learning experience regarding scholarly writing.

2.Description

Like any other learning process, it took baby steps to comprehend how to research for finding information, to acknowledge new ways, or remember ways of taking notes I knew, and to reflect on those learnt and their impact into my newly stretched level of consciousness.

Research is a stage that discusses and explains the information gathering and evaluates methods one uses in the investigation. As a crucial part of a fact-finding project, the methodology chapter allows the readers to evaluate the reliability of the study, by using a series of steps that explains what you did and the way you did it to reach the final conclusions according to Bak (2013, p32-43)

Research skills define an individual's capacity to find responses or remedy to a predicament and have the role to provide the learning individuals with the necessary expertise to become involved and capable of achieving the task. (Indeed, 2023)

As stated by the same source, the research skills include the following steps: “performing an investigation, searching for, finding, collecting, extracting, organising, analysing, interpreting and evaluating information.”

An inherent and close related to learning and writing either referring to the academical or extracurricular perspective is the note taking activity, that offers a wholistic approach by summarising and organising the information to the point of creating a clearer picture and offering support for the prewriting stage of the script as well as it facilitates memorising, positively reinforces the learning process and wires the topic's conceptual mapping for reflection .(Novak,1970)

Note-taking is a beneficial aptitude to the person involved in knowledge acquisitions, and according to some studies in New Zealand, it is not always a competence that students have when arriving at campus nor one to be learnt “through trial-and-error” during their first year of education. (Van der Meer, 2012, p13)

Reflecting is a cognitive-behavioural technique implying the non-judgemental self-observing, aiming self-assessment to either improve or positively reinforce desirable traits, leading to personal and professional growth and a clear definition of concepts. (Nurmi et al, 2019).

3. Feelings

The thought of embarking on an academic journey when in my mid-forties has not been initially very welcomed by my comfort zone. Although personal growth oriented, along with the aging process here comes the need for comfort and safety, and when typing these words, I feel an enormous satisfaction for eventually having managed to defy my defences and overcome procrastination by deciding to start a new learning process.

I started by feeling overwhelmed and remember myself thinking I will not be able to make it, but as we engaged in exercising in class, new techniques like mind mapping, that seemed way too creative for my linear mindset, or Cornell method that felt complicated because of requiring a level of tidiness my mind was not used to, or navigating through the library and the internet to learn new ways to find relevant and credible sources, I realised it had been my anxiety triggering coping strategies telling me I already knew it all, and as I continued practicing it started to come natural and to feel interested and motivated to keep on learning and reflecting to the new information.

4.Evaluation

I find researching and finding information to be critically important and the most time-consuming part of the academic writing activity.

The credit for the positive outcome belongs to the module's structured approach, and the teacher's step by step guidance, turning my initial lack of confidence into a success story coming along with improve abilities of asking myself the correct questions, planning the research' structure, collecting and analysing the data, basically managing even if at a beginner's level to systematically conduct my mini research for this report.

By practising the note taking methods I feel like my ability to organise and retain information has improved and I find easier to visualise connections between concepts.

Reflecting has brought a lot of new possibilities by helping me visualise my own cognitive-behavioural patterns through the eyes of the non-judgemental observer of my own reality and giving me the chance to correct things that were sabotaging my work and daily activities.

5.Analysis

The importance of structured approach in research is highlighted by Creswell (2014, p30-46), emphasising the need for clarity when it comes to the questions, planned data collection, and rigorous analysis and I strongly believe the module's design helped me develop a coherent and methodical approach to research, uplifting my work's quality.

By using Cornell method I was able to easier engage with the material during the lectures.

The method helps retaining information and improves critical thinking, according to Pauk and Owens (2010, p58-63).

The exercises in class helped me improved my ability to recall and review key points, making a big difference in my studying journey by enhancing its productivity.

Reflecting it's a critical process that involves analysing and evaluating to determine learning and improvement.

Reflection helps individuals understand what they have learnt and to link new acquisitions with preexisting ones, said Moon (1999, p 157) and after continuously and proactively exercising it in all the arise contexts it makes more and more sense each time in my daily basis reality.

6.Conclusion

This module has seriously impacted my personal growth journey and consciousness.

The methodological approach to notetaking, structured research techniques and the clarifying outcome of reflecting has improved my academic performance, my learning process, my critical thinking, has landed a hand to my personal and professional growth, supported my emotions processing and it boosted my communication skills.

Recollecting, I realise I should have taken a more proactive approach to learning and circular thinking and although far from having mastered the level of integrating all information, I declare myself satisfied for having learnt new things and I will continue to exercise to reassure the information' fusing into the long memory process, and to build up to the existing foundation by learning and developing new aptitudes.

7.Action Plan

I will use this experience as the foundation for my future plans, I will continue to refine the acquired skills through practice, for example I will regularly apply the note taking methods and continue using academic materials to refine my research, I will set clear goals and manage my time accordingly to achieve them, I will start gathering materials in advance to have the necessary window to browse through the information and take notes to organise the data, and I will use my imagination to reflect not only on the past experiences, but also on hypothetical situations from as many angles I can imagine, to improve the potential of coming up with new ideas, but also towards foreseeing, developing the predictive skills, always aware there is more than one correct way of doing things.

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10.Note

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