

Certificate of Higher Education in Business Skills for the Workplace

LCLM 4001_Lon

Academic Skills

Task 3 - Reflective report

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1. Introduction

Reflection is an important process for academic and professional development as it allows individuals to reflect on their experiences critically. This report deems to utilise the Gibbs' Reflective Cycle to reflect on three major academic skills acquired during the LCLM 4001 module, which include note taking, paraphrasing, and referencing. These skills are the foundation of my academic success and future professional life.

2. Reflection using Gibb's reflective cycle



Figure 1: Gibb's reflective Cycle

(Source: University of Cumbria, 2020)

As per the reports in University of Cumbria (2020), Gibbs' Reflective Cycle is a reflective framework, which helps provide continuous learning with six steps such as **Description** of what occurred, **Feelings** about those occurring, **Evaluation** of what is good or bad, **Analysis**,

Conclusion, and **Action Plan**. Alongside the framework also promotes reflective thinking and self-improvement.

2.1 Description

The module focused on the development of basic academic competencies through workshops, classroom activities, and various assignments. Notably, three skills such as note taking, paraphrasing, and referencing were emphasised. Throughout the note-taking sessions, I became familiar with methodologies such as the Cornell Method, which categorises cues, notes, and summary. The sessions also focused on activities such as practicing on note taking during lectures and even summarising academic articles (Bouguesba *et al.*, 2020). As for paraphrasing, the module contained exercises relating to rewording so that the content maintains a similar meaning. I found it challenging to put this aspect into practice when writing our essay compositions, trying to depict complex ideas in my words.

The referencing workshops offered guidelines on the Harvard style, indicating how to refer to books, journal articles, as well as other sources found online (Cassell and Hiremath, 2023). This style was adopted while undertaking assignment where accurate referencing was to prevent plagiarism. Each activity made me practice and apply theoretical principles and at the end of this module, I have learned all that while realising there is still so much to be improved on-the need for consistent formatting, for example, in citations.

2.2 Feelings

I was initially both excited and anxious to improve in all those skills. The structured approach toward note taking was reassuring, especially as the Cornell Method was relatively simple to organise the information. However, the paraphrasing exercises overwhelmed me, as the presentation of complicated ideas without changing their meaning in a new form was somewhat daunting. Alongside, referencing created mixed emotions, despite its purpose in maintaining academic integrity, formatting rules were infuriatingly complex. I often became confused about minute details such as punctuation and the order in which to place items in a bibliography. Through continual practice, my self-assurance increased and the successful implementation of paraphrasing strategies in my assignments provided a sense of fulfilment, as I observed enhancements in both clarity and originality. Upon completing the module, I experienced a

feeling of achievement regarding my proficiency in note taking and paraphrasing; however, I still held concerns regarding the precision of my referencing.

2.3 Evaluation

The module had several redeeming features, and note-taking techniques, especially the Cornell Method, proved tremendously helpful in organising information during lectures and for revision. Furthermore, paraphrasing exercises improved my ability to express ideas clearly and originally while improving assignment grades. Nonetheless, obstacles emerged regarding the citation process. Although I adhered to the prescribed guidelines, I frequently encountered slight formatting mistakes, undermining my self-assurance. In this regard, citing online resources with missing publication details and dates proved to be perplexing at times. This situation underscored the necessity for increased practice and dependence on citation management tools. With hindsight, the structured nature of module work was a significant strength, helping me to gain many more opportunities to practice and reflect. However, I felt that I needed to commit more time to referencing or other similar tasks to be less prone to mistakes and also to achieve consistency.

2.4 Analysis

Note Taking: Usage of concise and memory-friendly note-writing capabilities improved concentration. Increased effective processing that I later noticed. Use of structured study skill improves retention and focuses one on understanding. By the research by Fang *et al.* (2022), well-structured information may lead to good retention even with mere recitation.

Paraphrasing Ability: Paraphrasing requires critical thinking and deep understanding of the content. First, I would over-rely on using synonyms and hence provide only very shallow paraphrasing. Instead, the module insisted that sentences should be rewritten while still capturing the idea or point. Suseno (2024) annotation is in line with the above speculations, which implies the appropriate paraphrasing enhances deeper learning. Through this, while performing assignments I would be able to come up with clearer, more original arguments.

Referencing Skills: Proper referencing ensures academic credibility and prevents plagiarism. Although challenging, learning the Harvard system enhanced my ability to attribute sources

accurately. Frequent errors in formatting taught me the importance of double-checking citations. Utilising guides and tools like *Cite This for Me* improved my consistency, though further practice is needed to master this skill (Yilmaz and Yilmaz, 2023).

Hence, it can be stated that these skills are interlinked where effective note taking enhances the act of paraphrasing, and accurate referencing supports academic efforts. Together, they form the foundation of academic writing.

2.5 Conclusion

Upon reflecting on my experiences, I can recognise notable advancements in both my note-taking and paraphrasing abilities. The Cornell Method has revolutionised my note-taking strategy, rendering it more organised and efficient. In a similar vein, engaging in paraphrasing exercises has improved my capacity to articulate concepts in my own terminology while preserving their inherent meaning, thereby enhancing the calibre of my assignments. Sources are still a tricky area but have improved over time as I now understand its importance in keeping academics clean, and it provides all sorts of technology to limit the error. However, citing remains an area that needs constant attention. The reflective analysis reveals several strengths and areas to work on further. In the event that I do intend to return to the module, I would spend much more time on referencing and take further help, probably even attending library workshops or taking sessions at academic support services. Overall, I have had an excellent base for taking my education further from this module.

2.6 Action Plan

Skills	Current Strengths	Areas of improvement	Action Steps	Timeline
Note-taking	Organised and effectively using Cornell Method of note taking	Exploration of digital tools and alternative methods	- Experimenting with tools such as Notion - Researching bullet journaling techniques for varied applications	<i>Ongoing, (weekly practice)</i>

<i>Paraphrasing</i>	Performing clear and original rephrasing	For attainment of deeper understanding of complex content	● Practicing summarising journal articles ● Seeking peer feedback during group study sessions	<i>Monthly progress checks</i>
<i>Referencing</i>	Improved formatting and use of tools	Attainment of consistency in complex citations	● Attending university referencing workshops ● Using EndNote for managing and organising citations	<i>Workshops: Next semester</i>

Table 1: Action Plan

3. Conclusion

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle offered a structured framework through which to assess my academic development on note taking, paraphrasing, and referencing. I can see what I did well and what I did not do so well on. I am confident in moving forward with an action plan, thereby fine-tuning these skills for academic and professional excellence.

References

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