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LCLM4001 – Academic Skills
Task 3 – Reflective Report

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1. Introduction

This report will reflect on my learning experience in the academic skills module and how this has helped my academic and personal development. In this module, I have picked up many academic skills to improve efficiency in both my work and my personal life. Before starting this course, I had not developed some of these skills as much, so it was also a new experience for me. Some of the main skills I have developed include time management, referencing, note-taking and summarising. I aim to discuss these and how they improved my confidence on the course.

2. Time management

Time management is something that is important not only in academic work but also in day-to-day life. Managing time is important for meeting deadlines and balancing responsibilities and I have learned new ways to do this through the module. For example, controlling how much time I spend doing specific activities by using the Eisenhower method. This method is having two different sections which are classed as urgent and non-urgent, which has allowed me to prioritise which activities I need to do first and which are not as important.

The Eisenhower method helps me to give myself enough time to study which also helps in the improvement of my grades. I found this technique very useful to help me separate my work life and personal life and as Cottrell (2024) says, it helps to “feel more confident that you are in charge and can cope”. It has also helped me to balance my free time along with studying instead of having to rush and not have enough time to meet deadlines, reducing overall stress. I did not know about the Eisenhower technique before, however now it allows me to set short and long-term goals which increases the efficiency of my work.

3. Harvard referencing

Before I studied academic writing, I also had no understanding of Harvard referencing and how important citing sources properly is in academic writing. Using references in academic writing is necessary to avoid plagiarism by making sure to provide the source for any information we write. A reference is also important because it “gives authority to your work by showing the breadth of your reading” (Newcastle University, 2024) so it adds more support to an argument. I am now confident in my ability to correctly use the Harvard referencing style to write references so that I do not plagiarise and make good use of journals and books. I have also learned to use reading lists and the university library to find references instead of just using Google. This has helped to develop my formal and academic writing skills as I am doing more research for my assignments and making my arguments stronger.

4. Note-taking and summarising

There are many note-taking methods, some of the most common including the diagrammatic, tabular and Cornell methods. Each of these are appropriate to different learning styles, such as making diagrams or tables or structuring my notes in a specific way. For example, using mind maps to make notes more visually appealing and easy to understand through keywords and topics. Note-taking is another skill that I have improved which has helped me throughout the whole course as it is a good strategy to structure my learning. Taking notes helps me to process information quickly and decide what information to write down. All the note taking methods improved my study plan, boosting my skill and help to focus on specific areas that are covered in the course.

During my studies, I also realised that summarising is an essential skill for both understanding and presenting information in a way that is easy to follow. In the beginning, I found it very difficult to identify the key points from long texts and reduce them without losing their original meaning. Summarising is about keeping the same

meaning but using different phrasing so that I can better understand the whole message of the text. To start with I often added too much detail, making my summaries longer than necessary. However, with guidance from my tutor and more practice, I learned to focus on the core arguments and main ideas. I soon understood that summarising is not only about shortening a text, but also about understanding and writing clearly and briefly.

Both note-taking and summarising are important skills that have helped me in the course. These skills allow me to “be more focused and time-efficient” (The Open University, 2021) so that I am only writing down what is necessary instead of everything related to a topic. By spending less time writing down notes through techniques like using diagrams and summaries, I can pay more attention to the lectures. I also save time when I go back over my notes to revise as a result.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, my experiences in this module helped me to follow the course content better by managing my time more effectively and improving my notes through diagrams and summarising. The time management strategies I have learned, especially the Eisenhower method, have positively impacted both my academic and personal life. I have been able to improve my focus, productivity, and reduce stress, giving me more control over my schedule and improving my academic performance. Academic referencing techniques have also helped add more support to my writing and avoid copying, while taking better notes from lectures across the course has added more structure to my work.

6. References

Cottrell, S. (2024) *The Study Skills Handbook*. London: Bloomsbury. Available from: ProQuest Ebook Central. (Accessed: 6 April 2025).

Newcastle University (2024) *Referencing*. Available at: <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/academic-skills-kit/good-academic-practice/referencing/> (Accessed: 6 April 2025).

The Open University (2021) *Note-taking techniques*. Available: <https://help.open.ac.uk/notetaking-techniques> (Accessed: 6 April 2025).