

School of Sport, Health & Outdoor Education

Assessment Feedback Sheet

Student No./Name:

Module: Professional Development and Practice

Module Code: SHSS4062

Personal Evaluation – to support your academic progress please complete the section below BEFORE submitting your work.									
What do you consider to be the best aspects of this work?	The structure and my research.								
Which aspects do you consider could have been improved in this piece of work?	My time management and planning.								
What have you found most satisfying whilst undertaking this submission?	Building confidence of referencing academic work.								
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	Learning	GRADE							
		Poor 0-25%	Unsatisfactory 26-39%	Satisfactory 40 – 49%	Good 50 – 59%	Very Good 60 – 69%	Excellent 70 – 85%	Exceptional 86– 100%	%
Essay content and quality of resources used	1								30%
Referencing within the essay	1								20%
Correctly constructed reference list	1								20%
Structure of essay and clarity of writing	1								30%
It is expected that students will present work that is proof read, correctly referenced and adheres to the Assessment Checklist . Therefore a range of 0 – 10 marks will be deducted for non-completion of any of the points on the checklist below .									
TUTOR COMMENTS:									
Submission date: 2/11/18 via Turnitin		Return date: (at least within 4 weeks)		Tutor:				Mark:	

Discuss the components that of a good essay.

Introduction

There are many views on what makes a good essay and this essay will include the different aspects of a well written essay. It will talk about the need for planning and how it needs to be done correctly. It will include the general structure that a well written essay should have and how there are differing views about what the most important aspect of a good essay is. For example, is it content or is it the argument? It will also talk about the importance of going into depth but also about not waffling on and boring the reader. The final aspect of this essay will talk about critical thinking and how this is maybe the most important point of them all.

Planning

When writing an essay, you need a good plan to set you on your way. A good place to start is by 'reading around the subject area' as much as you can to ensure that your ideas are well supported by plenty of literature. Once this is done, take note of the years that the work was written in and try to take the most recent ones as they will be full of current information. It would also be a good idea to make a list of your findings straight away as this will only speed things up when it comes to your reference list. However, sometimes plans tend to go off track but Klein (2013) says this isn't such a bad thing. She says when a new focus arises, certain aspects of your essay such as subheadings can be altered because if your initial plan was of a very good standard then you will not lose focus on your planned end result (Klein, 2013).

Norton (1990) found that there was a positive correlation between using a large quantity of books and better essay marks. She also found that most students who worked on their essay for more than seven hours 'did significantly better' than those who only spent six hours or less. Her research shows that those who plan more efficiently and those who spend more time working on their essays, will score higher marks. It also found that all students needed a good plan in order to write a good essay (Norton, 1990).

When it comes to essay writing, study manuals have always strongly recommended planning. However, Gibbs (in Norton, 1990) says 'planning many people do is often so informal and messy' and 'the lack of any planning at all can be disastrous'. Therefore, it is argued that students must be extremely careful when it comes to planning their essays as it is so important to the whole essay.

Depth

Sometimes students can take a broader approach to essay writing which leads to inaccuracy and generalisations. It can result in the essay being poorly marked as the student has not taken the time to analyse and evaluate the authors views. Students can often take academic views for granted instead of challenging them. Students can increase their marks by looking for possible errors or bias made by the author. Students must also try to understand whether the results of a report are based on a specific set of circumstances. If results are dependent on certain circumstances, then the evidence is flawed as it cannot be universally applied (Levin, 2004).

One of the first things you need to do when writing an essay is knowing what the question is asking you and understand how in depth you are required to go. One of the main problems of essay writing that students find is that they address the topic squarely which means they are not putting enough information in when it is needed (Knowles, 2018). This source also says how you can use your peers to assist you with the analysis to ensure you are taking the right information and enough of it too. Another way to make sure that you are going into the right depth is to talk to your lecturer. They can help you understand what the question is asking you and how complex your answer needs to be (Knowles, 2018).

Structure

The general structure of an essay is in three main parts. Firstly, you start with the introduction in which you tell the reader what you plan to talk about in the main body of the essay. In the main body, students then proceed to talk about their points in large detail. The final part of an essay is a conclusion. The conclusion must sum up what you have said in the main body and in the end answer the question (Klein, 2013).

When writing an essay, students may fall into the trap of ‘diverging rather than converging’. Diverging means going off on a tangent and moving further away from the question that is being asked. Converging means ‘becoming focused’ on the essay question (Levin, 2004). To make sure you stay focused, you must always refer to the question and keep to your original structure. Obvious signs that students are diverging are introducing new subjects halfway through an essay that you have not mentioned in your introduction. Students must also consider the size of their sections, have they written too much? If so, students must consider condensing their essay. Finally, students need to make sure that their conclusion answers the question that was set (Levin, 2004).

Good essays must have a ‘smooth flow’ where paragraphs lead directly onto the next so that the reader does not get confused. To avoid confusion, the author can include a contents page, subheadings or lists so the information you are trying to get across is crystal clear to the reader. Using subheadings can also help the author as they can help keep them on track. Using subheadings means that material in the next paragraph doesn’t have to follow on from the previous paragraph as they can act as a brief description for what the next paragraph involves. Another way to help the reader is to have a concluding sentence at the end of each paragraph that acts as a brief summary, helping to reinforce the information in the readers mind (Levin, 2004).

Content

Research was done on ninety-eight first year psychology students to try find out what they found most important in essays and what tutors looked for when marking them. However, Norton (1990) says that there was a clear contradiction in what both students and tutors focused on in essay writing. She says that ‘students were more concerned with content, whereas tutors were more concerned with argument’ (Norton, 1990).

Authors need to make sure that their content is understandable to the reader. Greetham (2013) explains the importance of simplicity. The author should avoid complex, technical

terminology and in its place use simple descriptive vocabulary. This leads to a more effective essay as you are less likely to lose the interest of your reader (Greetham, 2013).

Critical thinking

Critical thinking is a complex process of consideration and deliberation where the student must use their high level of skills to do it successfully. It is all about being able to recognise the authors arguments and questioning whether they are correct. Students must realise that there are other views on subjects and these must be considered when it comes to reading work. Another thing to look for in writing is the use of the writer's persuasive speech. If they are trying to persuade you then students must be aware of this and question why they are doing so (Cottrell, 2017).

Critical thinking is essential when it comes to writing a good essay and this has been recognised by universities around the world. Students must realise that some sources that they come across may be one sided and may not consider any other points of view apart from the readers own. When writing an essay, students must take this into account and think critically (Greetham, 2013). In order to evaluate critically, students must actively engage with the readings that they have found, this, in turn, will allow the student to 'develop their understanding further' (McCune, 2004).

The importance of critical thinking in a university essay is that it shows the marker that you have understood the information, not just regurgitated it. Evaluating academic work is likely to score you higher marks as it shows you are questioning their arguments instead of taking them for granted. Critical analysis can be described as 'poking holes' in academic work by finding any imperfections in their evidence (Niemtus, 2017).

Conclusion

All these aspects should be considered when writing an essay. Planning is essential to a well written essay and the structure should always be in its three parts (introduction, main body and conclusion). You must always go into the right depth whilst writing each section and make sure that you do not lose sight of the question that you are answering. Also, you must ensure that you use the right terminology and make sure your content is understandable, so you keep the reader interested. Perhaps the most important aspect of all is the need to think critically. This shows that the student has understood what they have read and demonstrates their high level of knowledge for the subject.

Word count - 1543

Reference list

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