

Academic Skills Task 3 - Reflective Report

Student Name: Patrica Elizabeth Diane Whyte

Student ID: 2415935

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Lecturer: Sam D'Elia

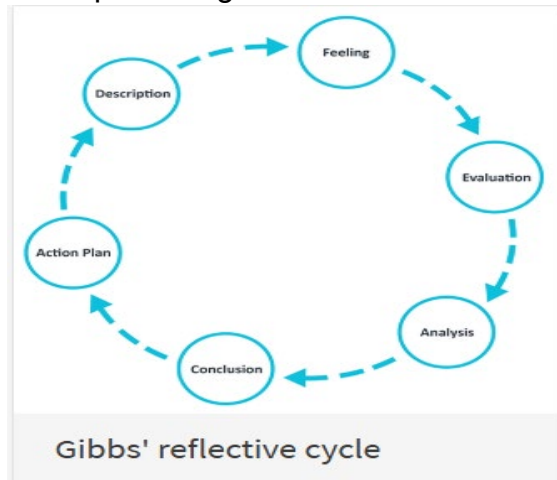
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1. Introduction

I will be presenting my reflection report to capture my experiences in preparation for this report using the Gibbs Reflective Cycle (1988).



During Week 4 of the Academic Skills course, I prepared for my upcoming assignment, scheduled for completion by August 20, 2025. The task required me to reflect on the previous week's learning to ensure I could apply my knowledge effectively and achieve a strong pass mark.

I felt both nervous and enthusiastic, as this was a completely new experience for me. Sam, my lecturer, encouraged me to focus on the learning outcomes, emphasising that the knowledge gained would be essential preparation for the 1,000-word report.

The experience was humbling; I felt challenged to expand my understanding and think more academically. However, I observed that some of my fellow students did not appear to take the class seriously. Their frequent phone use and late arrivals were disruptive and affected the learning environment for others, including myself.

2. Description

During my first semester in the Academic Skills module, our class participated in group activities and focused on developing essential skills for university study. One key skill we learned was referencing, which, according to Pears and Shields (2013), involves crediting the owner of intellectual property used to support academic arguments.

Throughout classroom sessions, our lecturer challenged us to answer questions and justify our responses. The Teachers Institute explains, "Open-ended questions are intended to stimulate thoughtful engagement and cannot be answered with a simple yes or no response. They often begin with prompts such as 'How,' 'Why,' or 'What do you think about...'" and encourage learners to expand on their ideas, share perspectives, and explain their reasoning. The purpose of these questions is to move students beyond superficial responses, guiding them toward deeper analysis, personal reflection, and critical thinking" (Teachers Institute, 2023).

In Week 4, I explored academic writing, one important aspect of which is the avoidance of colloquialisms—such as “that stuff,” “couldn’t,” and “isn’t.” According to Cottrell (n.d.), “As scholars progress through university, lecturers will expect increasingly higher quality of their academic output.”

The use of formal English places emphasis on tone, structure, and credible research that supports claims with trustworthy sources and includes correct citations.

3. Evaluation – Feelings

At the beginning of the group activities, I frequently felt anxious and became easily embarrassed when questioned. Although this was part of the learning experience, it was also daunting, as the feeling of vulnerability was overwhelming. I did not want to appear as though I had no right to be at university. I had to confront my imposter syndrome.

As Reid (2024) explains, “Imposter syndrome is when you have the impression that you are not deserving of your success and worry that others will discover that you are not as competent as they think, even if you have received degrees, awards, or praise that prove to the contrary.”

I was eager to develop my academic skills, but I was uncertain about my ability to meet university-level expectations. Referencing was a particular challenge due to its complexity and the strict rules involved (Pears and Shields, 2016). However, as the module progressed, my confidence grew. I began to enjoy the process of researching and writing, and I felt extremely proud and validated when I received a good mark for my Week 5 class assignment.

4. Analysis

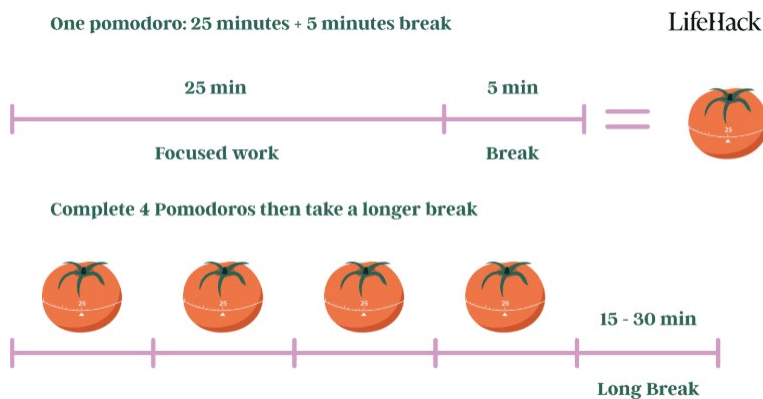
The module helped me gain a much clearer understanding of my learning style, as well as my academic strengths and weaknesses. I realised that when I become frustrated, I tend to procrastinate and avoid starting tasks I perceive as too difficult.

I also found that I cannot study effectively at my father’s house, as his Alzheimer’s makes him very dependent; he frequently calls me or asks for assistance. According to the Alzheimer’s Society (2021), people living with dementia often experience feelings of insecurity and anxiety and may seek reassurance that they are not alone.

I have discovered that, although there is room for improvement, I write well. Before attending university, I would often seek validation by asking colleagues to review my letters and reports. Now, when I read my work, I am surprised by the academic maturity I have developed, and I feel enthusiastic about the growth that lies ahead.

I also discovered that I learn best through active participation and discussion, which made the class engaging and highly beneficial. The module enhanced my ability to evaluate sources, structure academic arguments critically, and use referencing systems accurately (Pears and Shields, 2016). These skills are not only essential for academic integrity and ethical use of sources, which I now understand as fundamental principles in scholarly work (Williams, Woolliams and Spiro, 2020)

For time management, I will use the Pomodoro method. The Pomodoro time management method helps me focus for 25 minutes and then take five minutes to relax or reflect. I then, with a refreshed mindset, commence with my studies.



5. Conclusion

Reflecting on my experience in the Academic Skills module, I can confidently say that it has had a significant impact on my academic development. I have become more aware of the importance of planning, researching, and referencing in my academic work. My writing has improved in clarity and structure, and I feel more equipped to engage more actively in group discussions and seek feedback earlier in the process. I would also make a greater effort to manage my time effectively and avoid last-minute work. The module has taught me that academic success is not just about intelligence but also about discipline, organisation, and a willingness to learn from feedback (Cottrell, 2013).

6. Action Plan

To build on the progress I have made, I plan to implement several strategies moving forward. First, I will continue to use a weekly planner on my phone to organise my tasks and ensure that I allocate sufficient time for research and writing (Cottrell, 2013). I will also continue to use the additional tasks on Moodle and seek feedback from Lecturers to refine my skills further. Regularly reviewing academic articles will help me stay familiar with academic language and improve my critical thinking and reading skills (Williams, Woolliams, and Spiro, 2020). I intend to practice referencing regularly to ensure accuracy and avoid plagiarism (Pears and Shields, 2020). Additionally, I will improve my presentation skills by participating in more group activities and volunteering for speaking opportunities. These actions will support my academic journey and help me perform better in my future modules. I aim to become a more confident, independent learner with the ability to contribute to meaningful academic discussions and produce high-quality work.

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