

LCLM4001 Academic Skills

Reflective report

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1. Introduction

This report uses Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988) to reflect on three key academic skills: time management, academic writing, and note taking. Reflection is important in higher education because it helps students review learning, recognise strengths and weaknesses, and plan improvements (Jasper, 2013). The first skill discussed is time management, which is vital for reducing stress and completing tasks effectively (Claessens et al., 2007). The second is academic writing, which I found challenging as a foreign student due to the language and style required (Wingate, 2012). The third is note taking, as this supports understanding lectures and preparing for assessments (Fryer et al., 2017). The aim of this report is to reflect on my experiences, challenges, and progress with these skills, and plan how I can improve further.

2. Reflective Model

For this report, I am using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988), which has six stages: Description, Feelings, Evaluation, Analysis, Conclusion, and Action Plan. This model is widely used in education and professional practice as it provides a clear structure for reflection (Bulman and Schutz, 2013). The cycle encourages learners to describe an experience, reflect on feelings, evaluate positives and negatives, analyse the situation, draw conclusions, and plan improvements. This process helps me reflect on my academic skills and identify how I can develop them further.

3. Academic Skills

3.1 Time Management

Time management was difficult for me because I often left tasks until the last minute, which increased stress. In class, I learned strategies such as using planners and prioritising tasks, which helped me stay more organised. The positive part was that I reduced stress and finished tasks on time, but I sometimes became distracted and did not always follow my plan. I realised that effective time management improves both learning and wellbeing (Macan, 1994). I could have improved by checking my planner daily and setting smaller goals. In the future, I will use apps to track my time and focus on one task at a time to be more consistent (Claessens et al., 2007).

3.2 Academic Writing

As a foreign student, I found academic writing challenging because many words and structures were new to me. At first, I felt nervous and unsure, but the teacher explained clearly, answered questions, and made the lessons easier. The good part was learning new words and writing more formally, while the bad part was not practising enough at home, which made tasks harder. I realised that academic writing requires consistent practice and extra study outside class (Wingate, 2012). I could have improved by reading more academic texts and practising vocabulary. In the future, I will review notes, read examples, and ask for feedback to continue improving (Jordan, 1997).

3.3 Note Taking

Note taking was sometimes difficult because I tried to write too much and missed key points. At first, I felt stressed, but the teacher explained how to focus on main ideas, which gave me more confidence. The positive part was that my notes became clearer and easier to use, though I still wrote too much at times. I learned that note taking is about capturing main ideas, not every word (Fryer et al., 2017). I could have improved by reviewing my notes after class. In the future, I will use shorter words, symbols, and check my notes immediately to ensure understanding (Pauk and Owens, 2010).

4. Conclusion

Reflecting with Gibbs' Cycle has helped me understand my progress with three academic skills: time management, academic writing, and note taking. Time management showed me the importance of planning and prioritising tasks to reduce stress and work more effectively. Academic writing was the most challenging skill because of the language and structure required as a foreign student, but I improved through class explanations and support from my teacher. Note taking taught me to focus on key ideas instead of trying to write everything, which made my learning clearer and more organised. Across all three skills, I realised that regular practice and consistent effort outside class are essential for real improvement. My future goal is to build stronger routines, review my work more often, and keep asking for feedback. By doing this, I will continue to improve both my confidence and performance at university.

5. Reference List

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