

LCLM4001_LON Academic Skills

Reflective report

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Academic Writing, Summarising and Referencing Skill Reflection Report

Introduction

The importance of writing, summarising and referencing skills was realised at a truly unbelievable level throughout my studies. This not only contributes to the clarity and coherence of communication but also builds credibility and shows respect for the scholarly work of others. Through my engagement with different academic challenges, I have developed these skills and this reflection report will focus on my development in academic writing, summarising and the importance of referencing under the guidelines of Harvard style.

Academic Writing Skills

Academic writing differs in tone, style, and structure from other types of writing. It aims to educate, argue, or clarify an academic topic, maintaining formality and conventions. Over the course of my studies, I have learned that academic writing needs to have a clear argument and follow a logical structure while also being stringent in grammar and punctuation. For instance, in an essay about the consequences of climate change on biodiversity, I utilized a strong thesis statement, structured my points within well-organized paragraphs, and referenced relevant literature to back up my claims. Additionally, the formal and richer use of language (demonstrate instead of show), made my piece more formal and academic. And to write in the language of academic discourse, I learned that I needed to construct evidence-based arguments, so I applied the theories and examples to support my assertions. Through reviewing a variety of peer-reviewed articles, I developed my skill in how to compose a competent academic argument that contributes to the reader's understanding (Baker, 2021).

Following along with a set format has been invaluable in guiding my writing. These days, my essays generally have introductions that introduce the topic, body paragraphs that explain how a range of arguments have been made and conclusions that summarise the discussion and reemphasize why my findings are important. "A well-organized paper contains information that makes sense and is easy to follow," Williams (2018) states. This organization is a part of writing for me now; it guarantees that my arguments concern themselves not only with what is apparent but what is cohesive.

Summarising Skills

Summarising has also been another important academic skill that I have developed throughout my school career. Skimming enables me to take key information out of vast areas of research references and put it in front of me, articulated in my own words. I really find this useful when reading tightly written texts, or with amount of literature. By improving my understanding, effective summarisation helps me communicate a concept without adding unnecessary fluff. For example, while writing a research project about the effects of social media on mental health, summarising findings across several studies helped me produce a broad picture without missing out on their most important messages. Modelling 'good' outcomes by identifying them for example by using models developed by Hyland (2018), I used to draw out the key components of complex arguments into few points, ensuring in my summaries prevailing the authors' perspectives without inventing

meaning. This practice allowed me to realize that effective summarising is not just for my sake but for the sake of a better experience for the readers.

Moreover, mastering summary skills has also helped me blend multiple divergent perspectives into one cohesive thought. For example, by exploring the two sides of social media and its impact on society—good and bad—I brought in multiple perspectives to provide a balanced view, that encouraged critical thought and deeper discourse. Being able to summarise is also extremely important when writing literature reviews as the point of a literature review is to summarise a variety of studies, as opposed to just writing about them.

Referencing Skills

An equally essential skill has been learning to cite correctly. The realization that referencing serves to credit previous scholarship and legitimate my own research has helped underscore the ethics behind writing academic papers. Using ideas that originated from other authors shows that plagiarism is avoided and integrity is displayed, while following proper citation practices add credibility to my arguments. During my investigations into the forms of referencing, my concentration has been primarily on Harvard – a style that is often the style of choice in the humanities and social sciences. Another illustrative example was from a sociology report I wrote where I used multiple sources to highlight my thesis on how the structure of our society shapes educational background. Correctly tagging my in-text citations and building the reference list were fundamental to making sure that I was adhering to scholarly conventions. For example, I used the system described at the University of Leeds (2020): a full citation is present in the reference list and the in-text use skeleton author-date (Smith & Jones, 2019) retained.

Moreover, re-connecting academic discussions and practitioners use research, the accuracy of references is moreover one of the effective measures. For example, if you use links to journal references in your argument, it lays a premise that allows the writer to progress the discussion and adds legitimacy and credibility in the community. Thus, appropriate referencing not only reflects one's gesture of respect for the earlier works but also forms pathways for readers to follow the lineage of the ideas that drastically underpins the academic integrity (Jones, 2020).

Conclusion

My writing, summarising, and referencing skills have had concurrent evolution alongside my academic evolution. The audience starts with learning the practical skills of well-founded academic arguments and hybrids of those as reliance on summary for sense and precision, everything is an ingredient that brings me towards possibility for both logical and ethical descent of ideas. Moreover, stressing the sufficiencies of citation solidifies academic practice, fostering a trustworthiness ingrained in the core of research and writing. As I ponder these lessons, I realise that whilst reflection is ongoing, so too is the path to perfection in academic writing and my pledge is to develop along this path towards scholarly excellence.

References

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