



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU

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UNIVERSITY OF WALES

Trinity Saint David

Academic Skills - LCLM4001_LON

REFLECTIVE REPORT

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1. Introduction

Because it encourages students to critically engage with their learning processes and personal development, reflective practice is essential in higher education. It helps people to pinpoint their strengths, work on their shortcomings, and create plans for ongoing development (Moon, 2004). By encouraging deeper comprehension and independent thought, reflection assists students in going beyond superficial learning.

This report offers a critical analysis of my experiences in the Academic Skills module, which I completed during my first semester of college. The report analyses significant learning events, individual struggles, and the module's developmental influence on both academic and personal levels, drawing on Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988). The phases of description, analysis, assessment, and conclusion are followed throughout the report's structure. In addition to summarising my experiences, my goal is to investigate how they influenced my academic development and future learning.

2. Description of Experience

As I started the Academic Skills program, I experienced a mix of excitement and apprehension. There were several difficulties when moving from secondary school to college, especially adjusting to the demands of academic writing and independent study. Critical reading, essay planning, note-taking, referencing, and an awareness of academic integrity were among the fundamental academic skills covered in the first sessions.

The brief essay on critical analysis was a particularly noteworthy formative assignment. Using scholarly sources, exhibiting critical thinking, and adhering to the Harvard reference style were all necessary for this task. At first, I thought the assignment was challenging. I had little experience with citation styles and struggled to organise my points clearly. Despite my best efforts, these flaws were evident in my first draft, particularly in the integration of sources and referencing.

This assignment's feedback turned out to be quite helpful. My instructor pointed out my topic engagement capabilities while pointing out my referencing and argument clarity shortcomings. Despite my initial disappointment, I later realised that criticism was both necessary and useful. It inspired me to go over the Harvard referencing requirements again and work on structuring my thoughts more logically.

I became more adept at using academic resources, assessing the credibility of sources, and incorporating evidence into my writing as the module went on. I avoided inadvertent academic misconduct because of the workshops on plagiarism, paraphrasing, and correct citations. All things considered, the module prepared me for the demands of university-level coursework and introduced me to important academic conventions.

3. Analysis and Reflection

I assessed my experience by taking into account my initial responses, the lessons I learnt, and the implications for future practice using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988).

I didn't realise how difficult academic writing and referencing would be until the beginning of the module. Even though I had written essays before in school, the demands of university coursework were far higher. My initial referencing issues revealed a knowledge gap. Accurate referencing enhances academic credibility and guards against plagiarism, claims Cottrell (2019). At first, I formatted references inconsistently and abused in-text citations. However, I became more confident and accurate in this area after being exposed to Harvard referencing on a regular basis in a variety of activities.

Time management was yet another major obstacle. I found it difficult to juggle my schoolwork and personal obligations in the first few weeks, frequently putting things off until the last minute. Subpar work quality and needless stress resulted from this. I started mapping out chores using Gantt charts, digital reminders, and weekly planners in an effort to get better. According to Covey (2004), time management is setting priorities for the things that are most important rather than trying to complete everything at once. By adopting this approach, I was able to decrease procrastination and concentrate on high-impact tasks. As a result, I noticed a discernible decrease in stress and an improvement in the calibre of my contributions.

The ability to think critically was another important development. At first, I found it difficult to challenge presumptions or spot prejudice and instead took information at face value. I gained the ability to approach texts with a more analytical mentality through tutor-led conversations and guided tasks. According to Brookfield (2017), critical thinking is crucial for academic achievement because it empowers students to challenge concepts and formulate well-reasoned arguments. I gradually gained more self-assurance in my ability to formulate my own opinions and back them up with solid data.

Even while I made improvements, I still had periods of self-doubt. There were moments when I doubted my capacity to keep up with the amount of reading and writing because it felt so overwhelming. But these difficulties taught me the value of perseverance and asking for help. I started going to academic support meetings and consulting librarians for help with citations. Schön (1983) emphasises the idea of the "reflective practitioner," who gains knowledge from both successes and setbacks. Adopting this viewpoint enabled me to see obstacles as chances for development rather than as failures.

When I think back on how I've grown during the module, I can see that I've made great strides in both academic maturity and self-awareness. I used to be a passive learner, but now I actively use learning materials, ask for feedback, and use reflective techniques to do better at what I do.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, the Academic Skills module has played a crucial role in my first year of college. It has given me the ability to write academically, study critically, manage my time, and properly cite sources. These abilities will be essential in upcoming modules and have given my academic journey a strong foundation.

By using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988), I was able to evaluate my learning experiences in a methodical manner, pinpoint areas that needed work, and establish objectives for future growth. Important academic ideas from Brookfield (2017), Cottrell (2019), Covey (2004), and Schön (1983) helped me contextualise my learning and comprehend the wider significance of these talents.

The difficulties I ran into were instructive, especially when it came to reference and adjusting to independent study. They urged me to learn self-control, ask for help when I needed it, and keep an open mind. I intend to use these techniques regularly as I pursue my academic goals. In order to maintain my academic and personal development, I also hope to keep up my reflective practice.

In the end, the module has enhanced my academic abilities while also boosting my self-assurance, independence, and readiness for new challenges in the classroom. Critical reflection on my experiences has improved my self-awareness and put me in a position to succeed going forward in college and beyond.

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