

ACS REPORT

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Introduction

The aim of this report is to explore my learning experiences in the Academic Skills module at University of Wales Trinity St David London. It focuses on three main topics that was important to improve my skills: Taking notes, Paraphrasing, and Time management. At first, it was a little difficult to concentrate in class, to manage my time and to take notes that would be useful to study or to review later on but with some activities and some exercises that we did in class and Assessments such as Task 1 and Task 2, I was able to learn more about what is expected to achieved in this exact module and how to succeed. Despite being a big challenge, these experiences have helped me grow both personally and academically and improve the way I study and prepare myself for future tasks. This report will go through my experiences and reflect on the importance they had for my development.

Description of experiences

To start, in the first week, we learned about possible ways to manage our time. We did an activity with The Eisenhower strategy where we divide the plans we have for the day/week/ or month and then identify things that are really important and that needs to be done right away, things that we can schedule a time to do it, things that we can ask someone else to do it for us and things that we can eliminate from our list. This method made me realise that I was not using my study time properly, which often leaded to last-minute work and stress. By using this strategy to plan my week in advance, it turned easier to handle deadlines and to find time to study for important events.

In the second week, we studied note-taking methods. We learned the Cornell Method and watched a video about it, after watching the video, to have a better understanding we did an exercise. At the beginning, I struggled to find the key to the topic and the main points, but with my lecturer help and my colleagues, that seats beside me, and a lot of practice, I was able to understand better this topic and my notes became more organised and helpful for studying. We also learned the Pomodoro technique, that is a time management that helps focusing more by giving the mind small breaks. With this technique I could be more proactive during classes and while I was studying at home. Pomodoro method helped me with my focus problem.

In the fifth week, we covered Paraphrasing. We were given an exercise paper with sentences that we had to paraphrase and replace the verbs with synonyms. I found it complicated at first, as I was having difficulty to find synonyms and I often did not change a lot compared to the original. However, with the feedback from my lecturer it helped me to maintain the meaning of the given sentence while I only changed the structure of the phrase and words. Paraphrasing was hard to learn, but afterwards they increased my academic writing skills.

Analysis and Personal Reflection

At the very start of the module, I struggled to maintain my focus in class and to study back home, to organise and prioritise my time and to take notes. I felt overwhelmed with all the new things I had to learn, which had an impact in my confidence and made me afraid to do the tasks. When I first tried to do the Cornell note-taking method was confusing as I'm more used to the Linear notes method and because I was not used to write and summarise everything while listening. But after practicing during class with the help of my lecturer and studying at home, I improved my listening and my way to get the key points. With time, I participated more in class and made notes that helped me to study better when I get home.

Task 2 was a big challenge in my learning. The task tested our ability to paraphrase and to do a good academic writing. My first try was not the best, my answers were always almost similar to the original sentence. But with time I got it clear that it is not just changing the word, if we fully understand the sentence, it turns much easier to paraphrase and to find the right synonyms. To get a better understanding I did more searches regarding paraphrasing techniques. Bailey (2011) says that paraphrasing is not just about avoiding plagiarism but also about showing understanding, which I now see as important.

Time management was another skill that I did not give much importance. Before learning about time management, I did not insert study in my plans. I used to always leave most of my tasks until the last minute, which made me feel anxious and really stressed. In Week 1, when we experiment one of the methods of time management during an exercise, I realised that I spent too much time on non-academic activities and that I was not being productive with my time. By setting times to study during the week, I felt more alleviated and more in control. I felt a big difference with this change as it made a positive impact.

My desire to grow and to improve is one of my biggest strengths. Even when I struggled, I never quit or thought of myself as incapable to learn, I always tried my best to learn from feedback and class discussions. I still have some improvement to do with my confidence in academic writing. As a perfectionist, sometimes, I tend to spend too much time revising a paragraph to be perfect.

Overall, this module really helped me develop better academic habits and to have a better understanding of university expectations. From being unsecure and disorganised I became a person who now knows to schedule my time properly, a person who takes useful and clear notes and more confident. The skills that I have learned in the Academic Skills module will be useful in all my future modules, especially to do reports or for exams. I now am aware that the right way to success is by using the correct methods and to learn to manage our time.

Conclusion

This module was part of my journey. By learning to manage time, take notes, and paraphrase, I have built better study habits and more trust in my academic skills. Tasks like Task 2 and in class activities helped me found my strengths and areas to improve. These experiences even though they were scary it had a positive impact and thought me more about myself. I can say that I feel prepared for whatever that the future reserves for me.

Referencing

Bailey, S. (2011) *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students. * 3rd edn. London: Routledge.

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