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Reflective Report on Academic Skills

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1. Introduction

In this particular report, the focus will be on the skills acquired during the Academic Skills module and the areas that still need enhancement. This module was beneficial to me as it provided me with a basic understanding of critical thinking, time management skills, how to conduct research and communicate effectively while following the correct referencing procedures. It also assisted me in the area of self-regulation with an emphasis on procrastination as well as in writing and research skills. In this paper, I shall discuss how these experiences helped in my personal and academic development.

Description of Experiences

In the course of the module, I was able to participate in several activities that helped me as a student. One of the most memorable tasks was Task 1, which was an academic skills quiz that aimed at checking my knowledge of such things as time management tips, taking notes, citation, and academic dishonesty. This task was strength-based in terms of referencing and evaluation of sources, but it was a weakness in time management during tests.

The second activity, the application of academic skills exercise, or Task 2, was also very significant. This task involved writing notes and rephrasing the sentences as well as writing a whole paragraph in accordance with the academic writing standards. From this activity, I learnt how to write academically and how to present an orderly argument, as well as the importance of citing sources to prevent cases of plagiarism. Thus, the discussion in class and group work helped me to interact with my fellow students and receive their opinions on how to learn more effectively.

Another helpful thing that I learnt was the anti-procrastination techniques, especially the Pomodoro Technique as explained by Almalki et al. (2020). The most useful thing I learnt was how to divide the tasks into distinct intervals to be able to handle them properly. Additionally,

the use of critical thinking theories from Elder and Paul (2020) helped me to improve the understanding of the texts and develop appropriate arguments.

Analysis and Personal Reflection

Strengths and Achievements

In this particular module, I was able to excel at critical evaluation of sources and proper referencing. Neville's (2016) guide was quite helpful, as it outlined some of the most common mistakes as well as helped me have more confidence when citing sources. Also, the critical thinking skills were developed during the course of the work, and I, therefore, benefitted from the same. Prior to this module, I tended to take information for granted; nonetheless, Cottrell (2023) allowed me to analyse arguments in a different way, to challenge assumptions and to think from different viewpoints.

One of the areas that I was able to excel in was participation in classroom discussions. Discussions gave me a chance to state my opinions and ideas and to learn other people's opinions and ideas as well. Robles (2012) has posited that communication is an important soft skill that is applicable in a learning institution and at work. I was able to enhance my thinking, especially in terms of presenting ideas in a concise and convincing manner, due to the discussions involved.

In addition, I also learnt that the Pomodoro Technique is an efficient technique in the management of time and elimination of procrastination. Tracy (2017) also highlights ways of avoiding procrastination in order to increase efficiency, and this I applied, and I realised a great improvement in the time taken to complete a task. This was especially beneficial when it came to the application of the academic skills exercise in which I was able to figure out how to approach the exercise systematically.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

Nevertheless, various obstacles arose in the process of completing the module, and I faced them as follows: The main challenge was time constraints, especially in relation to balancing between

class work and other activities. However, I still had issues with setting enough time for the research and writing process during the Pomodoro Technique. In the article by Tseng, Yi, and Yeh (2019), the authors highlighted the need for self-regulation in learning, and I agree with the authors that it is crucial to work on the improvement of setting effective timelines for the tasks.

The other difficulty was on the ability to write good and correct English academic content. I became more aware of how the arguments should be constructed, but sometimes I had issues with the clarity and briefness of the text. Bailey (2014) shows the need to use correct and concise academic English, and I still have a long way to go in this particular aspect. The most challenging task was the inability to translate ideas while changing the meaning of the words and phrases as seen in Task 2. To overcome this, I propose to read more and practise paraphrasing more frequently and ask my lecturers to provide feedback on the same.

Also, it is important for me to develop more drive and determination in academic work as well as to improve my time management skills. Speaking of the factors that help individuals achieve their far-off objectives, Duckworth (2016) singles out grit as the trait that refers to perseverance and passion. At some point, I experienced difficulty in completing all the assignments; hence, I would procrastinate until the very end of the due date. Thus, by having a better structure for studying, I can increase my motivation and commitment to the academic performance.

Impact on Personal and Academic Growth

It has been the most interesting and beneficial module that has ever been taught at this university and helped me a lot in my personal and academic growth. However, one of the major transformations I have observed is that I have become more confident to interact with the academic writings and debates. In this regard, before coming across this module, I used to be very stressed when it came to writing and referencing.

Furthermore, I have learnt about my learning style and the aspects that need enhancement. Among them, critical thinking, as Elder and Paul (2020) pointed out, has been especially influential. This change in my thinking has helped me to examine arguments made in academic texts and look at them from different angles before reaching the necessary conclusion (Post, Buis, and Visser, 2017).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Academic Skills module has been helpful in my learning process, as I was introduced to critical thinking skills, time management skills and academic writing skills, among others. There are also some skills that I consider weak, namely time management and the academic language in the references and critical analysis. Thus, further improvement of my academic performance can be achieved by practising these skills and implementing such strategies as the Pomodoro Technique. In general, I have benefitted much from this particular module because it has provided the foundation to enable me to achieve success in my college and other endeavours.

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