

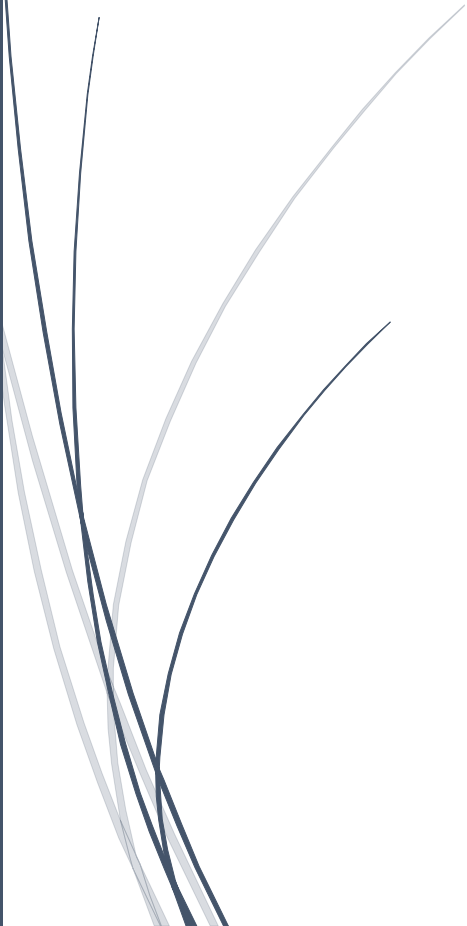
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4/25/2025

Module: LCLM4002 - Academic Skills

Task 3 – Reflective report.

Lecturer: Sylvia Hoffmann

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Reflective Report: Development of Academic Skills Using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

Introduction

Throughout this module, I have experienced significant growth in my academic skills, particularly in academic writing, summarising, and referencing. Using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988) as a framework, this reflective report explores how engagement with tasks such as enhancing my digital skills for the modern workplace added to my development. Using critical self-assessment, engagement with digital tools, and application of academic techniques, I identified areas for improvement and further developed my essential academic skills. Reflection has been key to my learning process, helping me adapt strategies and approaches for better academic performance and preparation for future academic and professional circumstances.

Description of Experiences

The module involved a variety of activities to develop both digital and academic skills. In Task 1, "Enhancing Digital Skills for the Modern Workplace," I assessed my digital capabilities using tools like the Jisc Digital Capability Tool (Jisc, 2022) and learned about platforms such as Microsoft 365, Zoom, Slack, and Google Workspace. Alongside technical development, academic writing was crucial to explain how technologies enhance workplace collaboration. Summarising skills were important when condensing large amounts of information about cybersecurity practices and workplace communication tools. Referencing was necessary to ensure that all sources, particularly when discussing GDPR compliance and cybersecurity essentials (European Union, 2016), were correctly cited. Early challenges included structuring written work formally, summarising without losing meaning, and appealing to referencing standards. However, through guidance, feedback, and self-reflection, I gradually strengthened these core academic skills, which are essential for effective academic communication.

Analysis and Personal Reflection

Academic Writing Skills

Initially, I found academic writing difficult, often being too descriptive and lacking critical analysis. Task 1 required clear articulation of the benefits of digital technologies such as cloud computing and project management tools (Microsoft, 2023). Feedback highlighted that my writing needed a more analytical structure, prompting me to adopt planning tools such as outlines and mind maps to organise ideas coherently. Following Cottrell (2019), I focused on developing clear introductions, logical paragraphing, and well-supported arguments. Reflecting through Gibbs' model, I realised that academic writing is not just about presenting information but about critically engaging with ideas. Over the course of the module, my writing became more structured and formal, with stronger linkages between theory and practice. Developing these skills has increased my confidence, and I now understand academic writing as a tool for critical thinking, not just information sharing.

Summarising Skills

Summarising large amounts of information into key points was another critical challenge. While discussing tools like Trello, Asana, and To do list (Atlassian, 2023), I initially included too much

technical detail. Realising this, I began to use structured note-taking strategies, such as the Cornell Method (Pauk & Owens, 2010), to identify key points before drafting my summaries. Summarising effectively meant focusing on how digital tools impacted workplace efficiency rather than detailing every function. This not only made my writing more concise but also allowed me to critically engage with the material. Effective summarising also helped me develop critical reading skills, enabling me to sift through sources quickly and extract relevant information. Reflecting on this progress using Gibbs' Cycle, I appreciate that summarising is a skill requiring active interpretation and selection, not simply condensing.

Using Diagrams to Support Academic Writing

During the module, I also learned how to effectively use diagrams to support and simplify explanations. For example, I created a diagram showing the steps required to share a file on OneDrive.



The diagram illustrated the process clearly: first selecting the file I wanted to share, then clicking the "Share" button, entering the email address of the recipient, and finally clicking "Send". This visual approach helped me communicate a complex process more simply and efficiently. Creating the diagram also deepened my own understanding of digital collaboration tools by forcing me to break down each action into clear, sequential steps. Reflecting on this, I recognise the value of visual aids in academic writing and professional communication, especially when summarising technical processes.

Referencing Skills

Referencing was an area where I faced initial difficulties, particularly with citation consistency and referencing unfamiliar digital sources. Early mistakes included inconsistent Harvard referencing style and incomplete citations. After realising the importance of accurate referencing for academic integrity (Neville, 2016), I used resources such as CiteThisforme Online and referencing tools like Zotero to improve. Task 1 involved citing sources on GDPR regulations, cybersecurity, and digital wellbeing, which demanded attention to detail (European Union, 2016). Proper referencing strengthened my arguments by supporting them with credible evidence. It also taught me to acknowledge the work of others, an essential academic and ethical practice. Reflecting on my development, referencing is no longer a mechanical task for me but a key component of critical writing, ensuring both credibility and professionalism in academic work.

Conclusion

Reflecting on my experiences in this module, it is clear that my academic writing, summarising, and referencing skills have developed significantly. Using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle enabled me to critically analyse my learning process and identify specific areas for improvement. Activities such as engaging with digital workplace tools and producing written assignments provided practical opportunities to apply and refine these skills. Moving forward, I intend to continue applying reflective practices to maintain and strengthen these capabilities. This experience has prepared me for the academic challenges ahead and will support my professional growth in environments that demand clear, critical, and credible communication.

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