



Reflection Report
Academic Skills Module-LCLM4001
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Introduction

A powerful tool for both academic and personal development, reflective practice enables students to critically examine their experiences and establish actionable plans for growth. This report explores the development of my academic skills focusing particularly on note taking, summarisation and retrieval of information. My development, challenges, and outcomes in these areas will be evaluated utilizing Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle. This was derived from primary self- and peer assessment, supplemented by secondary research. The recommendations in the report for enhancing these skills also serve to further demonstrate how intertwined academic prowess is.

Framework for Reflection

The reflection is organised using Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, which comprises four stages—Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualisation, and Active Experimentation (Kolb, 1984). This repeated framework helps improve learning by encouraging students to evaluate events, draw conclusions, and implement new strategies. Reflective Observation allows for exploration of both rational and emotional responses to these experiences, whilst the Concrete Experience is where the writer recounts specific academic events.

Abstract Conceptualisation is the process of finding trends and how to improve by making connections between these experiences and theoretical knowledge (Moon, 2004). Finally, Active Experimentation turns these findings into practical applications. Kolb's model suggests that reflection is vital to creating successful and adaptable approaches to learning (Race, 2014).

Techniques

This retrospective assessment is informed by both primary and secondary sources of information. Examples of primary data included peer reviews and self-reflective journal entries, while a review of scholarly works on productive study techniques was an example of secondary data. By blending with other sources, I had a quest for a greater understanding of my development and where I need to work (Hart, 2018). These resources were academic papers on study skills and information literacy, internet databases like JSTOR, and feedback rubrics.

Findings and Interpretation

Methods for Taking Notes

In the beginning, my notes were unstructured and hard to review, let alone memorize. Before discovering the Cornell Method, I experimented with different approaches but found nothing really helped me effectively prioritise key concepts and structure material (Pauk & Owens, 2011). Per peer feedback, this made the notes more useful and clearer, which made them much easier to read and refer to when I was making corrections. Academic studies have shown that structured note taking leads to a better understanding and retention of information, and I find it personally true (Kiewra, 2002). In addition, note classification and retrieval was made easy (Hembrooke & Gay, 2003) when the process was supported by digital technologies such as Microsoft OneNote.

Skills for Summarising

Summarising stuff was also a huge obstacle to me in the beginning as I often struggled to retain the vital ideas without losing more essential information. To do this, I focused on summarisation techniques such as mind mapping and paraphrase, in order to summarise main ideas in a concise format. The use of visual aids also enhanced my ability to condense complex topics (Buzan, 2010). Research has found that effective summarisation enhances comprehension, and retention over longer time periods, (Brown, Roediger & McDaniel, 2014). Peer and instructor feedback unequivocally demonstrated improvement in my capacity to relay short- and long-term significant summaries, emphasizing the value of these strategies for success as a student.

Information retrieval and research

In the initial stages of my academic studies, it was quite challenging for me to find the relevant and authentic material. Finally, even though it took some time, I learned to utilize scholastic

assets such as Google Researchers and JSTOR, to limit searches utilizing Boolean operators and channels (Hart 2018). This approach made my study significantly more impactful and high quality. Evaluating the credibility and relevance of sources had to be a central part of the knowledge retrieval process, a key part of which is not only knowledge but the characterisation of knowledge from authors (Wallace & Wray, 2016) which is part of many critical thinking frameworks. In addition, managing references control programs such as Zotero ensured accurate citations and alleviated the cognitive burden associated with source management (Van den Brink-Budgen, 2010).

Discussion

This constructive reflection shows just how far my academic abilities have come. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle provided a systematic approach to reflect on these experiences, especially regarding the interplay between research, notetaking and summarising. Note taking, for example, laid the foundation for effective summarization, and summarization strategies bolstered my ability to synthesize research findings. Such interdependence underscores the need for holistic development of academic skills (Moon, 2004).

Nonetheless, certain challenges remain, even after these reforms. Time management between courses and research remains a skill I am honing. Moreover, recently acquired techniques must be used consistently and require relentless discipline and effort.

Areas for improvements

Routine into the Future: Creating systematic reflection using Kolb's methodology will ensure continued growth and adaptability (Kolb, 1984).

Enhanced Method: Note-taking, summarising and research techniques used across a variety of environments will reinforce proficiency and adaptability (Kiewra, 2002).

Such feedback is an excellent opportunity for growth and provides new perspectives (Moon, 2004).

Digital Tools for the Next Generation: For more effective organisation of notes and citations programs such as Mendeley and Evernote can be developed (Hembrooke & Gay, 2003).

Effective time management techniques: having a well-organised timetable, with priorities in order of importance, where you can set a balance between academic duties (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

Conclusion

Reflecting on the methods I've used to develop my academic skills has been transformative. I applied to Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle to identify specific issues and implement solutions. My understanding of my development could be mastered thanks to primary and secondary research combined, which shows the importance of interconnected research, note-taking and summarisation skills. Although challenges remain, the proposed strategies offer a pathway to continued progress. I have faith that academic success will come from continued self-reflection and intentional effort.

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