

Reflective Report

Module: Academic Skills

Module Code: LCLM4001_LON

Student Name: Festus Ssebunya

Student ID: 2442547

Lecturer: Sukhpreet Grewal

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1. Introduction

As a June 2025 admission student at University of Wales Trinity Saint David, I have encountered various challenges, almost all of which are work and study balance related. However, by using some of the knowledge that I have acquired while studying academic skills module, I have mostly managed to overcome them.

In this report, I will be using Gibbs Reflective cycle (1988) because it is a useful framework for making a structured reflective analysis of learning experiences.

I will focus on three topics: time management, research skills and reflective writing. I have chosen to reflect on these topics mainly because I have already applied the knowledge I have gained during Miss Grewal's lectures in both my work and academic life.

2. Description

Our first academic skills topic was about, Time management.

As the lecture progressed, based on the discussion between Miss Grewal and students, I knew that like me, most of my fellow students did not realise how much time was being wasted in our daily lives due to inefficient time management.

Personally, even though I knew the basics of prioritising certain vital tasks over the others, I had not had prior wider knowledge with regards to time management, for example I had not known about the 3 time management strategies before, of which Miss Grewal advised us to use Pomodoro technique, especially when doing our revision work. I do and I find it very useful as it does not only help me to feel less stressed, but also makes me more productive. Based on Pomodoro technique, Entrepreneur Handbook (2019) it is emphasised that, we can work intensely and competently for 25 minutes at time followed by a short break of 5 minutes.

In week 3, we were introduced to another topic, Research skills and Harvard referencing. Perhaps it was one of the most engaging topics of the entire module as most students wanted to express their ideas. For example, when Miss Grewal opened a discussion about the CRAAP test and she asked the class to give examples of reliable sources of academic information, some students thought that Wikipedia was one of them, which is not, because anyone can contribute or edit the information on the platform.

Additionally, it is difficult, for example to establish the authority of the author and the information may also be inaccurate, uncited and outdated.

CRAAP is an acronym for, Currency, Relevancy, Authority, Accuracy and Purpose, (Blakeslee, 2004). It is a tool that was designed to evaluate sources of information, (Lasky, 2004).

In week 7, we were introduced to Reflective writing during which the lecturer explained what it meant and gave reasons why students, professionals and others sometimes do reflective reports. She described reflective writing as reflective thinking that is about looking back at something, normally an idea or event that happened. Adding that when we write a reflective report, it helps us to remember what happened and, also to learn lessons. And in cases where there had been mistakes, we are likely not to repeat them. To emphasise this point, she cited Gibbs (1988), that it is from the feelings and thoughts that develop from the reflection that concepts can be generated.

3. Feelings

On my enrolment day, I felt very happy and looked forward to starting my course.

This was due to the warm and friendly welcome that was given to us by the university staff.

However, once the term commenced and progressed, I realised that there were numerous challenges for me, especially with regards to balancing studying with a full-time job which always requires maximum attention because of health and safety.

4. Evaluation

Since I started this course, as perhaps expected, I have had to completely reorganise my entire life. I am now mainly focused on work and study, hence now having less time to meet friends and relatives.

However, my own assessment is that I have gained a lot of knowledge academically, even in this short period that I have been on the course, particularly, academic skills, because there is much knowledge that can be transferrable to work life or just personal development. For example, reflective writing or report writing which are essential skills to have for many professions and businesses, for example, the National Health Service, where doctors and nurses do sometimes have to write reflective reports.

5. Analysis

My whole experience whilst on this course and academic skills module, in-particular has been a good one. And to a large extent, Miss Grewal, our lecturer, deserve great credit for this, because from the start, she has been very professionally supportive and helpful to all students.

At this stage of my course, the only factor that has had a negative effect on my academic focus has been work and study balance. As I currently find it difficult to find time to do revision work. This greatly affected me negatively during Task 2 in-class assessment (application of academic skills exercise). I remember coming to class not as prepared as I would have wished to, I was very tired and I was not happy about it.

In general, I have gained essential transferrable academic knowledge such as, report writing which I may use in the future of my work life. I now know the difference between a primary and secondary research and common aims of reports writing, such as, presenting analysis or informing decision-making, et cetera.

Also, while learning of this module, I have become aware of the importance of using genuine sources when searching for academic information. And to achieve this, the use of CRAAP test, developed by Sarah Blakeslee is critical.

6. Conclusion

In summary, I have had a good experience whilst studying my university course despite having encountered various challenges probably as any other university student would. However, at the same time, the knowledge and skills that I have acquired by learning academic skills module have not only helped me a lot to overcome most of these challenges but have also prepared me for my future academic journey.

Also, by making personal reflection about my academic progress whenever necessary, I hope that my time whilst studying at this university will be an enjoyable one.

7. Action Plan

My current strategy on way forward, will mainly be to find better ways on how to make better use of time, so that I find more time to do my revision. Just by doing this reflective report, I have discovered that I need to do much more reading and research. Therefore, if I am to succeed academically in the future, a more adjusted time management will be very important.

One of my main aims for the future is to reduce stress and unfortunately for me, this has so far been a major source of it. I hope a Pomodoro technique, one of the three time management strategies will be of great use.

Additionally, I plan to make better use of available university resources than I am doing currently and seek more assistance from my lecturers who have been very helpful so far.

References:

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