

Description

This unit was the second unit of the Research Methods and Professional Practices module. The goals of this unit were to learn how to write a research question, literature review and research proposal.

For this unit we were required to read the majority of the first five chapters of the book *Projects in Computing and Information Systems: A Students guide* (Dawson, 2015), chapter 14 from the book *Writing about Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* (Healey et al., 2020) and the article on writing a literature review from an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of California (Boza, 2022).

The formative activity for this unit was to respond to at least 3 of your peers' collaborative discussion posts on the legal, social and ethical issues of one of the ACM case studies (ACM, 2018). The E-Portfolio activity for this unit was to begin planning your literature review using the literature review guide questions provided.

The lecture cast for this unit focused on how to plan a research question, how to plan a research proposal and the literature review process.

Feelings

I didn't see the point of having to respond to three of my peers' collaborative discussion posts as opposed to the 2 required in previous modules as the extra time spent researching, planning and writing could have been better spent working on the upcoming assignment.

I was already a week behind due to having to work on the portfolio assignment for a previous module so the work load for this week was higher as I had to try to catch up with the module which was not ideal. Additionally, I had a couple of job interviews this week so it was a very hectic week with lots going on.

When I was reading through the learning platform, I noticed some errors related to references. I was surprised to see this as Dr Outram stressed the importance of having correct references only to have mistakes in the references they used. This could cause confusion for students as the references aren't following the reference guide provided by the university.

I found the work load for this unit to be a lot more manageable than the previous unit as there were a lot fewer formative activities. As I am managing job applications, doctorate applications and my masters I need to manage my time effectively which I believe I was able to do in this unit a lot better than the previous unit.

Evaluation

The main positives of this unit were after completing the unit I learnt how to write an effective literature review and I improved my research skills. The skills will need to be developed further for my dissertation and my doctorate applications.

Due to the heavy workload of the previous unit and my other commitments I was still trying to catch up with the module when doing this module so I didn't have as much time to spent as I would have liked on the formatives for this unit.

The main negative I noticed during this unit was that the participation of the other students in the collaborative discussion was not up to the standard I would have expected from postgraduate students. This has been a common trend throughout my masters where collaborative discussion posts have always got few responses. Dr Outram did attempt to get more participation in the collaborative discussions by using the module announcements to remind students that the collaborative discussions are part of the portfolio but that didn't seem to make any difference. On the one module where the collaborative discussions were used effectively Dr Peoples also provided feedback to the students so maybe Dr Outram could do that in the future to ensure more active student participation.

Analysis

The workload of this module to date has forced me to try to improve my time management skills as I have a lot of other commitments that I have to manage alongside my masters.

As I am planning on applying for PHD's and still have a dissertation to do learning how to write a research proposal is a skill I will need.

Conclusion

Over the course of the unit, I learnt a lot about writing research proposals and literature reviews. As I am planning on doing a PHD and am actively thinking about working in research knowing as much about research is key.

For the literature review assignment, I chose AI-based assistive technology for the disabled after researching both the machine learning tools used in predicting sports results and the AI-based assistive technology for the disabled. The main reason for my decision was due to the amount of available research available as the machine learning tools used in predicting sports results is very niche compared to assistive technologies for people with disabilities.

Action plan

If I was to redo this unit of the module, I would have made sure not to fall behind at the beginning of the module as to I had to spend a lot of time trying to catch up with the module. As the lecturer advised us to try to stay up to date with the module due to the increasing workload each week being one week behind now could result in me needing to use the one-week extension I am entitled to as part of my reasonable adjustment plan.

References

Gibbs, G. (1998) *Learning by Doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods*. Further Education Unit. Oxford Polytechnic: Oxford.

Dawson, C. (2015) *Projects in Computing and Information Systems: A Student's Guide*. Harlow: Pearson.

Healey, M., Matthews, K. & Cook-Sather, A. (2020) *Writing about learning and teaching in higher education: Creating and contributing to scholarly conversations across a range of genres*. Center for Engaged Learning Open-Access Books, Elon University.

Boza, T. (2022) *How to Write a Literature Review: Six Steps to Get You from Start to Finish*. Available from: <https://www.wiley.com/en-us/network/publishing/research-publishing/writing-and-conducting-research/writing-a-literature-review-six-steps-to-get-you-from-start-to-finish> [Accessed 11 November 2024].

ACM. (2018) Code of Ethics Case Studies. Available from: <https://www.acm.org/code-of-ethics/case-studies> [Accessed 29 October 2024].