PORTFOLIO

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# Introduction

Academic skills can be defined as the collection of habits of studying, strategies implemented in learning and the time management tools that can be adopted and utilised by a learner to learn and absorb lessons effectively (Upson, 2023). Having adequate academic skills is essential for students to achieve higher academic success and higher performance later in professional life. The aim of the portfolio is to explore three academic skills that have been developed by investigating a phenomenon that is the way Covid-19 affected university students in the UK. A thorough analysis of those developed study skills along with an insight into the areas of personal strengths and weaknesses will be given in the portfolio. The areas of strengths and weaknesses have been identified based on the feedback given by the tutor against the investigation of the mentioned phenomenon made earlier.

# Skills developed

## Research skills

It has been assumed that the investigation of the above-mentioned phenomenon has significantly contributed to the development of research skills. As opined by Tuffrey Wijne *et al.* (2020), researching skills can be defined as the capability to identify, locate, extract, manage, evaluate and utilise or present information, which is relevant to a specific phenomenon. In the investigation of the mentioned phenomenon, the art of searching has adequately been learnt. In the investigation, there was a significant requirement to plan the search strategy that has been implemented to collect information. To draw appropriate conclusions from the overall investigation, requirements of recording and organising information relevant to the phenomenon were there, which have also been fulfilled. These are the ways the investigation has contributed to the development of personal research skills.

As indicated by Barrett, Kajamaa and Johnston (2020), the existence of research skills can form new opportunities for personal learning and growth. With the utilisation of research skills, an in-depth understanding of various topics and subjects related to the study can be enhanced. The factor is that effective skills in research often help individuals to obtain the most relevant information about a phenomenon to understand the entire subject.

On the other hand, it has also been found that by having effective research skills, information that is most relevant to studies can be obtained and even utilised effectively. The factor is that research skills can be helpful to locate appropriate information and evaluate those for quality and relevance. Issues in studies can also effectively be mitigated with the use of research skills since it can help to make good utilisation of information. In fact, later in professional life, the existence of adequate research skills can be helpful to enhance critical thinking (Tuffrey Wijne *et al.,* 2020). Hence, ideas in written and spoken formats can be synthesised and communicated effectively.

## Paraphrasing skills

By investigating the way Covid affected the lives of students in the UK, paraphrasing skills have been developed. Paraphrasing is mainly a writing skill. It refers to the capability of restating or rephrasing existing information published in a secondary source using own words while keeping the exact meaning of the information revealed in the secondary source (Akbar, 2020). Throughout the investigation, a vast amount of text and paragraphs has been read. To draw a conclusion from the overall investigation, opinions revealed regarding the effects of Covid-19 on the lives of students in the UK were supposed to be written down without looking at the original representation of data (Learninghub.ac.nz, n.d). The requirement has adequately been made in the investigation. In writing down the opinions without looking at the original data synonyms have been used. After all these, the meaning of the written sentences was crosschecked to monitor whether the meaning is the same or not. These are the ways the investigation has significantly contributed to the development of personal paraphrasing skills.

It has been assumed that the development of paraphrasing skills can be helpful to demonstrate effective academic writing capability throughout the remaining education life. In the future, to accomplish any sort of academic writing-related task, complex structural sentences from novels, articles, books and other secondary sources are required to be understood and extracted. Such a process often takes a vast amount of time so that the gist of the sources can be grasped. Having developed paraphrasing skills can help to modify such complex sentences while representing those through academic writing (Writeneed.com, 2018). Otherwise, issues with paraphrasing can be faced. As indicated by Jamieson and Howard (2019), by having effective paraphrasing skills, academic integrity can be maintained effectively throughout the remaining academic life. The factor is that by representing ideas and opinions of others relevant to personal study, information related to study can be represented in an ethical manner.

## Referencing skills

The investigation of the mentioned phenomenon has also contributed to the development of referencing skills. Referencing skills refer to the capability to acknowledge sources of information that are supposed to be utilised in a piece of writing. Through proper referencing in a piece of writing task, an individual demonstrates the way the works of others have been used to develop personal ideas, opinions and arguments (Paul and Criado, 2020). In representing information relevant to the effects of Covid-19 on the lives of students in the UK, giving credits to the original sources of information was a necessary requirement. Being aware of the process of referencing in a piece of the academic writing-related task, the process of referencing has been enhanced in two ways. First, at the end of writing, bibliographies have been framed. Then proper citations have been made in the representation of the information relevant to the proposed phenomenon. As per the requirement, the Harvard referencing style has been implemented to acknowledge the information given by others regarding the effects of Covid-9 on the lives of students in the UK. Through investigation, it has been learnt that the main elements of referencing are authors, date of publication of the studies accomplished by the authors, title of the article and journal name.

As indicated in the study by Cassell and Hiremath (2019), the development of referencing skills ensures that future academic writing-related tasks will be free from plagiarism. The factor is that the existence of knowledge about referencing can be helpful in making it clear which ideas interpreted are someone else's as well as own. In fact, an adequate understanding of the topic areas can also be demonstrated with the use of referencing skills. The factor is that through proper referencing, supporting evidence of ideas, opinions and arguments explored in writing can be supported.

# Areas of Strengths and Weaknesses

Based on the feedback given by the tutor against the investigation report on the effects of Covid-19 on university students in the UK, the following are the areas of personal strengths and weaknesses identified:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Areas of strength** | **Areas of weaknesses** |
| * I can effectively recognise the quality of data sources. * I am capable enough to enhance the verification of information relevant from multiple sources. * I have the capability to remain open to surprising answers. * I can stay organising while involved in a piece of research. * In interpreting and representing information, I am capable enough to find the most significant points and keywords to paraphrase. * In paraphrasing, I am well capable to cover the original texts and rewrite those in my own words. * I do not fail to keep the original meaning of information while paraphrasing. * I am capable enough to use different tools that are used to reference. * My academic writing validates my writing adequately as I adequately refer to documented evidence. * My academic writing effectively informs the readers of the scope and depth of my reading capabilities while researching or investigating a particular phenomenon. | * In researching, I need to start broad and then dive into the specifics. I am not capable enough to dive into specifics while interpreting and representing information about a particular phenomenon. * I need to learn more about the way quality sources of information and be organised. * I need to improve my reading skills to demonstrate effective paraphrasing skills. Based on the feedback given by the tutor it has been observed that I have failed to read the original sources of information carefully. * I need to improve the way my own representation of data is supposed to be compared with the original representation of data. * I need to work more on my paraphrasing skills since the tutor through feedback has indicated that my words and sentence structure often become similar to the original representation of data. |

# Conclusion

It can be concluded that the academic skills which are research skills, paraphrasing skills and referencing skills, which have been developed, which have been developed by being involved in the investigation can significantly help to achieve higher academic success. The improvement in personal research skills can significantly help to demonstrate the capability to investigate particular phenomena. Personal research skills can be helpful to enhance the in-depth representation of data related to a particular research phenomenon in the future. The development of effective skills in paraphrasing and referencing can help me to avoid plagiarism. This way I can maintain adequate academic integrity throughout my educational life.

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