

Task: Read the reflections and think about the questions. They will help you organize your reflection

Reflecting on Communication and Group Work

Communication is one of the most important skills for a group essay to be successful. A group essay does not only involve understanding amongst group mates but also requires the members to keep a common goal in mind. The group work that I want to discuss was the group essay task I was involved in.

The group essay has taught me two major ideas. Firstly, one should be flexible and be open minded when working in an environment with other peers with different opinions and views on topics. It is important to understand that one topic can be viewed from different perspectives and acting narrow-minded can result in an irregular flow of ideas which may lead to a poor essay. One should always respect his group mates and discuss the proper outlines of the essay by sharing information. The second important idea I have learnt from the group essay is proper allocation of different parts of the essay to different group members. This became an evident problem in our course of action as we could never make time to come together and discuss the topic. Eventually, after some serious brain storming sessions, we would be able to communicate our ideas and opinions by sharing information regarding each of our readings and draw a proper outline for our essay.

Via this experience, I have learnt how to effectively communicate my ideas by discussing and compromising rather than debating. I have become a better problem solver, by addressing the problem rather than working around it.

I have also learnt how to view a topic from other points of view. I have become more flexible and learnt to compromise rather than being stubborn. Moreover, I have learnt to negotiate with my peers. Finally, I will now begin future group assignments by keeping in regular touch with my group members and investing more time in my reading.

Questions

1. What is the skill that is being described and what is its purpose?
2. Why does the writer think that this skill is significant? How has this skill assisted them with their learning? How does the skill relate to their other subjects?
3. Does the writer think that the learning experience was successful? Has the student changed their approach due to what they have learnt? Were there any limitations that the student experienced?
4. What did the student learn from the experience? How will they change their approach in the future?

Reflecting on the Benefits of Cornell Note-taking

Thinking back over the course what I valued most was Cornell note-taking. It is a reading strategy and has a clear format, involving headings, essential questions, specific questions and a summary – there are four parts. The Cornell note-taking I want to talk about is in relation to the synthesis writing task.

There are two important ideas I learnt during the study. The first relevant idea is how to find key words. At the beginning of the synthesis writing, note taking plays a vital role as it helped me to develop an outline for my own paragraph. I felt really frustrated trying to summarize main ideas in a few words or phrases when I read long academic articles. After the teacher's instruction and some practice, I managed to have a good grasp of the gist of articles. If my notes are brief and my points are recorded accurately, I just follow ideas to write a paragraph instead of reviewing the article many times. Moreover, this skill is practical and transferable to other subjects. Good notes can help me fully understand the contents of text books. The second idea is the development of the summarization skill using my notes. It seems to me that the question I have to consider is summarizing academic information into one short paragraph by using my own words. I have learnt to write responses to each question into 2-3 sentences incorporating content-based vocabulary. In addition, poor note-taking may lead to plagiarism in the synthesis writing. I should record all reference information correctly in notes and clearly distinguish my own ideas from the ideas of other authors and researchers.

For me, the experience of the synthesis writing shows that I still need to develop my skill in note-taking. In the past, I seldom wrote down some notes when reading the article. Now I realize the importance of Cornell note-taking so that I develop the habit and the ability to summarize main ideas instead of just copying phrases or words in articles.

In conclusion, I have learnt that note-taking is essential for my all subjects both in my foundation year and in future. An efficient reading strategy like Cornell note-taking is related to a good paragraph and therefore good writing in general.

Questions

1. What is the skill that is being described and what is its purpose?
2. Why does the writer think that this skill is significant? How has this skill assisted them with their learning? How does the skill relate to their other subjects?
3. Does the writer think that the learning experience was successful? Has the student changed their approach due to what they have learnt? Were there any limitations that the student experienced?
4. What did the student learn from the experience? How will they change their approach in the future?

Reflecting on the Group Presentation

For this assignment, the skill that I will reflect on is discussion. Discussion refers to the action of talking about something to make a decision or to exchange ideas. In English class, many of my assignments involved group work. One example is the group presentation. Discussion played a significant role in this assignment as my group and I had to share our ideas, plan our slides, divide up roles and work together to deliver a great presentation.

There are many things that I have learnt through this assignment. First, I learnt that discussing in groups can increase my knowledge and understanding towards a particular topic or subject. Before exchanging ideas with my group mates, I did not fully comprehend the article sources that I must use for the presentation. The sources consisted of many complex vocabularies, which made it very confusing for me to understand. I was worried that I might struggle when planning ideas with my group. However, after several discussions with the other members, I was able to understand the sources and gain a deeper knowledge about the topic. I came across great ideas from my group members that I was not aware of before, which proved to be useful for the presentation. Second, the group discussion helped me improve my communication and listening skills. In the past, I have always feared public speaking. When preparing for the group presentation, I kept thinking that I might stutter a lot when presenting and disappoint my group. Through discussing ideas with my group mates, I was given the opportunity to speak confidently in front of them while sharing my ideas and plans for the presentation. Not only did it allow me to improve my communication skills, but it also served as a practice before the presentation. Moreover, discussion allows me to enhance my listening skills. It encourages me to listen to others' viewpoints and respect them when they are talking.

Through this experience, I was able to increase my knowledge and become a better communicator and listener. I learnt that discussion is very helpful as it allowed me to explore different viewpoints and speak confidently in front of others. It also allowed me to know my group members more. Even though we did not meet very often to discuss the presentation, we were still able to learn from each other.

Finally, this experience helped me identify my strengths and weaknesses. I realized that I still have a lot to improve on. In the future, I will make sure that my group and I hold discussions often so that everyone gets the chance to learn more and improve their skills.

Questions

1. What is the skill that is being described and what is its purpose?
2. Why does the writer think that this skill is significant? How has this skill assisted them with their learning? How does the skill relate to their other subjects?
3. Does the writer think that the learning experience was successful? Has the student changed their approach due to what they have learnt? Were there any limitations that the student experienced?
4. What did the student learn from the experience? How will they change their approach in the future?

Reflecting on Discussion

A skill that I have learnt during my English Unit 1 classes would be discussion skills. As students, we were required to have many discussions in class over the past nine weeks. The purpose of the discussions was for us to share our ideas and thoughts on a certain topic or issue with other members of the class. This is done so that we gain new insights and other perspectives that we would not have thought about. In the group discussions, we were split into groups of 3 or 4 and were given certain questions or topics to discuss.

I felt very apprehensive when I was first told that we had to do group discussions, because I was not very comfortable speaking to strangers. However, I slowly warmed up to my classmates and now I am at ease when we do group discussions together. Through the many group discussions in class, I have learnt how to interact better with students from other countries. I learnt that it was important to speak slowly and clearly to others, especially due to the prevalence of non-native speakers of English in the class. I had to speak differently to them, as they did not understand the Singaporean accent which has been ingrained in me since I was young. Additionally, I learnt how to speak to others when we had disagreements and how to discuss these differences amicably. The discussion skills are useful as I can apply them to all my other subjects here, as I do many discussions and group projects for them.

The group discussions have helped me to become a better communicator and better team player. They have also taught me to be more patient, because non-native speakers need time to figure out how to express what they mean in English. However, I believe that group discussions are not very effective in teaching me to express myself better using the English language, as I spend most of the time simplifying what I want to say and using easier words in order to accommodate to the non-native speakers. Nevertheless, this is necessary as the majority of the Monash College students do not speak English as their mother tongue.

I thought that I would be comfortable speaking to people who are mostly younger than me, however, I realised that it is still a little difficult for me to speak to them during the initial discussions. In the future, I will ensure that I try to relax more during the initial group discussions. I will also make sure that I can be understood by my discussion partners and remember to be patient with them.

Questions

1. What is the skill that is being described and what is its purpose?
2. Why does the writer think that this skill is significant? How has this skill assisted them with their learning? How does the skill relate to their other subjects?
3. Does the writer think that the learning experience was successful? Has the student changed their approach due to what they have learnt? Were there any limitations that the student experienced?
4. What did the student learn from the experience? How will they change their approach in the future?