Reflection Report

Predictive Modelling (2024 P3A)

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7th of July 2025

1. Situation

The situation took place in the spring of 2025, during the *Predictive Modelling* semester of the HAN Master in Applied Data Science. In this context, I was working on a research report for a machine learning project. I was involved as a student, with my lecturers from the program serving as supervisors and evaluators.

2. Task

As a student, it was my responsibility to independently set up, shape, and complete the research project. The final assignment involved writing a clear and structured research report. The report was expected to have a clear organization and be accessible to a broad audience, including readers without in-depth technical knowledge.

I set high standards for myself: I wanted to demonstrate that I could write a clear and persuasive report. At the same time, I knew this would be a challenge for me. In previous projects, I had struggled with writing well-structured texts, which also resulted in disappointing evaluations.

3. Action

To gain insight into the structure and content of the report, I created a visual layout of all chapters, sections, illustrations, tables, and references in advance. I did this by sticking physical post-its on my desktop, giving me a flexible overview that I could easily rearrange and adjust.

My approach was inspired by the Zettelkasten method, which was recommended by a lecturer. This method focuses on creating interlinked notes (originally on physical index cards) to build knowledge in a modular and insightful way. By
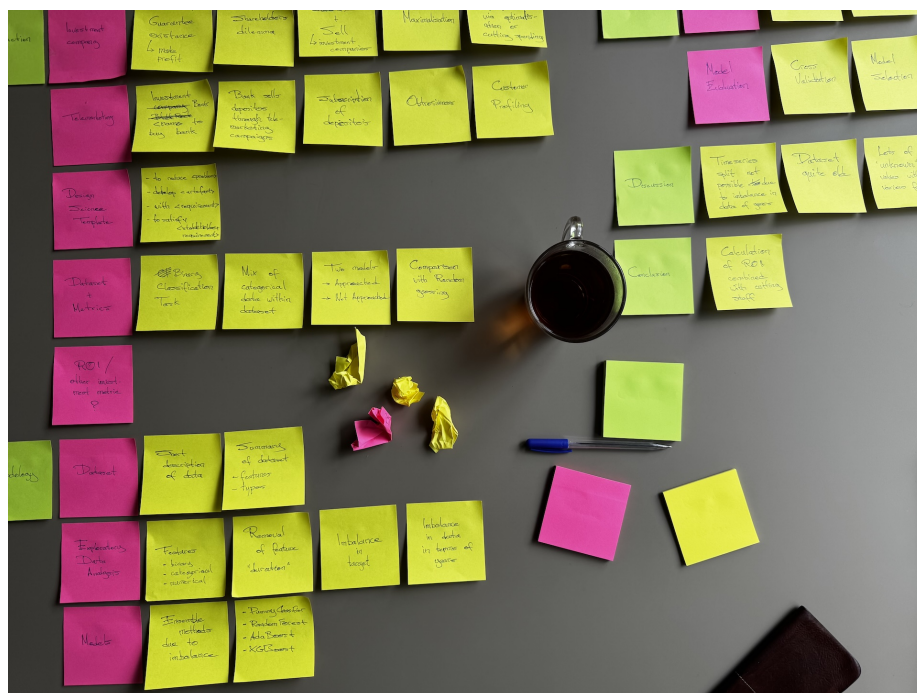
Figure 1: Desktop Post-It Layout

visually dividing my report in this manner, I was able to better understand and structure the connections between topics.

Additionally, I decided to write the initial version of the report in Dutch, allowing me to focus on content and structure without being hindered by language barriers. I translated it into English only after this. I chose this approach because I found that writing in English directly diminished the clarity and coherence of my texts.

4. Result

This approach has worked significantly. Structuring the report using physical post-its gave me headspace and clarity, and helped me to better understand the context of my task. As a result, I felt more confident in the writing process and could work more effectively on the report's content.

However, I also noticed limitations in my writing process. I quickly fall into a certain writing style, where I dwell too long on phrasing, which can hinder progress. I discovered that I needed a second pair of eyes to help me recognize and improve these stylistic pitfalls.

An appropriate analogy is how I used to cut a circle out of paper as a child: first roughly, and then refined it until it was truly round. In writing, this means for me: first putting everything on paper without too much self-criticism, and then rewriting with an eye for style, clarity, and tone.

5. Reflection

I look back with satisfaction on my approach. I worked thoroughly and plan to apply this process again in the future, with some small improvements. Although I believe the final report was reasonably good, I still see opportunities to enhance it. That feeling of "it can always be better" is also part of writing for me.

What I've learned most is the importance of physical structure in the writing process. By visually breaking down the topic, I gained more control over the content and the cohesion between different parts. Additionally, I realized that perfection doesn't need to be achieved all at once. By approaching writing as an iterative process, the quality of the text improves with each revision.

Next time, I would start with this approach a little earlier. That way, I might be able to incorporate insights from the structuring phase into the research project itself, rather than just in the reporting. The method I applied is versatile and certainly applicable in other situations where longer texts or reports need to be written.