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Introduction

This reflective report examines my learning journey in the Academic Skills module, focusing on Task 1 (academic skills quiz), Task 2 (application of academic skills exercise), critical thinking discussions, and group activities. These experiences taught me essential techniques like note-taking, time management, and referencing, shaping my academic and personal development. By reflecting on my strengths, areas for improvement, and what I learned, I aim to show how the module enhanced my study habits and confidence. Supported by scholarly sources, this report highlights the significance of these experiences in preparing me for success in my university program.

Description of Experiences

The Academic Skills module featured impactful activities that transformed my approach to learning. Task 1 was a 45-minute quiz in week 5, testing my knowledge of time management, note-taking, and referencing. Task 2, a 75-minute exercise in week 7, involved taking notes from a text, paraphrasing, and writing an academic paragraph. A class discussion on assessing source credibility was memorable, where I debated the reliability of a news website, these experiences were significant because they required me to apply skills like critical thinking and academic writing in practical settings. The quiz pushed me to recall key concepts, while Task 2 tested my ability to process and present information. The discussion and colleague review fostered collaboration and

critical analysis, revealing my strengths in organization and challenges in time management. These activities connected directly to the module's focus on building effective academic habits.

Analysis and Personal Reflection

Reflecting on these experiences, I can evaluate what went well, what I learned, and where I need to improve. Learning academic skills because I prepared by reviewing notes on time management techniques, such as prioritizing tasks, and the Cornell note-taking method (Cornell University, 2024). However, I struggled with a referencing question requiring a Harvard-style citation. This taught me the importance of precision in referencing, a skill emphasized by Cottrell (2017) as essential for academic integrity. I've since practiced creating references using online tools, improving my accuracy.

Task 2 was a practical test of my skills; however, I rushed the task, leaving little time to proofread, which highlighted my weakness in time management. I learned to allocate specific minutes for each section, a strategy I now use in timed assignments.

The class discussion on source credibility was enlightening. I contributed by analysing a news website's bias, which deepened my understanding of evaluating sources for reliability, a core module topic. Cottrell (2017) notes that critical thinking involves questioning evidence, and this discussion reinforced that principle. I felt confident sharing my views but hesitated to challenge others, indicating a need for assertiveness. I've started practicing this in small group settings, which feels less daunting. This experience taught me to approach research critically, a skill I apply when selecting sources for essays.

The group peer-review activity was valuable for learning collaboration. I gave constructive feedback on a friend's draft, suggesting clearer transitions, which improved my analytical skills. Receiving feedback showed I had weak in-text citations, often missing page numbers. This echoed the module's focus on accurate referencing. I've since studied Harvard referencing guides, and my recent work shows fewer errors. This activity taught me that feedback is a tool for growth, as Brown et al (2014) suggest, and improved my ability to work with others.

These experiences directly enhanced my understanding of the module's content. Task 1 and Task 2 reinforced time management, note-taking, and academic writing conventions, while discussions and peer reviews emphasized critical thinking and referencing. My strengths include organization, seen in my structured notes and paragraph, and openness to feedback, which improved my work. However, I need to improve time management in timed tasks and confidence in discussions. I've adopted time-blocking to manage deadlines, which helped me complete the module's assessments on time.

Personally, the module fostered resilience and self-awareness. Acknowledging mistakes, like my referencing errors, and addressing them made me a proactive learner. Collaborating with colleagues enhanced my communication, preparing me for group projects. The module equipped me with practical tools note-taking, paraphrasing, and critical thinking that I'll use throughout my program, making me a more disciplined student.

Conclusion

The Academic Skills module transformed my approach to learning through Task 1, Task 2, discussions, and peer reviews. I learned time management, note-taking, referencing, and critical thinking, improving my academic writing and source evaluation. My organizational strengths and feedback acceptance shone, but I need to enhance time management and discussion confidence. These experiences, supported by scholarly insights, made me a reflective, capable student ready for my program's challenges. The module's impact will guide my future studies, and I'm excited to continue applying these skills to grow as a learner.

References

- Brown, P. C., Roediger, H. L., & McDaniel, M. A. (2014). *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cottrell, S. (2017). *Critical Thinking Skills: Developing Effective Analysis and Argument*. 3rd ed. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cornell University. (2024). *The Cornell Note-Taking System*. [online] Available at: [Insert URL if applicable] (Accessed: 26 April 2025).