

Academic Skills
Reflective report

Avril Andrea Fernandez Hidalgo

Student ID: 242 6450

Lecturer: Peter Allen

This reflective report aims to explore my personal development and learning throughout the academic skills module. The purpose of this report is to critically reflect on key experiences

that have contributed to my growth as a student, including improving my research and referencing skills, enhancing my academic writing, developing my confidence in presenting information. By evaluating these experiences, I will identify areas of strength and areas for further improvement, with the goal of applying these insights to future academic work and professional development.

During the academic skills module, I used summarising technique to break down complex texts into key points, which helped me better understand and retain essential information. This was especially useful when preparing for assignments, as it allowed me to extract the main arguments from academic sources and rephrase them in my own words. By regularly practising summarising during reading tasks and note-taking exercises, I improved my ability to identify relevant content and avoid unnecessary detail. According to Bailey (2018), effective summarising is an essential academic skill that helps students engage their own academic voice. Overall, this technique played a crucial role in making my study sessions more productive and my writing more structured.

Throughout the academic skills module, I experienced significant growth in my ability to research, write, and present academic content. One key classroom event that contributed to this was a group workshop on referencing, where we practised using Harvard style citations in academic writing. This session helped me understand the importance of acknowledging sources to avoid plagiarism and to support my arguments with credible evidence. According to Cottrell (2019), referencing is a core academic skill that demonstrates critical thinking and the ability to engage with existing literature. Additionally, presenting a short talk in class helped improve my public speaking and confidence when explaining ideas clearly to others. These experiences collectively strengthened my academic foundation and prepared me for future university assignments.

Evaluating my experiences on the academic skills module has allowed me to identify both strengths and areas for improvement in my academic development. One of my key strengths has been my ability to engage actively in class discussions and apply feedback to improve my academic writing. I found that I could structure essays more clearly and support my points with evidence, which enhanced the quality of my assignments. However, I also recognised that time management and independent research are areas where I need to improve, as I sometimes struggled to balance reading and writing tasks effectively. According to Cameron (2021), self-awareness and reflection are crucial for identifying learning gaps and building effective study habits. Going forward, I plan to use time management tools such as the pomodoro technique; and schedule regular research sessions to support my continued academic progress.

At the beginning of the academic module, I struggled with fully understanding assignment briefs and often found myself confused about what the tasks were actually asking me to do. I sometimes misinterpreted key instruction words like “analyse” or “evaluate”, which led to me including irrelevant content or not answering the question in enough depth. This made planning and structuring my assignments quite challenging. However, as the module progressed, I gradually developed a clearer understanding through class discussions, tutor feedback, and support materials that explained how to break down questions effectively. I also started using checklists and highlighting important parts of the brief to keep myself on track. By the end of the module, I felt much more confident in understanding what was expected and was able to approach assignments with more clarity and purpose.

As a next step I will need to build on the content from the academic skills module include continuing to practise effective time management and refining my academic writing techniques. I plan to regularly use tools such as the Eisenhower matrix and assignment planning templates to help me stay organised.

In conclusion, the academic skills module has had a significant impact on my academic development, helping me build essential skills in researching, referencing, critical thinking, and effective communication. Participating in workshops and practical activities enabled apply these skills and reflect on my progress, which has boosted my confidence and academic readiness. I identified key strengths, such as engagement in discussions and essay structuring, while also recognising the need to improve my time management and independent study habits. As Burns and Sinfield (2016) suggest, developing these foundational skills not only supports success at university but also prepares students for lifelong learning and problem-solving. Overall, the module has been an important step in shaping my approach to academic work.

Reference:

Bailey, S. (2018) academic writing: a handbook for international students. 5th ed. Abingdon: Routledge.

Cottrell, S. (2019) the study skills handbook. 5th ed. London: red globe press.

Cameron, S. (2021) the academic skills handbook: your guide to success in writing, thinking and communicating at university. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Burns, T. and Sinfield, S. (2016) essential study skills: the complete guide to success at university. 4th ed. London: Sage.