

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

“Reflective Report on the Development of My Academic Skills”

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In today's world, where information is growing exponentially, and the complexity of tasks is constantly increasing, academic skills play a key role in achieving success not only in education but also in further professional activities and personal development. These skills are the foundation for effective learning, critical thinking, independent work, and successful communication. Possessing them allows you not only to assimilate knowledge but also to analyse, synthesize, evaluate information, solve complex problems, and effectively present your own ideas.

Having started my studies at the university, I want to note the consistency and structure of the presentation of the material. The module covered a wide range of important aspects, ranging from effective time management and workspace organization to critical thinking techniques and academic skills. Each topic was logically related to the previous one, which contributed to the understanding of the academic process.

Practical classes and tasks turned out to be especially valuable for me. Thanks to them, I was able not only to assimilate theoretical knowledge, but also to apply it in practice. According to Cottrell (2008), a good teacher will help student to see what they already know, and to use this as the basis for the next step in the learning. For example, exercises in critical analysis of texts helped me to take a fresh look at academic sources, teaching me to isolate the main points, evaluate arguments and identify possible biases.

I also positively assess the variety of learning formats. Lectures, group discussions and individual tasks created a dynamic learning environment where everyone could find the best way to assimilate information and get answers to their questions.

In terms of developing specific skills, I have experienced significant progress in:

- Time management: Learned to plan your learning process more effectively, prioritize and avoid procrastination.
- Information search and processing: Gained valuable tools for finding relevant academic sources and analysing them critically.
- Academic writing: Understood the key principles of writing research papers,

learned how to clearly formulate your thoughts and correctly format citations and references.

Of course, there were also certain challenges. For example, at first it was difficult for me to master all the intricacies of academic citation. However, thanks to additional materials and the support of the teacher, I was able to overcome this difficulty.

Here's how you can effectively use time management based on the knowledge from this module:

1. Define your academic goals and priorities: I need to figure out what I really want to get done with my studies and what's most important right now. I also need to see which tasks are due soonest. This module showed me how to set goals that are SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-limited.
2. Make a detailed schedule: I need to make a plan that breaks big tasks into smaller, easier steps. I should guess how long each step will take. My plan needs to include time for studying, but also for resting, eating, and other important things. This module showed me different tools like weekly schedules, daily to-do lists, and online calendars.
3. Use time management techniques: The module introduced me to various techniques that help me use time more efficiently. Here are some of them:
Pomodoro technique: Consists of you having to work intensely for a certain time (for example, 25 minutes) and then take a short break (5 minutes). After several such cycles, take a longer break (15-30 minutes). This helps to maintain concentration and avoid burnout.
Eisenhower Matrix: You need to divide your tasks into four categories: important and urgent, important but not urgent, unimportant but urgent, and unimportant and non-urgent. Focus on important tasks.
4. Eliminate distractions: When I'm trying to study, I need to find a quiet spot and turn off all those annoying notifications on my phone and computer. The study skills stuff I looked at gave some good ideas on how to make my study space work for me.

5. Systematically review and adjust your schedule: Don't always go to plan, so my schedule might need to change sometimes. At the end of each day or week, I should look back at what I planned, see what I did, and figure out what I need to tweak. I should try to stick to my main plan but also be ready to bend a little when life throws curveballs."
6. Take care of your physical and emotional state: It must be understood that effective time management also includes adequate sleep, a healthy diet and regular physical activity. When you feel good, it is easier for you to concentrate and work productively.

In general, I find the module "Academic Skills" extremely useful and important for my further studies. The knowledge and skills I have gained are already helping me to study more effectively and feel more confident in the academic environment. According to Cottrell (2008), students must be more creative in problem-solving, and very organised in their time management. I am grateful for the opportunity to take this module and feel better prepared for future academic challenges.

Reference

1. Cottrell, S. 2008, The Study Skills Handbook. Palgrave Macmillan LTD, third edition
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3. Mindtools (2019) "What is Time Management?"
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