

LCLM 4001- Academic Skills- How the module has helped improve academic skills- UWTSD

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Introduction

An Academic Skills module serves as a foundational standpoint for students aiming to enhance their educational abilities and academic performance. By focusing on essential skills such as effective communication, critical thinking, research methodologies, and time management, this module equips learners with the tools necessary to navigate the difficulties of higher education. Ultimately, participation in this Academic Skills module not only improves the likelihood of academic success but also promotes lifelong learning and adaptability in various professional and personal contexts.

My Paraphrasing Skills

Throughout the module, I have significantly enhanced my paraphrasing skills, a critical ability for academic writing to avoid plagiarism and demonstrate comprehension of source material. Initially, I struggled with accurately rephrasing complex ideas while retaining their original meaning, which often led to frustration and concern over unintentional similarity to source texts. However, through targeted exercises and feedback sessions, I learned effective strategies such as reading and summarizing content mentally before rewriting it, employing synonyms, and altering sentence structures. One notable task involved paraphrasing a scholarly article, where I initially found it difficult to move beyond minor word changes. Feedback from this exercise highlighted areas for improvement, like focusing on altering sentence flow while ensuring clarity. Over time, my confidence grew as I applied these strategies, allowing me to write with more originality and fluency. Moving forward, I plan to keep practicing paraphrasing through independent exercises and use plagiarism check tools to refine my work further.

Reflective Skills

Developing reflection skills has been a transformative aspect of my learning in this module. Initially, I found reflective writing challenging, as I struggled to critically evaluate my own progress and identify areas for improvement. However, through guided practice using structured frameworks like Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, I began to approach reflection more systematically. For example, completing a journal entry after each class activity helped me analyse my strengths, such as time management, and weaknesses, like lack of clarity in articulating ideas. This process made me more self-aware and allowed me to set actionable goals for improvement. Over time, I realized that reflection is not merely about looking back but also about shaping future actions to enhance learning. Moving forward, I aim to maintain a reflective practice by dedicating time after tasks to evaluate my

performance and integrate lessons learned into subsequent work. Figure 1 is an example of using Gibbs Reflective Cycle as the structure of my reflection.

Description <i>(What happened?)</i>	I have found my learning experience to be very simple and beneficial as there have been some things that I have not knew and learnt before
Feelings <i>(What were you thinking and feeling at the time?)</i>	I was feeling very nervous and anxious at the time but now I feel very motivated and confident.
Evaluation <i>(What was good and bad about the experience?)</i>	Learning new things that I didn't know about was not aware of before asking question to find out about things in proper detail, but I don't think there is anything bad about the experience.
Analysis <i>(What sense can you make out of the situation?)</i>	There are somethings I feel like I don't know in my learning experience, but I can do some research which could benefit and improve my understanding.
Conclusion <i>(What else could you have done? Or what could you have improved?)</i>	I need to revise work that has already been given to me during my learning experience so that I can be fully ready for upcoming tests. I could improve my understanding of how to use my laptop so in the future I can get better at it.
Action Plan <i>(If you do it again, what would you do differently? What skills do you need to develop?)</i>	I could prepare myself harder and spend half of my time at home revising to be prepared for exams.

Academic Writing Skills

The module has also been instrumental in developing my academic writing skills, enabling me to communicate ideas clearly and formally. At the beginning of the course, I often struggled with structuring essays and maintaining a professional tone.

Feedback from this task highlighted areas like over-reliance on descriptive writing instead of critical analysis. Incorporating this feedback, I improved my ability to gather information and develop balanced arguments. As a result, my confidence in academic writing has grown better, and I plan to further refine these skills by engaging in additional writing workshops and seeking feedback on future drafts.

Academic challenges have strengthened my ability to solve problems creatively. I've learned to break down complex issues into manageable parts and apply logical reasoning to find solutions, which I can now apply in real-life situations. Writing essays and engaging in group discussions have all helped me improve my communication skills. I've become better at articulating my thoughts, presenting ideas clearly, and listening actively to others, which enhances my personal and professional interactions.

Being open to new concepts has boosted my confidence in facing challenges and adapting to different circumstances. Academic skills have also helped me develop effective research techniques. Knowing how to gather, analyse, and synthesize information has improved my ability to learn independently, making me more resourceful and curious about the world around me.

As shown below Figure 2, this table is an example of an activity of what I did during one of my class sessions and helped me improve my academic writing skills. It did this by showing me and giving me an idea how to plan an essay/report. Moreover, it allowed me to have more of an understanding on academic writing skills.

Essay Analysis – Use of Sources	Main Idea (key theme)	Support for Main Idea (details, examples...)	Source Used for Support	Language used to introduce source (e.g. <i>according to</i>, <i>as the writer suggests</i>, <i>as noted by...</i>)
Paragraph 1	The internet it's a powerful toll for teachers	Because internet have different voices and languages and this can be useful for getting students attention	Pasch and Norsworthy (2001) Nelson(2008)	Suggested by Reinforced by
Paragraph 2	BRITISH STUDENT	intemet	Davis(2009)	According to
Paragraph 3	The internet helped doing the plagiarism	The student doesn't need to rewrite what the author suggested Just by using "Ctrl+C, Ctrl+V"	Lathrop, K. Foss and K.E. Foss (2000) Scanlon and Neumann (2002)	As noted by Argued about

Figure 2-Essay Analysis table worked on in a class session

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