



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Module Name: Academic Skills in the Digital Era

Module Code: BMSW4013

Assessment 2: Essay

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AI Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the use of Grammarly (<https://www.grammarly.com/>) to check my work using the prompt(s):

1. Please check the following text for readability, grammar and syntax.

I confirm that I have not presented any AI -generated text as my own work. I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Prior to my journey in the United Kingdom twelve years ago, I had attended university, pursued a degree in accounting, and obtained my qualification. The primary reason for the prolonged duration before resuming my academic pursuits is my demanding family life. The educational systems in my home country and the United Kingdom differ; however, students have all the necessary tools to succeed at university.

Universities often create a diverse community of students from various backgrounds, potentially resulting in feelings of isolation and challenges forming new social connections. Establishing new friendships and achieving a sense of belonging can be especially difficult for first-year students, who often contend with the demands of creating more support networks and navigating social expectations.

To succeed in higher education, students need some fundamental abilities, such as time management, note-taking, academic writing and critical reading during lectures. Israel Creleanor Mulaudzi (2023) Challenges Faced by First-Year University Students: Navigating the Transition to Higher Education.

The reflection focuses on a particular experience: preparation and submission of my first assignment, Academic Skills in the Digital Era, during my first term. Also, preparation for my presentation on digital skills. The experience is supported by the module topics, including research, academic writing, presentation, Harvard referencing and effective use of digital platforms such as Moodle and the online library.

Description

My reflective experience involves preparing and submitting my first assignment.

During my week 1, I learned the techniques and strategies of how to learn, study skills, and learning styles such as the Pomodoro and Eisenhower Matrix techniques. The Pomodoro technique was developed to use time as an asset for achieving our goals in a preferred manner and to enable the continuous enhancement of our work or study methodologies. In summary, the Pomodoro is improving productivity and fighting procrastination, and it helped me improve my time management. Also, I can use it in my future career. Francesco Cirillo (2006) The Pomodoro technique.

The Week 2 lecture allowed me to search for sources using the university online library for my assignment. Week 3: to find reliable and relevant sources by using the CRAAP test and reference them according to Harvard Referencing. Also learn how to paraphrase and note-taking. During week 4, the lecture on academic writing explained the difference between a report and an essay, for example, using PEEL.

My first presentation in Digital skills was less stressful and easy compared to what I was thinking because of my week 7 lecture (how to prepare a good presentation).

This experience is fundamental; that is why it is good for a student to create a daily planner by listing classes and assignments, setting a learning time outside of class and meeting deadlines.

Feeling

I was excited to start my assignment, but during the research and writing process, I felt confused and worried if I was going to meet the deadline and if I was in the right direction (if my academic writing was good and if I was using the CRAAP test and Harvard references correctly) two weeks before submission. After speaking to my lecturer, she confirmed I was on the right track; that is what gave me the confidence to go forward. As I said in the beginning of my reflection, students have all the tools they need to succeed. During the second week of my first term, my topic was focused on how to find and use information. To summarise the key topics, skills, or concepts, I used the CRAAP test, saved sources to my favourites, used the online library and resources list, and evaluated sources to continue writing my assignment. Additionally, what I learned in week 3 about note-taking, Harvard referencing and paraphrasing helped me increase my confidence in academic writing.

Academic writing I learned in week 4 allowed me to distinguish the difference between an essay and a report. As my assignment 1 was a report, the week 3 lecture gave me the opportunity to create headings, create bullet points and create a table of contents.

After attending the week 5 lecture concerning academic integrity and artificial intelligence, my writing was slow going back from the beginning to ensure I respected the rules. While I submitted my assignment, I felt proud of myself for doing it and will be improving more efficiently next time.

I enjoyed my first presentation in Digital skills, and I was proud of myself.

Evaluation

A favorable aspect of this experience was the practice of the week 1 topic: building student toolkit. Using Eisenhower's Matrix to prioritise my activities, using the Pomodoro for my time management, and knowing what the best technique for me to learn (techniques and strategies of how to learn efficiently).

However, a key challenge was inefficient thinking skills: understanding. Cottrell S. (2019) Study Skills Handbook.

As I am from another country, English is not my first language; it takes me time to understand some words and concepts.

As was mentioned in Week 9, an unexpected result was realising that effort by itself does not ensure high grades; assessors place a higher priority on academic quality, evidence, and structure.

Analysis

This experience developed an unfamiliar academic expectation compared to my background; this caused me to have a slow understanding.

Brown (2001) confirms that successful knowledge of the second language will be due to a learner's own personal "investment" of time, efforts, and attention to the target language in the form of a portfolio of strategies for understanding and producing the language. Brown (2001) How Learners from Different Cultural Backgrounds Learn a Foreign Language

My confusion was linked to my slow and uncertain academic writing. However, increasing my reading from books, my library on Moodle, journals and government websites leads to success. According to my experience, academic and digital skills show how students develop through practice, reflection and feedback rather than instant proficiency.

Conclusion

With hindsight, I could use the CRAAP test on my research earlier for my assignment rather than being uncertain for weeks. Using Pomodoro and Eisenhower's Matrix to prioritise my activities and timing my tasks.

This reflection highlights the importance of applying academic skills taught in class rather than passively engaging with content. Sooner and more consistent use of these strategies would have reduced stress and improved my achievement.

Smart action plan

Academic writing

- Specific: Apply PEEL consistently.
- Measurable: structure paragraphs.
- Achievement: yes
- Relevant: improve clear, coherent, and logically organised academic paragraphs.
- Time-bound: first essay next term.

Time management

- Specific: try to learn every night using Pomodoro.
- Measurable: two hours a night.
- Achievement: yes, try to finish before the draft deadline.
- Relevant: have feedback from the lecturer.
- Time-bound: finish my assignment on time without stress next term.

Presentation

- Specific: practice my presentation at home.
- Measurable: often.
- Achievement: yes, using the 5 Ps presentation (plan, prepare, practice, performance, and passion).
- Relevant: gain confidence before the presentation day.
- Time-bound: excellent presentation for next term.

References

Brown, H.D. (1994) *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. Englewood, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents.

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