

LCLM4001 Academic Skills

ACS report

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1. Introduction

This report reflects on my learning journey throughout the Academic Skills module, a core component of my programme aimed at developing the foundational abilities required for success in higher education. Over the semester, I engaged in a variety of structured activities, including the academic skills quiz, the application of academic skills exercise, and a series of interactive classroom tasks such as group discussions, peer reviews, and critical reading exercises. These experiences have been instrumental in enhancing key competencies such as critical thinking, time management, paraphrasing, academic writing, and referencing. The purpose of this reflection is to analyse the progress I have made, recognise areas that require continued improvement, and highlight how these skills have influenced my personal and academic growth.

2. Description of experiences

Academic skills quizzes became our first major project which tested our knowledge of referencing along with plagiarism and time management and academic writing conventions. This assignment revealed my strong points regarding source credibility identification as well as my weaker skills in Harvard referencing application.

The academic skills application exercise required us to write notes through structured methods before rewriting academic material and producing a brief paragraph during timed intervals. The task proved difficult because it evaluated my technical writing skills as well as my speed and efficiency under stressful conditions. The controlled environment of these exercises enabled me to develop my skills for combining multiple academic standards in a single piece of work.

Our classroom work included various practical tasks which added to the formal assessment components. For example:

- Critical reading sessions: Our group studied journal articles to extract the central arguments and supporting proof alongside the underlying biases. Active text engagement replaced my previous passive reading behavior through these educational sessions.

- We conducted paraphrasing workshops where participants practiced converting academic text into their own words by using textbook and online article examples.
- We formed pairs to create Harvard-style references for various sources including books and websites and journal articles. The team-based method enabled me to gain knowledge from my colleagues' proficient skills.
- Group debates: Students debated about the effects of social media on academic performance to determine if it had positive or negative consequences. Through these debates I developed my verbal communication abilities and learned how to present evidence in support of my arguments.
- Reviewing drafts from my peers helped them enhance their work and made me more sensitive to academic writing errors that students commonly make.

These activities combined to strengthen academic literacy components by allowing students to practice real-world application of these skills.

3. Analysis and reflection

Looking back, I can see substantial growth in my skills, but I also recognise that there are areas where continued improvement is necessary.

Strengths Developed:

- Time management represents the most beneficial skill I developed throughout this module. At the beginning of the semester I often misjudged the time required for assignments leading to excessive stress. I learned to schedule my assignments into smaller workable portions with specific deadlines through structured planning strategies. Cottrell (2019) supports time management by breaking work into smaller achievable tasks which results in steady progress and decreased stress. The implementation of these methods enabled me to finish assignments which gave me sufficient time for review and enhancement before submitting my work.
- The Eisenhower Decision Matrix has enabled me to develop a crucial ability for prioritizing tasks effectively.

The Eisenhower Decision Matrix divides tasks into four quadrants which help users identify the most impactful activities for their work (Mind Tools, 2024). The preparation for my academic skills quiz required immediate attention because it was both urgent and crucial so I handled it right away but scheduled my important background reading

for a later time. This approach reduced procrastination while I became better at managing deadlines and reduced my time spent on insignificant tasks.

- I made substantial progress in developing my note-taking ability. My initial note-taking method was unorganized which made it hard to utilize them during study sessions. I learned two note-taking strategies through class activities and independent practice: the Cornell Method and bullet-point summaries which helped me arrange important information effectively. According to Bailey (2018) students who maintain organized notes that are simple to understand can better comprehend lectures and create better academic papers by effectively paraphrasing and integrating sources. This skill development enables me to retrieve and apply information more effectively in my academic work

Challenges Faced and Areas for Improvement:

The main obstacle I encountered was paraphrasing. During the beginning phase I maintained excessive closeness to the original text which led to potential plagiarism issues. The paraphrasing workshops together with in-class exercises enabled me to improve but I need additional practice to master rewriting complex academic ideas into my own words without distorting their original meaning.

Academic writing style was another area that required attention. The first drafts I produced contained both disorganized structure and insufficient formal language. The way I speak naturally led me to write in a manner that compromised the professional quality of my work. My understanding of topic sentences together with logical idea connections and academic voice development enhanced both the clarity and persuasiveness of my assignments. My writing skills have improved yet I require further development of vocabulary and sentence structure to reach higher precision levels.

I observed during group work and debates that my verbal participation started off being restricted. I avoided speaking up because I feared my ideas might prove incorrect. My participation in discussions helped me understand topics better while I gained knowledge from the perspectives of others. I developed greater confidence in expressing my views throughout the module even when others disputed them.

4. Conclusion

The Academic Skills module has been a transformative experience that has strengthened my foundation for higher education. I have developed crucial abilities in time management, critical thinking, referencing, and structured academic writing. At the same time, I have identified areas, particularly paraphrasing and refining my academic style, that require further practice. I have improved both my technical skills and my confidence as a learner through the quizzes, application exercises and classroom activities. I will apply these skills consistently in all academic contexts, recognizing that they are essential not only for academic success but also for professional growth.

5. References

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