

Reflective Report – Academic Skills

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to reflect on my learning throughout the Academic Skills module. When I started this course, I was unsure about many things, such as academic writing, referencing, and managing my time properly. Since English is not my first language, I was also worried about how I would express my ideas clearly in assignments. The module gave me opportunities to practise key skills, like notetaking, paraphrasing, and critical reflection, which are all important for success in higher education (Cottrell, 2019). In this report, I will reflect on my experiences with Task 1 and Task 2, as well as classroom discussions and activities. I will also analyse my strengths and weaknesses, showing how the module has supported both my academic development and personal growth.

Description of Experiences

One of the first major activities in this module was Task 1 – the Academic Skills Quiz. The quiz tested knowledge on areas like time management, note-taking, referencing, and academic misconduct (University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 2025). Some questions were straightforward, such as recognising different note-taking methods, but I found referencing more difficult. I was not used to the Harvard referencing style, and I sometimes mixed up the order of elements, like the author's name, year, and publisher (Pears and Shields, 2019). Even though I did not perform

perfectly, the quiz made me realise the importance of being accurate with academic conventions.

Task 2 – the Application of Academic Skills Exercise – was another important experience. In this exercise, we had to take notes from a short text, paraphrase sentences, and then write a full paragraph in academic style. At first, I found paraphrasing challenging because I was scared of copying too closely. With guidance, I learned that paraphrasing is not just about replacing words with synonyms, but also about changing the structure and writing in my own voice (Northedge, 2005). When I completed the exercise, I felt more confident because I managed to create a clear paragraph with proper flow.

Classroom discussions also played a big role in my learning. For example, we had a group discussion on academic misconduct, especially plagiarism. Before this, I thought plagiarism only meant copying and pasting text, but I learned that it also includes using someone else's ideas without proper referencing (University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 2025). Hearing different views from classmates helped me understand the seriousness of academic honesty in higher education.

These experiences gave me practical opportunities to use the skills instead of just reading about them, which made my learning more effective.

Analysis and Personal Reflection

What went well

One of my biggest improvements has been in notetaking. At the beginning of the module, my notes were disorganised and difficult to use later. After learning about the Cornell method, I started structuring my notes into main ideas, supporting details, and summaries. This method made it easier for me to study and understand texts (Cottrell, 2019). During Task 2, my structured notes helped me paraphrase more effectively.

Another area where I made progress is paraphrasing. Before this module, I often relied too much on the original wording, which increased the risk of plagiarism.

Through practice, I learned to focus on understanding the meaning first and then rewriting it in my own words (Northedge, 2005). This skill will be very important for essays and reports in the future.

I also became more aware of academic misconduct. The discussions in class helped me see that plagiarism is not only about copying but also about not giving credit to sources. Now, I pay more attention to referencing correctly and making sure that I acknowledge the work of others (Pears and Shields, 2019).

What did not go so well

One weakness I still struggle with is referencing. Even though I understand why referencing is important, I sometimes forget the exact format. For example, I am not always sure about the correct way to reference online sources compared to books. I also tend to get confused about where to put commas and italics. This is an area where I need more practice and use of referencing guides like *Cite Them Right* (Pears and Shields, 2019).

Another challenge for me is time management. Although the module introduced strategies like using planners and to-do lists, I sometimes leave assignments too late (Cottrell, 2019). For Task 1, I did not revise enough before the quiz, and as a result, I felt stressed. I know that managing time better will reduce my stress and help me perform more effectively.

Learning from experiences

From Task 1, I learned the importance of preparation. If I had practised referencing earlier, I would have done better in the quiz. From Task 2, I learned that academic writing is a process. My first draft was not perfect, but by revising and restructuring, I was able to improve. This showed me that writing is not about getting it right the first time but about developing the text step by step (Northedge, 2005).

The classroom activities also showed me my preferred learning style. I realised that I learn better through interactive and practical activities rather than just reading. For example, the group discussion on plagiarism gave me a clearer understanding than simply reading a handbook (University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 2025). This

means that in the future, I will try to participate more actively in discussions and group work.

Strengths and areas for improvement

My main strengths now are note-taking, paraphrasing, and awareness of academic misconduct. These are skills I feel confident about. However, I need to improve my referencing and time management. I will continue practising the Harvard referencing style and use tools like *Cite Them Right* to guide me (Pears and Shields, 2019). For time management, I plan to set smaller deadlines before the main deadline, so I can finish work in stages (Cottrell, 2019).

Personal Growth

This module has helped me grow as both a student and a person. At the start, I was nervous about studying in English, but now I feel more confident in expressing my ideas. I have learned that making mistakes is part of learning, and reflection helps me see where I need to improve (Cottrell, 2019). The skills I developed here are not only useful for my studies but also for future employment. For example, note-taking and time management are important in any workplace, and paraphrasing is similar to summarising information for colleagues or clients (Northedge, 2005).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Academic Skills module has been very valuable in my learning journey. Through Task 1, Task 2, and classroom discussions, I developed stronger skills in notetaking, paraphrasing, and understanding plagiarism. At the same time, I identified weaknesses in referencing and time management, which I will continue to improve. Overall, this module has increased my confidence and shown me that I am capable of studying at a higher level, even though English is not my first language. It has given me a foundation that I can use in future modules and in my professional life (University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 2025).

References

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