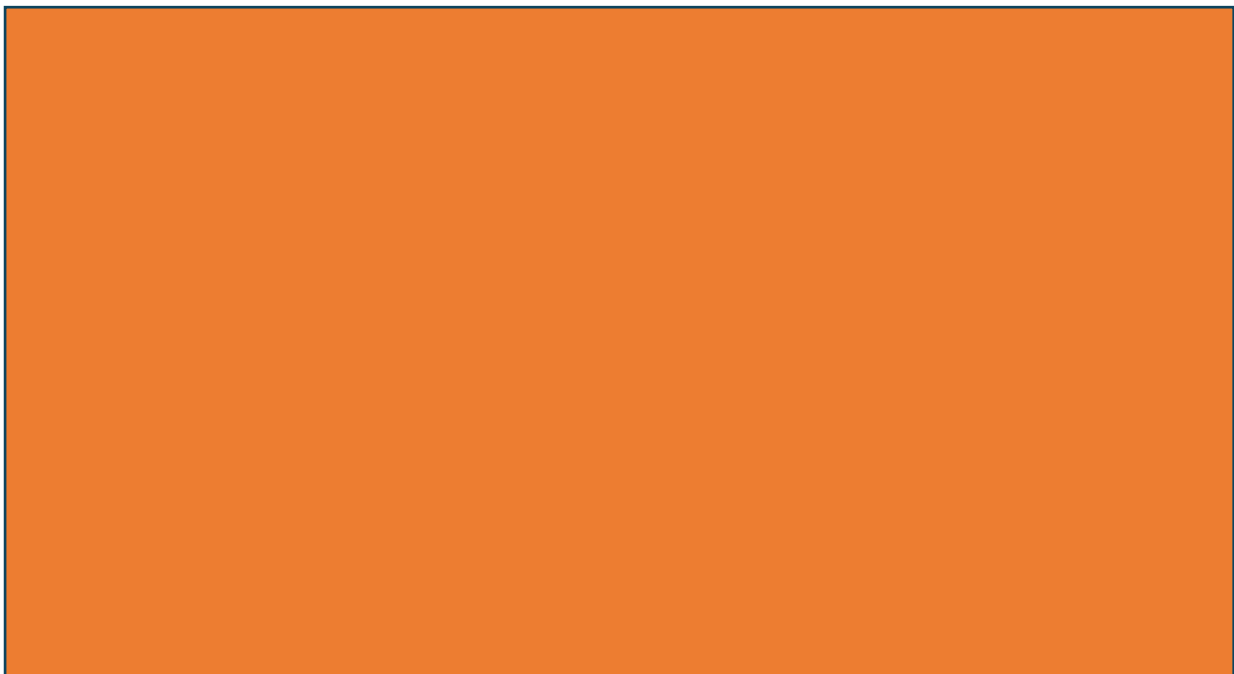




Academic Skills – Reflective report



Module Code: LCLM4001_LON

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1. Introduction

Returning to education after working in logistics for several years, I approached this Academic Skills module with equal parts anticipation and apprehension. The weekly structure provided a clear framework for rebuilding academic habits, with highlights being the interactive discussions in Week 1, the practical paraphrasing exercises in Week 5, and the thought-provoking critical thinking activities in Week 9. While adapting to academic writing and referencing proved challenging after years in a practical work environment, the gradual progression of skills across the term helped me develop confidence in my abilities as a student. This report reflects on how specific activities contributed to my academic development while acknowledging areas requiring further improvement.

2. Description of Experiences

The introductory session in Week 1 established an inclusive atmosphere that helped ease my transition back into education. Lecturer Sam's opening activity encouraged students to share their diverse educational and professional backgrounds, which normalised my position as a mature student. Hearing classmates discuss their varied experiences - from recent school leavers to fellow career-changers - made the classroom feel like a collaborative rather than competitive space.

Week 5's focus on paraphrasing resonated particularly well with my learning style. The practical exercises in transforming complex sentences into simpler structures reminded me of adapting technical warehouse procedures for different staff members in my previous role. I appreciated the clear examples demonstrating how to maintain academic integrity while putting concepts into my own words. These skills proved immediately applicable when working on my first major assignment later in the term.

Week 9's critical thinking exercises stood out for their real-world relevance. Analysing case studies about workplace ethics and problem-solving scenarios allowed me to connect academic theories to practical situations I'd encountered professionally. However, not all content came as naturally. The Harvard referencing system introduced in Week 3 initially frustrated me with its precise formatting requirements, which seemed unnecessarily rigid compared to the more flexible documentation standards I'd used in logistics. Similarly, Week 6's summarising tasks revealed how my professional tendency towards comprehensive explanations needed adjustment to meet academic concision standards.

3. Analysis and Personal Reflection

My professional background provided unexpected advantages that became apparent as the module progressed. During Week 9's critical thinking discussions, I found myself naturally evaluating arguments and identifying practical implications skills honed through years of troubleshooting logistical challenges. This real-world perspective

complemented the academic frameworks we studied, as noted by Cottrell (2019) in her analysis of mature students' contributions to classroom dynamics. The Week 1 introductory discussions similarly helped me recognise how my work experience could enrich rather than hinder my academic development.

The paraphrasing techniques from Week 5 proved immediately valuable when working on assignments. I discovered that breaking down complex texts into simpler concepts before reconstructing them in my own words - much like explaining technical processes to new staff - improved both my comprehension and written expression. Recording brief verbal summaries before writing, a strategy suggested by Bailey (2018), helped bridge the gap between my professional communication style and academic requirements. My confidence in this area grew noticeably across the term. However, the transition back to academic work presented distinct challenges. The detailed referencing conventions from Week 3 required more attention than I'd anticipated, particularly when formatting less common sources like industry reports. Creating a personalised checklist based on Pears and Shields' (2022) guidelines helped systematise this process. Week 6's summarising exercises revealed a more fundamental need to shift from comprehensive professional reporting to concise academic synthesis. Initial attempts either retained too much source material or oversimplified key concepts, but tutor feedback helped me find a better balance.

To address these challenges, I developed several practical strategies. The Cornell note-taking method from Week 2, when adapted to include margin notes linking concepts to professional examples, created a more meaningful review system. Week 8's source integration techniques helped me incorporate relevant work experience into academic arguments without compromising scholarly tone. Perhaps most importantly, I learned to schedule study sessions accounting for the additional cognitive load of mastering new academic skills while working, using time management principles from Week 1 to maintain sustainable progress.

This module ultimately transformed my perspective on being a mature student. What began as anxiety about my non-traditional path evolved into appreciation for how professional and academic learning can complement each other. The structured skill development across weeks provided both the challenges and support necessary for this shift, helping me recognise that effective scholarship builds on rather than replaces life experience.

4. Conclusion

This Academic Skills module gave me exactly what I needed to bridge the gap between my logistics career and university studies. While I'm still fine-tuning technical skills like referencing – those commas and italics still trip me up sometimes – I can see real progress in how I approach academic work. The critical thinking exercises in particular showed me how my years of solving practical problems can strengthen my studies, not hold me back. I've learned to stop seeing my work experience as a disadvantage

and start using it to ask different questions in class discussions. Moving forward, I'll keep blending these two worlds – applying the quick decision-making I developed on warehouse floors to analyzing case studies, while also embracing the more measured, evidence-based approach academia requires. The biggest surprise wasn't just learning new skills but realizing that education isn't something I left behind when I started working – it's been part of my journey all along, just in different forms. This module helped me see that connection clearly.

References

- Bailey, S. (2018) *Academic writing: a handbook for international students*. 5th edn. London: Routledge.
- Cottrell, S. (2019) *The study skills handbook*. 5th edn. London: Red Globe Press.
- Pears, R. and Shields, G. (2022) *Cite them right*. 12th edn. London: Bloomsbury.