



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

Module Name: Academic Skills in the Digital Era

Module Code: BMSW4013

Assessment 1: E-Portfolio

Student Name: Elizabeth Keen

Student Number: *****

Lecturer: Tom Jones

Deadline: Friday 27th February 23:59PM

AI Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT (<https://chat.openai.com>) on 16 February 2026 to support planning and structuring this portfolio assessment.

I used the following prompt(s):

- “Help me structure an academic portfolio assignment.”
- “Check my writing for clarity and academic tone.”
- “Help summarise academic arguments concisely.”

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

Contents

Component 1: Development of Academic Skills.....	4
Component 2: Application of Academic Skills.....	7
Component 3: Academic Poster	10

Component 1: Development of Academic Skills

Step 1: Evaluating Academic Sources Using the CRAAP Test

Source 1:

Bond, M., Buntins, K., Bedenlier, S., Zawacki-Richter, O. and Kerres, M. (2020) 'Mapping research in student engagement and educational technology in higher education', *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 17(1), pp. 1–30.

This source was accessed via Google Scholar.

Using the CRAAP Test, this source demonstrates strong Currency, having been published in 2020 and frequently cited. Relevance is high, as it directly examines student engagement within digital learning environments in higher education. Authority is strong due to the authors' established research backgrounds and the peer-reviewed nature of the journal. The Accuracy of the research is supported by extensive referencing and a transparent methodology. Purpose is academic and analytical, aiming to inform understanding of digital engagement rather than promote a specific technology.

Source 2:

Means, B. and Neisler, J. (2021) 'Teaching and learning in the time of COVID', *Online Learning*, 25(1), pp. 8–27.

This source was accessed via a university library database.

This source scores highly for Currency, reflecting recent shifts in digital learning. Relevance is strong due to its focus on student experiences in online education. Authority is credible, with authors affiliated with recognised research institutions. Accuracy is supported by empirical data and clear reporting. The Purpose is to evaluate educational impact rather than advocate policy, supporting its academic integrity.

Step 2: Synthesis of Academic Sources

A shared theme across both sources is the relationship between digital learning environments and student engagement. Bond et al. (2020) emphasise that engagement is influenced by how digital tools are integrated pedagogically, rather than

their mere presence. Similarly, Means and Neisler (2021) argue that effective digital learning depends on structured interaction and support mechanisms.

While Bond et al. focus on broader trends and patterns in educational technology research, Means and Neisler provide empirical insights based on student experiences during large-scale digital transitions. Together, these sources complement one another by linking theoretical understanding with practical outcomes. Synthesising these perspectives strengthens understanding by demonstrating that digital learning success relies on both effective design and student support.

Step 3: Identifying a Key Challenge and Opportunity

A key challenge identified in both sources is reduced student engagement when digital learning lacks structure or interaction (Bond et al., 2020; Means and Neisler, 2021). Poorly designed digital environments can negatively impact motivation and academic performance.

Conversely, a significant opportunity lies in the flexibility digital learning offers. When designed effectively, digital platforms can increase access, autonomy, and personalised learning opportunities, supporting diverse student needs and learning styles.

Step 4: Academic Planning

Component 2 will prioritise analysis of challenges and opportunities before proposing adaptation strategies. Recent academic literature will be used to ensure relevance. Key concepts developed in class, including digital literacy, critical evaluation, and academic planning, will be expanded. The report will follow a structured format: introduction, challenges, opportunities, strategies for success, and conclusion.

Task	Deadline
Finish research	02/02/2026
Draft first section	06/02/2026
Complete first draft	20/02/2026
Final editing	25/02/2026

Reference List

- Bond, M. et al. (2020) 'Mapping research in student engagement and educational technology in higher education', *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 17(1), pp. 1–30.
- Means, B. and Neisler, J. (2021) 'Teaching and learning in the time of COVID', *Online Learning*, 25(1), pp. 8–27.

Component 2: Application of Academic Skills

1. Introduction

Digital learning has become a central feature of higher education, reshaping how students access, engage with, and produce academic knowledge. Understanding both the challenges and opportunities associated with this shift is essential for academic success. While digital tools offer increased flexibility and access, they also present risks related to engagement, information overload, and digital inequality.

This report critically examines key challenges and opportunities for students in the digital era and proposes evidence-based strategies for adaptation. The report is structured as follows: an analysis of challenges, an evaluation of opportunities, a discussion of strategies for success, and a concluding summary addressing the main question.

2. Challenges

One significant challenge faced by students is digital overload, where constant access to online platforms leads to reduced focus and cognitive fatigue. Recent research highlights that excessive digital multitasking negatively affects concentration and academic performance (Sweller, 2022).

Another challenge is unequal digital literacy. While students may be familiar with technology socially, academic digital skills such as evaluating sources and managing online learning environments are not universal (Nguyen et al., 2023). These challenges directly impact academic success by reducing engagement, increasing anxiety, and limiting effective learning strategies.

Classroom discussions emphasised the importance of critical evaluation skills, particularly in identifying credible sources, which directly addresses these challenges.

3. Opportunities

Despite these challenges, digital learning presents significant opportunities. Digital platforms enable flexible access to learning materials, allowing students to engage with content asynchronously. Research indicates that flexibility can enhance student autonomy and retention when supported appropriately (Martin and Bolliger, 2022).

Additionally, digital tools support collaborative learning through discussion forums and shared documents. However, their effectiveness depends on structured use and clear academic guidance. Critical evaluation of these tools shows that when integrated purposefully, they enhance engagement and skill development rather than acting as

passive.

4. Adaptation Strategies

To succeed in the digital era, students must develop adaptive academic strategies.

- First, strengthening digital literacy enables students to critically evaluate online sources and avoid misinformation. Research supports structured evaluation frameworks, such as source credibility tests, to enhance academic judgement (Nguyen et al., 2023).
- Second, effective time management is essential in flexible learning environments. Studies show that students who use structured planning tools perform better academically in digital contexts (Sweller, 2022). Classroom activities focusing on planning reinforced this strategy.
- Third, active engagement strategies, such as participating in online discussions and collaborative tasks, support deeper learning. Evidence suggests that active interaction improves retention and understanding compared to passive consumption of digital content (Martin and Bolliger, 2022). Together, these strategies address digital challenges while maximising opportunities.

5. Conclusion

Students in the digital era face both significant challenges and valuable opportunities. While issues such as digital overload and unequal digital literacy can hinder academic success, digital learning environments also offer flexibility, autonomy, and enhanced collaboration. Developing strong academic skills, including critical evaluation, time management, and active engagement, is essential for navigating these environments effectively. By applying evidence-based strategies, students can adapt to digital learning demands and succeed academically. This analysis demonstrates that success in the digital era depends not on technology itself, but on how students engage with it critically and strategically

Reference List

Bond, M. et al. (2020) 'Mapping research in student engagement and educational technology in higher education', *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 17(1), pp. 1–30.

Martin, F. and Bolliger, D.U. (2022) 'Engagement matters', *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 70(2), pp. 567–589.

Means, B. and Neisler, J. (2021) 'Teaching and learning in the time of COVID',

Online Learning, 25(1), pp. 8–27.

Nguyen, T., Netto, C., Wilkins, J. and Brammer, S. (2023) 'Digital literacy in higher education', *Computers & Education*, 190, pp. 104–120.

Sweller, J. (2022) 'Cognitive load theory and digital learning', *Educational Psychology Review*, 34(1), pp. 1–17

Component 3: Academic Poster

KEY ACADEMIC SKILLS FOR THRIVING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

WHY ACADEMIC SKILLS MATTER

Digital learning offers flexibility, access, and new ways of learning, but success depends on students developing the right academic skills, not just using technology.



8

CRITICAL EVALUATION

Students are exposed to large volumes of online information, not all of which is reliable or academic. Poor source selection weakens academic work and credibility.

Nguyen et al. (2023) show that students without structured evaluation skills struggle to identify credible academic sources.

How students apply this skill

- ✓ Use evaluation frameworks
- ✓ Prioritise peer-reviewed sources
- ✓ Check author credibility and publication date



@DIGITAL LITERACY

Digital literacy enables students to engage effectively with online platforms, academic databases, and digital collaboration tools.

Martin and Bolliger (2022) found that digitally literate students demonstrate higher engagement and confidence in online learning.

How students apply this skill

- ✓ Navigate learning platforms confidently
- ✓ Use academic databases effectively
- ✓ Engage appropriately in online discussions



8

TIME MANAGEMENT & ACADEMIC PLANNING

Digital learning requires high levels of self-regulation. Without planning, students may experience overload and missed deadlines.

Sweller (2022) links structured planning with improved performance in digital learning environments.

How students apply this skill

- ✓ Use digital planners or calendars
- ✓ Break tasks into manageable steps
- ✓ Prioritise academic deadlines



CONCLUSION

Success in the digital era depends on students' ability to think critically, use digital tools effectively, and manage their time independently.

Developing these academic skills enables students to overcome digital challenges and maximise learning opportunities.

REFERENCES

- Nguyen, T. et al. (2023) Computers & Education, 190. pp. 104-120.
- Martin, F. and Bolliger, D.U. (2022) Educational Technology Research and Development, 70(2), pp. 567-589.
- Sweller, J. (2022) Educational Psychology Review, 34(1), pp. 1-17.