

Tiemoko Dagnogo student number 24441745

Academic skills

Lecturer Ellie Ristic

Introduction

This reflective report outlines my learning journey throughout the Academic Skills module. The purpose of the report is to analyse how my engagement with various tasks and classroom activities contributed to my personal and academic development. I will reflect on key experiences, including Task 1 (Critical Thinking and Source Evaluation), Task 2 (Presentation Skills), and in-class discussions and group work. These experiences were pivotal in helping me understand university expectations, develop skills such as referencing, critical analysis, academic writing, and teamwork, and gain confidence in facing academic challenges. The module has played a key role in preparing me for future academic success.

Description of Experiences

One of the most impactful experiences during the module was working on Task 1, where we were required to evaluate academic sources and apply critical thinking in written form. This task taught me the importance of using credible evidence and structuring a logical argument. Another important experience was Task 2, which involved preparing and delivering a presentation on a topic related to academic success. Although I found public speaking stressful, the process helped me organise my thoughts and practise verbal communication in a formal setting.

Class activities such as time management workshops and group discussions on academic integrity were also valuable. In one session, we peer-reviewed each other's drafts, which improved my ability to edit and view writing critically. This also made me more open to receiving feedback. I also appreciated our referencing workshops, especially on Harvard style, which I initially found challenging. Group discussions helped deepen my understanding of topics and develop confidence in expressing ideas. These varied learning experiences enabled me to gradually build my skills and become more aware of what is expected at the academic level. Overall, the combination of individual tasks and group work had a lasting impact on how I approach academic learning.

Analysis and Personal Reflection

Reflecting on Task 1, I initially found it difficult to understand what makes a source reliable and how to critically engage with it. At first, I tended to summarise rather than analyse. However, with guidance from the tutor and class resources, I learned to examine sources based on the author's credibility, the evidence presented, and how the content supported my argument. Feedback highlighted that my essay had good structure but needed deeper evaluation of sources. This experience improved my academic reading and writing, and I became more confident in selecting and interpreting scholarly material.

Task 2 was a more personal challenge. I often feel anxious speaking in front of others, and the idea of delivering a formal presentation was intimidating. However, by breaking the task

into steps—research, creating slides, practising aloud—I gained some control over the process. The final presentation was well-received, and I was praised for clarity and organisation. One point of improvement suggested was to reduce reliance on notes and maintain better eye contact, which I agree with. Although still a work in progress, this task improved my ability to speak clearly and communicate ideas effectively.

Group discussions and peer collaboration were another key aspect of the module. Normally, I prefer working independently, but participating in classroom activities helped me see the value of different perspectives. For example, during a session on academic misconduct, our group analysed real scenarios and discussed how they should be addressed. This deepened my understanding of academic honesty and plagiarism, and it also helped me develop skills in listening and contributing constructively. I discovered that I'm good at building on others' ideas and offering thoughtful responses—something I now see as a strength.

Time management, however, remains a challenge. Although we explored useful strategies, including using planners and prioritising tasks, I often found myself completing work close to the deadline. This increased my stress and affected the quality of my work. To address this, I've started using a digital calendar and breaking assignments into smaller tasks with mini-deadlines. I am beginning to see improvements, but consistency is something I still need to work on. Recognising this issue has been important for my personal development.

The module also helped me understand the conventions of academic writing, such as paraphrasing, using appropriate tone, and referencing correctly. At first, I struggled with Harvard referencing, often misplacing commas or missing details. However, with practice and the help of referencing tools, I became more accurate. Now, I feel confident in citing sources and avoiding plagiarism. This has made my written work more professional and aligned with academic expectations.

One of the biggest personal changes I've noticed is how much more reflective and self-aware I've become. At the start of the module, I was hesitant to speak in discussions or ask for help. Over time, I've become more comfortable engaging with others and recognising areas I need to improve. I've learned that reflection and feedback are powerful tools for growth. This shift in mindset has made me more proactive and willing to learn from mistakes. Overall, the module has helped me become a more confident, organised, and motivated student.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Academic Skills module has been essential to my growth as a university student. Through tasks like written analysis, oral presentation, and classroom collaboration, I've developed key academic competencies, including critical thinking, referencing, writing, and communication. I've recognised my strengths in participation and organisation, as well as areas I need to work on, such as time management and public speaking. More importantly, the module encouraged self-reflection, which has helped me take more responsibility for my learning. I now feel more prepared for academic challenges ahead and more confident in my ability to meet them successfully.