

Name: Juan Francisco Martinez Posada**Group: 4**

Tutor: Abdulla Sodiq

Student ID: 2439868

. Introduction

The purpose of this reflective report is to evaluate my learning experience throughout the Academic Skills module. This module has been both enlightening and foundational in shaping my approach to university study (Cottrell, 2019). Through class activities, assignments, and discussions, I have gained valuable insights into effective study methods, academic expectations, and personal development strategies (Neville, 2010). In this report, I will reflect on the knowledge and skills I have developed, assess my strengths and areas for improvement, and consider how these experiences have influenced my transition into higher education. Overall, this reflection aims to capture my growth during my first semester at university.

2. Reflection on Learning

My experience in the Academic Skills module has been both positive and transformative. One of the most important lessons I have learned is how to approach academic study at a university level (Lea and Street, 1998). Before starting the module, I had a limited understanding of expectations around critical thinking, referencing, academic writing, and time management. Through the structured content and guidance from my teachers, I now feel much more confident in these areas (Cottrell, 2019).

Learning the Harvard referencing system was particularly valuable, as I had never used it before (Pears and Shields, 2019). Understanding how to credit sources correctly improved my writing and made me more aware of academic integrity and the importance of originality (Neville, 2010). This skill will be essential throughout my degree.

I also benefited greatly from the collaborative classroom environment, where group discussions on topics such as plagiarism, note-taking, and essay planning allowed me to learn from my peers' perspectives (Brookfield and Preskill, 2016). Participating in

Task 1 and Task 2 provided practical opportunities to apply what I had learned. For example, in Task 1, paraphrasing and summarising academic texts was initially challenging but became easier with practice (Bailey, 2018).

Overall, the module has given me a clearer understanding of what university learning entails. It is not just about attending lectures or reading textbooks; it is about actively engaging with content, asking questions, and continuously developing skills (Moon, 2004).

3. Strengths and Achievements

One of my main strengths, which became clear during this module, is my willingness to learn and adapt. I was open to feedback and prepared to try new approaches to studying (Brookfield, 2017). For instance, after receiving feedback on my paraphrasing in Task 1, I worked to improve my technique, and by Task 2 I was able to express ideas more effectively in my own words while avoiding direct copying (Bailey, 2018).

Another strength is my active communication and participation in class. I consistently contributed to discussions, asked questions, and supported my classmates (Brookfield and Preskill, 2016). This helped me remain engaged and develop greater confidence in expressing my ideas in an academic setting.

I have also made significant progress in time management. At the start of the semester, I sometimes struggled with meeting deadlines and organising my notes. However, using study planners and goal-setting strategies introduced in class, I became more organised and better able to balance my academic and personal life (Cottrell, 2019). This allowed me to complete assignments without last-minute pressure and maintain a steady workload.

These achievements, while modest, have increased my confidence and made me feel better prepared for future challenges in my university journey (Moon, 2004).

4. Areas for Improvement

Despite my progress, I recognise there are areas where I need to improve. One ongoing challenge is academic writing structure. Although I understand the basic essay format, I sometimes struggle to organise my ideas logically and use topic sentences effectively (Bailey, 2018). To address this, I plan to write more practice drafts, read academic articles closely, and make use of writing support resources (Pears and Shields, 2019).

Another area is critical thinking. I occasionally accept information without questioning it in depth. The module introduced me to techniques such as identifying arguments, evaluating evidence, and considering alternative perspectives (Facione, 2015), but I need to apply these more consistently. Strengthening my critical thinking skills will help me become a more independent learner and a stronger academic writer (Moon, 2004).

Finally, I aim to improve my self-reflection and goal setting. While this report is part of that process, I want to make reflection a regular habit and set longer-term academic goals, rather than focusing only on immediate tasks (Cottrell, 2019). Tracking my progress over time will help me stay accountable and maintain continuous improvement.

By addressing these areas, I believe I can build on my current strengths and become a more effective and confident student in the next semester.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Academic Skills module has been instrumental in building my academic foundation during my first semester. I have developed essential skills such as paraphrasing, referencing, note-taking, and time management (Neville, 2010). I have also recognised strengths in adaptability and active participation, alongside areas for further growth in academic writing, critical thinking, and long-term goal setting (Facione, 2015).

Most importantly, I now understand that university-level study is not just about completing assignments or passing exams — it is about developing as a thinker, communicator, and independent learner (Moon, 2004). The guidance of my teachers, combined with an engaging classroom environment, has been central to this growth (Brookfield and Preskill, 2016). I feel more prepared to continue my academic journey with confidence, curiosity, and a clearer sense of purpose.

References

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