

EF3020 Summative Assessment 2 Learning Journal

Module Learning Outcomes being assessed:

- MLO2: Develop awareness of a range of digital tools to support academic study.
- MLO3: Develop understanding of appropriate academic style for different types of written text which may be produced in an academic context.
- MLO4: Demonstrate ability to assess personal strengths and weaknesses in relation to academic study skills, and to identify strategies to further develop these skills.

Task

You will complete a 1500-word Learning Journal reflecting on your development of academic skills throughout the module. The learning journal will comprise of four main tasks, completed weekly over the course:

- **Learning Journal Entry 1:** This will reflect on your own academic skills development in the module, including focus on at least 2 *academic skills*. (MLO3 & MLO4 - approx. 400 words).
- **Learning Journal Entry 2:** This will reflect on your own digital skills development in the module, including focus on at least 2 *digital skills*. (MLO2, MLO3 & MLO4 - approx. 400 words).
- **Activity Reflection:** This will reflect on your choice of learning activity from one specific lesson in the EF3020 module and what you learned from the experience. *Your learning activity must be chosen from the list found on your Learning Journal Template*, and your choice should be based on which activity has had the greatest impact on your own skills development. (MLO3 & MLO4 - approx. 400 words).
- **Action Plan:** This will be a clear action plan which focuses on your academic skills development in relation to your own strengths and weaknesses. It must focus on 2-3 study of the areas mentioned in sections 1-3 and include specific strategies and resources to support you in developing these skills in preparation for your remaining IFP modules and your future studies. You must justify your choices and support your action plan with references from the reading list. At least 2 appropriate references must be included. (MLO4 - approx. 300 words).

Sections 1-3 should be structured in paragraphs. **Questions and prompts on the template should be used as a guide to help you with your answer.**

Important: Your learning journal should demonstrate evidence of reflective thinking and effective action planning, in line with what you are taught in the EF3020 module. You must use the template provided for this assessment, and while time will be allocated in lessons for work on this assessment, you must also complete work in your own time to ensure you complete the assessment in full.

Assessment Checklist:

Before submitting your assessment,
please check your work carefully and make sure you have:



- Read the task carefully
- Completed all sections of the template in full (use the questions and instructions in each section to help with this)
- Written your reflection in an appropriate style, focusing on your own personal development
- Included at least 2 full references for your chosen resources to support your action plan, using either APA (if you are a Business and Law student) or Harvard (if you are a student on any other pathway) referencing <https://library.northumbria.ac.uk/skillsplus/referencing> . No other references are required for this assessment
- Proofread your work carefully, including checking you have followed the word count
- Typed and saved your work as a .doc or .docx file

Submission Checklist:

Remember that you must submit one document for this assessment:



- Your completed learning journal with all sections on the same template to the Turnitin submission point on Blackboard. This must be typed and saved as a .doc or .docx file

Learning Journal Entry 1: Academic Skills Development (at least 2 skills) (approx. 400 words)

This section must be presented in paragraph form. In this section, focus on:

- What academic skills did you focus on improving during the module?
- How did you feel when you were first introduced to these academic skills? Were you confident or uncertain?
- What aspects of these academic skills worked well for you? Were there any challenges or difficulties you faced?
- Why do you think some of these academic skills were easier or harder for you? How did these skills help you?
- What have you learned from the experience of improving your academic skills?

In this module, I increased my academic skills, mainly in reading and taking notes, paraphrasing and summarising. I also improved my critical thinking skills. These abilities are helpful to my academic study because they allow me to better get class material, arrange my ideas, and use academic sources in an effective way for my continued improvement.

Reading and Note-Taking: During Week 2, Lesson 2, I learnt to read in an effective way. I improved these skills using important ways like skimming and scanning. With skimming, I found the main idea from large texts quickly, while scanning helped me to locate specific information. I learnt some strategies to take notes, like the use of the Cornell Template (Week 2, Lesson 2). This method helped me to take my notes in an effective way. For example, during Task 4 on the advantages and disadvantages of having a panda as a pet, I used the technique of skimming to understand the overall concept and the technique of scanning to look for important information.

Paraphrasing and Summarizing: In week 2, I learnt to paraphrase and summarise information in a correct way. This skill will allow me not to make plagiarism in future and guarantee that my work is original. While doing Task 1 in the same week, I read the information about the students and academic integrity briefly. With this activity, I learnt that academic integrity means to be honest in my learning. I then summarised the key point in my own words. I also learnt the techniques to refer to the original authors to not be in cases of plagiarism.

Critical Thinking: I got the ability to examine what I read and to challenge material in the AP. 7.5 Critical Thinking Session. In this session, I wrote three to five sentences about myself in one exercise; some of them were true, and some were not. As a result, I got a better understanding of how individuals evaluate information from this activity. Listening to three lecturers and making notes on their viewpoints on critical thinking was another task. By this I understood that critical thinking includes challenging, evaluating, and drawing conclusions from the available data.

I also learnt how to give an effective presentation in the AP.7.4 Presentation Skills lesson. In this session, I practiced communicating in an effective way and came up with a list of problems that IFP students face. In addition, I learnt how to organise a presentation and keep audience interest.

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Learning Journal Entry 2: Digital Skills Development (at least 2 skills) (approx. 400 words)

This section must be presented in paragraph form. In this section, focus on:

- What digital skills did you focus on improving during the module?
- How did you feel when you were first introduced to these digital tools or skills? Were you confident or uncertain?
- What aspects of these digital skills worked well for you? Were there any challenges or difficulties you faced?
- Why do you think some parts of developing these skills were easier or harder for you? How did these skills help you?
- What have you learned from the experience of improving your digital skills?

This module improved my digital skills by teaching me to research online and use emails and university platforms. These abilities form the base of my academic achievement by letting me learn reliable information while using professional communication and organising my projects. During the module, I got direct experience working with many digital tools that will help me in my upcoming academic studies.

In Online Research and File Organisation: Lesson 2 of Week 5 I learnt to do internet research in an organised way. In this session, I worked on finding reliable academic materials by practicing with keywords and advanced search techniques. This skill is important for writing essays and reports because I need to make sure that the information I collect is true and relevant. I also collected an Academic Practice Folder on One Drive that helped me combine my notes along with my research documents. From these practices, I became better at managing academic tasks without misplacing relevant information.

Email Etiquette and Professional Communication: During the AP. 5 WS Workshop, we focused on the use of email etiquette. I learnt that this is a subject important skill to be used in both professional and academic communications. In Task 3 of this workshop, I learnt the important principles of using email etiquette that included the use of an exact heading, the use of an appropriate salutation, and professional wording. I also learnt that a student has to include important information in emails to avoid misunderstanding and to be effective. In Task 4 of the AP. 5 WS Workshop, I organised my university email account by creating an electronic folder titled 'IFP' to store important emails. I also created an email signature that included my full name, my student number, pathway, and group number. This activity made me more effective in communicating in an effective way to lecturers and peers in email.

Using Microsoft Word and PowerPoint: The AP 6 WS Workshop also allowed me to learn Microsoft Word and PowerPoint applications for academic tasks. In this session, I got experience with text formatting together with adding tables and building systematic presentations in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint documents. This set of skills helps students compose essays and organise reports. It also gives me advantage for creating professional presentations. In addition, these skills allow me to generate academic work of good quality while using my time more effectively.

Reflection on a Classroom Learning Activity (approx. 400 words)

This section must be presented in paragraphs. It must include reflection on a specific learning activity (not a general skill) from EF3020 classes. You must choose ONE lesson from the following 4 to focus on, considering which learning activity has had the greatest impact on your own skills development:

- Week 5 Lesson 3: Exploring and evaluating note-taking methods
- Week 5 Lesson 4: Developing paraphrasing skills
- Week 6 Lesson 4: Reflective thinking



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➤ Week 8 Lesson 3: Writing an academic paragraph from notes using the CREE structure

In your reflection, you must:

- Describe the activity and why you have chosen to focus on it in relation to your own strengths and weaknesses.
- Identify what skills the activity helped you develop.
- Analyse what went well about the activity and why. Include how you know this.
- Analyse what did not go so well about the activity and why. Include how you know this.
- Say what you would do differently when approaching this type of activity in the future and why.
- Identify how your chosen activity is relevant to your future academic studies.

The learning activity that gave me the most Exploring and Evaluating Note-Taking Methods in Week 5, Lesson 3. This was the one that I chose to do because note-taking was in the beginning a problem to me. Before this lesson, I was writing a lot of work and I was finding it difficult to organise my notes. This was making it hard for me to restore important information during my study. In this session, I learnt some important skills used to take notes like the Cornell Template, Mind Mapping, and Linear Notes. I tried them to find the best one that was right to me and I noted that The Cornell Method was good for me.

This exercise was helpful to me because it helped me to improve my summarising skills. It also improved my organisational skills. The Cornell Method was helpful to me because it allowed me to divide my notes into the important points, the details, and the summary. This made it easier for me to revise my notes in an easy way. Something that was successful was that I was able to implement this method in real life. In the end, I used the Cornell technique to read an academic article in an easy way. I was also able to observe that my notes were clearer and easier to read.

However, the Cornell Method was challenging for me for concise summary writing. The beginning of my summary writing included many details leading to extended note durations. I learnt that prioritising exact main points should have replaced unimportant details in my notes during my review process. I need to focus on just the most important details when summing to get better. My plan includes using Mind Maps and the Cornell Method for notes because they complement each other in different stages of note production.

The activity plays an important role in preparing me for future academic work. My understanding of lectures and ability to finish assignments and prepare for exams will improve by effective note-taking. The practice will help me in better organising academic content for academic purposes. My note-taking effectiveness will improve by improved study methods which results in better coursework performance.

Action Plan for further skills development – Based on Entry 1 and Entry 2 (approx. 300 words)

This section can be presented using paragraphs or a mixture of paragraphs and bullet points. It must include a clear action plan regarding your further skills development. This should support you in preparing for your remaining IFP modules and your future studies.

- Focus on 2-3 of the skills mentioned in Entry 1 and Entry 2 of this Learning Journal
- Be personal to you and your own skills development
- Contain justification of how your chosen strategies and resources are relevant to you



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- Include **specific** strategies you will use
- **Identify and reference at least 2 appropriate sources from the reading list to support your future development. Full references for these should appear in the 'References' section of the template**

To improve my academic skills more, I aim to focus on note-taking, paraphrasing, and reflective thinking. These were difficult for me in previous lessons, and I hope that by improving them, I will do better in left IFP modules and my future studies. These skills will be dealt with using selected strategies and resources.

For note-taking, I will stick with the Cornell Method and Mind Mapping. The Cornell Method will allow me to focus and record main ideas and summaries in a way that helps me to restore them in an easy way when reviewing my notes. With Mind Mapping, I can connect concepts in a visual way and, therefore, understand complicated subjects in an easier way. Structured note-taking is one of the most effective methods to help students because it makes their information processing easier and retention (Cottrell, 2024: 238). I will also attend courses on effective note-taking in my university and review my notes after each class.

For paraphrasing, I will start with the “Read, Cover, Write, and Compare” method so that I can be sure that I understand the text fully before I try to write it again out in my own words. Paraphrasing skills are important for good academic writing and avoiding plagiarism (Weyers, J. and McMillan, K., 2010: 327). In addition, I will always check my work with a plagiarism detector and try to get help from my tutors to improve my skills.

Finally, to reflect properly, I will use Gibbs' Reflective Cycle to structure my thoughts and make my critical thinking stronger. This framework deconstructs events into understandable steps that allow the student to learn from the past to avoid repetition of the same errors (Devet, 2020: 19). I will also use a learning diary to track my progress and reflect upon challenges and improvements. With this strategy, I can make my learning skills stronger and be in a good position to undertake further learning.

References (Include the full references here for the resources you identify in your action plan)

Cottrell, S. (2024). *The Study Skills Handbook*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Devet, B. (2020). Gibbs reflective cycle for writing center training. *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*, 44(9), 18–25. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.37514/wln-j.2020.44.9.04> (accessed 5/3/2025).

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Weyers, J. and McMillan, K., (2010). Study Skills for International Students: A Handbook for Studying in the UK. Prentice Hall.