



# LEARNING AND TEACHING CONFERENCE

**Centre for Academic Innovation  
and Teaching Excellence**

# Bridging the writing gap

Inclusive strategies to support students' academic writing



# Welcome:



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Senior Lecturer

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# Session Overview

1. Academic writing skills gap: background and context
2. Critical writing perspectives
3. Student skills development
4. Learning Services support offer





# Academic Writing Skills Gap

# Writing attainment gap research

- Students wanted more explanation of academic expectations.
- Students experienced anxiety when teaching style and learning environment was different from what they were used to (Turner, 2006).
- Different cultural expectations of what is a good essay.
- BAME students had barriers to asking for support.

"The way in which essay titles and exams questions were written acted as a barrier to those students who were less familiar with a specific style of writing"  
(Stevenson, 2012 p.14).

# Writing attainment gap research

- It may take some students longer to read written text and understand instructions, for example international students (Valiente, 2008) and students with specific learning differences
- Students with specific learning differences had lower levels of academic confidence than their peers (Sumner, Crane and Hill, 2020)

# Students' beliefs

- Bloomer and Hodkinson (2001) came up with the concept of learning careers
- Students carry internalised beliefs about themselves as learners
- These are situated in their current and past experiences of learning. However, they are not fixed and develop through their time studying

"In many cases, we will achieve more from our students if we address head on how they perceive themselves as learners, and invite them to consider whether this assists or inhibits their current learning."

(Cottrell, 2001)

I'm more of a practical person

I'm not very academic

My English isn't very good

I didn't do well in English at school

I'm dyslexic so I find it hard to write anything at all

I can't write essays

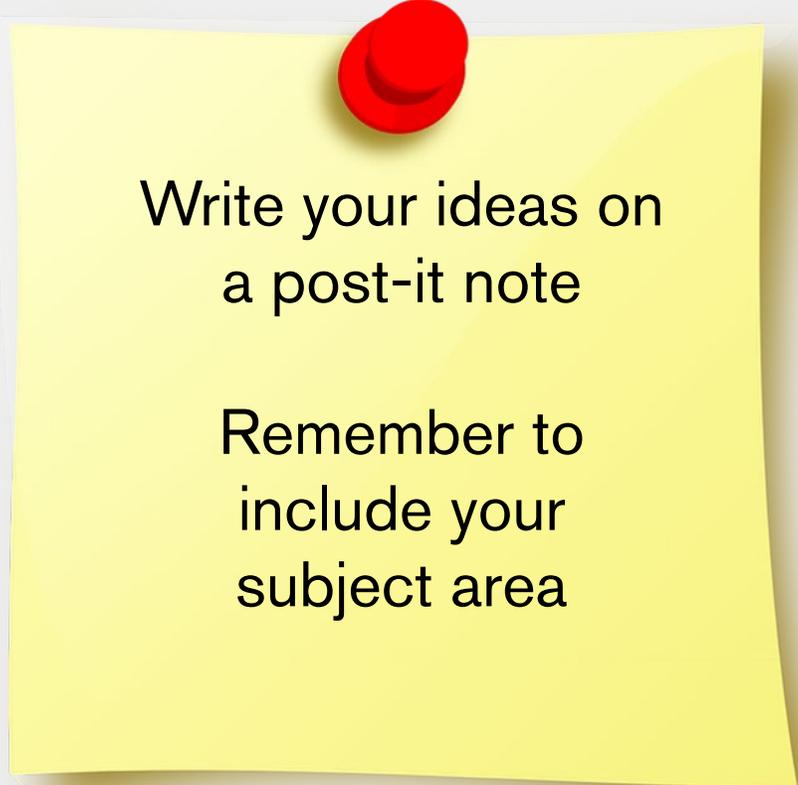




# Critical Writing

# Activity: What do you mean by critical writing?

- What does critical writing mean in your discipline?
- What does critical writing look like in your assignments?



Write your ideas on  
a post-it note

Remember to  
include your  
subject area

# What do students think we mean by critical writing?



I am not allowed to give my own opinion

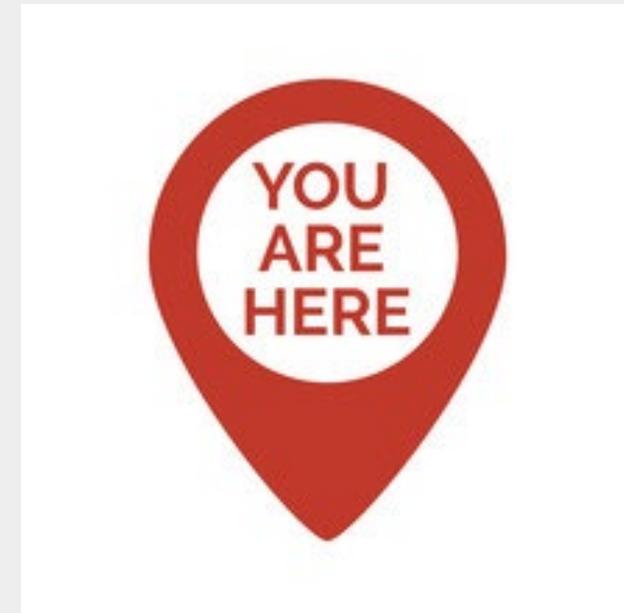
The authors are experts on the topic – who am I to critique their ideas

I must find fault with the literature

I must reference every idea

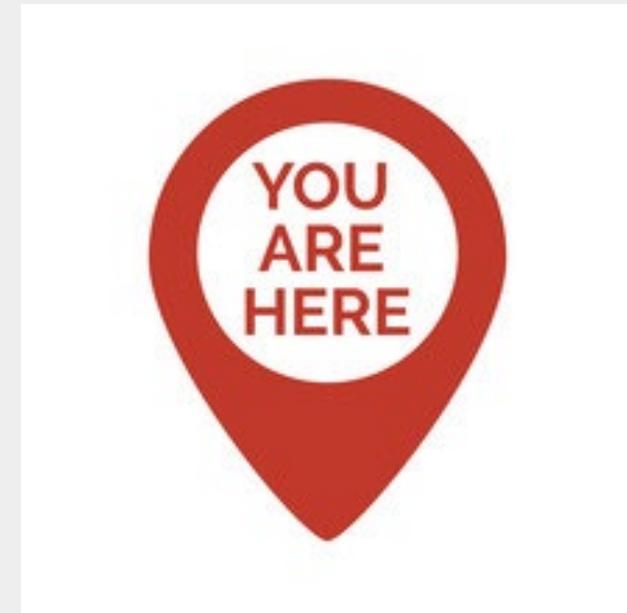
# Activity: Student Skills Audit

- Where are your students' starting points?
- What route have they taken to get to HE
- What academic skills do they already have?



# Activity: Student Skills Audit

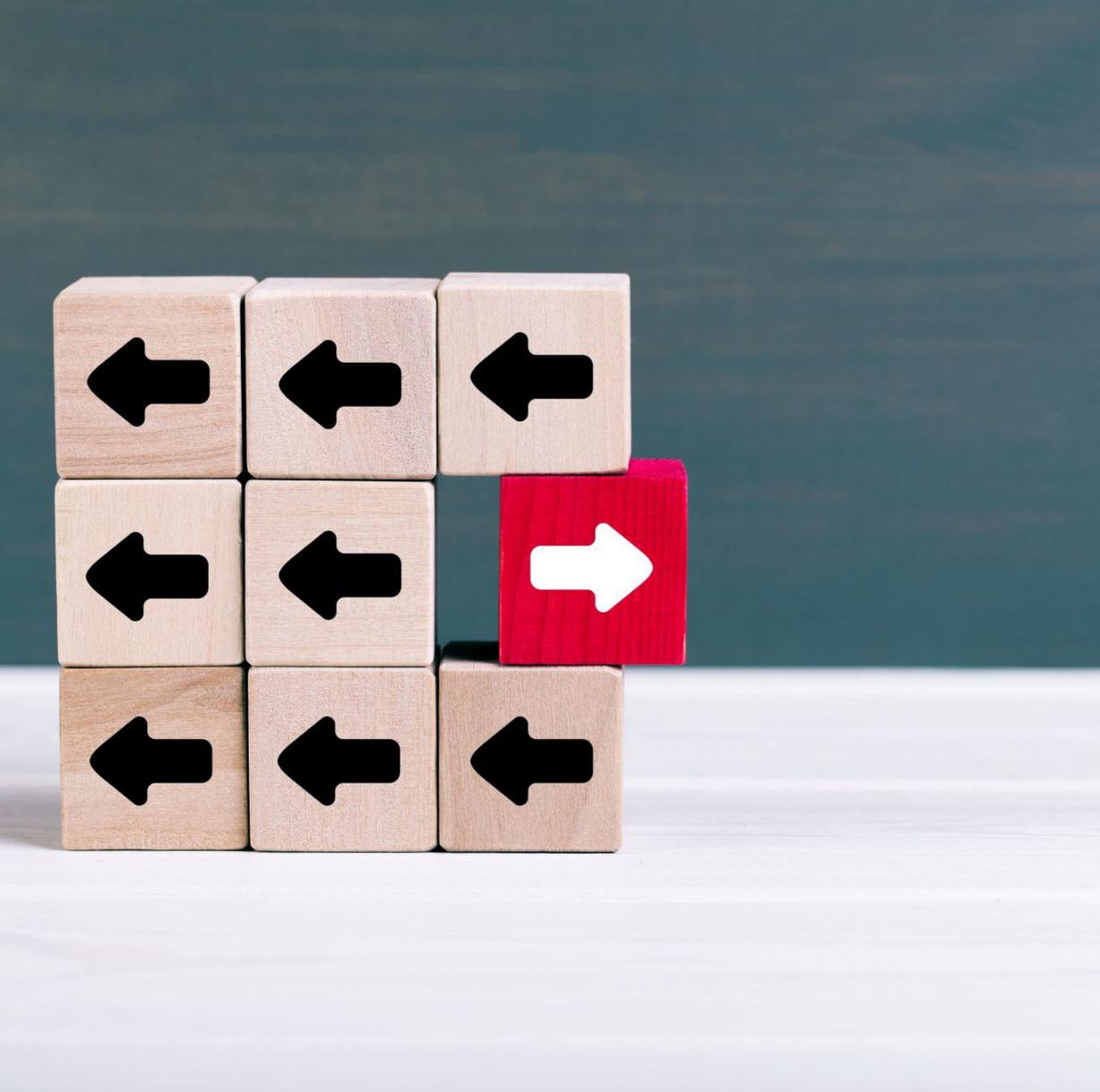
- What academic skills will they need to be successful on the programme?



# What do students need to be able to do to write well ?

- Understand what is **expected** from their writing (and how this is similar or different to their previous studies).
- Understand what is **good evidence** in their subject
- **Paraphrasing** and **summarising** sources
- Able to **critically analyse** sources
- Able to **reference** in appropriate style
- Understand what is an appropriate **writing style** for that subject
- Know how to **structure** an assignment
- Have good **grammar**
- Meet **deadlines**





# Student Skills Development

# Teaching strategies

- Embed support and teach writing in your subject context
- Reading is a part of writing
- Teach students how to paraphrase and summarise sources
- Highlight good examples of writing in your subject
- Make your expectations explicit. Should you write in the first person or the third person?
- Contextualise study skills in relation to assignments
- Help students see the transferability of their previous study

# Using feedback

- Help students actively use feedback
- Do students know why they have done well so they can do it again?
- Recognise the transferability of skills between different types of assignments



# Feedback - feedforward

Individual Research Essay

Henry Mintzberg claims that “*managing is neither a science nor a profession; it is a practice, learned primarily through experience, and rooted in context*”. Using examples and evidence from the literature, evaluate Mintzberg’s statement. In your answer consider how management roles are changing, and the types of skills needed to be an effective manager.

Answer

“Management is ‘ball of knowledge’ which seeks to understand why and how men work together systematically to accomplish objectives and to make these co-operative systems more useful to mankind” (Gulick, 1965). From the very age of Aristotle, as a field of knowledge management was more advance compare to science and mathematics. The evolution of management as science can be traced back to the work done by Frederick W. Taylor, Frank and Lillian Gilbreth. They worked respectively to come up with “the one best way” to perform a job (Kanigel, 1997). At the time of launching first issue of Administrative Science Quarterly, Thompson vision administrative/management science would be “be distinguished from administrative lore by the methods used to build that knowledge of administration” (Peroff, 1999).

The development of management is supported by the development of individual and social psychology. Management is also supplemented by the improvement of economic and mathematical logic and further its application to problems in real time. Management can be categorized as public and private management. Management was previously subjected to ignorance as private management was kept secret and public management wasn’t enough to passionately attract people as it was intermix with power and war.

More criticality needed – what is the evidence saying? Who agrees? Who disagrees? Where does this leave us? Further support available

• Do they understand what they need? Do they understand what they need? Do they understand what they need?

More criticality needed – what is the evidence saying? Who agrees? Who disagrees? Where does this leave us? Further support available

at: <https://library.dmu.ac.uk/CLASSResources/CT>

# Understanding Feedback

When you submit your work and you get your marks back, but then what? Or, perhaps your lecturer or supervisor makes a comment about your work...

## Take action from your feedback

Your lecturers will provide both positive and critical feedback. Generally, the positive feedback is easy to understand, but sometimes the critical feedback can use terminology that is not so easy to understand. Try to identify the main points in the feedback and think about what your tutor actually means. It can be challenging as your tutor may be using phrases and words that you may not fully understand to begin with.

Use the search tool below to understand how to take action from your tutors feedback comments.

What does your feedback say?

## Working with feedback to improve your grades

test copy

Working with feedback to improve your grades

Working with feedback to improve your grades



**Parallel Sessions 2 Synopses** provides a brief description about each session.

### 9. **Embedding well-being - The placement panel approach** EU & LFL

- Charlotte Rogers, Rachel Davies and Robert Frost (HLS)

### 10. **The Pracademic Classroom in Criminal Justice: Learning for life** EU & LFL

- Di Turgoose (HLS) Chair

- Panel members: Victoria Knight, Steve Christopher, Sarah O'Neill & (further names TBC)

### 11. **Agile- A new way of Working** PWP

- Ayodele Olusayo Osunmakinde (BAL)

### 12. **Partnerships for mutual benefit: achieving community impact** through LFL **real-life learning**

- Andrew Reeves (CEM)

### 13. **Improving student learning and development through action orientated feedback** LFL

- Nicola Brooks (HLS), Zara Hooley (LLS), Tracy Slawson, (LLS), Anna Chesters (HLS), Kit Messinger, DSU

### 14. **Access to high-provile jobs: Closing the gap** PWP

- Farukh Farukh (CEM), Anna Strzelecka and Ljiljana Marjanovic-Halburd

### 15. **Engendering teaching excellence in Transnational Education in a time of great change: The Empowering University in Dubai** PWP

- Dr Manjeet Ridon and Stuart Lawson (ADH)

The following is a pre-recorded session.

### 16. **Embedding support for students' mental wellbeing: Course Specific Initiatives**

- Rachel Davies (SAAS) EU

Template for you to create your own action plan.

# Embed support and teach writing in your subject context

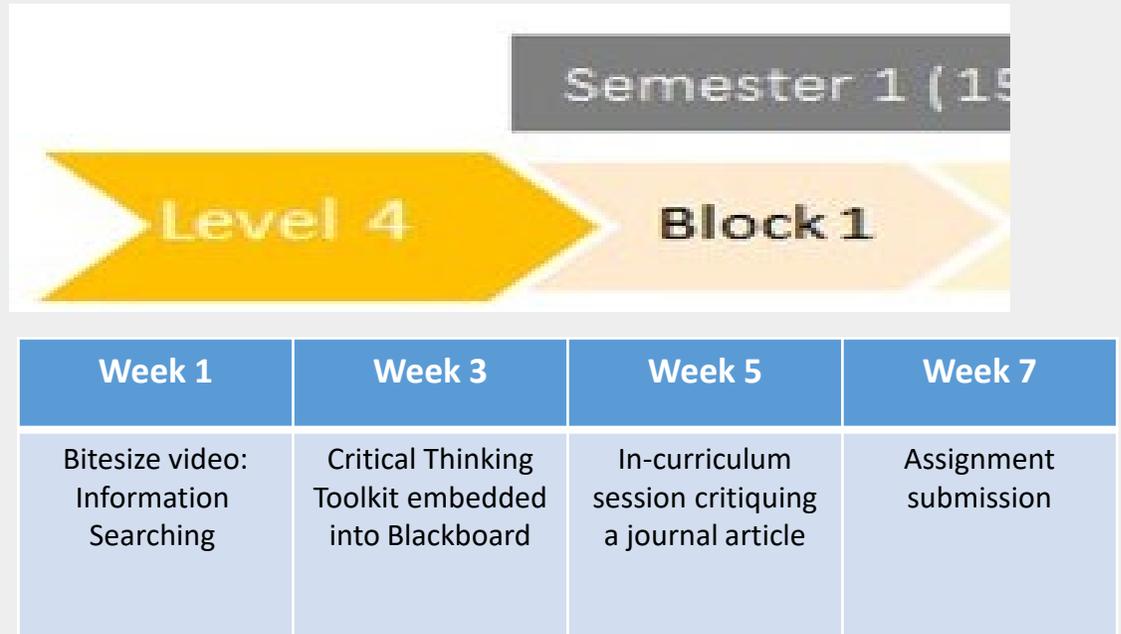
Making links between skill development and learning outcomes

## Learning Outcome:

- To be able to **write a critical review** of a piece of academic writing thereby demonstrating engagement with the module essential **reading**.

## Assessment:

"A critical review of a piece of academic writing"



## Learning Academic Skills | Digital Skills

Our **DMU Learning Services** provide learning and study support to help you develop your academic skills through our workshops, tutorials, drop-ins. Assistive Technologies is also provided. See below for the many ways you can access study support!



### Centre for Learning and Study Support (CLaSS)

Support with writing, reading and effective studying

- [Supporting Your Academic Practice](#)
- [Academic Writing Drop-In](#)
- [Tutorials](#)
- [Workshops](#)
- [A-Z Learning and Study Skills resources](#)
- [CLaSS Support FAQs](#)
- [Online resources](#)



### Maths Learning Centre (MLC)

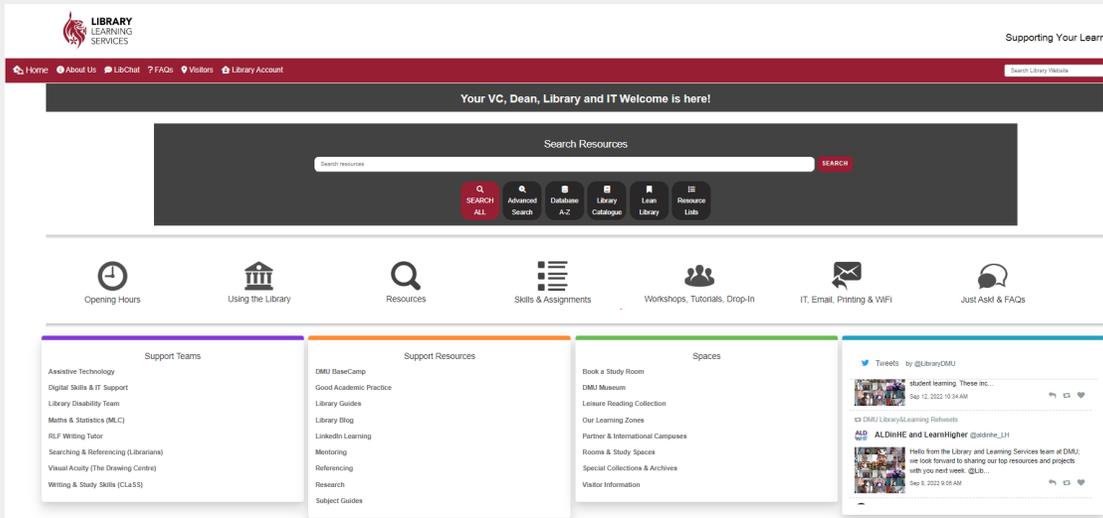
Support with maths, numeracy and statistics

- [Maths and Statistics Drop-In](#)
- [Tutorials](#)
- [Workshops](#)
- [A-Z Mathematics resources](#)
- [Statistics resources](#)
- [More Online Resources](#)
- [Email MLC](#)



# Learning Services Support

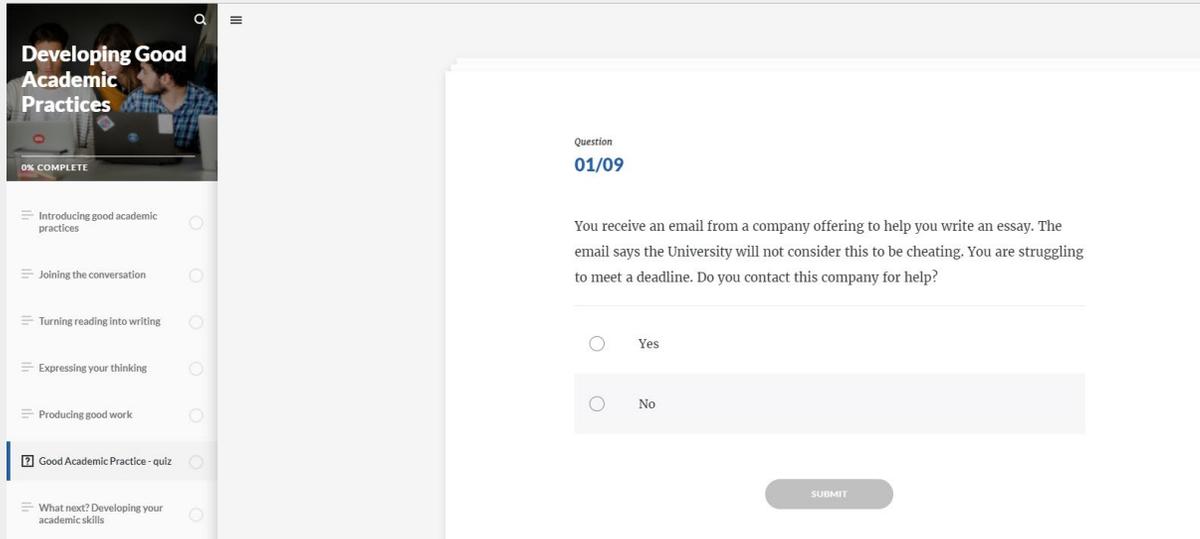
# Provide models and writing guidance



Resources on library website [Skills & Assignments](#)  
[Base Camp](#) available on Blackboard  
[Self Assessment exercise](#) completed by all first year students  
[Bitesize videos](#)

- Highlight good examples of writing in your subject
- Make your expectations explicit. Should you write in the first person or the third person?
- Contextualise study skills in relation to assignments
- Help students see the transferability of their previous study

# Contextualised Resources



The screenshot shows a Blackboard quiz interface. On the left, there is a sidebar with the title 'Developing Good Academic Practices' and a progress indicator '0% COMPLETE'. Below the title is a list of quiz questions, each with a radio button. The selected question is 'Good Academic Practice - quiz'. The main content area displays the question text: 'You receive an email from a company offering to help you write an essay. The email says the University will not consider this to be cheating. You are struggling to meet a deadline. Do you contact this company for help?'. Below the text are two radio button options: 'Yes' and 'No'. A 'SUBMIT' button is located at the bottom right of the question area.

- Bespoke online course and quiz developed for students in BAL
- Case studies in the quiz represents real scenarios which have occurred around good academic practice
- Resource embedded in their Blackboard shell

# In-curriculum support from Learning Services

- In-curriculum teaching
- Booster day conferences
- Faculty-specific drop-in
- Co-run drop-ins

## Outline of the morning

9 am – 9.30 am	Welcome and aims and objectives of the day Icebreaker and intention setting	Zara
9.30 – 10.15 am	Unpicking your title and planning the essay/ structure	Emily
10.15 – 11 am	Finding information/ evidence	Ceri
11 – 11.15	Break	
11.15 – 12.00	Language clarity	Arina
12 – 1.45	Tutorials and lunch break	<u>CLaSS</u> Team
1.45 – 2.30	Academic Writing	Zara
2.30 – 2.45pm.	Reacting to feedback and action planning for your next assignment.	Zara

# Requesting Learning Services Support



LIBRARY  
LEARNING  
SERVICES

Supporting Your Learning

Home About Us LibChat FAQs Visitors Library Account

Search Library Website

Search All Learning Guides

Search All Learning Guides...

Library Home Page Workshops for Staff Curriculum Consultancy DMU BaseCamp Guide Researcher Hub Just Ask! & FAQs

### Support

Outreach

Students' Pre-Induction and Self Assessment Exercise

Education 2030 Support

Mentoring

Programme Validation

Support for Collaborative Partnerships

Disability Support

Learning Communities

### Resources

Your Library and IT Welcome Guide

Inter-Library Loans

Resource Lists Staff Guide

Subject Guides

Student Digital Skills Hub

SCONUL Access

Lean Library Access

LinkedIn Learning

Copyright

Proofreading

### Working with You

Who We Are & What We Do

Library Appraisal Enhancement Plans (for Faculties)

Customer Service Excellence

Library Lab

Decolonising DMU

DMU Libraries

Rooms & Study Spaces for your Students

Special Collections & Archives

DMU Museum

Spaces

September 2022						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4
5	8	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Upcoming Events:

Introduction to writing at university  
Monday, 10th October 2022 10:00

How to cite and reference using the Harvard referencing system  
Monday, 10th October 2022 11:00

Introduction to Mentoring  
Monday, 10th October 2022 13:00

Building a support network  
Monday, 10th October 2022 14:00

I am a:

Researcher | Student off campus | International Student | Dubai Student | Partner Student | Member of Staff | Alumni

Librarian Login

# Takeaway menu



## Learning Services offer Education 2030

### We can help with:

- Researching, referencing and resource list development
- Writing, reading and effective study
- Maths, numeracy and statistics
- Digital skills
- Assistive technology
- Drawing, sketchbooks and visual acuity

### Support available:

- Resources you can embed in your teaching
- Bespoke resources created for your students
- In-curriculum sessions
- Consultancy and co-design
- Signposting students to self-selecting provision

# Questions

# References

- Stevenson J (2012) Black and minority ethnic student degree retention and attainment. Higher Education Academy, York
- Turner, Y. (2006) 'Students from Mainland China and Critical Thinking in Postgraduate Business and Management Degrees: Teasing out Tensions of Culture, Style and Substance', *The International Journal of Management Education* 5(1): 3–11
- Bloomer, M. and Hodkinson, P. (2000) Learning careers: continuity and change in young people's dispositions to learning *British Educational Research Journal* 26(5): 583-597
- Cameron, J Narin, K and Higgins, J (2009) 'Demystifying Academic Writing: Reflections on Emotions, Know-How and Academic Identity' *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, Volume 33, Issue 2
- Sumner, E. Crane, L and Hill, E (2020) 'Examining academic confidence and study support needs for university students with dyslexia and/or developmental coordination disorder' *Dyslexia*, Vol. 23 Issue 1