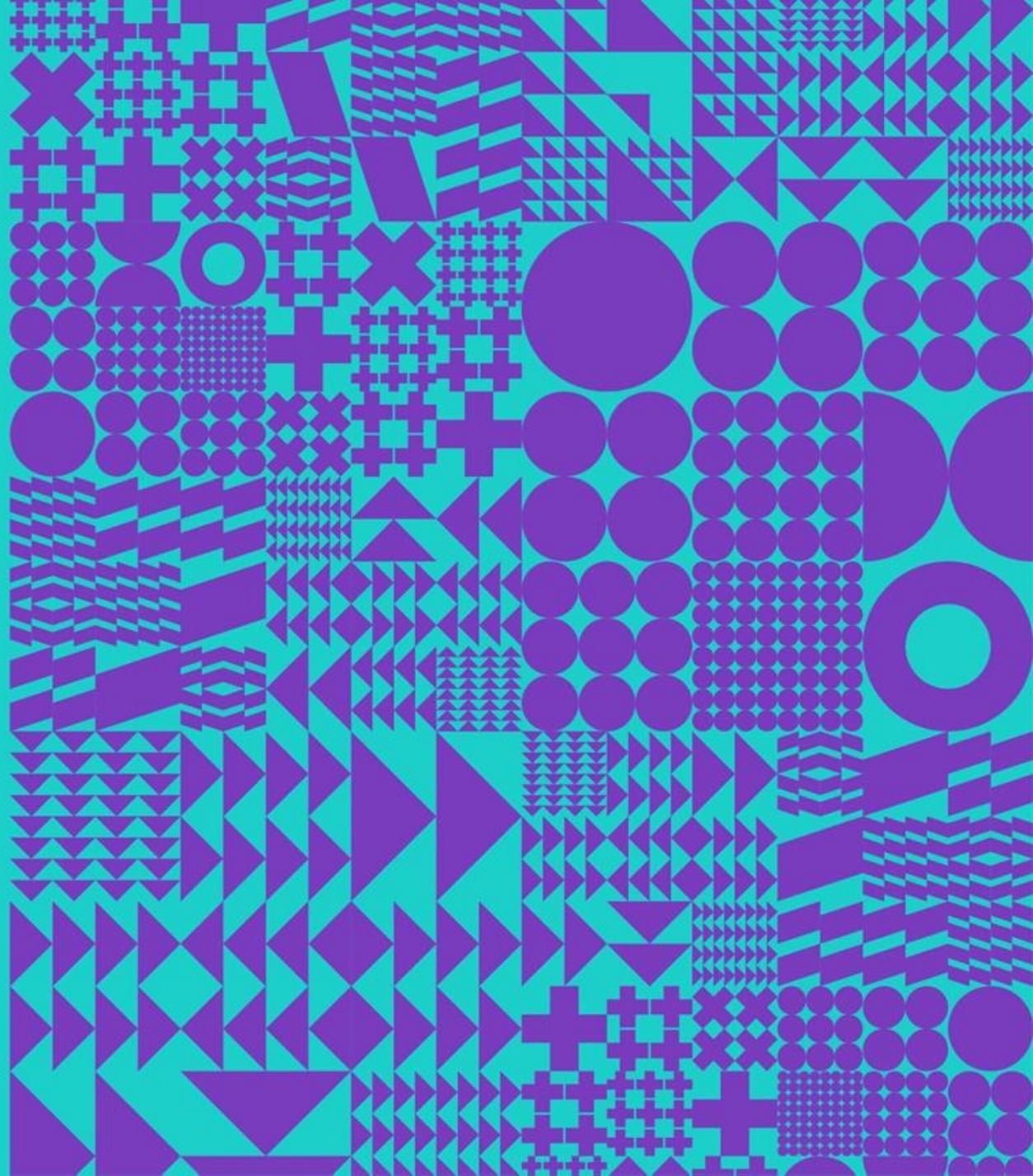


# Marginal Gains Approach to Building Academic Skills

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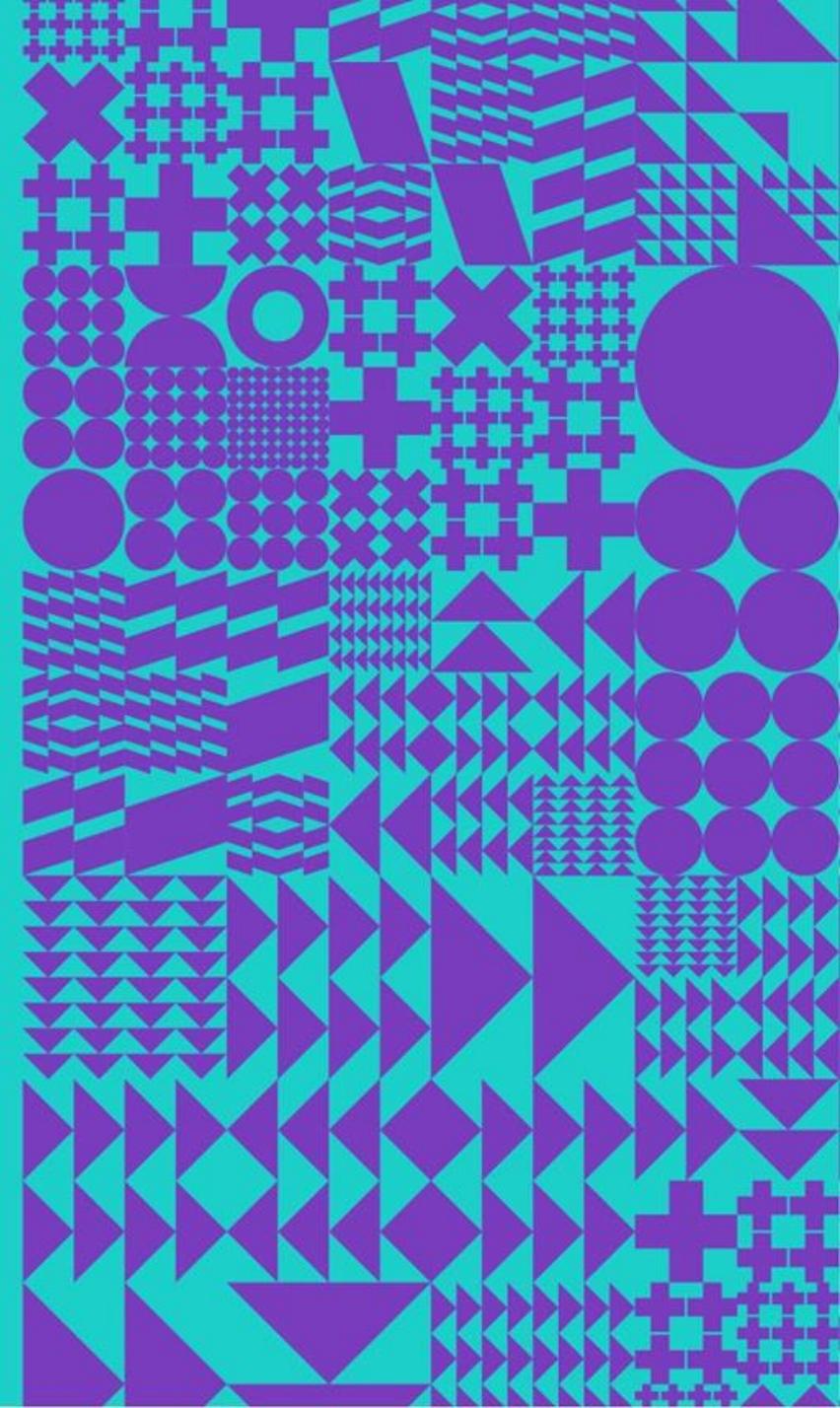


# The Rationale



# Aims

- 1. Share approach with other educational professionals**
- 2. Gain thoughts regarding place of this approach in the wider university teaching community**
- 3. Encourage other practitioners to try, test and feedback**

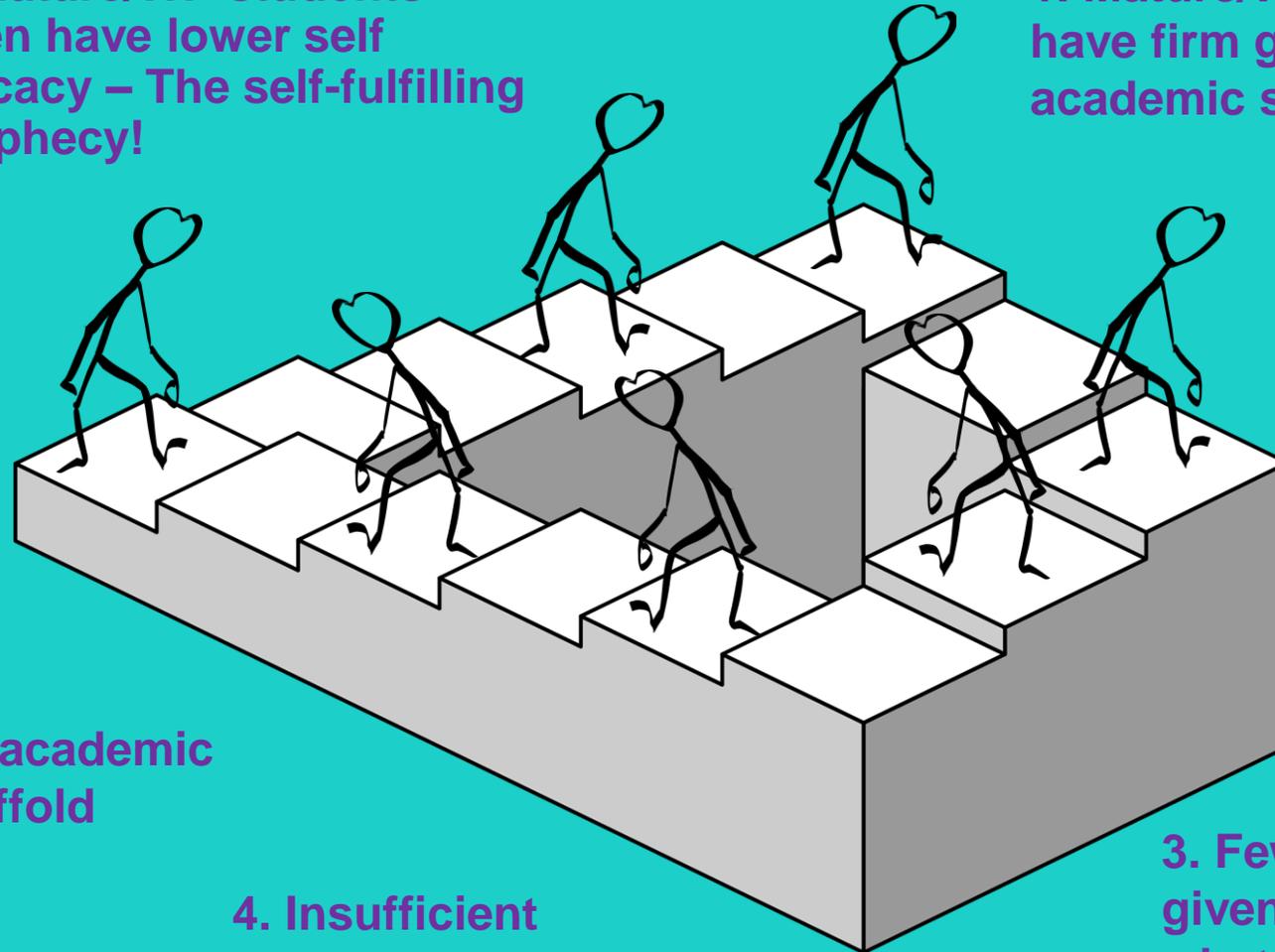


# The Issue

7. Mature/WP students often have lower self efficacy – The self-fulfilling prophecy!

1. Mature/WP students tend not to have firm groundings in essential academic skills

6. Mature/WP students can struggle more than others due to large periods of time out of education/ Negative experiences



2. The truest explanation of academic skills is taught, which can be abstract & difficult to understand

5. System of teaching academic skills tends not to scaffold learning

4. Insufficient exposure to/experience with language used in abstract explanations

3. Few examples given to show what is being explained

# The Response

Need to create a class/learning materials that...	Rationale
... give an overarching process/structure that gives a basic/holistic explanation in everyday language,	To give students clarity and help them understand why they are learning a particular skill. (National Research Council, 2000)
... adopt a marginal gains approach,	Isolating/developing smaller elements of larger goals, eventually has a significant overall impact. (Hall et al., 2012)
... teach people at an appropriate level of challenge,	To make the learning challenge feel attainable, yet engaging (Hattie, 2018)
... encourage improved self-efficacy	Encourages students to work through tougher challenges and make improvements with confidence (Bandura, 1997)

READ THE ASSIGNMENT BRIEF AND THEN READ PARAGRAPH A AND PARAGRAPH B. WHICH PARAGRAPH DO YOU FEEL WOULD GET A HIGHER GRADE AND WHY? DISCUSS WITH YOUR PARTNER.

Is the sense of emancipation from previous restriction fundamental in the representation of the 20th century city?  
Analyse TWO of James Joyce's short stories in 'The Dubliners' to answer this question.

### Paragraph A

Joyce portrays opportunities of emancipation through a number of themes in *The Two Gallants* and *The Boarding House*. Two of these themes are sexual freedom and the subversion of gender roles. One technique that conveys sexual freedom and the disruption of typical male and female roles within society is imagery. Joyce depicts Corley as a prostitute, which at the turn of the century was a female profession. This denotes that Corley is very different to characters of previous literary works (Haslam and Hooper, 2012, p.32). Joyce connects Corley to unorthodox adjectives, for example, when responding to Corley, Lenehan says 'That takes the solitary, unique, and, if I may so call it, *recherché* biscuit!' (Joyce, 1914 p. 44). By using words like 'unique' and '*recherché*', Joyce draws attention to Corley's character not conforming to traditional behaviour. By depicting the taboo topic of male prostitution, Joyce displays idiosyncrasies of modernism, underlining nonconformity and thus emancipation from previous restrictions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century city of Dublin.

### Paragraph B

Emancipation from sexual restrictions is also addressed in Joyce's short story *The Boarding house*. For example, 'All the resident young men spoke of her as *The madam*' (*ibid* p.57). The term 'madam' was used respectfully, however, it is also slang for the head of a house of prostitution (Brown, 1992, p.267). Not only that but by overturning the idea of freedom away from the parental home and making references to *The Boarding House* as a place with a 'certain fame', Joyce indicates the possibility of breaking away from some of Dublin's previous restrictions (Joyce, 1914, p.61).

1) Topic (Main idea of the paragraph. Note: Only one Main Idea per paragraph)

2) Argument (Explain the main idea/point)

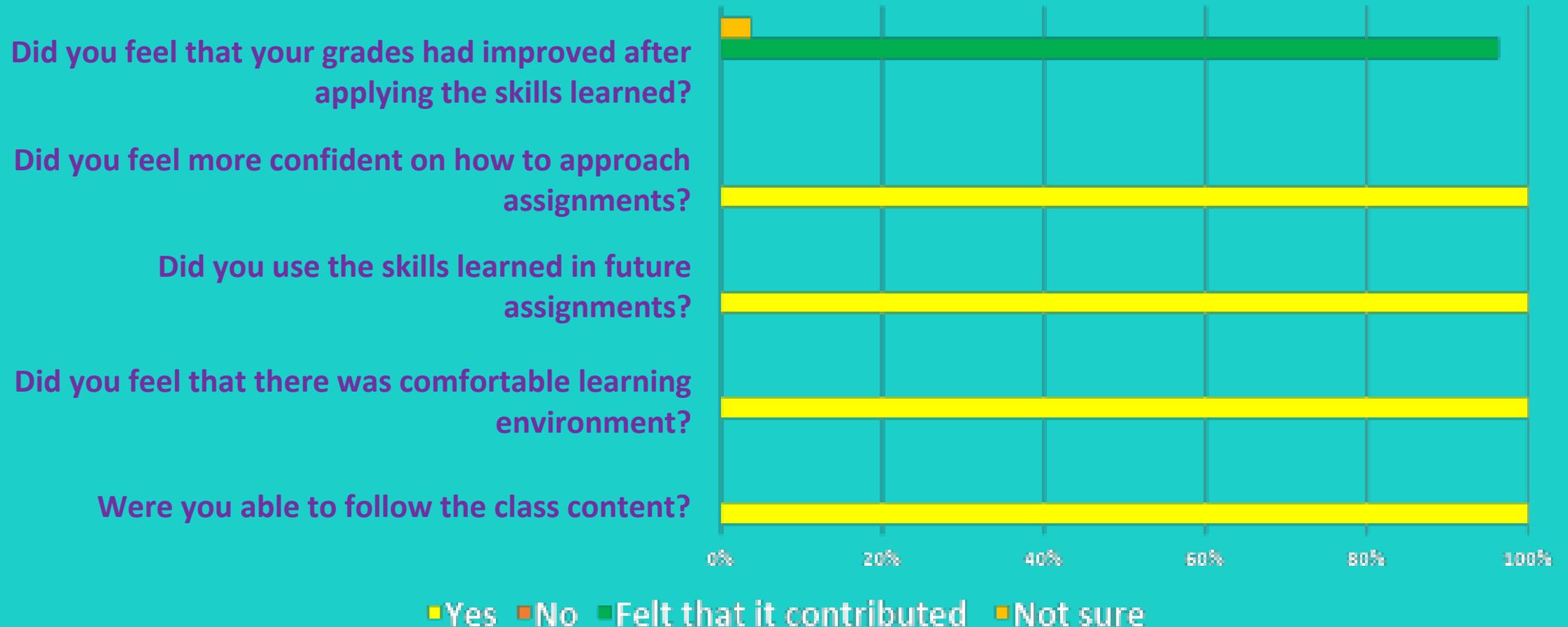
3) Evidence (Use a quotation/citation to back your argument/explanation up. **NOTE:** This should say the same thing that you have stated in the topic and/or the argument sentence)

4) Relevance (how does the topic/argument/evidence answer the essay question/support your overall argument?)

TAER

# The Quantitative Results

## Mature Students' Responses to the Marginal Gains Approach



# The Qualitative Results

In all honesty it's a shame I didn't get your help at the start of my masters, I nearly think it should be mandatory for mature students especially the ones who are struggling with essays.

I have found the one I attended really useful and it made me feel less stressed about the academic side of my learning as I have not done anything academic for years.

I felt at ease with the class and felt comfortable discussing my areas of weakness.

I think the majority of students not just mature students would definitely benefit from learning some of the techniques you taught us.

I definitely found the workshop to be a massive step in being confident to lay out plans and ideas for my essays.

I have been able to take all the advice from sessions and put this into my assignments. My last 2 assignments I got marks of 68 and 82!

# References

Bandura, A. (1997) *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. New York: WH. Freeman.

Cocking, R.R., Brown, A.L. and Bransford, J.D. (1999) *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Hall, D., James, D. and Marsden, N. (2012) 'Marginal gains: Olympic lessons in high performance for organisations', *HR Bulletin: Research and Practice*, 7(2), pp.9-13.

Hattie, J.A. (2018) *Visible learning plus: 250+ influences on student achievement*. Available at: <https://visible-learning.org/hattie-ranking-influences-effect-sizes-learning-achievement/> (Accessed: 05/06/19).

**Thank you for listening  
and please get in touch  
with your thoughts!**



The tables were so helpful, I was able to read a paper save important information from each into its own separate word document, then use the table you showed me to take the most relevant pieces of information from these studies to help form my argument for and against. I am so grateful for your help it has really change my perspective on writing essays, not saying I enjoy them now but they are so much more logical and better written with proper arguments.

I found the sessions really helpful, so much so that I got 72/100 on my late assignment (compared to 54 on the one before). I was absolutely over the moon and feel that it was all helped by your sessions. I think your sessions are really beneficial for people like myself who were returning to education, especially being a mature student, as so much has changed since I was in education.