

Introduction

Critical thinking is an essential skill for anyone in higher education, it is a skill that can be developed over a period of study and helps students to reflect on and question their prior knowledge and any information presented to them (*University of Essex, 2016*). This poster will be providing information on 3 specific study skills, Time Management, Reading and Note Taking.

Reading

Reading in preparation for an assignment can be time consuming, this is as there can be a lot of information to process. It is essential that students recognise the purpose for reading books, articles and other resources, then deciding what information can be retained and learnt from it. (*Godfrey, 2013. Pg 7*). It is vital that the relevant sources are chosen, as this can reduce the amount of time done reading. To help with the large amount of reading required, The University of Sheffield (2023), states that students should set time limits for reading a chapter of a textbook and gaining an understanding of the writer's narrative. All students should be aware that there are four main research strategies, these being; *Previewing the text, skimming the text, scanning the text and finally, reading the information in detail. There are also three key tips for effective reading, these are; Purpose - making sure there is a purpose for reading the specific text and that it is relevant to the assignment question, Keywords - identify the key words, these are likely to be found in the title of the assignment and lastly, Look - this can help to find relevant information within a piece of text. (*Uni Sydney Library, 2020*).

Time management

Okorobie (2023) suggests that by developing sound time management skills it can have varying benefits on students. For instance, a reduction in stress levels, development of responsibility and self-discipline. Students should be able to divide their time up, so they are able to have a good balance between their work, study and social life. To be able to do so, it is important to find a tool that will help with organisation of time management. Some examples of these are; planners, diaries and academic diaries or timetables. These are all examples of visual tools, they allow the user to see what assignments are due next, see a weekly or monthly view, keeping track of library returns, and making sure that time is being used wisely to complete assignments on time. (*McMillan et al, 2012, pp. 40-42*). When it comes to time management skills, it is often that students can be faced with three key issues, these are: Planning - Having realistic plans for studying, either over or under researching information and can result in falling behind writing or handing in work. Next is procrastination, this comes in two forms, putting off starting research or the assignment itself, or taking a break after studying for a sufficient period of time. Lastly, perfectionism - having the ability to write an assignment to the best of abilities in the time given. There is also a flawed perfectionist. This is someone who no matter what grade is received will believe that they could have done better, even if a high grade has been received (*Moore, et al (2010, pp. 135-148)*).

Note Taking

Note taking is an essential skills to have when studying, as it can help a student to understand what they are reading and researching. It is important that when notes are taken that they are not copied word for word, students should take notes but in a way that makes sense to them. By doing this it can help students to gain a deeper understanding of the information that is being looked at. (*The University of Edinburgh, 2023*). There are three main note taking methods, these are as followed; The Outline Method, is the simplest to use. This is where bullet point lists are used, the list will contain a main idea at the top, a subheading and examples to follow below. The Cornell Method, consists of dividing the page into three sections, these being; section one - notes, here will be the key notes from the lecture. Section two - cues, write down any main ideas, questions that were left unanswered or prompts for the summary. Finally, section three - summary, reflect on what has been discussed throughout the lecture, and summarise what has been learnt or what information could be key and finally, Mind-Mapping Method, is a visual diagram than has the main concept in the middle of the page and all ideas and notes surrounding the main concept. (*Jenkins, 2017*). During a lecture large amounts of information can be covered, this meaning large amounts of notes being taken. When taking notes, there is not always enough time to note down everything that is said, this is where abbreviation and symbols can be used (*Loveless, 2023*).

To conclude

I believe that Reading, Time Management and Note Taking are quality skills that can help to influence the development of critical thinking and study skills. The University of Oxford (No date) explains that, by continually developing previous study skills can help students to succeed, but also implement working effectively in the available study time. I feel that by using and adapting the mentioned study skills throughout my studies, will allow for development and improved understanding of the assignments and what is expected of me as a student.

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