Portfolio

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Use of AI Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the use of Microsoft 365 Copilot (https://m365.cloud.microsoft/) on the 9/9/26 to help with identifying different types of study techniques. I used the Prompt(s):

1. I am studying as an undergraduate in BA early years education and care practitioner status, what is the best way to increase concentration when studying?

2. I am studying as an undergraduate in BA early years education and care practitioner status, what is the best way to organise time management when studying?

3. How can I improve concentration when studying?

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources that I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Study Timetable.

Amser /Time	Llun Monday	Mawrth Tuesday	Mercher Wednesday	Iau Thursday	Gwener Friday	Sadwrn Saturday	Sul Sunday
00:00 - 00:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
01:00 - 01:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
02:00 - 02:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
03:00 - 03:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
04:00 - 04:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
05:00 - 05:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
06:00 - 06:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
07:00 - 07:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
08:00 - 08:59	Breakfast/ get ready	Breakfast/ get ready	Breakfast/get ready	Breakfast/get ready	Breakfast/get ready	Breakfast/get ready	Sleep
09:00 - 09:59	School drop off	School drop off	School drop off	School drop off	School drop off	Work	Breakfast/ get ready
10:00 - 10:59	Study- reading	Study- reading	Study- reading	Study- reading	Study- reading	Work	Family time
11:00 - 11:59	School pick up	School pick up	School pick up	School pick up	School pick up	Work	Family time
12:00 - 12:59	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Work	Lunch
13:00 - 13:59	Study- research/ note taking	Family time	Study- research/ note taking	Study- research/ note taking	Study- research/ note taking	Work	Family time
14:00 - 14:59	Study- assignment planning	Family time	Study- assignment planning	Study- assignment planning	Study- assignment planning	Work	Family time
15:00 - 15:59	Study- assignment writing	Family time	Study- assignment writing	Study- assignment writing	Study- assignment writing	Family time	Family time
16:00 - 16:59	Cook/ eat dinner	Cook/ eat dinner	Cook/ eat dinner	Cook/ eat dinner	Cook/ eat dinner	Cook/ eat dinner	Cook/ eat dinner
17:00 - 17:59	University lecture	Family time	Work	Work	Work	Study- referencing	Family time
18:00 - 18:59	University lecture	Family time	Work	Work	Work	Study- proofreading	Family time

19:00 - 19:59	University lecture	Toddler bedtime routine	Work	Work	Work	Toddler bedtime routine	Toddler bedtime routine
20:00 - 20:59	University lecture	Study-proofreading	Work	Work	Work	Study-proof reading	Study-University lecture preparation
21:00 - 21:59	Study-reading/ research	Study-reading/ research	Work	Work	Work	Study-proof reading	Study-University lecture preparation
22:00 - 22:59	Relax	Relax	Work	Work	Work	Relax	Relax
23:00 - 23:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep

Using Microsoft Copilot 365 to Explore Study Techniques

In this assignment I have been researching two different ways to improve study techniques.

The first prompt I used for copilot was: I am studying as an undergraduate in BA Early Years Education and Care Practitioner Status, what is the best way to increase concentration when studying? The response I received was:

1. Use the Pomodoro Technique

This is one of the most effective methods for improving focus.

- Study for **25 minutes** with full concentration.
- Take a **5-minute break**.
- Repeat 4 times.
- After 4 cycles, take a longer break (20-30 minutes).

Knowing a break is coming makes it easier to stay focused.

2. Create a Distraction-Free Study Space

Try to:

- Put your phone on silent or in another room.
- Close unnecessary browser tabs.
- Use website blockers if social media is tempting.
- Keep only the materials you need on your desk.

A cluttered environment can make it harder for your brain to concentrate.

3. Set Small, Specific Goals

Instead of:

"I'm going to study child development."

Try:

"I will read pages 20-30 and make notes on Piaget's stages of development."

Specific goals give your brain a clear target and help you feel productive.

4. Study Actively, Not Passively

Reading the same page repeatedly often leads to poor concentration.

Instead:

- Make mind maps.
- Create flashcards.
- Explain concepts aloud as if teaching someone else.
- Write short summaries from memory.

This keeps your brain engaged and improves retention.

5. Match Studying to Your Energy Levels

Notice when you focus best:

- Morning person? Do your most difficult reading then.
- Evening person? Schedule assignments later in the day.

Save simpler tasks, such as organising references or proofreading, for lower-energy periods.

6. Take Care of Your Body

Concentration is strongly linked to wellbeing.

Try to:

- Get 7-9 hours of sleep.
- Stay hydrated.
- Eat regular meals.
- Include some physical activity, even a 10-minute walk.

When you're tired, concentration becomes much harder no matter how motivated you are.

7. Use the "5-Minute Rule"

If you're struggling to start, tell yourself:

"I'll study for just 5 minutes."

Once you begin, you'll often find it easier to continue.

8. Connect Learning to Practice

As an Early Years student, relate theories to real-life experiences from placement or observations of children.

For example:

- Link attachment theory to practitioner-child relationships.
- Connect play theories to activities you've seen in settings.

This makes studying more interesting and improves concentration because the material feels relevant.

A Study Plan Example

90-minute session

1. 25 min: Read and highlight key points.
2. 5 min: Break.
3. 25 min: Create notes or a mind map.
4. 5 min: Break.
5. 25 min: Test yourself using questions or flashcards.

This is often far more effective than trying to study continuously for 2-3 hours.

For Early Years Assignments

A particularly useful strategy is:

1. Read the journal article.
2. Highlight three main points.
3. Write a 100-word summary in your own words.
4. Think of one placement example that relates to the theory.

This improves both concentration and academic writing skills.

Initial Prompts

The initial prompts I used to find information from Copilot were:

1. How can I improve concentration when studying?
2. How can I improve time management when studying?

Refined Prompts

I refined my prompts that I asked Copilot to receive a more specific response. The prompts I used were:

1. I am studying as an undergraduate in BA early years education and care practitioner status, what is the best way to organise time management when studying?
2. I am studying as an undergraduate in BA early years education and care practitioner status, what is the best way to improve concentration while studying?

References Provided by Copilot to Identify Sources

I asked Copilot to provide the sources that it received its information from.

The prompt I used to ask Copilot for this information was:

Can you provide references that you used to give me information about the Pomodoro technique?

Here are some of the references that it gave to me:

Cirillo, F. (2018)

Cirillo, F. (2018) *The Pomodoro Technique: The Acclaimed Time-Management System That Has Transformed How We Work*. New York: Currency.

Cottrell, S. (2024)

Cottrell, S. (2024) *The Study Skills Handbook*. 6th edn. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Race, P. (2019)

Race, P. (2019) *The Lecturer's Toolkit: A Practical Guide to Learning, Teaching and Assessment*. 5th edn. London: Routledge.

Discussion of the Two Techniques

This piece of writing will discuss two types of academic study techniques and how they can be used to improve the process of studying for students. The two techniques are the Pomodoro technique and creating a study timetable.

The first technique is the Pomodoro technique. This technique aims to divide studying into different timeslots. This method involves studying for twenty-five minutes, then having a five-minute break, and repeating the cycle. Once this cycle has been repeated around four times, a longer break of twenty to thirty minutes can be taken. The purpose of this method is to encourage students to maintain full concentration until the timer ends, afterwards then can reward themselves with a break.

Cirillo (2018) suggests that organising studying into timeslots helps to increase concentration and focus, encouraging students to become more productive during the time they spent studying.

Burroughs (2019) suggests that this technique helps motivate students to get into the flow of studying, as well as, helping to limit distractions and control procrastination. Burroughs (2019) also suggests that taking breaks is an effective way to refresh the brain while studying.

The second technique involves creating a study timetable to improve time management. Becker (2009) suggests that this technique encourages students to create goals for the tasks they wish to complete when studying. For example, week one: researching, week two: note taking, week 3: assignment planning, week 4: proofreading. Students could also include other daily activities such as, family time and work, to figure out suitable times to study as part of their daily routine. According to Cottrell (2024) mapping and organising time for studying alongside other daily activities can help students develop a better understanding of how much time they should spend studying, as well as, how often.

In conclusion, these techniques can be used to help students organise their time effectively, increase concentration and motivation, all important factors when studying.

Reference list

Becker, L. (2009) *The Mature Students Handbook*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Burroughs, C. (2019) *The Return to Study Handbook: study skills for mature, distance and workplace learners.* Kogan Page Limited.

Cirillo, F. (2018) *The Pomodoro Technique: The Acclaimed Time-Management System That Has Transformed How We Work*. The Crown Publishing Group.

Cottrell, S. (2024) *The Study Skills Handbook*. 6th edn. Bloomsbury publishing plc.

Reflection on Using Microsoft 365 Copilot

This section considers my reflection on my experience using Copilot for part of my research for this assignment. It explores the benefits and disadvantages I experienced while using Artificial intelligence (AI), including what worked well and what I found difficult. Furthermore, it considers how AI can be used responsibly for academic research in the future.

I found that AI was helpful for giving a basic understand and starting point for a topic when researching. The initial information provided by AI tends to be brief and refined into key points, which is helpful for gaining an overview of a topic. However, not enough information is provided for a student looking for academic research. It is also a very quick and efficient way of receiving information, which can be useful during the initial stages of research.

I had to refine and specify my prompts multiple times when using Copilot in order to receive the information I needed. I found that providing more detail within my prompts, such as explaining why I was asking for this information, resulted in responses that were more specific and suitable to my needs. The initial prompts I used were: “How can I improve concentration when studying?” and “How can I improve time management when studying?” I later refined these prompts to: “I am studying as an undergraduate in BA early years education and care practitioner status, what is the best way to increase concentration when studying?” and “I am studying as an undergraduate in BA early years education and care practitioner status, what is the best way to organise time management when studying?” I found that I received a more suitable response after refining my prompts.

There are concerns regarding reliability and accuracy with the information provided by AI. Therefore, I found AI should not be solely relied upon for information. For example, when asked for the resources AI used to receive its information from, it did not always provide reliable sources. For example, some of the websites provided to me by AI, would not be accepted as a credible source for academic research. I also had to ask Copilot to provide further information for the resources and references it had used. This is due to some of the websites provided were not affiliated with a trusted organisation. The library was helpful for further investigation in my research. The library provided useful and trustworthy information, approved by lecturers.

This process revealed that critical thinking is important when using AI, and that finding further information by a reliable source, to support the response provided by AI, is necessary for academic research.

Poster Investigating Two Study Techniques

Investigating Two Types of Study Techniques

This poster will explore two different types of study techniques and how they can support students in planning and organising their time effectively. The techniques explored in this poster are the Pomodoro method and creating a study timetable, both of which can help students to improve their time management when studying.

The Pomodoro Method

The Pomodoro method encourages studying for twenty-five minutes, then having a five-minute break, and repeating the cycle. Once this cycle has been repeated around four times, a longer break of twenty to thirty minutes can be received. The purpose of this method is to allow students to maintain full concentration during the allocated study time before taking a break.

A study by Biwer et al. (2023) compared students who took self-regulated breaks with a group of students who followed a systematic break technique, known as the Pomodoro method. The study found that the students who had self-regulated breaks experienced greater fatigue, more distractions, and lower concentration levels during the time of studying. It also revealed that students that had systematic break periods found tasks less challenging to complete. This suggests that the Pomodoro method may have positive effects on study experiences.

Owen and Watts (2026) found that when students used the Pomodoro technique it resulted in higher scores for interest in the course, understanding and reflection of learning results and overall improvement. This supports the Pomodoro technique can have beneficial effects on study habits and experiences.

Source: University of Pittsburgh (no date)

Creating A Study Timetable

A study timetable is an effective way for students to organise and manage their time, both academically and in their daily lives. There are different types of study tables that can help student's, depending on their individual needs. For example, a timetable may focus on specifically on study tasks, while another timetable could include study tasks alongside other events in daily life. Creating a timetable is an effective way for students to organise how they are going to use their study time and identify the tasks they will focus on, such as researching, note taking and reading.

Cottrell (2024) suggests that logging the amount of time taken to complete tasks is also an effective way of monitoring study time. Figuring out time requirements for activities in daily life, as well as, the amount of time needed to complete study tasks, can help students understand how much time they require to study and when is suitable to do so. This can support students in managing their time effectively for future assignments.

Cottrell (2019) suggests that students who organise their time using diaries, planners and timetables often become successful in time managing. According to Cottrell (2019) it is easier to create structure when learning by studying at the same time everyday. This will create a routine the student is more likely to repeat, encouraging students to maintain and develop effective study habits.

This poster has investigated two study techniques that can support students in improving their time management as they progress with their studies.

Link to Oral Presentation - study skills powerpoint.pptx

Reference List

Biwer, F., Wiradhany, W., oude Egbrink, M.G.A. and de Bruin, A.B.H (2023) 'Understanding effort regulation: Comparing "Pomodoro" breaks and self-regulated breaks', *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 93(S2), pp. 353-367. Available at: https://doi-org.uwtsd.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/bjep.12593

Cottrell, S. (2019) *The Study Skills Handbook*. 5th edn. Red Globe Press.

Cottrell, S. (2024) *The Study Skills Handbook*. 6th edn. Bloomsbury publishing plc.

Owen, A. Watts, T. (2026) 'The Impact of Pomodoro-style Class Breaks on Higher Education Student Engagement', *Active Learning in Higher Education*, pp. 1-18. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/14697874261433242

University of Pittsburgh (no date) The *Pomodoro Technique*. Available at: https://www.asundergrad.pitt.edu/study-lab/study-skills-tools-resources/pomodoro-technique (Accessed: 19 September 2026).