

Practical Skills for achieving Academic Study Success

Introduction

Effective study skills are essential when considering and pursuing education and personal development. Developing these skills and adopting them successfully will assist progression of life-long learning and aid career development. By engaging with the course fully and following the “Ten Golden Rules” of study and self-evaluation you are beginning your journey of further education (Cottrell, 2019, p30).

Research

Research skills are used throughout life not just academically. When considering purchasing a new car the customer will research the make or model, looking at reviews of a restaurant when choosing to eat out and school results when finding an area to live. When researching in an academic capacity the source and reliability is questioned more vehemently. When given a task competent study skills begin by asking questions, what do I need to find out? Is it up to date? Or whether it will support the assignment. The resources available are vast, taking advantage of the university library is the safest option, using Google Scholar to find peer reviews, articles and journals and using reputable sites for example ac.uk and gov.uk. During research the students' reading and note-taking ability is relevant to their success. Ensuring it is consistent, organized, and legible (McPherson 2018). Using paraphrasing, as writing verbatim is impractical and time consuming, shows a higher skillset than direct quotation. Successful research involves searching out the experts, using theorists who have expertise on the relevant subject and primary researchers. The benefit of using the university library cannot be underestimated (Cottrell, 2019).

Time Management

When considering time management, it is fundamentally important to be realistic! The desire to be available for everything, all areas of study, social, and family life is alluring but practically unworkable. Effective time management will result in more beneficial study achievements. Be pragmatic with planning and organizing your time by creating a timetable that clearly sets out what you would like to achieve on a weekly basis and then considering if it is workable. When considering your time be aware of how you actually spend it, we often over or underestimate how long we spend on activities, social media for example. Research how you will need to spend your time on the elements of study and life and consider what you want to achieve. Where necessary you will need to contemplate the importance of individual tasks and approach them accordingly, this is more likely achieved by following a diary that has been organized with your workload; considered and planned accordingly, persevere with your plan and try alternative routes for achieving the desired outcome. Be conscious of distractions and reward yourself for working through. By regularly addressing your plan you will know how well it is working and if you are set to achieve your targets (Cottrell 2019).

Critical Thinking

To master critical thinking you must analyse, evaluate, and improve your thinking to allow the formation of an objective opinion, (Paul and Elder 2006), this will prepare your ability to filter the necessary and relevant information for your needs. It is also important to acknowledge the likelihood of conscious bias and accept the need to change your opinion. This shows intellectual humility and, by considering other people, opinion and research, is more productive and shows intellectual empathy (BBC Ideas 2020). Creating the desire to challenge the validity and source of information to avoid external bias and eliminate misinformation, is necessary to be able to form a balanced and critical opinion. There is value in questioning information but being able to be critical and recognise bias is not easy, falling into the trap of over explaining or being tentative when expressing your own work (BBC Ideas 2020). Being critical of your own thinking is the essence of learning, allowing you to form your own opinions while considering those of others. In assignment writing, providing a well-rounded factual piece of writing that should answer the hypotheses raised (Eales-Reynolds et al 2013).

Well-Being

There is an expectation on students to be able to continue their everyday lives while studying and in many cases moving away from home. Staying on top of anxieties is essential. Anxiety is a necessary human reaction for life events going back to cave-men times so ignoring the feeling and symptoms is counter-productive. Acknowledging anxious feelings early can reduce the power of them and relieve symptoms caused by them. (Quarry and Ash 2022) It is essential to take ownership of your own well-being; taking time-out from electronic devices, avoiding social media, taking advantage of the university's well-being service, and making the effort to speak to someone face to face, will all benefit your mental state. It is helpful to nurture your well-being by getting involved in groups or societies or just spending time with classmates in social environments not just academic ones. Taking care of ourselves is often a skill we forget, prioritizing some things over others. Although they may appear by basic eating the right food and enough of it, and getting enough sleep you are forming strong foundations for a healthy mind that will then enable you to build a successful university and study experience (Cottrell 2019).

Conclusion

The culmination of following and using this range of study skills will be the successful completion of your learning experience. Having researched thoroughly while working as a critical thinker, who has used time management effectively and been able to take care of their well-being productively to achieve academic success at higher education.

References

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