

Using Microsoft365 CoPilot to Explore Study Techniques

This assignment explores two study techniques that can enhance academic success. The two techniques are planning your week before it starts (C. Wolters and A. Brady 2020) and the "Start Early" technique (R. Adawiyah, I. Rodiyah and N. Hasanati 2024).

Step 1: Ask Copilot

Prompt: What are the most effective time management strategies for first-year university students?

Answer: For first-year university students, the most effective time management strategies are usually the simplest ones done consistently. The transition to university often means more independence, fewer reminders, and competing academic and social demands.

Step 2: Record Copilot's Recommendations

Copilot recommended:

1. Use a Single Planning System

Choose one place to track everything such as a digital calendar, a planner or notebook or a task management app and record your lectures and seminars, assignment deadlines, exams, club activities and personal commitments. Avoid keeping some tasks in your phone, others on paper, and others in your memory.

2. Plan Your Week Before It Starts

Spend 15-20 minutes each weekend and review upcoming deadlines, identify important tasks, schedule study sessions, and reserve time for exercise, meals, and social activities. A weekly overview prevents surprises and reduces stress.

3. Break Large Assignments into Small Tasks

Instead of writing "Write essay" break it down because smaller tasks feel more manageable and make procrastination less likely. E.g.

- Choose topic
- Find 5 sources
- Read articles
- Create outline
- Write introduction
- Write first draft
- Edit and proofread

As a first-year University student. Provide me with two, time management strategies and include relevant evidence and recent studies.

As a first-year university student, developing strong time-management habits early can improve academic performance, reduce stress, and help you balance study, social life, and personal responsibilities. Below are two evidence-based strategies supported by recent research.

1. Time Blocking and Weekly Planning

What it is

Time blocking involves scheduling specific tasks into dedicated periods of your day or week. Instead of having a general to-do list, you assign particular times for lectures, reading, assignments, revision, exercise, and breaks.

How to use it

- At the start of each week, list all academic deadlines and commitments.
- Block study sessions into your calendar.
- Prioritise challenging tasks during your most productive hours.
- Include buffer time for unexpected tasks and rest periods.

Why it works

Time blocking reduces decision fatigue because you already know what task you should be working on at a given time. It also encourages self-regulated learning, which is especially important at university where learning is more independent.

Evidence

A 2025 study of over 1,000 college students found that effective time management was positively associated with study engagement and self-control, while reducing mobile phone dependence. Students with stronger time-management skills were more engaged in their studies and achieved better learning outcomes.

Additionally, a 2026 meta-analysis examining 31 studies and more than 13,500 university students found a significant positive relationship between time management and academic achievement. The effect was particularly strong among undergraduate students.

Discussion of the Two Techniques 270/300 words

Firstly, planning your week before it starts is a method that enables students to spread their work throughout the week rather than cramming at the last minute. It also promotes goal setting, prioritisation, and task organisation. Taking one day a week to catch up on any admin they may have accumulated, sorting their clothes for the week, understanding what activities they have and responsibilities they may have allows them to start the week the right way and not become overwhelmed. Both C. Wolters and A. Brady (2020) argue that planning and organising time can help students achieve better results in an educational environment. The article also highlights that poor planning, and time management can significantly affect academic engagement, weaken study habits, and negatively impact students' ability to achieve their goals. Consequently, effective time management enhances

motivation, engagement, self-regulation, persistence, and study habits supporting academic success.

Secondly, the “Start Early” technique encourages students to begin assignments well before deadlines, allowing time for planning, research, and revision while reducing procrastination, stress, and last-minute pressure. By beginning assignments as soon as they are set, breaking them into smaller tasks, setting mini-deadlines, and completing work gradually before the final deadline, it helps students reduce procrastination, manage their workload effectively, lower stress and improve organisation. This allows them more time for research revision and completing high-quality assignments. Although R. Adawiyah, I. Rodiyah and N. Hasanati (2024) do not directly talk about the “Start Early technique, their article shows a link between procrastination and poorer academic performance, heightened stress, and negative learning outcomes. This suggests that avoiding delays in academic work could be beneficial for students.

Reflection on Using Microsoft365 CoPilot for Academic Study 383/400 words

As a first-year university student, I have found Microsoft Copilot to be a useful tool for supporting my academic study and research. During this activity, I explored how different prompts affect the quality of the responses generated by Copilot and reflected on both the benefits and limitations of using artificial intelligence in higher education. This experience has helped me understand how to use AI more effectively while also recognising the importance of critical thinking and independent research.

Overall, my experience using Copilot has been positive. It has helped me work more efficiently by providing quick access to information, saving time when researching and completing academic tasks. I found it particularly useful for generating ideas, organising my thoughts, and helping me structure assignments. I also learned that using detailed prompts, such as the RTCF technique, produces more focused, relevant, and evidence-based responses. This improved the quality of the information I received and made Copilot a more effective learning tool. Moving forward, I will continue to use Copilot alongside my own research to enhance productivity, support my learning, and contribute to my academic success.

In addition, I learned the importance of using the CRAAP method (Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose) when evaluating information produced by Copilot. Applying the CRAAP method helped me critically assess whether the information was up to date, relevant to my research, from a reliable source, correct, and free from bias. This ensured that I was not simply accepting information at face value but actively evaluating its credibility before using it in my academic work.

Despite its benefits, there are several limitations to using Copilot for academic research. One of the main disadvantages is that it can sometimes provide inaccurate, misleading, or outdated information, meaning students must verify facts using reliable academic sources. Another concern is that over reliance on AI may reduce the development of independent thinking, critical analysis, and problem solving skills, which are essential for success at university. Copilot can also encourage students to accept information without questioning it, limiting deeper engagement with a topic. Furthermore, there is a risk of plagiarism if AI-generated content is copied directly into assignments without proper acknowledgement or adaptation. For these reasons, Copilot should be used as a support tool rather than a substitute for independent research, academic judgement, and original thinking.

References

C. Wolters and A. Brady 2020

Journal Article 'College Students' Time Management: a Self-Regulated Learning Perspective' Christopher A. Wolters and Anna C. Brady. Published online 27th October 2020. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48750443>

Wolters, C.A. and Brady, A.C. (2021) 'College Students' Time Management: A Self-Regulated Learning Perspective', Educational Psychology Review, 33(4), pp. 1319-1351. doi:10.1007/s10648-020-09519-z.

R. Adawiyah, I. Rodiyah and N. Hasanati 2024

Systematic Review: Academic Procrastination in Students
<https://ijrpr.com/uploads/V5ISSUE7/IJRPR31371.pdf>

