

Developing Effective Study Skills

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It is important to understand why developing effective study skills is an essential part of academic development. Investigating and engaging strategies which will help prioritize and

Critical Thinking

"Critical thinking involves examining ideas and information from an objective position and questioning this information while being aware of the influence of your own values, attitudes, experiences, emotions, and personal philosophy." (Eales-Reynolds, et al 2013, p.1)

To be a critical thinker you must have certain attributes, for example, being open-minded and inquisitive enough to question. Question not only other people's viewpoints but also evaluate and analyze your own and investigate bias, prejudices and strengths and weaknesses within your own thought process. Attributes such as the ability to look at more than one perspective, the positive and negative and scrutinize sources and their authenticity. In addition to confidently relay the information, thought process or argument in a professional manner. (Eales-Reynolds 2013)

Critical thinking and analysis are conjoint. Analyzing data, digital information, literacy, and your own writing. To be a good critical thinker is to develop critical thinking through reading and writing critically (Eales-Reynolds, 2013)

Sarah Bakerlee (2004) offers a tool to check information's credibility The 'CRAAP' Test ...

C urrent (Is the piece up to date?)

R elevant (Who is the audience)

A uthority (What are the authors credentials)

A ccuracy (Is it supported by evidence?)

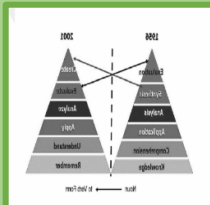
P urpose (Is it objective)

A critical reading tool recommended by www.springeropen.com (2023) is to use a Rubix system to determine the relevance of a piece of information.

According to Eales-Reynolds (2013) Critical writing and presenting is a chance to show thoughts, knowledge and understanding of a topic and demonstrate an ability to research and gather information. Gathering validated and relevant information from 'selected' sources is part of a process to show skills and understanding of the subject being studied.

J.Haber (2020) outlines Blooms

Taxonomy which was created in 1956 and sets out educational goals into a hierarchy of the levels of mental complexity. It offers scientific principles of how we think and whilst updated 45 years later is still widely used to evaluate students critical thinking skills in educational settings today.



This poster explores three areas of skills which support effective study today, Critical Thinking, Effective Note Taking and Time Management.

Effective Note Taking

According to Cottrell (2019) to achieve effective note taking is to firstly ensure that the reading materials are up to date and relevant as well as being reliable and from a credible source.

Annotation is a form of note taking which considers the readers initial thoughts, feelings, ideas and reactions at the time of reading the text. It is where the notes are written directly on the book, diagram, photo or reading material and where an instant response records a thought process.

Annotation is seen as beneficial for several reasons including: initiating the reader to become interactive with the text and in doing so more likely to absorb the information. It is also a technique which encourages them to ask questions and look deeper into what is being said and therefore prompting the reader to engage emotionally. Cottrell (2019) describes it as having a conversation with the text. Annotation can also be a useful organizational tool when labeling, colour coding and numbering pages along with providing a base for the 'main notes' offering quick relevant reference points.

Trevor Day (2018) gives tips on successful note taking. He explains the best notes are ones which are brief with key points or short phrases, are visually appealing and with enough information to provoke understanding once retrieved later. 'Pattern Notes' such as maps, concept maps, flow diagrams and mind maps are another form of note taking which are generally more visual and less conventional on the page when using the space.

In conclusion it appears that exercising and developing effective study skills is an essential part of learning. It can ensure information is understood and retained, improve exam results and benefit not only during study and employment but also throughout life's experiences!

Time Management

According to the oxford dictionary, time management is 'the ability to use one's time effectively, especially at work' it involves, 'keeping track of what you must do and how much time you must do it in' also 'the way in which you organize how you spend your time'. (Ref??)

The Oxford University podcast by Sally Lepage and Liz Timoney White (2014) suggests setting out priorities using a 'Priority Matrix': This is a 'Cube Planning Grid' encouraging you to list your activities based on four outcomes, important and urgent, important and not urgent, not important and urgent and important and not urgent.

Sarah Moore (2010) suggests there are 'Three Big Management Issues' for students today, Planning, Procrastination, and Perfectionism. She refers to some students as not having clear plans in place or plans which may be unrealistic. This could be due to a lack of experience in planning, lack of motivation or a difficulty in balancing study with other life commitments. Sarah talks about procrastination becoming an issue when the student feels overwhelmed, the subject may not be engaging or simply underestimating the time needed to complete a task. Perfectionism becomes unhealthy when there is a strive towards an impossible goal or the student is only driven by work related tasks. In chapter eight she offers three planning supports to help organize time and prioritize tasks. Firstly, a simple columned worksheet to group activities into either priority, importance or pending. A block week planner (prop) and lastly a manageable daily to do list.

Cottrell (2019) points out there are ten steps to effective time management. She suggests to **systematically** prepare your time, to **find out** and **clarify** time requirements such as the amount of independent studying called for or exactly how long a particular task will take rather than an estimation after considering practical factors such as travel time. She recommends **deciding** on how you want to split your time by using 'time circles' and emphasizes the importance of **prioritizing** these daily activities and setting deadlines for each one. She goes on to explain how to **'plan'** effectively by keeping detailed diaries and **'actually doing'** what is set out on the plan. It is also recommended in the book that by **applying** time management techniques such as timers or setting early deadlines allows space for other activities. Identifying **distractions** and being mindful of the websites, apps and tools which may take up the most time with the least amount of benefit is also important. Lastly Cottrell suggests to **monitor** your time and check that you are sticking to the planner and are on target.

Reference list

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