

Certificate of Higher Education in Employability Skills

LEVEL 4

Academic Skills for the Digital Era
(BMSW4013)

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Part 1

Introduction

In today's world, where technology is a huge part of learning, students need to find ways to study effectively. This essay will look at study strategies supported by recent research, explain how they work, and give practical examples of how students can use them. These strategies can help students study better and deal with common distractions that come with using technology.

Main body

The first strategy that can help students become more productive is the Pomodoro Technique. When it comes to studying it becomes tough when there are so many digital distractions. The Pomodoro is a way to break study time into 25 minutes sessions with a 5-minute break in between which is created by Francesco Cirillo. This method helps students stay focused and avoid feeling overwhelmed. It fits with research that shows short bursts of work followed by breaks can improve concentration (Van Gog & Sweller, 2021). Apps like Forest or TomatoTimer make it easy for students to use this technique. The benefit of this technique is that it helps keep students on track and makes studying feel more manageable. The drawback is it may not be great

for tasks that need a lot of deep thinking, as breaking up the time could interrupt the flow of work. The second effective strategy that can help students better is spaced repetition. Spaced repetition is a way of reviewing information at intervals over time. This method is based on the idea that we forget things if we don't review them, as shown by research on memory (Karpicke & Blunt, 2020). Apps like Anki or Quizlet can help students schedule reviews so that they don't rush at the last minute. Studies have shown that spaced repetition helps students remember more than studying everything at once. The benefit of this strategy is it spreads out studying and helps students remember things for longer periods. The drawback of this strategy is it requires students to be consistent and stick to a schedule, which can be difficult for those who prefer last minute studying. The third strategy that can help students study effectively is active learning. Active learning is about getting students involved in their learning process. Instead of just listening or reading, students should engage in activities like explaining ideas, discussing topics, or applying what they have learned. These actions help students understand and remember what they study. Research by Agarwal and Bain (2019) shows that active learning improves memory and understanding. Students can use tools like online discussion boards or group chats on apps like Slack or Zoom to discuss lessons and teach each other. The benefit of this strategy is it makes studying more interesting and helps students think critically, which can be useful in school and everyday life. The drawbacks of this strategy are students who are used to just taking notes or listening might find it hard to switch to this method which also takes time and planning. The fourth strategy that can help students study effectively is Digital notetaking. Digital notetaking has become popular with tools like Notion, OneNote, and Evernote. These tools let students organise their notes with text, images, and links, making it easier to study later. Research supports the idea that using different ways to learn, like combining words and pictures, can help students understand and remember better (Fiorella & Mayer, 2020). The benefits of digital notetaking are easy to search, edit, and share, making group sessions more productive. They also allow students to include different types of media to help understand the material. The drawback of this strategy is that when you stare at a screen for too long, it can cause eye strain. Plus, digital notifications can be distracting unless students take steps to turn them off. The fifth strategy that can help students study effectively is Mind maps. Mind maps are diagrams that show how different ideas connect. They help students see the bigger picture and are great for visual learners. Research by Dunlosky and Rawson (2020) highlights that combining visual and written information makes it easier to remember things. Digital tools like Mind Meister make creating and changing mind maps simple. The benefit of this strategy is that mind maps help with creativity and make it easier to see how ideas relate to each other. This is useful for studying subjects with lots of information. The drawback is for students who prefer straightforward notes, mind mapping might feel complicated or take extra time. One of the biggest challenges for students today is staying focused with so many digital distractions. Research by Agarwal and Bain (2019) suggests that taking breaks and using focus enhancing apps can help. Apps like Freedom

or Forest block distracting sites and remind students to stay on task. Creating a dedicated study space and setting device-free times are other helpful strategies. The benefit of this strategy is that when cutting down on distractions it helps students stay focused and get more done. It can also lead to better overall mental health by reducing screen time. The drawback is it can be hard for students to stick to these boundaries, especially if they are used to multitasking or need to stay connected.

Conclusion

In summary, students have many effective study tools and strategies available, such as active learning, spaced repetition, and the Pomodoro method. Digital notetaking and mind mapping cater to different learning styles and reducing distractions aids focus. Success comes from consistency and finding what works best for everyone. With practice, students can build habits that lead to success in school and beyond.

Part 2

Introduction

Time management is one of the most important skills for students in higher education. With the amount of work, assignments, and exams, it can be overwhelming to keep up if you don't have a plan. Learning how to manage your time well helps you stay organised, complete tasks on time, and balance school with other parts of life. In this report, it will explain why time management matters, how it works, and give examples of how students can use it to succeed.

Main body

Time management is about organising your time so you can get things done without feeling too stressed. It includes setting goals, planning your days or weeks, and sticking to a schedule. A popular way to look at time management is through Covey's Time Management Matrix, which divides tasks into four categories based on urgency and importance (Covey, 2020). This helps students figure out which tasks need to be done right away, and which can wait, so they don't waste time on things that don't matter. Another tool that students use is the Eisenhower Matrix. It is like Covey's idea and helps separate what is important from what is just urgent (Allen et al., 2019). By using this, students can decide where to put their energy and time to get the best results. Research has shown that students who use good time management tend to do better in school. A study by MacCann et al. (2020) found that students who manage their time well are more likely to hand in their assignments on time and get higher grades. This is because planning

ahead and sticking to a schedule helps reduce stress and makes it easier to focus on the work that matters most. Time management also comes under cognitive load theory, which says that the brains can only handle so much information at once (Sweller, 2021). When students plan their study time and spread it out, they learn better than if they try to do everything at the last minute (Roediger & Butler, 2019). There are lots of ways students can put time management into practice. One simple step is to use a planner or a digital tool like Trello or Notion to plan out assignments and study times. These tools help you see what is coming up, so you can plan ahead and not miss deadlines (Williams et al., 2021). An example to that is imagine a student who has exams in three weeks. Instead of waiting until the last week to study, they break their material into smaller parts and plan to study a bit every day. By the time exams come, they are prepared and don't feel as stressed. Research by Al-Harthi et al. (2020) shows that students who follow a study plan like this do better and feel less anxious. While time management is really important, there are other tools that can help students stay focused. For example, mindfulness is becoming popular to deal with stress and stay focused (Hölzel et al., 2020). Taking short breaks to do deep breathing or meditation can help students feel calmer and ready to study. But while mindfulness can help with focus, it does not replace the need for planning your time.

Conclusion

Time management is a skill that can make a big difference in how well students do in higher education. It helps students organise their work, stay productive, and avoid stress. While it can be hard to get started, using digital tools and setting small goals can help students build good habits. Combined with other strategies like active learning and mindfulness, time management can lead to better grades and a more balanced life.

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