

Developing Effective Study Skills

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It is generally considered that there are a variety of essential study skills which are fundamental techniques and strategies that help students learn more effectively, manage their time efficiently, and achieve academic success. These skills are outlined by the C.R.E.A.M strategy for learning [Cottrell \(2013, p.87\)](#) and are applicable across various subjects and educational levels. In approaching this topic I have chosen to concentrate on three different study skills which I will talk about in a more in depth manner.

Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism:

It is a well known fact that there are a number of key issues that can arise from plagiarising the work of others. [Day \(2018, p.149\)](#) points out that as well as your professional integrity being questioned, there is in fact, a very real possibility of not only academic penalties, but even legal ramifications. As a student you are not only morally obligated to acknowledge another's academic contributions to their chosen field but to fail to do so is to commit theft of their academic property. Thankfully, there are a number of ways to avoid plagiarising the work of another. [Cottrell \(2013\)](#) argues that one of the best ways to avoid plagiarism is to first to understand what it is. She outlines that Plagiarism is the use of another's work without acknowledgement. [Cottrell \(2013\)](#) outlines a number of strategies to ensure that your work remains plagiarism free. She points out that developing confidence in your own work will negate the need to imitate others. Of course, there will be instances where it is necessary to quote the work of others, however as long as that process is undertaken correctly by citing the sources of ideas and information used, ones work shall be all the better for it. One could go as far as to say that correctly referencing the work of others shows a great understanding and competency in using academic skills to further ones own work.

Time Management:

The first aspect to note within this topic is that effective time management helps students use their time efficiently. It ensures that they allocate the right amount of time to different tasks and activities, maximizing their productivity. [Cottrell \(2013, pg. 128 - 133\)](#) advises using a self reflective approach, which encourages the student to evaluate their own time management skills. Her suggested use of a Study Time Planning tool and Time Circle I myself have found particularly helpful, as Time Management is something I struggle with. According to [Covey et al's \(1994\)](#) theories of time management if students prioritize their study time and spend most of that time on tasks that are not urgent but important most of the stress that is caused by procrastination, and therefore elevates tasks from important to urgent, will be taken out of the situation. And as a result will lead to a much more enjoyable and fruitful academic experience. [Elizabeth Wilson & Dorothy Bedford \(Study skills for part-time students\)](#) theorise that a lot of study time can be wasted because students believe that it's not a long enough block of time to be useful. And whilst it may be true that having large chunks of time to commit to your academic studies may be beneficial, one can not ignore the fact that frequent, shorter study sessions will certainly alleviate some of the stress caused by falling behind due to procrastination.

Note Taking:

The first aspect to note on this topic is that good note-taking is an essential study skill as it enhances your learning experience, helps you stay organized, and serves as a valuable resource for studying and academic success. It's a skill that can significantly impact your overall performance and understanding of course materials. According to [Pauk, Walter & Owens, Ross J.Q. \(2010 pg. 219\)](#) listening is the first step to good note taking. They suggest subscribing to the Triple A Listening Method of Attitude, Attention and Adjustment. They go on to mention that good notes are concise and to the point. They capture essential information without unnecessary details. And aim to summarise key concepts and ideas in a clear and concise manner. Notes should be well-organised for easy reference. I myself have adopted the [Cornell Method](#) of note taking along side a use of sticky notes. Whatever method you choose, it is important to maintain consistency in your note-taking style and use the same format and symbols consistently to make it easier to review and study your notes later. It is important to develop a note-taking style that works best for you and adapt it to different situations and subjects as needed.



The arguments presented above all point to the conclusion that consistency and dedication are key to developing and maintaining strong study skills. That effective study skills are developed over time through practice and refinement as well as experimenting with different techniques and strategies to identify what works best for you. And that finally, and perhaps most importantly, that although developing effective study skills may take time, as long as you set aside time to dedicate to your learning and correctly acknowledge the work of others when referenced, developing your academic studying and writing style can become an enjoyable and enriching experience which will help you massively as you move through your educational journey.

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