

Assignment ECEY4012

**The learning journey: developing skills for
academic purpose.**

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AI deceleration:

I acknowledge the use of Microsoft 365 Copilot on 15.09.2026 to research different study skills and techniques. I used the prompts:

1. Good afternoon, I am a first year university student studying Early Years Education and Care and am looking for some useful strategies to help with time-management. Thank you
2. Hello, can you please give me some helpful strategies for a first year student in University to get better at note-taking.
3. Thank you, can you please refine it to three of the best strategies.

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated test as my own work. I can confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Part 1 - Study Timetable

Amser /Time	Llun Monday	Mawrth Tuesday	Mercher Wednesday	Iau Thursday	Gwener Friday	Sadwrn Saturday	Sul Sunday
00:00 - 00:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
01:00 - 01:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
02:00 - 02:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
03:00 - 03:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
04:00 - 04:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
05:00 - 05:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
06:00 - 06:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
07:00 - 07:59	Get ready for work	Get ready for work	Get ready for work	Get ready for work	Get ready for work	Sleep	Sleep
08:00 - 08:59	Work	Work	Work	Work	Work	Sleep	Sleep
09:00 - 09:59	Work	Work	Work	Work	Work	Home - clean house, go food shopping.	Relax
10:00 - 10:59	Work	Work	Work	Work	Work	House cleaning	Relax
11:00 - 11:59	Work	Work	Work	Work	Work	Me time	Relax
12:00 - 12:59	Work	Work	Work	Work	Work	Me time	Family time

13:00 - 13:59	Work	Work	Work	Work	Work	Shopping	Family time
14:00 - 14:59	Work	Work	Work	Work	Work	Shopping	Family time
15:00 - 15:59	Leave work and travel to university	Plan assignments – what will I need to do each study session.	Work through assignment	Frozen rehearsals	Unwind	Shopping/out with family	Family Time
16:00 - 16:59	Travel to university	List priorities for the week – how will I complete the assignment.	Work through assignment	Frozen rehearsals	Look through assignment -Extra study time if needed	Out with family	Finish any remaining parts of assignment. Read over any work done – check for errors
17:00 - 17:59	Lectures	Home - unwind from day.	Home from work – unwind.	Home from work – relax and unwind. Take Pads for a walk.	Extra study time if needed.	Relax	Write any questions or queries about assignment for next lecture.
18:00 - 18:59	Lectures	Take Pads for a walk.	Visit grandparents for dinner.	Work through assignment	Catch up plans with friends for the evening.	Baking ready for Sunday dinner.	Plan reading for the week.
19:00 - 19:59	Lectures - look over notes for any questions to be asked about assignment.	Relax	Relax	Continue with assignment.	Catch up with friends.	Date night	Relax
20:00 - 20:59	Travel home	Relax	Relax	Relax	Relax	Date night	Relax

21:00 - 21:59	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
22:00 - 22:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
23:00 - 23:59	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep

Part 2 - Using AI

Microsoft Copilot has been accessed to explore two study techniques to support students studying the BA (Hons) Early Years Education and Care course. Two prompts were given, one for each study skill – time management and note-taking.

The first prompt to Copilot: 'Good afternoon, I am a first year university student studying Early Years Education and Care and am looking for some useful strategies to help with time-management. Thank you'

Copilot's response:

1. Use a Weekly Planner

At the beginning of each week:

- Write down all lectures, seminars, and deadlines.
- Include work shifts, social commitments, and personal appointments.
- Schedule dedicated study periods.

A visual overview helps you see when you are busy and where you have free time for studying.

2. Break Assignments into Smaller Tasks

Large assignments can feel daunting. Instead of writing:

✗ "Complete assignment"

Break it down into:

- ☒ Find sources
- ☒ Read three journal articles
- ☒ Create assignment plan
- ☒ Write introduction
- ☒ Write main sections
- ☒ Edit and proofread

Completing smaller tasks gives a sense of achievement and helps prevent procrastination.

3. Use the Pomodoro Technique

This is particularly useful when reading academic articles or writing assignments.

1. Study for 25 minutes.
2. Take a 5-minute break.
3. Repeat four times.
4. Take a longer 20–30 minute break.

This method helps maintain concentration and prevents burnout.

4. Keep a Dedicated Study Space

Whether it's:

- A library desk
- A quiet corner at home

- A university study area

Having a consistent workspace helps your brain switch into "study mode" more quickly.

Refined Prompts: 'Thank you, can you please refine it to three of the best strategies.'

Copilot's response:

1. Plan Your Week in Advance

Use a planner, diary, or digital calendar to map out lectures, deadlines, work shifts, and study time. Planning your week helps you see what needs to be done and prevents last-minute stress.

2. Break Large Tasks into Smaller Steps

Assignments can feel overwhelming when viewed as one large task. Instead, divide them into smaller, manageable sections.

For example:

- Read the assignment brief
- Research sources
- Create a plan
- Write the introduction
- Complete the main body
- Proofread and edit

3. Prioritise Important Tasks First

Focus on tasks that are due soonest or carry the most marks. A simple "to-do list" with priorities can help.

High Priority: Assignment due next week

Medium Priority: Weekly reading

Low Priority: Organising study notes

Copilot was asked 'Thank you very much, could you please give me some references to support these' strategies.

AI Suggestions:

- The Open University (n.d.) *Time management*. Available at: <https://help.open.ac.uk/time-management> (Accessed: 15 September 2026).
- University of York (n.d.) *Manage your time*. Available at: <https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/time-management/> (Accessed: 15 September 2026).
- Cottrell, S. (2019) *The Study Skills Handbook*. 5th edn. London: Red Globe Press.

Discussion of Study Techniques

Study techniques are essential to being successful when completing a university degree. There are many important techniques to help students become successful in their learning, but this piece of writing will be looking at two specific skills - time management and the importance of note taking.

Time management can be useful in helping achieve academic success. There are many different strategies that can be used to manage time effectively when studying and completing assignments. Being organised, creating to-do lists and using a study timetable can help manage study time and complete tasks. 'Good organisation helps time management' Cottrell, 2024.

Cottrell (2024) suggest if you are struggling to have enough time, set priorities. By setting priorities, breaking down assignments and putting task into an order of importance the

workload of assignments can become less stressful. Burns and Sinfield (2022) suggest that listing everything you need to do the less overwhelming and more manageable studying will become.

Secondly, developing effective note taking skills can make writing assignments or revising for exams easier. Honeybourne (2025) suggests that there is no right or wrong way of making notes, as long as they make sense to you. Being able to identify key points and noting this information down in a quick and purposeful way will make the information given easier to read and use effectively when completing work or revising. Greetham (2023) says creating a clear structure will give you the best notes. Finding key words, colouring coding and abbreviations are some ideas that will help create purposeful and clear notes (Greetham, 2023).

In conclusion, these time management and note taking strategies can help make completing assignments or revising for exams a less stressful, making them more manageable and create more effective learning.

Reflection of Using Microsoft 365 Copilot for Academic Study

I have used Microsoft Copilot to research different strategies for two study skills, time management and note taking to help students with their academic studies. This reflection looks at the positives of using AI and how it can be used successfully and responsibly in learning, as well as the challenges and problems I faced when using artificial intelligence.

One positive aspect of using AI is how accessible it is. I found that Microsoft Copilot was very easy to access and was straightforward to use. I was able to access Microsoft Copilot on different devices which was very useful when writing the assignment and finding further research. As this was my first time using Copilot, I found that it was very easy to navigate and easy to understand how to use it correctly. Another aspect of AI that worked well is how time effective it is. I found that it generated the responses very quickly and it provided very clear information.

However, I did face some difficulties when using Microsoft Copilot. First, although it generated the information very quickly, it gave a lot of information. This proved to be unhelpful as I needed to read through the large response to find key information. Another difficulty I faced was thinking of the prompts to ask Copilot. As this was my first time using Microsoft Copilot, it took a few attempts to find the correct questions to ask to get the information I needed.

I feel that Microsoft Copilot can be a useful tool to use for academic studies, if it is used responsibly. It can give quick, useful feedback to the specific questions asked but I found that some of the responses that Copilot gave can be unreliable. To use Copilot responsibly, I would need to research the response further to ensure that the information given is reliable and provide academic readings and sources to verify the findings. This can be time consuming and may be easier to use academic resources in the first instance instead of AI for research purposes.

In the future, I feel that I would only use AI to help with initial ideas as a helpful tool to start and gain an understanding of assignments. However, I would continue to find other academic sources and apply critical thinking skills when using it.

Reference List

Burns, T. (2022) *Essential study skills : the complete guide to success at university* . 5th edition. Edited by S. Sinfield. London ; Los Angeles ;; London ; Los Angeles : SAGE.

Cottrell, S. (2024) *The study skills handbook* . Sixth edition. Edited by Stella Cottrell author. London : Bloomsbury Academic.

Greetham, B. (2023) *How to write better essays* . Fifth edition. Edited by Bryan Greetham 1946- author. London, UK ; New York, NY ;; London, UK ; New York, NY : Bloomsbury Academic.

Honeybourne, V. (2025) *Finding joy in studying : an autistic and ADHD guide to uncovering the study skills that work for you* . Edited by V. Barron. Philadelphia : Jessica Kingsley Publishers.