

Evaluating personal study skills education essay



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For this essay I will be evaluating my own study skills and identifying my strengths and weaknesses using a SWOT analysis technique. Once these issues have been identified any deficiencies will be addressed by way of a diagnostic plan. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats and was created by Albert Humphrey at Stanford University in the 1960's. SWOT Analysis is an effective process for interpreting my Strengths and Weaknesses, and for describing the Opportunities available to me and the Threats hindering me.

In order to be productive when learning study skills must be acquired. Study skills include such things as time management, note taking in lectures, concentration, memorizing and public speaking skills. In addition to assisting me to highlight the skills I need to improve and develop, completing a SWOT analysis will allow me to centre my attention onto the skills where I am already strong.

Study Skills Swot Analysis

Strengths

Note-taking in lectures

Punctuality

Classroom discussions

Researching

Reading

IT skills

Weaknesses

Motivation

Making time to study

Spelling

Time management

Procrastination

Self discipline

Presenting projects

concentration

Exam preparation

Memory

Work experience in the construction industry

technical knowledge

Impatience

Opportunities

Extra help from tutors

Proof reading by graduated colleagues

Use of technology such as recording devices during lectures

Opportunities for personal development

Job shadowing

Engage tutors in providing feedback

Threats

Working late in my part time job can negatively impact on my studies

Long commute to college can affect my time management

Time pressure

Study Skills

Study skills provide a significant contribution to academic success and they are decisive tools for learning. As Devine, (1987) stated:

Study skills encompass a range of coordinated cognitive skills and processes that enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of students' learning"

According to Hoover and Patton (1995), study skills include the competencies associated with acquiring, recording, organising, synthesising, remembering, and using information. These skills help the student to be successful. Studying is a skill and like all skills it involves training and developing by using particular methods that assist the student learn, organise, remember, and apply information. According to Gersten (1998), a lot of students with studying weaknesses simply do not know the "tricks of the trade" that are practiced by more successful students when they study.

A skilled student will use a type of cognitive learning rather than just learning from observing and repetition. Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) discovered several key cognitive techniques that successful students use in order to interpret and help remember information. Some of these were as follows:

Overview before reading

Search for important information and pay more attention to it

Relating important points

Use of prior knowledge

Change the approach of learning when struggling to understand

The reverse is true when dealing with students of a low academic level as they will frequently exhibit weak study skills. As they incline to adopt a more inactive role in studying and tend to rely on other people for example, teachers or parents.

Studying needs both cognitive thinking, as well as self-management skills in order to sustain the students' concentration, effort, and time needed. If these self-management skills are not employed it may be due to inadequate motivation.

Study skills are needed for students to achieve academic success. Good study skills reduce the chance that the student will fail and enable them to make the best of what they are taught. To be competent, students must have a broad range of study skills that they are capable of using.

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Issues to be addressed

Time management relates to an array of skills applied to manage time in order to achieve particular projects, jobs and goals. To improve my time management skills it is important I set individual tasks or goals and break them down into an action plan. An importance rating will be established for each individual task or goal and a deadline set (e. g. Dissertation to be completed by April 26th). This process will result in an extensive plan with a schedule of activities over a daily period. Many time management computer programmes are now available which I would find easier to manage.

Once my goals and tasks have been set and prioritised time management comes down to the efficient scheduling of my time which helps me to keep on track and focused. Scheduling is the procedure of calculating the time available and planning how to use it in order to accomplish the set goals and tasks. With effective scheduling I can make the best use of the time available and gain an understanding of what is achievable in the time allocated.

A leading cause of not being able to concentrate is not being interested in the work. If I'm reading something I really want to, my attention typically will remain. Yet, when I'm learning something that I regard as dull or tedious, I will normally find it hard. At other times my lack of concentration is because I'm tired or a fear of failure. In order to improve my concentration I must improve my work environment by making it more comfortable. Distractions must also be shut out as much as possible (e. g. TV, Radio). I must keep a positive mental attitude for the task and remember my purpose for studying and my ultimate goal.

Motivation is a complex field and self-motivating can be hard. There are basically two types of motivation, intrinsic (Doing something because you enjoy it) and extrinsic motivation (Doing things because of external factors like money etc). I can improve my self-motivation by changing the way I look at a task, and I can associate finishing it with something that's intrinsically pleasing. I will also supply my own rewards, and alter how I approach unavoidable tasks to provide more extrinsic motivation.

When I procrastinate I put off things that I should be focusing on right now, generally in favour of doing something that is more pleasurable. It is normal to procrastinate on occasion. Yet, unreasonable procrastination can lead to feelings of guilt about not completing a task straight away. Additionally, extravagant procrastination can lead to inadequate performance if the task is attempted without enough time to do it competently. In order to break this habit I will make up my own rewards for completing work and ask someone to check up on me to make sure I am carrying out the work needed.

There are a number of tools used to improve memory, these are called mnemonics. Mnemonics are methods for recalling information that is otherwise quite hard to remember. The thought behind practising mnemonics is to encode hard to recollect information in a way that's a great deal easier to recall. The central idea is that by encrypting information utilising pictorial mental images they are easier to remember when you need them. There are three basic principles implicit in the function of mnemonics; imagination, association and location. When you put these three principles together you are able to produce effective mnemonic systems.

To improve my presentation skills I need to address a number of factors. I firstly have to recognise what the audience requires and then I need to develop the content and deliver it in a confident manor to create an overall engaging presentation.

Issue

Personal Action Plan

Time Managment

Set individual goals and tasks. Schedule these tasks on a daily basis

Motivation

Set personal rewards. Positive attitude

Late working hours

Talk to my manager about changing hours

Concentration

Remove distractions. Improve study area

Lack of work experience

Apply for volunteer work or job shadowing

Cognitive Learning

Become less passive and more engaged in learning

Memory

Incorporate mnemonics into my exam revision