

# Independent learner study skills for independent learners education essay



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“ Independent study is a process, a method and a philosophy of education whereby a learner acquires knowledge by his or her own efforts and develops the ability for enquiry and critical evaluation.

Independent learning is a process in which development of values, attitudes, knowledge and skills are needed to make responsible decisions and teach students to take actions individually. Independent learning is promoted by creating study skills, which encourage student’s motivation, curiosity, self-confidence and self-reliance; it is based on students understanding their interests and the value of what they are learning.

In this essay I will identify these study skills required for independent learning. I will discuss these individually further on.

Organisational skills/ time management

Stress management

Critical thinking

Research and information management

### **Organisational skills/time management**

A very good basic technique is being able to mentally and physically prepare yourself for study. Organisation is widely thought to be the key to success in life itself, Let alone in studying. There are various ways of organising ourselves and managing time effectively. Everybody has a slightly different style of learning, so different things will work for different people.

The goal of organising your time is to help become aware of how to use your time.

Developing and planning for blocks of study time in a typical week is a useful way of getting things done. Keeping in mind some difficult material may require more time than others.

Determining a place free from distraction where you can maximize your concentration like the library. Having a simple To Do List will help identify activities, the reasons for doing them and the timeline for getting them done. Referencing back to the list for reminders of upon coming events like assignments and exams etc. a daily planner will help for lectures, labs and other daily routines. A long term planner can help plan ahead for assignments and exams.

The activities motioned above are all well and good for any student to implement but it is not as simple as that. If you do not get organised and start managing you time effectively in the early stage of your studies it will be very hard to do so later on.

Having said the above there are reasons for students not to be organised. Some students may not start work until the deadline starts frightening them. Others may compare it to climbing a mountain; these students may manage to finish their work in time and even get a feedback of their draft work. But they do not leave any time to implement this feedback in their work. Nor are they able to reflect on the feedback. No matter what useful comments the tutor may give these student have not left enough time to act on that

advice. Furthermore because they have not paced themselves properly over <https://assignbuster.com/independent-learner-study-skills-for-independent-learners-education-essay/>

the semester or year they have not given themselves the time to understand new material, to extend their learning with additional research. And to plan, prepare and refine their work. These students never get to reflect on their true potential. And remain unaware of what they can do.

Whilst schools and colleges set homework in university you are on your own. You may be given lists of reading material but that is it. The rest is on the students themselves. Every student must work out how much time they are prepared to give to get the grades they want.

## **Research/ information management**

Tom burns & Sandra Sinfield (2003)

“ Research is about investigating or searching for ideas to increase your knowledge.”

Listening in class, reading textbooks and journals, all involve research for they are all opportunities for engaging with theories and knowledge claims that already exist in the subject area. The purpose of research is to engage with these existing ideas to deepen understanding and to construct arguments within the subject area. By gathering new ideas and information student are adding to their sum of knowledge on the topic. Whilst you may be given information in lectures, classes, seminars and tutorials, this will not be all you need to know on the subject. You are also supposed to develop your knowledge of the subject beyond what the tutor has taught. Therefore you have to read what other thinkers and experts have written on the subject.

There is usually far more information available than you need, you need to make choices about what to read and use. Consider:

### **Your purpose?**

What do you intend to do with each piece of information? Do you really need it? Can you do without it?

### **What you already have?**

Brainstorm your knowledge of the subject or make a list of keywords for the subject. Use this to guide your search for information in the index at the back of books, in catalogues and on the internet.

### **Is it the best source?**

Check whether the source is reliable, up to date, written by experts in the field, and relevant to your needs.

### **Is it the best example?**

You will usually be able to refer to very few examples in your assignments and seminars. As you find more information, the latest information may be better than that you have already collected. Be prepared to put the less valuable information into a separate section which you use only if absolutely necessary. Keep evaluating which material is the most up to date and best for your purposes.

### **How much do you need?**

Usually word limits are strict. You cannot usually make more than a few lines or a paragraph on any one example. Bear this in mind when you make notes

so that you do not record more than you need. This will save you a lot of time.

## **Stress management**

Stress management is also very important for independent students. First step in stress management is to recognise stress. Exhaustion, loss of/increased appetite, headaches, crying, sleeplessness, and oversleeping are evidence of stress. Escape through alcohol, drugs, or other compulsive behaviour are often indications. Feelings of alarm, frustration, or apathy may accompany stress.

Stress Management is the ability to maintain control when situations, people, and events make excessive demands. If there is something that needs to be done to change the situation, that will be a good step. Setting up realistic goals and achieving them in steps instead of at one time. No matter if your studying biology or playing pool it is focus on the task at hand that makes you succeed in your objective. The ability to concentrate and focus attention on a task is an important tool for independent learners. Sometimes the mind can wander off from one thing to the other. Student's worries and outside distractions can affect learning. Reasons for losing concentration include difficult or boring material. A dedicated space with no outside distractions like mobile phones and TV etc. is useful to maximize concentration. Changing subject after an hour keeps the focus in learning by offering variety.

A positive attitude towards learning will give a good advantage to independent learners, recognizing that in order to succeed you need to make

decisions about prioritizing time and resources. Putting things according to priority helps keeps things in check.

## **Critical Thinking/ reflection**

Critical thinking is at the heart of independent learning and professional development and is fundamental for whatever subject you are studying.

They are seen as a transferable skill which employers expect graduates to bring to the workplace from university. They are both developmental and particular to the individual.

By thinking critically independent learners can engage more confidently in debate within their subject area. A well known writer on critical thinking, Jenny Moon, gives the following definition:

“ Critical thinking is a capacity to work with complex ideas whereby a person can make effective provision of evidence to justify a reasonable judgement. The evidence, and therefore the judgement, will pay appropriate attention to context.” (Moon, 2005)

Reflection is a complex set of processes which can empower an individual to recognise their learning opportunities and make the most of them. In its simplest form, reflection is the ability to look back over your experiences and identify significant aspects, such as reasons for success and failure. The important thing, of course, is to then learn from these reflections, by using them to inform practice and future learning.

## **Conclusion**