Essential Tools To Success In Academic Competence

Study skills are essential to succeed in academic competence. Positive outcomes across different academic subjects and success in later life are linked to effective study skills. (Gettinger, Maribeth, Seibert, Jill K., School Psychology Review, 2002, Vol.31 Issue 3, p.350)

Study skills progress and are developed through practice, reflection, experiments, and errors, as well as feedback from others, through the different stages of the educational journey. (Stella Cottrell, the study skills handbook, p. 1)

Study skills consist of time management strategies, notes taking, active listening abilities summarizing, and analyzing technics.

This essay will show how note-taking and learning styles can lead to attaining academic success.

Note-taking is the way of writing down or recording the key points of information. Note-taking is an important part of the research and maybe an essential source for discussion, essay, or revision. A good note will help understand and remember the necessary material; furthermore, it will improve memory and save time.

When it comes to taking notes, there is no good or bad way. Each person needs to figure out the right method and format for herself. Perhaps as stated by Michelle Cowen, Pat Maier & Geraldine Price (Michelle Cowen, Pat Maier & Geraldine Price, 2009), p.91 personal preferences and individual learning styles are the main factors when deciding on the format. Nevertheless, the type of information should be identified at the beginning of the process, based on who would use the material, for instance.

There are linear and non-linear methods of taking notes. In the first one, linear, written information is presented in a linear format, such as sentences and phrases. The most common example of it is the outline method. It requires the use of bullet points, numbers, or arrows to indicate a new subject or a new thought. All matters that belong to a topic are tiered to the structure of the subject. A new topic is written straight beneath the first topic.

The outline method has lots of advantages such as a structured way of the content, visible connection between different subjects as well as focus on notifying and writing down only main issues. Though, good listening and summary abilities are essential skills for a note-taker. (Michelle Cowen, Pat Maier & Geraldine Price , 2009)p.93 If the note taker decides to use this method should be aware to leave some space in case of additional information needed to be inserted between already existing. This is much easier when a computer, not paper is used.

The second group, non-linear note-taking involves the use of space and symbols. Varieties of this format include flow charts, mind maps, spider diagrams.

For instance, the mind mapping method requires creating a logical map that organizes facts, ideas, and information. Each fact is written on paper and arrows are used to connect certain

facts. The main idea would appear at the top of the page and arrows would be leading to other ideas. Mapping notes create a logical sequence of information that all connect together.

Dorthy (2015) claims that mind maps are taken over the traditional linear method as there are more visual and better at stressing connotations between words. As memory is associative mind maps enable us to find links between new and previous ideas in the brain and discover the right idea to grow. Mind maps benefit enhance creativity, improve memory retention and boost problem-solving ability. However, this technic should not be used by people who are extremely logical. As well as a personalized map can be found too difficult to be understood by others.

The most popular method of note-taking especially if the content is more mathematical or scientific is the Cornell system. This method was invented by Walter Pauk in in1940 at Cornell University.

The Cornell method involves dividing the paper into three or four sections. The left side section of the paper is used for writing the main topics, a larger section on the right side is used to write notes, and a section at the bottom to summarise the notes.

Information gathered by the Cornell method has a good visualization. The notes are organized well which allows identifying keywords and key concepts quickly. The material being organized in a good overall picture result in its quicker absorbance.

There are different studies on the effectiveness of the Cornell method. Some of them show that even if students took better notes when using the Cornell system they did not have better achievements. There are lots of studies underlining the benefits of use Cornell note-taking. The researchers claim effectiveness in the organization of students' thoughts that they have been taught and give a better review in recollecting all the information that they have learned. [7] The Cornell note-taking system is not only a fast method of writing notes, but one is able to absorb the information that is given at a faster rate. This results in better exam outcomes [8] and improves student's studying and listening skills. [9

To summarise there is lots of different method of taking notes from lecture or reading. Choosing the right technique depends on the subject and personal preferences. Each method has advantages and disadvantages and more than one method can be used at the same time. What is important, the student needs to take notes with a critical eye, write down the thought and reaction on a specific material, add comments, and connect new ideas with previous ones. This will help remember important details and process your own thoughts on the authors' points. Reflecting and thinking critically over time and adding more details to old notes help to create true knowledge and achieve academic success.