

# Learning for personal development

Issued by [Wits Plus](#)

4 May 2020

Living and working in a knowledge-driven society is the challenging reality that most of us face these days. Jobs change quickly and there seems to be a continuous demand for new skills, more knowledge and higher levels of functioning.



There are many reasons why you might need to improve your qualifications or add to your skills profile: you may want to qualify for a promotion, make a career change or maybe you just want to be sure that you stay abreast of new developments in your industry.

## ***What do you need?***

Study skills can be described as the strategies and methods to manage learning efficiently; they also make up an important set of transferable life skills. Study skills can include time management strategies, notetaking and active listening as well as reading and analytical skills.

Study skills develop over time. For example, some students may retain information better when presented with visuals, while others absorb information efficiently through lectures and even through textbooks. Part of developing good study skills is to acknowledge that people learn in different ways.

## ***Develop your own study skills***

You need to develop your own approach to studying and learning in a way that suits your own individual needs. As you develop your study skills, you will discover what works for you and what doesn't.

Study skills are generic and can be applied to any subject or course. You will, of course, need to understand the concepts, theories and ideas surrounding your specific subject area. To get the most out of your studies, however, you will need to develop your study skills continuously.

Practising and developing your study skills will increase your awareness of how you study and you'll become more

confident. Once mastered, study skills will be beneficial throughout your life. They are transferable life skills that you can apply in all sorts of new contexts and include organisational skills, time management, prioritising, analysing, problem-solving and the self-discipline needed to stay motivated.

### ***Become a critical reader***

We read texts for different purposes. We read to gain information for practical use, for example, a training timetable or a movie listing. We may read fiction to be entertained or newspapers and magazines, print or online, to stay informed about current events.

Unlike most everyday reading though, academic reading should not be seen as a passive activity but rather an active process that develops learning. Reading for learning requires a conscious effort to make links, understand opinions, do research and apply what you learn to your studies.

When you read while studying an academic course, your main goal will be to gather information in order to answer assignment or exam questions. Underlying this is the more important goal of learning and development: to develop your thoughts, to incorporate new ideas into your existing understanding and to develop your knowledge and understanding and ultimately yourself. Learning comes about not just from reading and remembering details but from developing your understanding of the meaning of the details.

### **Company details:**

Wits Plus, the Centre for Part-Time Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, offers selected undergraduate degrees as well as a wide range of short certificate courses. Evening classes make all qualifications accessible to working people and busy entrepreneurs. Wits Plus also offers a range of online short courses in partnership with Digital Campus. Certificates of Competence are awarded to successful participants for both certificate and online short courses.

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### **Websites:**

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