

English for Specific Purposes

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NHSM - Sidi Abdellah-

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Objectifs

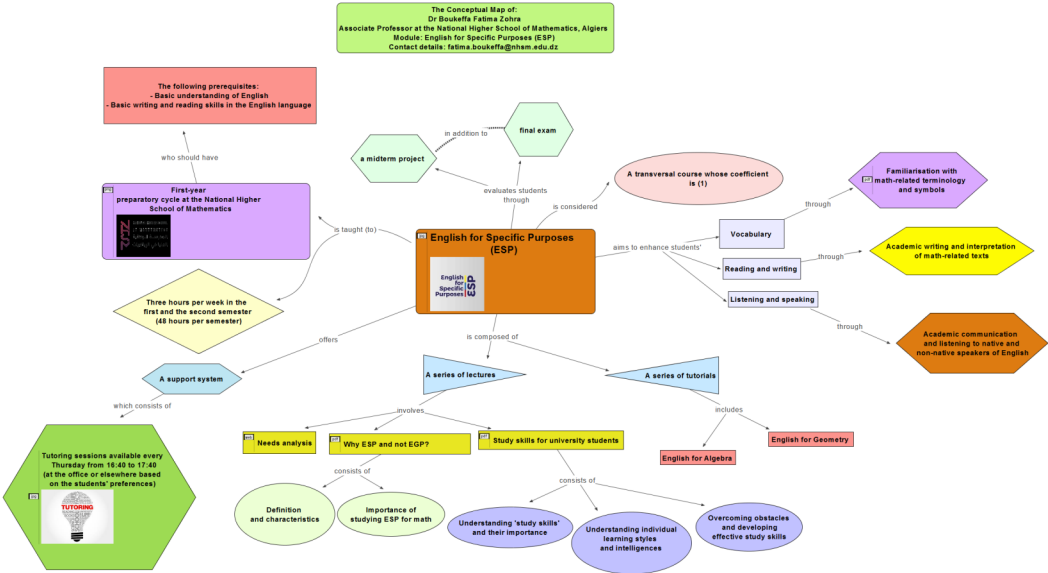


At the end of this whole ESP course, first-year preparatory-cycle students at NHSM will be able to:

- **Understand** study skills and their importance.
- **Recognize** the multiplicity of learning styles and preferences.
- **Outline** the different ways of overcoming academic obstacles.
- **Design** a comprehensive study plan that integrates study skills, personal learning styles and preferences, and strategies to overcome obstacles and cultivate a growth mindset.



Introduction

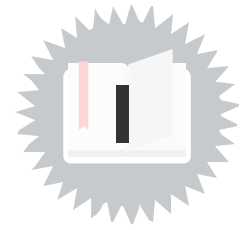


As per the conceptual map shown above which comprises a range of units, it is important to explain to students that our focus in the upcoming three chapters is going to be solely on **study skills** and the elements which, I deem, are related to them.

Mathematics is a field that often evokes a wide range of emotions among students—some are positive, such as excitement and curiosity, and others are negative, such as anxiety and frustration. It is worth noting that mathematics is a subject that requires not just understanding concepts but also applying them to solve problems, often within limited timeframes. Therefore, it is deemed that **effective study skills** are essential for **success in mathematics**, as they can transform the learning experience **from daunting to manageable** and, hopefully, even **enjoyable**. However, in order to successfully adopt study skills, we need to know ourselves at a deeper level. This can include, for example, knowing our **learning styles** and **preferences**, our **type(s) of intelligence**, as well as the difference between having a **fixed** and a **flexible mindset**.

Please, get ready to embark on this journey of exploring the exciting world of study skills.

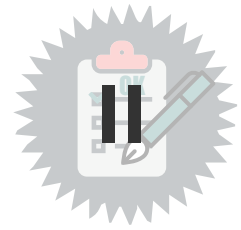
The Prerequisites



To be able to successfully understand the upcoming three chapters specifically, first-year preparatory-cycle students should:

- Be able to **reflect** on their **academic study skills** and **practices**.
- Have **flexibility** and **open-mindedness** to **improve** their study skills and **change** bad academic habits when identified.

The Prerequisites Test



Exercise 1 : Get to know yourself !

[solution n°1 p. 12]

Have you ever faced any challenges that have made your learning process somehow hard?

- a) Yes, definitely
- b) No, at all.
- c) I am not sure whether I have faced any challenge or not.

Exercise 2

[solution n°2 p. 12]

If you ever identify some deficiencies in your study habits, would you be able to work on them?

- a) Yes, I am willing to improve. Yet, I might need some guidance.
- b) No, I find it difficult to change my study habits.

Exercise 3

[solution n°3 p. 12]

To what extent do you agree with this statement: “It is important for any university student to have their own study techniques in order to facilitate their learning process”.

- a) No.
- b) Yes.

The Prerequisites Test : Useful Resources in Case of Failure



Please, check the following websites to level up your skills and be able to better comprehend the course :

- <https://news.coloradoacademy.org/self-reflection-good-thing-students/>
- <https://ctlc.blogs.bristol.ac.uk/2021/10/01/self-reflection-the-what-the-why-and-the-how-by-simon-brownhill/>

Chapter One : Understanding Study Skills and Their Importance



Study skills are the backbone of academic success, providing students with the tools and strategies needed to excel in their studies. In this section, we will explore the significance of study skills and their impact on students' learning outcomes. By understanding the importance of study skills, students can unlock their full potential and achieve their academic goals effectively.

1. The Specific Objectives of This Chapter

At the end of this first chapter, students will be able to:

- Explain the concept of study skills and their importance for academic success.
- Describe the impact of lacking study skills on academic performance.
- Recognize the common obstacles faced by students in their learning process.

2. 'Study Skills' : Let Us Define The Concept



What is a **skill** ? “To be skilled is to be able to perform a learned activity well and at will.” (Cottrel, 2013, p. 36)*.

Study skills, or **study tactics**, are the set of strategies and techniques that students adopt to improve their academic performance and learning efficiency (Cottrel, 2013*). This set of skills includes various practices designed specifically to help students effectively **acquire**, **process**, and **retain information**. At the heart of study skills, we find aspects such as: **time management***, **organization**, **active learning**, **critical thinking***, and the ability to adapt study methods to **individual learning styles**. By mastering these skills, students can improve their comprehension, retention, and application of knowledge across different subjects, including mathematics.



STUDY SKILLS

Study *smarter*, not harder.

Figure 1 : Study Skills Allow You to Study Smarter Not Harder

3. Importance of Study Skills

[cf. Why are 'Study Skills' so Important ?]

First, effective study skills are crucial for students to successfully navigate the ebb and flow of academic life. They could be considered as the foundation upon which students build their academic success, enabling them to absorb, process, and retain information efficiently. By utilizing strategies such as active reading, note-taking, and organization, for example, students can enhance their study sessions, making the most of their time and resources (Cottrel, 2013*, 2019*).

Furthermore, strong study skills are closely related to **improved academic performance**. Students who adopt **effective study habits** tend to excel in both their coursework and examinations. In this vein, techniques such as **time management**, **critical thinking**, and **problem-solving** empower students to approach their assessment and evaluation with both confidence and competence, fruitfully leading to **better academic outcomes**.

Beyond academic achievements, and from a psychological standpoint, developing study skills develops a **sense of confidence** and **self-efficacy** in students. The more they master effective study habits and witness concrete improvements in their academic performance, the more their **self-esteem** grows, making them more **proactive and engaged learners**. It is worthy to mention that this boost in confidence transcends the boundaries of the classroom, positively influencing various aspects of students' lives.

In addition, given that most students in higher education enter the workforce after graduation, acquiring a solid set of study skills in the academic phase is more likely going to prepare them for **future success in their professional lives** too. The skills cultivated during academic pursuits, such as **time management**, **organization**, and **critical thinking**, are highly transferable to professional settings. By mastering these skills early on, students equip themselves with 'the tools of the trade' - i.e., the skills needed to thrive in diverse learning and working environments.

Effective study skills also facilitate adjustment to **the dynamic landscape of education**. In an era that witnesses advancements in technology (e.g., artificial intelligence) and changes in teaching methodologies, students might experience a variety of learning environments and instructional approaches. Hence, solid study skills allow students to navigate these diverse settings with ease, whether in traditional classrooms, online courses, or self-directed learning environments.

Moreover, fostering effective study skills nurtures **a lifelong habit of continuous learning** and **personal growth**. Beyond academic endeavors, individuals with strong study habits are often better equipped to pursue their interests, explore new subjects, and expand their knowledge throughout their lives. This commitment to lifelong learning enriches personal and professional development and fosters a sense of curiosity.

Lastly, effective study skills contribute to the **reduction of stress** and **anxiety** among students.



« too much stress, or poor stress management, can affect your learning, health and well-being. » (Cottrel, 2019, p. 151*).

By implementing techniques such as goal setting, prioritization, and stress management, students can manage their workload more effectively, leading to **a healthier balance** between **academic responsibilities** and **personal well-being**. This reduction in stress levels promotes overall student well-being and enhances their ability to thrive academically and personally.



« It is easier to avoid excess stress if you deal with anxieties and difficulties at an early stage » (Cottrel, 2019, p. 152*).

4. Obstacles Faced by Students Without Study Skills

Students who lack effective study skills often encounter a range of obstacles that hinder their academic progress and success. Among the most common challenges faced by these students are **difficulties in managing time efficiently**. Many struggle to allocate sufficient time to study, leading to last-minute cramming sessions and inadequate preparation for exams and assignments.

Furthermore, **disorganization** is a prevalent issue among students with ineffective study skills. They may struggle to keep track of assignments, deadlines, and study materials, resulting in missed deadlines and incomplete or poorly executed tasks. This lack of organization can contribute to feelings of stress, overwhelm, and a sense of being constantly behind in their coursework.

Another challenge faced by students lacking effective study skills is **poor note-taking** and study habits. Without proper note-taking techniques, students may struggle to capture key concepts during lectures, leading to gaps in their understanding of the material. Additionally, **ineffective study habits**, such as passive reading or re-reading of textbooks, can limit students' ability to engage deeply with the material and retain information effectively.

Ineffective time management, disorganization, and poor study habits can also contribute to feelings of **anxiety** and **low self-confidence** among students. As they struggle to keep up with their coursework and achieve academic success, they may experience a sense of inadequacy and frustration, further undermining their motivation and performance.

Overall, these common challenges faced by students lacking effective study skills highlight the importance of developing and honing these skills to support academic success and overall well-being. By addressing these obstacles and implementing strategies to improve study skills, students can enhance their learning experience, boost their confidence, and achieve their academic goals more effectively.



Figure 2 : Learning Obstacles

5. Exercise : Fill-in the gaps activity : Test your understanding of 'study skills'

[solution n°4 p. 12]

Check your understanding of 'soft skills' by filling in the gaps with words of your own. Please, make sure that the sentences meaningful and coherent.

Part 1: Defining Study Skills

- Study skills are techniques and strategies that help students _____ and _____ information effectively.
- Effective study skills are crucial for math students because they help with understanding complex _____ and solving _____.

6. Exercice : Fill-in the gaps activity : Test your understanding of the importance of 'study skills'

[solution n°5 p. 13]

Check your understanding of the importance of 'soft skills' by filling in the gaps with words of your own. Please, make sure that the sentences meaningful and coherent.

Part 2: Importance of Study Skills

- Good study skills can improve [] and lead to better [] in exams.
- Study skills help students manage their [] and reduce [] by being better organized and prepared.
- Developing strong study skills can increase a student's [] and [] in their academic abilities.

7. Exercice : Fill-in the gaps activity : Let me raise my awareness of the impact of the lack of 'study skills' !

[solution n°6 p. 13]

Check your understanding of the obstacles that students may face in the absence of 'soft skills' by filling in the gaps with words of your own. Please, make sure that the sentences meaningful and coherent.

Part 3: Common Obstacles

- One common obstacle faced by students who lack study skills is [], which can lead to last-minute cramming.
- Another challenge is [], making it difficult to keep track of assignments and deadlines.
- Students without effective study skills might struggle with [], resulting in poor understanding of the material.

8. Exercice : Paragraph writing : Writing time !

Write a maximum of three paragraphs summarizing why you need to adopt study skills as a university student. This is an individual work that needs to be submitted via email on 12-02-2024.


Solutions des exercices



Solution n°1

[exercice p. 6]

Have you ever faced any challenges that have made your learning process somehow hard?

- a) Yes, definitely
 - b) No, at all.
 - c) I am not sure whether I have faced any challenge or not.
-  The students need to show that they have a certain level of self-reflection and self-awareness.

Solution n°2

[exercice p. 6]

If you ever identify some deficiencies in your study habits, would you be able to work on them?

- a) Yes, I am willing to improve. Yet, I might need some guidance.
- b) No, I find it difficult to change my study habits.

Solution n°3

[exercice p. 6]

To what extent do you agree with this statement: “It is important for any university student to have their own study techniques in order to facilitate their learning process”.

- a) No.
- b) Yes.

Solution n°4

[exercice p. 10]

Check your understanding of 'soft skills' by filling in the gaps with words of your own. Please, make sure that the sentences meaningful and coherent.

Part 1: Defining Study Skills

- Study skills are techniques and strategies that help students **retain** and **understand** information effectively.
- Effective study skills are crucial for math students because they help with understanding complex **concepts** and solving **problems**.

Solution n°5

[exercice p. 11]

Check your understanding of the importance of 'soft skills' by filling in the gaps with words of your own. Please, make sure that the sentences meaningful and coherent.

Part 2: Importance of Study Skills

- Good study skills can improve academic performance and lead to better results in exams.
- Study skills help students manage their time and reduce stress by being better organized and prepared.
- Developing strong study skills can increase a student's confidence and proficiency in their academic abilities.

Solution n°6

[exercice p. 11]

Check your understanding of the obstacles that students may face in the absence of 'soft skills' by filling in the gaps with words of your own. Please, make sure that the sentences meaningful and coherent.

Part 3: Common Obstacles

- One common obstacle faced by students who lack study skills is procrastination, which can lead to last-minute cramming.
- Another challenge is disorganization, making it difficult to keep track of assignments and deadlines.
- Students without effective study skills might struggle with comprehension, resulting in poor understanding of the material.

Glossaire



Critical Thinking

The ability to analyze information objectively, evaluate evidence, and make reasoned judgments.

Time Management

The skill of effectively organizing and prioritizing tasks to optimize productivity and efficiency.

Bibliographie



Cottrel, S. (2013) *The Study Skills Handbook* (4th ed.). UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cottrel, S. (2019) *The Study Skills Handbook* (5th ed.). UK: Palgrave Macmillan.