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STUDY SKILLS AND CRITICAL THINKING DEVELOPMENT: THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS

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OVERVIEW

This presentation focuses on crucial study skills and critical thinking development for students to pursue business studies on a university level. These key skills will be viewed for a direct correlation to learning business skills.

Basic study skills reflect a certain organisational style of learning. Moreover, critical thinking development shows the ability to assess and to critique ideas and issues. In both cases, students need to cultivate these skills conducive to their own approach.
As for business studies in a university, study and critical thinking development directly impacts student success. The acquisition of business concept and practice requires a highly developed sense of learning style and assessment skill from the student. Consequently, effective business management skills have a definite relationship to good study and critical thinking processes.

Thus, the essential ideas of study skills and critical thinking development will be reviewed for its link to successful business skills. This discussion suggests the skill relationship provides the solid building blocks for tomorrow's future business leaders — for both Lebanese and global markets.

**PRESENTATION TEXT**

This discussion explores the issues of skill areas for middle to high school students who eventually pursue university business studies.

Two primary skills for young students are study skills and critical thinking development. It is suggested that these two basic skill areas impact directly on learning business skills inherent to any university business degree programmes whether it be in United Kingdom, United States, Europe or the Middle East.

One might contend that study skills and critical thinking development are important for pursuing any university degree. There can be no basic argument with this premise. Why, then, would one focus on these skills and their specific relationship to business skills? From the Business English Trainer viewpoint, there is a clear connection between study skills and critical thinking development — to learning business skills. Moreover, it is proposed that student success in university business programmes is dependent upon this skill cultivation.

First of all, what is meant by study skills? One can think of his own organisational learning style to find his most beneficial learning process. For students this is typically exemplified by note-taking ability, and reading for gist with skimming, scanning and outlining. Study skills also involve whether the student studies alone or with a group and using research tools such as libraries and the internet. In middle and high school curriculum it is important that the students receive the maximum opportunity to develop this sense of a personal learning method. Study skills can then reflect student
centred learning which lays the building blocks for student confidence and self-esteem.

Secondly, what is the importance of critical thinking development? In the formative middle and high school years, the students learn to express evaluative points of view. Engaging in active listening, they consider all aspects of an issue whether they be positive or negative. The students are encouraged to ask «why» as they build their logic and rationale. The student input is deemed unique, constructive and meaningful among their peers. As in the case of study skills, critical thinking development is essential for student self-worth. Also, this beneficial process decreases competition as it increases cooperation.

With a basis of study skills and critical thinking development, what connection can be drawn to business skill leasing? If the student has mastered solid organisational learning and thinking skills, then he will be better prepared to grasp the concept and actualisation of key business competencies:

1. Strategic planning
2. Taking initiative
3. Decision-making
4. Problem-solving
5. Analysis
6. Formulating action plans
7. Managing people
8. Managing operations
9. Managing information
10. Maintaining self-development

Moreover, the issue of student self-confidence is directly linked to professional self-esteem. In a business university programme, the students learn to expand their self-image to the business context. They extrapolate professional self-esteem affecting the company’s reputation, interaction with colleagues and clients/customers, and also the overall corporate culture.

With a solid cultivation of study skills and critical thinking development, the students bring these learning tools to their university business studies.
They already have a vital basis to grasp business ideas, primarily strategic thinking and transparent decision-making. The students apply these concepts to both the personal and organisational level. Thus, there is an important relationship found in study skills, critical thinking development and business skill learning.

The current global business environment is volatile and unstable. Political and economic factors play heavily into the markets, but also there is the added element of rampant corporate scandal. Today’s business climate demands transparency, responsibility and accountability from the entire organisation: from management to low-level employees. These arduous business conditions are redefining effective management and good business practices. Hence, the cultivation of student skills can lay the foundation for successful future business leaders — of Lebanon — to meet this challenge of a complex global market.

REFERENCES

