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*Инглиз тили ва адабиёти кафедраси*

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**Ўқув-услубий мажмуа  
«Independent Study Skills»**

Ушбу ўқув-услубий мажмуа замонавий педагогик технологиялар асосида, олий таълим муассасалари филология факультетлари чет тиллар (инглиз тили мутахассислик) кафедрасининг “Мустақил таълим кўникмалари” фани ўқув дастури асосида тайёрланган. Ўқув-услубий мажмуа Гулистон давлат университети Ўқув-услубий кенгаши томонидан тавсия этилган (Баённома № \_\_\_\_ «\_\_\_\_» \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_ йил).

**Тузувчи:** *Хакимова Ш.*

**Тақризчилар:**

*Тожиёв Х.* – ф.ф.н., Инглиз тили ва адабиёти кафедраси доценти;

*Рашидов А.* – Инглиз тили ва адабиёти кафедраси мудири.

# CONTENTS

<b>1. Syllabus</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Theoretical Materials</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>3. Presentations</b> .....	<b>69</b>
<b>4. Hand-outs for Independent Study</b> .....	<b>149</b>
<b>5. Materials for Practical Sessions</b> .....	<b>168</b>
<b>6. Laboratory Works</b> .....	<b>206</b>
<b>7. Glossary</b> .....	<b>207</b>

# 1. Syllabus

## Кириш

Олий таълимнинг Давлат таълим стандартига кўра “Педагогика” таълим соҳасида ўқитиладиган “Мустақил таълим кўникмалари” фани дастури хорижий тилни ўрганишда зарур бўладиган мустақил таълим кўникмалари ва тиглаш гапириш амалиёти тушунчаларини ўз ичига олади.

## Фаннинг мақсад ва вазифалари

Мустақил таълим кўникмалари модули талабаларни олий таълим тизимида ўқиш жараёни ҳамда фанлараро боғлиқлик масалалари билан таништиради. Жумладан, ўқиш билан боғлиқ рефлексия, мустақил қарор қабул қилиш, ўзини англаш, билимларини мустақил равишда мустаҳкамлаш, университет ҳаёти ва ўқиш жараёни, вақтни тўғри режалаштириш каби масалаларни ўз ичига олади.

Мустақил таълим кўникмалари модули ўқув режадаги бошқа фанларнинг таркибий қисми саналади. Мазкур фанни ўқитишда фанлараро боғлиқликка жиддий эътиборга қаратилади. Фан 1 семестр давомида ўқитилади.

## Фан бўйича талабанинг малакасига қўйиладиган талаблар

Талаба:

- олий таълим муассасасида таълим олишнинг ўзига хос жиҳатлари;

- ўз шахсий хусусиятларидан келиб чиқиб, ўқиш ва ўрганиш усуллари танлаш мустақил танлаш;
- таълим олишда рефлексиянинг аҳамиятини тушуниш;
- ўз-ўзини баҳолаш, билимларини такомиллаштириш учун мақсад ва келгуси режаларни туза олиш;
- олий таълим тизимидаги ўқув жараёнига ўз вақтини тўғри режалаштириш, стресс билан курашиш, вазифаларни ўз вақтида бажариш ва имтиҳонларга тайёргарлик кўриш;
- таълим олиш, шунингдек, келгуси касбий фаолияти билан боғлиқ малака ва кўникмаларини мунтазам такомиллаштириб бориш йўллари ўрганади.

### **Фанни ўқитишда замонавий ахборот ва педагогик технологиялар**

- амалий вазифалар;
- мустақил ўқиш;
- долзарб мавзулар муҳокамаси;
- матнлар /мақолалар/видео материалларни биргаликда танқидий муҳокама қилиш;
- таълим олиш жараёнига одатланиш;
- талаба портфолиоси

### **Кутилаётган натижалар**

Курс якунига келиб талаба:

- мустақил таълим олиш тушунчаси ҳақида тасаввурга эга бўлади;

- таълим олиш жараёнида мустақил таълимнинг турли стратегияларидан фойдаланади ва уларни татбиқ эта олади.

### **Фаннинг амалий машғулоти мазмуни**

- Мустақил бўлишга ҳаракат қилиш
  - умумий ўрта ва ўрта махсус (мактаб, лицей, коллеж ва олий таълим тизимларида ўқув жараёни ва уларнинг фарқли жиҳатлари;
  - ўқитувчига тобалик тамойилидан талаба мустақиллигига томон йўл;
  - мустақил бўлиш (билимларни мустақил ўзлаштириш) аҳамияти;
- Таълим олиш услублари ва мойилликлари
  - сенсор таълим услублари (визуал, аудио, кинестет, тактил);
  - таълим услубларининг Хани ва Мамфорд таснифи (назариётчи, активист, рефлексор, прагматик);
  - интроверт ва экстраверт;
  - яхши билим олиш учун таълимнинг самарали услубларидан оқилона фойдаланиш.
- Ўз- ўзини баҳолаш
  - ўзининг тил билиш даражасини умумэтироф этилган халқаро меъёрлар (CEFR) га мувофиқ баҳолаш;
- Мақсадларни тўғри қўйиш

- SMART мақсадлар;
- чет тилини ўрганишдан мақсадни тўғри белгилаш

#### Рефлексия:

- таълим муассасаси ва ундан ташқарида вақтдан унумли фойдаланиш;
- стресс (руҳий зўриқиш) га қарши курашиш;

#### Вазифалар устида ишлаш

- вазифаларни аниқлаш ва персонализация қилиш;
  - кутубхоналардан унумли фойдаланиш;
  - интернетдан мақсадли ва самарали фойдаланиш;
  - плагиат (кўчирмакашлик) га йўл қўймаслик.
- 
- хотирани яхшилаш;
  - имтиҳон ва тестга тайёргарлик кўриш;
  - келгуси ишларни режалаштириш;
  - таълим кўникмаларини босқичма-босқич эгаллаб бориш;
  - мустақил бўлишга ҳаракат қилиш.

**“Мустақил таълим кўникмалари”**

**(Independent study skills)**

**фанидан машғулотларнинг мавзулар ва соатлар буйича**

**тақсимланиши:**

<b>Т/р</b>	<b>Ой</b>	<b>Машғулот турлари</b>	<b>Мавзу номи</b>	<b>Қўшимча маълумот</b>	<b>Ажратилган соат</b>
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Сентябрь	амалий	Course Requirements and Intro to Study Skills	<i>Presenting the syllabus, assessment specifications &amp; The Study Power system overview</i>	2
2		амалий	Self-assessment. Learner Autonomy	<i>Assessing language skills using CEFR.</i>	4
3		амалий	Setting Goals and Decision Making	<i>Exploring the SMART system</i>	4
4		амалий	Time Management. Learning styles.	<i>Defining students' physiological learning styles</i>	4
5	Октябрь	амалий	Study skills. Note Taking & Its Strategies	<i>Making the most of the library.</i>	4

6		амалий	Improving Transferable and language skills.(Improving reading skills)	<i>Practicing the various types of reading</i>	4	
Оралиқ назорат						
7		амалий	Avoiding Plagiarism. Referencing, Paraphrasing & Summarizing	<i>Defining plagiarism; introducing APA and strategies to avoid it</i>	4	
8		амалий	Concentration and Memory. Difficulties with Them	<i>Maximizing SS' concentration span and memory capacity</i>	4	
9		Ноябрь	амалий	Avoiding Test Anxiety and Test Taking	<i>Maximizing the potential to succeed on tests</i>	4
10	амалий		Making Effective Presentations	<i>Presentation design and delivery</i>	4	
Яқуний назорат						

## Талабалар билимини баҳолаш шакллари

<b>Жорий назорат:</b>	<b>40%</b>
ЖБ 1: CEFR таснифи асосида уз-уздини баҳолаш ва йиллик режа ишлаб чиқиш	15 %
ЖБ 2: Кейс стади: <i>Яхши талабанинг хусусиятлари</i>	15 %
ЖБ 3: Талабанинг дарсдаги иштироки (баҳолаш мезонига қаралсин)	10%
<b>Оралик назорат:</b>	
Кутубхона тадқиқ этиш ва ундан фойдаланишнинг самарали йўл ва усуллари ёритиб бериш.	<b>30%</b>
<b>Якуний назорат:</b>	<b>30 %</b>
Талаба портфолиоси	

### Фойдаланиладиган адабиётлар:

- Cottrell, S. *The Study Skills Handbook*. – Hampshire: Palgrave, 1999  
Cottrell, S. *Skills for Success*. – Hampshire: Palgrave, 2003  
*ELA Guide*. – Tashkent: British Council, 2009

## **2. THEORETICAL MATERIALS**

### **THEME 1. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND INTRO TO STUDY SKILLS**

Many students find that studying at university involves new ways of learning and relating to others. Some students come to the school having experienced traditional and perhaps very formal education systems where the tutor's role is to transmit information to the student who is then expected to learn and then repeat this information in assignments, dissertations or examinations. This is not the way in which learning takes place at the University. At this university you are expected and encouraged to critically think about ideas and then discuss and debate them with your peers and tutors. Students who achieve high marks are those who study relevant information sources, think critically about their findings, discuss and debate them, and then construct their own valid perspective. The first section in this chapter explains the different types of learning and teaching activities within the school, and what you can expect in them.

#### **Becoming an independent learner**

During your time in the Business School you will develop your skills as an independent learner.

What is an independent learner?

Independent learners are motivated to learn. They accept responsibility for their own learning and have the confidence to approach others for help if they need it. Independent learners manage their learning processes effectively. This includes

- identifying what they want to learn, for example, reading the learning outcomes in the module handbook

- identifying how they are going to learn, for example, individual study, working with a friend, asking for help
- managing time, stress and other commitments
- using a wide range of learning opportunities and resources, for example, using appropriate printed and electronic sources
- adapting the learning process to make use of new opportunities

Independent learners are able to monitor and reflect critically on how and what they learn. Through this they develop an awareness that helps them to learn with increasing effectiveness. They also demonstrate a more questioning attitude to what they are learning. The last point is an important one. In the education system students are expected to discuss and debate ideas with their tutors; you are not expected to accept passively the ideas and concepts presented by your tutor. Learning is an active process and you are expected to engage in it during seminars, tutorials and private study sessions.

The following questionnaire will help you to identify and think about your approach to study. Please complete this questionnaire and then reflect on your findings. How can you help yourself to develop as an independent learner?

**Developing yourself as an independent learner**

The aim of this questionnaire is to help you to think about your approach to learning.

When answering these questions you might like to think about a particular learning situation, e.g. learning a particular subject, or you may answer them in relation to how you generally approach learning.

Everyone is unique and there is no 'right' approach to learning. By learning how we learn and by exploring new and different approaches to learning it is possible to become even more effective learners. We hope that this questionnaire will help stimulate your learning.

## **Study techniques**

When deadlines loom, the common reaction is to run and hide. Nevertheless, burying your head in the sand isn't going to get you those top marks.

- *Check out these tips for some useful techniques on how to work smarter:*
- *Consider what you are learning and prioritise it so that you work on small chunks at a time. This way you will not feel overwhelmed by what needs to be done.*
- *Think about when you work. Set a period of time, perhaps 40 minutes to an hour and work when you are at your most alert. For some this can be the morning.*
- *Where will you be working? To study effectively, ideally you will need a quiet, organised study space. This could be in your bedroom or the library. Try to avoid noisy places with distractions such as bars and cafes.*
- *How do you work best? Studying 24 hours a day will not necessarily get you the grades as your brain will eventually switch off. Many students finding working in short blocks followed by regular breaks helps them to focus better.*
- *Finally, if you feel you have worked hard, do not forget to reward yourself with an edible treat, a bit of television or a walk in the park. This will help motivate you and keep your morale up.*

## **Top tips for independent learning**

Top tips for independent learning Independent or self-directed learning is an important skill whether you plan to continue your studies after school or college or enter the world of work.

What is independent learning?

Independent learning is when an individual is able to think, act and pursue their own studies autonomously, without the same levels of support you receive from a teacher at school. In other words, you need to be able to do your own research instead of expecting a teacher to give you all the background material you might need. To become a good independent learner you need to be:

- *Motivated*
- *Resilient, to overcome challenges*
- *An excellent time manager*

Why is independent learning important?

Independent learning is not just important to become a good student.

The skills you gain are transferrable to most jobs. These include:

- *Motivation*
- *Independence*
- *Initiative*
- *Time management*
- *Organisation and multi-tasking*
- *Strong reading and writing skills*

How can I become an independent learner?

Active reader: You will need to be an active reader, paying close attention to the words you are reading and their meaning.

Skim read: Speed read or skim material before reading it in detail and then summarising the text in your notes.

Go solo: Practice working on your own for long periods of time without seeking the help of an adult.

Different sources: When doing research, try to draw from a variety of different sources.

Be persistent: If a task is challenging, do not give up. Keep at it until you understand what you need to do.

Seek help where necessary: Asking for support and advice is an important part of independent learning. Unlike school, you are unlikely to

be spoon-fed all the information you need in work or at university. If you need help, ask for it!

**Discussions:** If you want to expand an argument but are stuck for ideas, get a debate going with friends or peers. This could help you think about an element you had not considered before.

**Set goals:** A good way to keep your motivation up is to think what you want to get out of your work and remind yourself next time you are flagging.

**Effective time management:** In work or uni studies, you are more than likely to have several pieces of work to juggle at any one time. Break each project down into the relevant tasks, work out how long you will need to spend on each part, and then allocate time in your diary in order or priority.

Several people have asked what I mean by the term “independent learning” as a focus for this blog.

I have not defined it so far because it is difficult to encapsulate within a sentence.

Some people prefer the term “self-directed learning” because it avoids the (mistaken) assumption that independent learning means working alone.

I prefer independent learning. I am interested in not only the concept but also how the term is used in practice. For example, some US universities use it to refer to their online or distance learning departments (e.g. University of Wisconsin Independent Learning). These are the sorts of learning experiences I am interested in, however I think of them as “independent study” rather than “independent learning.”

### **Independent Study vs Independent Learning**

I think of “independent study” as a specific activity synonymous with distance learning. It designates work carried out away from the direct supervision of a tutor. However, such distinctions are becoming

problematic. Students can now mix on-site courses with online courses and blended learning is becoming increasingly popular. In this context it is likely that terms such as “distance learning”, “independent study/learning” and even “elearning” will lose their significance.

Whatever label is used, it is important to distinguish between independent study/learning meaning the organization of courses, and the actual process of learning.

### **A starting definition**

There are lots of definitions for independent learning. A useful starting point from is from Philip Candy:

*“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”.*

I like this definition because it includes process, method and philosophy. Many definitions focus on method without reference to philosophy which can lead to a narrow view of independent learning.

### **Philosophies of Education**

Independent learning means different things according to one’s philosophy of education. This is particularly true at high school level. Some people argue students should choose their topics of study to be truly independent learners. Others assume independent learning is the outcome of successfully completing homework and passing exams.

In the diagram below student choice is only a characteristic of schools in quadrant A. This might include holistic schools and centers for students who have not done well in mainstream schools. “Mainstream” in this context refers to schools with a traditional curriculum set by the state. It also includes private schools who follow broadly the same curriculum as

state schools. Quadrant C is small and includes private faith schools with conservative values where adherence to a particular religious doctrine is the central aim.

### **Independent Learning Quadrant**

The majority of state schools in Britain and the USA fall into quadrants B and D with a centrally controlled curriculum and testing structure. Students are not free to choose their curriculum but there is a great deal of variety in how teaching and student staff relations are structured. In this respect there are major differences between B and D. The organization of teaching and learning in quadrant B is more compatible with the skills described in the next section.

### **The Skills of Independent Learning**

A review of the literature on independent learning identifies three related skills areas of independent learning: cognitive, metacognitive and affective. These skills are shown in the diagram below:

### **Independent Learning**

This model is helpful because it can be applied from elementary level to university and beyond. Obviously, a five year-old is unlikely to describe learning by recourse to sophisticated ideas. However Meyers et al. cite research in the UK and US to suggest that children as young as six are able to talk about and reflect on learning.

All the skills areas can be incorporated into teaching with an awareness of age appropriateness. They can also be used by adult learners to develop effective learning strategies that are not simply repetitions of ill-remembered techniques from their own school days.

## **Can Independent Learning be Taught?**

I do not think there should be a subject called “independent learning.” These skills are necessary for all subjects and for the most part can be built into teaching, although this will be more difficult for schools in quadrants C and D in the diagram above. That said, the importance of the quality of the individual teacher is of paramount importance. I’ve met teachers at the most “alternative” end of progressive education who would struggle to incorporate practical teaching strategies to support independent learning. I also know teachers in mainstream American schools with the most dynamic innovative practices.

Whatever the stated aims of a school, teaching needs to facilitate the development of certain skills for students to become independent learners. It is not enough to have a homework policy and assume that independent learning will naturally develop.

## **What about Adult Learners?**

The good news is that a great deal has been discovered about how people learn. Research in brain imaging, cognitive psychology and educational research have all contributed to a better understanding of how people study.

Most of the skills described in this diagram are more accessible to adult learners with the advantage of experience.

In addition, for many people learning as an adult is infinitely more rewarding than at school because they can control what and how they study.

This blog will carry reviews of resources that I think are particularly useful for those who have chosen to pursue learning at any stage of life.

Next week I will review a new book called *Make It Stick* by Peter Brown and Henry Roedinger. It has the sort of advice that would have

saved me a huge amount of wasted effort when revising for various exams. These are the sorts of resources that can make studying for both adults and children much more effective.

## **THEME 2. SELF-ASSESSMENT. LEARNER AUTONOMY**

### **Peer and Self-Assessment of Student Work**

“Peer assessment, in which students comment on and judge their colleagues’ work, has a vital role to play in formative assessment, but it can also be used as a component in a summative assessment package.

One of the desirable outcomes of education should be an increased ability in the learner to make independent judgments of their own and others’ work. Peer and self-assessment exercises are seen as means by which these general skills can be developed and practiced. A peer-rating format can encourage a greater sense of involvement and responsibility, establish a clearer framework and promote excellence, direct attention to skills and learning and provide increased feedback.

In terms of summative assessment, studies have found student ratings of their colleagues to be both reliable and valid. Orpen found no difference between lecturer and student ratings of assignments in terms of average ratings, variations in ratings, agreement in ratings or relationship between ratings. Arnold et al. reported that peer ratings of medical students were internally consistent, unbiased and valid. Other studies suggest there is variation according to factors such as age of the student.”

### **Self and Peer Assessment – Advantages and Disadvantages**

“Group work can be more successful when students are involved in developing the assessment process. This may include establishing their own assessment criteria through consultation with teaching staff.

Alternatively you can provide students with sample self and/or peer assessment criteria.

The main aims of self and peer assessment are to:

- *Increase student responsibility and autonomy*
- *Strive for a more advanced and deeper understanding of the subject matter, skills and processes*
- *Lift the role and status of the student from passive learner to active learner and assessor (this also encourages a deeper approach to learning)*
- *Involve students in critical reflection*
- *Develop in students a better understanding of their own subjectivity and judgment.*

### **Peer assessment**

Students individually assess each other's contribution using a predetermined list of criteria.

Grading is based on a predetermined process, but most commonly it is an average of the marks awarded by members of the group.

Advantages:

- *Agreed marking criteria means there can be little confusion about assignment outcomes and expectations.*
- *Encourages student involvement and responsibility.*
- *Encourages students to reflect on their role and contribution to the process of the group work.*
- *Focuses on the development of student's judgment skills.*
- *Students are involved in the process and are encouraged to take part ownership of this process.*
- *Provides more relevant feedback to students as it is generated by their peers.*

*•It is considered fair by some students, because each student is judged on their own contribution.*

*•When operating successfully can reduce a lecturer's marking load.*

*•Can help reduce the 'free rider' problem as students are aware that their contribution will be graded by their peers.*

Disadvantages:

*•Additional briefing time can increase a lecturer's workload.*

*•The process has a degree of risk with respect to reliability of grades as peer pressure to apply elevated grades or friendships may influence the assessment, though this can be reduced if students can submit their assessments independent of the group.*

*•Students will have a tendency to award everyone the same mark.*

*•Students feel ill equipped to undertake the assessment.*

*•Students may be reluctant to make judgements regarding their peers.*

*•At the other extreme students may be discriminated against if students 'gang up' against one group member.*

### **Self-assessment**

This is similar to peer evaluation but students assess their own contribution as well as their peers using an established set of criteria.

Advantages:

*•Encourages student involvement and responsibility.*

*•Encourages students to reflect on their role and contribution to the process of the group work.*

*•Allows students to see and reflect on their peers' assessment of their contribution.*

*•Focuses on the development of student's judgment skills.*

Disadvantages:

*•Potentially increases lecturer workload by needing to brief students on the process as well as on-going guidance on performing self-evaluation.*

*•Self evaluation has a risk of being perceived as a process of presenting inflated grades and being unreliable.*

*•Students feel ill equipped to undertake the assessment.*

### **Implementing Self-Assessment**

Students can become better language learners when they engage in deliberate thought about what they are learning and how they are learning it. In this kind of reflection, students step back from the learning process to think about their language learning strategies and their progress as language learners. Such self-assessment encourages students to become independent learners and can increase their motivation.

### **Goal setting**

Goal setting is essential because students can evaluate their progress more clearly when they have targets against which to measure their performance. In addition, students' motivation to learn increases when they have self-defined, and therefore relevant, learning goals.

At first, students tend to create lofty long-range goals (“to speak Russian”) that do not lend themselves to self-assessment. To help students develop realistic, short-term, attainable goals, instructors can use a framework like SMART goals outline (see attached).

One way to begin the process of introducing students to self-assessment is to create student-teacher contracts. Contracts are written agreements between students and instructors, which commonly involve determining the number and type of assignments that are required for particular grades. For example, a student may agree to work toward the

grade of "B" by completing a specific number of assignments at a level of quality described by the instructor.

Contracts can serve as a good way of helping students to begin to consider establishing goals for themselves as language learners.

### **Guided practice with assessment tools**

Students do not learn to monitor or assess their learning on their own; they need to be taught strategies for self-monitoring and self-assessment. The instructor models the technique (use of a checklist or rubric, for example); students then try the technique themselves; finally, students discuss whether and how well the technique worked and what to do differently next time.

In addition to checklists and rubrics for specific communication tasks, students can also use broader self-assessment tools to reflect on topics they have studied, skills they have learned, their study habits, and their sense of their overall strengths and weaknesses.

Students can share their self-assessments with a peer or in a small group, with instructions that they compare their impressions with other criteria such as test scores, teacher evaluations, and peers' opinions. This kind of practice helps students to be aware of their learning. It also informs the teacher about students' thoughts on their progress, and gives the teacher feedback about course content and instruction.”

## **THEME 3. SETTING GOALS AND DECISION MAKING**

### **Seven Steps to Setting Achievable Goals for Successful Learning**

1. *Put the goal down so it takes a physical form.*
2. *Make sure the goal is framed in a positive way in your mind, as well as on the page.*

3. *Make the goal sensory specific. How does it feel to get there?*

*What do you see/hear when it is achieved?*

4. *Make more than one plan to get to the goal.*

5. *It should be realistic. (Challenging, perhaps but obtainable.)*

6. *Break down the plan you choose into smaller steps or chunks.*

7. *Get some help if going it alone seems too overwhelming or shows signs of not working.*

## **10 Takeaway Tips Goal Setting**

1. *Goals are a useful tool to monitor your progress and feel like you are achieving something. Setting clear goals, whether for the day e.g. to read and make notes on two sources from your reading list, or for the semester e.g. to get above a certain mark in your assessments, they are an excellent way to keep your mind focused.*

2. *Be clear of your intentions. What is there to gain from completing your goal and to lose if you do not?*

3. *Write your goals down so that they are visual and clear in your mind. Ticking them off when completed will also give you a sense of accomplishment.*

4. *Tell other people about your goals so they can be supportive and help keep you motivated. Motivation can be vital to success when you are stressed or frustrated. Stay focused on what you are trying to achieve and how it will feel when you do.*

5. *Make sure all your goals are SMART; specific, measurable, action-based, realistic and timely. For more information on this see our online resource 'Using SMART goals'.*

6. *Don't make your goals too easy as this won't challenge you, but also making them so hard that they are simply unachievable can be demotivating. It is important to be realistic.*

7. *Think about what potential obstacles could deter you from completing your goal. How will you overcome these?*

8. *You may find you experience conflicting goals during busy periods in your life. It can be useful to prioritise by dividing goals into 3 groups;*

1) *crucial goals – these must be accomplished in order for you to succeed e.g. to progress into the next year of your studies*

2) *enabling goals – ones which contribute to your crucial goals e.g. meeting an assignment deadline*

3) *nice-to-haves – ones which could enhance your experience but are not vital to complete e.g. colour coding all your notes.*

9. *If a goal seems overwhelming break it down into smaller subtasks; long term goals are likely to be made up of lots of short-term steps. E.g. if you wanted to achieve a certain mark in your assessments what steps would you need to take to make this goal a reality?*

10. *Be self-aware and reflect on how you are progressing. Are you on track to meet your target? If not, why not and what actions can you take to ensure that you do? Reflection can also be useful once you have completed your goal. For example, what went well and what didn't? Were you realistic about your timeline? This can help you to set better goals for yourself in the future.*

## **THEME 4. TIME MANAGEMENT. LEARNING STYLES**

### **Managing your time at university**

Managing your time at university As a university student you will have to be quite self-motivated and able to manage your time effectively enough to get all your work done. To help you, read on to find out how your time at uni might be spent and some top tips to help keep you on track.

## **Private study**

At university, you are in charge of your time outside lectures. Whilst a personal tutor may be available, it is generally up to you to get motivated and direct your own learning.

You may not have as many essays as students on other courses, so there is no pressure to do private study but be disciplined as it will pay off!

### **Tips:**

- *Do not be afraid to ask your personal tutor for help or advice on how much time you should spend in private study.*
- *Depending on which course you study, your timetable might change regularly. If that is the case look at what you have to attend at the start of the week and plan your private study around that.*
- *Try to get into a routine of writing up and reading your lecture notes straight away, rather than filing them away until the end of year exams. This way, you learn more as you go and will not be as panicked when you get to the exams!*

## **Assessment and revision**

It is very important that you allow enough time to prepare for approaching exams and revision. The private study tips above will help you with this but there are also a few other things you might find useful.

### **Tips:**

- *See if you can look at previous exam papers so you can practice.*
- *Try out different revision styles to see what suits you – group revision can break the boredom, flash cards and post-it notes*

*could help you remember the key points. Your style may be different to what you did at school.*

- *You will not be able to make as many notes as you did at school – there is so much content, it's best to annotate lecture notes.*
- *Do not leave essays until the last minute!*
- *Use the search function on this site to discover many more revision tips and tricks.*

## **Your timetable**

Your timetable may often change from week to week and term to term. Remember that you will be expected to do a certain number of hours doing private study alongside contact hours at university.

These contact hours will likely be split into different types of teaching; lectures, seminars / tutorials (smaller groups than lectures), practical sessions / work experience.

The actual amount of contact hours you will have at university will depend on your course. Some arts, humanities and social science subjects (and Masters) will have fewer lessons but will require you to do more study at home (reading set texts or writing essays).

## **Time management tips**

Time management tips Too much to do and not enough time to do it in? Sounds like you need some time management advice. Read on to become a time lord and not a time loser.

Check out our **top 10 time management tips** for working as productively as possible and put them into practice.

### **1: Avoid interruptions**

Switch off your phone, and try to find a quiet study space away from distractions. If you struggle to avoid interruption, try setting a timer and doing 25 minute bursts of focused work followed by 5 minute breaks. This can make it easier, because if something does distract you, you know you can deal with it during your next break.

## **2: Divide and conquer**

It can be hard to know when to start, but if you break jobs down into smaller tasks, which you tackle one-by-one, things will become much easier. If you are not sure how to do this, write a list of everything you need to do to complete an assignment. Put it in the correct order then tackle it headfirst!

## **3: Set targets**

Set yourself work targets that are specific, achievable and realistic. Saying you are going to work solidly for 12 hours isn't any of the above. Remember, short bursts of productivity are more effective than long slogs.

## **4: Start a time planner or timetable**

Each week create a time planner or timetable of the things you need to do. Whenever you are set new work, set time for it in the planner. This way you will be more in control of your time and work and will avoid stressful situations where you rush your work the night before it's due.

## **5: To do list**

At the end of every day, make a 'to do' list for the next day, and use that as the basis for your work. It is satisfying to tick off your tasks as you complete them.

## **6: Keep your energy levels up**

Some ways to keep your energy levels up include drinking enough water and keeping active. Make sure you move about during break times to get the oxygen pumping round your brain.

Also, remember to avoid sugary snacks and high-energy drinks which are packed with sugar and which give you highs and lows. Yoghurt and fruits are much more effective. They release energy more slowly throughout the day and keep you alert.

## **7: Be inspired**

Use post-it notes, inspiring quotes, images, and visual reminders on your wall to keep you focused. Perhaps even decide now what you want to get out of school. If you want good exam results to go to university, remind yourself of that goal the next time you are lacking in motivation.

## **8: R and R**

If you want to be a good time manager, you need to find time for some rest and relaxation. Always ensure you get enough sleep- about 8 hours is healthy.

You should also try to find time to relax in the evenings after school or college. This will help you sleep and feel more refreshed for the next day.

## **9: The half hour rule**

The next time you get in from school, spend half an hour getting started on some work or just thinking about the homework you were given that day.

That way if you then go out with your mates, play video games or watch telly, you will know what is urgent and can start planning your next

steps in order to get the work done to the best of your ability and handed in on time...

### **10: Do not be afraid to say no**

In an ideal world, it would be great to do everything; go out with friends, join sports clubs and ace the exams. Nevertheless, you have to be realistic.

If you feel that, there is pressure to do things outside of school, which you do not think you have time for, just be honest. The chances are your mates will follow your lead!

*Managing time is an important skill for independent learning. This post looks at Toggl, a free online tool that can help you monitor and improve your study skills.*

### **What is Toggl?**

Toggl is an online tool designed for freelancers to track time spent on projects and to analyze productivity. It is free and extremely simple to use and is available as a desktop client, web app and smartphones.

The importance of time management for learning

Time management is an important skill to acquire for independent learning. However, this isn't just a matter of being organized or showing up to class on time; being able to allocate appropriate amounts of time to different aspects of a learning project is equally important.

### **Beware of the research auto-pilot**

You know the scenario: the project starts with the best of intentions to prepare, research, write and review. Then life gets in the way and, when you do start, you are under pressure. So your research auto-pilot kicks in, starting with the preparation and research phase, with writing crammed into

the remaining time available. The problem with this approach is that it leaves no time for the essential process of revision and editing – key to successful writing. It also means you never really reflect on your own learning process in order to make it more effective.

### **Enter Toggl**

Toggl provides a simple, visual tool to monitor how long you spend on each part of the research process. In a way, it is similar to the Fitbit that tracks the number of steps you take. Toggl provides an objective record of how long you toggl logospend on research. When I was testing the app I compared the stats with my own estimate of how long I had spent on each part of the project. It turned out I was way off in my own calculations. Toggl has a way of correcting inaccurate estimates of time spent on work in the same way as the Fitbit is a salutary corrective to my somewhat optimistic approximations of how much exercise I get in any given day.

### **Setting up Toggl for Educational Projects**

Toggl – at least the free version of the app – is designed to track multiple projects. However, it is possible to use it for individual projects by treating the different stages – such as research and writing – as different projects. Once you have registered your account, the easiest way to do this is to add the stages of your research manually before you start tracking time. Categories can be anything relevant to the sort of project you are engaged in. I tend to use the following:

The screenshot shows how categories can be added. To use for an individual project you need to ignore the “What have you done?” section and add categories to the “select project” dropdown.

### **Timer Toggl**

You can start the timer immediately but I find it easier to add all the categories first. When I start the timer I just have to select the appropriate stage from the drop-down menu (see screenshot below). Each time you start work on your computer, Toggl will ask you what you are working on, simply select the stage you are on from the list of projects and then click on “start” for the timer to start.

### **Timer entries**

The desktop version has a simplified menu and will remind you to track your time if you are working at your computer and haven't started the timer. If you are away from your computer you can use a smartphone app to track the time which will sync up with the desktop app. Toggl will pause the timer if it detects no input at your computer for a certain amount of time. It will ask you if you would like to pause or continue. If you are reading or doing something else work-related, just click on “continue timer.” The program will even send you an email if you have forgotten to switch off the timer (along the lines of, “Have you really been working on this project for the last 12 hours?”).

You can review your progress by clicking on “Reports”. The screenshot below shows the summary report for an example project. Over the period of a week, I have added entries to it using the categories I described above. Toggl color codes the categories – blue for research, mauve for outline and notes, purple for writing and green for review. The pie charts provide an instant visualization of the time spent on the different elements, in the example the research phase half of the total time.

It is best to get used to using the app by simply using it to record the different stages of your research project. Once you have completed several assignments you can review the amount of time spent on different elements. I don't believe in prescriptive statements about how much time

should be spent on each part of the process – everyone is different with different strengths and weaknesses. For me, the temptation is always to think that if only I do a bit more research I am going to find the perfect reference. So I know I have to stop the research process earlier than I would like to. However, I would argue that the real “thinking” of a research project happens during the writing and editing, and so it is necessary to curtail getting distracted by ever more references.

Toggl provides a concrete way of reviewing the time spent on your work. It isn't a cure for leaving things till the last minute, but it should make you a more effective learner by ensuring that whatever time you have available to study is spent productively.

## **THEME 5. STUDY SKILLS. NOTE TAKING & ITS STRATEGIES**

### **Five ways to take better notes**

Five ways to take better notes Taking notes is one of the most important skills for successful studying, but you do not want to drown in paper. Here are some top tips for keeping your note-taking in control.

There is not a ‘right’ way to take notes. In fact, the more personal your style is, the more effective it will probably be. That said, there are a few guidelines you need to make sure your notes are useful when it comes to revising.

### **Show your sources**

Before you start taking notes, make sure you have written down where you got the information from, whether it is a particular lesson, book or magazine. This should make it easier to find out more, if you need extra facts when you come to do your homework, assignments or revision.

### **Break it up**

Make sure you don't write in one continuous chunk. You need to use lots of sub-headings and bullet points so when you come to read it again, you can pick important sections and key facts. Organizing your notes like this will also help you to understand the information, as you will have to think about the structure and decide which points are most important.

### **Do not copy, write!**

Try to write in your own words rather than just copying down large amounts of text. It will help you to understand what you are reading and will help you to memorize as you are writing. The exception comes if you need to note down an important quotation exactly as written. Make sure you note down where any quotations come from to avoid plagiarism.

### **Less is more**

The point of note-taking is that you are compressing information. This means that should try to keep your notes short. Always keep in mind why you are taking notes – if it is for a particular project; only write down points that will be relevant.

### **Get filing**

It sounds boring and obvious, but if you cannot find your notes, then there is no point in doing them. Invest in a file and some dividers, and then make sure you put your notes in the right section. It will make your revision much less stressful!

### **5 things you might not know about your local library**

5 things you might not know about your local library  
Libraries are a great place to get hold of books, but did you know about these other ways you could use your local library?

### **1: Ebooks and audiobooks**

With many UK libraries, you can now borrow a book in an instant without even leaving the house. Lots of libraries run schemes which allow you to download a book to your computer or mobile phone either as a written ebook or as an audiobook. Not only is this really convenient if you don't live near the library or you want to listen to a book when walking to school, you also don't have to worry about the book you want being lent to someone else!

### **2: Events and workshops**

There is a lot going on at the library that you might not notice. Reading groups and bookshops might not come as a big surprise, but many libraries also run drama workshops and clubs for everything from videogames to knitting. If you are into film, library film nights can offer something a bit different to the local Odeon - and much cheaper!

### **3: Online tools**

Whether it is for a school project or your own curiosity, the online tools at your library can be incredibly useful. For example, you can log in to the online version of the Oxford English Dictionary from your own computer with nothing more than your library card number. You might also be able to access online versions of magazines and newspapers among other resources. Ask at your library for more information.

### **4: 24-hour services**

Libraries are finding unusual ways to help you use their facilities even when they are closed. Things like ebooks and online access help, but a library in Newcastle has taken things a bit further. A book vending machine on the city's John Dobson Street lets library users borrow and return books around the clock.

### **5: Archives**

It is not just bestsellers and reference books on the shelves at your local library. They also store archives of local history and records. For example, old census records and local newspapers can help you find out more about your family history, or the history of the place you live in.

## **THEME 6. IMPROVING TRANSFERABLE AND LANGUAGE SKILLS (IMPROVING READING SKILLS)**

### **Become a more active reader**

Do you struggle to remember things after reading them? If so, this may be because you are not reading actively.

Active reading involves being focused on what you want to learn from something.

Once you have learned the tricks for active reading, it should help you remember things more easily, saving you time and frustration in the long run.

Check out these **active reading tips** and try them out.

### **1: Highlighting key words**

A useful way to help you read more actively is to highlight separate key words in a text using different colours. For example, you could

highlight references to people with a red pen, references to places in green, facts and figures in blue, quotations in yellow and dates in orange. When you have finished read the article again and list the key points you've highlighted.

## **2: Make notes in the margins of what you're reading**

Do this to summarise points, raise questions or challenge what you've read.

## **3: Be critical when you read**

Ask questions of the text: who wrote it? When? Who is the intended audience? Does it link with other material you have studied in the course?

## **4: Make notes from your reading on index cards**

You can use them to keep track of themes or collect examples to back up an argument.

## **5: Use sticky notes if you don't want to leave marks on the text**

Jot down some notes and make sure the note sticks out so that you can easily flip to the right page.

## **6: Test yourself**

Read for half an hour, then put the text away and write down the key points you can remember. Then go back to the text and fill in the gaps.

## **7: Look for key words and phrases to help you understand the text**

Phrases like ‘most importantly’, ‘in contrast’ and ‘on the other hand’ show where an important point is being made that you should not miss. This is useful if you do not have much time to read a text thoroughly.

### **8: Explain what you’ve read to someone else**

**9: Record yourself reading the course material or your notes and listen to the recording while you’re travelling.**

### **Improve your reading skills**

Improve your reading skills Feeling intimidated by a big pile of books? Here’s how to select the appropriate information and read more effectively.

### **Plan using the contents page**

It sounds obvious but the contents page is your map to the book. Often, you will not need to read a whole book to get the information you need. Select the chapter or chapters which look most relevant and miss out the rest.

If you are not sure, ask your teacher or tutor to pinpoint the areas they think are most important for the assignment.

### **Use the index**

The index is another tool to help you find the most relevant areas in a book. Make a habit of checking the index to find references to the topics you are interested in.

### **Use sub-headings**

Sub-headings help you find your way around a chapter of a book. If you do not have time to read 20 pages in detail, look at all the sub-headings and decide which bits would be most useful.

Practice reading the other parts of the chapter more quickly and slowing down your reading when you get to the areas you think are important.

### **Use a dictionary**

It is very easy to just drift over a word you don't know when you're reading. Sometimes, you might hardly notice that you didn't actually understand what you just read. Get into the habit of looking up words if you're not sure what they mean. You could even make a note of these words separately so you can look over them and make sure you remember them.

### **Write notes and mark pages**

Making notes might make reading take a little longer, but it means you get much more out of it. It will force you to concentrate and understand what you read and the act of writing should help you remember some of the information. You should also record where the information you find is: include page numbers in your notes, and use bookmarks to find sections that you need to turn back to often. This is especially important if you are writing an essay that requires references.

Try to be selective in your note taking – copying out the whole book will not help you. Set yourself guidelines such as one page of A4 notes per chapter.

If you are reading a library book, never underline, highlight or write in the margins: not only is it annoying for other people, you are likely to be fined.

### **Learn to skim**

- Skim reading is a useful skill when you need to pick out relevant parts from lots of material. The idea is to not read every word or even every sentence.
- Try to let your eyes skim over the text spotting key words as you go. It does take practice, so do not worry if you find it hard to start with.
- When you come across an important section, read it carefully and take notes.

This isn't a substitute for proper reading, but it does allow you to find useful information quickly when you don't have time to read everything.

### **Know what you are looking for**

If you know what you are looking for before you start reading, you're a lot more likely to find it. Think about the facts you need to find, the questions you need to answer or the things about the book you want to understand before you start. Try writing these key things down with space to note down the answers when you find them.

## **THEME 7. AVOIDING PLAGIARISM. REFERENCING, PARAPHRASING & SUMMARIZING**

### **How to Avoid Plagiarism**

Plagiarizing, or representing someone else's ideas or words as your own, will cause problems for people in any stage of life. Students get flunked for it and it even cost Joe Biden a shot at becoming the US President in 1988. Here is how you can make sure you don't plagiarize on purpose or by accident.

## Steps

### **1. Understand what plagiarism is.**

The American Heritage dictionary defines plagiarism as: "the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work." Thus plagiarism not only includes the word-for-word copying of another piece of work, but close imitation of it also. Using synonyms and other word choices is not an excuse to justify plagiarism. You should write a piece of text strictly in your own words and then cite your sources. You can help yourself write a good paraphrase that is not too close to the original by thinking of the paraphrase more as your interpretation or reflection on what you read, rather than a re-wording of what you read.

Original source: "The law of the land prohibited slaves from seeking remuneration from their masters for even the most heinous crimes."

Plagiarizing: "The law of the land forbade slaves from seeking damages from their masters for even the most vile crimes."

Not plagiarizing: "Even injured, tortured, or taunted slaves could not press for remuneration from their masters according to United States law at the time."

Plagiarism also applies to:

- Downloading a paper from the internet.
- Hiring someone to write something for you.
- Attempting to make the ideas of others appear like they are your own.

### **2. Be familiar in the area that you are talking about.**

By understanding the subject, you are more likely to write in your own words, rather than restate someone else's definition of this subject.

Look for information on the topic you want to write about. This can be on the Internet or in books, although books are almost always more authoritative than the Internet.

The trick here is to grab several different sources of information. If you're relying on just one source — a book about slavery — the chances are higher you'll inadvertently copy or plagiarize. If you rely on three books about slavery, one documentary, and two original sources, the chances are much lower that you'll inadvertently plagiarize.

### **3. Restate the subject to yourself a couple of times.**

The key is to understand the material and be able to express its meaning in your own words. Try to avoid reading from another author's material too much, as you will be more inclined to restate that author's exact statement.

Original source: "Slaves worked grueling 12-hour days, from sun-up to sun-down, surviving on little more than 1,200 calories of starches and their own blood, sweat, and tears."

Reworked: "Surviving on about half of what we today consider the suggested caloric intake, slaves in the 19th century worked bitter, back-breaking hours."

Reworked: "In the 19th century, slaves worked for as long as there was light, receiving little in the way of nutrition."

### **4. Reference your quotes and sources.**

You must include a bibliography or works cited in your paper. If you use a direct quote from another author's work, then you must quote it and cite it properly. Many teachers accept the standard MLA format, unless otherwise specified.

You can avoid inadvertent plagiarism by inserting quotation marks (if an actual quote is used) and citing your source immediately when you make a quote or a paraphrase from that source. If you wait to do so, or if you leave inserting quotation marks and citations as the last step in writing your paper, you might forget a quotation or a citation and get in trouble for plagiarism.

### **5. When in doubt, give credit.**

There are a lot of ways to do this in order to avoid plagiarism. Here are a few:

Mention the source inside your paraphrase: "According to Richard Feynman, quantum electrodynamics can be described using path integral formulations."

Put quotation marks around unique phrases you think could be interpreted as being copied: "A 'paradigm shift' happens when one scientific revolution forces the community to think of the world in a fundamentally different way."

### **6. Understand some basics about copyright.**

Plagiarism can be more than a bad academic practice, it can be a violation of the law if you break copyright. Here is what you need to understand to stay legal:

As a general rule, facts cannot be copyrighted. This means that you are able to use any facts you find to support your writing.

Although facts are not subject to copyright, the words used to express them are, particularly if the wording is original or unique (copyright covers original expression). You are free to use information from other materials in your articles, but you must use your own words to express it. To avoid this, you can take the existing facts and put them into your own words.

There is a grace on how different the phrase can be; adding a comma is not enough. However, changing the grammar around is.

### **7. Understand what does not need to be cited.**

Not every single thing in academic research needs to be cited, or else research would be too painful for people to undertake. The following things do not need to be cited in your research and final papers:

Common sense observations, folklore, urban legends, and well known historical events, such as the date of the Pearl Harbor Attacks.

Your own experiences, insights, creations, and musings.

However, if you used these same experiences, insights, creations, or musings in a previous assignment that you submitted academically, or got published, you would need to first obtain your instructor's permission to re-use the material and, if you receive permission, include a self-citation.

Your own videos, presentations, music, and other media created and originated by you.

However, if you used these same videos, presentations, music, or other media created and originated by you in a previous assignment that you submitted academically, or got published, you would need to first obtain your instructor's permission to re-use the material and, if you receive permission, include a self-citation.

The scientific evidence you gathered after performing your own tests, polls, etc.

## **THEME 8. CONCENTRATION AND MEMORY. DIFFICULTIES WITH THEM**

**Improve your memory.** Try these ways of varying your revision to help your mind remember information.

Play around with the memory techniques below and find out what works best for you. Remember, don't be panicked by your classmate's pages of neatly written notes, revision is quite a personal skill, so you need to find your own individual learning style.

### **Make memory cards**

Get some index cards from a stationers and write out questions on one side and answers on another – this way you can keep testing yourself wherever you are. This method is quite active because it forces you to summarise the information into short, yet comprehensible chunks. You will not have enough space to simply copy out your notes again, which can be a bit too passive.

### **Word games**

Use mnemonics (pronounced 'nem-onics'). This term means 'one thing helps you remember another'. The idea of mnemonics is to use a phrase that sticks in your mind to remind yourself of a more difficult point. An example of a famous mnemonic is the one used to remember the order of the points on the compass - N ever E at S hredded W heat becomes North - East - South - West.

Find out more about different types of mnemonics and how to use them.

### **Mind maps**

There are different ways to use diagrams, which can help you visualise information. One form is to start in the middle of the page with the main idea and then branch out into more detail using keywords, different colours and pictures. This is a good way to help you remember how different theories, people or events are linked together.

## **Sing your studies**

If things are getting desperate, try to record yourself singing your revision notes to your favourite tune. Play it back a few times and see if you can remember the words. Too embarrassed to actually sing? Just listening to yourself talk through your revision notes might help you remember them better.

The following are some simple strategies that anyone can use to improve the amount of information that they take in and remember:

1. Pay attention. You cannot take in information unless you are paying attention, and you cannot memorize information unless you are taking it in. Get enough food and sleep, and avoid distractions such as a background radio or television.

2. Involve as many senses as possible. For example, if you are sitting in a lecture, you will remember more of what is being said if you listen and scribble down a few notes. Or if you are reading a letter or an article, you will remember more of what is written if you read it aloud to yourself.

3. Relate new information to what you already know. New information is much easier to remember if it can be contextualised. For example, if you are prescribed a new antidepressant drug, you can relate its side-effects to the side-effects of your old antidepressant drug. Or you might notice that both antidepressant drugs are from the same class of drugs, and thus that they have similar side-effects.

4. Structure information. For example, if you need to remember what ingredients you need to cook a meal, think of them under the subheadings of starter, main course, and desert, and visualize how many ingredients there are under each sub-heading. Or if you need to remember a telephone number, think of it in terms of the five first digits, the middle three digits, and the last three digits.

5. Use mnemonics. That is, tie information to visual images, sentences, acronyms, or rhymes. For example, you might remember that your hairdresser is called Sharon by picturing a Rose of Sharon or a sharon fruit. You might remember the order of the colours of the rainbow with the sentence, 'Richard of York got beaten in Versailles'. Or you might remember, as medical students do, the symptoms of varicose veins with the acronym 'AEIOU': aching, eczema, itching, oedema, and ulceration.

6. Understand information. Try to understand more complex material before you try to remember it. If possible, summarize the material in your own words and write or type out your summary. Reorganize the material or your summary of the material so that it is easier to remember. By manipulating the information in this way, you are forcing yourself to think about it actively.

7. Rehearse information. Review the information later on the same day or sleep over it and review it the following day. Thereafter, review it at regular, spaced intervals until you feel comfortable that you know it well enough.

8. Exercise your mind. Mental challenge can help to create new wire connections in the brain, which makes it more effective and more resistant to memory disorders such as Alzheimer's disease. So develop a new hobby, read a novel, learn a foreign language, or practice yourself at crosswords or sudoku.

9. Develop a healthy lifestyle. Eat a healthy, balanced diet, take regular exercise, and avoid smoking. A healthy lifestyle increases the amount of blood and oxygen that is delivered to the brain, and reduces the risk of medical conditions that can lead to memory loss such as Alzheimer's disease, stroke, and diabetes. Exercise also increases your 'feel-good' endorphins, which improves your mood and prevents

depression. Depression results in impaired attention and concentration, and is also a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease.

10. Get sufficient sleep. Sleep is necessary for memory consolidation, and feeling alert and refreshed improves your attention and concentration.

11. See a doctor. Certain prescribed and over-the-counter drugs can impair your attention and concentration, and hence your memory. If you suspect that this is the case for you, see your family doctor. You should also see your family doctor if you begin having memory problems that affect your ability to get by on a day-to-day basis.

Most people think that the things that have hurt us in life are what cause us to experience emotional pain, and that in order to heal and experience real happiness we must resolve those old wounds. The reality, however, is somewhat different. We can only feel emotions, including the painful ones, in the present moment. What we feel in the present moment is determined by what we give our attention to. Nothing can hurt you unless you give your attention to it. Most people can make themselves cry in just a few minutes by simply pulling up a vivid memory of something that was at the time painful. So why would we give our attention to things that cause us pain? Some negative events can hold our attention if we perceive them to be a threat but most people who ruminate on a negative past are simply unaware that they are doing it and/or that there is any choice in the matter. Things you are unaware of are outside your control.

William James, as far back as the 1890's, wrote extensively about the relationship between selective attention and experience, profoundly observing "my experience is what I agree to attend to." Modern day cognitive psychologists have demonstrated through research that we are active participants in our process of perception, confirming that what we think and feel is determined by what we pay attention to. Not only do we have the ability to shift our attention away from painful things and give our

attention to more pleasant thoughts or memories, as we do this it inhibits our ability to think about the unpleasant painful things. This happens because attention works on an activation/inhibition model. When you give attention to negative things it literally inhibits your ability to see positive things, that's why psychologists often say people with depression see a more depressed world. The more you start to give your attention to things that feel good, overtime, the more you will start to see a more positive world and you will find yourself noticing fewer of the negatives in life.

Once you are aware you can do it, shifting your attention is something you can have complete control over. You can choose what you want to pay attention to, and as a result you can choose how you want to feel. Does that sound too easy? Here is a tip that will make it even easier. There are only two things in life that you can pay attention to that cause you to experience emotion: things you want and things you don't want. Every single thing that you can think of that causes any type of significant emotion can be sorted into one of those two categories. Breakups, job loss, betrayal, death of a loved one—all things you don't want; pets, best friends, birthday parties, getting a raise—all things you do want. You will always know when you are giving your attention to things that you don't want in life, because your emotions will tell you. Paying attention to things you don't want generates negative emotions, while paying attention to things you do want generates positive ones. When you realize that you are experiencing a negative emotion, recognize in that moment that you are giving your attention to something unwanted and consciously choose to shift your attention to something you want instead. You will start to feel better almost immediately. This type of proactive avoidance isn't unhealthy; Joseph Ledoux an NYU Neuroscientist and expert on Emotional Intelligence refers to it as a positive coping strategy that can give you greater control over your life and attentional control training has been shown to be effective in

the treatment of depression and anxiety. One way to shift your attention to the positive that we know works very well is to practice gratitude: things that you are thankful for are all wanted things in your life.

One of the most self-sabotaging things that people can give their attention to is an unwanted future. Nothing in the future has actually happened, yet many people spend a good deal of their time experiencing negative emotions like anxiety, fear, and self-doubt because they are giving their attention to things they don't want to occur. Doing this not only robs them of their present-moment happiness but prevents them from thinking about the positive experiences they could instead be creating in their future.

Our attention is the gateway to what we experience in life. Learning to notice what you are paying attention to, and how to redirect your attention to things you want, can change not only your current experience but also the life you create for yourself going forward.

## **THEME 9. AVOIDING TEST ANXIETY AND TEST TAKING**

Test Anxiety is a very real stress that affects some students' ability to perform to the best of their ability on a test or exam. While most people experience some level of anxiety in a testing situation, we do not have to be debilitated by it. Learning to expect and manage test anxiety is an important skill for successful students.

### **Thinking about Test Anxiety**

As a student, you will likely not be able to avoid tests. Knowing this, take some time to think about the causes of test-associated stress, and work to develop coping mechanisms so test anxiety doesn't impede your success.

### **Identify the causes:**

- *Not doing well threatens self-image.*
- *Poor test grades pose a threat to your future goals.*
- *Lack of preparation increases stress. Some students underestimate how much time they need to prepare for a test. (Keep in mind that those students who say they "never study" are probably not telling the whole truth.)*

**Develop coping mechanisms that may lessen your anxiety:**

- *Develop successful study skills. Be realistic with yourself about how much time you need to study and prepare for a test.*
- *Learn relaxation and visualization techniques.*
- *Avoid negative self-talk.*
- *Avoid procrastination. It is a rare student who succeeds on an exam by cramming the night before without other preparation.*
- *Identify and use resources.*
- *Practice! Develop test-taking strategies that work well for you and work with review material in practice tests.*

**Study Smart!**

Be realistic with your time. Set time aside for work, socializing, class time, and relaxation. Then, schedule in times you will study for each class. As a general rule, a class requires two hours of study time for each hour you're in class. For example, a 3-unit class would require 6 hours of study time per week.

Pay attention to verbal and nonverbal clues given by the instructor. He or she will tell you which information is most important by:

- *Writing notes on the board or overhead,*
- *Repeating the same information within a lesson or over a period of time,*

- *Saying "This is important" or "You'll see this again,"*
- *Using a raised voice or emphatic gestures,*
- *Providing review sheets or printed study guides,*
- *Assigning specific textbook pages, review questions, or other references.*

Take notes and use them. Rewriting class notes shortly after the class session will help you keep them clear and organized, and will reinforce the information, making it easier to remember in a test situation. Indicate information the instructor paid special attention to, as you'll likely see this on a test. Some students use different colors or symbols to represent different topics or types of information in their notes. Such clues can help you link information together for easier recall.

Find and use available resources. The Center for Academic Success (CAS) offers a variety of ways for students to develop smart study habits. Check out some of these services:

**Critical Skills Workshops:** Drop-in workshops that support skills in a variety of writing, computer use, and study-skill areas.

**Tutors:** For a student to become a tutor, they have to show that they are successful in their subject area and that they can help others develop study habits. In addition to their own strategies, tutors are trained to identify student's learning preferences and can help them develop study habits that work for a specific course.

**Study Groups:** The Group Study Room in CAS offers a quiet, comfortable space for you to meet with others in your class. Working together to identify important points, clarify questions, or review for an upcoming exam is a powerful way to learn material in a relatively short

period of time. Check out the TIP Sheet Working Successfully with a Study Group to ensure that your study group is productive.

The CAS staff is friendly and always willing to offer suggestions and help you find a service that best suits your specific needs. Contact Ann Shannon, Learning Resource Specialist, for information on any of CAS services and other resources: ShannonAn@butte.edu, 895-2306.

Students who qualify for special services should contact the service provider on campus and investigate other resources specific to their program (for example, EOPS, DSPS, MESA, Veteran's Office, etc.)

#### Employ Effective Test-Taking Strategies

- *Get a good night's sleep the night before a test.*
- *Stay away from stimulants (but do not make a huge change in your habits).*
- *Eat healthy food on a regular basis. Your brain needs good fuel, but do not change your eating routine just prior to a test.*
- *Sit in the same seat you sit in during class.*
- *Wear comfortable clothing, bring water, and BREATHE!*
- *Do not pick up your pen or pencil until you have skimmed the entire test to get a feel for what it contains. Surprises on the last page are extra-stressful!*
- *If the instructor permits it, jot down important formulas, vocabulary, or rules in the margins or on scratch paper. Getting this information onto paper makes it easier to concentrate on the test questions. Refer to these notes as needed.*
- *READ THE DIRECTIONS. Read them again. Many points have been lost due to lack of attention to directions.*
- *If a question stumps you, skip it and move on to the questions you are more sure of. Put a mark by the questions you skip so you can*

*find them easily later on. Sometimes other questions will give you clues to the ones you thought you did not know.*

- *If a question is confusing, ask the instructor for clarification.*
- *Read each question thoughtfully, as it relates to the course and the instructor's emphasis.*
- *Budget your time according to the point value of each question or section. Do not waste time on 1-pointers if you know the 10-point answers!*
- *Try any extra credit problem you are given. These are freebies and any information you can get down may help your overall score.*
- *If time permits, check your work.*
- *If you are using a Scantron answer sheet, make sure you have filled in the correct bubble for each response. Double-check that all erasures are complete.*
- *As a general rule: If you studied, go with your first response. This is most often the best answer. Be careful about second-guessing yourself.*
- *Guess at any items you are still not sure of at the end of the testing time, as long as you are not penalized more for incorrect answers than for blanks.*

Know the different types of items that may be on the test and how to best approach them:

### **Completion or Fill-in-the-Blank**

- *Be sure your response fits grammatically in the sentence.*
- *If you do not know the exact answer, make your best guess.*

*Essay*

- *To study for essay exams, use mnemonics to memorize key points about your topic.*
- *Spend the first few minutes of the test brainstorming and creating an outline for your response.*
- *Save yourself 5 minutes at the end of the test time to read your essay and make minor corrections.*

### **Matching**

- *Complete the easy items first.*
- *Mark items off the list as you complete them, eliminating some choices (unless the instructions say an item may be used more than once).*
- *Save the ones you don't know for the last.*

### **Multiple Choice**

- *Read all choices given and select the best.*
- *If all choices seem to be correct, select the most complete.*
- *If you're unsure of which choice is best, eliminate those that seem wrong, then select between the remaining choices. You can double your chance of getting a right answer by using this tactic!*

### **True or False**

- *If any part of the item is false, then it is a false statement.*
- *Watch out for words such as "All," "Only," "Never," and "Always." Statements with these words are often false.*

### **Practice Makes Perfect**

Like any skill, test taking requires practice. If you're worried about test anxiety affecting your success in school, make your own quizzes as

part of your study strategy and take them with a time limit. Some instructors will even give you sample problems or old tests to practice with. Have a friend, roommate, or tutor set you up in a practice test setting and try the strategies introduced above. By developing a plan that you follow each time you take a test, you can overcome test anxiety and all your hard work will pay off!

## **THEME 10. MAKING EFFECTIVE PRESENTATIONS**

We have condensed all of the presentation techniques down to the most effective. Here are the **Top 10 effective presentation techniques:**

### **1. Use visual aids**

Using pictures in your presentations instead of words can double the chances of meeting your objectives.

### **2. Keep it short and sweet**

There is an old adage that said – “No one ever complained of a presentation being too short.” Nothing kills a presentation more than going on too long.

There are some college professors who will penalise a short presentation (most lecturers see no problem in droning on) , but for most people a shorter presentation is better. Keep your presentation to under 22 minutes if you can.

### **3. Use the rule of three**

A simple technique is that people tend to only remember three things. Work out what the three messages that you want your audience to take

away and structure your presentation around them. Use a maximum of three points on a slide.

#### **4. Rehearse**

Practice makes for perfect performance. Many experts say that rehearsal is the biggest single thing that you can do to improve your performance. Perform your presentation out loud at least four times. One of these should be in front of a real scary audience. Family, friends or colleagues. Even the dog is better than nothing.

#### **5. Tell stories**

All presentations are a type of theatre. Tell stories and anecdotes to help illustrate points. It all helps to make your presentation more effective and memorable.

#### **6. Lose the bullet points – don't put your speaker notes up on the screen**

Bullet points are the kiss of death for most presentations. Most people use bullet points as a form of speaker notes. To make your presentation more effective put your speaker notes in your notes and not up on the screen.

#### **7. Video yourself**

Set up a video camera and video yourself presenting. You will see all sorts of mistakes that you are making, from how you are standing, if you are jangling keys, to how well your presentation is structured.

#### **8. Know what slide is coming next**

You should always know when presenting which slide is coming up next. It sounds very powerful when you say “On the next slide [Click] you will see...”, rather than a period of confusion when the next slide appears.

## **9. Have a back-up plan**

Murphy’s law normally applies during a presentation. Technology not working, power cuts, projector blowing a bulb, spilling coffee on your front, not enough power leads, no loudspeakers, presentation displays strangely on the laptop – all of these are things that have happened in presentations that I have given.

Have a back-up plan. Take with you the following items – a printed out set of slides – (you can hold these up to the audience if you need to), a CD or data stick of your presentation, a laptop with your slides on it. Just in case it goes wrong.

Guess what? When you have back-ups – you seldom need to use them.

## **10. Check out the presentation room**

Arrive early and check out the presentation room. If you can make sure that, you see your slides loaded onto the PC and working on the screen. Work out where you will need to stand.

However, it is potentially even more useful to know what you should not do. Look at seven things to avoid: **the seven deadly sins of presentations**, if you like.

### **1. Thou shalt not be boring**

An old rule of writing says that there are no boring subjects, only boring writers. In the same way, whatever your subject, your presentation can be fascinating, as dull as ditchwater, or anything in between. It's up to you. Even the most abstruse, technical topics can be livened up by anecdotes, stories, a varied delivery, a touch of humour. But a boring presentation just lights up a big signal over your head that it's time for the audience to tune out and switch off mentally.

This is also about your passion. If you're excited by your subject, people will pick up on your enthusiasm. Think about some TV personalities who can get you interested in things that might not really be in your natural interest zone: Bill Oddie, David Attenborough, Patrick Moore, Jamie Oliver. But if you're not really interested in your presentation, why should your audience be?

## **2. Thou shalt not be rude**

Do not insult anybody or anything, even in a joke. Even if you think you are on safe ground given your audience, an off-colour joke or insensitive remark is likely to offend someone – as many a politician has found over the years. Do not knock competitors, do not insult the audience, don't poke fun at cherished beliefs. In addition, definitely do not do a Gerald Ratner and be rude about your own company's products.

## **3. Thou shalt not be unprofessional**

A poorly prepared presentation is as bad as turning up late to give it. You should be as prepared as you possibly can be. Run through the presentation before you give it, rehearse, and hone it to a fine edge. If possible, video yourself and check for tone of delivery, body posture, movement. You might even want to rehearse ad-libs, as Frankie Howerd

did, in order to make them seem unplanned. Anyway, the more professional you are, the more people will respond to your message.

#### **4. Thou shalt not give it out faster than they can take it**

An episode of the original series of Star Trek featured a sentient device downloading information into the ship's computer. It delivered it so fast that circuits burnt out. The same thing can happen in a presentation – and if it does, it is not communication, it's info-dumping. Don't crowd out your screens with enormous amounts of information or flip through slides as if you were in a race. Take it at the pace your audience can absorb.

#### **5. Thou shalt not say sorry**

It might seem strange, but do not apologise if you make a mistake; this just dents your professionalism. Just correct it and move on, or take the opportunity to laugh at yourself. Alternatively, you could follow the advice of the jazz great who said: "If I play a wrong note, I go back and play it again. That way, people think I meant to play it that way."

#### **6. Thou shalt not lose sight of the audience**

Many websites are so full of the company's own self-importance that visitors wonder what is in it for them. It is all "we are the acknowledged leaders in the field", "we are proud of our record", etc. Very poor website writing – and very bad presentation skills. As a presenter, put yourself in the shoes of the audience. Fascinating person though you are, they did not come to see you but to have some problem solved. What do they want from the presentation? Why are they there? What did they come to discover? That way, the presentation will be focused on their needs and you will cut to the chase far more effectively.

## **7. Thou shalt not fear questions**

Many presenters are so afraid of post-presentation questions that they do not even offer that facility – or if they do, they curtail it as much as possible. Nevertheless, questions show that the audience is interested in what you said and wants to know more. The key here is all about preparation: prepare the likely questions and rehearse your responses. If possible, get someone who knows the subject to ask you some sample questions before the presentation. Even if you are stumped, you can promise to get back to the person with the answer. Moreover, questions are a great way to open up and interact with your audience.

### **Some Tips on Making Effective Presentations**

#### **Before the Presentation:**

Plan well in advance. For an important presentation start preparing at least a week in advance. Write a first draft then leave it overnight before working on later drafts. If possible try to have everything ready a few days before you give the presentation (except perhaps for fine tuning).

Know your audience. To whom will you be speaking and at what level?

Decide what you would like the audience to learn from your presentation. Choose a small number of key points and structure your talk around them.

Keep the presentation as simple as possible. It is a common mistake, especially with scientific talks, to overestimate the audience and make the talk too difficult or too technical and this can have the unwanted effect of boring or frustrating most of the audience. On the other hand, it is often a good idea to address the experts in the audience for part of your talk, just do not lose the non-experts for too long.

Organize your material carefully. Usually it is essential to begin with some introductory or background material to prepare the audience and to explain the motivation for the work. The entire talk should be clearly and logically organized. Differentiate between main points and secondary issues. For longer talks a summary or a review of the key points at the end of the talk can be very effective.

Design your visuals carefully to effectively convey your message. There is a wide range of "effective" visuals, depending on the style of the speaker, the content of the talk, and the audience. Some speakers use very sparse visuals effectively, filling in gaps verbally, while others use visuals, which are essentially complete and can be understood independently of the speaker! For most speakers something in between these two extremes is appropriate; use whatever best suits your style of presentation. However, as a rule, complicated visuals with a large amount of information and/or a high density of information (such as a large page of text in a small font or a very dense plot or figure) should be avoided. On visuals "less is better" - presenting a small number of key points (say, one to three) per page works well. If you must show a complicated visual, make sure you tell the audience what they are supposed to learn from it.

Practice your presentation, preferably in front of friends or family, and ask for feedback. Check the timing of your talk! Does it fit comfortably within the time allotted? Running out of time is a common problem, and can ruin an otherwise good talk.

Think about the things you find especially interesting or exciting in your material and find ways to convey your enthusiasm to the audience. If you seem interested in your material your audience is more likely to be.

Try not to be too anxious about giving the presentation. Remember that most people feel nervous about giving presentations, but most audiences are well aware that giving a presentation can be stressful and

they are forgiving of errors. Often only the speaker knows when there has been a slight omission or a minor change during the talk. Lots of rehearsal before the presentation helps to reduce anxiety.

### **During the Presentation:**

Speak clearly and with sufficient volume to be heard throughout the room (this applies even if you are using a microphone).

Face the audience and establish eye contact, especially during the most important parts of the presentation. Some people find it helpful to identify a few friendly faces in the audience. Often a person in the audience will nod, smile, or give some form of helpful feedback.

Try to avoid mumbling, seeming nervous or confused, looking away from the audience for long periods, or generally giving the impression that you would rather be anywhere but here giving the presentation (even if it is true!). It is also advisable to avoid too many colloquialisms or an overly casual conversational style. For technical talks a slightly more formal style is common and (partly because audiences have come to expect this style of presentation) is more likely to convince the audience that the speaker knows the material.

Remember: whenever you make a presentation you are also presenting yourself. If you present your ideas clearly and persuasively, with self-assurance, skill, and professionalism, you and your presentations are likely to be much more effective.

### **After the Presentation:**

Think through the presentation: which parts do you think went well and which parts would you improve if you gave the presentation again?

Ask a member of the audience (preferably someone you know well) for some feedback on your presentation. Viewing a video of your

presentation, if one is available, can be another way of obtaining useful insights. And relax!

After you give your opening statement, you should give a brief overview of your presentation. This includes what your presentation is about, how long you will take and how you are going to handle questions.

For example, a presentation to sales staff could start like this:

"Welcome / "Hello everyone."

Opening statement

"As you all know, this company is losing its market share. But we are being asked to increase sales by 20 – 25%. How can we possibly increase sales in a shrinking market?"

### **Overview**

"Today I am going to talk to you about how we can do this. My presentation will be in three parts. Firstly I am going to look at the market and the background. Then I am going to talk to you about our new products and how they fit in. Finally, I'm going to examine some selling strategies that will help us increase our sales by 20%. The presentation will probably take around 20 minutes. There will be time for questions at the end of my talk."

### **Useful language for overviews**

"My presentation is in three parts."

"My presentation is divided into three main sections."

"Firstly, secondly, thirdly, finally..."

"I'm going to..."

take a look at...

talk about...

examine...

tell you something about the background...

give you some facts and figures...

fill you in on the history of...

concentrate on...

limit myself to the question of...

"Please feel free to interrupt me if you have questions."

"There will be time for questions at the end of the presentation."

"I'd be grateful if you could ask your questions after the presentation."

### **The main body of the presentation**

During your presentation, it's a good idea to remind your audience occasionally of the benefit of what you are saying.

"As I said at the beginning..."

"This, of course, will help you (to achieve the 20% increase)."

"As you remember, we are concerned with..."

"This ties in with my original statement..."

"This relates directly to the question I put to you before..."

### **Keeping your audience with you**

Remember that what you are saying is new to your audience. You are clear about the structure of your talk, but let your audience know when you are moving on to a new point. You can do this by saying something like "right", or "OK". You can also use some of the following expressions:

"I'd now like to move on to..."

"I'd like to turn to..."

"That's all I have to say about..."

"Now I'd like to look at..."

"This leads me to my next point..."

If you are using index cards, putting the link on the cards will help you remember to keep the audience with you. In addition, by glancing at

your index cards you will be pausing – this will also help your audience to realise that you are moving on to something new.

### **Language for using visuals**

It's important to introduce your visual to the audience. You can use the following phrases:

"This graph shows you..."

"Take a look at this..."

"If you look at this, you will see..."

"I'd like you to look at this..."

"This chart illustrates the figures..."

"This graph gives you a break down of..."

Give your audience enough time to absorb the information on the visual. Pause to allow them to look at the information and then explain why the visual is important:

"As you can see..."

"This clearly shows ..."

"From this, we can understand how / why..."

"This area of the chart is interesting..."

### **Summarising**

At the end of your presentation, you should summarise your talk and remind the audience of what you have told them:

"That brings me to the end of my presentation. I've talked about..."

"Well, that's about it for now. We've covered..."

"So, that was our marketing strategy. In brief, we..."

"To summarise, I..."

Relate the end of your presentation to your opening statement:

"So I hope that you're a little clearer on how we can achieve sales growth of 20%."

"To return to the original question, we can achieve..."

"So just to round the talk off, I want to go back to the beginning when I asked you..."

"I hope that my presentation today will help you with what I said at the beginning..."

### **Handling questions**

Thank the audience for their attention and invite questions.

"Thank you for listening – and now if there are any questions, I would be pleased to answer them."

"That brings me to the end of my presentation. Thank you for your attention. I'd be glad to answer any questions you might have."

It's useful to re-word the question, as you can check that you have understood the question and you can give yourself some time to think of an answer. By asking the question again you also make sure that other people in the audience understand the question.

"Thank you. So you would like further clarification on our strategy?"

"That's an interesting question. How are we going to get voluntary redundancy?"

"Thank you for asking. What is our plan for next year?"

After you have answered your question, check that the person who asked you is happy with the answer.

"Does this answer your question?"

"Do you follow what I am saying?"

"I hope this explains the situation for you."

"I hope this was what you wanted to hear!"

If you don't know the answer to a question, say you don't know. It's better to admit to not knowing something than to guess and maybe get it wrong. You can say something like:

"That's an interesting question. I don't actually know off the top of my head, but I'll try to get back to you later with an answer."

"I'm afraid I'm unable to answer that at the moment. Perhaps I can get back to you later."

"Good question. I really don't know! What do you think?"

"That's a very good question. However, we don't have any figures on that, so I can't give you an accurate answer."

"Unfortunately, I'm not the best person to answer that."

### **What can you say if things go wrong?**

You think you've lost your audience? Rephrase what you have said:

"Let me just say that in another way."

"Perhaps I can rephrase that."

"Put another way, this means..."

"What I mean to say is..."

### **Can't remember the word?**

If it's a difficult word for you – one that you often forget, or one that you have difficulty pronouncing – you should write it on your index card. Pause briefly, look down at your index card and say the word.

### **Using your voice**

Don't speak in a flat monotone – this will bore your audience. By varying your speed and tone, you will be able to keep your audience's attention. Practise emphasising key words and pause in the right places – usually in between ideas in a sentence. For example "The first strategy

involves getting to know our market (pause) and finding out what they want. (pause) Customer surveys (pause) as well as staff training (pause) will help us do this."

Do not forget – if you speak too fast, you will lose your audience!

## **3. PRESENTATIONS**































































































































































# **4. HAND-OUTS FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY**



<b>Section two: Managing your learning</b>	<b>never</b>	<b>rarely</b>	<b>sometimes</b>	<b>always</b>
4 Before a class/workshop/study session, are you clear about what you hope to learn?	1	2	3	4
5 Do you plan how and when you are going to learn something?	1	2	3	4
6 Do you ask for help if you are having difficulty learning something new?	1	2	3	4
7 If you come across new study methods do you try them?	1	2	3	4
Please write any comments on section two here				
<b>Section three: Reflection</b>				
8 Do you question what you are told e.g. by tutors, in books?	1	2	3	4
9 When you have finished learning about something do you think back about how effective your learning process was?	1	2	3	4
10 Do you change the way you go about learning new things as a result of thinking about past learning situations?	1	2	3	4
Please write any comments on section three here				

### Interpreting the results

1. Now add up the numbers you circled in sections one, two and three.
2. Write the number you score in the TOTAL SCORES column.
3. Circle the numbers you scored in the adjacent row.
4. Add up your total scores and circle your FINAL SCORE in the last row.

	Low independence	Moderate independence	High independence	TOTAL SCORES
Section one: Motivation Q1–3	3 4 5	6 7 8 9	10 11 12	
Section two: Managing your learning Q4–7	4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16	
Section three: Reflection Q8–10	3 4 5	6 7 8 9	10 11 12	
FINAL SCORE	10-19	20-30	31-40	

This questionnaire gives an indication of how independent you are as a learner. If you rate yourself as having low or moderate independence, you could probably benefit from working at increasing your level of 'learner independence'. You might like to discuss this with your peers or tutor. A good starting point for developing your independence in learning is to work through this study skills manual.

### Planning your studies

You may find it helpful to complete the following type of chart and to identify

- the times you will be attending taught sessions.
- times you will be able to study (from printed materials)
- best times for you to use a computer (at home, work or in university)

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Night
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

### Overview: how to reference

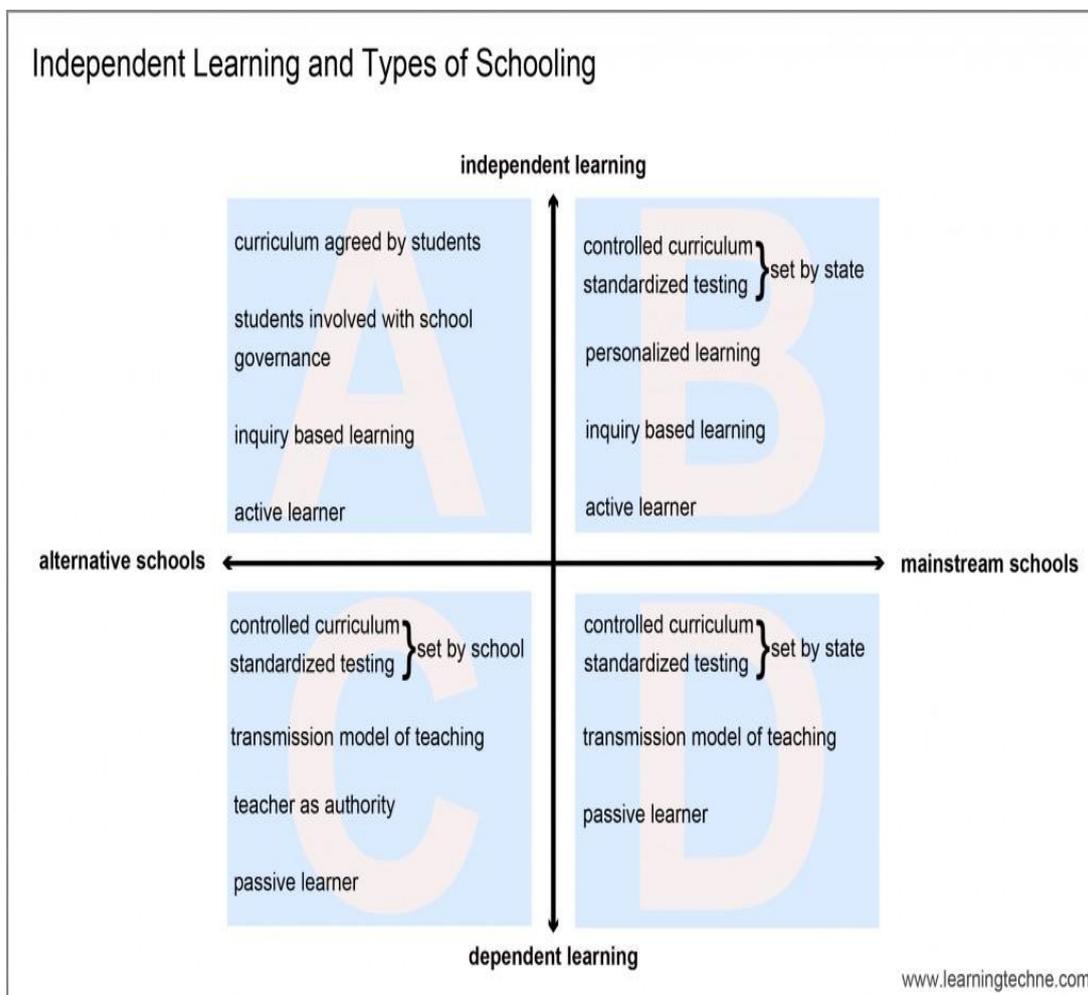
Your essay or report should contain a reference to other people's work. This indicates to the reader that you are using other people's ideas. Here are some standard ways of referencing in your text:

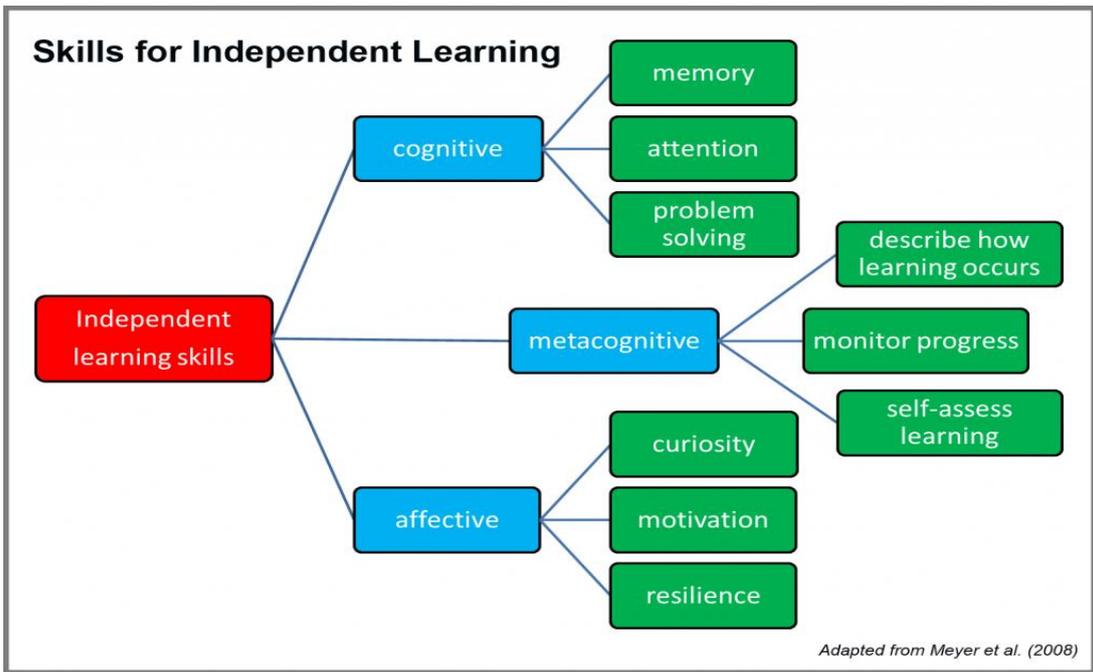
<b>You need to reference other people's work:</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>If you quote another author 'word for word'</b>	David McConnell suggests that "students in cooperative environments perform at a higher level than those working in competitive or individualistic environments." (2002, 19).	Date only, because the author's name is already clearly given; and page number because it is a direct quotation.
<b>If you are using someone's ideas, theories or models - using your words rather than their words.</b>	David McConnell (2002) provides an overview of collaborative and co-operative learning and he identifies the following benefits:	This sentence is 'paraphrased,' that means the student has used their own words, and they mention the source of these ideas by including the author's surname and date.

Create an action plan for each aim. Make clear notes on what you want to achieve, the steps you will need to take, when you aim to achieve the target and evidence documenting your achievement. Use the following template to create your action plan:

Target	Steps to achievement	Completed by	Evidence
	1		
	2		
	3		

Remember that your targets and the steps you take towards achievement don't have to be university based. Look towards the local community for different steps to achieving your target from joining a sports team to volunteering for a charity.





## Independent learning skills evaluation

1. Skill	2. Comment
Concentration	Aim for 10 minutes initially and increase to 20 minutes (in one sitting)
	Are you better in the morning or evening?
	Does a quiet or noisy environment suit you?
Confidence	Use a warm up exercise- such as a times table
	Celebrate what you achieve!
Well laid out work	Spend time creating a neat answer 'template'
	Don't overcalculate
Understand what's required	Write, or draw a picture, to represent the steps
	Try to estimate the answer
	Learn to read the examples / questions thoroughly
Review your answer	Ask great questions such as 'is that reasonable?'
	What marks would you give yourself?

## **The VARK Questionnaire**

### **How Do I Learn Best?**

Choose the answer which best explains your preference and click the box next to it. Please click more than one if a single answer does not match your perception. Leave blank any question that does not apply.

You have to make an important speech at a conference or special occasion. You would:

- write out your speech and learn from reading it over several times.
- write a few key words and practice saying your speech over and over.
- make diagrams or get graphs to help explain things.
- gather many examples and stories to make the talk real and practical.

A group of tourists wants to learn about the parks or wildlife reserves in your area. You would:

- take them to a park or wildlife reserve and walk with them.
- give them a book or pamphlets about the parks or wildlife reserves.
- show them maps and internet pictures.
- talk about, or arrange a talk for them about parks or wildlife reserves.

You are planning a vacation for a group. You want some feedback from them about the plan. You would:

- phone, text or email them.
- give them a copy of the printed itinerary.
- use a map to show them the places.
- describe some of the highlights they will experience.

A website has a video showing how to make a special graph. There is a person speaking, some lists and words describing what to do and some diagrams. You would learn most from:

- reading the words.
- listening.
- watching the actions.
- seeing the diagrams.

Do you prefer a teacher or a presenter who uses:

- demonstrations, models or practical sessions.
- question and answer, talk, group discussion, or guest speakers.
- handouts, books, or readings.
- diagrams, charts or graphs.

You are using a book, CD or website to learn how to take photos with your new digital camera. You would like to have:

- diagrams showing the camera and what each part does.
- clear written instructions with lists and bullet points about what to do.
- many examples of good and poor photos and how to improve them.
- a chance to ask questions and talk about the camera and its features.

Other than price, what would most influence your decision to buy a new non-fiction book?

- It has real-life stories, experiences and examples.
- A friend talks about it and recommends it.
- The way it looks is appealing.
- Quickly reading parts of it.

You are going to choose food at a restaurant or cafe. You would:

- look at what others are eating or look at pictures of each dish.

- choose from the descriptions in the menu.
- listen to the waiter or ask friends to recommend choices.
- choose something that you have had there before.

You are about to purchase a digital camera or mobile phone. Other than price, what would most influence your decision?

- Reading the details or checking its features online.
- Trying or testing it.
- It is a modern design and looks good.
- The salesperson telling me about its features.

You have a problem with your heart. You would prefer that the doctor:

- showed you a diagram of what was wrong.
- described what was wrong.
- used a plastic model to show what was wrong.
- gave you something to read to explain what was wrong.

I like websites that have:

- things I can click on, shift or try.
- audio channels where I can hear music, radio programs or interviews.
- interesting design and visual features.
- interesting written descriptions, lists and explanations.

You are helping someone who wants to go to your airport, the center of town or railway station. You would:

- write down the directions.
- tell her the directions.
- draw, or show her a map, or give her a map.
- go with her.

Remember a time when you learned how to do something new. Avoid choosing a physical skill, eg. riding a bike. You learned best by:

- diagrams, maps, and charts - visual clues.
- watching a demonstration.
- listening to somebody explaining it and asking questions.
- written instructions – e.g. a manual or book.

You want to learn a new program, skill or game on a computer. You would:

- follow the diagrams in the book that came with it.
- use the controls or keyboard.
- talk with people who know about the program.
- read the written instructions that came with the program.
- You are going to cook something as a special treat. You would:
- cook something you know without the need for instructions.
- look on the Internet or in some cookbooks for ideas from the pictures.
- use a cookbook where you know there is a good recipe.
- ask friends for suggestions.

You have finished a competition or test and would like some feedback. You would like to have feedback:

- from somebody who talks it through with you.
- using graphs showing what you had achieved.
- using a written description of your results.
- using examples from what you have done.

## **Motivation and Concentration**

### **Quick-Scoring Achievement Motivation Quiz**

While taking the quiz below keep track of your score on a sheet of paper.

**1.0    *I have no clear goals in life.***

1.    I have a general idea of a career in which I want to succeed
2.    I have set daily objectives which advance me toward my long-term goals.
3. I set daily, weekly and quarterly goals which will advance me toward my long-term goals.

**2.0    *I am too proud to accept help, no matter how stuck or lost I get.***

1.    I will accept help, but only when it's offered.
2. I actively seek out expert help whenever I get stuck or lost
3.    I am acquainted with most campus resources and regularly use them without becoming dependent upon them.

**3.0    *I tend to give up after the first setback.***

1.    I eventually bounce back from a setback after a period of immobilization.
2.    I analyze my setbacks instead of kicking myself or blaming others.
3. A setback inspires me to try again, using new methods if needed.

**4.0** *My fantasies about career success are limited to scenes from "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous."*

1. My fantasies about career success include practical details of my future world of work.
2. My fantasies about career success include thinking about practical steps I can take on a daily basis.
3. My fantasies about career success include long-range, intermediate, and daily plans to reach my goals.

**5.0** *Most of my goals are so high that I seldom reach them or so low that I reach them with very little effort.*

1. At least some of my goals are moderately difficult - high enough to challenge me but low enough not to overwhelm me with anxiety.
2. Most of my goals are moderately difficult.
3. Most of my goals are moderately difficult, and increase their difficulty as I reach them.

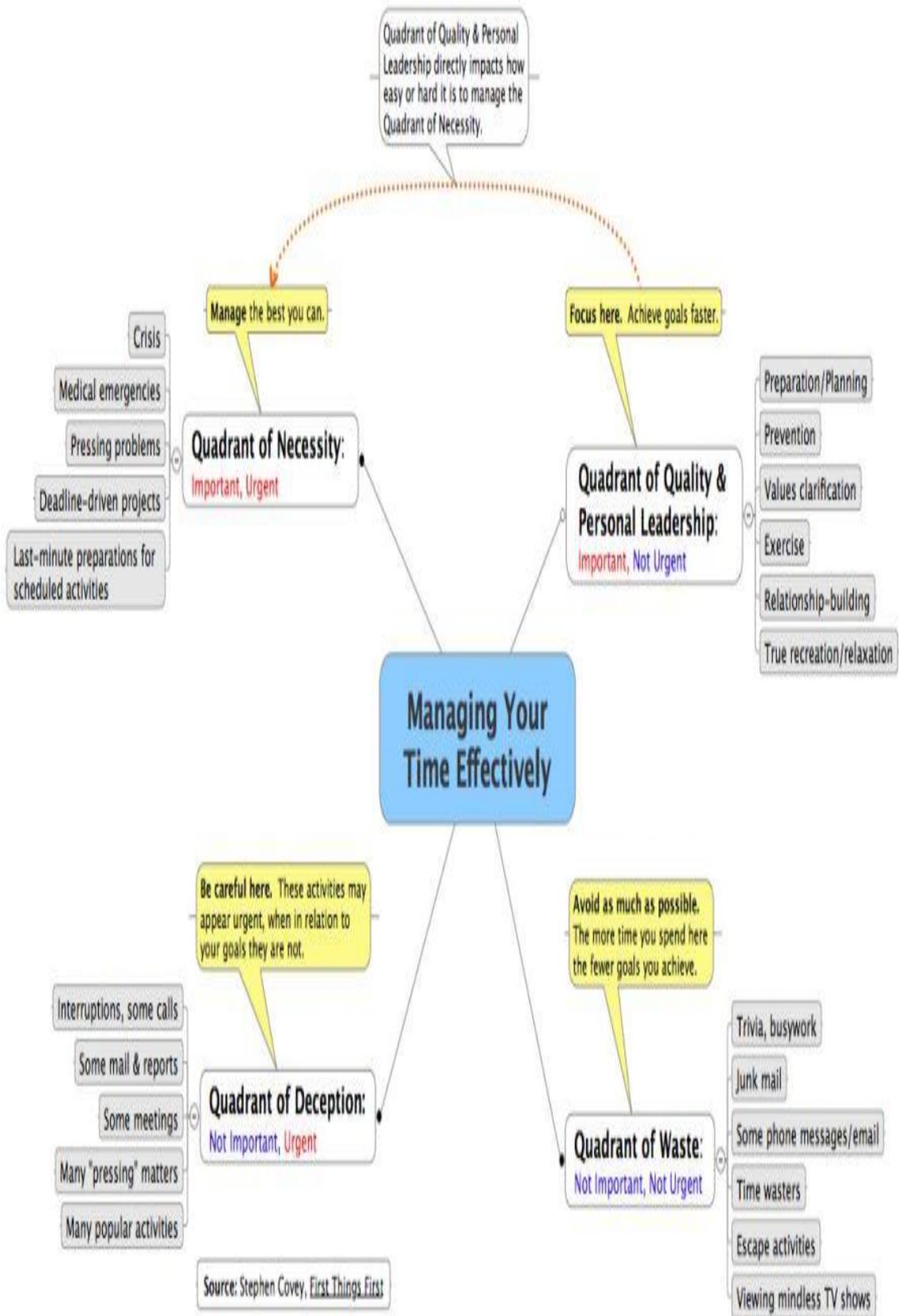
**Scoring:**

**0 Points** - If you don't crawl out from under the doormat and join the human race, you will have about as much a chance at success as a slug with a lobotomy.

**1-5 Points** - The beginning stages of the blue-chip mindset are showing. Still a ways to go though.

**6-10 Points** - You're on the way, but watch out - success can be addictive.

**11-15 Points** - Blue-chip material. You can turn your dreams into reality.



# SAMPLE NOTE-TAKING: OUTLINE FOMRAT

9/30 - HOW TO TAKE NOTES IN LECTURE	
A. PREPARE BEFORE CLASS	
why? makes you ready for what comes up	
① READING	
- mentally organizes information	
- take notes and use as guide for lecture notes	
② POWERPPT. OR NOTES SHEETS	
- print & bring them to write on;	
- look over before class	
③ BEFORE CLASS BEGINS (arrive 5 min early)	
- scan topics to be covered (syllabus, last weeks notes, etc).	
- think about ?s from reading, last class	
B. DURING CLASS (varies based on class, instructor, me)	
① LISTEN!	
- FOR KEY ORGANIZATIONAL WORDS ex: "3 main things"	
- TONE, EMPHASIS	
- EXAMPLES	+ MAIN IDEAS
② WRITE!	THINK ABOUT WHAT'S BEING SAID
- WRITE DOWN MAIN IDEAS, HOW THINGS CONNECT, EXAMPLES	
- LEAVE SPACE TO ADD STUFF	EX: $\neq$ $\Delta$ change
- USE CODES OR SHORTHAND	not equal
③ OTHERS:	
- watch body language	
- ask questions (if I get lost)	
- record (audio) lecture - optional & ask prof 1 <sup>st</sup>	

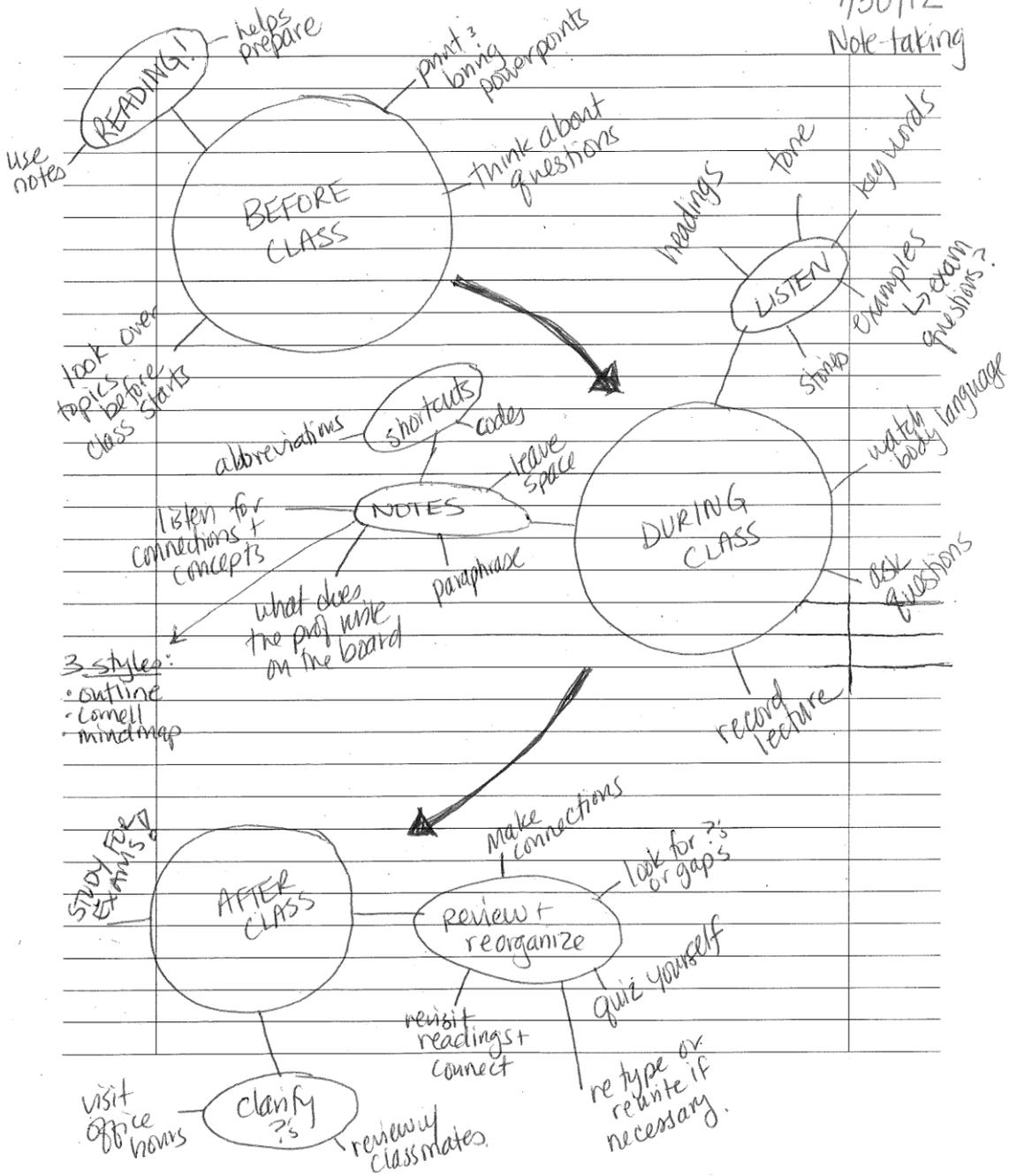
# SAMPLE NOTE-TAKING: CORNELL METHOD

9/30/12

	Note-taking
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"><p>3 main steps:</p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- before</li><li>- during</li><li>- after</li></ul></div>	<p><b>Before</b></p> <p>prepare by reading, look over notes before class starts, print ppts., think about ?'s why? → helps organize information and prepare your brain to listen.</p>
<p>② what do you write if it's all on the ppt. slide you print?</p>	<p><b>DURING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a system for writing that makes sense to you (codes, abbreviations, etc.) ex: w/ b/c Δ ppl govt</li><li>• listen for important points - cues include tone, body language, emphasis, written on board.</li><li>• if it's going too fast: ask ?'s, write what you can + leave space, abbreviate examples</li><li>• listen for organizational cues for what is coming next</li><li>• if you're going to record, ask the prof first</li></ul>
<p>② find out % from prof. →</p>	<p><b>AFTER</b> - most important</p> <p>students who review notes remember more for exams than those who don't!</p>
	<p><b>Summary:</b></p> <p>Note taking isn't just what happens in class, but how you prepare for and review material before and after class - all 3 are important * and this connects to the memory process - repetition * !!</p>
<p>② practice test questions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- name 3 cues to indicate importance</li><li>- provide examples of possible abbreviations</li><li>- describe why it's important to prepare before class</li></ul>

# SAMPLE NOTE-TAKING: MIND MAP

9/30/12  
Note-taking



# **5. MATERIALS FOR PRACTICAL SESSIONS**

## **1. Requirements and Intro to Study Skills**

### **Effective Habits for Effective Study**

YOU can prepare yourself to succeed in your studies... by developing the following habits and understanding these underlying principles.

#### **Take responsibility for yourself:**

Responsibility is the recognition that, in order to succeed, YOU must make decisions about your priorities, your time, and your resources.

#### **Center yourself around your values and principles:**

Don't let friends and acquaintances dictate what you consider important.

#### **Put first things first:**

Follow up on the priorities you have set for yourself, and don't let others or other interests, distract you from your goals.

#### **Discover your key productivity periods and places:**

Whether you are a morning bird or a night owl, studying during your “peak” times is important. Study when you are mentally fresh and not tired. Take short breaks. Study in a location in which you can remain focused and attentive.

**Consider yourself in a win-win situation:**

You win by doing your best and contributing during class. If you are content with your performance, your grade will become a secondary motivator to doing well in the class. Learning will become the primary motivator.

**First understand others, then attempt to be understood:**

When you have an issue with an instructor (a questionable grade or an assignment deadline extension), put yourself in the instructor's place. Now ask yourself how you can best make your argument, given the situation.

**Look for better solutions to problems:**

For example, if you don't understand the course material, don't just re-read the material. Try something else. Consult with the professor, a tutor, an academic advisor, a classmate, a study group, or your school's learning center.

**And lastly, seek to continually challenge yourself!**

## 2. Self-assessment. Learner Autonomy

<i>Skills</i>		<i>4</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>
<b>Listening skills:</b> TV, Radio, lectures, conversations	1. Can I understand when the teacher speaks in English?				
	2. Can I understand when my classmates speak in English?				
	3. Can I understand TOEIC tapes?				
	4. Can I understand movies in English?				
	5. Can I understand the news in English?				
<b>Speaking skills:</b> conversations, interviews, travel, seminars, lectures, employment, public speaking	6. Can my classmates understand my spoken English?				
	7. Can I give directions in English?				
	8. Can I express my likes and dislikes in English?				
	9. Can I talk about my daily routines?				
	10. Can I express my opinions?				
	11. Can I politely interrupt?				
	12. Can I bring others into a conversation?				
	13. Can I encourage others to continue speaking?				
	14. Can I check that I understand?				
15. Can I check that others understand me?					
<b>Presentation skills:</b> describing, discussing, reporting	16. Can I explain how to do something?				
	17. Can I describe things?				
	18. Can I negotiate?				
<b>Writing skills</b>	19. Can I write my resumé?				
	20. Can I write business letters?				
	21. Can I write reports?				
<b>Other skills</b>	22. Can I shop online in English?				
	23. Can I use an English Internet browser?				
	24. Can I understand a computer manual in English?				
	25. Can I understand a textbook in English?				

**Sub-totals:**

--	--	--	--

Add all the subtotals to make the **final total:**

--

### **3. Setting Goals and Decision Making**

Decision Making Skills and Goal Setting: Lesson Plans

Summary: Activities to be used in a lesson on decision making and goal setting.

Healthy Skills: A1, B1, C1, D1

Discuss values, goals, decision-making and personal responsibility.

Student Prior Knowledge: Information on self-awareness and personal values.

Intended Learning Outcomes: Students will learn how to make wise decisions and goal setting Career Connections:

Materials: Worksheets for students.

Hook: Share a story with students to help prepare them in making wise decisions.

Instructional Procedures:

- Read Case Studies and fill out Case Studies Worksheet.
- 5 Steps to good Decision making.
- Setting Goals Worksheet and Discussion.
- Set Personal goals and Create Visual Representation.

Attachments

Attached worksheets:

- Making Decisions - Case Studies Scenarios and Worksheet Setting Goals
- How to Set Goals - Visualization.

Procedures Script

All of you are in here because you have made particular decisions about drugs and alcohol. I know that all of you envision a future for yourselves after high school. Every decision you make effects your future and leads you down a particular path.

Today I want us to talk about good decision making and goal setting. I want all of you to be successful in life, that is why we need to learn how to choose wisely and set goals.

This is not only about drugs and alcohol, but every decision you make in life.

On the board is our agenda.

First I want us to go over a couple scenarios.

After going through these two scenarios, what have we learned are 5 steps to good decision making? You can look at the worksheet if you need help. (Identify the problem, decide what the choices are, Gather information, consider the Outcome, and Make the decision. You can also evaluate your decision.)

Now we know the basics to good decision making, let's think about what we can do with these skills in the future.

How many of you have set goals for yourself?

Do you do this regularly?

I try to set goals for myself regularly - college, job, teaching masters.

I want you to fill out this sheet on that asks you some questions about setting goals.

Lets talk about it.

Now I would like us all to set some of our own goals.

This is what I have

After we are done, I want us all to share our goals.

Sometimes it helps to obtain our goals if we think of them in multiple ways. We have written our goal, now I want us to visualize our goals.

## MAKING DECISIONS: CASE STUDIES

### SITUATION 1

Suzy is a very pretty girl. She has a beautiful face and beautiful hair. She is not very happy with her body size. She weighs about fifteen pounds more than her friends. Suzy says, “My friends are so much prettier than I am. I am so fat. I wish I could be as skinny as they are.” She also says, “It’s not fair that you guys are so skinny and I am fat.”

When Suzy comes home from school she is starved to death. She is a picky eater. She doesn’t like the things they serve at lunch, so she spends her lunch money in the candy and Coke machine at school. When she gets home from school, she makes herself an extra-large milkshake because she is so hungry.

What choices does Suzy have about weighing more than she wants? Are there different choices that she could make about her diet to enable her to be the way she wants to be?

### SITUATION 2

Fred loves clothes. His favorite activity is to go shopping at the mall and try on new clothes. He looks forward to the day when he has a job so he can buy all the clothes he wants.

Next week is Fred’s birthday and he will receive \$75.00 for his present. He saw a pair of jeans at the mall that were \$72.00; however, he also needs new shirts, new shorts, and some swim trunks for the summer. His \$75.00 could purchase all of these things or it could purchase the one pair of designer jeans.

All the kids at school wear these jeans. Fred states, “If only I had a pair of these jeans, I would be popular.” How could Fred make a wise decision? What would you do?

### SITUATION 3

Katie loves clothes. She wishes she could have all the designer clothes she wants. Unfortunately, she can't; she has two brothers and three sisters, and her parents cannot afford to buy all their children designer clothes.

Katie has a few friends that have some designer jeans. Her friends let her borrow the jeans, even though this is against her parents' wishes. Her parents felt that Katie should not borrow them in case something were to happen to them. In that case, they would need to purchase an outfit to replace the damaged one.

One day on the way home from school, Katie tripped and fell on her knees. She tore holes in both knees of the designer jeans she had borrowed from her friend, Julie. Katie was crying, not only because she had injured her knees, but because the new jeans were ruined and they weren't even hers.

What is Katie going to do? Should she tell her parents? Should she tell Julie? What decisions should Katie have made prior to borrowing the jeans? Does Katie have an obligation to Julie?

### SITUATION 4

Steve is fourteen and has taken piano lessons since he was five. He feels that he misses out on many fun activities because he has to practice everyday after school. He wants to quit piano lessons, but his mother will not allow him to; she says, "If you quit the piano now you'll be sorry when you get older." Steve wants to quit anyway.

What other options could Steve and his mother find? Is there a compromise that they can make to satisfy both of them?

## CASE STUDIES WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to evaluate each case study. Use one worksheet for each case study.

1. Identify the problem.
2. What are the person's choices?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
3. Gather information: What information should the person gather that would be helpful to know before making a decision?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
4. Consider the outcome. What would be the results of the decision?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
5. Make the decision. What should the person do?

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  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
4. Consider the outcome. What would be the results of the decision?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
5. Make the decision. What should the person do?

## Setting Goals

Name:

1. Do you ever set goals for yourself? What are some goals you have right now (short term and long-term)?

2. Agree or disagree: It's better to set lower goals than to risk failure by setting higher ones.

4. What's the difference between a wish and a goal?

5. How do you decide what your goals are?

6. Have you ever set a goal that was unrealistic? What happened? What did you learn from that?

7. Is it ever okay to take risks? What kinds of risks are okay? What kinds of risks are not okay?

8. Have you ever gone out on a limb and risked failure in order to achieve a bigger goal? (describe) Are you glad you took that risk?

9. Has there been a time when you turned a failure into a success? (describe) What did you learn from that?

10. What's the difference between failing and being a failure?

11. If you don't accomplish all your goals does that make you a failure?

12. What are some good ways to deal with disappointments?

13. What is your personal definition of success?

14. Is it a good idea to set goals? Why, what do goals do for you?

## HOW TO SET GOALS

In order for something to be a goal:

- It has to be important to you, personally.
- It has to be within your power to make it happen through your own

actions.

- It has to be something you have a reasonable chance of achieving.
- It must be clearly defined and have a specific plan of action.

1. Define the goal.\*
2. Outline the steps needed to achieve it.
3. Consider possible blocks and ways of dealing with them.
4. Set deadlines.

\*Not every wish can be a goal. For instance, you may wish you could live and stay young forever, but since there's nothing you can do to make that happen, it could never be considered a goal.

### Visualizing Your Goals

Create a visual representation of your goal. You can use: paper and markers, collage, computer graphics, or abstract designs.

Put thought into your creation! Spend the time to make this piece quality and presentation worthy.

You can use the space below to sketch out your design or brainstorm.

**Goal Setting**  
***Framework***

Desired outcome: State this with positive wording, in the present tense.	
Potential gains	
Potential losses	
How I'll recognise when the outcomes have been achieved	
Targets (sub-goals)	
Possible obstacles	
Steps to overcoming obstacles	
How I'll celebrate success	

#### **4. Time Management. Learning styles**

##### **Time management quiz**

How good are you at managing your time? Take this quick quiz to find out.

1. Your teacher has given you two weeks to research and write an essay. Do you?

a) Start work on the essay straight away and continue redrafting it up until the deadline.

b) Leave it until the night before and stay up all night working on the essay to meet the deadline.

c) Forget about it until the night before and ask to copy a friend's work.

2. You have been invited to an interview for a job in a local café. Do you?

a) Arrive at the interview one hour early.

b) Get stuck in traffic on the bus and arrive at the interview just in time.

c) Forget to find out where the interview is and arrive two hours late because you got lost.

3. Your out-of-town cousin, Lewis, has come to stay for the weekend. You want to show him the sights, but you have homework to do. Do you?

a) Write out a list of suggestions that Lewis can do and send him out to explore on his own.

b) Give Lewis a quick tour then race back just in time to dash out your homework.

c) Take Lewis out and get your mum to call the school on Monday to say you're sick.

4. You've promised to help make props for the school play. They need them ready in a month. Do you?

a) Change your mind and explain you need to focus on your studies and can't afford to commit that much time to a school play.

b) Forget about your promise until a week before the props are due. You make them but they're not as good as you'd hoped.

c) Go and buy toy props from a shop. You're too busy socialising to make anything and toys will look much better than home-made ones.

5. Which of these statements best describes you?

a) I don't know when to stop working on an essay. I like to keep adding things because I want it to be perfect.

b) I rush most of my work because there are so many other things I want to do with my time.

c) If I think I can get away with it, I won't always do my homework.

6. Have you ever missed a homework deadline?

a) No, never. I always get things done on time.

b) Occasionally, though I normally meet deadlines.

c) All the time.

7. How often do you write out a weekly planner?

a) Every week like clockwork.

b) Once a month or less. I don't always stick to them so they're not that useful.

c) Never, I don't need one.

8. When you tell your parents that you are doing your homework are you...

a) Actually doing your homework.

b) Doing a bit of work but thinking about other things at the same time.

c) Usually on MSN messenger or texting friends.

9. What do you think you spend most of your free time doing?

a) Homework and studying.

b) It depends, some nights I'll work nonstop, others I'll hang out with mates or chill out in front of the telly.

c) Socialising and chilling out.

10. What motivates you to get your homework done on time?

a) The thought of getting a good grade.

b) The fear of getting told off by a teacher.

c) When homework is fun. I tend not to bother if it's boring.

**Add up how many times you answered A, B and C then find out what kind of time manager you are:**

**You answered mostly A**

You're a super-keen Keira!

Keira works hard because she knows that she needs good marks to get started on her career.

She is a good time manager because she meets deadlines and usually allows plenty of time for work or appointments.

However, Keira's workaholic tendencies may become unhealthy if she carries on this way.

The trouble is Keira doesn't know when to stop working. She has no hobbies and lets her friendships suffer because she is so focused on her studies. To strike the right balance, she should find more time for friends and other activities that may help her unwind and relax.

**You answered mostly B**

You're a busy, busy, busy Brandon!

Brandon is a popular guy because he likes to get involved with everything and always keeps a promise. However, he doesn't manage his time as well as he could.

The result is that he crams too much into his life and feels like he's constantly catching up. He rushes work and other commitments because he is worried about upsetting people. He meets deadlines but doesn't do the work to the best of his ability because it's rushed and he's thinking about other things.

Brandon would find it easier to juggle things if he drew up a weekly planner. That way he knows exactly how much free time he's got and can

decide whether or not it's sensible to commit himself to doing things like prop-making.

He should learn to prioritise what's important and not be afraid to say no to people.

### **You answered mostly C**

You're a time-wasting Tina

Tina knows how to unwind from a day at college- spending time chilling out or chatting to friends online.

She values both friendships and free time.

However, if she wants to be successful in her studies, she needs to sort out her priorities.

Tina puts her social life before studying. The result is that she leaves homework until the last minute, often resorting to shortcuts like copying to get it done.

She doesn't plan ahead and so ends up getting lost, being late or simply giving up. She does the minimum amount of work and is motivated only by what is fun.

Tina could become a better time manager if she drew up a timeplanner and stuck to it. To motivate herself, she should set rewards for when she hits deadlines. For example, when she finishes an English essay, she could reward herself with an hour of chatting on MSN.

## 5. Study skills. Note Taking & Its Strategies

### Note-Taking

A laptop computer can be a useful note-taking tool and any of the below suggestions may be adapted for use on a computer.

1. Full-sized, three-ring notebooks are best for containing all lecture notes, handouts, and notes from the test and readings. Why? Pages can be arranged chronologically with pertinent handouts inserted into lecture notes for easy reference. If you miss a lecture, you can easily add the missing notes. Course materials are together in one notebook.

2. Date and number your note pages and your handouts. It will help with continuity.

3. Give yourself plenty of blank spaces in your notes, as well as plenty of room to write. This will allow you to make additional notes, sketch helpful graphics, or write textbook references. Your notes will be easier to read if you write in pen and use only one side of the paper.

4. Law-ruled or summary margin paper is helpful with its three-inch margin on the left side of the page. If you can't find this paper, draw the margin on each piece of paper. This sets one up for using the Cornell format of note taking. Write your notes on the right side of the line. After the lecture, use the left margin for key words or phrases, or sample questions when you review the notes.

5. Take as many notes as you can. If you miss something, leave a space; you may be able to fill in the blanks later. Do not stop taking notes if you are confused or if you want to ponder a particular concept. You will have time for that later. Abbreviations are extremely helpful.

6. It may be difficult to make your notes look great or to have them extremely organized as you write them. Work with your notes as soon after

class as possible when your recall is at its best. You may be able to fill in some blanks. Color coding can bring some organization to your notes. For example, identify concepts and categories by highlighting items with a particular color. If you still have problems organizing your notes, begin to formulate a specific question for your professor or study groups.

7. As you review your notes, look at the information as answers to questions. As these questions become clearer to you, jot down the questions in the left margin. You may also write key words or phrases in the left hand margin that cue your recall of definitions, theories, models, or examples. Now you are ready to try to recall the information in your notes. Cover the right side of your notes, leaving only these clues (whether there are questions or key words) to test yourself.

8. As you begin to put the material of the course together, add a somewhat generic question—WHY?—to your answers. You need to know why a particular answer is correct. You need to know why the information is pertinent to the course. This will also prepare you for essay exams.

## **6. Improving Transferable and Language Skills**

### **(Improving reading skills)**

#### Marking Texts

The word “highlight” is used here to designate any mark that draws attention to a word or phrase—not just use of a colored highlight marker.

1. Finish reading before marking in your text.

Never highlight until you have finished reading a full paragraph or section and have paused to think about what you just read. The procedure will keep you from grabbing at everything that looks important at first glance.

2. Be extremely selective.

Don’t highlight or jot down so many items that they overload your memory or cause you to try to think in several directions at once. Be stingy with your highlighting, but don’t be so brief that you’ll have to read through the page again when you review.

3. Use your own words.

Jot notes in the margins in your own words. Since your own words represent your own thinking they will be powerful cues to the ideas on the page when you return to it for later review.

4. Be brief.

Highlight brief, but meaningful phrases, rather than complete sentences. Mark your marginal jottings short and to the point. They will make a sharper impression on your memory, and they will be easier to use when you recite and review.

5. Be swift.

You don’t have all day for highlighting. Read, go back for a mini-overview, and highlight. Then move on to the next portion of the chapter.

6. Be neat.

Neatness takes conscious effort, not time. Later when you review, the neat notes will encourage you and save time, since the ideas will be easily and clearly perceived.

7. Organize facts and ideas under categories.

Items within categories are far more easily memorized than random facts and ideas.

8. Try cross-referencing.

For example, if you find an idea on page 64 that has a direct bearing on an idea back on page 28, draw a little arrow pointing upward and write “28” by it. Then turn back to page 28 and alongside the idea there, draw an arrow pointing downward and write “64” by it. In this way, you’ll tie the two ideas together, in your mind and in your reviewing.

9. Be systematic.

There are many ways to mark the text: highlighting with different colors; single and double underlines; the use of asterisks, circling, boxing for important items; and the use of top and bottom margins for longer notations. If some of these ideas appeal to you, work them into your marking system, one or two at a time. But use them consistently so you will remember what they mean at review time.

## **7. Avoiding Plagiarism. Referencing, Paraphrasing & Summarizing**

Plagiarism means using someone else's words or ideas as your own.

Plagiarism is viewed as a crime in the publishing domain and is a serious ethical offense in the academic world. Instructors are experienced in reading student papers and watch for plagiarism, whether it is careless or intentional. Instructors may vary in their views of what is plagiarism. Instructors might consider a paper a student has written for a different class as plagiarism if handed in as an assignment for their course. In any case, copying exactly from a source without using quotation marks or not giving your source credit is considered stealing.

### **Guidelines**

#### **1. Paraphrase your information when doing research.**

Restate ideas by using your own words when taking notes from resources. Compare your wording to the original source to ensure that your paraphrasing conveys the essence of the ideas, not the exact original phrases or words.

Make your own observations stand out in your notes. Put your own ideas in the margin or print them so they look physically different from the material you noted from other authors. You can then include these observations in your writing without fear of committing plagiarism

#### **2. Credit your sources.**

When quoting directly, that is using the exact wording, use quotation marks and credit your source within your text or according to your instructor's format requirements.

When referring to words and ideas of other writers, even if your paraphrase, cite the sources in the format required by the instructor.

#### **3. Limit your use of quotations.**

Use quotations only when your own words will not convey the same impact as the words of your sources.

Using long or many quotations may indicate your uneasiness in expressing your own ideas.

4. Don't help others plagiarize.

Lending your work when you know the borrower is planning to hand in your work (or something related to your work) as his/her own is viewed as contributing to plagiarism. If questions arise regarding the source of the paper, you may be asked to explain why you lent your work to someone intending to hand in the paper as his/her own work.

5. Prevent others from plagiarizing your work. If you use a computer accessed by multiple users, store your document on your own disk. Storing documents on the computer's hard drive allows access to others who use the computer to download your work without your permission or knowledge. They then are able to use your work as their own.

## **8. Concentration and Memory. Difficulties with Them**

How do I approach memorizing?

1. Remembering is like seeing; dependent not upon how much we use it, but rather how we use it.

So how do I memorize?

2. Close attention. Cultivate the habit of close attention to the subject you wish to remember. This will help make an impression.

What do you mean, “impression”?

3. An impression is a mark left on your memory. Obtain as many impressions as possible. For example, try reading aloud. In doing this your eye takes in the appearance of the printed word, your ear passes the sound of the words to your brain, and your throat contracts to produce sound. All of these elements help to give the total impression which your mind is expected to store.

I have a roommate and can't read aloud until later. What can I do right now?

4. Visualize. Either remember a diagram or a picture of the material to be remembered, or take short notes about it, which you can then visualize.

How else can I improve my memory?

5. Intend to remember. Like attention, intention requires special effort. The mere intention to remember puts the mind in a condition to remember. If you will apply this intention while studying, you will be able to recall between 20 and 60 percent more of what you read and hear than if you were not actively trying to remember.

I'm reading aloud and visualizing, but I'm still struggling to remember.

6. Consider. A fact doesn't belong to you until you have used it. In making use of this principle, plan to spend not more than one-half of your

study period in reading your lesson. Spend the other half using what you learn. Think about what you have studied; write down notes about it; make flashcards and diagrams about it; and explain it to somebody else.

I'm not sure I'm "making use" of the information.

7. Associate. One of the most important of all aids to the remembering process is the habit of immediately associating a new idea with facts or ideas that are already firmly lodged in the mind. This association revives and strengthens the old memories and prevents the new one from slipping away by anchoring the new memory to the well-established framework of your mental world. For example, you are studying parts of the brain and want to remember that the "temporal lobe" interprets hearing. You already know that "tempo" has to do with music. So, "temporal"=hearing, "tempo"=music.

## **9. Avoiding Test Anxiety and Test Taking**

### **(Overcoming test anxiety)**

Most students experience some level of anxiety during an exam. However, when anxiety affects exam performance it has become a problem.

General preparation/building confidence:

Review your personal situation and skills

Academic counselors can help you in these areas, or refer to our Guides on the topic:

- Developing good study habits and strategies (a link to our directory)

- Managing time

(dealing with procrastination, distractions, laziness)

- Organizing material to be studied and learned

Take a step by step approach to build a strategy and not get overwhelmed

- Outside pressures

success/failure consequences (grades, graduation), peer pressure, competitiveness, etc.

- Reviewing your past performance on tests to improve and learn from experience

Test preparation to reduce anxiety:

- Approach the exam with confidence:

Use whatever strategies you can to personalize success: visualization, logic, talking to your self, practice, team work, journaling, etc.

View the exam as an opportunity to show how much you've studied and to receive a reward for the studying you've done

- Be prepared!

Learn your material thoroughly and organize what materials you will need for the test. Use a checklist

- Choose a comfortable location for taking the test with good lighting and minimal distractions

- Allow yourself plenty of time, especially to do things you need to do before the test and still get there a little early

- Avoid thinking you need to cram just before

- Strive for a relaxed state of concentration

Avoid speaking with any fellow students who have not prepared, who express negativity, who will distract your preparation

- A program of exercise is said to sharpen the mind

- Get a good night's sleep the night before the exam

- Don't go to the exam with an empty stomach

Fresh fruits and vegetables are often recommended to reduce stress.

Stressful foods can include processed foods, artificial sweeteners, carbonated soft drinks, chocolate, eggs, fried foods, junk foods, pork, red meat, sugar, white flour products, chips and similar snack foods, foods containing preservatives or heavy spices

- Take a small snack, or some other nourishment to help take your mind off of your anxiety.

Avoid high sugar content (candy) which may aggravate your condition

During the test:

- Read the directions carefully

- Budget your test taking time

- Change positions to help you relax

- If you go blank, skip the question and go on

- If you're taking an essay test and you go blank on the whole test, pick a question and start writing. It may trigger the answer in your mind

• Don't panic when students start handing in their papers. There's no reward for finishing first

Use relaxation techniques

If you find yourself tensing and getting anxious during the test:

- Relax; you are in control.
- Take slow, deep breaths
- Don't think about the fear
- Pause: think about the next step and keep on task, step by step

Use positive reinforcement for yourself:

- Acknowledge that you have done, and are doing, your best
- Expect some anxiety
- It's a reminder that you want to do your best and can provide energy
- Just keep it manageable
- Realize that anxiety can be a "habit"
- and that it takes practice to use it as a tool to succeed

After the test, review how you did

• List what worked, and hold onto these strategies

It does not matter how small the items are: they are building blocks to success

- List what did not work for improvement
- Celebrate that you are on the road to overcoming this obstacle

Check out local centers and resources in your school for assistance!

If you are aware that you have a problem with test anxiety, be sure your teacher or instructor knows before any testing begins (and not the hour before!). There may be other options to evaluate your knowledge or performance within the subject matter.





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# Activity 1

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## Preparing for a presentation – what to do first

Beryl is preparing to give a talk to members of the local neighbourhood group. She wants to talk about the water company plan to clean the polluted brook.

Below are three questions which need some thought before Beryl gives her presentation. Write a sentence in response to each question.

1. What is the main aim of Beryl's presentation?

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2. Who will be listening to Beryl's talk?

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3. Suggest some topics which Beryl's talk might cover?

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*You will find the feedback to this activity on page 23.*

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The mini project later in this booklet will ask you to give a short presentation. Many of the activities you will be doing are designed to help you prepare for this presentation. Talk to your supervisor and ask if you can make an 8 – 10 minute presentation relevant to your job.

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# Activity 2

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## The three key questions

After you have spoken to your supervisor, write down the answers to the three questions in the spaces below.

1. What is the main purpose of your presentation?

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2. Write down what the presentation is about in no more than three short sentences?

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3. Who will be listening to your presentation?

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**FEEDBACK:** If you have clear answers to these questions you will find that preparing for your presentation will be much easier.

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# Activity 3

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## Who will be in your audience?

Describe the people who will be listening to your presentation. What do they want to hear?

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**FEEDBACK:** If you spend a little time thinking about your audience and what they want to hear, this will help you to identify what it is they want out of the presentation.

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## Activity 4

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What does your audience want to hear?

Thinking again about your own presentation, what information will your audience find most useful? Is there any material you should leave out? If so, make a note of what it is and why you think it best not to include it in this presentation.

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FEEDBACK: Here are some indicators which you can use to compare with your own answers.

- Would the information be at a basic or more advanced level to suit your audience? Will everyone in the audience be able to follow what you are saying? Is this the information your audience want from the presentation?

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## Activity 5

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How can Beryl structure her talk?

Returning to the example of Beryl and her presentation to the neighbourhood group, can you think of a simple way in which she could break down her talk into easy stages for her audience?

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## Activity 8

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### Think about your own voice

Think about the following aspects of your voice. Tick the box if you think you need more practice.

- |                                                             |                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too loud                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Too soft                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking too fast                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Talking too slowly      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking naturally                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Moving my body and arms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking from the back of my throat |                                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Putting expression in my voice     |                                                  |

**FEEDBACK:** If you need more practice in any of these areas, the best way of doing this is to practise your presentation in front of supportive people such as friends and colleagues. Ask them to tell you how they think you can improve the way you give your presentation.

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## Activity 9

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### Watch a presentation on TV

*You will find the feedback to this activity on page 23.*

Watch someone presenting information on the television. What techniques are used to make the information more interesting and enjoyable? Write your observations on a separate sheet of paper.

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## Activity 10

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### Draft an overhead

Draft an overhead for a presentation on one of the following:

- a recent day out
- your ideal job
- a new idea for your team.

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## Activity 11

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### Your worst experience during a presentation

What has been your worst experience when giving a presentation? Describe what went wrong. What lessons did you learn from that experience? If you have never had this experience, write about the worst presentation you have heard. What mistakes did the speaker make? What could the speaker have done to improve the presentation?

FEEDBACK: Common mistakes which people make when giving a presentation are:

- not giving the presentation enough thought beforehand so it is difficult to follow
- speaking too fast
- speaking too softly
- trying to remember the presentation word for word and forgetting things
- giving too much information so the main points get lost.

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## Activity 12

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### Make yourself more relaxed

Take another look at the list of ideas we have given on page 19. Which techniques for making yourself more relaxed about giving a presentation would you find useful? Make a note of them. Is there anything else that you do which we have not mentioned here?

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## **6. LABORATORY WORKS**

**There are no laboratory works on this subject**

## 7. GLOSSARY

- Activity*** Things that people do. Something that someone does in order to achieve an aim. Something that you do because you enjoy it or because it is interesting. A situation in which people are busy doing different things.
- Appearance*** The way that someone or something looks. The time when something starts to exist or be seen. An occasion when you are on television or in a play, movie, concert etc.
- Challenge*** Something that needs a lot of skill, energy, and determination to deal with or achieve, especially something you have never done before and enjoy doing. An action or idea that questions whether something is true, accurate, or legal. An invitation to someone to compete of fight, especially in sport.
- Character*** The qualities that make up someone's personality. Unusual person. Morally good qualities.
- Conversation*** A talk between two or more people, usually a private and informal one.
- Custom*** Something people do that is traditional or usual. The practice of buying goods or services from a particular shop or company.
- Description*** The process of saying or a statement about what someone or something is like.
- Design*** The way that something is made so that it works in a certain way or has a certain appearance. A pattern that decorates something. A plan or idea.

<b><i>Education</i></b>	The activity of educating people in schools, colleges, and universities, and all the policies and arrangements concerning this. The process of providing people with information about an important issue.
<b><i>Elementary</i></b>	Relating to the most basic and important part of something.
<b><i>Environment</i> (<i>the Environment</i>)</b>	The place in which people live and work, including all the physical conditions that affect them. The natural world, including the land, water, air, plants, and animals, especially considered as something that is affected by human activity.
<b><i>Experience</i></b>	Knowledge and skill gained through time spent doing a job or activity.
<b><i>Friend</i></b>	Someone you know well and like that is not a member of your family.
<b><i>Health</i></b>	The condition of your body, especially whether or not you are ill.
<b><i>Hobby</i></b>	Something that you enjoy doing when you are not working.
<b><i>Intermediate</i></b>	At an academic level below advanced.
<b><i>Interview</i></b>	A meeting in which someone asks another person, especially a famous person, questions about themselves, their work, or their ideas, in order to publish or broadcast the information.
<b><i>Leisure</i></b>	Activities you do to relax or enjoy yourself.
<b><i>Lifestyle</i></b>	The type of life you have, for example the type of job or house you have or the type of activity you like doing.

<b><i>Personal</i></b>	Your own. Private.
<b><i>Researcher</i></b>	Someone who does research, especially someone who works for a television or film company to collect relevant facts and ideas.
<b><i>Science</i></b>	The study and knowledge of the physical world and its behavior that is based on experiments and proven facts and is organized into a system.
<b><i>Society</i></b>	People in general living together in organized communities, with laws and traditions controlling the way they behave towards one another.
<b><i>Story</i></b>	An account of something that happened. The events in a book, film etc.
<b><i>Technology</i></b>	Advanced scientific knowledge used for practical purposes, especially in industry.
<b><i>Upper-Intermediate</i></b>	An academic level higher than intermediate, more than average.