

20 Tips for Effective Learning



BRADFORD
UNIVERSITY
School *of* Management

**Effective
Learning Service**

**20 Tips for
Effective Learning**



20 TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING

Here are '20 tips for effective learning', many of them suggested by successful undergraduate and postgraduate students at the School of Management. The topics cover the following: **Time Management, Note-taking, Referencing & Bibliographies, Essay Writing, Working with Others, Passing Exams & Helping Each Other.**

Topic: TIME MANAGEMENT

1



"Time management is the key to getting more out of your time. Logging your activities for a week will show you how much spare time you actually have and don't use wisely. So schedule your week in advance including allocating time for socialising, free time etc. Also reward yourself by having an hour off after doing a couple of hours work."

(Erica Bramhall, final year undergraduate)

2

"You have around six assignments to do in the first semester and the hand-in dates are close to exam dates, so you need to manage your time to make sure you don't end up rushing to finish".

(Hitoshi Shintani, MA Student)

3

"Never leave work until the last minute (for some students this is common place). This only adds to the pressure and stress that you will face. It may also affect the quality level of your work as you cannot do the required reading around the subject to source references etc".

(**John Eggleton**, final year undergraduate)

4

A time-management tip from the EFFECTIVE LEARNING SERVICE:

Get a large sheet of paper and write sub-headings on it: '**By Today**', '**By Next Week**', '**By.... Date**' on it:

BY TODAY	BY NEXT WEEK	BY.... DATE

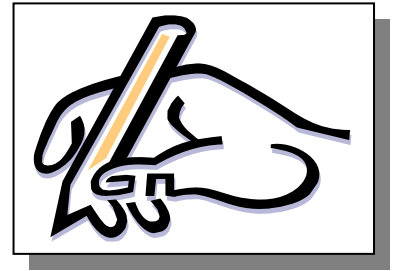
Get some yellow stick-on 'post-it' labels and use these to list the things you **will** do today, **will** do by next week & **will** do by... (write the date in). Keep this where you see it.

There is a leaflet on **Time Management** available from the Effective Learning Service.

Topic: NOTE-TAKING (from written sources)

5

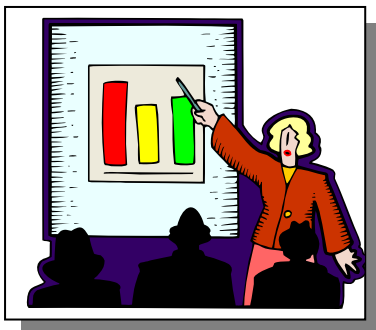
Most books or articles contain at least one **key point** or 'big idea'. Try and identify them as you read. This will make reading a more interesting and active experience.



When you have identified the main ideas, make a note of these. But the really important thing to do is to record your source, otherwise you will forget. You will need this information for your references & bibliographies in essays. You need to write down:

- Title of Publication
- Date of Publication
- Author(s)
- Publisher
- Page Numbers if you want to quote something direct from the publication

Topic: NOTE-TAKING (from lectures)



6

"Try & read books in advance of lectures & tutorials, particularly if you are also learning English, and particularly if the subject is an unfamiliar one. Read a chapter in advance of a lecture"

(**Karine Ouzana**, 1st year undergraduate student)

7

Lecturers make their lecture notes available to students via the Blackboard system. However, to keep your attention from wandering in lectures, try listening for, and noting down, the **main points**. You can't record every word the lecturer says, so concentrate on recording the **main points**. Compare notes with other students afterwards. **Try & make your notes memorable, e.g. use colour to highlight key points.** There is an Effective Learning booklet 'Effective Note Making' that looks at creative ways of taking and making notes.

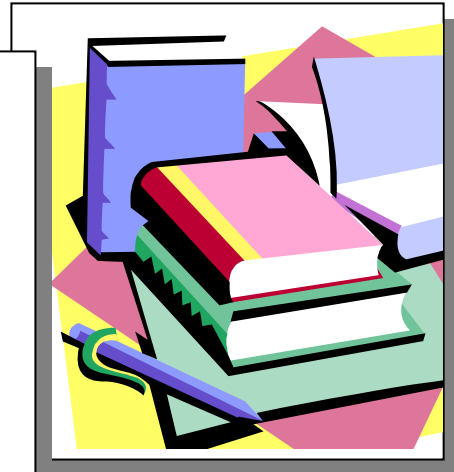
Topic: REFERENCING

8

*"Since our course is so well structured, many do not feel the need to go out and augment exam answers with research. If you are going for a high mark - **big mistake!!***

*Remember the lecturer must be able to distinguish not only your style but also **SOME** of the content. If you can just **SOURCE** your information...just **WHO AND WHEN**...you add immense value to your answer".*

(**Rahul Agarwal**, final year undergraduate)



9

Get into the habit of accurately recording all your sources of information. It is expected academic practice that you will state the **sources** of your ideas in your essays and reports. You need to use the **HARVARD SYSTEM** for referencing and bibliographies. This is a simple system to learn.

The author's surname is listed first, followed by his/her initials, followed by the year of publication, and followed by the title of book or other written source, and finally the place & name of the publisher, e.g.

Handy, C. (1994) *The Empty Raincoat*. London: Hutchinson.

You can also use the **EndNote** system to help you with referencing. **EndNote** is a useful bibliographic tool, which can help you keep track of the books, journals and other sources that you have used to write essays.

If you enter reference information for all of the resources that you use into **EndNote**, you can then use the program to create bibliographies for your essays, theses and dissertations.

Ask at the library about **Endnote**, or check it out on the Internet on <http://www.brad.ac.uk/library/electinfo/endnote/about.php>

There is an excellent library guide to using references available in both a printed version and on the Internet: '**Cite 'em Right: how to give good bibliographic references**' (available from the University libraries), and at www.brad.ac.uk/library/electinfo/cdrom/cite.pdf

The Effective Learning Service has also produced a booklet aimed at Business and Management students; 'References and Bibliographies'.

Topic: ESSAY WRITING

10

"Always structure essays using an introduction, conclusion and a main body to help keep the structure and flow of the writing".

(**Erica Bramhall**, final year undergraduate)



11

BE CLEAR ABOUT THE ESSAY QUESTION

What type of question is it?

DESCRIPTIVE	ANALYTICAL
<p>Descriptive essay questions test your knowledge and understanding of a subject and to present your ideas in a clear and organised way. They often contain KEY words, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe • State • Outline • Explain • Define • Show how • Demonstrate • Illustrate • Classify • Give an account of... 	<p>Analytical questions also test your knowledge of a subject – but they are more concerned with ability to get below the surface of a subject and to examine it from different perspectives. KEY words include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss • Analyse • Contrast • Consider • Compare • Evaluate • Criticize • Evaluate • Interpret • Justify

You will also encounter combined questions involving both descriptive and analytical approaches. In this event, although you will need to address the descriptive part of the question in a thorough way, the greater emphasis in your essay should be on the analytical aspects of it.

There are also three booklets on **Essay Writing** available from the Effective Learning Service, plus the booklet **Effective Writing**..

Topic: WORKING WITH OTHERS



12

*Don't necessarily work with friends, it is important to have a group **you can rely on** and not feel guilty about telling off if they don't pull their weight. Get to know who can be trusted to do good, reliable work, and who offer a range of skills as soon as possible in your uni life, and then work with them wherever possible for the years at uni....I have and it works!!*

(**John Eggleton**, final year undergraduate)

13

"In formal group meetings, have somebody who will write minutes and at the end of the meeting agree on what each person will do before the next meeting. Then E mail round to the group who is doing what, so that everyone is clear".

(**Claire Derrick**, final year undergraduate)

14

Being a successful member of a group involves:

- **Everyone** working together to **clarify objectives** & action points
- **Listening** to other people
- **Contributing positively** to the discussion yourself
- **Being reliable** & doing what you say you will do

There is a leaflet on **Group Work** available from the Effective Learning Service.

Topic: EXAMS

15

" When preparing answers to questions, time your writing speed - this will let you know exactly how much you can delve into a subject. How many times have you walked out of an exam thinking, I wish I had so much more to write!! This also improves your structure...if you go into too much depth early on and taper off later in an answer, you WILL lose marks. You can time yourself by turning on the stopwatch and writing out ONE page of the exam booklet. You can get copies of past papers from the Undergraduate Office.

Also, a very simple point...I've marked tests before, and they just look like scribbled stuff, which is boring to go over. So, this is an exam writing tip, WRITE NEATLY!

Another tip: USE HIGHLIGHTING...it often happens that important points are lost somewhere in the structure, bring them out, by highlighting them in your answer."

(Rahul Agarwal, final year undergraduate)



16

Use past exam papers to look for **patterns of recurring questions.**

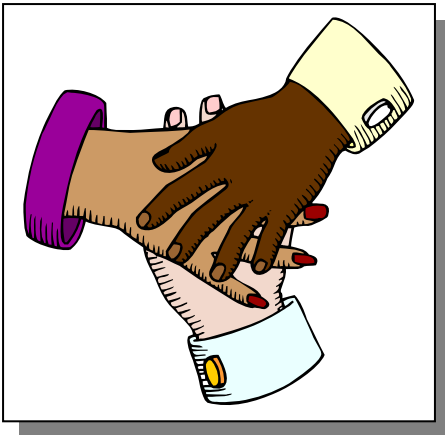
Reading past exam papers will also 'tune' you into the language used by examiners to construct questions.

You can find past examination papers in the library and on the University Home Pages on the internet: go to *Learning Support Services-Library-Reference-Examination Papers.*

17

Take time to read the question & don't rush to start. Write down in note form the **main points** you want to make at the start of each exam question answer. Spend about five minutes doing this before you write the main answer.

There is a leaflet **Pass Your Exams** available from the Effective Learning Service.



Topic: HELPING EACH OTHER

18

"Never be afraid to ask for help - something I've learnt is that if you're having trouble, the likelihood is that so are lots of other people! Students could set up informal study networks to help each other"

(**Daniya DeBrito**, final year undergraduate)

19

"Encourage new students to mix with & communicate with other students from other countries because you can learn from them. They can help you learn the more difficult subjects as they often have more previous experience of studying them. They can also help you more about other cultures".

(**Ting Pang**, MA student)

20

"Don't be shy – mix with other students, as they will help you".

K(**Karine Ouzana**, 1st year year undergraduate student)

FURTHER READING & HELP

These are all the titles in booklets in the 'Effective Learning' series:

1. *Return to Part-time Study*
2. *Return to Full-time Study*
3. *The First Semester*
4. *Time Management*
5. *Accelerated Learning*
6. *20 Tips for Effective Learning*
7. *Six Steps to Effective Reading*
8. *Effective Note Making*
9. *Effective Writing*
10. *Essay Writing (1) stages of essay writing*
11. *Essay Writing (2) planning and structuring your essays*
12. *Essay Writing (3) finding your own voice in essays*
13. *References and Bibliographies*
14. *Report Writing*
15. *Pass Your Exams*
16. *Your Assignment Results – and how to improve them*
17. *Presentations*
18. *Group Work*
19. *Introduction to Research and Research Methods*
20. *Foundations of Good Research*
21. *Writing Your Management Project Report or Dissertation*

The booklets can be found at four locations in the School: Airedale building (entrance hall & outside room 0.10), the School library and in the Emm Lane building reception area).

You can also print-off these booklets from the School Home Page: 'Resources' – '**Effective Learning**' link. There are also film clips and other aids for learning on the Effective Learning Service web pages.

In the School of Management and J.B. Priestley libraries, there is a study skills section at **D.371.30281**

The Effective Learning Service can offer individual help, advice and support to students on any aspect of learning. Drop-in 'writing clinics' are offered on a weekly basis, usually a Tuesday or Wednesday afternoon, or appointments can be made with the Effective Learning Officer, Colin Neville. The Service is open Monday to Thursday, and Colin can be contacted in room 0.10 Airedale Building, Email: C.Neville@bradford.ac.uk, telephone (01274) 234414 (internal 4414).

Recommended reading:

Cottrell, S. (2003) *The Study Skills Handbook*. Palgrave
(Contains lots of bite-sized chunks of advice and information presented in a lively and visually interesting way. This is an excellent general study skills guide for all undergraduate or postgraduate students).

Giles, K. & Hedge, N. (1998) ***The Manager's Good Study Guide***. Open University. (A study skills guide written for business studies students and contains advice and information presented in a clear, readable and subject-specific way.)

Marshall, L. & Rowland, F. (1998) ***A Guide to Learning Independently***. Open University Press. (There is a particularly useful section on 'Listening to Lectures', Chapter 10.)

Turner, J. (2002) ***How to Study: a short introduction***. Sage. (There are useful chapters on 'Making the Most of Seminars & Seminar Presentations, Chapter 7, & 'Finding Your Academic Voice', Chapter 9.)

Other learning material may be available, e.g. videos. Please enquire at library reception.

Some Useful Internet Sites:

www.support4learning.org.uk/education/key_skills.htm (a good all-round site for study skills advice & information)

www.bized.ac.uk/ (a study support site for business studies students).

© This booklet was edited and written by Colin Neville, Effective Learning Officer, University of Bradford, School of Management and must not be reproduced without permission. Last updated January 2006. C.Neville@bradford.ac.uk