How to study well
Outline

This workshop will cover:

• what to expect from university study
• academic and personal skills that you need to develop at university
• recognising how you learn best

This session is aimed at first year undergraduates, students returning to education or students new to studying at a UK university.
What students think about university

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whIEeZRpaB8
Three dimensions of study: the WHY of learning

- WHAT: subject specific skills and knowledge
- HOW: academic skills
- YOU: personal development
Personal development for effective learning

• Independence
• Self-motivation
• Openness to working with others
• Ability to work things out for yourself
• Ability to set goals to improve your own work
• Ability to organise your time
• Ability to work out when, how and where you learn best
Developing a growth mindset

• Power of ‘yet’ and ‘not yet’ rather than failure
• Hard work makes a difference
How do you work best?

• Aim to find a method that works for you
  • Don’t compare yourself with others

• Be honest with yourself and your strengths and weaknesses
  • Are you a morning or an evening person?
  • What is your preferred environment? Do you need quiet to be able to concentrate? (the library has different types of environments)
  • Do you prefer to work alone or with others?
Spend some time getting to know your preferences: VARK

- Questionnaire online:
**Example VARK question**

A website has a video showing you how to make a special graph. You would learn most from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Watching the actions</th>
<th>Kinaesthetic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Aural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Seeing the diagrams</td>
<td>Visual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Reading the words</td>
<td>Read/Write</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example VARK question
Do you prefer a teacher who uses...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Handouts, books or readings</th>
<th>Read/Write</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Demonstrations, models or practical sessions</td>
<td>Kinaesthetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Question and answer, talk, group discussions</td>
<td>Aural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Diagrams, charts or graphs</td>
<td>Visual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ideas for visual preferences
Ideas for Aural Preferences

• Discuss topics with others
• Listen to recordings
• Put summarised notes into a recording and listen
• Ask others to hear your understanding of a topic
• Record your assignment plan
Ideas for Read/Write Preferences

• Read through your notes and any handouts
• Rewrite ideas and principles into your own words
• Organise graphs, diagrams etc. into statements
• Write assignment plans
• Write paragraphs, beginnings and endings
• Write to-do lists
• Arrange your words into hierarchies and points
Ideas for Kinaesthetic (learning by doing) Preferences

• Use all your senses
  • Videos – visual/aural combined
• Put ‘real life’ examples into your notes
• Try to relate your learning to practical examples
• Recall the experiments/field trip/placement experiences
• Trial and error
• Visit collections and exhibits
Be open to new ideas

• Are there areas you need to develop?
• Be prepared to try different approaches
• Be proactive
• Be reflective
The Thinking Student

For every activity, thinks ...

What do I need to do it well?
- Personal skills
- Academic skills
- Knowledge
- Understanding

How do I find out the things I need to know?
- Classmates
- Tutors
- Books/journals
- Internet
- Elsewhere

How did I do?
- How could I do it better next time?
- SMART targets

And most importantly, what have I learned?
- What have I added to my bulging brain?
- Personal skills
- Academic skills
- Knowledge
- Understanding

When activity finishes, thinks ...

Student & Library Services
Manage your time

• Be aware of your deadlines
  • A number of assignments can be due together
• Prioritisation
• Break down the tasks into smaller components
• Action planning – set targets
  • Trello for project management
  • Phone/Google calendar/wall planner
  • Notepads - separate one for each assignment
What else do you want or need to do?

• Job to help with finances?
• Family commitments?
• Other opportunities – clubs, societies

• Make most of university life
• Employability skills
• Keep motivated – work-life balance
Manage stress

• Physical effects of too much stress
  • Insomnia, headaches, weakened immune system

• Psychological effects of too much stress
  • Anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, irritability

• Look after yourself
  • Sleep
  • Exercise
  • Eat and drink well
  • Have fun
  • Rest
  • Reduce anxiety eg with calming visualisation

• Ask for help at the Student Centre
HOW: Academic skills

- WHAT: Subject specific skills and knowledge
- HOW: Academic skills
- YOU: Personal development
Academic skills for effective learning

- Communication – listening and articulating
- Reading
- Notetaking and note-making
- Research and literature searching
- Academic writing
- Referencing
- Responding to feedback
Academic attributes – Cs and As

• ‘to educate our students in their chosen discipline to become confident, critical, creative, adaptable, articulate and aspiring’ (Teesside University, 2018)

• Complete the skills audit
Activity

• In pairs, discuss one of the statements which you feel you need to work on.
• What could you do to improve your skills in this area?
What helps

• Succeed@Tees workshops and online resources
  • http://libguides.tees.ac.uk/workshops

• Tutorials with learning advisors and librarians
  • http://libguides.tees.ac.uk/lrs/tutorials

• Is PASS running in your course?
  • http://libguides.tees.ac.uk/pass
WHAT: Subject specific knowledge

WHAT: subject specific skills and knowledge

HOW: academic skills

YOU: personal development
Deep vs surface approaches

• Not just about hours spent
• Seeing the bigger picture
• How does it fit together?
• Threshold concepts
Improving your subject knowledge

• Keep attending, even if it seems difficult
  • Keep motivated by focusing on your end goal
• Read the module handbook
• Regularly check the VLE
  • Blackboard App
• Listen for clues
• Go over lectures – go back to PowerPoint slides, lecture recordings
• Scaffolding – start easy and build up
  • Find something on the reading list that appeals
• Go to PASS if it’s running in your course
• Ask your lecturer for recommendations
REPEAT to become good at things

• Reinforcing your learning
• Experimenting
• Practise
• Experience
• Accepting that you’ll get it wrong
• Trial and error
Learning.....

Resources


Questions?