





Learning Outcomes

- Get to know one another
- Develop an understanding of studying in Higher Education
- Be aware of how to be a better learner



Quick questions

- What are you looking forward to in the next 3 years?
- What are you concerned about?



—What does success in university look like to you?



What will success in university look like to you?

- Gain qualification.
- Develop a range of skills.
- Personal confidence.
- Making friends.
- Becoming independent.
- Take advantage of a range of opportunities.
- Develop new interests.



Differences from school/further education

- The teaching methods, especially the emphasis on independent study.
- The assumption that you have the maturity and skills to 'get on with it', managing your own study etc.
- Academic work is more difficult and complex.
- The strong emphasis on 'understanding' rather than 'information'.
- Time may operate differently and good time management skills are essential.

Current skills/priorities



- What do you see as the skills you'll need within university?
- How do your current skills fit into this list?
- What can you do to improve upon these skills do you think?

Universities are increasing building group work activities into their programmes



- ▶ Because they believe in collaborative learning; we are inter-dependent beings and should recognise and build on that.
- ▶ Because group work offers support; tasks are easier when they are shared.
- ▶ Because they are preparing students for the world of work; if you cannot work with people, you are unlikely to get a job.

Burns & Sinfield (2012)

Question: what are the advantages of working collaboratively?

Working co-operatively creates opportunities to:



- Share ideas
- Gain extra perspectives/points of view
- Tap into wider pool of experience
- Stimulate each other's thinking
- Clarify own thinking by talking through and answering questions

Working co-operatively creates opportunities to:



- Help each other to stay focused on task
- Learn to deal with challenge and criticism
- Realise there are more dimensions and answers to a question than you can discover on your own
- Develop assertiveness rather than aggression, flexibility & compromise rather than intractability & stubbornness.

TASK



- In groups make a list of what skills you need in order to make group work successful?
- Now determine the order of importance for each item on the list

How to help group work succeed



- ▶ BE ENCOURAGING
Eg say 'I found that interesting..'
- ▶ LISTEN TO OTHER GROUP MEMBERS
Everyone deserves respectful attention
- ▶ HELP THE FLOW
Contribute but don't dominate
Ask reasonable questions
Take some responsibility
Help to keep to subject

How to help group work succeed

- ▶ BUILD ON OTHER PEOPLE'S IDEAS
- ▶ INCLUDE EVERYONE
- ▶ Speak to everyone and make sure that everyone has chance to answer
- ▶ INDICATE WHEN YOU AGREE
- ▶ Express your agreement
- ▶ ADMIT MISTAKES/MISUNDERSTANDINGS
- ▶ OFFER INFORMATION
- ▶ USE BODY LANGUAGE
- ▶ Smile, nod etc

Belbin (1981 in Burns & Sinfield 2012)

- ▶ Company person; dutiful & organised – possibly inflexible
- ▶ Chair: calm & open minded – not creative
- ▶ Shaper: dynamic – but impatient
- ▶ Creative thinker: brilliant ideas – but unrealistic
- ▶ Resource investigator: extrovert, responds well to challenge – may lose interest.
- ▶ Monitor: sober, keeps everyone on track – may lose inspiration
- ▶ Team worker: mild, plenty of team spirit – may be indecisive
- ▶ Completer/finisher: conscientious, perfectionist – a worrier.

- ▶ Class discussions/activities. Simply a collective activity that you are asked to do in class with other people.
- ▶ Group assignments – where you are asked to produce something collectively. This may be to prepare and deliver a presentation or critique of a reading. Often this will be a formal assessment



Independent study – what does it suggest to you?

freedom

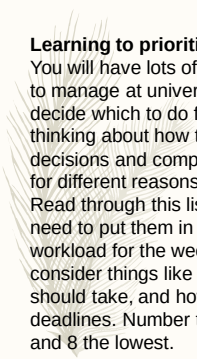
Making my own success

isolation



Independent study - benefits

- More control over your study time
- More control over your spare time
- More choice about where/when to study
- More choice about how to study
- More responsibility for your own success
- More choice about how much energy you devote to topics that interest you
- There isn't a teacher looking over your shoulder all the time



Learning to prioritise

You will have lots of competing tasks and deadlines to manage at university, and it will be up to you to decide which to do first. This exercise aims to get you thinking about how to prioritise tasks: how to make decisions and compare things that may be important for different reasons.

Read through this list of tasks and imagine that you need to put them in priority order to plan your workload for the week ahead. You will need to consider things like outcomes, how long each task should take, and how difficult it is, as well as the deadlines. Number them, with 1 the highest priority and 8 the lowest.



Organising your time

Planning time:

- ▶ Looking ahead
- ▶ Making plans
- ▶ Breaking up time
- ▶ Planning the week
- ▶ Planning a day
- ▶ Setting priorities
- ▶ Reviewing progress



Organising your time

Using time:

- ▶ Getting started
- ▶ Keeping going
- ▶ Taking breaks
- ▶ Knowing when to stop
- ▶ Know your own obstacles



Organising your time - summary

- Be clear about what you have got to do and when it has got to be done by
- Use a term planner to help gauge your productivity over time
- Use a week planner to set a clear agenda for the week ahead
- Use a 'to do' list as a prompt to remind you of the tasks you have dedicated to that day
- Use time effectively by setting and sticking to realistic objectives.



Time management

- ▶ Be systematic
- ▶ Find out the time requirements
- ▶ Clarify how you use your time now
- ▶ Decide how you want to use your time
- ▶ Prioritise
- ▶ Plan
- ▶ Do it
- ▶ Apply time management techniques
- ▶ Manage distractions and procrastination
- ▶ Monitor



Taken from University of Leicester

IMPORTANT ↑ high ↓ low	Spend time over these things and do them carefully	These things need to be done now and need to be done thoroughly
	Don't waste your time here!	Just do these things quickly
	low	URGENT → high



Dealing with distractions

shopping

Computer games

Washing dishes



As the project deadline looms, Michael finds it ever more essential to ensure that his pencils are lined up parallel to the Greenwich Meridian.



Admit to yourself that you are procrastinating!

- Give yourself rewards for each stage.
- Break tasks into small chunks.
- Find a new way of describing the activity to yourself so it becomes more interesting.
- Stay away from anyone who encourages your procrastination.
- Arrange to do tasks in pairs or in a group if this helps.



Homework feedback

- In groups share the research you undertook following induction last week.
- Compare your strategies for reading and taking notes. What are the similarities and what are the differences?



Suggested Reading

Burns T & Sinfield S (2012) *Essential Study Skills* 3rd edn.
London: Sage.

Cottrell, S. (2013) *The Study Skills Handbook* 4th edn.
Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan
