

Self-help handbook

for managing your own learning



Interactive
Stimulating
Effective
Engaging
Relevant
Practical
Memorable
Challenging
Interesting
Transferable
Motivational
Meaningful
Personalised

This is a self-help handbook for managing your own learning. It also contains aides memoire for when you are in situations, such as a work placement, and you need a few reminders. There is advice on how to develop effective study skills and how to use review and reflect techniques to improve your performance, as well as a selection of strategies you could use to help your learning.

It's worth remembering that business, industry, the NHS or other workplace establishments are not experts when it comes to specific learning differences (SpLD) and resultant issues. Your success will not be dependent on the law and the efforts of workplace employers. Your success will be linked to your performance. You have to be in the driving seat and be responsible for yourself and your own learning.

Check out the strategies at the end of this book. Other strategies can be found on the ALS Community on myBU... and of course, ALS is always available to support you on 01202 965663 or contact your ALS Specialist Tutor in your normal way.



Frustrated by your past learning experiences? This may be because the teaching style did not match your personal learning preferences. At university you are responsible for your own learning, so you can adapt your self-teaching style to match your self-learning preferences.

PROCESSING

To study effectively in HE you need to understand how you learn. If you don't, your learning will lack structure and you will become anxious, which will lead to loss of focus, loss of control, brain fog and characteristics of stress. Once you know how to learn, processing information will be less of a challenge.

ORGANISATION

Just as you have varied approaches to learning, academic staff have varied approaches on how information is delivered. University departments have their own traditions and staff within them have individual preferences - we are all different in our preferences. Don't expect consistency of approach. Develop your own organisation strategies for your own success. Lecturers may be less available to support you at uni than at school or college so don't expect their attention or rely on it or be disappointed when you don't get it. Find an alternative way to get the info you want by re-framing your habits and being proactive in your personal approach to independent learning.

WORKING MEMORY

Grab as many opportunities as you can for your brain to take in information because developing connections and associations makes it easier to recall information later. Your imagination is extremely powerful so learn to use it well. Multi-sensory learning techniques are the key to remembering anything because all the pathways to your brain are used and you're not relying on just one of them that might be inefficient.

As a BU student, it's expected that you have independence, self-motivation, a willingness to work with others, are able to set goals for self-improvement, can organise time and self-learn. This can be hard work! Keep this handbook with you all the time for quick reminders. Keep telling yourself that you have many strengths which could include the following:

Innovative thinking



Creativity



Problem-solving



Intuition



Influential leadership



Kinaesthetic excellence



Holistic processing



Curiosity



Lateral thinking



Expression



Good social skills



Empathy



Graphic visualisation



Lots of energy



Practicality



Sometimes there are challenges to processing information, organisation, working memory and how you feel...



You're in good company with many people who share these strengths and challenges. These famous people below have all shown success in one way or another and so can you. If you have the right tools for the job of learning and remembering, you too can be empowered to be successful.

* Albert Einstein * Leonardo da Vinci * Richard Branson * Bill Gates * Holly Willoughby * George Washington
* Winston Churchill * Steven Spielberg * Walt Disney * Robbie Williams * Kara Pointon * Jennifer Aniston
* Noel Gallagher * Tom Jones * Princess Beatrice * Cher * David Beckham * Agatha Christie * Paloma Faith
* Tom Cruise * Johnny Depp * Kiera Knightley * Pablo Picasso * John Lennon * Muhammad Ali * Steve Redgrave
* Jamie Oliver * Whoopi Goldberg * Daniel Radcliffe * etc....

GO ONLINE TO CHECK OUT MORE. YOU'RE IN GOOD COMPANY!

So what are the tools for the job of learning and remembering? Follow the **PLAN-DO-MEASURE-REVIEW** process and you'll not go far wrong...

Firstly, PLAN. Get used to doing SWOT analyses. These focus your mind into action planning for lectures, seminars, placements or any other aspect of your life where you need to feel in control of what you're doing. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)



Strengths I can use

- What skills do I have?
- Which are the best ones I can use?
- What do I know already?
- How can I use my knowledge and skills?
- What are my strengths?
- How can I use these proactively?
- What resources have I got access to on the VLE?
- What do I need to take with me?
- How am I going to disclose my dyslexia?
- What shall I put on my action plan for practice/placement?
- Remember to volunteer for the things I'm good at in group work like presentations or visual aids.

Weaknesses I need to work on

- What do I need to improve?
- What should I avoid if possible?
- What do I see as my weaknesses?
- I'm not too good with directions so how will I get there?
- Have I got my assistive tech, phone, laptop ready to go?
- What strategies am I going to use to help me through?
- Am I going to be able to disclose my dyslexia or dyspraxia?
- If I do an action plan for practice/placement, which of my weaknesses shall I declare I need help with?
- Can I take responsibility for myself to ensure support is available?
- Can I take responsibility to seek help to put strategies in place on placement?
- Remember not to volunteer to take notes in the group work.



Opportunities I can use

- I owe it to myself to be the best I can be so how am I going to be in control?
- What opportunities will I have to improve my skills?
- What opportunities will I have to gain more knowledge?
- Which support networks can I link into?
- What do I want to learn?
- What are the learning outcomes for the upcoming practice/placement?
- What are the learning outcomes for the current dissertation?
- What do I need to achieve?
- What do I want to know by the end of this lecture/seminar/placement?
- What kind of support will I need to achieve?
- How am I going to use my assistive tech?
- What will my role be within the team?
- Who do I report to and who reports to me?
- What's my optimum working time before I get distracted?

Threats I need to avoid or deal with

- What is going to be difficult?
- Am I presenting a risk to myself or others by not disclosing my dyslexia/dyspraxia and getting reasonable adjustments?
- Can I be fully proactive in taking responsibility for myself?
- What knowledge and skills might be difficult to learn?
- Could any of my weaknesses affect my performance?
- What should I be prepared for?
- Have I got my aides memoire in case I forget anything?
- How am I going to keep control of my anxieties?
- What will I do if I can't find a quiet work area?
- What will I do if I can't implement some of my plans?
- What strategy have I got if I can't work little and often?
- How am I going to reduce my workload and work more smartly?
- What will be my most common distractions?



How are you going to DO things? You'll need to understand your learning style and make sure that anything you do takes account of what you're good at. Learning styles will intermingle but there will be one (or maybe two) styles that will be really dominant.

VISUAL:

Can relate to graphic info such as handouts, diagrams, pictures, photos, flash cards, maps, charts etc. Likes to take own notes or have notes. Uses technology well. Likes written instructions to complement oral ones. Uses coloured pens for highlighting words, key points or whole sections of text. Can frame the shape of new words and relates to semantic meanings. Uses mnemonics and acronyms. Adds symbols to draw attention to specific items on written text. Enjoys sequencing activities that are relevant, meaningful or patterned. Responds to visual imagery when examples are given. Responds to being asked to: 'Picture it'. Likes watching films. Can get distracted by untidiness. Enjoys 2D and 3D art forms. Uses visual images in speech. Can speak quite quickly. Remembers visual details. Notes facial expressions. When angry, becomes silent and seethes. When inactive, will doodle or gaze around.



Visual learners are uncomfortable and frustrated when they can't see pictures, diagrams or charts, do not have notes and have to listen without the corresponding visual images.

AUDITORY:

Likes to hear new information through spoken explanations, commentaries and recordings. Can benefit from reading aloud key passages and making own recordings. Learns skills by imitation and repeated practice. Enjoys discussions and debates. Often talks aloud to themselves. Responds to being encouraged to give verbal answers. Likes group revision. Likes to record questions and answers. Benefits from brainstorming activities and discussion before beginning independent work. Responds to being encouraged to explain things using own words. Enjoys oral games. Spells out new words orally. Gets distracted by noise. Enjoys listening to music. Talks fluently, evenly and in a logical order. Remembers oral information. Notes tones of voices. Expresses anger in an outburst. When inactive will talk to themselves or others.

Auditory learners are uncomfortable and frustrated when they can't use their voice, are prevented from hearing anything clearly and don't get the opportunity for discussing ideas.

KINAESTHETIC:

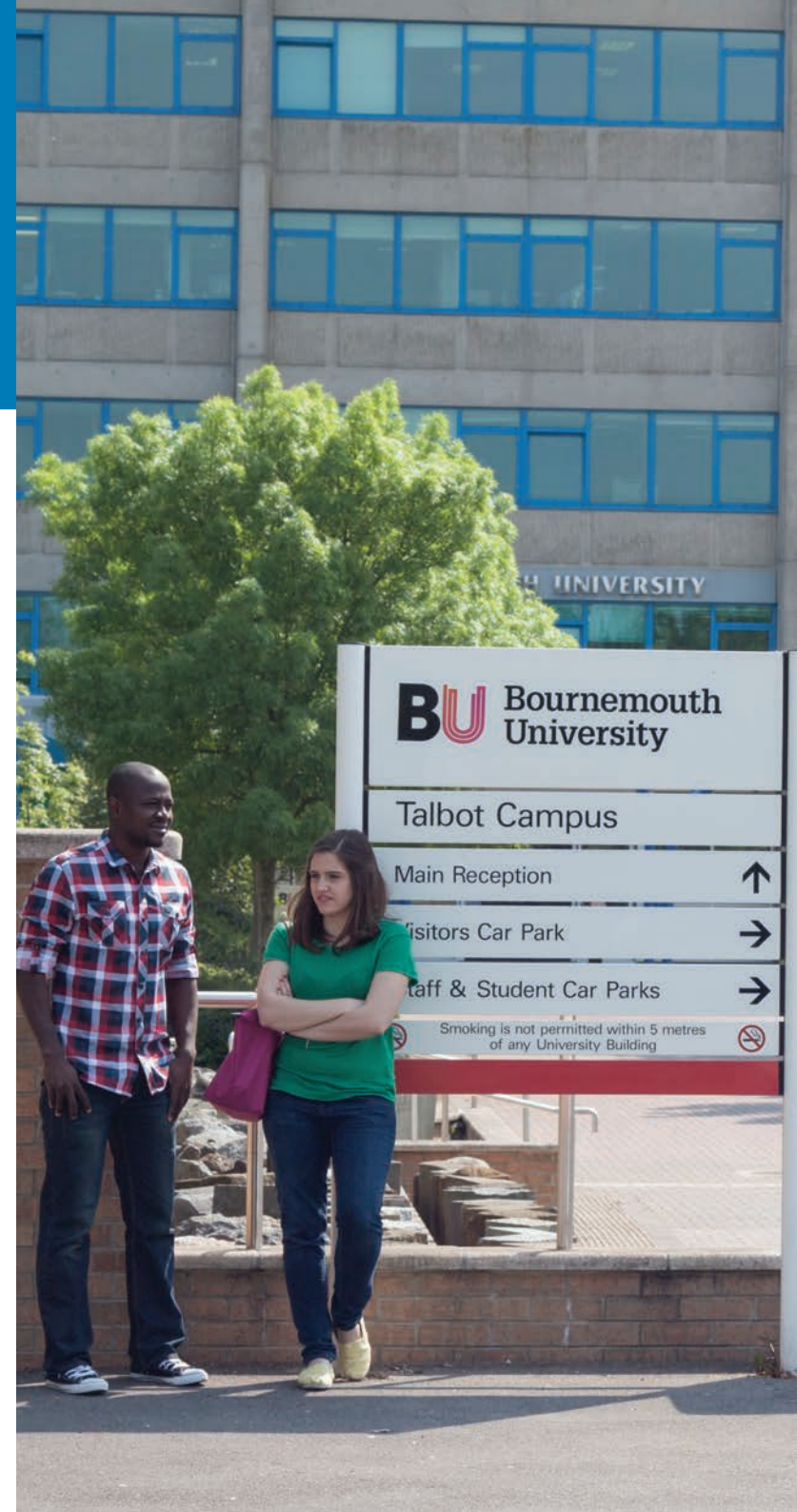
Learns effectively through hands-on activities. Enjoys tactile experiences. Benefits from imitation and practice. Responds well to role play. Uses movement and rhythm as much as possible. Walks or moves around whilst revising. Experiments with a variety of equipment and materials. Responds to real-life rather than simulated materials. Benefits from using calculators, assistive tech, recorders, headphones etc. Likes to try things for themselves. Gets distracted by movements or physical disturbances. Enjoys dancing or sports. Uses lots of hand movements in conversation. Speaks fairly slowly with pauses. Remembers physical action and orientation. Notes body language. When angry, storms about, clenches fists or throws things. When inactive, will fidget or walk about.

Kinaesthetic learners will become impatient if they have to sit and listen for lengthy periods, are prevented from doing things and don't get the opportunity for moving about and touching things.

MANY DYSLEXIC STUDENTS HAVE A VERY LOW PREFERENCE FOR THE AUDITORY LEARNING STYLE AND HAVE TO COMPENSATE GREATLY BY PROCESSING INFORMATION INTO A VISUAL OR KINAESTHETIC STYLE IN ORDER TO LEARN EFFECTIVELY.

How are you going to **MEASURE** your work? This means how are you going to evaluate what you have done? Here are some questions to get you started:

1. Did I plan as fully as I could or should have? (Did I plan too superficially? Did I include every aspect of the task? Was I fully prepared?)
2. Do I understand what I have written? (Have I double checked that I've answered the question? Have I addressed the learning outcomes?)
3. Do I know what I'm doing? (Have I understood my supervisor/tutor properly? Do I need to check I'm on the right track?)
4. Can I prove that I know what I know? (Have I referenced and evidenced my dissertation?)
5. How am I going to edit and proof read my work? (Do I know any proof reading strategies? There's one at the end of this book p38/p39)



Get into the habit of doing a **REVIEW**. Reflect on *how* you learned as well as on *what* you learned. Would you change anything next time? Could you have written it better? Or done it better? Could you have chosen easier techniques or a better way? Did you feel comfortable with what and how you did the work? Reviewing can simply be asking yourself the following four questions on a regular basis. The answers you give yourself will help you to plan for the next time.

What went well today?	What didn't go well today?
Why did it go well?	Why did it not go well?

Remember: **PLAN DO MEASURE REVIEW**. It's a good habit to get into and will help you to develop **CONSCIOUS COMPETENCE** which helps you to succeed by taking control of your own learning, with:

- A will to succeed through motivation, relevance, applying self-knowledge and self-advocacy skills
- Persistence to be in the driving seat to re-frame your environment and change your habits to make things work for you
- The use of your learned strategies and identified strengths as a matter of course for everything to achieve positive results

AIDES MEMOIRE for **READING**



- Keep a small notebook handy to write down troublesome words and abbreviations
- Use a dictionary: electronic or pocket-book
- Use a coloured overlay
- Ask for extra time
- Go somewhere quiet to concentrate
- Print out stuff and read from hard copy
- Use a highlighter for key words and phrases
- Make notes, flow charts, mind maps or storyboards to record as you read
- Colour code info that you record
- Use self-questioning about the text as you read
- Change the desktop colour to suit if reading on screen
- Change the size of font to suit
- Use a ruler or similar to hold under each line if reading from a book, magazine or journal etc.
- Read little and often
- Take regular breaks
- Use headphones to reduce noise and help concentration
- Ask a colleague for an outline or overview so you get the context before you begin to read
- Ask for the essential chapters to concentrate on if you have many books to read
- Read out loud and record it, then you can revisit by reading and listening at the same time
- Do the Library tour to find out where your subject area is in order to find reliable reading material
- Work out your optimum reading time before feeling drowsy or being distracted

AIDES MEMOIRE for WRITING



- Use a chunky pen to enable legible handwriting
- Take home a form to practise filling it in
- Record your ideas to write up later
- Use a dictionary: electronic or pocket-book
- Use a template for letters, memos, forms or reports
- Use proofreading techniques to check what you've written
- Ask a colleague to proof read your work
- Give yourself plenty of time
- Write rough notes and get them checked
- Plan what to write, get it checked, stick with it
- Find a good example of a report to see what you have to do
- Learn key words and phrases
- Create crib sheets for learning key vocabulary
- Use www.howjsay.com to learn pronunciation and spelling
- Use bullet points to minimise punctuation
- Write notes as you go along
- Go somewhere quiet to concentrate
- Avoid disruptions
- Take regular breaks
- Use coloured or highlighter pens
- Use assistive tech to edit and proof online
- Record meetings then write up minutes
- Change your desktop to suit
- Ask for PowerPoints or handouts before a lecture to focus your note making

AIDES MEMOIRE for ORGANISATION



- Prepare a daily work schedule with specific targets and plan the workload
- Try to keep to a routine within rigid structures
- Get any verbal instructions in writing
- Convert task sequences into a storyboard
- Repeat instructions back to check you've understood
- Agree realistic target times with your supervisor, mentor or line manager
- Work to penultimate deadlines to give yourself wriggle room
- Use your phone apps for timely reminders
- Use your PC tech to send text reminders to your phone
- Read back messages to telephone callers to check you've got all the info
- Design your own prompt sheets to help with tasks and sequencing
- Prioritise and highlight daily and weekly events in your diary, notebook or phone
- Group tasks together and colour code them

AIDES MEMOIRE for ORGANISATION



- Break down complex or time-consuming tasks into manageable chunks
- Check the expectations of the work placement
- Build time in your day to review and reflect
- Keep a clock in view
- Devise To Do lists
- Make it clear to friends and colleagues when you don't want to be interrupted
- Use auto preview on emails to save opening
- Limit the time you check emails, texts and other social media
- Know your most productive time and plan to use it
- Say: 'Can I get back to you?' when interrupted
- Use headphones to avoid noise distractions
- If it's feasible, ask to work from home
- Use the same route and note landmarks when travelling
- Give yourself plenty of space
- Plan how long a task will take then double it
- Use bags, backpacks or briefcases with pockets for most used items like keys, phone, ID card

AIDES MEMOIRE for MEMORY



- Use mnemonics and acronyms
- Use a digital recorder such as Audio Notetaker
- Use pocket calculator, phone app or PC for numerical tasks
- Use MSL techniques to make things memorable
- Record important things to remember
- Use aids such as wall planners, highlighted notices, Outlook reminders, phone apps etc.
- Write out a plan of action or use a phone app and refer to it often
- Put verbal instructions in writing
- Put up a Do Not Disturb sign
- Use the alarm feature on your watch or phone
- Keep things you're working on in view
- Return things to the same place when used
- Colour code your filing systems or shelf contents

AIDES MEMOIRE for MEMORY



- Check your To Do lists
- Build time at the end of each day for things you've forgotten to do
- Use speech technologies
- Use a satnav or phone app to help with directions when driving or walking
- Use a marker or Post-It to show where you left off if interrupted
- Repeat instructions to your supervisor, programme administrator or line manager to check your recall is correct
- Request small amounts of info at a time
- Convert a sequenced activity into a diagram or flow chart
- Learn in small chunks, revisit and check before moving on
- Ask people to speak slowly or repeat what they've just said
- Use Dragon Naturally Speaking speech to text software

LEARNING STRATEGIES

Make sure you know how to use specific strategies that are multi-sensory in order to remember, get yourself organised and process information for dissertations and exams. All the following strategies are available on the ALS Community in myBU. You are automatically enrolled on this Community but if you're not sure how to access it, please contact your ALS Specialist Tutor or Mentor.



- CRP: Context Relevance Performance
- SQ3R: Reading for Meaning and Purpose
- Note Taking: Lectures, Reading Material
- Structuring the Content of an Assignment
- Writing an Assignment using a Writing Frame
- Using Paragraphs
- Starting, Connecting and Finishing Linking Words
- Proof Reading
- Essay Zone: the Golden Rules
- Time and Task Management
- Remembering Things: Multi-Sensory Learning; Memory Anchors
- Exams
- Anxiety
- Self-Advocacy



CRP Strategy

Context - Relevance - Perform/Procrastinate

Before starting any course of action, whether writing an assignment or listening to a lecture, try following this CRP strategy. You need to focus your mind and concentrate on using logic, structure and sequencing.

You must know what you are doing (**C**ONTEXT) and why you are doing it (**R**ELEVANCE) in order to do anything (**P**ERFORM). Otherwise, you will PROCRASTINATE!

If you haven't understood the **context** to know what you're doing, or perceived any **relevance** to acknowledge why you are doing it, you won't follow through with **performance**. You will most likely switch off in lectures, become bored or your attention will drift to something else. If you don't know what you're doing for an assignment you will procrastinate, time will fly and you will get anxious as a deadline approaches. Lack of CRP is a self-fulfilling prophecy for failure; following CRP gives you control, which ensures success. Using **CRP** in an academic or work setting can be good for asking the right questions. Think of it as a journey...





CONTEXT: Where am I going?

RELEVANCE: How am I going to get there?

PERFORMANCE: How do I know I've arrived?

WHERE AM I GOING?

Planning: who is involved? What do I need to know?

Learning Outcomes: what's this lecture/work placement about?

Preparation: what's going on? Do I need anyone to support me?

Target setting: what are my objectives? What's my part in this?

HOW AM I GOING TO GET THERE?

Strategies: which of my plans will be most effective? How am I going to use my personal learning style? Which strategies will I be using?

Techniques: which skills shall I use? Have I got the right procedures?

Control: I'm going to self-advocate. What do I need to do to re-frame my environment and change my habits?

Time and task management: I'm going to use my conscious competence to follow an organisational strategy to get me through this!

HOW DO I KNOW I'VE ARRIVED?

Memorised: learned, finished and hit the deadline

Understood: remembered and competent

Achieved targets: achieved objectives and addressed learning outcomes

Feel good!

SQ3R

– a strategy to use when reading for meaning and purpose. It can also help to deconstruct a question to understand its meaning

SURVEY:

If there's a lot of reading, decide on the size of section you want to read first. Grasp ideas and sub-headings, scan for key words and phrases, get an overview of the text and make full use of graphic clues to visualise as much as possible – get the story/video in your mind. Use coloured highlighter pens or make notes, drawings or schematics. Relate as much as possible to your own experience and knowledge. Visualise examples.

QUESTION:

Ask yourself a series of personal questions: **What do I know already? What do I want to know? What's the main idea? Why am I reading this? Is it giving me the info I need? Is it giving me proof and evidence? Who is this aimed at? What is it saying? Is the info relevant for what I need? How do I associate this? Why is this important? Am I going off at a tangent? Do I agree with what is being expressed? What is it telling me to do?** Your own knowledge is valid and useful so never assume it's all new stuff, or indeed always correct! Be confident in using your own underpinning knowledge. As you question, visualise the context.

READ:

Mark the beginning and end of the section and choose which bit to read thoroughly. Identify a topic and find proof – find the answer. Resist the urge to make notes yet – just read and get the story in your head. Re-read and link the content to your own questions – this will give relevance and meaning to the text because you are answering your own questions. You will begin to own the context because you now associate it with your own questions. Instead of reading the words, you will 'read' the images you previously created when you looked at the text the first time round. Take notes on re-reading the highlighted bits.



RECITE:

Write down your thoughts on the meaning and purpose of the text, or better still, record them and listen back. Identify the relationships between facts and ideas and express them. If appropriate, discuss this with a group of friends or a colleague. Focus on the key words and messages in your discussion or record yourself talking about these. Voice your ideas in a tutorial and ask if you've got the general idea. Oral expression will re-inforce the visual understanding.

REVIEW:

Look at what you've done in timed intervals. Every time you revisit the work, it will be reinforced in your memory. Critically analyse the content every time you revisit and review because this will strengthen the meaning and purpose of the text. Are your notes useable? If your notes don't make sense, repeat the Survey and check them against the key words, phrases and ideas. Check them against the sections you highlighted.

As you strengthen the images you will be able to recall them more and more effectively. Thus **by involving yourself visually, orally and kinaesthetically with the text, you will find it easier to understand what is being said or asked of you.**

Note-Taking Strategy:

The aim of developing your note-taking style is to imagine more, connect more and write less.

1. NOTE-TAKING FROM LECTURES

Listening to information, assimilating it, sifting the content to decide if it's worth remembering, then getting it down on paper all adds up to a complex activity.

You can learn how to do it effectively by involving sight, sound and movement, which equates to the visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles. You may have a weakness or low preference for one particular style but that doesn't mean you can never use it!

There can be a tendency to write too much due to a perceived need to get everything down for fear of forgetting. Then when you do write things down, your handwriting may be so illegible it is difficult to read... so learn to trust your memory and become selective with what you record.

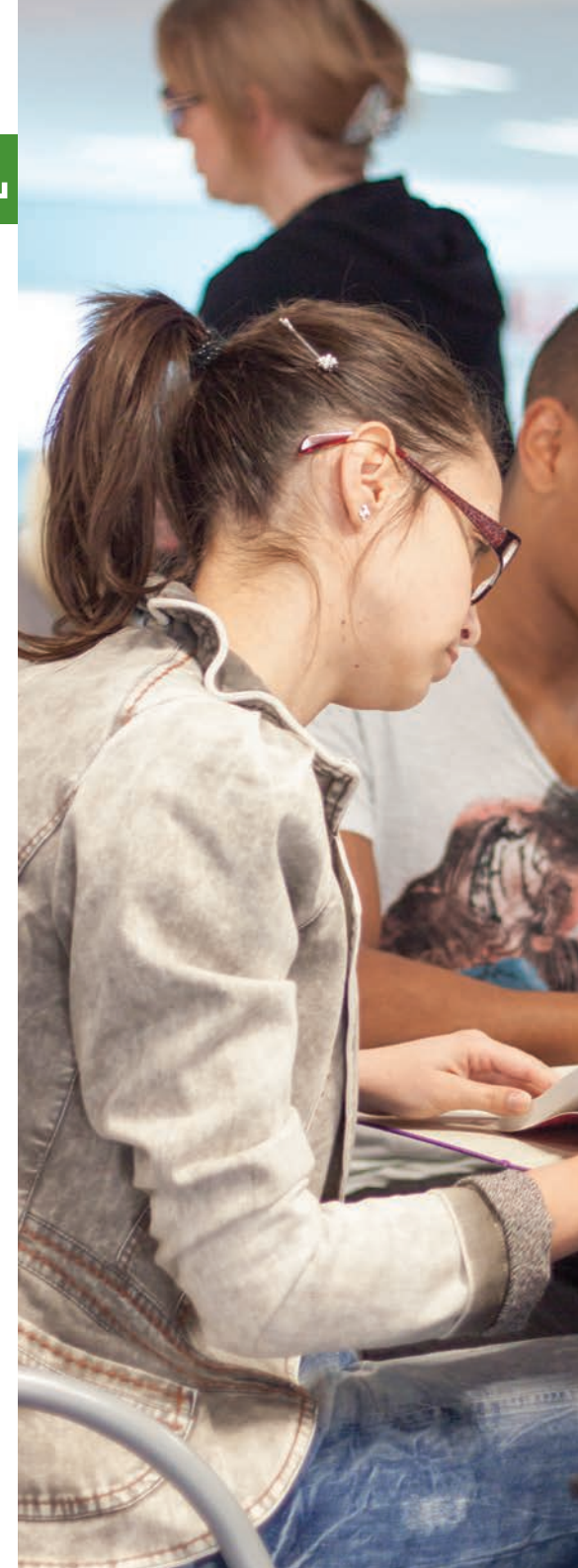
Following are ideas that may help you to develop a note-taking style:



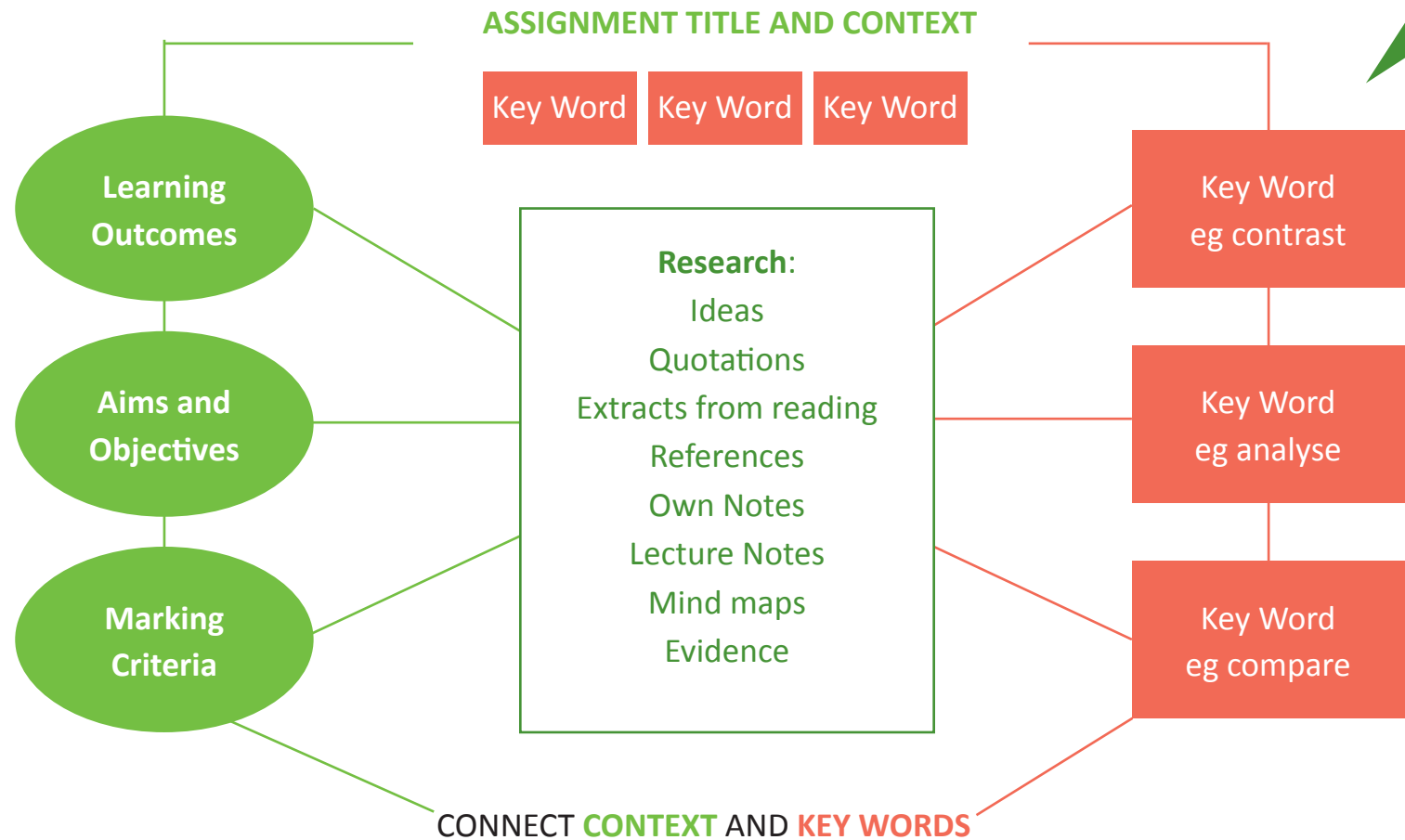
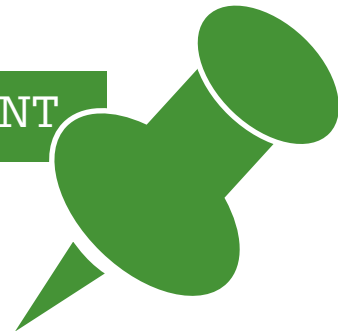
- Always have a large, thick notebook. **Don't limit yourself to space** as this will make you cram your notes and thus affect your handwriting. Write freely to avoid the psychological barrier of 'running out of space'.
- **Develop personal shorthand.** eg – cf nb ie wd cd shd pls b4 < > ~ Ω use texting script.
- Try to write notes on **new information only.** It's a waste of time to write what you know already. You can incorporate your own knowledge later.
- Make a **visual representation** of what you are hearing. Draw an algorithm, or a mind-map. You can refine it later and expand the visuals with words.
- Learn to **listen for key words and phrases.** Associate the key word in your mind with a visual picture and as you write it down, quickly sketch an image. When you re-visit your notes, the key word or phrase will trigger the accompanying memory and you can expand the information.
- **Use coloured pens** and change them regularly. **Write on pastel coloured paper or a wallpaper roll if you have room.**
- If you **get hold of lecture notes or handouts,** your note-taking can be limited to questions and comments from other students.
- Devise a page into squares like a **storyboard** and write one key point in each square with an accompanying line drawing. Try this method for part of a lecture then switch to another technique.
- Don't leave your notes to revise later. They aren't revision-ready yet. **As soon as possible after a lecture, refine your notes** so that they form a logical sequence and 'tell the story'. Expand on the key words and phrases. Revisit again as soon as possible after that to consolidate and affirm the memory. Use a digital recorder and refine the contents as above, as soon as possible. Constant reviewing will consolidate the memories and then the notes will be revision-ready.
- Use Audio Notetaker. This offers a visual and interactive form of note taking where audio, text and images can be used to create comprehensive notes.

2.NOTE-TAKING FROM READING MATERIAL

- Try to avoid copying too much from reams of text. You should only note what you need to quote and ensure that it is referenced. **Information and ideas are what you want.**
- Firstly, **scan through the text** to get a sense of the content. Get a holistic feel for meaning and purpose using the SQ3R strategy. Build an internal visual picture of the text.
- Then **re-read and choose key words and phrases.** Write down these key words, storyboard them or highlight them if you are able to deface the material.
- **As soon as possible** after this activity, **expand** on the key words and phrases. You'll find that you use your own expressive style, especially if you have associated and internalised the key words.
- Remember, **you don't need to make notes on what you already know.** You can incorporate new knowledge with learned knowledge when you structure your assignment.
- **Trust your memory** but if you can't, use a thumbnail sketch to anchor your notes. Imagine a line of dominoes placed close together. When you knock the first one over, it knocks over the one behind it and so on. Using your thumbnail sketch as a memory anchor has the same effect. When you revisit your notes and see the drawing, all the memories associated with it will fall into place, one after the other and supplement the content in the notes you've written.
- Try the Cornell note taking system. This method provides a systematic format for condensing and organising notes and its structured process may appeal.
- Do you have a tendency to go off at a tangent? Do you get carried away with learning new information that's really interesting but strays from the point? Check out the next strategy for help with this and re-read your notes, key words and phrases to see if they connect with the criteria for your assignment.



A STRATEGY FOR STRUCTURING THE CONTENT OF AN ASSIGNMENT



Anything that doesn't connect is not relevant so don't use it. Store it in



Resources file for future use

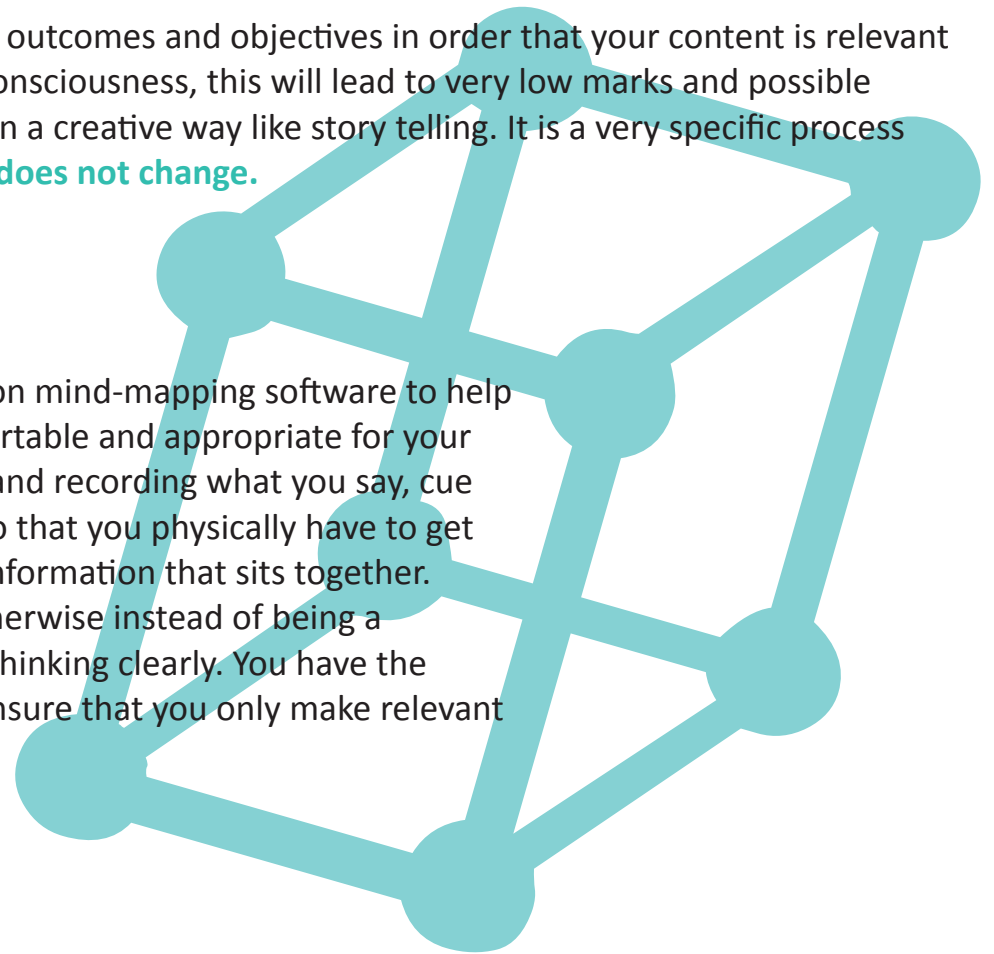
This structure will ensure that the content will address dissertation criteria.

Structuring the Content of an Assignment

It is important to plan the content of your assignment against the outcomes and objectives in order that your content is relevant and focussed. If you don't plan and begin writing in a stream of consciousness, this will lead to very low marks and possible failure. Academic writing is not about describing what you know in a creative way like story telling. It is a very specific process with very specific rules. **The rules are patterned and the pattern does not change.**

PLANNING:

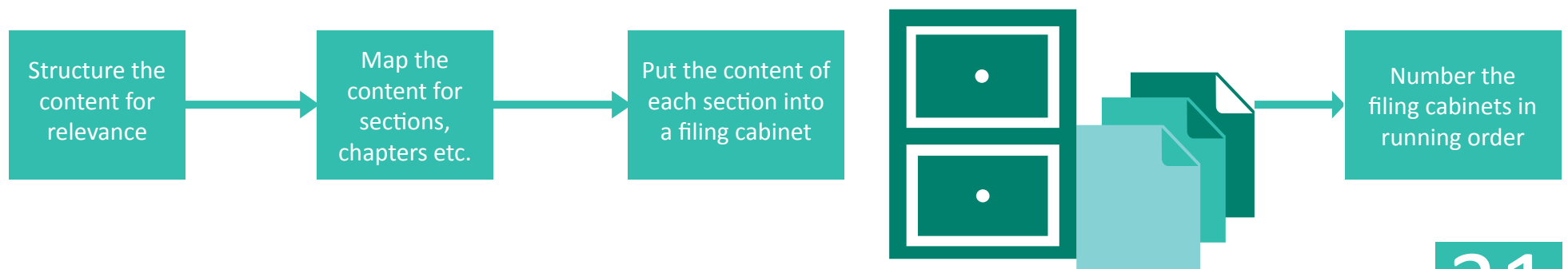
Use your preferred method such as spidergrams, lists or Inspiration mind-mapping software to help with your planning. It is important to use whatever is most comfortable and appropriate for your learning style: colour coding, drawing diagrams, talking out loud and recording what you say, cue cards, or placing information around the room where you work so that you physically have to get up and move around. Use whatever works for you. Colour-code information that sits together. Mind maps can get very complex. You must keep them simple otherwise instead of being a helpful tool to organise your thoughts, they become a barrier to thinking clearly. You have the capacity to connect everything so you have to be disciplined to ensure that you only make relevant connections according to the criteria and key words.





RUNNING ORDER:

1. When you've got to the stage of knowing that all your information is relevant and you've got it all ready in piles of paper/books, on the wall, round the room or recorded, you then need to make the decision: 'What do I start with first?'
2. Sometimes there is no obvious logical order to the sequence of your writing; it depends entirely on what you are writing about. However, there are occasions when it is clearly important. Revisit the instructions for the assignment and follow the sequence of how the instructions are presented.
3. You need to channel all your collected research and the ideas in your head in a logical, structured order.
4. So, think of each chapter, or set of ideas or section of your work, as a filing cabinet. This can be represented as a bullet-pointed list. Colour-code each filing cabinet and then all the colour-coded research you have prepared in your piles of paper/books, on the wall, or round the room can be matched.
5. Now you have a series of coloured filing cabinets with colour-coded information within them. Having revisited the instructions for your assignment you can now number these filing cabinets in running order.



A strategy for writing an assignment using a

Writing Frame

Once you're sure that all your material is relevant and in running order you can begin to sequence your writing using the discourse analysis structure. A writing frame helps to put your thoughts and ideas into a logical, sequenced pattern following the academic model that is expected.

- A writing frame is patterned and helps to demonstrate logical thinking; it keeps your thoughts on track.
- A writing frame helps to plan the main points of an argument and it helps to organise the sections and paragraphs. Here is an example:

There is a lot of discussion about whether or not
Those who agree with this idea, such as, claim that
It could be argued that.....
A further pointmakes is
However, there are strong arguments against this point of view. There are those who claim....., such as and
They say
Moreover, it is believed bythat
It could be argued clearly thatbecause
Furthermore..... states in that
After weighing up both arguments and reviewing the evidence put forward, it can be seen thatbecause
In conclusion

This sequence can be used over and over again within a piece of work. The discourse pattern is: **S P S O**



OR IF USED ONCE:

Introduction

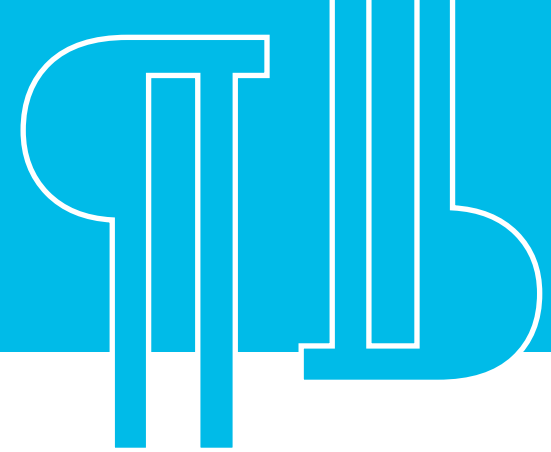
Main Body of Work

Conclusion



Save time and hard work by building your references as you go along! Use referencing software such as Endnote or download a free online alternative such as Zotero.

Using Paragraphs



READ THIS:

Everygolferwantstobeabletohittheballstraightoratleasttowardsadefinabletargettodosoononaconsistentbasisyouwillneedthecorrectalign-
mentgripandstancesomethinglike80%ofthefaultsingolfcanbetracedbacktopooralignmentgripandsetupthingsyoudobeforeyouevenbe-
gintoswingtheclubgettheserightandyouwillhavecutout80%ofyourgolfingproblemsiamgoingtoshowyouthewaytogetintothebestposition-
toswingtheclubonaconsistentbasisandishaldealwiththeprocessinexactlythesamewayaseveryprofessionalwould

If your eyes can't follow the text, can you speak it out loud?

How does this exercise make you feel? FRUSTRATED? IRRITATED?

Is the following spaced version easier to read?

Every golfer wants to be able to hit the ball straight or at least towards a definable target. To do so on a consistent basis, you will need the correct alignment, grip and stance. Something like 80% of the faults in golf can be traced back to poor alignment, grip and set-up, things you do before you even begin to swing the club. Get these right and you will have cut out 80% of your golfing problems. I am going to show you the way to get into the best position to swing the club on a consistent basis and I shall deal with the process in exactly the same way as every professional would.

This text can be made even easier to read by introducing paragraphs.

Every golfer wants to be able to hit the ball straight or at least towards a definable target. To do so on a consistent basis, you will need the correct alignment, grip and stance. Something like 80% of the faults in golf can be traced back to poor alignment, grip and set-up, things you do before you even begin to swing the club. Get these right and you will have cut out 80% of your golfing problems.

I am going to show you the way to get into the best position to swing the club on a consistent basis and I shall deal with the process in exactly the same way as every professional would.

A paragraph is text that is concise and communicates an idea or thought.
A series of paragraphs takes your ideas along a pathway that is easy to follow.
It communicates your train of thought in a logical manner.

Linking words are a buffer between blocks of hard facts. Just as light and shade in paintings provide visual relief, and loud and soft notes in music provide auditory contrast, linking words provide a flow to the rhythm of speech. They also give directions along a logical pathway. For example:



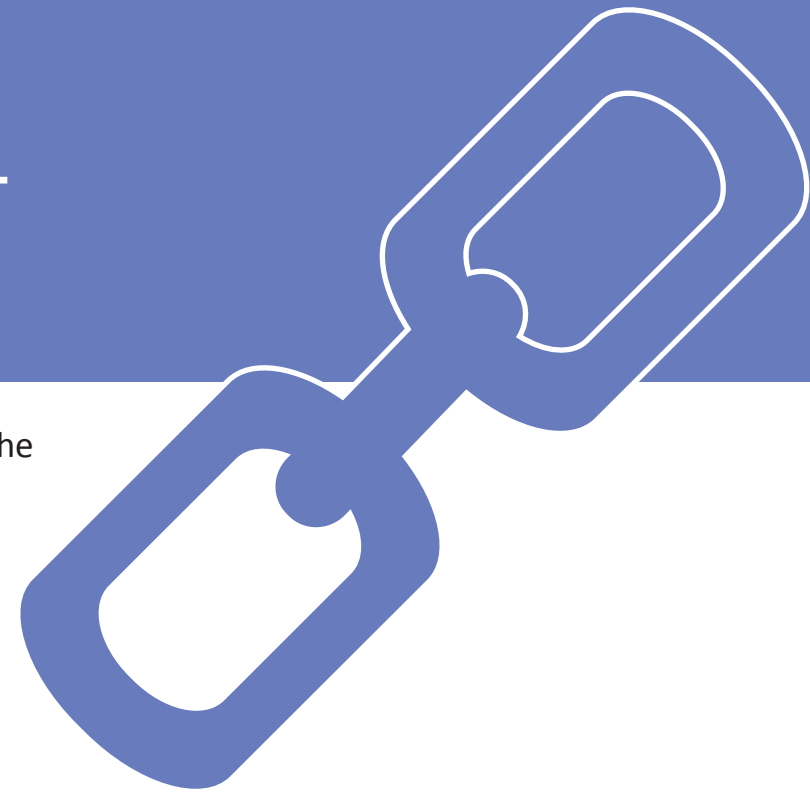
Begin a paragraph with linking words.

In contrast to this...
Thus it can be deduced...
To corroborate this...
By comparison...
It could be argued that...

The object of paragraphing is to make the reading of your work understandable and enjoyable, as well as to facilitate a logical sequence of ideas.



Starting, Connecting and Finishing Linking Words



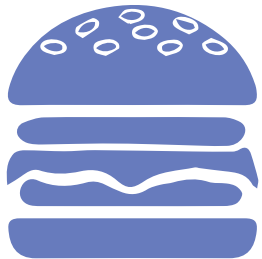
To avoid a descriptive style of writing use the writing frame because this develops the academic pattern. Within each frame or paragraph(s), you will need to introduce:

- links to what you have learned on your practice
- examples if appropriate
- links that demonstrate your underpinning knowledge
- references that demonstrate your reading
- references from your research to support what you say
- relevant quotations

In other words, as you write your paragraphs, weave this list into them. Your academic tutor is looking for evidence of academic English usage: **CLARITY, OBJECTIVITY, PRECISION AND REFERENCING.**

The academics will have confidence in your writing if they know where your information comes from. Be clear with your referencing and sourcing of evidence. Thoroughness in referencing suggests thoroughness in checking your facts.

NB - NO EVIDENCE; NO MARKS.



The Knowledge Burger!

Your words and opinions are vulnerable on their own so always support them with examples and links or references to the knowledge of others.



Evidence – Your words – Evidence

Plato said that knowledge is remembering things and to show you have remembered, you have to prove that you know what you know otherwise it's just opinion with nothing to back it up. Proof of what you know is shown by evidence.

STARTING

To begin with ...
Although not everyone would agree, I want to argue that ...
There are several reasons for this point of view. The first reason is ...
It can be seen that ...
.....will be needed in order to ...
Firstly, ...
To explain why ...
There are different reasons why ...
It could be suggested that ...
There are several reasons why ...
Before discussing, it is important to ...
It starts by ...
In discussing, I will

Since ... there has been ...
This essay will be looking at
Contemporary research suggests ...
There are a number of ...
There are specific ways of

It is worth noting ...

CONNECTING

Moreover ...
Although ...
Nevertheless ...
On the other hand ...
As a result ...
A further point s/he makes is ...
Another reason is ...
In addition to these points ...
Because it can be said that.....
Furthermore ...
First ...
Next ...
Therefore ...
However ...
Thus it can be seen that ...
To illustrate this point ...
The is thus seen to be playing a very strong role
Similarly, ...

FINISHING

In conclusion ...
Finally ...
Consequently ...
It can be seen that ...
These facts indicate ...
Despite the arguments to the contrary, I believe ...
So now it can be seen why ...
Bearing all this in mind, the decision to ...
Despite all the evidence it can be argued that ...
As a result ...
Thus it can be proved ...
On reflection ...
Therefore ...
To conclude, ...
In looking at ..., the conclusion is ...
To sum up ...
In summarising the salient points, ...
Having examined all the evidence...

A Proof-Reading Strategy

Using the acronym **C O P S** may be helpful as a proof-reading checklist:

- C** Check content, communication, clarity, and capitalisation
- O** Overall appearance, organisation and order of argument
- P** Punctuation, professional appearance, proper language
- S** Structure, spelling, sense, scholarship



Thorough checking of your work, and asking yourself questions based on learning processes, will give you confidence that you have presented your assignment properly.



■ CONTENT:

Is it relevant? Does it relate to the objectives of the assignment? Have the right questions been answered?

■ COMMUNICATION:

Why am I writing this? Have I communicated my thinking by good use of paragraphs that move my argument along? Have I followed the instructions? Have I been objective or subjective?

■ CLARITY:

Have I logically structured the writing to show clarity in my thinking? Have I expressed my own underpinning knowledge? Have I related my thoughts, ideas and knowledge to referenced sources?

■ CAPITALISATION:

Have I been constant with my use of capital letters? Have I used them in the right places eg with proper nouns?

■ OVERALL APPEARANCE:

Have I used the correct presentation spacings? Have I been thorough in my referencing? Have I used the Harvard Referencing System correctly?

■ ORGANISATION:

Have I followed my planning properly? Have I put any appendices outside the main body of text? Is the page numbering right? Have I checked the word count?

■ ORDER OF ARGUMENT:

Have I got the right running order? Have I put the right reference against the corresponding argument?

■ PUNCTUATION:

Good writing sounds good. Have I used the correct punctuation to make my words sound good? Does the flow of my writing have rhythm? Am I really asking a question wherever I've put a question mark? Have I used abbreviations when I should have used the full term?

■ PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE:

Have I chosen the right font? Is the presentation looking smart?

■ PROPER LANGUAGE:

Have I used any slang or jargon? Is my vocabulary in the academic register?

■ STRUCTURE:

Does the structure and flow of ideas relate to the way I planned it? Have I stayed on track according to my planning? Have I gone off at a tangent in places? Have I shown precision in my sequencing?

■ SPELLING:

Go with the look of a word. (A well-trained visual memory is the secret of good spelling!) Does it look right? Does it feel right? Can I check it phonetically? Re-check using a spell-checking system. Have I used the same word over and over again? If necessary, find another word with the same meaning in a thesaurus.

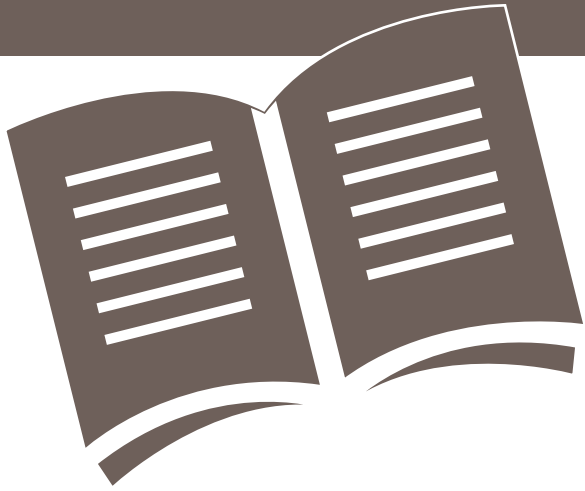
■ SENSE:

Is every source I mention or quote accounted for in the bibliography? Read your work out loud. Does it logically flow and make sense as an academic logical discourse? Record your work and then play it back. You will hear any mistakes in syntax that you may have overlooked when reading silently.

■ SCHOLARSHIP:

Is the range of the knowledge you have learned reflected in your dissertation? Have you added your own conclusive thinking or just reproduced lecture content and literary information?

ESSAY ZONE: the GOLDEN Rules



1. **ALWAYS PREPARE** and plan before you write anything.
2. The **INTRODUCTION** is roughly **5-10%** of the total word count and you must say what you are going to cover and what you want to achieve.
3. The **CONCLUSION** is roughly **5-10%** of the total word count and you must summarise and emphasise the main points.
4. The remaining 80-90% is for covering what you said you would in the introduction. **IF YOU HAVEN'T PLANNED IT, DON'T WRITE IT!** This will make your work unstructured.
5. In a nutshell, **SAY WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO SAY – SAY IT – SAY WHAT YOU'VE SAID.**
6. Use the writing frame model to ensure you get the pattern of **SITUATION – PROBLEM – SOLUTION – OUTCOME.**
7. When writing **REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENTS** you can use the **FIRST PERSON 'I'**. For example: Based on findings by Smith and Jones, I think that You can also use the first person 'I' when writing qualitative research that is based on subjective experience.
8. In all other cases you must write in the **THIRD PERSON IMPERSONAL**. For example: Based on findings by Smith and Jones (2009), it can be argued that
9. Never assume knowledge on the part of the marker. S/he wants to know what you know, so, keeping within context and relevance make sure you write all you know, as you planned it. **WRITE EXPLICIT INFORMATION;** never assume your information is implicit.
10. Never write your views or opinions without corroborating them. Always **SANDWICH YOUR WORDS WITH REFERENCES AND EVIDENCE** to support what you say. Demonstrate your knowledge through the knowledge of others.

LEARN, RESEARCH, EXCEED YOUR EXPECTATIONS

A Time and Task Management Strategy

The 5p Theory: Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance!

This technique will support you to learn linear habits and help you to become aware of time as a measure of duration in which you can get things done, instead of some kind of abstract barrier preventing you from doing anything with purpose. Getting into the most effective studying habit starts with allocating a specific study space. Prepare a suitable area that you can always access, go back to frequently and preferably that no-one else uses. Personalise it and make it comfortable. Don't do anything else in that space so that there is an immediate behavioural association: space = study.

Setting out a plan to achieve your goal gives you control, context and relevance for what you're doing, keeps you focussed and prevents you from getting side-lined into some other task. An achievement action plan guides you along a timed, step-by-step linear process. Here is an example:

Week	Action/Targets	To be completed by
1	Plan the content of the assignment using the support document 'Structuring the Content of an Assignment', focusing on key words, outcomes/learning criteria, reading and note-taking	29 March
2	Plan – decide on sections, sequence of discourse, ensure relevance, prepare the 'knowledge burgers', collect references, evidence, collate notes	5 April
3	Write – use a writing frame, decide what to paragraph, use oral techniques to hear the logical argument and language flow, use software programmes to hear what you've written, prepare drafts	12 April
4	Write – final draft	19 April
5	Proof – using the COPS proof-reading technique	26 April
6	PENULTIMATE DEADLINE	3 May
7	Contingency week for emergencies	10 May
8	ACTUAL DEADLINE AND HAND-IN	17 May

Your action plan is determined by weekly deadlines that lead to the final deadline for hand-in. **PLAN BY WORKING BACKWARDS FROM THE FINAL DEADLINE** and set the dates for weekly achievements. **ONLY DO WHAT YOU HAVE PLANNED PER WEEK.** Try to fight the urge to get everything done at once. Remember these wise words from Einstein: ‘Time was invented so that we don’t have to do everything at once!’ The weekly deadlines will pace you and ensure that you concentrate on achieving one thing at a time instead of fighting the feeling of doing everything at once and getting stressed.

Each week, have a **DAILY PLAN** for your time: diary, a chart on the wall, Outlook, i-phone app – whatever you are comfortable with using. Set yourself your daily tasks.

To consolidate your study habits further, set aside specific time for studying. To do this effectively, block out periods in the day for attending to meals, social time, lecture time, shopping, sleeping, working, washing etc. and **BE VERY REALISTIC RATHER THAN THEORETICAL.** The hours you have spare are the ones available for studying.

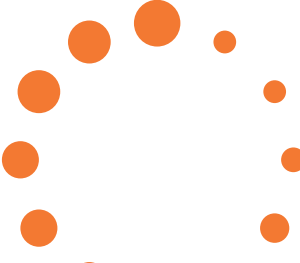
HIGHLIGHT YOUR STUDY TIME. Set your phone alarm, use the kitchen timer etc. and stop what you’re doing and begin to study. In reality, you may only have a few hours per week for studying. The length of time is not as important as what you do within that time – **QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY.**

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE: THE SOLID BLOCK DENOTES STUDY TIME.

	7-9	9-10	10-12	12-1	1-4	4-5	5-7	7-8	8-9	9-11	11-12
Sun	bed	bed	b'fast	work	work	work	work	dinner	TV		bed
Mon	gym	lectures	lectures	library	lectures	shop	dinner			TV	bed
Tue	b'fast	lectures		lunch	lectures	lectures	dinner		pub	pub	bed
Wed	bed	laundry	shop	socialise	lectures	lectures	sports		dinner		bed
Thur	gym	b'fast	lectures	library			dinner				bed
Frid	b'fast		laundry	lunch	lectures		library	pub	pub	socialise	socialise
Sat	b'fast	gym	gym	lunch	shop	shop		TV	dinner	TV	socialise

Strategies for Remembering Things

1. MULTI-SENSORY LEARNING – MSL

- 
- MSL works because:** There is more than one pathway to the brain so information can be assimilated in many ways. You can construct a mental model for understanding text in alternative ways. This can be great fun! The working motor memory stores information about physical concepts (taste, smell, touch and movement). This strengthens working memory. You can associate words with a wider meaning which strengthens the memory.
- As your brain decodes visual and aural info in short-term working memory tasks, you can supplement this activity with other sensory learning.
 - It by-passes the effects of an inefficient working memory so you can store and retrieve info more easily.

MSL maximises opportunities to learn by using all the routes available to the information processing areas in the brain.

In practice, most learning in uni is not multi-sensory. Considerable emphasis is placed on reading, which places a heavy load on your phonological memory. There is currently no evidence to suggest that this extends to other working memory systems. (McLoughlin 1994/2007). Traditional approaches are the least useful for anyone with a specific learning difference in which the working memory is inefficient. If this affects you, it's much better to use methods that use the other sense modalities.

Once the emphasis on phonological memory is removed, you can compensate by making maximum use of all the other pathways to learning, recalling and understanding.

2.MEMORY ANCHORS



NB: MULTI-SENSORY TECHNIQUES SUPPORT LEARNING AND REMEMBERING PROCESSES BECAUSE ALL PATHWAYS TO THE BRAIN ARE USED.

Once knowledge is fixed in the long term memory, recall of information becomes easier, and information based on personal meaning is the most relevant and effective to learn and recall. Developing a personalised approach to remembering meaningful connections is the key to assimilating information. There are many ways to learn and remember – but **YOU MUST MAKE EACH EXAMPLE PERSONAL.**

The brain is not a computer; we are not machines. There is **integration**, and memory is linked across the whole experience so even a word should be integrated using multi-sensory learning (MSL). It doesn't matter how little or how much you have to remember, the anchors you use can always be the same.

There is no single centre within the brain totally responsible for vision, language, emotion, social behaviour, consciousness or memory. Therefore an act of remembering is a unique coming-together of all the relevant parts from across the whole brain.

1. The **AMYGDALA** assigns an experience an emotional value
2. The **HIPPOCAMPUS** decides on where and how the information is stored
3. The **CEREBRAL CORTEX** helps to package the memory into a coherent whole

– and so all are involved in retrieving memory.

Emotional involvement helps the memory but anxiety doesn't. A bit of adrenalin is quite normal and allowing it to flow within a calm state bodes well for effective learning.

1. To get your thoughts into focus, try this technique known as **Backward Chaining**: Remember a happy time. Visualise the occasion then take pathways along the sounds, smells, the weather, music and so on. Concentrate on the details as much as possible. Tell the story, re-live the video, focus on people and try to remember their names or a special feature. Remember the feelings. This exercise is a practice for recalling from the long term memory (LTM).
2. This technique is based on using **Pathways and Images** and is another practice for recalling from the LTM. Imagine a situation. Use all your senses to tell the story. Be as detailed as you can. Your imagination will draw on your long term memory storage. This is disciplined day dreaming!
3. **Repetition and Review**; Re-visiting helps remembering, so on a wall calendar or in a diary, plan dates for reviewing specific learning. Start from the time now; review in 10 minutes; review in an hour; review in a day; a week; a month; etc.
4. Information enters the brain in a continuously changing, adaptable system. It doesn't get imprinted in a permanent place. Imagine a **3D forest** of trees with interconnecting branches that act like the neural connections. Think of your incoming knowledge in this living way. Associate each tree in the forest with a specific variety and attach your information accordingly.
5. **Physical** memory aids include lists, a diary, MS Outlook, writing on your hand, an alarm clock, the cooker timer, post-its, your watch, mobile or a wall planner. Use them often.
6. You must have a genuine reason for remembering. Make the memory **relevant and memorable**. Just reading and reading is not helpful if you have memory retrieval difficulties. You may remember something from this kind of rote learning but will you understand it? Will you be able to connect it?

7. **Use sensory associations.** Use feel, touch, taste, smell and hearing. See objects, lists, facts and people in a full way to remember them. Textures, shapes, scents, sounds and shades affect us strongly. Whenever we hear music from the past, all sorts of memories can be associated with it and can come flooding back. The same applies to smells, good or bad. There are strong associations with them.
8. Movement: **Action attracts attention** so re-frame your environment to move within it as much as possible. Aristotle and his students walked and learned at the same time; so did many sages and faith leaders. Do you remember going for walks with a parent or grandparent and listening to their stories or explanations? Dance through a sequence, clap a rhythm, and rhythmically walk around the garden. Here is an example of action with sensory association to remember how to count from one to ten in Japanese (Tracy & Rose: 1992): See how quickly you can learn to count...

Japanese	English	Sound	Action
Ichi	One	Itchy	Scratch your
Ni	Two	Knee	Knee
San	Three	Sun	Point to sky
Shi	Four	She	Point to woman
Go	Five	Go	Walk two paces
Roco	Six	Rock	Rock 'n roll
Shichi	Seven	Shi-chi	Double sneeze
Hachi	Eight	Hat-chi	Put on hat
Kyu	Nine	Coo	Coo like a dove
Ju	Ten	Jew	Imagine a Jewish cap

9. The neurons/synapses in the brain thrive on **associations** to evolve. One way to associate is to attach a new (and therefore weaker) memory to a strong one. When you recall the strong memory, it will produce the association.
10. Use the same idea of association but attach an emotional tie. Wrap a new memory around a pet, children, a partner etc. Recalling the image will recall the associated **emotional memory**.
11. Absurd images and ideas are vivid, pleasant and memorable. **Humour endures** so funny and surreal images that make you laugh should be brought into service! If surreal humour doesn't raise a smile, then use whatever silliness works for you.
12. Making an extra effort to imagine a scene or to tell a story means we **own it**, we **built it** and therefore there is a tendency to want to **keep it**. The capacity we have for visual recall reflects our evolutionary history. Written language only evolved 90,000 years after the human brain had evolved to its present form - and anthropologists studying cultures without written language have recorded photographic-like ability for visual recall of objects and places.
13. Using **numbers** can help to remember sequences or facts in the correct order. Strong graphic signs and images, especially if imagined as very large numbers – like those found on military target ranges – are associated with the particular memory. Here's an example taken from The Brain's Behind It: Smith 02... The Structure of the Eight Courts of the Civil System in England and Wales can be remembered by number association. There is the County Court and the High Court with three divisions: the Queen's Bench, Family and Chancery – the Court of Appeal, the House of Lords, and the European Court. Thus:

- **ONE: The County Court** – think of the big hand on a clock counting the minutes and associate it with the number 1.
- **TWO: The High Court** – make the number two a high mountain with clouds floating round it.
- **THREE: The Queen's Bench Division** – imagine a bench with three legs and a Queen's crown on it.
- **FOUR: Family Division** – imagine a number four with children's faces arms and legs waving about on it
- **FIVE: Chancery** – recall a dice in a game of chance with the figure 5 uppermost.
- **SIX: Court of Appeal** – think of orange peel cut off in one long strip and curling round to make the number 6.
- **SEVEN: The House of Lords** – put a long judge's wig on the number 7 making it look a bit like a bloodhound.
- **EIGHT: European Court** – arrange all the stars of the European Community Flag into the number 8.



14. We remember what we need and what we want because it's relevant. Keep reminding yourself of the relevancy of all the facts, figures and information you are trying to store away. If this is difficult, turn the relevancy into an outcome and **associate the outcome with success**. London taxi drivers learning 'The Knowledge' can hold a map of the city in their heads. They are very much motivated by the outcome of success.
15. The old cliché, a **picture paints a thousand words**, is so true that it is an extremely powerful memory recall device. To help you paint this imagined picture, draw each piece of information using stick-men or cartoons. Drawing skill is not the important thing; attaching the fact is.
16. **Colour** illuminates, expands, harmonises, contrasts, livens up, discriminates, brightens, defines, outlines, illustrates, relates, describes, compares, connects and generally adds value to a picture. Note that some of the vocabulary used here is the same as that often used within assignment titles or criteria. An immediate connection!
17. **Order gives structure** to a memory. Use a family tree, put things in alphabetical order or use a numerical sequence to attach information you need to remember. Trying to remember your PIN can be easier if you associate the sequence of it. Remembering a phone number is easier if there's a pattern to the sequence of numbers.
18. Always be positive and avoid using unpleasant or ugly associations. Emotional psychology tells us that bad memories tend to get hidden, whereas happy ones are all too willing to surface. **Positivity** helps to control anxiety.
19. Within all your memorising and imagined visions, **exaggerate** as much as possible. Imagine particular facts as looming forward and shouting. Many adverts are based on surrealism and this makes them memorable. (But if you can't remember what they are selling it's because there has been no association with the image!)

20. **Mnemonics and Acronyms:** The key words trigger associated memories or they can just be used as a one dimensional aid. For example:

- Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain is a mnemonic for the colours of the rainbow – Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet.
- LASER is an acronym for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation.
- SONAR stands for SOund Navigation And Ranging
- Spelling 'rhythm' can be remembered by its associative meaning – rhythm helps your two hips move
- MRS GREN is an acronym for the vital processes of life: Movement, Respiration, Sensitivity, Growth, Reproduction, Excretion, Nutrition

21. **Sounds of all kinds** make a sensory link to your long term memory. Sounds are alive, vivid and ring in your ears. Speak, shout, sing and repeat. Create multiple echoes, from sound to meaning and back again.

22. When you are introduced to people, do you immediately forget their names? One way to remember them is to **repeat the name** as soon as you hear it and use it as many times as possible thereafter. This technique

also works with new vocabulary. Learn a new word and use it as often as possible in conversation.

23. Important concepts are made memorable by shared initial letters, **Alliteration's Artful Aid**. For example: prior planning prevents poor performance or action attracts attention

24. **Link a new memory** with a very well-known long term memory. For example: visualise your home. As you

move around it link familiar items – the front door, the hallway table, the sitting room sofa – to a new memory. As you recall your home, the association will recall your new memorised information. There is a lot of familiar detail in your home with appearance, smell, light, colour, warmth etc. so this is an excellent way to remember knowledge for an exam.

25. The kinaesthetic nature of movement in **Rhythm and Rhyme** supports an inefficient working memory. Raps, doggerel, limericks – even short phrases, all support the working memory. For example:



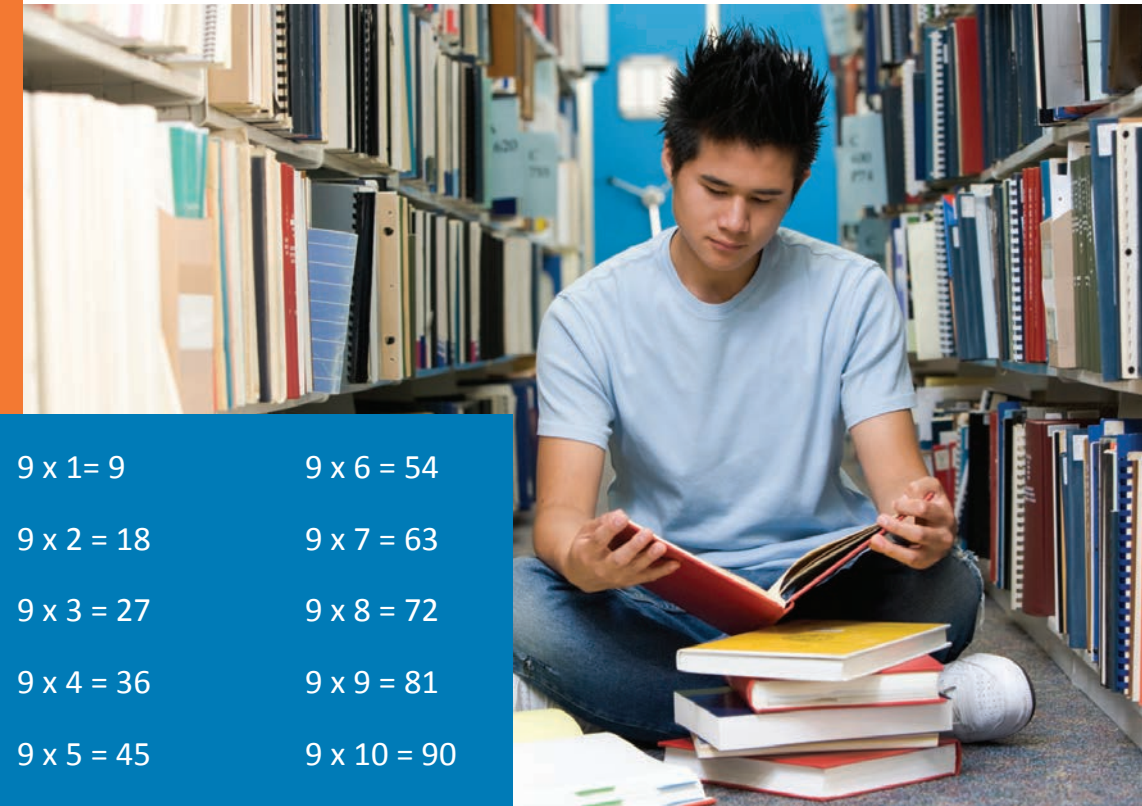
- In fourteen hundred and ninety two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.
- 'O ye canna shove yer granny off a bus' – 11 beat rhythm – 'it's a nanotechnological idea.' Sing the doggerel to a rhythm then transfer the rhythm to the phrase you have to remember.
- Remember, remember the fifth of November; gunpowder, treason and plot.
- deoxyribonucleic acid – dum diddly dum dum dum diddly dum
- Thirty days hath September, April, June and dull November ... etc.
- If you get into a muddle when dividing by fractions, use this rhyme: **The number you're dividing by, turn upside down and multiply.** For example:
 $10 \text{ divided by } \frac{1}{2} = 10 \times \frac{2}{1} = 20$
 $15 \text{ divided by } \frac{1}{5} = 15 \times \frac{5}{1} = 75$



26. **Adapt lyrics from a memorable song.** The symbol for water, H₂O, can be remembered by sensory links. For example: Happy Birthday to you, Hydrogen has two, Oxygen has only one, Happy Birthday to you.

27. Group difficult words together to see the **pattern** of their spelling. For example:

- Double consonant words: embarrrassed accommodation succss
beginnning address accidentally assassination possession
- ‘Ough’: A rough, dough-faced, thoughtful ploughman emerged from a slough to walk through the streets of Scarborough, coughing and hiccoughing. (The same spelling with different pronunciations in different contexts.)
- Words within words give a pattern to spelling: eg ICI make medicines
- Homophones can be patterned: eg here or hear? You hear with your ear; sail or sale? Ale is for sale.
- There are patterns in numbers too: halfway through the nine-times table for example, the numbers invert:



$9 \times 1 = 9$

$9 \times 6 = 54$

$9 \times 2 = 18$

$9 \times 7 = 63$

$9 \times 3 = 27$

$9 \times 8 = 72$

$9 \times 4 = 36$

$9 \times 9 = 81$

$9 \times 5 = 45$

$9 \times 10 = 90$

28. **Patterns and colours work well together** when recalling information. Group difficult words in colour lists and they will become associative, thus aiding your recall from your memory banks. Pattern and colour

lists work for all kinds of facts and figures.

29. **Associations** with short phrases can help with spellings. Eg. ‘necessary’ could be remembered by thinking of: One cup of coffee with two sugars.

30. Associate particular facts and figures with **strong smells or tastes**. These are strong senses and therefore strong memories. Recall the smells or tastes and the associated memory will be recalled.

31. **VISUAL, SPATIAL SYSTEMS:** Routes, maps, diagrams, spidergrams, charts, shapes, schematics, 3D imagery – all visual information-givers without using too many words.

32. **CHUNKING:** When trying to remember a long list of things, primacy and recency come into play. **Primacy** refers to items at the beginning of a list and recency the items at the end. There is a tendency to forget things in the middle. Dividing the list into groups of seven, (plus or minus two depending on how easy you find this technique), is the best way to memorise the whole list, including the bits in the middle. This also applies to words, numbers, images or ideas.

33. Create a **MEMORY ROOM:** Cicero, the renowned Roman orator, used visual images from the Senate House in Rome to cue the points in his speeches – among the columns, around the walls, on the ceiling, across the floor on the mosaics. Similar techniques are found in India and China. This is a very traditional, powerful technique. However, instead of using a known memory, try creating or designing your own room. This will mean that you can fix cue points anywhere and contrive them to fit in exactly with what you want to memorise and recall. **This is an excellent revision and exam technique.**



34. Rote Learning does not support the idea of making connections, it does not deepen sensitivity, nor does it give insight to the application of knowledge. However, **an immediate learned response has its place.** For example, if you were flying and there was an engine failure, you would expect the pilot to know the safety drill by heart! If you learned your times tables at school by rote learning, it can make quick calculations easier. As a memory anchor, ask yourself if you always need to thoroughly understand why you are learning something or could it just be expediency – a means to an end?



The **SPECS** memory filing technique: (from the Brain's Behind It: Smith 02). The principle of this way of learning is that a single memory is vulnerable, whereas a multi-sensory one is supported by extra layers of memory thus ensuring it will not be forgotten.

See it **P**ersonalise it **E**xaggerate it **C**onnect it **S**hare it

Examinations

Looking holistically at the patterning of exams, the following is a summary of the exam process.



Looking holistically at the **patterning** of exams, the following is a summary of the exam process.

Exams **R** about: **R**ECALL, **R**ESPONSE, **R**ELEVANCE, **R**IGOUR

RECALL

- Recall of **knowledge** has been the mainstay of academic examinations since the days of Plato, who said that knowledge is remembering things.
- Information to be remembered for exams should be re-visited as often as possible so it can be successfully recalled. Use multi-sensory learning strategies to process information in the short-term working memory. Once information is in, it can be recalled from the long-term memory by using an appropriate memory anchor.
- From oral questioning of underpinning knowledge, and practical observation of skills learned, to written responses to questions, it's all about **showing what you know**. In case you think you may forget what you know, memory anchor strategies are designed to have a domino effect on associated memories so that **you do not have to remember everything – only the main memory anchor**.
- Revising for an exam can be supported by using **memory anchors** therefore not only are you able to remember and recall, but you will also remember, understand and recall. Understanding is important for analysis questions.
- Question Spotting is a time honoured technique for preparation for exams. Take particular note of any subject or idea that academic staff may stress more than any other. *Take the hint if it is given!*



RESPONSE

- Responding to instructions and questions means you **take time** to fully understand what is being asked of you.
- It is a known fact that many students, of all ages, don't read instructions and questions with understanding and therefore lose marks.
- If the question doesn't make sense, find a **key word** and visualise its meaning, then tell the story. Use the SQ3R strategy.
- **Take time** to plan a structure for your response.
- Do a **schematic of the question** according to your preferred style of working.
- Note the key **instructions** – explain, discuss, analyse etc. Write this instruction at the top of your answer sheet and briefly write what it means. Do the same thing with any topics you have to cover – write/draw a skeletal content. Bring out your memory anchor for each topic and write it down. **Once this is written down you don't have to keep trying to remember it. You can refer to it as often as you want. Each memory anchor will activate a sequence of ideas and information.**
- Following this strategy will save you time as you will not repeat information or forget what comes next. If you are running out of time, you can bullet point the last few points from your plan, which will then give you time to write a conclusion.

RELEVANCE

- **Connect ideas** from your planned structure to the instruction within the question and disregard any idea that doesn't connect.
- **Link** key word – instruction – knowledge
- Ask yourself: Have I responded to the question asked? Are my responses relevant? Have I gone off at a tangent?
- Then **take time** to check your structure, check the connections, check the links and check for relevancy.
- Force yourself to go through this **quality assurance checklist**. Make it a habit. It is a strategy to off-set the tendency for holistic responses to miss out on detail.
- Hand in your planning along with your responses. If you run out of time and are unable to finish answering a question, an examiner can see what you know even though it may not be written in the anticipated academic format.

RIGOUR

Judgement through reasoning

Accuracy with facts and references

Validity of inference and argument

Action sequencing in the right order

- If your exam is about new ideas, contributions and personal expression, then creativity based around underpinning knowledge and critical analysis should be added to this list.





Anxiety

YOUR PAST IS NOT YOUR POTENTIAL

Past experiences can often condition anxieties. Given that dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADD, ASC, medical or mental health conditions etc. can have a significant effect on your self-esteem, potential for academic success and personal fulfilment, it's not surprising that you may experience increased anxiety from time to time.

Some people get an immediate 'brain-fog' when presented with reams of text. For others, deep-rooted and long-standing difficulties leading to failures have impacted so much that low motivation and low self-esteem are inevitabilities.

Struggle and conflict over time will influence your coping skills and when there is no coping, an anxious state of emotional negativity is the result. You may also procrastinate and be unable to make sound judgements or important decisions.

Under stress caused by negative emotions, information you need to make judgements and decisions may never reach the parts of the brain it should. It gets filtered out or suppressed; the mind goes blank and anxiety prevails. **This is a vicious circle: difficulty with learning and making decisions, feeling threatened emotionally, information not going in, difficulty with learning and making decisions, feeling threatened emotionally, and information not going in...and so on.**

When information is transmitted using multi-sensory strategies, this appeals positively to the emotional processing in the brain so learning gets the green light. There is no filtering or suppression.

To experience success and release potential as a human being, not just a learner, there are strategies that can work. Consider this quote from Carl Rogers, an Educational Psychologist: 'The only truly educated person is the one who has learned how to learn.'

Learning how to deal with anxiety is just as important. It will contribute to your success and the releasing of your present and future potential.



**My name is Jack!
I'm a Caring Canine
and I work in ALS**

STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH ANXIETY

1. Visualise or write the word **impossible**. Add an apostrophe and a space that changes it to **I'm possible**. Keep reading this and believe it!
2. Think of all the people who have been successful despite their learning differences and look again at the positive strengths that you share. **Celebrate your talents**. Write them down under a photograph of yourself and keep looking at them.
3. The emotional brain doesn't distinguish between a real experience and an imagined one. Use this fact to re-programme yourself. **All attitudes are learned attitudes**. The emotional response you get from a negative stimulus has been learned, so **if you can learn one, you can learn another**.
4. The negative image you have of yourself is more likely to respond to emotions rather than logic, so start with the end in mind and visualise what you want. Translate this vision into goals. Putting everything into a connected action plan will focus on what's important:

1. **VISUALISE** your goals. Having a purpose gives **MEANING**.
2. **MEANING** makes your goals relevant. Relevance gives you **DETERMINATION**.
3. **DETERMINATION** enables you to be positive. Positivity will enable your willpower to work with a **STRUCTURE**.
4. Use a **STRUCTURE** to plan for achieving the goals you **VISUALISE**.

5. To get into a state of positive calmness, think of a time when you experienced success through your own control. Your emotional state is important therefore remember what your success, or your control, felt like. **Memory is the stimulus but feelings are the response**. Use your feelings to give yourself a reminder of that success and you will get the mental edge to be positive.

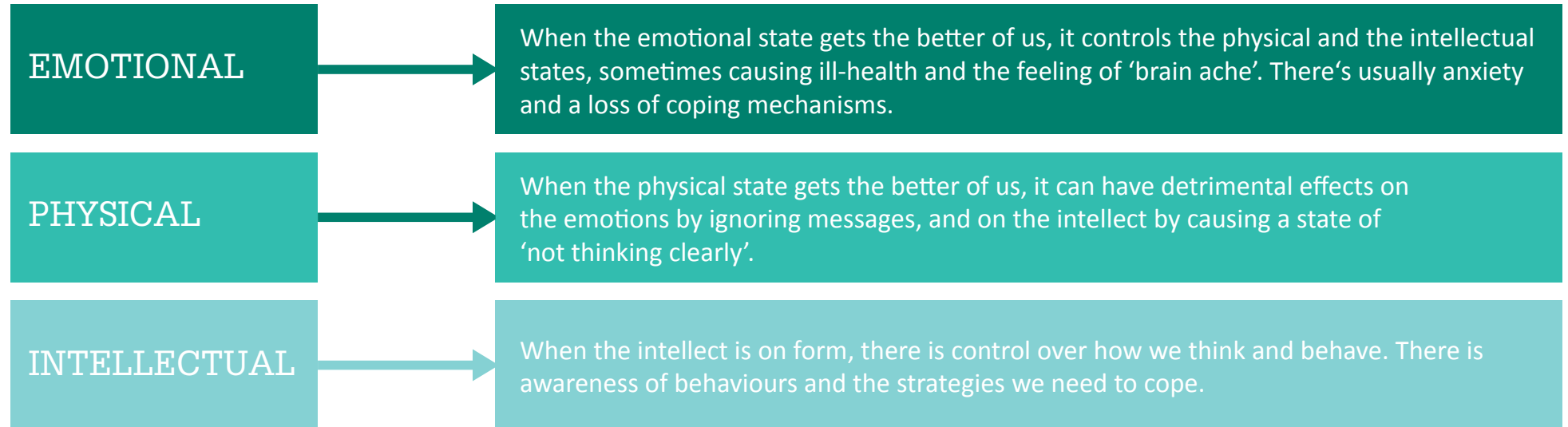
6. **Maximise oxygen:** A 3lb brain uses 20% of your oxygen intake. Deep breathing is a recognised strategy for bringing about a state of calmness.
7. **Neck and shoulder exercises** relieve tension. How are you reading this? Hunched over, shoulders raised, neck straining? Be aware of your physical state.
8. **An upright, straight spine** allows blood, oxygen and energy to pass freely between your body and brain. A relaxed physical state will promote the ability to be inspired. The word **inspire** comes from Latin and it means to **breathe in**.
9. **Shift your physical position** frequently. If you're sitting, stand up and vice versa. Lie down and stretch out occasionally. This kinaesthetic movement metaphorically helps to shift thoughts away from that brick wall that we can often hit when trying to find a pathway through thoughts and ideas.
10. **Always drink plenty of water.** Dehydration fogs the mind (and fogging leads to anxiety). Sometimes, the body-signals for thirst aren't always recognised, especially as anxiety skews the focus. So getting into the habit of drinking regularly gives the brain the maximum opportunity to work better.
11. **Kaizen** is a Japanese concept for one-step-at-a-time-improvement leading to success. The holistic mind misses small sequences, so an awareness of this philosophy – success in small chunks – will associate learning with feeling good. No matter how small, always celebrate a success. For example, feel positive about making each and every decision. Don't wait until you have finished the whole assignment before allowing yourself to feel OK. **Feel good one step at a time!**
12. **A Time and Task management strategy** that diarises small steps, eventually leading to completion of the whole project, will develop skills that can be used for any activity, not just dissertations. If you have a tendency to avoid details and then become anxious when what you're doing doesn't work out, then developing time and task management skills will be invaluable and help to keep anxiety at bay.
13. **Reinforcement of a skill** leads to automaticity. Therefore, use this fact to reinforce coping strategies. Positive systematic habits will control anxiety.
14. **Anxiety often distorts perspectives.** Make realistic comparisons of your expectations and abilities. For example, spelling can be a nightmare but everyone makes mistakes. Everyone should use a dictionary or spellchecker. It's no big deal! It's important to keep things in perspective. You have the ability to learn strategies to support your learning so affirm this. Sometimes, wise/humorous words or quotations can make you feel good – so use them if they work for you.
15. **Don't be in isolation** with anxiety. Get your family, friends or partner to make affirmations to remind you of your potential. Re-frame your environment using support networks. Be aware of the steps to take to reach conscious competence and control.

16. **Isometrics:** These can be very useful before an exam. It's quite natural to have some adrenalin rushing round your system but controlling your emotional state by the use of physical techniques can divert anxiety and let you get on with the business of recalling information and getting it down in a structured, well-practised way.

- The easiest isometric exercises that will not attract attention (so you can do them anywhere) are as follows:
- Press your fingertips together as hard as you can for a count of 5, then release.
- Press the heels of your hands down on a chair as hard as you can for a count of 5, then release.
- Breathe in deeply and as you do so, pull your navel into the small of your back, hold and release.
- Press your feet into the floor, or the balls of your feet if you find the whole foot difficult. Hold for a count of 5, then release.



17. There are **3 strands of development** that grow in every person but at varying times from conception onwards. These states work together to make us what we are and support us throughout life.



18. **Enable your intellectual self to control negativity and anxiety** by having safety nets in place so that you can get back on track. These safety nets are structures, habits and learned responses to the fight, flight, and freeze or flock activities that accompany deep anxiety.

Self-Advocacy

Developing your own self-advocacy code is an important goal to focus on, not only in the learning environment and workplace but also in life generally. Only you can decide what this means in your particular situation and below are self-advocacy principles for you to choose from to build the content of your personal code.

- The key to self-reliance is a practical knowledge of how your specific learning impacts on you. Be really sure you have the underpinning knowledge to know how your learning style works for you.
- Approach an employer with the confidence to provide a clear outline of your strengths and difficulties in relation to your job description.
- If your employer is unaware of support entitlements under the Equality Act 2010, you should be confident enough to explain what they are.
- You are in the best position to raise awareness and educate your employer if needs be. People don't know what they don't know and ignorance can make your working environment unnecessarily stressful.
- Labelling is a contentious issue. Being in victim mode is not healthy and doesn't support an advocacy role. Be proud of who you are in spite of your difficulties not because of them.
- Employers do not always appreciate what your strengths are or how they could be applied in the workplace – so promote yourself.
- Any one of these could be your strengths: innovative thinker, excellent trouble-shooter, intuitive, rapid grasp of concepts, a problem-solver, heightened perception, kinaesthetic excellence, holistic processing, influential leadership, pattern awareness, curious, creative, a lateral thinker, a divergent thinker, a fast thinker, a lot of energy,

expressive, social skills, sophisticated ideas, highly motivated, empathic, good concentration, 3D thinking, oral skills, scientific/graphic visualiser, practical. Focus on your strengths and promote them.

- Use the assertiveness techniques espoused in Transactional Analysis; the Parent, Adult, Child communication pathways. Always communicate in adult to adult mode.
- Assertiveness can be difficult to achieve. Re-frame your environment and support networks to learn assertiveness skills.
- Support groups can offer valuable assistance. They can set you off on the road to success to determine your rights and responsibilities in whatever situation you may face in daily work and life. A support group can be informal such as a few friends. It doesn't always have to mean something more formal. Talking is good and it makes you

realise you're not the only one with anxieties. You can share strategies for dealing with things.

- If you can't find a support group – start one up! This kind of re-framing is very confidence boosting.
- See yourself as successful by positive imaging and affirmations.
- Identify the differences between normal life stresses and those that your difficulties present. This can be a hard thing to do sometimes as one affects the other, but it puts things into perspective and promotes self-confidence.
- Remember that an environment and systems can be disabling; your characteristics are not.
- You are a very able person to have the willingness and ability to re-frame your environment to make the world fit you – not you fit the world. This is the social model of disability. The medical deficit model of something being wrong with you

has no place in modern society!

- Celebrate your learning difference and show your colleagues how fortunate they are to have you in their team.
- Surround yourself with positive role models and affirmations of your abilities and success.
- Don't take any negative comments. Practise phrases to immediately counter any insensitive remark. This usually results in a conversation along the lines of: 'I didn't realise that...' Raising people's awareness leads to a bit more understanding.
- Convince your employer that you have good metacognitive awareness. (This means you know how to learn and can apply your knowledge to any new learning situation) This gives added value to your employment.
- Accept challenge, devise your strategies and use your strengths.

- Advocating for your legal rights doesn't necessarily mean going through a grievance procedure! Take these advocacy steps:
 1. Communication
 2. Negotiation
 3. Mediation
 4. Arbitration
- Self-advocacy may be your responsibility but it is not achieved in isolation. Develop support networks.
- Along with rights come responsibilities. For equilibrium, you must get the balance right so that when you advocate for your rights, you are able to demonstrate your attitude towards your responsibilities. This approach will get you noticed.



© 2015
Christine Scholes
Head of Additional Learning Support and Disability Services
Bournemouth University

PRODUCED AND PRINTED BY DORSET CREATIVE - Proud to have dyslexic employees. www.dorsetcreative.co.uk

The author has asserted her right to be identified as the author of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

