

Academic Services Unit

Workshop:

Efficient Study Habits

LECTURES

- A lecture is only an **introduction** to a topic that familiarises you with the subject area main issues and **CONCEPTS** in that topic. Follow up on the lectures.

- *“Eighty percent of success in life is showing up”.*

Woody Allen

Attendance = success. Course lectures act as building blocks i.e. previous knowledge helps understanding in for new knowledge.

- Pre-read for lectures

EFFICIENT STUDY HABITS

- MORE TIME STUDYING *DOES NOT ALWAYS EQUAL* BETTER STUDY
- EFFICIENT STUDY *ALWAYS MEANS* BETTER STUDY
- There is a famous saying that says – “If you really want to learn something, then teach it!” (Anonymous)
 - This is because, if you want to teach something – you need to read – understand – and then explain though words
 - In other words, you have to PROCESS the information and RECONSTRUCT it for your students. It is not enough to just memorise. When you do this, you find that you have learnt it!
 - As a student, you need to follow the same procedure; read/listen + process + reconstruct. Just reading or just listening in lectures is not enough

WHAT TO STUDY

Subject Outline: see what chapters / sources you need to study. You then need to look at the OBJECTIVES of each week / unit of the course as well as the OBJECTIVES of each chapter (mentioned in the outline) in each week / unit.

Depending on subjects / textbooks however generally there are objectives at the beginning of a chapter. You can use these to work out the key concepts to study eg:

Nellis, J., & Parker, D., *Principles of Macroeconomic* Chapter 10 p. 224

Learning Outcomes: *Understand the nature and causes of economic growth*

After the lecture, do you feel like you really understand the nature and causes of economic growth? Can you explain them if someone asks you? If you can then you have achieved one objective of the chapter. If not, you need to work on this.

WHEN & WHAT TO STUDY

When:

Do Pre-reading before each lecture and follow-up after each lecture

What:

‘Follow up’

1. Re-write notes from lecture. Use the text-book to add extra information in note form ie: **PROCESS & SYNTHESISE** information.
2. Any homework activities
3. Any on-line activities to accompany the text-book
4. Look at the **AIMS / OBJECTIVES** of each chapter or week in your course outline and text-book. Do you understand them?

Code: ‘Pre Reading’

1. Look at the course outline.
2. Read the chapter / readings for the upcoming week.

HOW TO STUDY

To study efficiently you need:

- **USE A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES (NOT JUST READING)**
- Some activities should **PROCESS** information and **DEMONSTRATE** understanding of concepts eg: Reading a textbook doesn't mean you understand it. A good reader will **RECONSTRUCT** the writers' message. It is **NOT** a **PASSIVE** activity.

Example (from Gibbons, 1991 p 70). Read the passage and answer the questions.

Reading A krinklejup was parling a tristlebin. A barjam stipped. The barjam gruppued ‘Hey Minto!’ to the krinklejup. The krinklejup ziskied zoelly.

Questions

- What was the krinklejup doing? → Parling a tristlebin
- What stipped? → A barjam
- What did the barjum grup? → ‘Hey Minto!’
- How did the krinklejup zisk? → Zoelly

You can see that, although you can answer the questions, there is no real meaning in copying structures straight from the text. Your questions in your own mind should be:

‘What is a krinklejup? What is parling? Are these real words? etc

HOW TO STUDY

Reconstruction Activities

- Reading and then summarising a concept in writing
- Explaining a concept to someone (talking)
- Quizzing yourself on key concepts
- Doing online quizzes – many of the textbooks have online activities
- If there are no online quizzes – then test yourself (when you make summary notes, put the concepts in the margin. Fold the paper so you can't see written explanations – and test yourself.
- Go to the objectives – read them and try to answer them
- Some chapters have questions / case studies for you to answer. Try to answer them with **REAL UNDERSTANDING** (not like in the 'krinklejup' example)

MORE TIPS

- Group study (not just on group projects) can help you **UNDERSTAND**. You can use other group members to test your understanding of concepts / objectives – through talking and explaining to each other and quizzing each other – use the time to **PROCESS** and **RECONSTRUCT**.
- **TAKE REGULAR BREAKS** Break every hour – and during the break, do something active – avoid sitting at a computer in your break. It's better to take a short walk.
- **WHEN YOU HAVE A SNACK, AVOID HIGH-FAT JUNK FOODS** – they often require a lot of energy to digest and so they can make you feel tired.