

Adjusting to Third Level

The main challenges facing students coming into Third Level are:

- the different form of teaching
- the greater amount and type of reading/ assignments
- the task of learning to take charge of and be responsible for one's own learning

What can you do?

It is possible to reduce the effect of these changes by developing some good study skills. These skills will help you make the transition to third level education. Not only will they help you in first year but every year. They will improve your exam preparation and make time at college more enjoyable.

It is a big mistake to assume that the learning habits that you have developed in school will automatically guarantee academic success for you in college. The challenge at college is to manage your own learning, or, in other words, to become an active, independent and self-motivated student when it comes to planning, conducting and evaluating your academic work. Accepting this challenge means that you will have to become a 'driver' rather than a 'passenger' in your journey through college. If you are not prepared to take responsibility for your own learning, college will be a frustrating and unpleasant experience for you.

Time Management


- plan a study timetable– daily or weekly
- set yourself study goals – short– and long-term
- put them down on paper
- prioritise urgent tasks
- allow time for rest and relaxation
- start tasks ahead of time

Improving your concentration


- place of study should be quiet, free from distractions and interruptions, comfortable, well-lit and ventilated
- ensure good posture
- keep desk free from clutter and distractions
- take a 10 minute break each 50 mins of study
- study difficult subjects when more alert
- clearly define the task you are going to work on
- be active rather than passive, e.g. take notes, have questions in mind as you read.
- set yourself realistic small targets
- vary both the topics you study and methods you use
- review each task for a few minutes before moving on to the next
- REWARD yourself for work done!

Improving your memory

- review regularly

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- use memory aids like mind maps, mnemonics, rhymes, index cards, colour coding etc
 - remember, there is no such thing as a bad memory only an untrained one, so we need to be active in our learning

Improving your note-taking

- take a front seat and hear better
 - anticipate – before each class look at notes from the last lecture or glance ahead in the text book
 - listen for ideas, not just facts
 - use A4 size sheets
 - write in short sentences
 - develop your own abbreviations
 - use lecturer's words
 - if lecture is too fast, get the main points and headings and leave blank spaces and fill in later
 - don't be afraid to ask questions in class if unsure about something
 - don't doodle or sit near uninterested friends
 - re-read notes as soon as possible (ideally the same day) and fill in the gaps
 - identify anything you don't understand and ask your lecturer, a friend or consult a book
 - organise your notes in a clear and better version
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Improving your reading efficiency

- Prioritise your reading list
- Use contents page to get a rapid picture
- Scan headings and sub-headings
- Skim read initially
- Read with a purpose (e.g. a question)
- Take notes
- List key points
- Summarise

Conclusion

There is no magical formula about how to study and learn. This leaflet offers some tried and tested ways you may wish to consider. You may need to develop a “pick and mix” approach to find out what suits you best.

You may already have used some or many of the study skills mentioned above. Take the ones you like and adapt them to suit what you are studying. Change them to suit your personal style and remember to use them from the beginning of term as they will not work miracles two weeks before the exams!!

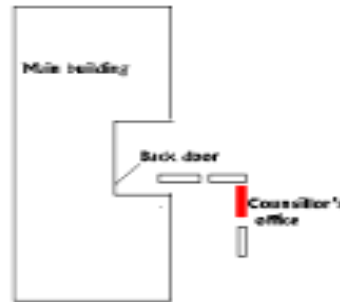
Where to find Help

Student Counselling Service

Portacabin 3 behind the main building.

Tel: ext 2635 (from outside 4042635)

E-mail: aisling.obrien@it-tallaght.ie



Some Reading

There are many books on Study Skills in the **College Library**. A number of the recommended ones are listed below :

Managing your own learning at University-
Aidan Moran

The Good Study Guide
- Andrew Northedge

The Sciences Good Study Guide
- Andrew Northedge et al.

Improving Study Skills
- Conrad Lashley

How to Win as a Part-Time Student
- Tom Bourner and Phil Race

Recommended Internet Site:

<http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/stdyhlp.html>

Study Skills



Student Counselling Service

Student Services

Institute of Technology, Tallaght
