

Learning Effectively: the study needs of dyslexic students at university

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Introduction

A group of freelance dyslexia/ SpLD tutors who work with HE students at The University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University ran a workshop at the ADSHE networking day 18th June 2009 (it was originally presented at the BDA conference in Oxford February 2009) One aim of the workshop was to open up the discussion about the study needs of students in higher education (HE). Dyslexia is again recognised as being one of a range Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) and it is increasingly recognised that the different SpLDs co-occur. The students we work with can be dyslexic, dyspraxic, dyscalculic, dysgraphic, or have ADHD or ADD or any combination of the same. It is important to make the experiences of adults and post-16 students known to others, including people working with children because dyslexic/ SpLD children grow up to be dyslexic/ SpLD adults who will share some of the same problems and solutions.

The recent changes to the DSA (Disabled Students' Allowances) processes have resulted in discussion between the different groups of professionals involved. There are clearly differences of perspectives and the need for better communication between the groups has been a significant theme in the email forums. A clear understanding of the work done by support tutors and the eventual positive outcomes for the students should be at the heart of any new systems used to administer the support.

The workshop opens with a discussion of some aspects of dyslexia in HE; the participants then work in four small groups on important issues for students at HE: effective reading, writing skills, group work, and time management and organisation; followed by a full group discussion and a final conclusion. This paper follows the same pattern with the discussions of the different small groups at the end. We expect that colleagues in the ADSHE network will have very similar experiences to ours. One of our chief concerns is the need to present the work of support tutors in the HE sector to others, including other professional groups, the students, those in charge of the funds and the general tax payer, who foots the bill. For this reason, the contributions from the BDA conference are included below.

Opening discussion

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Support work with HE dyslexic students is funded by government money through the Disabled Students Allowances (DSAs). The three allowances cover equipment, general (expenses) and non-medical helpers. They are intended to allow students with any disability to study at university and gain qualifications that reflect their inherent potential and work achievements and that are not masked by the effects of the disability. The IT bought through the equipment fund can make a considerable difference to the achievements of dyslexic students, but in our experience the support from someone who knows about the wide range of possible impacts of dyslexia on students is often just as important and sometimes more important, and sometimes not needed at all.

The basic effects of dyslexia/ SpLD are not cured but a compensated² dyslexic/ SpLD can minimise the effects. Managing dyslexia/ SpLD effectively comes by recognising how you process tasks or information well and being able to deliberately use the methods that suit you and by recognising the typical tasks that present you with problems and knowing how to deal with them. Any change of circumstances can disrupt the management systems, including change of job, house, life partner, educational environment, even change of bank can require the dyslexia/ SpLD management systems to be re-developed. The tools for managing include the innate, preferred thinking processes that each individual student has; discovering which ones each student uses well should be part of the support at university. It is so important to respond to the individual you are working with, not all dyslexic students can use mind maps, though many thrive with them; not all use colour or creativity to good effect, some are decidedly list makers and linear thinkers.

Dyslexic/ SpLD students chose a wide range of subjects. The column on the left of the table shows those subjects that would be expected since they need creative and practical skills. The subjects on the right are unexpected since the literacy element of the course will be very demanding. The interest of the student is paramount in making the choice; it carries the

Subjects studied	
Architecture	History
Fine Art	English Literature
Sciences	Modern Languages
Engineering	Classics
Nursing	Maths
	Medicine

student over the dyslexia/ SpLD difficulties while a boring but less demanding subject can mean the effects are much harder to manage properly.

When dyslexic /SpLD children are learning to spell, read or write, they need to be taught and learn in a way that suits them individually. The same is true of study skills (and general life skills) for adults and post-16s. The skills cannot be assimilated while learning curriculum subjects; attention has to be given to them in their own right. They cannot be learnt in isolation; they need to be applied to something the student is working on at the time of learning. The skills needed at university are a development from those used at school and sometimes they can be quite new. There are several study skills books that are good resources, but often it is the support tutor with a

² David McLoughlin, et al, 'Adult Dyslexia: Assessment, Counselling and Training' London: Whurr Pub 1994

wide range of experience who can guide the student to find the most effective methods. The aim of the support is help the student to become an independent learner and employee; there will be benefits for general everyday living as a welcome spin off.

Small groups and issues arising

The small groups' discussions last for half an hour; each one is written up after the conclusion. To focus attention for the final discussion as a complete group, it was suggested that they contribute what they considered the most important, the least important, the most unusual, the most surprising and other. 'Other' is always an important category when working with dyslexic/ SpLDs; however wide the range of experience shared with the support tutor to date, there will be one student whose experience isn't quite like that of anyone met before

The comments made in the final discussion at the BDA conference are given below. Where it is known, the group making the comment is given. R, W, G and O denote one of the four small groups: effective reading, writing skills, group work and time management and organisation, respectively.

The most important:

- You don't have to read everything (R)
- Scan a text quickly overall (R)
- Necessity of planning properly (W)
- Unpacking question (W)
- Very expressive writing (W)
- Poorly structured (W)
- Advocacy: self advocacy in groups (G)
- Subject tutors responsibilities (G)
- Unfairness of method (G)
- SpLD students not supported affect other students grades (G)
- ? Depends on teacher (G)
- Having patience and sense of humour (O)
- Dyslexic [support] tutor to understand institution (O)
- Tutors felt bombarded by problems (O)
- Telling someone else helps you feel better (O)

The least important

- Spelling no longer vital (W)
- 'Spelling doesn't matter' not true for nursing and medicine (W)
- Handwriting
- Perfectionism

The unusual/unexpected

- Whole new technique (R)
- Lengths of sentences/ complexity (W)
- Sense of frustration in support tutors (O)

The most surprising

- Highlight details as you register them (R)

- Could rapidly understand article from The Economist (R)
- Ideas gush out very quickly (W)
- Students arrive at uni not knowing how to structure their work (W)
- Students not prepared (G)
- Tutors blocked by student problems (O)
- Student didn't know title of essay (O)
- Impact on everything you do

Other:

- Frightening because used to reading every word (R)
- Students don't do what they're told to do (O)
- Not enough preparation for jump to HE
- The emotional impact of finding you are dyslexic while at university
- IT sometimes helpful, sometimes 'just another thing to learn'

Conclusion

For dyslexic/ SpLD students to become independent and successful it is important that support tutors listen to them and respects their individual capabilities. No two dyslexic/ SpLD students, or people, are the same.

You need to work out what is happening, where the root of the problem lies in order to find the most effective solution. You need to take seriously what the students say, however odd it seems, while still being able to do reality checks. To show the contrast: one student came asking for help with a essay, and rejected all the standard study skill suggestions; eventually the tutor mind mapped round the problem and it turned out that this mature student had a teenage child living at the family home in the north; the arrangements weren't working for the teenager and the worry was undermining the mother to the extent that her dyslexia was affecting her performance again. It was suggested that one student would demonstrate his knowledge better by writing exams on a computer; he said it wasn't necessary because he wrote just as much by hand; the support tutor persuaded him to make the comparison; in a given length of time he wrote 1½ pages by hand and by computer; the word count was considerably greater by computer than by hand; he realised that covering the same area by computer and by hand was not a good way to assess his needs.

It is a privilege to work with dyslexic/ spLD students as support tutors and it is a joy to see them succeed as students and gain skills they will use for a long time.

I EFFECTIVE READING

Reading at university level: summary

This workshop looked very briefly at the reading skills required at university level.

First we gave a short introduction to the whole subject, then explained something about the specific task of 'scan reading' which we were going to try out. Then we did two short exercises, giving the participants highlighters to

mark the text as they went along. The first was a very small article from *The Guardian*, for which we gave people a set of questions to answer from 30 seconds of reading time. Most people were amazed at what they could pick up in such a short time.

Then we did a longer piece from *The Economist* in two stages; the first a quick scan to get the basic idea (1 minute), then a more detailed scan for 3 minutes, at the end of which we attempted as a group to answer a set of questions. This second exercise caused people more difficulty. Some people were dyslexic, and they were frightened or even made a little angry by it because they instantly assumed that they could not do it. Several people did not follow the instructions but continued to read in detail from the beginning – illustrating the very point made in our introduction that many people feel very insecure in abandoning their habitual ways of reading, even if they are ineffective. Others had a go, and again, were surprised by how much they could understand without detailed reading. In both groups, we managed to answer the questions without difficulty.

We had a third exercise prepared, to look through a book, but we did not have time for this.

The following are the handouts for the Effective Reading small group.

Introduction to reading small group

- Almost by definition, a student at university will have mastered the basic skills of literacy and most of them are good readers.
 - Those who get into Oxford to study an arts subject such as English or law, for instance, have often forgotten that they ever had any problems with reading and sailed through secondary school and A levels.
- However, at university they are faced with tasks which challenge their reading ability and many of them begin to experience difficulties
- This is both
 - 1) because of the sheer volume of reading they need to get through
 - 2) because of the open-ended nature of the reading, which is quite different from A level where the texts are very defined in terms of quantity; at university, it is generally impossible for any student, let alone a dyslexic student, to read everything on their reading list and therefore everyone has to develop strategies for selecting material and assessing the value of a text before spending too much time on it.
- At this level, dyslexia tends to manifest in three basic problem areas;
 - 1) People tend to read very slowly compared to their fellow students
 - 2) As the LEVEL of the reading gets higher, they can find it difficult to acquire the terminology and technical vocab of their area. Also, the structure of the texts get more complex; sentences tend to get much longer and complex, for instance, and many students find them hard to follow.

3) They tend to forget what they read.

These last two are connected if one understands the underlying problems in a neurological way. One of the almost universal indicators of dyslexia is a low score in what is called 'Working Memory Index'; which just means, that people tend to have less capacity to remember information, especially information given through text.

As the difficulty of reading increases, it takes more effort to actually DECODE the words on the page and understand them simply in terms of grammar and basic meaning.

This leaves less 'space' in the working memory to also understand MEANING, so people experience themselves in a SIEVE-LIKE way - they feel that the information runs out of them without any retention.

- It is therefore important that they begin to understand what is happening, and to know that there are strategies which they can develop to help them compensate for what is, in the end, an irreducible deficit.
- There is a great deal that can be done in this area, but today we are going to look at three basic lines of approach;
 - 1) That students need to be very SELECTIVE about what they read, and learn how to identify key texts and passages rather than try to read everything in detail.
 - 2) They need to develop ways of separating out the processes of DECODING and FINDING MEANING so that before they read in detail they already have some basic idea of what the text says.
 - 3) They need to learn to REVIEW the material by making summaries so that they fix it in memory.
- These can all be established by learning what is generally called 'SCANNING' techniques.
- This means developing the ability to look over a text, a book or an article quickly without doing detailed reading, but using a variety of clues such as headings, pictures and diagrams, to get some basic meaning. It also means applying knowledge about the structure of academic texts to help with understanding them.
- We are going to do a bit of this ourselves, so that you can see how it works and how it might help even a non-dyslexic to become more efficient.
- In the usual university situation, these techniques sit within the whole process by which an essay gets written; starting with analysing the question and pulling apart the concepts within it,

then working on the reading list so that one identifies the best books to read, and what order to approach the reading in.

- And here the basic principle is the same as we shall come across with the SCANNING, ie that one is trying to get a general outline or picture of the field as soon as possible, so that then one comes to really detailed difficult passages, there is some sort framework established into which the information can fit. Rather than trying to understand everything at once.

This makes it easier to remember, and cuts down the time spent on detailed reading.

Therefore the principle is to always work
from
SIMPLER or MORE GENERAL
to
MORE COMPLEX OR MORE DETAILED

So students are advised to start with very general material which they may not be able to quote or use in their final essays, but which gives them this kind of overview; wikipedia is helpful, specialist dictionaries and encyclopaedia, such as Ency. of Philosophy; or 'nutshell' guides which are available in law and in English etc; even 3rd year Oxford students in English, for instance, will often use A level guides when starting out on a new author or a long new text, etc.

SCANNING is very much a skill which a student can work to develop, and it is something which many dyslexic students have not ever thought of. Many of them are so scared of reading, or so in awe of books, that they feel almost obliged to start from the beginning and work slowly through to the end of a piece of text. They are often rather shocked at first when they come across the idea of scan reading, but once they have tried it, many of them list it on the feedback forms as the single most useful thing they have learnt from the one to one sessions.

This kind of reading is in fact an essential academic skill which any successful student, or busy academic, has to master.

We are going to do three exercises to show you how the skill can be developed, and how powerful it can be. In each case we are going to ask you to DO something as well as read,

- 1) Short piece with lots of pictures and headings. Not the sort of thing you get at university level, but is just a basis to show method.
- 2) More complex article
- 3) Book.

SCAN READING EXERCISES

- 1) Simple scan
Look at the piece from *The Guardian*.

Look only at

- headlines
- pictures
- insets
- first paragraph

Now answer the following questions:

What is this about?

Why is it in the newspaper?

Who did the research?

Which four products does it discuss?

What is the main conclusion?

2) More complex scan

Look at the article from *The Economist*.

Do the same scan and try to write down three bullet point answers to the question:

- What is this about?

Now read ONLY

- first and last paragraphs
- first 2-3 lines of each paragraph

with the aim of answering the following questions.

Who coined the key term?

What are the three basic factors discussed?

Who is most affected by the first one?

Who is affected by the third?

How is public opinion changing?

What is the overall conclusion?

3) Book scan

Work in pairs to assess a whole book. At the end you will be asked to:

- a) Give a brief review of the book, covering subject, content, author/s, etc.
- b) Give an evaluation of how easy it would be for you to read for an essay.

Look through the book from beginning to end, reading only:

- Title, sub-titles, 'blurbs'
- Contents pages, index, appendices
- Scan each chapter for diagrams, sub-headings, summaries.

Scanning a Text

There are two reasons for learning to scan.

- a) It helps you find the passages you really need to read in detail.
- b) It helps you to form a general picture of the subject, making it easier to fill in details later.

1) Always read with a definite purpose in mind; ask:

Why am I reading this?
What do I want to get out of it?
What records do I need to make?

But keep an open mind, and a questioning approach so that you don't jump to wrong conclusions.

- 2) Do not read in detail first of all but scan from beginning to end
- 3) Aim for an overall picture of the book or article
 - a) Look at titles, headings, and any pictures or diagrams.
In books, read back cover and/or 'blurb', contents page, look for summaries and a good index
 - b) Read introduction and conclusion of article/chapter
 - c) Scan the first line of each paragraph
Use your knowledge of 'sign-post' words to identify the structure of the argument.
- 4) Always read actively; ask:
 - How is this relevant to the task I am doing?
 - Is the argument sound? Do I agree with it?
 - What else does this relate to?
- 5) Summarise/review at the end
 - a) Try to express what you have learnt in a brief summary, eg five bullet points, diagram of the argument structure.
 - b) Assess its importance to you: is this good to read in more detail?
- 6) Now choose the relevant passages to read in detail and...
- 7) Decide a reading strategy
 - How are you going to 'chunk' the text?
 - How will you structure your notes?

II WRITING SKILLS

The aims of this group were two-fold

Firstly to offer – by means of a handout (attached as separate pdf file) – an understanding of the way HE support tutors can address the problems a student faces in writing at a high academic level. The handout moves through the processes involved in writing an essay from the moment the topic is assigned to the completion of the essay.

Secondly to simulate the experience of the student by working on three separate areas and share outcomes. The chosen areas were those particularly relating to writing:

1. Participants were asked to deconstruct four essay titles of varying types – in particular to say which words needed to be defined before the question could be answered satisfactorily.

Results and conclusions:

Defining the terms can often define the question and gives a sense of what the answer should entail.

This deconstruction is central rather than peripheral to the success of the essay. Vital skill in exams where so many marks are lost for not sticking to the point. That you get a lot of knowledge shown in essays but not necessarily the knowledge the question is asking for.

The most important outcome was that students should be encouraged to spend time on the question; it is central not peripheral.

The most surprising outcome was that it is easy to miss a layer of meaning even in a relatively simple question.

2. Participants were asked to spend a few minutes brainstorming a simple essay question and then to look at how they had organised their thoughts.

Results and conclusions:

Almost no one did a mind map.

Easier to tell someone to brainstorm than do it yourself from cold, even when you are familiar with the subject.

It is important to organise from the very beginning.

If the initial thoughts are written down linearly it can be hard to reorder them and what you thought of first is not always most important.

Everyone agreed the crucial importance of sequence of ideas / words to give clarity.

Dyslexics can be spatial rather than linear - they should see this as a strength – though the linear nature of the essay may be painful the planning level of writing the essay is not necessarily contra intuitive.

It is surprising how much work it is useful to do on the question and the plan before you even get going but one must also be careful not to prioritize too soon.

3. Participants were asked to comment on how they would improve a selection of dyslexic sentences.

Everyone found it very hard to understand the specific meaning of the chosen sentences though they could get the general drift. People commented they found it hard to advise the students because the sentences were so complicated to unpick.

Response as what to approach first was varied; some participants immediately addressed the grammar, others tried to separate the ideas out into discrete sentences.

In some cases the construction was not ungrammatical but the sentence did not read well. The problem of style beyond accuracy is not often addressed. Simplification for clarity may not do justice to complexity of the original intention.

The creativity of the writers was remarked upon.

Surprise was expressed that students could reach a very high level of academic achievement and still find difficulty writing a clear sentence. This is an area where a lot of help with proof reading is needed.

III GROUP WORK

This small group considered the reasons for using group working tasks at university.

- Reflecting “real world” or professional life post-university
- Active learning
- Communication skills - including presentations
- Process of team-working
- Learning from peers
- Tackling larger tasks - study
- Easing assessment of large tasks or large groups

Two cases of students undertaking group work in Video Production were presented, highlighting how different the experience can be and how far these might diverge from the reasons for using group working for an assignment.

Note:

Student 1 has dyslexia and ADHD

Student 2 has dyslexia and dyspraxia

(At BDA)

Groups looked at:

- Agreeing 2 things each student might have learnt about group work
- Decide 3 strategies or pieces of advice for each student before starting the video project

Five group work titles from various fields were presented for the group to consider. They were asked what issues they foresaw arising from these assignments.

- PHYSIOTHERAPY: A case study, in which 6 students have to reference every aspect to national, regional and local policy and practice
- PUBLIC HEALTH & NUTRITION: 2 students demonstrate the preparation of a healthy meal, having researched current govt. advice
- BIOLOGY: Experiment in groups of 3-4 in class, counting multiplication of bacteria in vitro and writing up report (results, conclusion, evaluation given by PowerPoint)

- SPORTS SCIENCE: research project, (4 in group) designing and using questionnaire on exercise and health. Final report to be fully referenced with current literature.
- MUSIC (MA) Group (6 in group) installation/research project demonstrating individual perception of sound. Culminating in experimental performance and written report on theory and process.

The issues related to: the scope of the assignment title; the number of group members; practical elements to the assignment and final presentation;

(At BDA)

The key points for preventing difficulties with group work highlighted the need to:

- Keep in touch
- Keep records of meetings
- Agree ground rules
- Let a person work to their strengths
- Divide up the work fairly

An example of Group work meeting records was show – Upgrade Study Advice, Oxford Brookes, available at

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/upgrade>

(At ADSHE only)

E-group work in a Virtual Learning Environment

This section considered the different communication and technical issues of group work undertaken online. The potential benefits of the trail of input held online and the challenges of real time communication in text and the complexity of learning new procedures.

Some problems we've encountered:

- Technical "hitches" (often dyslexic student is the only one who admits that the system isn't working!)
- Software incompatible with assistive software
- Tutors say they'll moderate discussions and don't!
- Students don't realise the EXTENT they have to participate → time-management issues

Technology can benefit ALL learning styles

- * Complementary to those who see a broad picture
- * Many dyslexic students excel at using ICT, and can gain confidence by helping others in the group
- * Mind-mapping software, which many use already, helpful for making presentations

The group were asked to contribute their own findings of students' experiences.

IV TIME MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION

Time management is a key feature of the experience of people with a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD).

The main aim of this session was to give participants an insight into the range of difficulties and possible responses the student and tutor have to struggle with when dealing with time management and organisational problems.

The discussion started by covering a wide variety of typical difficulties experienced by students with SpLD, divided into 4 categories: over-arching, diary, general life and study. (See Handout 1)

This led onto a discussion of what sort of strategies might work, how and why. The importance of working very much at the individual level was stressed, as each student has different ways of thinking and different personal resources available to them.

Some strategies may appear quite 'unusual', such as leaving your keys in the fridge, but once understood, make complete sense and can be extremely successful. The answer to this one relies on the student being motivated enough by his lunch sandwiches to look in the fridge every morning!

Strategies which may not work were also discussed.

A few potential strategies and resources were then covered, such as the use of:

- To-Do Sheet
- Prioritising Sheet
- Estimating time
- Semester/Term Planner
- Weekly diary
- Month-plus diary

(See Handouts 2 and 3 for some examples)

Case Histories

Participants were divided into groups which were given a case history describing a typical student's time management problems concerning their study. Some in each small group were given a collection of characteristic difficulties in study, life and general situations to help them with the student's perspective and asked to contribute to the discussion from the student's perspective. Others were asked to contribute from the tutor's perspective. The participants were asked to consider two questions about their case history. The case histories were intended to draw from their experience and help them suggest ideas to enable the student to manage more effectively.

Example CASE HISTORY A 2nd Year Humanities student at university was given the details of coursework assignments for all 4 of her modules in Week 1. All of which are due in between Weeks 7 and 10. It is now Week 5, but she hasn't got around to making a start on any of these assignments. She is starting to panic.

Student Perspective - in the discussion, focus on how the particular difficulties experienced by the student affect the time and organisational problems.

The particular difficulties she experiences are:

- She takes ages to get up in the morning, but doesn't know how long she takes
- She forgets to organise and fit in ordinary life activities eg. shopping, travel, social life
- She is always reorganising her diary
- She procrastinates
- She is not confident she has understood her reading, so tends not to get on with the next stage of her work
- She finds it hard to organise her ideas
- It's hard for her to meet her deadlines

1. How do her particular difficulties impact on her handling all 4 assignments in on time?
2. What strategies does she need to achieve this?

Tutor Perspective - in the discussion, focus on finding solutions to the student's time and organisational problems.

1. How could a support tutor find out a) what time management problems this student has and b) what strategies would best help her?
2. What are the problems and the strategies.

Potential Responses from Student

Question 1

- Day is too chaotic and doesn't have enough time in it. I spend too much time doing nothing or things like texting, Facebook, shopping or cooking.
- I find it hard to get started.
- I don't understand what the assignment means or what they want me to do. My head just feels foggy.

Question 2

- I work harder
- I read lots of books
- I ask for an extension
- I ask friends
- I often end up writing an irrelevant essay, but at least they feel they have something to hand in.

It is important to realise that different students with a similar workload and problems may well come up with different answers to both questions.

Potential Responses from Tutor

- Find out the size of the task: how many essays, word counts, hand-in dates etc
- Put this information on paper in linear or mind-map form
- Put this information on a term/semester planner
- Put this information on a weekly/monthly diary planner, together with all commitments and remember to include some slack time. This shows the student graphically how much study time they have available
- Read the assignment questions together and check for understanding
- Do some reality testing eg. how much sport can be fitted in
- Work on Reading Skills to improve comprehension and confidence
- Work on planning
- Produce some targets, structured working days (reading, planning, writing, breaks etc)

Always talk around the problem widely with the student and try to match the strategies to the student's needs and ability to use the strategy. Always check! Help them to accept ownership and responsibility for their own work.

Feedback from the case histories

Those taking the students' perspective acknowledged that talking about the problem with someone who understands made them feel better about their work

When the student perspective was contributed by someone who had a detailed understanding of what it is like to be a student with SpLD, those taking the tutor's perspective said they gained a better understanding of the difficulties of working with these students

Those working from the tutors' perspective also felt bombarded, frustrated, overwhelmed and blocked by the student's problems. The discussion highlighted that support tutors need a full understanding of the problem and the institution. It was also felt that a sense of humour is essential!

Overarching Difficulties

Procrastination
Can't prioritise
Know they're disorganised, but have no idea how or what to organise
Working out where is a good place to study
(distractible, space, time)
The passing of time doesn't impact on them (short break \approx 3 hours,
often elsewhere)
Perfectionism

Diary problems

Don't have a diary
Have a diary, but don't use it
Have 3 different diaries
Are always re-organising their diary

Don't take 10 books to Egypt

(i.e. study books on holiday)

Ordinary life problems

Don't take account of how long tasks/ events take
get up in the morning (including eating breakfast & washing)
prepare & eat lunch/ dinner
travel to uni/ work/ home
etc
Forget to organise every day tasks
go food shopping
do laundry
fit in trip to gym/ sport
fit in their social life
do any paid work

Study difficulties

Take a long time to: research eg finding books in library
read and understand
organise ideas
plan essays
Don't have confidence in own understanding, so don't get on with next
stage
Can't meet deadlines
Forget to collect books
Forget to leave enough time for proof reading
Often late for lectures, so have no handouts

Table 1 Handout 1 for Time Management and Organisation

Task Sheet

Task

What needs to be done?

Steps needed, for the completion of task:

-
-
-
-
-

Further action needed?

Estimating Time

Task/ event	Priority	Estimated time	Start time	End time	Actual time

Useful for planning a sequence of tasks/ events and building up an accurate knowledge of how long tasks/events take.

For example the sequence of getting out of the house, travelling to uni, going to the library to get books, going to the computer room to print an assignment and getting to the lecture on time.

Prioritising

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
I M P O R T A N T	1 Crises Pressing problems Deadline driven work <i>Preparation</i> <i>Planning</i> <i>Course work</i> <i>True recreation</i> <i>Seeing friends</i>	2 Crisis prevention
N O T I M P O R T A N T	3 Interruptions Phone Calls Mail Meetings Some activities <i>Trivia</i> <i>Busy work</i> <i>Phone calls</i> <i>Pleasant activities</i> <i>Time wasters</i> <i>(Facebook, emailing, TV etc)</i>	4

Figure 1 Handout 2 for Time Management and Organisation

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
February	23	24	25	26	27	28	1	
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
March	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	2008 - 2009
March	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
April	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	

Figure 2 Handout 3 for Time Management and Organisation