**My own studying and learning behaviours**

**1. I keep on studying even when I am tired and need to sleep as it’s important just to keep going**

1 2 3 4 5

Never, rarely, sometimes, often, always

**2. I give up easily, if I have not understood something when studying.**

1 2 3 4 5

Never, rarely, sometimes, often, always

**3. I want my essays and assignments to be perfect so I often find it hard to start writing them**

1 2 3 4 5

Never, rarely, sometimes, often, always

**4. I put off starting certain assignments because they are too difficult/boring**

1 2 3 4 5

Never, rarely, sometimes, often, always

**5. I prioritise studying so much that I do not have time for other things in my life**

1 2 3 4 5

Never, rarely, sometimes, often, always

**6. Exams cause me a significant amount of stress and worry**

1 2 3 4 5

Never, rarely, sometimes, often, always

**7. I feel under a lot of pressure to do well in my studies and this pressure can sometimes actually stop me from doing as well as I could**

1 2 3 4 5

Never, rarely, sometimes, often, always

**8. I don’t talk about problems or difficulties I’m having at the time which can lead to the problems getting worse**

1 2 3 4 5

Never, rarely, sometimes, often, always

**9. I find it difficult to ask for help**

1 2 3 4 5

Never, rarely, sometimes, often, always

**10. I begin to write my essays and assignments a few days before/ the night before they are due in**

1 2 3 4 5

Never, rarely, sometimes, often, always

**C. My own studying and learning behaviours**

**Scoring (the lower your score, the better)**

Scale: 10- 50

10 = healthy and effective

50 = potentially unhealthy, unproductive and likely to need reviewing in order to achieve your potential

**The lower your score the more healthy and effective your approach**

**Individual question scores. What to do next:**

**Question 1:**

If you scored high on this question it may be that you need to i) develop your time management skills and/or ii) think about how to work more efficiently. Missing out on sleep for study is never beneficial for learning as studies such as Guang et al.’s (2014) show the importance of sleep for learning, memory and information recall. If you would like help with your time management skills, check out the IAD webpages (just type ‘IAD’ into the search box on the University of Edinburgh homepage) for time-management workshops or book a one-to-one appointment with a Study Development Advisor (these appointments are booked online).

**Question 2:**

If you scored high on this question, it may be helpful for you to revise your conception of ‘learning’. Not understanding something or finding something difficult, is *part of* real and meaningful learning. Your lecturers and tutors do not expect you to know everything/how to do everything already, otherwise there would be nothing left to learn! Studies show the learning potential from making ‘mistakes’ and learning from them or working hard towards understanding a complex problem as these are the very things that help to form new synaptic connections in our brains (Boaler, 2013).Psychologist Carol Dweck’s (2013) work shows us the value of accepting that problems are a natural part of learning and just because we can’t do something *now* doesn’t mean that we will never be able to do it. Dweck explores this last point, which she describes as ‘The Power of Yet’, more fully in her recent Ted Talk entitled ‘The power of believing you can improve’:

[**https://www.ted.com/talks/carol\_dweck\_the\_power\_of\_believing\_that\_you\_can\_improve/transcript?language=en**](https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve/transcript?language=en)

**Question 3:**

Everyone wants to do well in assignments. However, perfectionism is more than this and in its extreme form it can actually impede your progress and even limit your creativity. Studies have shown (UC San Diego MOOC) that our creative and innovative thoughts occur most often when we are in the ‘diffuse’ thinking mode, meaning when our brain is not tightly focused on something e.g. ‘being perfect’. Barbara Oakley explains more about these the diffuse and focused modes of thinking here:

<https://www.coursera.org/learn/learning-how-to-learn/lecture/75EsZ/introduction-to-the-focused-and-diffuse-modes>

If you think you would like help to keep perfectionist tendencies in check then make a new students consultation appointment with the Academic Transitions Advisor (you can book these online on the IAD website) or the student counselling service who will be able to advise you on strategies that help.

**Question 4:**

If being honest, most people would admit that they are affected to some extent by procrastination in some area of their lives. It is important to try to keep your levels of procrastination in check though as it can have negative consequences in all areas of our lives: study, work and personal matters.

Research has shown (UC San Diego MOOC) that when we think about something that makes us feel uncomfortable e.g. an essay we have to write, the ‘pain centre’ of the brain is activated. We immediately want to take this pain away which usually results in us not focusing on the essay and turning our attention to something more pleasant instead. In order to conquer procrastination we need to understand what our brain is doing when we ‘put things off’ and employ strategies to stop it from happening. For more information on this, watch Barbara Oakley explain things more fully:

<https://www.coursera.org/learn/learning-how-to-learn/lecture/J5vCL/tackling-procrastination-its-easier-and-more-valuable-than-you-think>

or read the ‘Procrastinate no more!’ section in Gill and Medd (2015). If you would like to speak to someone in person, book a new students consultation with the Academic Transitions Adviser (you can book these online on the IAD webpages) or the student counselling service.

The IAD also run ‘Writing Bootcamps’ which help students to start assignments they need to write and achieve their work targets and deadlines (details of these can be found on the IAD webpages and you can book a place online)

**Question 5:**

Whilst it is important to devote time to your studies, it is equally important not to devote ALL your time to your studies. Research shows that your brain learns best if (i) you divide your studying up into chunks of time interspersed with breaks (Dunlosky 2013) and ii) take breaks from studying altogether (Immordino-Yang et al. 2012). It is important that you make these breaks ‘guilt free’ and stop yourself from thinking ‘I should be studying’! Often, it is helpful to divide your day up in a pie chart to see exactly how much time you are spending studying and how much free time you are affording yourself.

**Maybe this?** This handy guide **(**<http://www.studygs.net/schedule/>) helps you review how you organise your day and prioritise, while <http://www.time-management-abilities.com/effective-time-management-charts.html> will help you create a personal management time chart via Excel.

**Question 6**

There are very few people (but there are some) who enjoy or look forwards to exams. It is natural that we feel stressed about exams as an exam is a high pressure situation in which our performance will be judged. However, things become problematic when exam angst becomes too much and begins to affect both our lives and our exam performance. The IAD run workshops that show you how to revise most effectively for exams and how to cope with and overcome anxiety during the exam itself. Find details of these exam workshops on the IAD webpages.

**Question 7**

Pressure ‘to do well’ can come from various sources in our lives: parents, family, partners and ourselves. It is a good thing to feel that you want to do well in your studies and as Palmer and Puri (2006) explain we need a certain amount of ‘pressure’ to keep us motivated. However, putting yourself under too much pressure to succeed can often lead you down a path that is the very opposite of success. This type of pressure can lead us to overwork and overthink things which can result in ‘burnout’. It’s important to take a balanced approach to your studies and if you would like help with this then please contact the student counselling service or make a new students appointment with the Academic Transitions Advisor (this can be booked on the IAD webpages).

**Question 8**

Often, some students leave informing someone at the University about the problems they may be having until the problem has become a ‘crisis’. The best approach is to talk to someone before the problem grows. There are many people at the University of Edinburgh that you can talk to about problems that may be affecting your life and studies including:

The International Office

The Advice Place

Peer Support

Personal Tutor

Study Development Advisors/ Academic Transitions Advisor at the IAD

Student Counselling Service

Disability Service

Chaplaincy

Nightline

**Question 9**

If you have a high score for this question then it is even more important that you become aware of this tendency and take steps to remedy it. It is important for you to change your thinking on this matter so that you will be able to make contact with some of the people/services listed above in question eight whose job it is to help you during your time at the University of Edinburgh.

**Question 10**

Good academic work takes time! An ‘A’ essay is never written in a first draft as the craft of writing involves re-visiting our ideas and re-writing drafts. Allowing yourself enough time to ‘re-write’ means not only being able to proofread your work to check for spelling, grammar, typing and punctuation errors (which can lose you marks) but also to check if you what you actually have written is what you thought you had written! Very often, we are so absorbed in what we are writing that it takes at least a few days for us to be able to gain valuable distance from our work and see its strengths and weakness.

For help on how to write better essays (which also involves ‘how to read to write’) book into one of the IAD ‘essay writing’ or ‘reading critically’ workshops (these are advertised on the IAD webpages).

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