



ARKS KEYS TO LEARNING

WHAT IS EFFECTIVE LEARNING?

What is Effective Learning?

INTRODUCTION

When you return to learning as an adult and find that you have to organise your work and thoughts effectively, it can be quite a daunting task. One of the aims of this pack is to break down the process of learning into manageable chunks, so that you can work on different aspects of your learning, as required.

In this first chapter you are introduced to the idea of “learning to learn”. One important aspect of this, is your own experience and how you have already learned to do a wide range of things throughout your life.

It is important to acknowledge what, and how, you have learned in the past and the influence this can have on what you want to learn today.

Common anxieties amongst adult returners include their ability to concentrate and to fit their new workloads into already busy lives. Therefore included in this chapter are a range of activities on concentration, memory, stress and approaching learning in a positive way.

When starting something new, you can be bombarded with information, ideas and advice. To be an effective learner you must first learn how to look at information critically and to assess whether it might be of use to you, or not. This chapter offers you some methods to assist your critical thinking.

WHAT IS LEARNING?



In this section you will think about:

- how you learn new things
- how to make sense of new ideas



Activity 1

Think of something you have successfully learned to do recently, and the different stages involved in the process.

For Example:

Learning to drive, dressmaking, servicing your own car, programming a video recorder, learning a new language, cooking a new recipe, learning a new procedure at work.

Write your learning activity here:



If you can, work with a colleague. Discuss the different stages you had to go through to learn.

If you are working alone, make a list of your stages here:

What is Effective Learning? - What is Learning?

Your list may look something like this:

- read instructions to get started
- demonstration from colleague or friend
- check you have everything needed to complete the task
- keep instructions handy
- practise until happy with the result
- get some feedback of how successful you have been, e.g. family enjoyed the meal, car running smoothly, spoke in the new language, supervisor satisfied with work, passed driving test

Now think about what helped you to successfully complete the activity:

- Did you have clear instructions to refer to?
- Have you had any similar experiences which made this learning easier?
- Was the feedback from others helpful?
- Did you ask friends or colleagues for advice?
- Did you practise?

If you answered **yes** to any of the above questions, then you have some understanding of what learning is about and how to be an effective learner.

People often see learning as a different process from “doing things”. You may think that intelligence is important or that you need to be able to memorise a lot of facts. However, the learning process and practical work can be similar.

In order to learn something, you have to make sense of new ideas. Now whether that is how to service your car, or how to prepare a report, you have to understand why it is done in a certain way. To learn successfully, you have to make patterns and connections within your memory, as well as making links with your existing knowledge.



Activity 2

Look at the letters below for 10 seconds:

NHEPSA KNTPLEI

Now close the book and try to recite them in the same order.

How did you get on? Too difficult?

Try this exercise again once the letters have been rearranged.

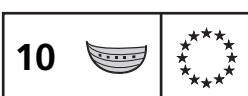
PINK ELEPHANTS

No problem this time, because now the letters form words. They make sense that you can understand and easily remember.

Examples:

- (a) A person who can already drive a motorcycle, may find it easier to drive a car, than a person without previous driving experience. They are already familiar with acceleration, gears, power and the rules of the road and so are able to link the two activities.
- (b) The same can happen when somebody starts to learn maths. If they have had experience in balancing the family budget, estimating how much money they have to pay regular bills, calculating how much the week's groceries will cost, how much a 15% saving in a sale really is; then they will already have some understanding of the processes involved in maths.

This does not mean, in either example, that the person has nothing new to learn, but that they already have some existing knowledge on which to base their new learning.



What is Effective Learning? - What is Learning?

Activity 3

Think of an example in your own situation where some previous knowledge or experience, however small, connects with the work you are studying now.



Write it here:

Evaluation Questions

Are you able to make sense of new ideas?

Can you connect them with things you know about already?

Are you able to talk or write about what you have learned?



What you
have learned

LEARNING, MEMORISING AND UNDERSTANDING



Take time to consider:

- **how your memory works**
- **the difference between memorising and learning**

Memory

Many people think that their memory does not work as well as it should. Adults are often anxious about their ability to remember, worrying about having to recall large amounts of information for exams or assignments. In this section you will discover that your memory is more efficient than you think and that there are ways of storing and recalling information.



Activity 1

1. Think back to what you had for supper last night, what you ate, where you ate it, who was with you, did anything happen during the meal? Try to remember as many details as possible and write some notes here:

How much could you remember? Although when you were eating last night, you did not make a conscious effort to memorise the meal, you probably still managed to recall quite a lot of detail.

Activity 1 continued



Activity
continued

2. Now think further back, to what you were doing exactly two years ago. Can you remember what you were doing, who you were with, what you had for supper? Make some notes here:

It is unlikely that you can remember small details from two years ago. However, you should still be able to recall some useful information of what you were doing at the time, where you were living and working and who your friends were, where you ate most of your meals, and with whom?

3. Finally, think back to a special day in your life: the day you moved house, the birth of your first child, the day you left school, your first day at work, any day that was important to you. Where were you, who was with you, what happened, what were you wearing, what did you have for supper?

Write some details about the day here:

Even if you have not thought of this day for some time, you were probably able to recall quite a lot of detail, things you didn't realise you had remembered.



What you have learned

What can you learn from this exercise?

That your memory is more efficient than you thought.

Special or unusual events trigger your memory, helping to recall more detail, even if time has elapsed.

Linking events, making connections, helps you to recall detail.

These processes will be useful when organising and planning your work.



Activity

Activity 2

Without looking back to the start of this section, can you remember the exact questions asked about last night's supper?

Think about it for a few minutes and then look back to check how close you were.

You may not remember the exact words used but you would remember what the question was about. Your memory did not record an exact copy of the question but it did store what sense it made to you, linking it to your existing experience and knowledge.

If something does not make sense, it is very difficult for the memory to store and recall as it has nothing to connect it to.

Understanding

Here is a simple model to help you remember things.

To learn you may need to:

1. **M**emorise some facts, eg name different parts of an engine.
2. **U**nderstand ideas, eg how the engine works.
3. **D**o an activity to learn from experience, eg service the car yourself.

The first initials from these three activities form the mnemonic **M.U.D.** which may help you remember them.

How can you apply M.U.D. to your learning?

1. In the work you are doing just now are there some facts you have to memorise in order to take part? eg names of equipment, technical terms, spelling some words.

List them here:

2. Now think about what you need to understand to carry out your work, eg how a machine works, the causes of poverty in society, the purpose of a scientific experiment.

List them here:

3. Some activities you can only really learn by doing, eg using a computer. You can learn what all the different functions are, and you can read about what to do but until you actually start to use the computer itself, you have not really learned how to use it.

If there are any "doing" activities in your work, list them here:

Which box has the most activities? Do you need to "memorise", "understand" or "do"?



Discussion

If you can, discuss your results with colleagues and compare answers.

Activity 3

Read the list of activities below. In learning them, do you need to **memorise**, **understand** or **do** them?



Tick **M.U.** or **D.** in the space provided:

	M	U	D
1. Learn multiplication tables.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Write a story.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Plan a letter.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Learn to ride a bike.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Bake a cake.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Explain the advantages of the Euro Dollar.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Plan a sowing programme for a garden.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Explain why some young people are homeless.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Produce a data base on a computer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Fill in an application form.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you can, discuss your answers with a partner. You should find that you have more activities which require understanding than memorising or doing.

This is important. If you can understand the reasoning behind something, then you will be able to connect it with things you already know and be able to recall it when necessary.





What you
have learned

Evaluation Questions

Think back to some work you have recently completed. Your mind cannot record every detail, so how did you attempt to learn it? What did you do?

How effective was this?

What different methods would you like to try?

MY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

The purpose of this activity is to:

- clarify your ideas of learning and studying
- clarify the roles of tutor and learner
- become aware of any barriers you may have to learning
- motivate you to develop new study methods

You will need:

- some large sheets of drawing paper and coloured pens.

When you start something new, it can be useful to take time to think back over previous learning experiences, particularly your experience of school.

This activity can be done with a group, giving you the opportunity to share experiences, or you can do it alone, if you can find a quiet time to concentrate and reflect. Any negative memories you have you can use to help you to change your learning now.

Close your eyes for a few moments and think back to your school days.

Think of the word '**SCHOOL**'

What does it bring to mind?

What do you see?

What do you hear?

What do you feel?

Take your paper and coloured pens and draw some of your school time memories (take about 10 minutes to do this).





What do you think?

When you have finished your drawing, discuss the following questions with your group:

If you are studying something new, what do you expect from the tutor?

What do you expect to be responsible for?

What did you learn at school that is of use to you now?

Did you have any school experiences which you now feel prevented you from learning or developing? If so, what were they?

Do you feel more, or less, able to study now? Can you explain why?

I CAN DO

This exercise aims to give you some confidence in learning new skills. **You will learn to use a Mind Map** as a way of producing new ideas. Although this exercise is best completed in a group, it could be undertaken individually as a form of self discovery.



Activity

Take a large sheet of paper and write the words **"I can do"** in the middle. Now write down things that you feel able to do. Start with basic skills such as reading, budgeting, talking to people, riding a bike, driving, etc. Include things that you do because you have to as well as things that you enjoy doing. Keep adding things as they occur to you and your mind opens up to the task.



Take about 10 minutes to complete this.

Now take turns in the group to present what you have written and discuss the various skills each person has.

What can you learn from this exercise?

- that you have already learned many skills
- once learned we often take skills for granted
- as adults we are learning new things all the time
- it is possible to study or practise and acquire new skills



Discussion

Can you exchange skills within your group and help each other?



What you
have learned

Evaluation Questions

How did you feel doing this activity?

What have you learned about yourself?

THE SEVEN INTELLIGENCES

In this section you will discover:

- that people deal with information in different ways
- how to use different parts of your intelligence to boost your learning



Activity

Answer the following questions:

	Yes	No
Do you remember your own telephone number?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you like talking to people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you like working independently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you remember people's faces?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you like travelling in a train?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you hugged anyone in the last six months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you like listening to music?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you ever kept a diary?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you seen a live band or any live music performance this year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When you make a shopping list at home, do you know approximately what it's going to cost you in the shop?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you a member of any organisations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it easy for you to follow a map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is studying important to you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





Activity
continued

Activity continued

Yes

No

Do you feel the change of weather in your body or mind?

As a child, did you enjoy listening to stories?

Do you remember how many inhabitants there are in your home town?

Do you ever use a pocket calculator?

If people ask you for directions, is it easy for you to explain where they should go?

When you talk on the phone, do you sometimes draw pictures or symbols on a paper in front of you?

Do you ever day-dream about anything?

Do you wear different clothes at home and when you are out?

Do you sometimes sing to yourself when you are alone?

Do you like writing letters?

Do you read interviews about interesting people in magazines?

Have you ever tried playing an instrument?

Do you like dancing?

Do you remember the dates of your friends' birthdays?

Do you read newspapers?

Do you like working in a group?

If you gave yourself 14 or more **YES** answers, you can consider yourself widely intelligent! All your seven intelligences are active in your everyday life and you use them to learn new things.

If you compare your answers to these questions with other people you will find that you all have quite different answers, but that you will all have answered YES more than 14 times. This demonstrates that as individuals you are attracted to different methods of learning and use your memory in different ways. Try the following activities and discover which ones you respond to.



Discussion

These are the seven areas of intelligence:

- Speaking, reading and writing
- Logical thinking and numbers
- Music and rhythm
- Pictures, colours forms and shapes
- Movement and feelings
- Working with others
- Knowing yourself

Speaking, Reading and Writing (Verbal Intelligence)

In this area your intellect shows in the way you communicate with people, e.g. listening, writing letters, diaries, stories and remembering jokes and stories.



Activity 1

Write a short story using the following words (you can change the order and add as many other words as you wish but make sure that you use all of the words).

gold

apple tree

yellow

sheep

pleased

river

hat

If you are working with others, tell your story to the person sitting next to you.

Logical Thinking and Numbers (Logical and Mathematical Intelligence)

This area of intelligence helps you to work with numbers and calculations. For example, you may find that you remember telephone numbers easily.

Activity 2

Try these calculations:

- a) What is the total number of months that you have studied? Include all of your years at school, further education or training courses such as apprenticeships, in-service training etc.
- b) Write down as many of your family and friends' telephone numbers that you can remember.
- c) When you make a shopping list at home, do you know approximately how much it is going to cost in the shop?

When you have to calculate something, which of the following methods would you use?

- Your fingers or draw lines on paper?
- Do you find it easy to make mental calculations?
- Use a pocket calculator?
- Estimate it roughly in your head?

Write about your methods here:



Music and Rhythm (Musical Intelligence)

Musical intelligence is apparent if you enjoy listening to music, sing to yourself, or play a musical instrument.



Activity 3

Find the rhythm in your life!

1. When you are working at home, which one of these do you prefer?:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| TV on loud | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Stereo on, maximum volume | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Radio on in the background | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Silence | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| You don't really pay attention to the sounds around you. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. What is your favourite song at the moment?

If you are working in a group, can you hum this song to the person next to you?

3. If you wanted to rap something just now, which one of the following would you use as a rhythm instrument?

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| hands | <input type="checkbox"/> | pencils | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| chairs | <input type="checkbox"/> | feet | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| alarm clock | <input type="checkbox"/> | glasses | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| spoons | <input type="checkbox"/> | comb | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you are working with others, make a rap about today with the person sitting next to you. One of you can sing and the other provide the rhythm!

Pictures, Colours, Forms and Shapes (Visual and Spatial Intelligence)

You can recognise this intelligence in ideas that come to you as pictures, or in memories that seem like pictures or movies. You may be good at remembering people's faces or you may find it easy to read maps.

Activity 4

Figure this out!



1. If someone stops you to ask for directions, do you find it easy to help them?
2. Have you noticed the different ways people give directions? Can you think of any examples of different ways of doing this?

3. Describe your kitchen or your own room, or your dream kitchen or dream house. Think about colours, forms and shapes and write your description here:

If you are working with others, read your description to the person next to you. Ask your partner to listen to your description with eyes closed and when you have finished see if he can draw an outline of your room on paper.

Movement and Feelings (Kinaesthetic Intelligence)

This type of intelligence can be seen in your choice of hobbies and interests, e.g. if you like exercise such as walking or jogging, or if you enjoy going out dancing or if you are good at making things with your hands, these are all indicators of kinaesthetic intelligence. You may also feel emotions in your body, feeling happiness, tiredness or sadness in your hands, feet, back or neck.

Does this sound like you?



Activity 5

1. Can you change the way you feel by changing your clothes? Do you usually change when you return home? If so, describe how this affects you.

2. What is your favourite way of relaxing?

3. Which of the following could you teach to the group you are working in at the moment?

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| stretching exercises | <input type="checkbox"/> | relaxation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| aerobics | <input type="checkbox"/> | massage | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| a dance | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

anything else

Why not try a kinaesthetic session with your group, with each member taking a turn at teaching the group a form of exercise.



Working with Others (Interpersonal Intelligence)

This part of your intelligence enables you to work with others and take an interest in other people's lives in general. It is important to you that you are able to communicate effectively with other people and one of your reasons for learning new skills is to make your social life more interesting. You like doing things with others.

Activity 6

Try this!

1. Write down a list of all the groups you are a member of. Think of as many groups as you can!

Here are some examples to get you started:

women/men, men over 25 years, Japanese, Finnish, dark-haired, vegetarians, office worker, ice skater, darts team, parents' council...

Write your list here:

2. Do you read interviews about interesting people in magazines?
3. Is there an interesting person you would like to meet? Why would you like to meet this person?



Knowing Yourself (The Intra-Personal Intelligence)

This area of intelligence shows in your ability to work independently and in your interest of developing yourself. It is important for you to spend some time on your own, with your own thoughts and ideas, you may like to day dream, or keep a diary. You also like to take care of yourself, your body and mind.



Activity 7

Dream, dream...

Have you ever kept a diary? If so, why do you think it is useful to keep a diary?

Here is a meditation exercise! Think about the following questions on your own, concentrating on your own thoughts. Write down some key words which sum up what you thought.

1. What will you most probably be doing this time next year?

2. What would you like to be doing this time next year?

3. What do you dream of being in five years' time?

If your dreams are not too secret, share them with a friend or a partner in your group!

Using your Seven Intelligences

You can use all seven areas of intelligence in your learning. Several types of intelligence are probably needed for each learning task! Match the type of intelligence with the different activities you have to do and notice yourself selecting different work methods to suit each situation.

Activity 8

Here is a list of activities that learners have to complete on the study course they are on. Which types of intelligence will they have to use to get the most out of each activity?



Seven Intelligences

1. **Speaking, reading and writing**
2. **Logical thinking and numbers**
3. **Music and rhythm**
4. **Pictures, colours, forms and shapes**
5. **Movement and feelings**
6. **Working with others**
7. **Knowing yourself**

Activities to be done	Intelligences to use
Planning visual diagrams to support a speech	
Concentrating on a writing task	
Sitting and listening to a guest speaker	
Working at the same pace as the group	
Giving your own opinion in group discussion	
Learning a dance or aerobic exercise	
Giving a short talk	
Reading graphic charts and statistics	
Writing a summary of a book	
Organising a group project	

If you are working in a group, compare your choices with a partner or with the rest of the group.



Activity 9

Now that you have discovered some of the attributes of the different types of intelligences, answer the following questions about yourself:

1. Which intelligences do you think you use most in your everyday life?

2. Which parts of your intelligence do you use less? Why do you think this is?

3. Are there some areas of intelligence that you would like to use more or develop?

4. Once you have written about your feelings on how you use the different intelligences, discuss your findings with your learning group.



Evaluation Questions

While carrying out the activities in this section, did you discover any areas of intelligence in yourself that you hadn't recognised before? Which ones?



What you
have learned

How can you make use of all parts of your intelligence in learning situations?

(originally presented in a Finnish book by Markwort: Kouluttajan uudet vaatteet)

THE THREE CHANNELS



You will learn to recognise the **three channels** you use for doing and understanding, taking in new information and for learning new things. The **three channels** are:

- the visual channel (the seeing-channel)
- the aural channel (the hearing-channel), and
- the kinaesthetic channel (the emotional and movement channel).



Activity

Answer the following questions. Choose the option which best describes you.

1. Others can tell what I feel like from:

- (a) my face
- (b) my voice
- (c) the movements of my body, feet or hands

2. I follow what's happening in the world by:

- (a) reading newspapers
- (b) listening to the radio
- (c) quickly skimming the paper or watching the TV news for a few minutes

3. I keep in touch with my friends by:

- (a) writing letters
- (b) talking to them on the phone
- (c) going for a walk, to the gym or dancing with them

4. When I'm angry:

- (a) I shut up
- (b) I shout
- (c) I bang doors or throw plates

Activity continued



Activity
continued

5. When I'm driving in a car:

- (a) I carefully follow the traffic
- (b) I switch on the radio
- (c) I feel restless and find it difficult to get comfortable

6. I think I dress:

- (a) smartly
- (b) casually
- (c) comfortably

7. When I attend a class or a meeting:

- (a) I always prepare well and do my homework
- (b) I enjoy discussions and hearing different opinions
- (c) I'm restless and doodle on my papers

8. In my free time:

- (a) I watch TV, go to movies or the theatre
- (b) I listen to music or the radio
- (c) I play sport/go for a walk

Count up your score

(a)s _____ points (b)s _____ points (c)s _____ points

If you scored mostly **(a)s**, you are a visual person and you respond to what you see.

If you scored mostly **(b)s**, you are an aural person and what you hear is most important for you.

If you scored mostly **(c)s**, you are a kinesthetic person and movement and emotions are most important for you.

If all your scores were fairly even, this suggests that you use your three channels equally.



What you
have learned

Evaluation Questions

Are you surprised at your results? Why, or why not?

Which channel would you like to develop more? Why?

WHAT'S MY LEARNING STYLE?

This section is about how people learn. If you look at the people around you, you soon realise that there are huge differences in the way people learn and work. Some people like to plan their work well ahead while others work best when they have a deadline to meet. Some people prefer to learn from books while others prefer talking things over and discussing issues with other people.



Activity 1

Can you think of any other differences in the way people learn?



You might have included:

- Some people learn better by doing things themselves
- Others learn by watching a demonstration
- Some people are good at following instructions
- Some people can see a picture or diagram in their minds
- Others are good at remembering numbers

Discovering your Learning Style

The four questionnaires you are asked to complete in this section are intended to help you to find your learning style. Complete all four questionnaires, **Enthusiastic**, **Practical**, **Logical** and **Imaginative**, as honestly as you can. They can be completed in any order.

Once you have completed all four questionnaires, move on to the next section **Knowing your learning style**, and follow the instructions there.

Follow up work

Once you have decided on your major learning style, try using another style for a week and note any differences.

Complete all four Questionnaires.

Questionnaire 1: Enthusiastic

Read each question and tick the box according to whether your answer is **Usually**, **Sometimes** or **Never**.

U = Usually, S = Sometimes, N = Never

	U	S	N
I get bored easily and like moving on to new things.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I love variety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I learn by talking things through with other people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I work quickly and like to flit from one thing to another.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I like to skim through books quickly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy group discussions and ask a lot of questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I look quickly at instructions and then begin to work almost immediately.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I enjoy my work I am totally involved in it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I don't like something, I tend to neglect it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't like planning things. I want to get down to the work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Details bore me. I don't read through or check my work once it is finished.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I like trying out new things.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I am upset, I like to find someone to talk to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I like to take life as it comes and be spontaneous.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Total for each column

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Total for questionnaire 1

--

Complete all four questionnaires

Questionnaire 2: Practical

Read each question and tick the box according to whether your answer is **Usually**, **Sometimes** or **Never**.

U = Usually, S = Sometimes, N= Never

	U	S	N
I like to get on with things and not be side-tracked.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I make sure I know exactly what is required of me before starting an assignment, e.g. how many marks for each part.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get down to work easily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I like to plan ahead, have a clear timetable for my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get annoyed by people who don't keep to deadlines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My work is well organised. I think in advance about any equipment I might need.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy the satisfaction of completing a piece of work more than I enjoy doing it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think that daydreaming is a waste of time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I like working on my own.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I draw diagrams, graphs or maps to give information, they are not meant to be works of art.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I read instructions carefully before beginning any piece of work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I work steadily which means that I usually have time for doing other things and still get my work done.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total for each column	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total for questionnaire 2	<input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>		

Complete all four questionnaires

Questionnaire 3: Logical

Read each question and tick the box according to whether your answer is **Usually**, **Sometimes** or **Never**.

U = Usually, S = Sometimes, N = Never

U S N

I work as hard on the things I have to do which I don't enjoy as well as those I do enjoy.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I like to understand how things work, or how an idea was developed.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I like to make lists, work out timetables and plans.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I always check my work and will persevere until I get it right.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I enjoy solving problems and like to pose new questions.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I prefer to listen to others rather than to talk myself.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I learn best working alone.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I pay great attention to detail.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I like to work on one thing at a time.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I learn best by gathering information and reading and then making up my own mind.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I prefer to work through personal problems by myself.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I always consider all the options carefully before making a decision.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Total for each column

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Total for questionnaire 3

<input type="text"/>

Complete all four questionnaires

Questionnaire 4: Imaginative

Read each question and tick the box according to whether your answer is **Usually**, **Sometimes** or **Never**.

U = Usually, S = Sometimes, N = Never

U S N

I forget to take home the things that I need to work on at home.

I spend too long thinking about my work before getting down to it.

I like to find new and original ways of presenting my work.

I can see the connections between different areas of my work.

I like thinking and talking about my work better than doing it.

I like day dreaming and thinking around topics.

I like to float ideas around with other people.

I am not interested in detail, but I am good at seeing the whole picture.

I tend to work in bursts of energy.

I prefer to work without timetables and plans.

I like to draw creative, attractive diagrams, graphs or maps.

I sit down to work only to discover that I do not have important information or equipment that I need.

I enjoy thinking about or questioning ideas.

Total for each column

Total for questionnaire 4

Complete all four questionnaires

Knowing your Learning Style

The four completed questionnaires can tell you about which learning styles dominate your approach to work.

Questionnaire 1: **Enthusiastic**

Questionnaire 2: **Practical**

Questionnaire 3: **Logical**

Questionnaire 4: **Imaginative**

Once you have completed all four questionnaires, you need to find your total score for **each learning style questionnaire**:

- The **Usually** column scores 2 points,
- The **Sometimes** column scores 1 point, and
- The **Never** column scores 0 points.

Add up your scores for each questionnaire and then put them into the table below:

	Total		Total
Enthusiastic		Logical	
Practical		Imaginative	

What Does Your Learning Style Say About You?

Whichever questionnaire scores your highest score, suggests your major learning style. Each style has its own strengths and weaknesses. There are no 'good' or 'bad' styles. Your major style will tell you what strengths you have as a learner and what makes it easier for you to learn. You will also discover the weaknesses you need to be aware of in your approach to work. Using the strengths from your major learning style and building on your under-used styles will benefit your work. You will be more successful if you can switch from one style to another.



Activity

Activity

Which is your major learning style? What do you think are the **advantages** of your major learning style? List them here:

What do you think are the **disadvantages** of your major learning style? List them here:

Read through the advantages and disadvantages of each learning style at the end of this section.

Remember that no one style is better than the other styles.

Conclusion

Knowing your learning style is very important in understanding your approach to work, and knowing where your learning style lets you down is essential in making you aware of your weaknesses.

A knowledge of all the learning styles can make you more tolerant of other peoples' approaches to learning. The **Imaginatives** tend to get annoyed with the **Practicals**, who always seem to want to get on with things and lack the patience for discussion around the topic. The **Logicals** can't understand the **Enthusiasts** who flit from one thing to another, are noisy and excitable, and never seem to persist with anything. The **Enthusiasts** consider **Logicals** as boring plodders, who try to dampen their enthusiasm with irrelevant questions. The **Practicals**, who like to have their study timetable planned down to the last minute, are often called 'swots' by **Enthusiasts** because they tend to leave everything to the last minute. Aim to push up your scores in all the learning styles, so that you have the advantages of each style working for you.



What you
have learned

Advantages of Each Learning Style

Enthusiastic

You get totally involved in something that interests you.

You work well with other people.

You will try out any new idea or way of working.

You enjoy writing freely - as it comes.

You are not concerned with making a fool of yourself by asking questions or volunteering for something new.

You like variety and excitement.

You learn by talking with other people.

You can skim and scan new books.

Imaginative

You see new ways of doing things.

You come up with creative solutions.

You see the long term implications of things.

You can see the whole picture.

You see the connections between the different subjects or topics being studied.

You don't hurry, or get in a flap.

You present work in novel and artistically pleasing ways.

You are good at coming up with new alternatives.

Practical

You work well alone.

You are good at setting goals and you like to use timetables and work plans.

You know how to find the information you need.

You get things done on time.

You don't get distracted.

You organise your time well so you have time for other things.

You read instructions carefully before starting to work on something.

You have any equipment or written materials you need organised and/or filed.

Logical

You organise facts and material well.

You like to understand everything you are working on.

You work at things until you get them right.

You are curious and enjoy problems.

You are a good critic.

You work well alone with minimum help from other people.

You are precise and thorough. You see the link between ideas.

You plan well in advance for any work you have to do and know how to prioritise tasks.



Disadvantages of Each Learning Style

Enthusiastic

You rush into things without thinking them through in advance.

You tend to neglect the things which don't interest you.

You are not good at organising time.

You try to do too many things at once.

You find it difficult to prioritise work.

You leave things until the last minute.

You can be demanding of your friends.

You can't be bothered with details.

You don't read through or check work.

Imaginative

You tend to forget important details.

You wait too long before getting started.

You accept ideas uncritically.

You don't like timetables or work plans and you don't organise your work well.

You only work in bursts of energy.

You forget important things you need for your work.

You are easily distracted from the task in hand.

You don't go over your work or organise materials.

You are too easy going, not assertive enough with other people.

Practical

You are impatient with the viewpoints of others.

You don't use friends and others as resources.

You can't see the wood for the trees, that is, you get preoccupied with details.

You lack imagination.

You think there is only one way of doing things - your way!

You are poor at coming up with new questions.

You often don't work well with others.

You are more concerned with getting the job done than with making sure that you do a good job.

You cut corners and are not interested in the presentation of your work.

Logical

You need too much information before getting down to work and allowing yourself an opinion.

You don't use friends and others as resources.

You are over-cautious and don't like taking risks.

You can get bogged down in theory.

You don't trust feelings, your own or other people's.

You don't function well in group discussions.

You keep problems to yourself.

You are reluctant to try out new approaches and you like to do things in a set way.

You only trust logic.

FLY KITE FLY

This activity will help you to realise the importance of:

- encouragement and positive support
- persistence (not to give up easily)

You can do this activity in a group or answer the questions individually and then discuss them with your tutor or a friend.



Activity

Activity 1

Read the story **“fly kite fly”** aloud, either sharing the reading or ask a volunteer to read it. Feel free to use your acting skills to demonstrate what Toad is doing: running, swimming, jumping and shouting which will probably (hopefully) make you laugh.

After reading the story, work in groups of 2-4 to answer the questions which follow.



Reading Task

Fly kite fly

Once upon a time there were two very good friends: Frog and Toad.

*Toad was quite a stockily built toad,
and Frog was a frog with long, long legs.*

Toad and Frog went out to fly a kite.

They found a wide meadow where a fresh breeze was blowing.

“Our kite will fly high” said Frog.

“It will fly high and high until the end of the sky.

Listen Toad, I will hold the string.

Why don’t you hold the kite and run across the meadow?”

Toad ran across the meadow.

He ran as fast as he could with his short legs.

The kite went up - and fell down with a thump.

Activity 1 continued



Activity
continued

Toad heard a laugh.

There were three sparrows sitting in the bushes.

"That kite won't fly" said the sparrows.

"You'd better give up."

Toad ran back to Frog.

"Frog, this kite won't fly. I'd better give up."

"We have to try again," Frog said.

"Swing the kite above your head. Maybe that will make it fly".

Toad ran across the meadow.

He swung the kite above his head.

The kite rose in the sky - and fell down with a slap.

"That kite is a joke!" Toad heard from the bushes.

"It will never rise from the ground" said the sparrows.

Toad ran back to Frog.

"This kite is a joke. It will never rise from the ground".

"We have to try again," Frog answered.

"Swing the kite above your head and jump up and down.

Maybe that will make it fly".

Toad ran again across the meadow.

He swung the kite above his head and jumped up and down.

The kite went up - and came down with a crash.

"That kite is a piece of junk!" the sparrows giggled.

"Throw it away and go home."

Toad ran back to Frog.

"This kite is a piece of junk.

I think that we should throw it away and go home".

"Listen Toad. We have to try again!" said Frog.

"Swing the kite above your head, jump up and down and shout FLY KITE FLY

Maybe that will make it fly.



**Activity
continued**

Activity 1 continued

Toad ran again across the meadow.

He swung the kite above his head. He jumped up and down.

He shouted FLY KITE FLY!

The kite flew up. It flew higher and higher.

It flew high and high until the end of the sky.

“We did it” Toad shouted.

“That’s right! We did it!” Frog answered.

*“I knew that if you run it doesn’t work,
and if you run and swing it doesn’t work,
and if you run and swing and jump, it doesn’t work.
I knew that if you run and swing and jump and shout,
then it’s bound to work!”*

Story by Arnold Lobell.

Activity 2



Now discuss the following questions:

1. Find **three** things in the story that help you when you are learning something new. List them here:

2. Find **three** things in the story that can make learning more difficult. List them here:

3. Why didn't Frog run and make the kite fly himself, since he knew how to do it?

4. Why do you think that Toad and Frog managed to succeed in the end?



Activity
continued

Activity 2 continued

5. Who, or what, are the sparrows in your own life?

6. Who is the Frog in your life? Is there anyone you could ask to be your Frog?

7. *Fly Kite Fly* was Frog's slogan that finally made the kite fly. Do you have anything that you always say to yourself in difficult situations?

Have you heard other people use slogans, e.g. sports men and women?

They may use something that you could try yourself.

Write your slogan here:

Evaluation Questions

Has reading this story and answering the questions helped your learning in any way?

Why, or why not?

Who can you turn to for support?

How do you deal with negative advice?



What you
have learned

CONCENTRATION

In this section you will:

- discover how concentration works and how it can be influenced
- find some suggestions for improving your concentration

Concentration checklist



Activity 1

Answer the questions below by ticking the appropriate square. This will give you an idea of your power of concentration and which aspects you may need to work on.

Always Sometimes Never

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I have problems concentrating on my work in a group. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I usually make good progress when working. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I am easily distracted from my work. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. When I am working, I can forget everything around me. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. During meetings or classes, my thoughts often start wandering. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. While working, I'm always distracted by all sorts of small things. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. I can only focus my thoughts when I'm really interested in something. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. I doze off when I have to listen for over half an hour. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. In the evening, I always know exactly what I've achieved that day. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

I concentrate best when _____

I would like to improve on _____

What is Concentration?

It means focusing all your energy on one point, giving your full attention to something. (*see Practising your Concentration*)

If you are fully concentrating, then you forget everything else around you, losing all sense of time. You are not thinking about what you have to do later, or what went wrong yesterday.

Concentration uses up energy, but also generates energy, leaving you feeling satisfied and self confident.

It is generally easier to concentrate on something that you really enjoy or something that you are highly motivated to do.

Tips to Increase Your Powers of Concentration

Fixed Rituals

Everyone has their own method of concentrating. Ask 10 people and you are likely to get 10 different answers. In sport, concentration plays an important role. Sports men and women often have fixed rituals to help them focus their concentration before a competition, e.g. wearing certain clothes, having a special routine, carrying a lucky charm. If this ritual is interrupted in any way, it may be difficult for them to regain full concentration, e.g. Olympic athletes.

Think about developing your own ritual.

Take Time

If you are about to do a difficult job, requiring your concentration, then it is important to stand back and take the time to work out just how you are going to tackle it. This gives you the opportunity to focus, or concentrate on the task.

The Influence of Adults

The attitude of friends and family can affect your ability to concentrate. Criticism, or doubts in your ability, can upset your concentration, as you are forced (consciously or unconsciously) to defend yourself.

On the other hand, people who show you encouragement and believe in your abilities, can help your concentration by increasing your motivation and keep you focused on whatever it is that you want to achieve.

The Influence of Children

Children demanding your attention can be a major distraction. You have to make a choice:

- Do you put your work aside (for the time being) and concentrate on your children?
- Do you find somewhere quiet to work where you cannot be disturbed?
- Can you come to an agreement with your family on how to share your time? (this is more effective with older children!)

Influence of Emotional Events

If you are upset by other events in your life, then your concentration can suffer. For example, if a member of your family is ill; if you have relationship problems, or if you have an important decision to make, your thoughts are likely to wander back to these events as you try to concentrate. This can mean that no matter how motivated you are to achieve something, you are not able to give it your full attention. However it is also true that sometimes focusing on a particular task can help to distract you from emotional stresses.



What do
you think?

Concentration Problems

If you have a problem concentrating, ask yourself these questions:

- Am I really motivated?
- Am I really interested in what I am doing?
- Am I tired?
- Am I actively involved in the subject?
- Am I distracted by other events in my life?

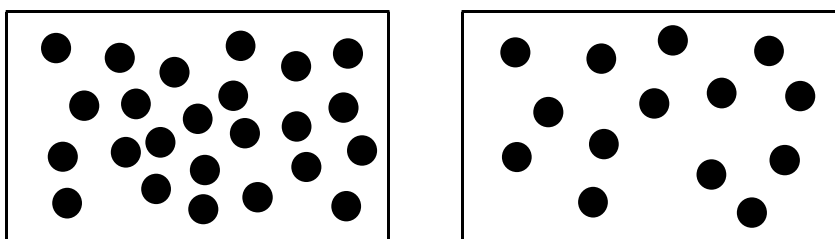
Practising Your Concentration

Try some of these exercises below. They may help you to focus your attention and improve your **concentration**.

Activity 2



1. Look at the two boxes below. Count the dots in each one by just looking at them. Now count them again, this time putting a circle around each dot and counting as you do it. Which method is more accurate?



2. Listen to a piece of music and try to follow one particular instrument from start to finish. Forget about all the other instruments.
3. Give your full attention to eating one sweet. Try to concentrate on the taste and not think of anything else. Do not crunch it but savour it until it is completely gone. Do not be distracted by anything that may be happening around you.
4. Try to give 100% of your attention for 10 minutes of a meeting or class. Refuse to be disturbed by outside noises or by the people around you.
5. Choose an object that you like to look at. Place it in front of you and study it as if you are seeing it for the first time. Study each and every detail. Try to keep focused as soon as your thoughts start wandering. Keep this up for at least 5 minutes.
6. Try to cut out a picture with an irregular shape (e.g. a flower or a portrait of some one with shaggy hair) and do it very carefully. Concentrate very hard, working as accurately as possible.



What you
have learned

Evaluation Questions

How can you use these techniques to help you concentrate on your work?

Which methods work best for you?

RELAXATION RECIPE

This exercise is designed to help you achieve a relaxed frame of mind, which should enable you to concentrate and think more clearly. To be effective, some initial planning has to go into the layout of the room, so that you are comfortable and unlikely to be disturbed while you progress. Deep relaxation might put you in touch with your inner self stirring up emotions. Do not worry. Keep calm.

Background music can enhance the atmosphere: any soothing music can work, but nothing too loud.

After the relaxation, you will be asked to think about your plans for a few minutes, to capture some ideas. **(see questions at the end of this section)**. Once you return from your relaxed state, write these ideas down.

The Relaxation Recipe

(You can read this on to tape to use yourself at home)

Sit comfortably and straighten your back.

Support your feet firmly on the ground.

Close your eyes.

Rest your hands on your lap with open fists.

Breathe in deeply.

Exhale slowly.

Let your shoulders go down.

Inhale through your nose, exhale through your mouth.

Relax your mouth and chin.

Feel your neck and forehead relax.

Your arms, hands and fingers are resting warm and softly.

Your breathing is calm.

Inhale energy and good feeling.

Exhale all the worries and tiredness.

Let your chest and stomach relax with each exhalation.



Inhale energy and strength.

Let it flow in your neck, in your shoulders, in your arms, in your chest and stomach.

Let your back relax all the way, little by little.

Feel your thighs and legs and feet relax.

Your body is resting and your mind is resting too.

(Have a short break to relax and listen to the gentle music before you start to come back).

After a while, when the music fades away, you will be ready to stretch and open your eyes.

The good feeling and the energy stays. In a moment you will be ready to open your eyes.

Open your eyes and stretch!

Questions to think about

Think about the work you are doing at the moment:

Is there anything you can do to make it easier?

Think about **three** things that you are going to do tomorrow.
(2 minutes silence).

Think about **three** things you would like to do next month.
(2 minutes silence).



**What do
you think?**



Think about **two** things that you are not going to do.
(2 minutes silence).

Think about **three** things that you are going to do next year.
(2 minutes silence).

Once you have come round from the relaxation programme, write your answers to the questions above and keep them to refer back to.

Evaluation Questions

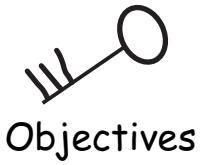
What effect did the relaxation have?



What you
have learned

How did it make you feel?

I WANT TO LEARN



In this section you will:

- consider your personal goals and put them in order of importance
- use a study group to plan common work and goals

Everyone in the group is provided with five small pieces of coloured paper and has to write down one learning task on each piece of paper. The learning tasks don't have to be connected with study or any particular course content but can be anything you want to learn (eg driving a car, swimming, cooking, a new language, getting along with other people etc). Use key words or short sentences.

Once you have written your learning tasks, arrange them in order of importance.



Activity

Write **"I Want to Learn"** in the middle of a large piece of paper. You could make a yellow circle in the middle, just like the sun. The group then makes the sun rays by attaching their pieces of paper, with the most important learning goals nearest to the centre. Take it in turn to tell the rest of the group what you have written.



Look at the sun together:

1. What type of learning tasks are there?
 - skills
 - knowledge
 - personal development
2. Which tasks could be carried out in the group you are working with just now?
3. Are there any common goals? These could provide a starting point for planning group work.
4. Write down any comments. If there are decisions to be made, these can be used in the next phase of the group's activities.
5. If you included personal goals, which cannot be achieved within the group activities, think about how you can achieve them.

GROUP PROJECTS

By taking part in a Group Project you will learn:

- **how to ask questions and co-operate with other people**
- **different methods of finding information, discussing and reporting it**
- **how to put forward your point of view and give presentations**

1. The group should choose a project which is of interest to everyone in the group. Everyone should be motivated and committed to the work. Your tutor can give you guidelines for getting started and help you to decide on a topic.
2. As a group, it is then up to you to agree on the goals of the project, i.e. which areas of the topic you want to concentrate on, what you want your end product to be. By dividing the group into smaller units, different tasks can be allocated to each member and a timetable agreed for reporting back.
3. Each group member can work on their own task, collecting information using different methods (interviewing experts, or members of the public, reading books, looking at television programmes and newspapers, using the Internet etc.) See sections on **Interviewing and Taking Notes** in this pack.

Once everyone has gathered their information, you are ready to meet as a group to report back your findings. It is important that all group members stick to the agreed timetable, so that all the information is ready at the right time.

It is at this group meeting that any changes in plan may need to be agreed in the light of your findings, e.g. you may have discovered some new information or you may have been unable to retrieve as much information on some subjects as you had hoped. Your tutor will help you, if necessary, to change your project plan.



4. You should now be ready to complete and publish your findings. If you plan one joint report you must meet to decide on the format of the final presentation and content. You may produce an article, a performance, a written report or a video. The group must decide which format is most suitable.

Presenting the final product is an important part of the learning process as it gives you experience in defending your opinions, appearing in public or in receiving feedback.



Discussion

5. When you have completed your project, it is important that you take time to look back and **evaluate** how everything went.

Meeting as a group, you should look at each stage of the project and discuss:

- Which parts were you most pleased with?
- What problems did you have?
- What have you learned from this experience that you can use again?

If you would like to find out more about working in groups and how to share tasks effectively, look at *ARKS Keys to Participation* for some more activities.

Example:

Here is an account of a project carried out by a group of adult students attending a residential college in Finland.

A study group of 8 students decided at the beginning of March to organise an event in their college, to celebrate International Women's Day on 8th March. They started work on 6th March by looking at literature dealing with women's issues, with the help of the college librarian. Everyone chose books to read that evening.

The topics were:

- **Women's situation in Finland and around the world**
- **How fairy tales and stories describe women and their lives**
- **Women in history**

The group had one day to work. They first discussed the nature of the event and decided to organise a fair in the Big Hall where visitors could wander round from one point to another getting information about different topics.

The group divided up, each with their own tasks (finding facts, materials, decorating the hall etc.) The group didn't have a main leader so everyone was responsible for their own contributions. The tutor was included as a member of the group. They had to work long and hard to get everything done.

The event was advertised within the college by posters and by announcements in the dining hall.

At the start of the International Women's Day Event, the men in the group presented every woman attending with a silk flower, made by the group. A tutor divided the 40-50 people present into small groups to visit each action point and took charge of moving groups on in about 20 minute time slots. The action points presented were:

Women in tradition: a Finnish folk tale was read and discussed from the women's point of view.



Women in advertising: advertisements with pictures of women were discussed.

Women in different parts of the world: video films about Nepalese and Zambian women were shown.

Women in statistics: a light-hearted guessing game about serious facts.

Women's music: music performed by women from different times. People were asked to draw pictures based on the music.

Once everyone had visited all the action points a discussion was held. The participants were enthusiastic about the event particularly because they had been actively involved in so many ways. Many said that they had learned a lot about women's situations.

When the project group got together to evaluate their work they were mainly positive and thought that the day had been a success. Although they had worked successfully without a leader on this occasion, they decided that in future projects they would prefer to have one. Some group members criticised the short time scale but others felt proud of what they had achieved in such a short time. They felt that their method of reporting, i.e. the fair, was good because so many different talents were able to be used. The men in the group felt that they had learned about things from a women's point of view. One member of the group volunteered to write a report about the event.

Evaluation Questions

Do you feel comfortable working in a group? Why, or why not?



What you
have learned

If you have been involved in a group project, what worked well for you and your group?

Is there anything you would do differently another time?

THE GROUP AGREEMENT



In this section you can:

- **write a learning agreement, either for yourself, or as a member of a group**
- **think about what you need to learn and what you are prepared to contribute**

Working in a group, gives you the opportunity to learn the principles of co-operation. This agreement can help to evaluate the group dynamics, especially in a crisis. The agreement helps group members to understand their responsibilities and encourages co-operative learning.

Resources required for the session:

Coloured paper, large sheets of paper, scissors, pens, blue tack.

1. **Learning in a group**
Discuss why an agreement, or group rules, might make working or learning together easier.
2. **Ideas**
Each member of the group takes five small pieces of paper. On each paper they write one thing they consider important for co-operation – try using key words like friendship, good humour, etc.
3. **The map**
The group leader writes the word co-operation in the middle of the large sheet of paper. Everyone in the group then places their own words around the centre of the paper, placing the things they consider to be most important near the centre and those of minor importance away from the centre. Where people have chosen similar words, these can be grouped together on the paper. Take it in turn to explain to the group, why you chose your key words.

Don't discuss the value of everyone's choices just yet.

4. **The agreement**

Now, as a group, turn the key words into phrases to make up the agreement. One member of the group should lead the discussion and another can take notes, e.g. "Trust: We agree to trust each other in the group."

5. **The evaluation**

Use these phrases to make up your group agreement. Take time to discuss what should be included and what should not. This agreement can now act as a cornerstone of all group work. Everyone in the group then has the right to remind members of the agreement if they ever feel that the group is not functioning effectively. The agreement can be changed together later on if necessary as your group develops.

6. **Keep for Reference**

Decide where the agreement is going to be kept. You could keep it on the wall of your meeting room, or distribute the printed versions to everyone, signed by all members.

There is a sample agreement on the next page, but do not distribute it to students or group members. It's best that each group draft their own agreement.

The Group Agreement

We, participants of the Second Chance course will have the courage to:

- 1. Work in positive co-operation, open mind and good humour**
- 2. Exchange ideas and knowledge**
- 3. Produce goal-directed and responsible work**
- 4. Have mutual trust**
- 5. Recognise differences and respect each other**
- 6. Give everyone the right to be themselves**
- 7. Use constructive criticism**
- 8. Listen to each other**
- 9. Recognise individual reasoning**

THE HAPPY SHOWER

The aim of this exercise is to:

- increase self esteem
- build relationships with the group
- allocate group tasks

Materials required for the session:

Cardboard and coloured pens

Adjective lists (**pages 78-79**)

Small pieces of paper

One large piece of paper

We Think You Are...

Everyone in the group takes a card (A5 or smaller), some coloured pens and the **Adjective List** seen on pages 78-79.

Organise the group in a dyad circle (an inner circle and an outer circle with the same number of people in each). People in the two circles face each other. Look at the person facing you. Choose one adjective on the list to describe that person (we are dealing with first impressions!). Once each partner has exchanged adjectives, write the word used to describe you on your card. **This process should only take about a minute.**

Everyone in the outer circle now takes one step to the left so that you are facing a new partner. Adjectives are exchanged and written down again, and the outer circle takes another step to the left. Continue this pattern until you come back to your original partner.

When everyone is ready, sit together in a horseshoe or circle. You now all have a card containing adjectives used to describe you.

Discuss how you felt, being showered with these positive descriptions.

Choose **three** adjectives that you would like to be **MORE**.
Write them on your card.

Choose one adjective to describe your state **RIGHT NOW**.

Choose one adjective you would like to be like **FOR THE REST OF THE DAY**, one that you would like to be like **FOR THE WHOLE DAY TOMORROW**, and so on.

Jobs in the Group



Activity

On the small pieces of paper, write down all kinds of jobs and roles that you think are necessary when working in a group. It is a good idea not to have any examples at this stage, but to see what the group is thinking.

On a large sheet of paper write **"A Working Group"** in the middle. Everyone then fixes their pieces of paper with jobs, around the middle circle. Join up any similar suggestions. Now discuss the results of your "search" and decide whether all possible tasks have been covered. What different roles do you need to have in your group?

- a secretary
- a chairperson
- a presenter
- a time keeper
- an observer (for different aspects of group work, eg communication, effectivity, productivity, power relations, democracy, leadership, harmony, friendship, arguments, listening, laughter... whatever the group thinks is necessary. You can prepare a checklist for the observer to use!)
- an animator
- a critic
- an emotional leader
- a wizard
- a fortune-teller
- a child

- a father
- a mother
- anything else you can think of?

Decide what kind of characteristics different tasks and jobs in a group call for. Use your Adjective List if you need some ideas.

Write the appropriate adjectives close to each job on the large sheet.

Now think about the actual division of tasks within the group. Everyone should be given the chance to say which tasks they think they are most suited to.

- What would you find easy?
- What do you need to work on?
- What do you find challenging?



What do you think?

As a group, decide how often members will be responsible for a particular task. Decide on everyone's first task or responsibilities and if necessary write a list of "who is doing what".

ADJECTIVE LIST

You are.....

A ccepting	active	adventurous	amiable
amusing	animated	appreciative	artistic
assertive	authentic	aware	
C apable	carefree	careful	caring
cheerful	clever	colourful	competent
confident	considerate	cooperative	cordial
courageous	courteous	creative	
D evoted			
E arnest	easy going	efficient	empathetic
energetic	enthusiastic	expressive	
F ascinating	flexible	forgiving	friendly
funny			
G enerous	gentle	genuine	giving
good-hearted	good-humoured	good listener	good-natured
gracious			
H appy	happy-go-lucky	hard-working	helpful
heroic	honest	honourable	hospitable
humane	humorous		
I dealistic	imaginative	independent	industrious
informal	insightful	inspiring	intelligent
interesting	inventive		
J ust			

What is Effective Learning? - The Happy Shower

K een	kind	kind-hearted	
L ively loyal	logical	lovable	loving
M ature	merciful		
N atural	nourishing	nurturing	
O bjective original	observant outgoing	open-minded	organised
P atient pleasant profound	perceptive polite progressive	persistent practical	playful productive
R ational resourceful	realistic respectful	reasonable responsible	reliable responsive
S elf-reliant skilful supportive	sensible sociable sympathetic	sensitive spontaneous	sincere stable
T actful trusting	tender truthful	thorough	thoughtful
U nbiased	understanding	unique	unselfish
V ersatile			
W arm	warm-hearted	wise	

CRITICAL THINKING

While studying, as well as in daily life, you need to be able to think clearly and to communicate your thoughts and ideas so that you are easily understood. Sometimes ideas come out in a muddled way or when people try to write things down, they don't manage to say what they really intended.



This section should help you to:

- **think more clearly about what you are doing**
- **organise your thoughts, recognising opinions and facts**
- **recognise weaknesses in other people's arguments**

What is an argument?

- a fight
- a row
- a discussion
- an essay

An argument is saying what you believe in and why.

There are **two** important reasons to be able to recognise an argument.

- 1) So that you can make your case convincingly
- 2) So that you can recognise a weak or poor argument

A good argument requires **proof** to back up what is being said.

Activity 1

Look carefully at the following argument in a letter to a newspaper and answer the questions at the end.



Dear Sir,

I think that it would be wrong for capital punishment to be reintroduced and I ask all those people who support it to consider the following points.

Firstly, there is no evidence to support the idea that capital punishment acts as a deterrent. Most murders are committed in the heat of the moment, with no time to think about the consequences.

In the past, mistakes have been made and the wrong people have been convicted of crimes they did not commit. If there was capital punishment, they would have been wrongly executed.

The State would definitely be setting society a bad example in bringing back capital punishment. If it is OK for the state to use such violence, how can they control it in others?

I believe that the true purpose of punishment should be to reform an offender and it goes without saying that you cannot reform a dead man. Surely the government will see sense and not consider capital punishment as a serious solution to the increased violence in society.

Yours faithfully,

John Jones



Activity
continued

Activity 1 continued

(a) What is the main point of this argument?

(b) What evidence does the writer offer?

(c) Does the evidence prove the main point?

Activity 2

Now look at this letter and answer the questions at the end.



Dear Sir,

Parents today seem to have no control over their children. The increase in use of drugs and alcohol, and in crimes such as car theft, shoplifting and truancy, would not exist if parents acted responsibly.

When I was young I was quite happy to spend time with my mother and father and I went cycling and walking with my friends. When I helped my mother to carry the shopping home on a Saturday, we would stop at a small cafe to have tea and cakes.

Of course, when I left school I went straight into work, where I made many friends, some of whom I still see today. My parents knew how to bring me up properly.

Yours faithfully,

Catherine Brown

- (a) What is the main point of this argument?



Activity
continued

Activity 2 continued

(b) What evidence does the writer offer?

(c) Does the evidence prove the main point?

(d) If not, what has gone wrong?

Activity 3

Now try to make some arguments yourself. Can you think of three or four reasons to back up the following statements:



- (a) To stay healthy you should eat three good meals a day.

- (b) Regular exercise is good for the heart.

- (c) Fathers are entitled to the same leave as mothers when children are born.

Argument and Assertion

What is the difference between **argument** and **assertion**?

- An **argument** is a statement supported by evidence.
- An **assertion** is a statement where no evidence is offered. It is simply stated as fact.

You can make an assertion into an argument by adding proof or evidence to back it up.



Activity 4

Think about some common assertions made about healthy eating:

- Everyone should eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
- Healthy foods are more expensive.
- Red wine is good for your heart.
- To eat healthily you should cut down on salt, sugar and fat.
- To lose weight, cut out bread and potatoes.
- "Diet foods" are healthier than ordinary foods.

Activity 4 continued

Do you agree with all these assertions?



Activity
continued

How can you decide if an assertion is reasonable or not?

Where can you find evidence?

Sorting Out Argument and Assertion



Activity

Activity 5

Read this list of statements and decide which are **arguments** and which are **assertions**.

	Argument	Assertion
1. Children today are getting fatter as they spend less time exercising and more time with computers or watching television.		
2. Smoking is bad for your health.		
3. Women can't drink as much alcohol as men. Their smaller frame means that the alcohol takes effect more easily.		
4. As capital cities, Dublin and Edinburgh have a great deal in common.		
5. Scotland will be better off with its own parliament. Important decisions should be made locally.		

Activity 6

Now read this letter, looking out for the **assertions** and **arguments** used, then answer the questions.



Dear Sir,

Women today are working harder than ever. Whilst the majority of women are employed outwith the home, they are still responsible for the housework and childcare.

When a woman gets home from work, she has to start again, preparing food, laundry and cleaning the house. Even with all the labour saving devices in the home today, she is the one who manages them.

I must admit that some men are doing more around the house, but if you ask them, this is seen as "helping" women rather than their own responsibility.

When is society going to recognise this "hidden labour" and move towards true equality!

Yours faithfully,

Nicky Smith

(a) What is the main purpose of the letter?



Activity
continued

Activity 6 continued

(b) What supporting evidence does the writer offer?

(c) Does the writer make any assertions?

(d) If so, are the assertions reasonable or unreasonable?

Activity 6 continued



Activity
continued

(e) Do you ever make assertions?

(f) Is there a place for them?

(g) What do you need to be aware of?

Now look at your own work and ask:

- Do I make assertions?
- Are they reasonable?
- Do they need further evidence?

Putting Ideas Across Clearly

Putting your ideas into words, or onto paper, can cause problems.

When supervisors and tutors give feedback on work, they sometimes comment that learners do not organise their ideas clearly, or fail to answer the question, or wander off the subject. You may have noticed politicians, advertisers or friends using arguments which don't really make sense, but you can't quite see why.

This section should help you to organise your thoughts more clearly and also to recognise weaknesses in other people's arguments.

There are three main criteria to putting ideas across clearly:

1. **Definitions**
2. **Logic**
3. **Evidence**

1. Definitions

In everyday speech we use language loosely or casually. But if we do not clearly define the words and phrases that we use, people may not understand us. So when you are answering questions or preparing any written work, be sure that your reader, or audience, will understand the terms you use.

Look at the following statements. Each one uses a word which can be understood differently by different people.

- The family no longer exists in the 21st century.
- Poverty is widespread in Western society.
- We live in a classless society.

What is meant by "family" or "poverty" or "classless"? These terms would have to be explained more clearly before any meaningful argument can be made.

2. Logic

When you are making an argument, it is important that one statement should build on another statement and lead to a conclusion. Remember that you are trying to lead your listener, or reader, through a logical argument.

Look at these examples and see if one idea always follows from another:

- Standards in schools are falling, therefore schools need more funding.
- John is dying of heart disease because he never eats any vegetables.
- Cats have four legs. This animal has four legs, therefore it must be a cat.
- More adults are returning to education to help them find employment.

Ask yourself:

- Are the facts correct?
- Does one idea follow from another?
- Do they make sense?

3. Evidence

You will often be expected to find evidence for statements that you make. If you are writing an article, a report, an essay or a talk; you can produce a series of paragraphs, each one containing an **assertion** which is then supported by evidence and examples, turning it into an **argument**. Without the evidence your colleagues, tutors or friends will probably not be convinced and may ask you to justify your assertions.

What Goes Wrong with Arguments?

At first glance, an argument can often be convincing, but on closer examination that may have more to do with the way it is presented than with use of accurate evidence. How many of the following means of persuasion do you recognise?

1. **Generalisations**
2. **Emotive use of language**
3. **Persuader words**
4. **Question begging**
5. **Cause and effect**
6. **Appeal to authority**

1. **Generalisations**

A generalisation is a statement which can be applied to many situations.

For example:

- Women are more poorly paid than men.
- Finnish winters are colder than Scottish winters.
- There has been a large increase in traffic on our roads.

These are all general statements. But sometimes people make generalisations when there is no evidence to support them. **Look at this list of assertions and decide which are reasonable generalisations and which are not.**

- Unemployment brings low morale, lack of self-esteem, and isolation.
- Wealthy people are healthier than poor people.
- Women are naturally caring.
- It will be cold in Helsinki at Christmas, so take warm clothes!
- Scottish people have an unhealthy diet.

- a) Which of these statements are generalisations that most of us would agree with?

- b) Which are unreasonable?

- c) Which might be reasonable but need more evidence to support them?

It is useful to remember that in most situations you will need to provide evidence to back up any general statements.

2. Emotive use of language

Sometimes language is used to persuade people by appealing to their emotions rather than their reason. This is often used in advertising.

Examples: "Alpine fresh", "Farm fresh", "Healthy", "Natural". These words are frequently used to make us believe that the products we buy have some extra qualities.

Look for advertisements and product titles which use emotive language. You may like to collect a few to share with colleagues.

Charities often use emotional language to attract attention e.g. Children in Need, Band Aid, Action for the Crippled Child.

3. Persuader Words

surely	plainly
of course	definitely
certainly	undeniably
naturally	obviously

Instead of relying on argument, sometimes words such as these are slipped into sentences to persuade the reader or listener not to question certain statements.

For example:

- Certainly, Europe wants a single currency.
- Naturally, small children need to be with their mothers.
- Of course, privatised industry is more efficient than publicly owned services.

Add one of the persuader words above to the following assertions.

For example:

(Before)

The invention of the computer has changed the way we work.

(After)

Undeniably, the invention of the computer has changed the way we work.

1. People would be healthier if they didn't smoke cigarettes.

2. Children today don't know how to use their imaginations.

3. People who have been unemployed for over a year don't really want to work.

What happens to the original assertions?

Look out for persuader words in advertising, newspaper headlines, political speeches.

4. Begging A Question

This means that you assume something to be right, when you should in fact be questioning it.

For example:

- *We are all aware* that there is an intelligent mind working its way through the universe.
- *It is a fact* that since time began every woman has been in a state of bondage to a man.

What questions do you want to ask the people making these assertions?

Can you see how they are trying to get you to agree with them?

5. Cause and Effect

When making an argument, it is common to say that one fact **caused** a certain **effect**.

There may be a connection between the two events but can you prove that one caused the other?

For example:

- He drank because he was depressed.
- He was depressed because he drank.
- He was so stressed at work that he became depressed and drank heavily.

It is not always a simple case of one event causing another - or the real cause might be hidden. Even if there is a link between his depression and drinking, it may not be a simple cause and effect.

What do you think are the real causes in the following:

1. Many pop musicians suffer from partial deafness. Are people with poor hearing attracted to pop music or does pop music cause deafness?
2. There seems to be a greater alcohol problem in northern European countries than in southern ones. Does this mean that the sunshine and climate cause different drinking patterns? Or is it due to cultural differences?

Can you decide on a cause here, or do you need more evidence?

6. Appeal To Authority

If you are asked to believe an assertion just because someone says it is true, you may need to ask for further evidence.

Consider the following:

1. Dr. Brown says "the new DZW diet will restore you to health".
2. Science has proved that BSE cannot be passed down from cow to calf.
3. The Government said that the rain which fell shortly after the Chernobyl disaster would not pollute the grasslands.
4. "He's having an affair. It said so in the papers".

These statements are not asking you to think whether you agree or not. They are telling you to believe what you are told by these experts. But you really need evidence before you can agree.

Evaluation Questions

What do you feel you have learned from this section?



What you
have learned

Did you find anything which may change or improve the way you work?

CREATIVE THINKING: THINKING HATS

This exercise has been adapted from an original idea by Edward de Bono.

Thinking is a skill that can be learned and taught to others.

When you are investigating something, it can be helpful to present ideas from different points of view, **wearing different kinds of thinking hats**. You can wear **black** and be pessimistic or **red** and be full of strong emotions, or **white** and be neutral, sticking strictly to the facts.

In this exercise you have to think about a subject while wearing different hats.

1. WHITE
2. RED
3. YELLOW
4. BLACK
5. GREEN
6. BLUE

You should try the hats on in this order. **The order is important.**

When you have tried them all, you can go back to any one of them to check your responses. For example, if the **Green Hat** produced a revolutionary idea, you can go back to the **Black Hat** or **White Hat** to test it.

What Do the Different Hats Mean?

WHITE HAT: neutral
deals only with facts
is like a computer, has no emotions

RED HAT: strong feelings
emotional
anger/hatred
don't need to give reasons for your feelings
(the Red Hat can protect you if you want to be emotional)

YELLOW HAT: positive
optimistic
hopeful
creative
constructive
the very best point of view

BLACK HAT: negative
pessimistic
constructive
critical
gloomy
threatening
argumentative

GREEN HAT: creative
new ideas
new way of seeing things
making changes easy
offer alternatives

BLUE HAT: gives an overview of the other hats
shows what you need more of
shows what you have too much of
good for drawing conclusions

How to use the Hats

Notice which hat is most useful for each situation, e.g. the White Hat wouldn't produce any new ideas but it may help you to organise a set of facts.

Notice which Hat others in the group are using when they make comments. (You may want to ask someone to take off the Black Hat and try on the Yellow Hat, for example).

Try to avoid mixing Hats. You may think that you are presenting black, negative ideas but without noticing, slip on the Red Hat, offering emotional ideas instead.

Use the Hats to test out new ideas from various points of view.

If you have problems in your life, the Hats can help you look at the situation from different angles. This may help you find solutions.

If you have to make an important decision, trying on all the Hats may help you make that final choice.

Activity



Try on the different hats to discuss any one of these topics:

- puppies
- chocolate
- football
- marriage
- popular music

Put on each Hat for a while and think about your topic from that point of view.

Make some notes.

What would happen if you tried to draw conclusions wearing any of the Hats other than Blue?



Activity
continued

Activity continued

How could the Thinking Hats help you with your work?

Here is a sample answer from a discussion about **cats** using the **Thinking Hats**.

White: Four legged animals with fur and whiskers, eat mice.

Red: Dirty, selfish animals who are like dictators in families, cute loveable fur balls, warm and soft.

Yellow: Really useful in a house for catching mice, good for teaching children how to care for animals, independent and easy pets.

Black: May carry diseases, best to avoid when pregnant (because of diseases), may cause allergy, need to think carefully about the responsibility of owning a cat.

Green: You could open up a new business and run a cat hotel, or breed cats.

Blue: Some people love cats and others hate them. There's no logical explanation. It's all down to feelings.