

University of Ljubljana Career Centres

# University of Ljubljana Tutor's Manual



UNIVERZA  
V LJUBLJANI

## University of Ljubljana Tutor's Manual

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The Manual uses the male gender neutrally. The Manual covers both the University of Ljubljana buddy and mentor system.

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## Dear Tutors,

Here is your Tutor's Manual. It has been created as part of the project "University of Ljubljana Career Centres – the compass on your career path", which is cofinanced by the Republic of Slovenia and the European Social Fund of the European Union. The Career Centres of the University of Ljubljana regard the provision of the tutoring system as part of their responsibility, since they see their role in higher education as not just mediating between students and employers, but also as supporting students in their studies and in their personal development.

The Manual is aimed at tutors, tutor coordinators and all those who work with students and who encounter challenges and issues, such as establishing an appropriate relationship and communication with students, motivating students to study and to achieve the goals set on their career path, achieving effectiveness and rational use of time, effective learning, coping with failure, stress and anxiety.

The Manual is in two parts. The first part deals with specific topics, while the second provides worksheets and exercises that you can print out and use independently in your work. At the beginning of each chapter, the main points are summarised in a few sentences, then there is the detailed content, which includes useful tips, actual cases and proposed solutions. At the end of each chapter you will find a list of references, where you can obtain further information on the topics discussed.

The content has been selected with the aim of providing recommendations for those areas that tutor coordinators and tutors have pointed out in recent years. We trust that the Manual will help you in your work and will contribute to the continued high-quality of tutoring at the University of Ljubljana.

Prof. Dr Barbara Novak,  
*Vice-Rector for Education (2017 – 2021)*

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# 1. TUTORING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

**This chapter deals with the following content:**

- the purpose of tutoring;
- roles and tasks in the tutoring system;
- defining expectations in the tutor – student relationship;
- forms of tutoring provided at the University of Ljubljana.

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## 1.1. The purpose of tutoring, its role and tasks in the tutoring system at the University of Ljubljana

At the University of Ljubljana (hereinafter: UL) in the Rules of the system of tutoring at the University of Ljubljana (2015) we defined tutoring as the systematic and organised provision of assistance to students in their studies and in their academic development.

The purpose of the tutoring system is to co-create an environment that will underpin and encourage:

- all types of support for students during their studies and for their studies (IT support, support in formulating the elective part of the curriculum, support in studying specific subjects and so forth);
- better progress;
- greater inclusion of students in the work and life of the university;
- greater inclusion of students in extracurricular activities;
- special concern for students with special needs, special status and international students.

Since various different actors are involved in the tutoring system, we will have a look below at who are tutors, tutor coordinators and students, the tasks envisaged for them by the UL tutoring system and what forms of tutoring assistance are provided at UL.

### Roles and tasks in the tutoring system at the University of Ljubljana

A **TUTOR** is someone who provides additional explanations and help students acquire information and knowledge; they motivate and guide students and thus contribute to their personal and academic development.

A tutor may be a student or a teacher.

#### The tasks of a student tutor are in particular:

- regular provision of tutorial hours, during which they advise students regarding studies and other topics and situations;
- familiarising students with their rights and duties and the rights of international students, special needs students and special status students;
- familiarising students with the procedures and rules of operation of the member faculty, the Student Council at the faculty and other forms of student organisation and life (Rules of the system of tutoring at the University of Ljubljana, 2015).

#### The tasks of a teacher tutor are in particular:

- provision of tutorial hours, during which they advise students regarding their studies, choice of subjects, their further academic path and career opportunities;
- help in resolving academic or other issues that arise during studies ([University of Ljubljana Tutor's Manual, 2007](#)).

A **TUTOR COORDINATOR** may be any professional, research or teaching staff member of a UL member faculty or a student authorised by the member faculty to coordinate tutoring work ([University of Ljubljana Tutor's Manual, 2007](#)).

**The tasks of a tutor coordinator are in particular:**

- managing tutor meetings;
- monitoring the work of tutors;
- offering tutors help in their work;
- providing tutors with study-related and extracurricular information;
- sees to the implementation of the annual tutoring work plan at the member faculty;
- in cooperation with the Assistant for Tutoring or the Tutoring Committee, compiling a joint annual report on tutoring at the member faculty ([University of Ljubljana Tutor's Manual, 2007](#)).

In the tutoring system a STUDENT is the recipient of assistance and guidance from the teacher tutor or student tutor. Irrespective of their cooperation with a tutor, students are themselves responsible for their academic performance (Rules of the system of tutoring at the University of Ljubljana, 2015).

## 1.2. What can the tutor expect from the student and the student from the tutor?

Tutors often find themselves in a situation where students expect from them specific information and favours, such as providing notes, seminar assignments and similar, which is not the tutor's job. Equally, students often do not know what they can expect from tutors, what they can ask them for and what information a tutor can provide. We frequently hear that they do not know when their tutor is available, how they can be reached and so forth. In order to avoid these issues, it is advisable at the very first meeting to set out clear rules and expectations for both sides. Below we have condensed the main tasks or expectations of tutors and students.

You can also find the list in the final section of the Manual (Appendix 1) and this can serve as a tool or handout when working with students. You can adapt it and supplement it depending on your needs.

**What the tutor can expect from the student:**

- the student should be respectful, sincere and trusting towards the tutor and should strive for a good relationship;
- they should provide contact details through which they can be reached;
- they should attend meetings regularly, and in cases of absence they should excuse themselves in advance;
- they should contact the tutor in the way that was agreed, and should abide by the agreed times;
- they should provide information that is important for conducting the tutorial hours (regarding studies, problems related to studies and so forth);
- they should be familiar with the role of the tutor and the tutor's tasks in the tutor-student relationship.

**What the student can expect from the tutor:**

- the tutor should be respectful, sincere and trusting and should strive for a good professional relationship;
- they should inform the student when and in what manner they can be reached (email address, telephone number, scheduled tutorial hours);
- they should be available at the agreed times;
- they should respond to emails promptly;
- they should arrive at meetings punctually and properly prepared;
- they should help, advise, support and guide the student, and should not carry out assignments in their place;
- the information entrusted to them by the student should be treated with care and in confidence;
- they should guide the student in seeking information and not seek information instead of the student;



- they should give clear instructions regarding expectations and further work;
- they should not impose their own convictions;
- the tutor also has study obligations.

#### What the tutor does not do:

- they do not seek information instead of the student, but simply guide the student;
- they do not offer tips about cheating in exams;
- they do not comment on or discuss teaching staff, the assessment policy, teaching methods and study requirements;
- they do not write seminar assignments, reports, notes etc. instead of the student;
- they do not provide the student with lecture notes.

## 1.3. Forms of tutoring assistance at the University of Ljubljana

Forms of tutoring differ from each other in three criteria: who is in the role of tutor, what form of assistance are they offering and for whom the tutoring assistance is intended. The following forms of tutoring assistance are provided at member faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

Types of tutoring	What assistance the tutor offers
Orientation tutoring	Help for freshmen students in adjusting to the new living and educational environment.
Course tutoring	Additional assistance to students in understanding and mastering study material in individual courses.
Tutoring for international students	Help for students on arrival in Slovenia in getting over the culture shock and adapting to the new environment.

Tutoring for students with special needs	Assistance for special needs students in adjusting and becoming involved in academic life and work, and help with those study activities that they are unable to perform themselves.
Tutoring for information sources	Help in finding and managing sources of information.
Scientific and research tutoring	Assistance in research work, from the set problem to the solution.
Tutoring for compulsory practical work	Assistance in finding and organising compulsory practical work.
Tutoring for students with special status	Guiding students in obtaining special status, exercising rights and fulfilling requirements, and assistance in inclusion in academic life and work.
Teacher tutoring	Tutoring where a teacher is in the role of tutor.

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## 2. ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STUDENT AND PREPARATION FOR MEETING

**This chapter deals with the following content:**

- the progress of group development and its parameters, which may be of assistance in working with students, be it in a group or individually;
- preparation for meetings with the aim of making them more effective.

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When you prepare for any kind of meeting, it is advisable to bear in mind that the development of group dynamics follows its own laws, which are also characteristic of the development of relations between two people, so a knowledge of this is beneficial both for those tutors working with students for the most part individually and for those working with groups.

## 2.1. Group development

The development of the dynamic in a group progresses through five stages (Tuckman and Jensen, 1977), as follows:

- forming (mutual connecting);
- storming (upheaval);
- norming (calming down);
- performing (establishing functional relations);
- adjourning.

The stages of group development progress **in the same sequence in both formal and informal groups**. Each stage plays its part, and **it is advisable for each one to be implemented properly** if you want the group dynamic to be as solid and successful as possible.

Below is a descriptive breakdown of each individual stage:

a) **In the first stage, forming**, the members of the group cautiously observe each other, and there is a reserve, uncertainty, involving standard and tested patterns of behaviour and communication in clichés.

You probably have some experience of encountering an acquaintance starting off with the ritual greetings and the question “How are you?”, to which you expect the response “Good”, and this is followed perhaps by some talk of the weather and general topics before anything shifts. The pattern is similar in a group that is just becoming acquainted.

In order to get past uncertainties as quickly as possible, the leader can help by:

- presenting the purpose of the group or meeting (you can present the aims you have for the meeting, or perhaps tutoring in general, your role, what you expect from students and so forth);
- setting out the structure of the meeting (for instance an agenda);
- ensuring that all the members introduce themselves (it is important for every single member to do this, and given the reservations it makes sense at the beginning to keep introductions formal and fairly impersonal – for instance name, surname, perhaps their home town and such);
- providing a sense of safety (possibly by you introducing yourself first and setting the example for the rest to follow);
- not singling out individuals (maintain the same attitude to everyone, do not comment on an individual’s introduction, just thank them for it and so forth).

b) **In the next stage, storming**, friction arises in the group, and this is essential for structures to be created and roles to be assigned or taken on.

In order for this stage to progress effectively, as a leader you must:

- permit discussion of the work as a group (what members would like to do and so forth);
- set boundaries (steer the conversation so it does not wander off into irrelevant topics and so forth);
- include all members in the conversation;
- encourage talk about the views and values of the members (for instance you can ask them why they chose a particular direction of study, what is important to them in life and so forth);
- prevent disputes on the personal level (the leader can allow disputes about what people want to do and how, but must stop those disputes relating to the personal

circumstances of individuals in the group, such as where they live, gender, etc.);

- encourage the acceptance of diversity (emphasise that differences are acceptable, that they can enrich the group, benefit the work and so forth).

c) **In the third stage, norming**, the group binds together, rules are developed, along with perhaps new tasks in the group, adjustment of behaviour progresses, the role of the group is clarified and trust in members emerges.

The role of the leader in this stage is to:

- outline the purposes (possibly through discussion of the group's purposes, so the visions of members can be coordinated);
- outline the roles (perhaps by checking who has what role or task and so forth);
- outline the rules (perhaps by checking how members understand the rules and so forth);
- foster the connectedness of the group (perhaps through joint rituals, customs, some pleasant activity and so forth).

In this stage, if it progresses intensively, the group binds together strongly, meaning that it can have a deep trust in itself, and can establish its own strong rules and customs, although this can present difficulties in the inclusion of new members. In the event that in this stage or after it a new member joins the group, care needs to be taken that the new member is given a detailed presentation of the rules (including informally), important events in the development of the group and so forth, since this will ease inclusion.

d) **The performing stage** means that the group has now matured sufficiently for the roles of members to be functional and adaptable, meaning that they can be effectively interchanged, adapted and so forth. The members are competent, autonomous and capable of independent decision-making.

The role of the leader in this stage is to:

- monitor progress and achievements and report on them to the group;
- promote the independence and self-confidence of members (this can be through praise, encouragements, etc.);
- delegate problem-solving to the members;
- delegate tasks;
- present the members with challenges.

In the case of course tutoring, this stage would be reflected for instance in students themselves taking on the setting of topics, independently finding solutions to problems, an absent member being quickly substituted and the group working well together, even if the tutor is not present.

e) **The final stage is that of adjourning**, which comes at the end of the diploma assignment or academic year. The conclusion can bring about feelings of sadness, with affection expressed towards the leader and members of the group, especially if the third stage, in which the members bonded, progressed very intensively.

The role of the leader in this stage is to:

- sum up the achievements of the group;
- highlight the achievements of individuals;
- **organise the rituals that signal the conclusion** (for instance evaluation, the conferring of certificates or diplomas and so forth).

In the development of the group dynamic after this stage, it is important to be aware that as the meetings progress and the group becomes more mature, group meetings flow more smoothly and quickly.

**In order for the group dynamic to be maintained as well as possible, it is advisable to have group meetings at least once a week**, which in the context of tutoring probably only applies to course tutoring, where the content of lectures and practicals are discussed each week. In other forms of tutoring you will therefore need at each meeting to plan more painstakingly the individual steps by which you will foster the group dynamic. It is good to be aware that certain group members will progress through specific stages more rapidly than others, and this might require them to be slowed down a little (for instance so they do not share too much too soon) while others are encouraged more (for instance to say a bit more about themselves).

## 2.2. Before the first meeting with students

You can set up the first meeting with students in various ways. You can decide that you should first meet up with the whole group that you are tutoring, or you can start with separate meetings with individual students. In both cases, in your meetings try to keep track of the stage of group development, since even in the case of meeting individually with students, development progresses through the same stages.

I recommend that the first meeting be held as a group, even if it is small, since in this way when there are questions from members you can provide more in-depth explanations about what tutoring will involve and what the rules are, the group can bond and there is better cooperation over the content being followed in tutor meetings.

It is advisable to explain in advance at least in outline in the invitation what will take place at the first meeting. This lets you set out in advance the structure and allows the students to feel safer, to prepare for the meeting and so forth.

## Tasks that are good to carry out before the first meeting

Table 1 shows what tasks are advisable to carry out before the first meeting. Of course you can adapt the preparation to the circumstances you are in, but I trust that the table will help.

Table 1: What you need to do before the first meeting

Task	Time
get information on how many students you are in charge of	at least ten days before the first meeting
decide whether the first meeting will be held in a group or individually	at least ten days before the first meeting
reserve a space for the first meeting with students	at least ten days before the first meeting
think up the content that will be covered in the first meeting	at least a week before the first meeting
make up the invitation to the first meeting	at least a week before the first meeting
obtain the contact details of the students	at least a week before the first meeting
send out the invitation to the first meeting	at least a week before the first meeting
draw up the final plan for the first meeting	at least two days before the first meeting

If you are organising a group meeting (both the first and subsequent), it is advisable, if you have this option, to agree on the date and time of the meeting with the students (adjust the example of preparing for the first meeting in Table 1 in this case and send out two invitations – the first for a decision on when students can most conveniently attend, and the second a notice on when you are meeting).

**In coordinating the meeting it might help you to use one of the websites for coordinating meetings** (such as <https://doodle.com/>), which you can also use for coordinating the times of individual meetings. If you do not have this option, think seriously about when your students most probably have time, and call the meeting for that time.

Since some meetings are not possible to hold in person, or if you are trying to organise meetings before the start of the academic year and it is hard to get hold of the students from all corners of the globe, you can organise a meeting through one of the online chatrooms. If you do not have access to tools such as MTeams or Zoom, which require payment for full functionality, you can use Google meet (<https://apps.google.com/meet/>), or Jitsi meet (<https://meet.jit.si/>).

Since your online meeting might require you to draw something, vote on something or conduct some kind of workshop, you can get help for this from Mural (<https://mural.co/>), Clickup (<https://clickup.com/>), and users of Google tools can make use of Jamboard (<https://jamboard.google.com/>).

For each meeting, either online or in a lecture room, you should in any event **define the goals** you are trying to achieve, and prepare specific activities aligned with this. At the first meeting it would be ideal if you achieve the following goals:

- introduce yourself;
- define when and how you can be reached (email, possibly telephone, office and so forth);
- get to know the students (as persons, their expectations, fears and so forth) and
- agree on subsequent meetings (when, where, what content will be covered).

Of course the accomplishment of certain goals could be stretched out over several meetings, especially if you have a large group of students, but have these meetings as much as possible together, if possible with no more than a week in between, since otherwise it is hard for the group dynamic to flow.

## 2.3. First meeting with students

At the first meeting with students you can follow the group dynamic by gradually addressing issues that are appropriate for the specific stage. An example of the structure of a first meeting with students (this is appropriate both for orientation and course tutoring) is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Example of the structure of a first group meeting with students

Part of meeting	Content	Notes
introductory part (forming)	introduction of tutor	Introduce yourself in the way you would like the students to introduce themselves (i.e. just your name, name and surname, some additional information and so forth).
	introduction of students	Appropriate content for getting to know each other at this stage is their name and surname and perhaps the place they come from.
	presentation of structure	Present the structure of the meeting, how long it is expected to take and other points (this could also be before the student introductions), and you can tell them how and when you can be reached (email, office hours) and how soon you will respond (try to be as quick as possible) and so forth.
intensification of connecting (storming)	introduction of members (tutor and students)	Appropriate content for getting to know each other at this stage includes your horoscope sign, what drew you to study, what is important in your life, who your role models are and so forth.
connecting in the group (norming)	agreements on rules	Appropriate content for this part is an agreement on the time and place of meetings, and how you can contact each other (via email, creating a Facebook group or other suggestions).
	introduction of members	Appropriate content for getting to know each other at this stage includes what they enjoy, what of these things could they do together (you can celebrate birthdays together, go to the cinema and so forth), and agreements about this.

	determining roles	You can agree on who will take the minutes, who will take care of invitations to tutorial meetings, who will be in charge of remembering birthdays and so forth.
agreements going forward (performing)	introduction of members	Appropriate content for getting to know each other at this stage can include talking about prior knowledge, fears, expectations around tutoring and so forth.
	agreement on further content	Explore what content would be desirable to address at tutorial meetings (this can be suggested by the members or by you).
	determining tasks	An agreement on who will do what by the next meeting.
conclusion of meeting (adjourning)	summary of events	Sum up what agreements have been reached (what will be done by the next meeting, when you are next meeting and so forth).
	conclusion	Expression of thanks for participation.

## 2.4. Next meetings with students

The next meeting with students can be individual, so you can devote yourself fully to the individual, and subsequent meetings can depend on what topics are being addressed – for those that are of interest to multiple students (how to study, be organised and so forth) it makes sense to have a full group meeting (or part of the group), and when you are dealing with content relating to individuals, then obviously you would meet with them individually.

For the first individual meeting with a student you can refer to Table 3. The table offers content that could be useful, but of course you can adapt the structure and content depending on your needs and the circumstances.

Table 3: Example of the structure of a first individual meeting with a student

Part of meeting	Content	Proposed content
introductory part (forming)	presentation of structure	Presentation of structure (what the content will be, how much time the meeting will take and so forth).
intensification of connecting (storming)	getting to know the student	What are the student's desires and goals and so forth.
connecting (norming)	agreements on work	How you can help as a tutor, how the student can benefit from your help, confidence between the two of you (so that everything entrusted to you remains between the two of you, and you can only disclose an issue in the case of consulting with experts, but not the identity of the person that entrusted this to you and so forth).
planning (establishing functional relations)	setting student goals for the specific academic year	Setting student goals with regard to the rules for setting goals (presented in the chapter on motivation in the Tutor's Manual), agreement on the tutor's assistance in achieving these goals and so forth.
conclusion	review of agreements	Summary of agreements at the meeting.
	agreement going forward	An agreement on what to carry out by the next meeting, when the next meeting will be, who will initiate it and so forth.

## 2.5. Proposed activities for individual tutoring

For course tutoring it is of course advisable to meet throughout the academic year each week, so that you can promptly resolve issues regarding the course, look deeper into the material and so forth, while for orientation tutoring there is usually not sufficient content to need a weekly meeting. Table 4 shows an example of the timetable for meetings and other activities that can help you in your work, but of course you should adapt the structure and timing to your circum-



stances. The proposed timetable envisages an individual semester having 15 weeks, and proposes certain topics that are more relevant in a specific part of the semester, and it is good to address these in orientation tutoring.

Table 4: Example of the timing of meetings and actions in orientation tutoring over the first academic year

Event	Content	Time
first email to students	invitation to the introductory meeting with a group of students	last week before the first semester
first meeting with a group of students	presentation of tutoring, getting to know students, agreements	first week of the first semester
first meetings with individual students	getting to know students, establishing goals for the specific academic year	first week of the first semester
second meeting with a group of students	presentation of effective ways of studying, formulating study plans	second week of the first semester
third meeting with a group of students	learning about efficient use of time	third week of the first semester
second email to students	enquiry as to how things are going, whether they need any help	seventh week of the first semester
fourth meeting with a group of students	review and discussion of study plans up until the exam period	ninth week of the first semester
fifth meeting with a group of students	presentation of methods for dealing with stress during exam time	tenth week of the first semester
first meeting of student group*	repetition before exams	fourteenth week of the first semester
second meeting of student group*	repetition before exams	fifteenth week of the first semester
third email to students	good wishes for the exam period, encouragement to get in touch if things get difficult	start of first week in the winter exam period

third meeting of student group*	repetition before exams	first week in the winter exam period
fourth meeting of student group*	repetition before exams	second week in the winter exam period
fifth meeting of student group*	repetition before exams	third week in the winter exam period
second meeting with individual students	analysis of performance in the first exam period, possible planning for improvements going forward	first week of the second semester
sixth meeting of student group*	repetition before exams	fourteenth week of the second semester
fourth email to students	enquiry as to how things are going, whether they need any help	seventh week of the second semester
seventh meeting of student group*	repetition before exams	fifteenth week of the second semester
fifth email to students	good wishes for the exam period, encouragement to get in touch if things get difficult	start of first week in the summer exam period
eighth meeting of student group*	repetition before exams	first week in the summer exam period
ninth meeting of student group*	repetition before exams	second week in the summer exam period
tenth meeting of student group*	repetition before exams	third week in the summer exam period
sixth meeting with a group of students	evaluation of work in the group, evaluation of your tutoring, agreements for the next academic year	last week of the summer holidays or first week of the next academic year
third meeting with individual students	analysis of performance in the academic year, setting goals for the next academic year	last week of the summer holidays and first week of the next academic year

\*For meetings of the student group it is not essential for you to attend, but you can participate to improve the dynamic. You can also go over some material that you studied a while ago.

After individual meetings it is advisable to draw up (you can use Appendix 2 at the end of the Manual) minutes of the meeting (of course you should agree on this with the student, since you might be restricted by the legislation on personal data protection), which you can also send to the student and use in the preparation of your next meeting with them. It also makes sense after each meeting with students to send them a list of the agreements you have reached, what content you addressed and so forth. Be attentive to the agreements and stick to them consistently, or notify the students in good time if you cannot do this, since this will maintain trust.

## In conclusion

When preparing meetings, as well as after them, it is perfect if you have the chance to consult with other tutors about them. An exchange of experiences and evaluations from colleagues can help you in your professional and personal growth and improve your own leadership and organisation of meetings. If you are uncertain about anything you can approach the coordinator of tutors.

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# 3. TUTOR - STUDENT COMMUNICATION

**Communication between tutor and student is an important tool for establishing the relationship, and also for achieving the goals that the student wishes to attain during the process. This chapter deals with the following content:**

- methods of clear communication and active listening, as a basis for successful communicative dialogue;**
- tips on how to deal with challenging behaviour from a student, and ways of resolving communication and conflict issues.**

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## 3.1. Are you understanding each other properly?

The success of the relationship and joint cooperation between the tutor and student depends to a large extent on successful and effective communication. However, problems can easily arise here.

### Why?

Each person is a world unto themselves. Not just a world – an entire universe! We are all born with certain abilities, and during our lives we gain a variety of experiences, values and knowledge, and sometimes we ask ourselves how we can understand each other at all given all these differences. This is backed up by the fact that only a third of what we say is properly understood.

### What should you do?

Good, effective communication is vital for personal and professional success. It is a skill that you can learn. Its purpose is to communicate a message to another person, and it is very important here that the other person receives the information in the way the sender wished to give it. Effective communication therefore depends on clear communication on the one hand and active listening on the other hand.

In the process of communicating the sender encodes information and sends it to the recipient through a channel/medium. The recipient then decodes the message and responds to it (provides feedback to the sender). Communication is thus a process whereby we ascribe and transmit significance with the aim of creating common understanding. The process requires a wide selection of skills in the area of personal and interpersonal understanding, listening, observation, speaking, questioning, analysing and evaluating.

If you want to understand your interlocutor, you must decode their message. You can make this easier by asking questions:

- “If I understand correctly, you’re telling me that...”
- “This means that you feel...”
- “Does it seem to you that...”
- “This means for you...”
- “I have the feeling that...”

## 3.2. The power of non-verbal communication

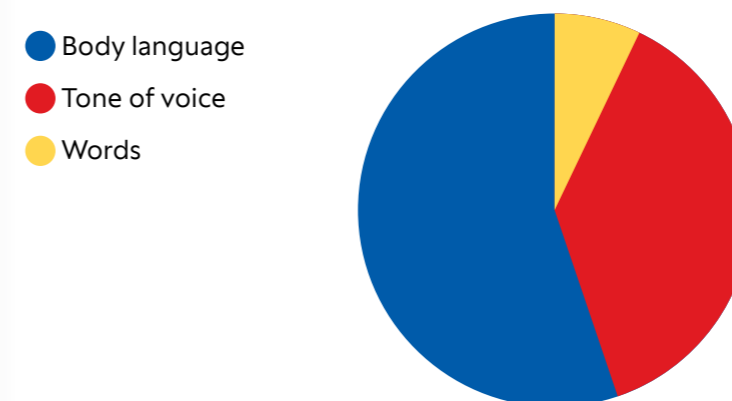
The fact that things get even more complicated in communication is thanks to non-verbal communication, which often communicates something different from what you are saying in words.

**In communication it holds that words have just 7% of the weight, tone of voice has 38% and body language has a full 55%.**

So it is not even that important what we say, but rather how we say it.

In communicating with a student it is important to be mindful of non-verbal signs (such as various body postures, tone of voice, body language), and if the non-verbal message does not seem to you to align with the verbal message, you can draw the student’s attention to this. You can say for instance: “I wasn’t convinced by your...”

Graph 1: The significance of non-verbal speech



### 3.3. Clear communication

Clear communication in a relationship with a student has other purposes in addition to providing information. Through high-quality communication students feel included, they are more motivated to achieve their goals, and at the same time it contributes positively to the development of good interpersonal relations.

The relationship is like a bridge, where the tutor is 100-percent responsible for their half and the student 100-percent responsible for their own half.

#### So – are you ready to learn?

In front of you are a number of tips on how to prepare to provide information to another person in a way that will be as clear and understandable as possible. Memorise some of these pieces of advice and practice them daily. And don't forget – practice makes perfect!

- Get to the core of what you want to communicate to the student.
- Communicate the core concisely and clearly (simply, in understandable language).
- Do not try to pass on to your interlocutor all the knowledge you have about a thing.
- Avoid jargon, foreign words, abbreviations and so forth.
- Provide the information in a logical sequence (1, 2, 3...).
- Make the information more appealing with visual aids, examples, descriptions and so forth.
- Provide the information several times, repeat the essence, make a summary.
- Listen to your interlocutor carefully.
- Check to see that they have understood properly.

### 3.4. Active listening

Once you have made sure to provide clear and understandable information to the student, your next task is active listening. Active listening is the reflection of the content and feelings, along with a summarising, of everything the other person has said. The listener is actively involved in clarifying the thoughts and feelings of the speaker.

We speak of active listening when:

- you want to hear what the other person wants to say;
- you are ready to take the time for a conversation and to listen to the other person;
- you are ready to understand that person.

#### Always listen

Active listening is vital in the relationship with a student. This means that the student has the feeling that you are listening to them, taking them into consideration and understanding them, and respecting their needs. Empathy plays an important part in this. The student must have the feeling that their problems are understood and that everything has been done to resolve them.

#### Politeness

Words such as please and thank you are often forgotten in relationships. But it is especially important in work with students not to neglect the basics of etiquette. The student will have the feeling of being valued and respected, and not just being one of the crowd.

#### Involve the student in the process of solving a problem

If the student has a problem, involve them in the process of solving it. They should always have a handle on what the next steps will be and how soon they can expect a solution. It is advisable to draw up a plan together for solving problems

and small goals that you will stick to. Table 5 shows several skills that can help you be an adept listener.

Table 5: Skills that will help you listen

Technique for listening skills	Description
asking open questions	<p>These are questions that the student can answer descriptively, and they are useful for a more in-depth understanding of the student's topic, since they outline for you the student's situation and views on it.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>What (describes facts)?</p> <p>How (process, feelings)?</p> <p>Why (causes)?</p> <p>Could... (general description of situation)?</p>
asking closed questions	<p>These are questions for which you will get the answer 'yes' or 'no'. You can make use of closed questions when you want to conclude the conversation, for instance 'So, are we agreed then?'</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Did you...?</p> <p>Was there...?</p>
technique of paraphrasing statements	<p>This is a technique where you repeat what you have heard, so you can make sure you understood the student properly. Repeat back to the student some of the main words – this encourages them to describe the details.</p>

technique of reflecting feelings

Focus attention on the feelings that accompany the problem.

Example:

Ask the student: 'How do you feel about this?'

technique for summarising what you heard

At the end of the conversation summarise all the facts, feelings and reasons the person presented to you. Say in your own words what the other person told you. Also, summarise the agreement between the two of you. You can also ask the student to sum up the key communications of your meeting. In this way you can make sure you both understood what was agreed in the same way.

### 3.5. Conditions for a successful relationship and communication between tutor and student

#### Respect:

- take some time to provide for a suitable space;
- introduce yourself to the student and remember their name;
- listen attentively, do not interrupt and do not try to persuade;
- ask open questions, without criticism or judgement.

#### Being genuine:

- know how to talk about yourself and show your feelings;
- do not try to appear different from what you really are;
- do not make promises that you cannot keep, i.e. stick to your promises and agreements.

**Empathy:**

- include non-verbal elements in your responses;
- take a personal approach;
- listen actively.

**Quick tip**

In communication it will be easier to overcome obstacles if you use an 'I' message. This means that instead of a 'you' message (e.g. 'How could you do that!') use the first person singular and words such as 'it bothers me...', 'it doesn't feel right to me', 'it seems to me' and so forth. In this way it is easier to be closer to the other person, since they will not feel threatened.

## 3.6.

### When not everything goes to plan in communication

It is always a good idea to first try to work out the real reason for some unpleasant behaviour from the other person. The reasons are often really simple. Perhaps the student feels under-appreciated, or that they deserve more attention, that they have not progressed in their studies as they would have liked and so forth. The reasons can also relate to serious personal difficulties (financial, learning, love and so forth).

Often a very simple approach in solving problems is a simple conversation where you show interest in the other person. Try to establish a calm and pleasant atmosphere (for instance have a coffee or tea together, go out for lunch and so forth) and talk about possible problems or unresolved issues. Show understanding if the reason for the difficulty is justified, and offer help. If the difficulty continues and the behaviour of the other person becomes increasingly disruptive for others, it is time to take other action.

## 3.6.1.

### Setting boundaries

Dealing with difficult behaviour involves an approach similar to dealing with bringing up a difficult child. It is important to set boundaries and to stick to them consistently yourself. It should be clearly determined what is acceptable and what is not. It is extremely important that you respond quickly when boundaries have been overstepped. Often you will have to respond immediately, but it is advisable to consider things at least for a moment first. But do not spend too much time thinking, or worse, do not avoid a confrontation, since this will send the other person the message that everything is just fine and they can continue behaving the way they do.

Boundaries are a message about what rules need to be observed, where the boundaries of your own integrity lie and what your expectations are. Boundaries determine criteria, and they are a kind of 'recipe' for how you wish and permit others to behave towards you. Through them you define what is acceptable, safe and permissible for you in your relationship with another person.

**How to set boundaries for another person:**

- clearly express your expectations;
- agree on rules of cooperation;
- do not apologise or give reasons – just provide a brief explanation and stick with that;
- be consistent;
- through verbal and non-verbal communication show that you are being serious;
- be respectful but determined;
- present your demands in good faith and in a friendly way;
- do not impugn the integrity or dignity of the other person.

## 3.6.2. How to communicate with a difficult partner

### Acting professionally

Be sure on your part that you have acted professionally, with propriety and in the best possible way in the given moment. Prepare well for the meeting. If the other person 'drives you up the wall', take a time out and then continue the communication when you are calm. Be self-reflective – think about how you too could respond differently. None of us are infallible – if you make a mistake apologise and try to put it right.

### Stay calm

When the other person behaves improperly towards you (is unfriendly, insulting, aggressive, ignorant and so forth), it is very hard to stay calm. It is important in these moments for you to be able to recognise your feelings and find a way to calm down. This can involve conscious breathing, counting in your head, a brief time out (e.g. going out for a glass of water). If you are very upset, postpone the conversation to another time.

### Exercise for rapid calming

Close your eyes, breathe in deeply and exhale, and in your thoughts go to your 'safe place'. This is a place that can exist in reality or just in your head – it doesn't matter. What is important is that you feel pleasant and safe there. Focus on how you feel in your 'safe place'. When you open your eyes again, keep the positive feelings with you. This exercise will help mitigate unpleasant feelings and make it easier to continue your work.

### Find a solution

In solving the problem do not dwell on who is at fault, but rather focus on solutions. Avoid trying to rectify the past, and

be in the present moment. For instance: 'The situation is such and such, so let's see what we can do moving forward...' Seek out multiple solutions and focus on the best one.

## 3.6.3. Different types of difficult partners

### a) Negativists and complainers

These are negativistic, cynical and unenthusiastic people, critical of everything and everyone, not willing to cooperate or take responsibility, and always see the fault as lying in others. They are chronically unsatisfied and constantly complain.

**Recommended action:** Do not play the part of a saviour. Let them have their share of responsibility. Guide them towards solutions. When they give an opinion, do not contradict them. Stick to the facts and repeat the positive things which you think can come out of this.

### b) Martyrs and eternal victims

They have an attitude of 'poor me' towards everything, they feel cheated, excluded, and often they arouse feelings of guilt in others.

**Recommended action:** Do not play the part of a saviour. Help them feel empowered and to strengthen their positive attributes. Set boundaries for them and push them to play the part of an 'adult'.

### c) Aggressive and violent people

These are interlocutors who are coercive, aggressive, argumentative and driven to take advantage of other people or to behave aggressively towards them. They frequently try to tell other people 'what's what', they interfere in other people's business, make demands on them and want things to be 'their way'.



**Recommended action:** Be aware that you cannot change their personality, but you can adjust the way you respond. The majority of aggressive people anticipate other people deferring to them because they do not want conflict. The next time you are in conversation with such a person, listen to them, do not respond and calmly, clearly and consistently stick to the set boundaries.

#### d) Know-alls

They have a superiority complex and at every step they have a sense of greater worth, they are arrogant, egocentric and think they are always right.

**Recommended action:** Do not object to their judgements, since you will achieve the most with them if you agree with them or even give them some kind of praise. Politely cut off the conversation and advise them to write everything down rather than telling you. Set a clear boundary where it is needed.

#### e) Passive people

These people are meek, quiet and subservient, they avoid conflict and along with it all responsibility.

**Recommended action:** Encourage and embolden them. Together with them set out small steps that they can achieve.

### 3.6.4. Time for action

**Make a plan.** Every tutor must also be a good strategist. This also applies to confrontations with difficult students. Think about where, when and how you will speak to them. Make sure that the conversation takes place between the two of you – unless you take the view in advance that another person should be present.

**Focus on the actions, not on the person.** When you confront an individual regarding their difficult behaviour, focus on their actions. Do not use personal attacks, such as ‘You’re bad, incapable, irresponsible...’ Try to say: ‘Your behaviour is having a bad effect on...’

**Offer an alternative.** For the thing identified as a problem, you should offer a positive alternative. How should the student act in similar situations, how should they respond – in other words what is acceptable and even desirable from them.

**Use ‘I’ messages.** In communication and descriptions of the reasons why a certain behaviour is problematic, if you use ‘I’ sentences this will significantly reduce the defensiveness and resistance from the other person.

**Listen.** Do not forget to take the time to really listen. Do not deny the other person the right to defend themselves and explain their reasons. This enables you to maintain an appropriate level of objectivity and provides time for reflection.

**Summarise and clarify.** When you listen to the other person and together you want to find a creative solution for both sides, summarising is a very useful technique. In this way you can make sure that you have understood correctly (so any difficulty later will not wind up as some endless vicious cycle). You can say for instance: ‘If I understand correctly, you are proposing...’

**Accentuate the positive.** Just as in criticism of undesired, problematic behaviour you objectively highlight critical facts, you should also highlight what is positive. Combine being critical with being positive. In this way you can secure the cooperation of the ‘opposing’ side and balance the tension in the situation.

**Summarise.** At the end of the meeting summarise what was agreed for the future and what the consequences will be if the boundaries that have been set are overstepped again. Summarise and emphasise the positive alternative as to what is desired and expected in the future.

**The connecting element running through all this is always your own personal orientation. This is the key to all solutions.** For this reason, when you are dealing with challenging individuals you should still try to maintain a positive orientation towards them. If you do not fully succeed in this, the golden rule should be that at least you avoid accusations and insults. Act objectively, on the basis of facts, try to find a common solution and not your personal victory. Seek out positive things in other people and highlight them.

### 3.6.5. Winning way of resolving conflict: “I win – you win”

An enduring and high-quality way of communicating can be found in the win-win ('I win – you win') method, which alone takes into account all the participants and their substantive and emotional needs. In terms of time this method is of course not always the most efficient, but in resolving conflicts that kind of efficiency does not matter.

**The best thing is to maintain a balance between your feeling for yourself (the importance of your own interests) and your feeling for others (the importance of good relations). It is important, however, that on matters that are vitally important to you, you do not budge.**

In a constructive atmosphere, conflicts can even be beneficial, since they foster creativity, exchanges of views, argumentation and seeking the best solutions. Where a conflict is destructive, first of all everyone needs to calm down, mutual understanding encouraged and alternatives and possible solutions explored. Sometimes humour also helps!

#### **In conclusion, a short story on the power of communication**

A story goes that once there was a blind man sitting on the pavement, with his hat next to his feet and beside that a wooden sign on which was written in chalk: 'Please help me, I am blind'.

Some creative professional writer walked by, stopped and looked at the paltry bit of change in the hat. Without asking permission, he grabbed the wooden sign and on the other side wrote a new message. He put the sign back down by the poor man's feet and went on his way.

In the afternoon the writer again walked past the man begging for alms. He noticed that now his hat was full of bank notes and coins. The blind man recognised the writer's gait, so he asked if he was the one who had written the new message, and most importantly, what he had written.

The writer replied: 'Nothing that is any less truthful than what you wrote, but in different words.' And grinning he went on his way. The blind man never found out that the new message read as follows:

'Today it is spring and I can't see it.'

**When you do not succeed in something, change the strategy/message and perhaps the new method will be more successful.**

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# 4. MOTIVATION OF STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE SET GOALS

**This chapter deals with the following content:**

- **the student's motivation to study;**
- **the theory of needs that steer us in life;**
- **the methods and techniques that can help in identifying student motivation (coaching method of posing questions, the GROW model and SWOT analysis);**
- **how to help the student define their specific goals and how to formulate an action plan to achieve them;**
- **what to do if a student is non-responsive and unmotivated by your efforts.**

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Motivation is a force that creates behaviour through which we satisfy a need. Motivation is a force concealed behind our behaviour – understanding the motive hidden behind an action is the key to motivation. Knowing what the individual wants to achieve is the essence of motivation to achieve a goal. Understanding the primary motive for an action is the key to motivating anyone, including yourself.

**As a tutor you must discover in working with students what their inner motivation is.** Without inner motivation it does not work, and external rewards are just short-term solutions.

Motivation was researched by Abraham Maslow, an American psychologist and founder of humanist psychology, who in his paper A Theory of Human Motivation divided human needs into four basic or lower needs (i.e. those that are important principally for human survival) and three higher needs (needs for personal growth). In terms of their importance he ranked them into what is called a hierarchy of needs. Understanding the concept of the hierarchy of satisfying needs is vital to understanding the motivation of each individual, and of course students and their motivation to study.

Maslow's ranking of needs is composed of physiological needs, followed by safety needs, love and social needs and esteem needs. At the peak of the author's pyramid we find the highest needs of humans, i.e. self-fulfilment or self-actualisation needs. When we satisfy the basic needs, we start seeking out other areas of need: success, emotional fulfilment, personal growth, self-respect.

The key to true motivation, whereby we motivate ourselves or others, is which of the stated needs is most important for that person at a given time. Motivation is very personal and can change in an instant if the priorities change. Motivation can change during an activity. Example: you start training to run for weight loss, then you run for the sense of wellbeing, and then for the enjoyment of the sport itself.

## 4.1. Techniques and tools for motivating others

Encourage the student first to explore their wishes and needs that guide them in their studies, so that through joint work the two of you can more easily discover where their motivation lies. Are they really interested in the course they have chosen? Are they studying for themselves or others (e.g. parental pressure)? Are they using study to fulfil their interests and dreams, or are they studying so that later it will be 'easier to find a job'? Do they just want to get the course 'done', or do they want to prove themselves in a given field of expertise?

### a) Coaching

In researching the area of motivation there is a useful method known as 'coaching', which is in fact a **method of clear and effective posing of questions** that enables more effective learning and development of the individual. It is focused on ways of behaving to achieve goals, raising motivation and establishing the right strategies. It serves to encourage the development of values such as being proactive, innovative and responsible. Coaching helps a person make changes in an area/areas that are important for them: in other words 'taking a step forward' in the direction they want, and mainly in a way that aligns with them and will bring the desired results.

Through the coaching method you can help the student:

- become conscious of what is important for them;
- define clear goals, understanding and personal growth;
- expand awareness of themselves and their surroundings;
- and guide, motivate and encourage them on the path to their individual goal.

## b) GROW model

The GROW model (taken from Whitmore, 2002) can be used as a guideline/starting point for conversation. The model is aptly abbreviated as an indication of growth, while each letter also denotes one of the steps explained below. These are guidelines to have in one's head during a conversation with the student, and they help steer the conversation towards identification of their motivation, goals and results.

**TO: topic** – what would you like to talk about?

**G: goal** – what would you like to achieve in the tutor meeting? What is the desired status?

**R: reality, research** – what is going on currently in the student's life? What is troubling them? Where do they not know or are unable to see the way ahead?

**O: options** – together seeking possibilities and methods that might lead the student to the desired status.

**W: will** – where is the student's will and motivation? What will they do? What are the next steps? What is the most important thing for them from this meeting?

**ME: monitoring and evaluating** – how will the student monitor their shift, their success? How will they know that they succeeded? What will the difference be in their life?

Some examples of questions that can help you uncover the student's motivation and goals using the GROW model:

- What do you actually want? What would satisfy you?
- What does \_\_\_\_\_ represent for you?
- How does that look right now? Tell me something about it.
- What do you feel you could do in this regard in the next month?
- What else could you do?
- What would your life look like if you had already done this?
- If you could do anything, what would that be?
- What is the possibility of you really doing this?

- What do you need for this?
- What can you do starting tomorrow? What will you do tomorrow?
- How will you know that you succeeded?

## c) SWOT analysis

**For easier identification of internal and external factors, together with the student you can also do a SWOT analysis,** which identifies strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O) and threats (T). The analysis can be applied to yourself, others, studies, personal life and so forth.

In a SWOT analysis you place under the microscope four aspects, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The purpose of the analysis is assistance in decisions about where specifically to steer oneself and one's life/studies.

First of all there needs to be a demarcation of **strengths/weaknesses** and **opportunities/threats**. The first two aspects relate to internal and the second two to external factors. The main difference here is that with internal factors we have some influence, we can adapt, develop or take some other action. With internal factors we are in a region of our own influence. Opportunities/threats relate to external factors on which we have no influence and we cannot ourselves do anything directly other than adapt our inner qualities, and we can use opportunities as a tool for motivation. Appendix 3 in the final part of the Manual offers an example of a SWOT analysis and questions that can help you in your work. You can use it as a worksheet to share with students.

## 4.2. Setting goals

When you have analysed needs and motivations, the student can set goals. Setting goals is a very important factor on the path to success. Goals are set in order to steer one's life and to shift wherever one wishes. In setting goals it is important to know why you wish to achieve them – indeed the intent is more powerful than the result.

**A set goal will raise the student's motivation and steer them towards seeking the right strategies to achieve it.**

In the final section of the Manual (Appendix 4) you will find a worksheet that you can use with the student as a basis for the conversation about setting goals.

### 4.2.1. Smart goal setting

When you set or reframe your goals, it makes sense to stick to the formula recommended by numerous experts on goal setting. The basic formula centres on the English word SMART. Each individual letter in the word represents one of the important elements that every goal must contain.

A well-set goal should therefore be:

**S** – specific. What needs to be done and by when, who will do it and what is needed, why you are doing it and so forth.

**M** – measurable, since only in this way can you see how much progress you have made, while at the same time achieving goals on the path to ultimate success represents an additional motivation, since you have already achieved a goal.

**A** – attainable/achievable. Setting unattainable goals has a bad influence on morale and motivation. Smart goal setting is also important because through smart planning, a goal that seems unattainable can be made attainable.

**R** – realistic. If the goal seems realistic to you, you will make the effort and work to achieve it, otherwise (if the goals seem unrealistic from the outset) your motivation will fade sooner. You should set yourself both high and realistic goals at the same time, and you yourself can determine how high. It is easiest to set realistic goals based on past experience.

**T** – time-related, i.e. set in a time frame as explained above. Ask yourself: 'How much time will I need for a specific task?' or 'By when will the project be concluded?'

In the final part of the Manual you will find an exercise (Appendix 5), which using the described method will lead to a definition of your goal.

### 4.2.2. Action plan for achieving the goal

This is a plan of steps as to how the student will achieve their goals. Help the student define specific steps and activities for achieving their goal. You might be helped in this by the proposed action plan (Appendix 6), which you will find in the final part of the Manual.

## 4.3. Problems with non-responsive students

You are highly motivated to work with students, you are ready to study and educate, you are making an effort, yet still just one or two students are showing up to the tutorial meetings? Don't worry, you are not the only one. Stick to your mission. Find out what works. Get together and talk to other tutors to see what works for them.

Above all, think about:

- What are you actually offering the students? Why would they come to you for help?
- In what way are you letting the students know that they can get the help of a tutor? Through what channels do the students respond (events, notice board, internet, email, Facebook, Instagram, telephone messages and so forth)?
- Are you in personal contact with the students?
- Do you know what they need?
- Have you given notice of the times and locations of meetings in advance and in due time so that the students can organise their time?

And do not forget, it is your responsibility to do your work professionally, in good faith and to the best of your abilities. What others take from you or not is their responsibility, not yours.

### **In conclusion, another story that you can share with your students**

One day a distinguished professor at a French faculty of economics was asked to give a lecture on the topic 'Efficient and economical planning of an individual's time'. He was supposedly speaking to around 15 directors of large North American corporations. The lecture was to be one of five workshops of a one-day seminar. This gave the distinguished professor just one hour for his lecture. So when he stood up in front of the elite group, who were ready to note down every word he said, he looked around the lecture hall and said: 'Let's do an experiment.' From under the lectern he produced a huge glass jug (which could hold more than four litres of fluid) and placed it in front of him.

He then took a dozen round stones, about as big as tennis balls, and carefully one by one, put them into the glass jug. When the jug was filled to the brim and he could not put anything else in it, the professor looked up and asked his audience: 'Is the jug full?'

They all said yes. The professor waited a moment, then asked again: 'Really?'

Then from under the lectern he took out a pot full of little pebbles. With some precision he sprinkled them among the large stones and then lightly shook the glass jug. The pebbles were distributed around the stones, all the way to the bottom. Again he asked his audience: 'Is this jug full?' Now his students slowly grasped the process. One of them answered: 'It's probably not full.'

'So,' continued the professor. Then from under the lectern he produced a bucket of sand. He carefully shook it into the glass jug. The sand filled up the spaces between the stones and pebbles. Once again he asked: 'Is the jug full?'

This time his audience, without any hesitation and in one voice, answered: 'No, it's not full!'

'So,' continued the professor, who then picked up a jug of water from the lectern, and poured it into the glass jug, up to the brim. He asked: 'What great truth does this experiment reveal to us?'

The boldest person in the audience thought about the topic of the lecture and said: 'The experiment shows us that even though a person might have a completely full timetable, he can, if he really wants, still find time for something important.'

The professor said to him: 'No, that's not it.'

'The great truth is this: If a person does not first fill up the jug with the biggest stones, later on he will not be able to get everything else into the jug.'

There was dead silence. The professor continued: 'What are the big stones in your life?'

'Your health, family friends, fulfilling dreams, learning and education so you can do what makes you happy, rest, fighting for your principles, taking time for yourself and so forth.'

'What you need to remember is that what a person needs to put in first place in his life is the "big stones", otherwise it might happen that he will not be successful in life.'

'If a person prioritises those little pebbles, he will fill his life with little things and will not have enough precious time for the important things in life.'

'So don't forget to ask yourself this question: What are the big stones in my life?

And first start with them.' With a slow wave the professor greeted his audience and left the lecture hall.

*Christian Godefroy*

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# 5. USE OF TIME IN TERMS OF PERSONAL EFFICIENCY AND GUIDING STUDENTS

**This chapter deals with the following content:**

- the concept of use of time;
- the steps that can help you in your own planning of use of time, from analysis of yourself, planning your activities and avoiding disruptions to use of time when something gets cancelled.

Author of article:  
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When we talk about use of time, we are talking about behaviour aimed at achieving efficient use of time, when you perform activities to achieve certain goals. In the past such behaviour was aimed mainly at being as productive as possible at work, while nowadays training in the use of time is to an increasing extent aimed at life in general having higher quality and at obligations being coordinated to the best possible extent and minimising their impact on our free time.

The authors Claessens, van Eerde, Rutte and Roe, 2007 distinguish between four different generations of aids aimed at efficient use of time as follows:

- reminders (simple notes and lists);
- planning, preparation, setting goals, determining dates using calendars and computers;
- setting priorities and managing on the basis of values, setting long-term and short-term goals, daily organising;
- spending time on truly important things in life, separating up unimportant tasks, training for declining tasks.

In Slovenia people talk more about 'time management' than about 'use of time', but generally authors around the world agree that 'time management' is not an appropriate expression, since until we develop time machines, we cannot manage time nor can we organise it.

Training for use of time should, in order to be most effective, include drills in various skills:

- the skill of planning, setting priorities allocating everyday tasks;
- the skill of spending a greater part of your time on important rather than on urgent tasks;
- the skill of managing disruptions;
- the skill of linking together medium-term goals with daily goals;

- the skill of setting and achieving goals;
- the skill of using lists to prevent forgetfulness;
- the skill of declining, without endangering relationships or your career;
- the skill of recognising and reducing procrastination;
- the skill of decision-making about what is truly important;
- the skill of seeking a work-life balance and
- the skill of influencing the organisational culture of making use of time.

In orientation tutoring it makes sense of course for students to be familiarised not just with how to study, but also with the techniques of using time, since studying is much less structured in terms of time than their previous schooling, and deciding on how to allocate time is left up to them much more.

**Research has shown that efficient use of time is associated with satisfaction at work and study and with less stress at work and study, individuals with greater skills in using time set themselves higher goals in studying and achieve higher grades, so dealing with these issues is well worth the time and is not a waste of it.**

## 5.1. Analysis of time use or 'What am I doing with my time?'

I suggest that you get to grips with the issue of time use by first **reviewing how you spend your time**. You can make up a table in one of the programmes that allows you to make tables, use one of the programmes that allows you to do this (those that are free to use for a single user include <https://www.rescue-time.com>, <https://clockify.me/>, <https://www.timecamp.com/> or <https://tmetric.com/>), and you can also use Appendix 7.

It is advisable to monitor time as precisely as possible for at least three days, if not a whole week, and each day or at the end of the whole period make a review of what is happening. Your students can do the same thing, then you can use one of your meetings with them to analyse the findings. If monitoring time use in this way is too demanding for you or your students, you can immediately make use of Appendix 8, completing it on the basis of the review of time you performed with Appendix 7. You can include in this other activities that were not foreseen. When you add up the time you need for all the listed activities, **you get a better view of whether you are devoting too much or too little time to a single activity**. If you subtract the overall time of all weekly activities from 168, you can see how many hours you have available for unforeseen events.

The general recommendation for work is that you plan just 40% of your time, and keep the rest free for unforeseen events, although it is true that this proportion depends to a large extent on how unpredictable your work is. Of course it also makes sense for studying that you allow some time for unforeseen events, and if nothing unusual happens, you can use the remaining time in the most rational and high-quality way.

Table 6: Part of completed table of time use

Date	Time (XX:XX)	Activity	Satisfied needs	Fulfilled values	Remarks
7 April 2010	00.10	sleep	rest		
	6.40	snoozing			unnecessary
	6.50	eating	eating		
	7.05	morning ablutions	hygiene		somewhat extended showering
	7.30	reading the news		being informed	delaying

7.40	journey to the faculty		
8.19	assessment of reports		very important
8.24	visit Professor X		disruption
8.34	assessment of reports		very important
9.12	preparing e-classroom	curiosity	
9.35	departure for Student Organisation meeting	family	used for telephone conversation with parents

## 5.2. What are my values and needs?

In order for the activities you choose to be as rational as possible, it is important to know what your **values and needs are**.

Under **needs** you list the things without which you could not live or their absence (including in the long term) could jeopardise your existence, or their absence could significantly impact your quality of life (for instance food, drink, rest, hygiene, etc.).

Under **values** you list those things that are important to you, that bring you satisfaction and happiness and fulfil your life (such as friends, knowledge, family, success, etc.). Everyone should make up their own list, and to help with this you can use Appendix 9.

If you are not convinced about your values and needs, you can repeat the exercise several times with a gap of a few days, and see which values and needs you listed most. Of course it also makes sense to think about your own values at least every few years (since with development the hierarchy changes) and upon major life events (such as completing studies, birth of a child, sickness, etc.), since it would be

a shame for your planning to be based on values that are no longer highly important to you and to neglect those that have become important.

When you have a list of values and needs ready, you can look over Appendix 7 and ask yourself a few questions:

- Which of my needs have been made a lower priority in my days?
- Which of my values have been made a lower priority?
- Which values could perhaps be given less time?
- Which activities have been very, medium or not important?
- Did I achieve what I wanted?
- What time of day am I most productive?
- What time of day am I least productive?
- Which events constituted disruptions (events that were not under your control and were not important to you or even impede you in achieving your goals – for instance a housemate who wants to go to a party with you when you need to study)?
- Which actions constituted procrastination (activities that are under your control but which you did to avoid a less pleasant but important action)?
- Have I noticed anything else?

It is a great idea to share your observations with the students or for them to share them with each other, since in this way they gain a better insight into how to make use of their time, they share remarks about the findings and help each other find solutions.

## 5.3. Planning activities

Once you have an insight into how you are spending your time, you can start planning your activities in line with this. **You can make up a timetable for each day** and the whole week in advance, and you can also plan for longer periods.

You can do this **using a notebook or calendar** (including online), or you could consider one of the **applications** (for instance <https://todoist.com/> or <https://www.remembertthemilk.com/>).

Be sure to leave enough space in the timetable to satisfy your needs and fulfil your values, and take into account here when you are more and less productive. In setting up the timetable be mindful to allow enough time for unforeseen events, time when you will not be doing anything or when such time does arise, that you will fill it with some sensible activities. Look over your plan and check whether it lacks any time for some important thing, and try to avoid the less important things. You can find out about how you set the goals so that you will be most effective in achieving them in the next chapter.

You can help yourself in planning by **dividing individual assignments into the most precise possible tasks** (you can organise these into a table such as the one in Appendix 7). For instance you can separate up the job of preparing a seminar assignment into specific tasks: finding the literature, studying it, preparing the structure, formulating the introduction. When you have a structure laid out on the basis of your searching, you can add other tasks (or chapters). In longer-term planning you can determine the time for specific tasks so you will complete the assignment on time.

## 5.4. Separating important and urgent tasks

In deciding how to allocate time, it is important to **separate important and urgent tasks**. Important tasks are those that are tied to your needs and values, and urgent ones are those where you are short of time to do them, although they are not necessarily truly important for you. It can help to separate activities by their urgency and importance.

**Important and urgent** tasks are for instance: saving a choking child, rescuing property from a flood, seeing the head teacher because of a child's bad behaviour and so forth. **Some important tasks also become urgent due to procrastination** (for instance submitting a seminar assignment), but you can avoid unnecessary stress if you plan such assignments in advance and carry them out in sufficient time before the deadline.

**Tasks that are just important but not urgent** include: doing sports, doing your favourite leisure activity, meeting up with friends and family, dates with your partner, studying, maintaining your house and car and so forth. In your planning you should allocate these tasks the most time, so they do not become urgent and you can maintain the best possible quality of life.

**Activities that are urgent but not important** are usually disruptors, and often involve helping others achieve their goals, such as responding to a large pile of email, dealing with a student's request for a letter of recommendation and so forth. The problem is that you can spend a lot of time on these activities because their urgency makes them seem important. This does not mean that you don't need to attend to them, but you need to consider to what extent, when and of course to watch out that you do not allocate more time to them than to important activities.

If you have the problem of being too nice to other people, you might benefit from some assertiveness training, so you can learn to stand up for yourself and take time for things that are important to you.

**Activities that are neither important nor urgent are also mainly disruptors.** This involves for instance watching television, wasting time on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and similar, playing computer games, pointless shopping and so forth. When you find yourself in that place, you need to consider whether you are using it to relax after a hard day (which can make sense up to a point), or whether it does not make enough sense and you can stop doing that and switch to something more fulfilling.

## 5.5. How to avoid less important activities

If possible, leave them to someone else, or divide them up (shopping can be done each time by someone who enjoys it, or can be done each time by a different person among your housemates, for instance).

As for disruptors that are not under your control, it is advisable to try to prevent or limit them (for instance you can lock your room when you are focusing on study). If you end up procrastinating, it is good to be aware of this and to try to prevent it.

You might have major problems using a computer, which on the one hand is an essential tool for study, while on the other hand you can use it to access websites that represent both procrastination and relaxation. For this reason you might consider using an **application that allows only limited access to websites** that you determine (such as <https://self-controlapp.com/>, <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/leechblock-ng/> and so forth).

There is a similar danger lurking in your mobile phone, for which there are also various apps that help you avoid excessive use (such as <http://www.offthegridapp.com/>).

Procrastination may be a result of feeling overwhelmed by an assignment and not knowing where to begin. In this case it can help to **divide up the assignment into the smallest possible parts and tackle the first one as soon as possible**.

If you do not feel sure of yourself, this can help:

- think about the knowledge and skills you have to achieve the goal;
- education about the issue (you can browse online);
- think about past successes that you have achieved;
- a person who succeeded in something similar and who is most similar to you.

Some people also procrastinate when they fear failure. With some students we have observed that they can put off preparing for exams, so in the event that they fail, they know they did not give it their all, and can face the failure more easily than if they had put everything they could into it, and then have to face a possible failure knowing it was not enough.

In procrastination you also need to check whether there is still some other need that has not been met, and for that reason you are doing things that partly satisfy it – for instance you are eating sweet things instead of realising that you need to rest because your energy is low, you are hanging out on Facebook because you are not socialising enough and at least you have the feeling of keeping up with your friends, instead of getting together with them and spending some quality time in their company.

## 5.6. How do you make use of the time when something is cancelled?

Students as well as other people experience things being cancelled for them. In this case it is good to **have a prepared list of activities and tasks that you can do when some unplanned time arises**. You can make use of Table 7 or one of the applications in which you have entered information about activities (such as <http://www.getontracks.org/>). Based on such a list you can quickly find tasks with which you can sensibly fill the time that has suddenly opened up

for you (this kind of table is also very useful in planning how to spend time in an individual day or week).

Table 7: Part of completed table of tasks

Task	Assignment	Circumstances	Deadline	Flexibility of deadline	Importance	Necessary time	Scope for dividing up	Completed
find articles	prepare section on use of time	computer, internet	15 October 2018	fixed	3	3 hours	3 x 1 hour	14 October 2018
write theoretical introduction	prepare section on use of time	computer, internet	17 October 2018	fixed	3	3 hours	no	15 October 2018
write a section on analysis of use of time	prepare section on use of time	computer, internet	18 October 2018	fixed	3	4 hours	no	16 October 2018
buy tickets for Liffe	attend Liffe	Cankarjev Dom	23 October 2018	can be moved to 6 November 2018	5	1 hour	no	
call dentist	see dentist	telephone	25 October 2018	can be moved to 5 November 2018	5	5 minutes	no	
see the Ivana Kobilca exhibition	see the Ivana Kobilca exhibition	National Gallery	10 February 2019	fixed	4	3 hours	no	

Table 7 is just a suggestion as to how you can arrange your obligations in order to be as efficient as possible, and you yourself can organise your information on the activities you need to do in a different way.

A table organised this way can help you to know precisely:

- what the task is and which assignment it falls under;
- in what circumstances can you carry out the task (what needs to be available to you);
- when the deadline is that you set for completing the task;
- how flexible that deadline is or by when do you absolutely have to complete the task (setting deadlines before the final cut-off helps keep the highest number of assignments as important ones and not urgent ones);

- what is its importance (so you can prioritise more important assignments);
- how much time would you need to implement the task (to be able to quickly place the task in the time slot that has become available);
- can the task be rationally divided up or does it need to be completed as an entire unit, and
- information on when you completed the task.

This kind of arrangement lets you browse quickly through tasks using various criteria, which can help you decide what to do.

For the highest possible quality of life, it makes sense for tasks on the list not just to be the kind that are tied to obligations, and you can add to your reminder list tasks that you simply enjoy, that are important to you not to forget and for which you should also take time when a slot becomes available. Why would you go and study in the library, when you have done that enough already for one day, instead of going to an exhibition you want to see, and that would take precisely the time that you have available?

## 5.7. What about when I finish my assignment?

When you complete a certain task, it is to some extent motivating just in itself that you have done it, but it is also a good idea **to record this** – both in terms of motivation and in terms of having completed tasks put in a separate part of the information in the table.

Once you have completed assignments, take time of course to reward yourself – perhaps with a rest, or with one of the activities that are important to you and which you are putting off because the force of circumstances means others are becoming more urgent.

## In conclusion

Dealing with how you use time can be a long-lasting process and offers ample opportunities for progress, practicing skills and so forth. Of course it pays to invest at least some time in looking at your use of time and trying to improve it, while it is also recommended that you re-evaluate your use of time every so often. I suggest that if this is a topic of interest, you read up one of the resources on it, and you can also turn for additional help to advisers at the University of Ljubljana Careers Centres.

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# 6. APPROACHES FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING

'Tomorrow's illiterate will not be the man who can't read; he will be the man who has not learned how to learn.'

*Alvin Toffler*

**This chapter deals with the following content:**

- the method of steering your own process of learning and examples of effective strategies for studying;
- how you can provide your own motivation for study when you are 'running on empty' or lack will;
- a presentation of making up your own good notes from written materials or lectures.

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Since students have already successfully passed their matura (school-leaving) exam, which has allowed them to actually become university students often there is a (mistaken) belief that they know how to approach learning effectively. However numerous students in the first (and also higher) year, despite the relatively large quantity of study material that they should explore independently, often find themselves in a situation that is frustrating and stressful. They do not know how to even begin with such a quantity of material, and how – generally in a limited time – to go over it most efficiently.

## 6.1. What does the theory of effective learning for students say?

If one tried to describe effective learning – i.e. **learning where the student understands the study material and also remembers it well** – through a key characteristic, one could technically say this: effective learning is **self-regulated learning**.

The essential characteristic of such learning is that the **student is capable of directing their own learning process to the ultimate (learning) goal**. And in fact students often find themselves in situations where they are expected to be capable of independently looking over specific material and independently gaining information and knowledge. Self-regulated learning therefore involves learning that the student has under control, or as Pintrich and de Groot (1990) note vividly, it is **learning where students are active participants and not victims of their own learning process**.

Self-regulated learning includes the regulation or directing of three aspects of the student's learning (Zimmerman, 2001):

**1) directing cognition**, which includes **control** of various **cognitive strategies** for learning, such as strategies of deeper processing of material, which is reflected in a better understanding of the material and better academic performance;

**2) directing motivation and feelings**, which includes **controlling and changing motivational beliefs**, such as self-efficacy, target orientation, whereby the student can adapt to the requirements of the study/assignment, while at the same time learning to **control their own feelings** (especially those less productive, such as fear) with the aim of improving their learning;

**3) self-regulated behaviour**, which includes active control of various **resources** available to the student, such as **time, environment** (e.g. the space where they will be studying) and **social resources of help** (fellow students, tutors and others) that can help them.

This directing of cognition, motivation and behaviour requires well-developed **metacognitive abilities**, which enables students to be able in any instance of learning to select appropriate learning goals, then to plan the learning process, monitor it and in the end also evaluate it.

There are numerous programmes for developing self-regulated skills among learners, with the majority intended for younger people – primary and secondary school pupils. But it is not too late for university students – they can opt to develop certain self-regulated skills that can offer a more systematic approach to studying, which generally leads to better academic performance. Review studies on the effectiveness of self-regulated learning programmes (e.g. Dig-nath, Buettner and Langfeldt, 2008; Hattie and Donoghue, 2016) have shown that participants of these programmes improve their study achievements most if they exercise the use of cognitive (especially elaboration and organisation), metacognitive (especially planning strategies) and motivation strategies.

First you need to know the effective learning strategies in order then to be able to use them in studying. To this end, presented below are some basic learning strategies for effective study. Here the expression **learning strategy** denotes the **sequence of (thought) steps in going over study material** (Pečjak and Gradišar, 2015), where it should be pointed out that the majority of study material is in written form.

Effective study most often includes reading material and then immersing oneself in it through the use of various learning strategies.

## 6.2. Strategies for effective study and their application

Below we present three basic groups of strategies (stemming from the theory) – cognitive, metacognitive and motivation strategies, with characteristic activities within individual groups of strategies.

### 6.2.1. Cognitive strategies

The basic purpose of using cognitive strategies is **understanding and memorising** study material. Most commonly these strategies are divided up in terms of the thought processes that flow in learning into:

- **strategies of repetition;**
- **elaboration strategies;**
- **organisational strategies** (Pintrich and Garcia, 1994; Pečjak and Gradišar, 2015);
- **strategies of balancing resources** (McInerney and McInerney, 2002; Hattie and Donoghue, 2016).

### 6.2.1.1. Strategies of repetition

Strategies of repetition enable you to select information from text and store it in your long-term memory, thereby memorising it. **Without repetition there is no memorising** of study material, so in planning the study process it is **imperative to reserve some time for repetition**. Strategies of repetition are important for memorising both fundamental data and also specific details in each subject of study.

#### Here we may observe:

a) **Strategies of repetition in simpler assignments**, which include for instance repeating out loud certain key words/sentences, re-reading the material and using memorising tools (mnemonics). The primary purpose of such repetition is simply mechanical memorising. Multiple repetition leads to what is termed overlearning, meaning that then it is very easy to recall the necessary information/data you need. Such repetition makes sense in certain study situations, when you need to recall specific information practically automatically, so that then you can resolve more complex learning problems.

#### Examples:

Learning words with the aim of expanding vocabulary in a foreign language (a student of English studies repeats for instance the conjugation of irregular verbs or certain collocations so that then they are able to use them fluently in conversation).

When a student wishes to have good mastery of a certain procedure, in order to be able to carry it out in practice (e.g. a student of psychology with steps in holding a counselling talk or a student of carpentry with the process of pre-working the wood before making a specific product).

**b) Strategies of repetition in more demanding assignments**, such as repetition on material worked on in a textbook or repetition with one's own lecture notes. Both cases involve reworking the existing textbook material or lecture for the purpose of repetition. Material reworked in this way should include **underlined or marker-indicated important information or parts of the text in the textbook (or appropriately crafted extracts from the textbook) or lecture notes**. For more on the creation of good notes from a textbook or lecture see chapter 6.3.

## 6.2.1.2. Elaboration strategies

Elaboration strategies are strategies that enable a **deeper understanding of the study material**, which is the starting point for the application of knowledge in solving problems (including more complex ones) and in transferring knowledge to new situations. Using these strategies you can deepen your understanding of new study material by linking new information to already existing foreknowledge.

Examples of such strategies can be seen in activities such as:

- repeating study material in your own words (paraphrasing);
- asking yourself questions about the study material and answering them;
- explaining the study material to others or teaching others (e.g. colleagues);
- seeking similarities and differences in study material;
- analysing the relationships between parts of the study material.

## 6.2.1.3. Organisational strategies or strategies for arranging information

Organisational strategies or strategies for arranging information represent a basic tool on which you can 'hang' information when learning a specific subject. It is good if you know how to arrange the information in a way that makes sense to you, which helps you to more easily include it in existing foreknowledge and in this way memorise it more rapidly.

These strategies are most often seen through the following activities:

- merging specific pieces of information (details) into broader conceptual categories (hypernyms) with the aim of relieving your working memory and thereby memorising more;
- presenting the relationships between key concepts in the form of conceptual networks (e.g. thought patterns);
- arranging information hierarchically (from more important/general to less important/specific);
- using other graphic methods for presenting the study material (e.g. Venn diagram or comparative matrix in comparing two or more elements from the study material; timeline or graphic display where the sequence of events in a process, phenomenon etc. is important) and so forth.

## 6.2.2. Metacognitive strategies

These are strategies of awareness, understanding and control of one's own process in learning. Metacognitive strategies include:

- strategies for planning;
- strategies for monitoring;
- strategies for balancing and
- strategies for evaluation of learning.

### 6.2.2.1. Strategies for planning

Strategies for planning are those strategies that you **implement before the process of studying** as a preparation for study. They help to activate foreknowledge, while at the same time helping in the selection and use of appropriate cognitive strategies for which reason understanding the material is easier/better.

#### These are the following strategies:

- **Selection of learning goals** (which should be realistic) **and appropriate strategies** for achieving them. The following questions will help you in this: 'What does the assignment require?', 'What is my goal or what do I want to know in the end?' and 'What information and which strategies do I need?'
- **Balancing time**, such as allocating study time to individual study components.
- **Balancing the learning environment** in the sense of selecting and arranging a study space that is not disruptive (peaceful, without a telephone and other distractions). The question: 'How much time and what resources do I need?'

#### Examples:

- You have to work on the material so that you will understand it well, since you will also need this knowledge in other subjects. Or: Since you know the exam will be very challenging, you will be satisfied even with a lower grade.
- For a challenging exam you should start studying a month in advance. Divide up the material so that in three weeks you 'get through it', then in the final week you just repeat.
- To make up a seminar assignment you should look at the fundamental literature in the faculty library and seek out the latest articles on the topic in journals.
- Since you know that it is hard to stay focused in a student room because of your housemates, it is better to go and study in the university library, where it is quiet.

### 6.2.2.2. Strategies for monitoring

Strategies for monitoring relate to the actual process of solving problems and learning. They can be used to assess the effectiveness of the use of various strategies. They include directing attention to the study material, monitoring understanding in terms of asking questions 'Do I understand what I am learning?' and so forth.

Questions related to monitoring include: 'Do I understand what I am doing?', 'Does anything bother (distract) me when I am studying?', 'Am I focusing my mental effort on the material?', 'Am I on the right track and heading for the goal?' and 'Do I need to change anything?'

**Examples:**

- Underline unknown technical terms in the textbook, so you can find an explanation immediately after reading – using an online dictionary or asking a colleague.
- Ask yourself the question: 'Is my mind still on the material or have I lost the thread?'
- Ask yourself: 'Am I too focused on the details and in the time available will have difficulty getting through the study material?'

**6.2.2.3.****Strategies for guiding the learning process**

Strategies for guiding the learning process can be used when you realise that something in the process of learning or solving problems is not going well or properly.

**Examples:**

- When you realise that you do not understand something, read that part of the material again.
- For harder parts of the study material slow down your reading speed – read slowly and think about each sentence.
- If you do not know how to answer a question at the end of individual parts of the material, run over the material again and try to find an answer.
- If you find that you are taking too much time to study an individual part of the material and you are not going to get through it all in time, extend your study time or try to learn just the most essential things.

**6.2.2.4.****Strategies for (self-)evaluation of learning**

Once you have finished learning it makes sense to evaluate your own learning – both the learning outcome and the process of learning. Here the following questions can help you: 'Did I achieve the goal?', 'To what extent did I achieve the goal I set at the beginning?', 'What was effective?', 'What was not effective?' and 'Next time will I do anything differently, and if so, what?' and so forth.

**Examples related to achievement:**

- Ask yourself whether you achieved the goal you set yourself at the beginning.
- Do you understand the material?
- Do you know enough to be able to pass the exam?
- After studying, check the correctness of the mathematics assignments in the solutions appendix.

**Think about whether your method of learning was effective:**

- Did you plan it properly and have enough time to complete the assignment?
- Did you select an appropriate learning environment so you could be focused?
- Did you select the appropriate strategy, or will you try something different next time?

Merely knowing strategies and how to control and direct the study process is not enough for a good study outcome. Just as important as **knowing how**, is **wanting**, which includes knowing and balancing different **emotional and motivational beliefs and strategies**.

## 6.2.3. Emotional motivation strategies or how to self-motivate to learn

Emotional motivation (or affective) strategies influence one's will, or the amount of effort that the student is willing to invest in studies, and behaviourally this manifests as **perseverance in studying**. In the background of these strategies are various motivational beliefs, such as **interest in the study material**, a **feeling of competence** (the belief that you are capable and will arrive at the goal) and **target orientation** (either towards understanding or mastering the material or merely towards achievement – for instance that you pass the exam). All these are 'motors' of internal motivation. It makes sense, therefore, to ask yourself, how as a student can you change those beliefs so you will know how to self-motivate for studying. Some initial questions to raise specific aspects of learning motivation are shown below (Table 8).

Table 8: Questions to raise one's own learning motivation

Motivation elements	What increases it?	Questions or strategies
interest	usefulness of knowledge	'Where will I be able to use what I've learned in subsequent study?'
		'Where will the study material benefit me or help me in everyday life?'
	connecting with experiences and goals	'How can I connect what I am learning with my own experiences?'
satisfying the need to socialise		'Would it be easier to learn with a colleague?'
		'Could I perhaps repeat the material with someone after studying, to see how much I know?'

perceived competences	detailed feedback	'What have I already mastered and what not yet?'
	setting realistic and short-term goals	'How much can I really learn?'
	help	'Do I need to really understand everything or is it enough to just memorise certain things?'
target motivation focus	monologue focused on mastering	'Can someone help me to study? Who?'
		'I convince myself to study intensively so I will master the study material.'
		'I convince myself to stick with studying and test myself to see how much I can learn.'
	'I challenge myself to complete the assignment and in this way learn an important thing.'	
	monologue focused on achievement	'I take note how important it is that: ... I get a good grade. ... I do well in the exam. ... my grade will go down if I stop studying.'
	monologue focused on avoiding showing your own inabilities	'I tell myself that I need to try a bit harder not to appear stupid.' 'I think about how it would be really unpleasant for me to have a worse result than others.'

These questions and strategies include those that raise motivation to study, and those that reduce it.

**Motivation to study** is generally **raised** by the following strategies:

- **Defensive pessimism**, where you imagine negative feelings if you fail (disappointment, sadness at yourself and others) and in this way prepare to study.
  - Example: When you just think how complicated your life would get if you do not pass this exam, it is enough to get you opening your books.
- **Effective styles of ascribing reasons** in the case of failure, when you are seeking reasons for your own failure in yourself and in factors over which you have control (e.g. in your own efforts).

- **Self-affirmation**, when you try to increase the sense of your own effectiveness with the statement: 'I know I can do this, I've already done this kind of assignment.'
- **Encouraging monologue**, focused on mastering, on achievement or on avoiding showing your own inability (see Table 1). This also includes the ability to direct attention from an assignment you do not know how to do, to another assignment, and in so doing not to get overwhelmed by negative feelings (e.g. you do not experience panic).
  - Example: If you do not know how to complete a certain assignment in mid-term exams, you do not panic and move on to the next assignment. You tell yourself that you will go back to it at the end.
- **Self-boosting**, where you reward yourself if you persevere in studying something to the end.
  - Examples: When you have worked through two chapters, you will reward yourself with chocolate or beer. When you finish studying tomorrow, you are going to the cinema with a friend.

**The willingness of a student to study** is generally **reduced** by the following strategies:

- **Self-blocking**, where you are not focused on success, but on protection of your own self-image – not wanting to shame yourself in front of others. This is usually evident in putting off studying to the last moment, so you can justify your failure by having insufficient time.
  - Example: I would have done better on this assignment/exam, if I hadn't procrastinated so much on writing it or studying.
- **Non-productive styles of attribution**, where the student seeks reasons for failure outside themselves and in factors over which they have no control (e.g. in their abilities).
  - Examples: A student in the first year of an undergraduate course says: 'That professor is asking as much from us as if we were doing a master's course. I simply don't have the head for statistics.'

## 6.3. Strategies to make studying a piece of cake

The majority of studies involve you using textbooks or other study (mostly written) material or lecture notes, so we will focus on a few effective strategies for working with textbook material or your own notes.

### 6.3.1. How do you tackle studying from a textbook?

For an initial review of the material in a textbook you can apply the **rapid overview strategy**. This means that you **browse quickly** through the study material – in a few minutes. Here it is good to know that in textbooks the important information is most often 'concealed' in the following places, so as you browse through, stop or take a closer look at:

1. the title of the text;
2. subheadings;
3. graphic material;
4. the beginning of the study material;
5. the end of the study material;
6. the envisaged essence, main thoughts.

Based on browsing through the study material, in the first five steps you will be able to formulate a picture of the material, the construction and possible difficulty of the material, which will help you in further planning your studies. In the sixth step, based on the information you gained during your browsing, and your own foreknowledge that you activated, try to predict what the specific study material will probably be dealing with.

With this strategy you are just 'warming up', then you can start in on a close reading and scrutiny of the material. Here during the reading itself you can **mark material in the text-book** or **write it out**. At this point it is advisable to take heed of the following tips:

- **Selectively underline or write out the essential information** (there is no need to underline too much or note down everything, but just the key concepts, important details and the relationships between them).
- When you mark important parts of study material **with markers**, use them in a **specific system** that you yourself choose/determine. For instance mark parts of the material that are most important (the most general) and without which you will not pass the exam, in red; information that is lower down in the hierarchy of importance, in yellow, and green for information representing specific details and data.

## 6.3.2. How do you take good notes from lectures?

In **taking lecture notes** it is worth adhering to the following principles for effective note-taking:

- A note of the title and date of lecture, or an explanation, which helps recall the information later when studying.
- Do not transcribe text from PowerPoint presentations. It often happens that students are so taken up with writing down the text from the slides that they stop actively listening to the lecture. This leads to them not noting down what the teacher is explaining and what is not on the slide.
- Mark what the professor underlines as important (in colours or in some other way).
- After lectures look over your notes (this is very important, but students do not often do this).

Some suggestions for **effectively reviewing notes**:

- look over your notes immediately after the explanation or lecture has been given (this helps retain the information in your memory);
- before each new lecture, read through your previous notes (it does not take long, but helps put new information more easily in context);
- when reviewing again, mark everything that does not make sense, that you do not understand, and then ask for an additional (repeated) explanation from the teacher or a colleague.

An effective strategy for creating good notes that enable effective repetition is the **Pauk strategy**. Arrange your notes from a textbook or from lectures by preparing an appropriate template (in a folder or in a Word document on your computer), as shown in Appendix 10.

This strategy has four steps:

1. in reading/listening to a lecture **take notes** using the principle of efficient note-taking in the wider space (field 1);
2. after lectures or reading, **review** it and where necessary **correct and supplement the notes** – insert or delete individual words/sentences, improve the method of organising the main thoughts, underline key terms and so forth;
3. summarise what is written in field 1 in a short form of essential **keywords** and write them down in field 2;
4. **repeat the study material** by describing, explaining, substantiating and so on the keywords with details from field 1 and explain the connection of the keywords. Repetition can be oral, but can also be performed by summarising in writing all the important points in the form of a summary (field 3).



## In conclusion

I am certain that in these presented strategies and tips, both students and student tutors will be able to find something beneficial and useful, first and foremost for themselves. At the same time both students and tutors will be equipped with new knowledge about effective learning strategies, they will more easily talk amongst themselves about challenges in their studies and together they will find ways of studying more effectively. I believe that tutors and students will in this way become active co-creators and not victims of their own studies.

But you need to be aware that, just as in everything, in studying only practice makes perfect, and only trying out different strategies will help you uncover those that are best suited to you and with which you will be able to achieve your study goals.

Good luck to you all in studying – and full steam ahead, now that you know how!

You can read more about the strategies presented here and elsewhere in the book:

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# 7. WHEN A LONG PERIOD OF STRESS, FAILURE OR ANXIETY ARISES

**This chapter deals with the following content:**

- recognising the signs of stress in students and the reasons that lead to stress;
- mental disorders as a consequence of stress;
- how to recognise anxiety;
- the development of anxiety disorders;
- the causes of stress during study and methods of tackling it;
- techniques for overcoming anxiety and stress;
- managing stress in six steps;
- when to seek the help of a doctor.

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Over the course of their lives, people in all stages of life encounter various challenges and obstacles. The time of studying is a time of change, when students often move away from home, go off to a new environment, meet new people and face a number of challenges, both in their studies and personal life. For someone who is not used to change, new life situations can generate stress and serious anxiety.

## 7.1. How stress is manifested

Stress is a psychological and physiological response to events that impact personal balance. When you face threats to your physical safety or mental balance, the body responds by shifting into a higher gear.

**Stress is good in small quantities. At that point it gives you energy and motivates you to try to focus on the problem and be alert. It keeps you on your toes during a presentation at work or forces you to study for an exam at the end of the semester, although you would rather be watching TV, playing a computer game or hanging out with your friends. But if the demands are too big and go beyond your ability to deal with them, stress can become a threat to your psychological and physical health.**

**On the physiological, bodily level** the stress response involves a sequence of changes that prepare you for immediate activity. When a danger is perceived, the hypothalamus in the brain triggers a chemical alarm. Corticotropin, a relaxing factor, is released, and through the hypophysis it releases stress hormones. These hormones are released into the blood and prepare the body to fight the danger or flee from it. Here the autonomous nervous system also plays a part, causing a redistribution of blood from the digestive system and less important organs to those that are activated during stress: the brain, lungs, heart and skeletal muscles. Other physical signs also appear: higher blood pressure and accelerated heartbeat and

breathing, increased sweating, higher levels of blood sugar and accelerated blood clotting, dilated pupils and dry mouth.

Pressures and demands in your surroundings or demands that you place on yourself and cause stress, **are stressors**.

### Stressors include:

- The first recognised stressors are **major traumas**, such as physical attack or natural disasters.
- Later on, stress events include **major life events** (marriage, divorce, loss of a loved one, start of new or loss of job, moving to a new environment, starting to study).
- Stressors in the broader sense can also include **harmful environmental impacts** (noise, overpopulation, pollution), **chronic tension** stemming from your role in life (difficulties in marriage, at work, poverty), and also **everyday difficulties**.

Stressors can be short-duration events, chronic or can often be recurring. The rapidity at which they arise is important, as is also how different stressors connect and bind together mutually.

Loss of job causes poverty, which can negatively impact your family or marriage and can lead to divorce. Failure in studies, failed exams or a bad overall grade can lead to loss of a grant, loss of the possibility of living in students halls and consequently a halt to studies. For students, the feelings that go with breaking up with a partner can lead to apathy in studies.

**Stress can be viewed as an interaction between the environment and the person, i.e. a combination of demands from the environment and individual abilities. The perception of stress depends on the demands of the environment and the ability of the individual to deal with these demands. Stress stems from an imbalance between demands and individual abilities.**

Thus for instance a fault in a car represents a manageable problem for a mechanic, but for someone who does not have these skills and is also in financial straits, this problem is a serious stress.

**Stress over exams in the final exam period for an important subject is probably greater than over an exam in a subject for which the student has prepared well and for which several exam periods are available.**

What represents stress to a person depends on gender, age, personality, general outlook on life, the cultural and social environment the person comes from, the ability to overcome difficulties, past experience and social support.

### How can you recognise that you are experiencing stress?

Stress is manifested in physiological, emotional and behavioural reactions. The psychological and behavioural signs of long-term stress are numerous and diverse:

- There are **physical symptoms**: accelerated heartbeat, headache, sweaty palms, cold hands and feet, nausea, diarrhoea, upset stomach, irregular breathing.
- **Mood changes** are evident: indecisiveness, loss of sense of humour, tension, depression, irritability, anger.
- There are often **changes in behaviour**: lack of will, lack of organisation, crying, irregular sleep, sexual dysfunction, excessive use of alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, analgesics and psychopharmacological products.
- There may be changes in **thinking patterns**: forgetfulness, lack of concentration and attention, poor judgement, confused notions, difficulties in thinking and a diminished imagination.

**A person experiencing stress often thinks as follows: I can't do this, I'll lose my mind, it's all too much, it's hard. One's self-image is often poor.**

## 7.2. Mental disturbance as a consequence of stress

When stress kicks in on a person with heightened vulnerability, in addition to the aforementioned specific symptoms, the person can develop actual mental disorders that can require further treatment by a doctor or psychologist.

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### Acute stress disorder

This is directly tied to extremely serious physical or mental stress events. The disorder arises during the actual stress event or immediately after. Often there is evidence of feelings of apathy, emotional lack of response and non-perception of surroundings. There are expressions of anxiety, uneasiness, hopelessness, irritability, depression and sleeping difficulties. The person's social functioning deteriorates markedly. The disorder is short-term and generally eases off after a few days.

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### Post-traumatic stress disorder

This arises as a delayed or extended response to extremely stressful events, which can be very frequent, different and universal, for instance being a victim or witness to rape, mugging, wartime trauma, abduction, being a prisoner of war, torture, traffic accident or incurable disease. The signs of the disorder can be seen in the first three months after the trauma, but can be drawn out over several months or even years. The traumatic event is constantly relived in the form of images, thoughts and perceptions. There are often nightmarish dreams about the stress event, accompanied by severe mental strain, and the avoidance of stimuli associated with the stress event. There is a significantly reduced interest in activities, along with a feeling of alienation and limited emotions. Frequently there is disrupted sleep, irritability, outbreaks of anger and difficulty concentrating. The disorder lasts at least one month and causes severe mental strain, and seriously impacts the person's quality of life.

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### Adaptive disorders

These appear as emotional disorders that significantly affect a person's social functioning and are linked to life changes to which a person is forced to adapt. These changes can be for instance moving to another environment, changing or losing your job, change in a person's social network, loss of an important person, learning of a serious illness. Adaptive disorders can be seen in depressed mood, worry, anxiety, the feeling that the person can no longer resolve everyday difficulties on their own. The signs appear sooner than one month after a stress event and usually do not last longer than six months.

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## 7.3. How to recognise anxiety

Occasional anxiety is a common feeling experienced by all people. It is an unpleasant feeling that causes a sense of internal oppression. The sense of anxiety is closest to the feeling of nerves that is tied to some specific event, such as an exam or public appearance. With anxiety you feel a 'vague fear', which you often cannot explain.

Anxiety can appear gradually or come on suddenly. It can last a few minutes and be barely noticeable or it can appear in the form of panic attacks.

In a stress event it is quite normal for you to be anxious and worried, because you are focused on danger and the body is activating for fight or flight; this is therefore an evolutionarily determined defence against an impending threat. Anxiety therefore has principally a protective function, but it becomes problematic to health when it is excessive or arises without reason. Anxiety is a symptom which apart from in ordinary life situations is also expressed in all stress-generated mental disorders.

## 7.4. Anxiety disorders when there is too much anxiety

Anxiety, the feeling of internal tension, which can also be accompanied by uneasiness, is frequently and strongly expressed when you find yourself in a threatening situation. We can talk of an anxiety disorder when it arises in situations where it is not necessary and there is no external reason for it, and if it is necessary it lasts too long, and if it incapacitates a person to the extent that they are no longer capable of functioning normally.

This kind of anxiety is found in anxiety disorders, which include a generalised anxiety disorder, panic disorder, obses-

sive-compulsive disorder and various phobias. These disorders are further detailed below. In this way anxiety becomes disruptive and burdensome, and it can strongly impact normal human activity and affect the quality of life.

<b>Generalised anxiety disorder</b>	The basic characteristic is anxiety, which is general and persistent, and is not limited to any particular external circumstance. The person is irritable, quickly becomes psychologically and physically fatigued, they have fears and worries about the future, difficulties concentrating, muscular tension, headache, trembling hands and the feeling of being unable to relax.
<b>Panic disorder</b>	Anxiety is manifested in the form of panic attacks, which recur unexpectedly and are not tied to any specific situation and in circumstances that in themselves are not dangerous. Due to vegetative excitement the person feels a range of symptoms, such as heart palpitations, rapid pulse, sweating, tremors, they feel shortness of breath and choking, they may have pain in the chest and stomach, a feeling of nausea, vertigo and dizziness, feeling cold or hot and a sense of their skin crawling. The person is most incapacitated by fear of death, fear of loss of control over themselves and fear of losing their mind.
<b>Obsessive-compulsive disorder</b>	Characteristic of this are repetitive, intrusive thoughts, obsessions and repetitive ritualistic behaviour, compulsions accompanied by anxiety, especially when the patient tries to resist these symptoms. The person recognises obsessive thoughts as their own, although they are involuntary, irrational and often unpleasant or aggressive. Compulsions are also movements or behaviour that is not useful and brings no joy.
<b>Phobic anxiety disorders</b>	It is characteristic of these that anxiety is triggered by certain external objects or situations which in themselves are not dangerous. The fear is therefore tied to various objects and situations, such as a closed space, open space, height, darkness, weather phenomena, pain, dirt, the sight of blood and so forth. For this reason the person avoids such objects or situations, but sometimes the mere thought of them evokes fear which can be just a mild uneasiness or can reach the level of terror. Students can also be severely hampered by social phobias, where anxiety is triggered in limited social positions with a small group of people, in which the person anticipates being exposed to scrutiny or criticism, so these symptoms are often manifested in exams.

In the first panic attack the person is often highly fearful, and convinced that something is dreadfully wrong with them physically and often they seek urgent care. In the period between attacks the difficulties are not present, but often there

is an anticipatory anxiety – this is a fear of the next attack. Attention is often selectively focused on certain bodily responses, while excessive anxiety is triggered by an erroneous interpretation of the individual momentary physical or mental symptom which in itself is not dangerous.

## 7.5. The causes of stress during studies

At the start of their studies, many students move to a different location. The time of adjustment to the new environment differs from student to student. Some students experience homesickness and frequently visit their home town, while others adjust more easily to the change in environment. Upon moving there is also often a need to adapt to housemates, who are many times unknown people. Students have to take care of themselves entirely and learn how to spend money sensibly, if they have not already mastered these skills. Even the method of learning at university is often different from that in secondary school.

Unsuccessful adaptation to the new environment and to numerous changes for some students triggers anxiety, and the previously described adaptive disorder can develop.

**The most stressful periods in the period of studying are usually the exam period and the end of the academic year, when there is uncertainty regarding the academic results.**

The actual preparation and approach to exams or failure in exams can generate in students the above-described acute stress reaction, with heightened anxiety, emotional instability and a pessimistic view of the future. A burden of stress on students is often also engendered by thinking about the future and concerns about finding a job.

Parents and the student's family can help ease the burden on the student, but their response, if it involves criticism and anger can amplify the student's sense of failure.

**As a tutor, just by speaking out about noticing their difficulty, you can enable the student to talk about the problems besetting them. Just talking about difficulties can ease the burden. If you notice that the strain on the student is increasing, you should advise them to seek professional help.**

## 7.6. Methods of dealing with stress

People use multiple ways and strategies for dealing with stress.

**The problem-focused method:** a person in difficulty tries to change the situation by seeking information on how to act; there are few impulsive and immature reactions.

**Balancing emotions:** the person tries through defence mechanisms to reduce the emotional impact of stress. They seek emotional support and understanding from other people and in this way ease their situation.

**Regressive behaviour through the use of earlier, more primitive defence mechanisms:** the person acts as if they are in childhood, when others, usually the parents, solved their problems and consoled them.

**Denial:** the person pretends that there is no problem at all. At first this can bring a sense of ease, and the stress temporarily subsides, but frequently this causes additional consequences and problems when grappling with stress later.

**Being inert, inactive or withdrawn:** it seems to the person that there is no longer any possible solution to the problem and is no longer dealing with the stress.

**Easing the strain by using psychoactive substances:** a strategy that is risky to health is easing the strain by using psychoactive substances – self-medication with alcohol, medications and drugs, which can momentarily ease the anxiety that is present, but can cause major risk of the development of addiction, especially among vulnerable persons.

It is advisable for a student in difficulty to use what is the most appropriate strategy for them to deal with stress, and especially to avoid those that are more harmful. If you fail an exam, the strategy of denial, regression, inertness or easing the strain by using psychoactive substances will probably not be of any help in dealing with the problem, and will rather simply intensify it.

**As a tutor you can guide students to seek healthier ways of easing the burden and dealing with the strain.**

## 7.7. How can you help yourself overcome anxiety and stress?

Each one of us uses their own method of relaxation. These methods are very diverse, ranging from physical training, yoga, running, walking, reading books, socialising, chatting with friends to work and hobbies.

One of the effective and simple methods of influencing how you feel is **movement**. Physical activity eases the stresses of everyday life. Regular exercise contributes to reducing feelings of anxiety.

Another effective method for overcoming stress among students is **rest**, since adequate rest is essential for the regeneration of both physical and mental abilities. Adequate rest improves the ability to concentrate and other intellectual abilities, and improves academic performance.

As a tutor you can encourage students to spend their free time on **hobbies and things that interest them**. **Socialising and connecting through common interests** are also recommended, and this is something particularly important for students who find themselves without important social networks and friends after moving to another location.

**By asking questions such as ‘How are you getting used to living in a different place?’, ‘Are you lonely?’, ‘Do you miss your people at home?’, ‘Have you made any new friends**

**at the faculty?’ and so forth, the tutor can let the student know that they are also available for more personal topics and not just for advice on studies. Often this is enough for the student to unburden themselves just by sharing their sense of hardship.**

## 7.7.1. Relaxation techniques, help in overcoming anxiety and stress

The most highly recommended **relaxation techniques** are breathing exercises, deep relaxation, visualisation, mindfulness and autogenic training:

**a)** When done properly, **controlled breathing** is a very effective relaxation. As you breathe in, the diaphragm tightens and expands, then relaxes when you breathe out. It is important to inhale deeply through the nose and slowly exhale through the mouth. The body must be in a comfortable position and the muscles relaxed. While breathing in, count to four, then hold the breath for four seconds and again count to four as you breathe out. Correct breathing lets you quickly relax and thus reduce your stress level.

**b) Gradual muscular relaxation** is a systematic technique for reaching a state of deep relaxation. In a precisely determined sequence, you gradually relax the 16 main muscle groups of the body. You start with the fist and lower arm, followed by the upper arm, the upper and lower forehead, eye muscles, mouth, jaw, back of the neck, shoulders and lower neck. Then you move on to the chest muscles, inhaling deeply and holding your breath for ten seconds, then exhaling. This is followed by the stomach muscles, the thighs and the lower legs and feet.

Each exercise is repeated twice. The procedure is to first tense the muscles for a few seconds, then relax them. The aim of the exercise is to learn what is tension and what is relaxation. The tensing and relaxing of different muscle groups in the body engenders a state of relaxation.

*Settle yourself comfortably in an armchair or chair. Lean back, with your head if possible resting on the back rest, your hands on your knees or arm rests. Your legs should be parallel, with your feet on the floor. Keep your eyes closed, so you can focus better on what is going on within your body. The time of relaxing should be twice as long as the time of tensing the muscles. Your attention should be constantly focused on what is going on and being felt in your muscles, and your breathing should be calm and even. At each step, focus first on the feeling of tension, followed by relaxation.*

**c) Visualisation** is a method that harnesses your imagination to change your behaviour, emotions and even your inner physiological state. The power of the imagination is stronger than the power of conscious will.

*In your mind you can picture yourself for instance floating on the surface of the sea, how leaves flutter in the wind, listening to bird song and so forth.*

It is important that you visualise the scene with enough detail to completely hold your attention. When you reach a state of relaxation, you achieve the effect on the physiological level, tension eases in your muscles, your heart rate slows and blood pressure is lowered. The images you conjure up and enjoy will relax you and drive away negative thoughts.

**d) Mindfulness or conscious focus is the direction of attention** to the present moment, which is accompanied by a sense of non-attachment. The term relates to clear, non-reflexive attention focused on the present, on mental and physical processes that arise from moment to moment. Due to its broad usefulness and benefits, in the past two decades the practice of mindfulness has spread throughout the world. It is used as a technique in psychotherapy, mainly in managing anxiety. It can help reduce stress in chronic illnesses, and is used in schools.

*The main characteristics of mindfulness are therefore presence from moment to moment (stable presence), being conscious in relation to the present and very clear cognition. This involves concentration and being focused on the current moment, and on what arises in that moment, for instance hearing raindrops, and knowing that these are raindrops and that is all that it is,*

*and not reacting to it. It is important not to interfere with the mental and physical processes, to observe them without reaction, to be non-attached and not involved in them – for there is nothing that lasts longer than a moment.*

**e) Autogenic training** is composed of six exercises and is based on reducing tension through mental concentration. At first it needs to be practiced under the guidance of an experienced therapist, then later the individual can practice the exercises alone.

## 7.7.2.

### Managing stress in six steps

#### **Anticipate and plan!**

Try to foresee which stresses might await you, and prepare yourself for them. Each morning or at the beginning of a new week, think about what awaits you, and make a plan of how you will face the stressors.

#### **Limit the effect of the stressors!**

Minor stressors such as the morning rush hour on the roads, an important work meeting, quarrel with a partner and so forth can spread into all areas of your life (e.g. when you 'bring home' a bad day at work and then make a bad day for everyone around you). Put stressors in their place: a problem at work should not wreck your relationships at home, and vice versa. When you find that you have a powerful stressor in one area of your life, try concertedly to maintain or strengthen the other areas of your life!

#### **React calmly!**

If you respond immediately to a stressful situation with action or emotionality, you become a victim of the stressful situation. This triggers a stress reaction, which in the long term weakens your immune system. But if you react calmly, you can maintain your inner balance and in that way gain time to decide consciously how to deal with problems.



**Establish control over your body!**

It is important to halt the stress reaction as soon as possible: ease your breathing and relax your muscle tension.

**Slow down and find your inner strength!**

Stressful situations usually drive you blindly towards actions to remove the stress or avoid it. Instead of this, calm yourself mentally and physically using relaxation techniques. When you become attentive to your breathing and a sense of relaxation in your muscles, your attention will automatically be turned inwards. This is the source of your strength.

**Think optimistically!**

When you are stressed, you often lose sight of what is possible and what is important. In your momentarily negative situation try to find good sides and opportunities. Do not forget your goals.

You can find the described steps in the final section of the Manual as Appendix 11 and you can use them as a handout.

## 7.8. Help at the doctor

When anxiety is manifested as one of the stress-generated disorders or as an anxiety disorder, the person needs to find expert help from a chosen family doctor, who can judge whether there is a need to refer the person to a specialist in psychiatry or clinical psychology.

**If you recognise that a student you are working with is in severe discomfort and shows signs of needing help, encourage them to seek the help of a doctor.**

Both a psychiatric specialist and a clinical psychologist work at the University of Ljubljana Student Health Centre.

Anxiety disorders and stress-generated disorders can be treated with medication, psychotherapy or a combination

of the two, depending on the clinical picture and the level of affliction of the individual, and what is important is the level of affliction of daily functioning and the experiencing of the condition. Treatment with medication involves mainly anti-depressants, which mitigate or eliminate the symptoms.

There are various effective psychotherapy approaches, the most common being cognitive and behavioural, support or dynamically oriented psychotherapy, while other psychotherapy measures and relaxation techniques are also helpful. The aim of the therapy is for the person to gradually recognise the factors that contribute to the emergence and manifestation of psychiatric symptoms, and to develop changed behavioural patterns.

## Where to go for medical help

### Student Health Centre of the University of Ljubljana

- Psychiatric Clinic – by appointment; you can call 01/2007411 or come in person during surgery hours. Only students are treated, and no referral is needed.
- Treatment by a clinical psychologist – the clinical psychology clinic provides examinations, counselling and psychotherapy. To attend this clinic you need a referral to a specialist clinical psychologist, which you can obtain from your personal doctor or from a psychiatrist.

### In urgent cases you can seek help at:

- **The Urgent Psychiatric Clinic**, which operates on weekdays from 8 am to 3 pm, at Njogoševa 4, (Poliklinika, Njogoševa 4, Centre for Outpatient Psychiatry, tel.: 01/4750670). The purpose of the Urgent Psychiatric Clinic is to rapidly assess the psychiatric state, provide initial counselling and introduce medication or adjustment of medication, if the patient already has prescribed medication, directing patients to additional diagnostic procedures where necessary, and directing the patient to further treatment (to a clinic-selected physician, a psychiatric specialist or specialist in a non-psychiatric discipline, or referral for hospital treatment);
- **Centre for Clinical Psychiatry**, Chengdujska 45, (Psychiatric Clinic, duty service, tel.: 01/5872 112);
- **Centre for Mental Health**, Grablovičeva 44a (Psychiatric Clinic, duty service, tel.: 01/5874916).

## In conclusion

Stress is with us throughout life. Balancing the requirements of studying, time for recreation and socialising can help students successfully navigate all the burdens.

Where stress is heightened and present for a long time, it is important for the student and for you as the tutor to recognise the harmful consequences of stress on the body and mind, since through timely action and self-help you can prevent the onset of more serious mental disorders.

You can help the student just by having a talk, and in serious situations you can guide the student to seek appropriate expert help.

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- <http://www.nebojse.si/portal/index.php>.

# 8. APPENDICES

Below are the appendices that you can print out and use as a work accessory, worksheet, handout or as a basis for conversation. We wish you successful tutoring!

## Appendix 1: EXPECTATIONS OF TUTORS AND STUDENTS

Appendix to first section: Tutoring at the University of Ljubljana, author: Sabina Mikuletič Zalaznik.

### What the tutor can expect from the student:

- the student should be respectful, sincere and trusting towards the tutor and should strive for a good relationship;
- they should provide contact details through which they can be reached;
- they should attend meetings regularly, and in cases of absence they should excuse themselves in advance;
- they should contact the tutor in the way that was agreed, and should abide by the agreed times;
- they should provide information that is important for conducting the tutorial hours (regarding studies, problems related to studies and so forth);
- they should be familiar with the role of the tutor and the tutor's tasks in the tutor-student relationship.

### What the student can expect from the tutor:

- the tutor should be respectful, sincere and trusting and should strive for a good professional relationship;
- they should inform the student when and in what manner they can be reached (email address, telephone number, scheduled tutorial hours);
- they should be available at the agreed times;
- they should respond to emails promptly;
- they should arrive at meetings punctually and properly prepared;
- they should help, advise, support and guide the student, and should not carry out assignments in their place;

- the information entrusted to them by the student should be treated with care and in confidence;
- they should guide the student in seeking information and not seek information instead of the student;
- they should give clear instructions regarding expectations and further work;
- they should not impose their own convictions;
- the tutor also has study obligations.

### What the tutor does not do:

- they do not seek information instead of the student, but simply guide the student;
- they do not offer tips about cheating in exams;
- they do not comment on or discuss teaching staff, the assessment policy, teaching methods and study requirements;
- they do not write seminar assignments, reports, notes etc. instead of the student;
- they do not provide the student with lecture notes.

## Appendix 2: NOTES FROM MEETING WITH STUDENT

Appendix to second section: Establishing a relationship with the student and preparation for meeting, author: Dr Boštjan Bajec.

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**Student:**

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**Date of meeting:**

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**Topic of meeting:**

---

**Summary of discussed topics:**

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**Review of achievement of goals agreed in previous meeting:**

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**Agreed goals:**

---

**Date of next meeting:**

---

## Appendix 3: MY PERSONAL SWOT ANALYSIS OF STUDY MOTIVATION

Appendix to third section: Motivation of students to achieve set goals, author: Katja Bizjak.

### STRENGTHS

(my personal strengths, making it 'easier' for me to study):

What do you do very well?

What are your key strengths? What do others see as your strengths?

What are you proud of in yourself?

What resources can you rely on?

### WEAKNESSES

(my personal 'weaknesses', making it 'harder' for me to study):

Where could you make improvements?

Where do others see your weaknesses?

Where do you have fewer resources than others?

In what situations do you not feel good?

### OPPORTUNITIES

(opportunities for me that I see in the external environment):

How can your strengths become opportunities?

What trends can you rely on?

What are the current possibilities for you?

### THREATS

(threats for me that I see in the external environment):

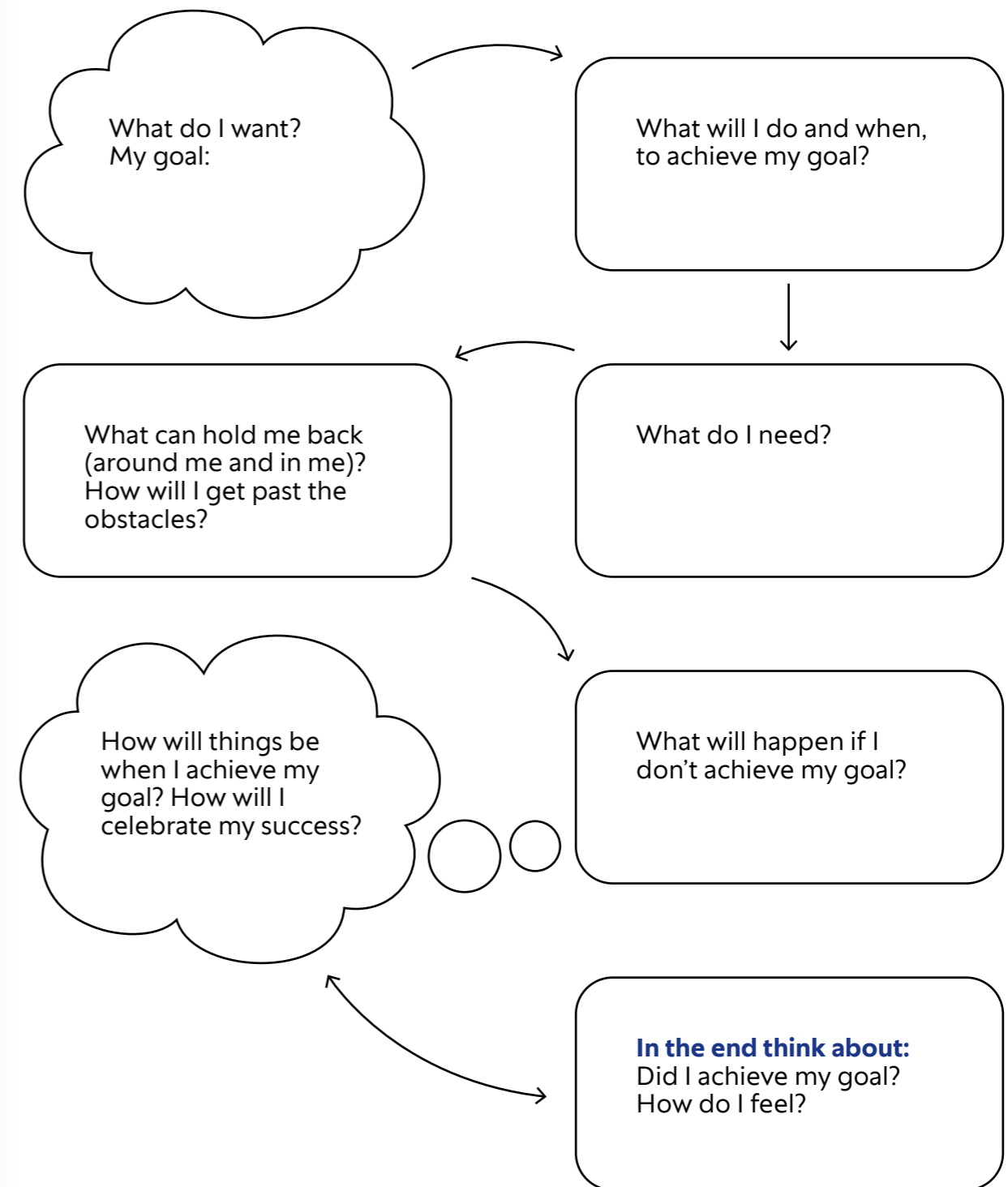
What threats can prey on you?

What/who in your surroundings could oppose your goals?

What threats represent for you your weaknesses?

## Appendix 4: MY GOAL

Appendix to third section: Motivation of students to achieve set goals, author: Katja Bizjak.



## Appendix 5: ASSESS YOUR GOAL USING THE SMART METHOD

Appendix to third section: Motivation of students to achieve set goals, author: Katja Bizjak.

Using the exercise in front of you, try to set your goal or through questions guide the student to define their goal.

**1. Specific:** With goals it is very important to be as specific as possible. E.g. *'I want to lose a kilo'* is much more specific than just *'I want to lose weight'*.

My goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Measurable:** If things cannot be measured, you cannot control them, including your progress. Each goal must be measurable and in the above example you can see why this is important (*use of scales*).

My goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Attainable:** The set goal must be attainable, while at the same time you need to have the feeling that you can actually do it and that you are able to commit to fulfilling your plan.

My goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Realistic, important, rewarding:** Attainability implies a realistically set goal, which in turn hinges principally on the time frame for the goal. So each goal must be attainable, and also set in realistic time frames.

My goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Defined timetable:** The final piece of advice as part of this formula for setting goals is that for each goal you must determine the time limit or deadline by which you will reach the goal.

My goal: \_\_\_\_\_







## Appendix 10: TEMPLATE FOR LECTURE NOTES OR PRINTING OUT STUDY MATERIAL

Appendix to sixth section: Approaches for effective learning,  
author: Dr Sonja Pečjak.

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**Title:**

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Study material

Key words

---

Summary

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## Appendix 11: MANAGING STRESS IN SIX STEPS

Appendix to seventh section: At the onset of a lengthy period of stress, failure or anxiety, author: Dr Brigita Novak Šarotar, dr. med., psychiatric specialist.

### **Anticipate and plan!**

Try to foresee which stresses might await you, and prepare yourself for them. Each morning or at the beginning of a new week, think about what awaits you, and make a plan of how you will face the stressors.

### **Limit the effect of the stressors!**

Minor stressors such as the morning rush hour on the roads, an important work meeting, quarrel with a partner and so forth can spread into all areas of your life (e.g. when you 'bring home' a bad day at work and then make a bad day for everyone around you). Put stressors in their place: a problem at work should not wreck your relationships at home, and vice versa. When you find that you have a powerful stressor in one area of your life, try concerted to maintain or strengthen the other areas of your life!

### **React calmly!**

If you respond immediately to a stressful situation with action or emotionality, you become a victim of the stressful situation. This triggers a stress reaction, which in the long term weakens your immune system. But if you react calmly, you can maintain your inner balance and in that way gain time to decide consciously how to deal with problems.

### **Establish control over your body!**

It is important to halt the stress reaction as soon as possible: ease your breathing and relax your muscle tension.

### **Slow down and find your inner strength!**

Stressful situations usually drive you blindly towards actions to remove the stress or avoid it. Instead of this, calm yourself mentally and physically using relaxation techniques. When you become attentive to your breathing and a sense of relaxation in your muscles, your attention will automatically be turned inwards. This is the source of your strength.

### **Think optimistically!**

When you are stressed, you often lose sight of what is possible and what is important. In your momentarily negative situation try to find good sides and opportunities. Do not forget your goals.

