

Introduction

This handbook is designed to help you develop your strategies for study. It is a short reference text that provides some guidance into a range of areas, such as managing time and producing written work. Hopefully it will help you to get the most out of your course by becoming an independent learner.

A starting point is to consider three issues:

1. What you think the course might involve?

There is no right or wrong answer here but your list will probably include attending lectures and taking notes, reading, essay writing, thinking/reflection, and developing both your clinical and critical skills.

2. How you feel about the course?

What do you feel are your strengths?
What skills do you feel you need to brush up on?
What are your concerns about the course?
What are you most looking forward to?

3. How you think you learn?

(Ask yourself the following questions to help you decide)

Do you learn visually?

Do you remember faces rather than names?
Do you prefer film to radio and enjoy descriptive scenes in books?
Do you use words like 'see' and 'picture'?

Do you learn by listening?

Do you prefer the telephone for important conversations?
Do you find verbal instructions helpful?
Do you use words like 'say', and 'hear'?

Do you learn by doing things?

Do you prefer to jump in and try it when faced with a new task?
Do you watch for body language?
Do you use words like 'touch' and 'hold'?

Now you have some idea of the way you learn, you can build on this and bear your learning style in mind as you study:

- a visual learner might draw pictures and construct mind maps
- an auditory learner might use tape recorder and discuss topics with friends
- a kinaesthetic learner needs to keep active- to reflect on issues while doing other things and even walk around whilst reading

A useful tool to support you throughout your course is the School of Nursing website: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/nursing/>. Access the student intranet regularly.

Whatever way you learn it is possible to develop your study skills; Stella Cottrell recommends the **C-R-E-A-M strategy**:

C- Creative

Have the confidence to use your individual strategies and styles, applying imagination to your learning

R-Reflective

Be able to sit with you experience, analyse and evaluate your own performance, and draw lessons from it

E-Effective

Organise you space, time, priorities, state of mind and resources to the maximum benefit

A-Active

Be personally involved and doing things, physically and mentally, to help you to make sense of what you learn

M-Motivated

Be aware of your own desired outcomes; keep yourself on track using short -and long -term goals