

ESSENTIALS

STUDY SKILLS

For Nursing, Health and Social Care



Edited by
MARJORIE GHISONI
and **PEGGY MURPHY**

ESSENTIALS

STUDY SKILLS

For Nursing, Health and Social Care

ESSENTIALS

STUDY SKILLS

For Nursing, Health and Social Care

Edited by

MARJORIE GHISONI
and **PEGGY MURPHY**



Lantern

ISBN: 9781908625656

This book is an updated and revised version of *Essential Study Skills for Health and Social Care* edited by Marjorie Lloyd and Peggy Murphy, published in 2008 by Reflect Press Ltd (ISBN 9781906052140)

Lantern Publishing Ltd, The Old Hayloft, Vantage Business Park, Bloxham Rd, Banbury, OX16 9UX, UK
www.lanternpublishing.com

© 2020, Marjorie Ghisoni, Peggy Murphy, Paul Jeorrett, Liz Lefroy, Jacqui Maung, Craig Morley, Seren Roberts, Tracy Ross, Helen Thomas, Ella Turner and Paul Verlander

The right of Marjorie Ghisoni, Peggy Murphy, Paul Jeorrett, Liz Lefroy, Jacqui Maung, Craig Morley, Seren Roberts, Tracy Ross, Helen Thomas, Ella Turner and Paul Verlander to be identified as authors of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988.

www.cla.co.uk

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

The authors and publisher have made every attempt to ensure the content of this book is up to date and accurate. However, healthcare knowledge and information is changing all the time so the reader is advised to double-check any information in this text on drug usage, treatment procedures, the use of equipment, etc. to confirm that it complies with the latest safety recommendations, standards of practice and legislation, as well as local Trust policies and procedures. Students are advised to check with their tutor and/or practice supervisor before carrying out any of the procedures in this textbook.

Cover design by Andrew Magee Design Ltd

Cover image reproduced under licence from stock.adobe.com

Typesetting and production by Newgen Publishing UK Ltd, Stroud

Printed in the UK

Last digit is the print number: 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

About the authors	vii
Introduction	1
1 Skills for the resilient learner	7
2 Effective time management	19
3 Reading and note-taking skills	29
4 Skills for literature searching	43
5 Skills for critical thinking	57
6 Writing essays and reports	73
7 Referencing skills	87
8 Feedback	109
9 Reflective writing skills	123
10 Skills for teamworking	139
11 Skills for presentations and public speaking	155
12 Skills for employability in health and social care	169
13 Skills for the developing professional	183
14 Lifelong learning skills: future-proof your learning	195
Answers to quizzes	209
Index	213

About the authors

Marjorie Ghisoni is a Lecturer and course lead for mental health nursing at Bangor University in North Wales. Marjorie qualified as a nurse in 1996 with Bangor University and worked as a community psychiatric nurse for a few years before becoming a lecturer practitioner part-time then a full-time lecturer in 2003. After gaining her PhD in 2012, Marjorie believes that compassionate understanding of the needs of people in all walks of life is the main component of healthcare skills, education, development and practice. Marjorie is also a regular blogger on compassionate care: see <https://drmarjorieghisoni.edublogs.org>.

Peggy Murphy is a Lecturer in adult nursing at the University of Chester. She worked as a nurse in acute medicine and cardiothoracic intensive care. She became a lecturer in 2003 and has had an interest in working with students to support inclusive practice in nurse education. Peggy was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship by the Higher Education Academy in 2014 for her work on assessment and feedback and how this influences students' academic development. Peggy has published and presented her work nationally and internationally in the sphere of pedagogy.

Paul Jeorrett has been a professional librarian for nearly 40 years. He began his career at the Zoological Society of London and then at various academic libraries until recently retiring from Wrexham Glyndŵr University. During his career he has taught information skills to staff and students in many disciplines. Good presentation skills have always been a passion for him and he brings his experience as a conference speaker and singer to help students embrace their performing edge in whatever they are doing.

Liz Lefroy is a Senior Lecturer in Social Care at Wrexham Glyndŵr University. Her teaching and research interests centre on the involvement of those with expertise through the experiences of receiving health, social care and social work services. She has developed creative and innovative ways of ensuring that this knowledge is embedded in the curriculum for social work. More information can be found at <https://outsidein2.wixsite.com/outsidein>.

Jacqui Maung is a Subject Librarian for Health and Social Care at the University of Chester. She gained her MA in Information and Library Management at Manchester Metropolitan University in 2010 and has worked at University of Chester libraries over the last 13 years, most of this time working to support the Faculty of Health and Social Care. A large part of her role involves designing and delivering information literacy sessions for a wide range

of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the Faculty. Jacqui has a professional interest in developing information literacy skills.

Craig Morley is a Learning Developer at the University of Manchester. He is an editor for the *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education* and Chair of the North West Academic Libraries (NoWAL) Academic Skills Community of Practice. Craig gained his PhD in Ancient History at the University of Liverpool in 2015. He has published and presented research across different disciplines both nationally and internationally.

Seren Roberts is a Lecturer in Mental Health at the School of Health Sciences, Bangor University. Seren graduated and registered as a mental health nurse in 1996 and worked clinically in a variety of clinical settings. Following her PhD in 2003 Seren embarked on a long career in mental health research in which she undertook quantitative and qualitative research prior to taking up a lectureship in 2014. In addition to teaching healthcare students at undergraduate level, Seren also teaches at postgraduate level and regularly supervises Masters, PhD and Professional Doctorate students within the School of Health Sciences. Seren is an experienced literature reviewer and has published reviews in academic journals. For this edition, Seren has contributed a chapter on developing literature-reviewing skills, a key skill for any student studying a health-related subject.

Tracy Ross is a Senior Lecturer in Acute Adult Care at The University of Chester. Tracy has been a nurse for 34 years and her experiences include adult nursing in acute and primary care. She has worked in higher education for 18 years. Her publications include research methods and critical thinking. Tracy has carried research into caring and has won an RCN Nurse of the Year award in education for her contribution to caring in nurse education.

Helen Thomas is a Librarian at the University of Chester. She qualified as a professional librarian in 1999 and has created many taught information literacy sessions for a variety of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study for the Faculty of Health and Social Care in her role as Subject Librarian at the University of Chester. Helen has professional interests in developing user engagement and information literacy skills. Recently Helen has moved into a new role as Research and Repository Librarian at the University of Chester.

Ella Turner is a Learning Developer at the University of Chester and has direct responsibility for managing a team of academic literacies and maths specialists. Ella has worked in education for over 10 years in a variety of settings. She has worked as a tutor for lifelong learning within a local community setting and as a lecturer and personal tutor in two further education institutions, before moving into higher education as a Learning Developer in 2013. In addition to her BA (Hons) degree, MA and Diploma for Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector, Ella has achieved Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy in recognition of her teaching and learning support. She is currently studying for a Doctorate in Education and is a steering group member for the Association of Learning Development in Higher Education (ALDinHE). Ella was the first in her family to attend university and it is her personal journey as a student that has developed her passion for learning and teaching, enabling students to make sense of and get the most out of their HE experience.

Paul Verlander is a Senior Librarian at the University of Chester. Paul began his career in libraries in 2000 in the research library of the Health and Safety Executive, which he later went on to manage. Paul moved into higher education in 2007, during which time he has developed a keen interest in information literacy. He has presented at a number of conferences including LILAC (the annual Information Literacy Conference) and has had his work in skills development recognised as an exemplar of best practice by the national JISC project 'Learning Literacies in the Digital Age'.

Introduction

We seem to have forgotten that care and treatment is fundamentally delivered through human encounters, despite the advanced technologies that underpin the processes or procedures at hand.

Oelofsen (2016)

In health and social care you will experience many human encounters that will stay with you throughout your entire working life. These encounters will make you think about your practice and about how we all, as human beings, navigate our way through life. Many will make you think about your practice, reflect upon an event in practice, or develop your values and standards or your own practice. This personal development in our lives is what we now know as lifelong learning or how we navigate our lives. We are learning all the time, but to get the best out of this lifelong learning we need to be able to identify when it takes place and to demonstrate to our employers that we are reflecting and changing our practice or life course as we go along. In this book we have developed the themes of lifelong learning, resilience and employability to help you to do this and to help you recognise your skills as they are developing. We have also identified areas of practice or study where you can develop your lifelong learning skills. The following is a brief overview of how you can do this.

Developing study skills is a way to help you negotiate the challenges of further or higher education and beyond into your chosen career in health and social care. This book will help you develop lifelong learning skills for your professional career and help you gain the confidence to argue for good-quality care for the people you will be working with.

In health and social care we have a professional and personal responsibility to do no harm and to aim towards providing the highest standards of care for some of the most vulnerable people in society. People do not ask to get ill or become vulnerable and they can be very afraid of what will happen to them. As health and social care practitioners, we need to be confident in our practice so that people can be confident in us.

This book aims to help you develop your confidence in your ability to find information quickly, to scrutinise that information for its robustness and to apply that information when meeting the needs of vulnerable people. This may appear easy in practice, but in reality it takes years of study and experience together with a healthy dose of self-reflection for it to work.

During your studies you will access a myriad of information. Developing study skills will help you be able to make sense of all of this information and give you tools to develop your

own mindset for lifelong learning. Reading this book does not require any prior knowledge of study skills but simply an open willingness to learn about yourself and about what other people have found to be helpful in their own studies. Therefore, we are all dependent on each other to share information and to use information in order to improve health and social care services.

The book has been designed to build your skills step by step and to help you to scaffold your learning to become independent learners in the future. The book is designed to enable you to engage with activities to develop your confidence as a student. Our aim is to develop you through interacting with this book to become more confident learners. Each chapter can also be read as a stand-alone resource to support your learning, but we have designed the book as a journey as you begin and continue to develop your lifelong learning skills.

The three themes that will be threaded through each of the chapters in this book – developing resilience, enhancing employability and learning for life – we feel are very important for personal development and growth in health and social care. In our experience these are major concerns for many students and this book aims to enable students to learn more effectively to improve their professional and personal lives.



Developing resilience is interlinked with lifelong learning and employability as they each support one another. They are important factors for success in any chosen career, but it is through reflective practice that we become more aware of them. Reflective practice is discussed in more detail in *Chapter 9* as a tool to help us think about our individual resilience needs, what learning we need to do to develop our resilience and how will this help us to do our jobs well. We can also use the resilience cycle above to plan our future careers. Where would you like to be in 10 years' time and what knowledge, skills and experience will you need to be resilient enough to get there?

Developing resilience in health and social care

When we talk about resilience we mean the type of skills needed to flourish in an ever-changing environment such as education or professional practice. Having good resilience skills has been proven to improve self-esteem, develop self-confidence and, most important of all, demonstrate skills of compassion for ourselves and others.

Resilience requires a mindful approach to our everyday activities so that we can monitor our own responses. We will be asking you to do this in each chapter so that you can practise self-compassion and resilience skills. As you work through the book your skills will become useful in practice and in meeting educational and professional deadlines or requirements.

Developing resilience skills will also help you to identify your own needs when searching through literature and making reference to the literature that you have read. We will be exploring resilience as part of the learning outcomes in each of the following chapters so that you will become more aware of what skills you need to develop and increase your resilience skills.

Resilience is closely related to developing employability skills and lifelong learning skills, as without it we would be unaware of what our individual needs were. Therefore, developing skills in resilience will help you to do this as you learn about the human experience and all that it entails.

Learning for life in health and social care

Learning for life, or lifelong learning as it is more commonly known, helps us to develop skills that we can use throughout our career to update our knowledge and practice. As evidence-based practitioners this is really important and will help you to manage situations where people might say 'we have always done it this way' or 'why are we reinventing the wheel?'

Learning for life will add to your skills of resilience and employability as you will quickly be able to defend any decision you have made with up-to-date evidence or policy. You will find that learning for life is an essential part of your professional revalidation or continuous professional development portfolio. Whatever the reason you have for doing it, lifelong learning will help you to develop your skills of resilience and employability so that you can become a confident and compassionate practitioner. Most people with a desire to work in health and social care want to do so in order to help other people; however, as paid carers we need to know why we are doing things in more depth so that we can make sure we are helping and not hurting other people.

In each chapter there will be activities to help you to develop your lifelong learning in different areas of your practice. In a world where everything is becoming more demanding, it is important for our own resilience and employability that we are able to manage our individual lifelong learning needs and not become dependent on other people to do it for us. Lifelong learning is not a passive process but a creative, constructive and self-compassionate approach to personal development that can be of benefit to us and to the people we care for in both our personal and professional lives.

Employability in healthcare practice

Many students who enter health and social care courses do so in the hope of improving their job prospects and developing their career. They may have had many years' experience in the healthcare field but still feel as if they do not know enough to go for that dream job

at the end of all their studying. If you bear in mind your employability needs and also those of your prospective employers, you can start tailoring your study towards your final goal.

For example, if you are interested in one area of practice you can focus your study in that area so that when you go for interview you are confident in your knowledge. You do need to be mindful of not being too narrow in your focus or you may find that you are very limited in the jobs that you can apply for. If you plan in the very early stages of your adult education or career how you are going to enhance your employability skills then you can gain the confidence in maintaining your knowledge base around the right areas of practice.

In an ever-changing world of health and social care we are as much influenced by law, risk and policy as we are by evidence-based practice. As professionals it is very important for us to get these sometimes conflicting views into perspective so that we can make sure we are practising safely and effectively. Sometimes conflicting views about practice can feel overwhelming so it is really important to develop our skills and confidence in our lifelong learning, employability and resilience. Most confident practitioners can utilise these skills and are able to demonstrate them every day.

If you can focus on these three areas you will be able to develop the knowledge and skills that make your personal and working life more fulfilling and beneficial to the people we want to help. To become a professional, however, takes more than just knowledge; it also requires an ability to self-reflect on and be mindful of what skills we need to improve and what skills we are quite good at already. We have made sure as editors that all chapter authors explore this in their chapters so that the knowledge and skills that you will develop from reading the chapter can be used to improve your employability. In a world where human encounters are at the centre of everything we do, the skills that we develop to deliver high-quality health and social care will be our toolbox for a long and satisfying career.

Conclusion

In this introductory chapter we have outlined how we think this book will be of most help to health and social care students. The activities within the book could also be useful to lecturers as ways of exploring practice and developing skills with students. We do hope that by taking a more general approach we are able to reach more students to develop and improve their skills in health and social care. In turn we are all aiming to achieve the same goal in that we can be confident that health and social care students are providing the best care possible to some of the most vulnerable people in society. Let us make it our aim as health and social care practitioners to develop the skills in lifelong learning, resilience and employability in every member of staff whose work involves high-quality and compassionate human encounters every day.

Marjorie Ghisoni and Peggy Murphy, editors

REFERENCE

Oelofsen, N. (2016) *Finding My Professional Heart: a brief guide to compassion and mindfulness for practitioners*. Lantern Publishing.

Chapter 8

Feedback

Peggy Murphy and Craig Morley

LEARNING OUTCOMES

When you have completed this chapter you should be able to:

- 8.1** Use feedback to take control over your personal and academic development
- 8.2** Interpret common feedback statements and seek clarification from peers, tutor and others
- 8.3** Use feedback to create a personal action plan to improve academic performance and percentage grades.

8.1 Introduction

Many students feel disheartened when getting a lower grade than expected, or can become complacent when receiving a high grade. Other students only look at their final grade and do not pay attention to their feedback. Interacting positively with feedback and using feedback effectively is key to improving your marks. Feedback is usually given at the end of a module, following assessment, but with active reflection, feedback can be used as a springboard to help you achieve better grades in future assignments. This chapter will help you regard feedback from others as an opportunity to facilitate your academic growth.

It is inevitable that you will receive positive and negative feedback, both in university and in your career. How you respond to praise and criticism will play a large role in your personal, academic and professional development. To help you think about the importance of feedback and how it can motivate you to improve your studies, this chapter will consider effective approaches to working with feedback for academic development.

8.2 The purpose of feedback

Feedback can take many different forms:

- Formal written feedback following assessments
- Informal verbal feedback from tutors
- Peer-to-peer feedback from fellow students
- Generic group- or cohort-based feedback
- Self-evaluation and reflection.

Feedback is used to highlight what you have done well and what can be improved upon. Constructive feedback enhances student learning. Feedback takes on greater importance when students use it to form a discussion with their marker. To get the most from feedback you need to proactively engage with it. This will enable you to identify goals for your academic and professional development, and help you create action plans to reach those goals.

Hounsell (2004) defines feedback as ‘any information, process or activity which affords or accelerates student learning’ (p. 1). Feedback is not merely used as a method to rank performance and competency, but as a distinct teaching tool. It is the most common form of guidance university students receive on how to improve their work. As a result, it is important to view feedback as more than a score awarded for a piece of work. Instead, it is more useful to view feedback as a conversation between yourself and your tutor (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Nicol, 2010). Mortiboys (2005) recognises the emotional dimension within the teacher/learner relationship and that it is beneficial to both to adopt an emotional state that is conducive to learning. Working in partnership with your tutor helps you to gain a sense of control over your own learning rather than being a passive recipient of knowledge.

8.3 Feedback mindset

Your mindset and attitude towards feedback has a direct effect on your ability to utilise it effectively to develop your academic and professional competencies.

Dweck (2006) coined the terms ‘fixed mindset’ and ‘growth mindset’. She recognised that the way you perceive yourself as a learner can have a profound effect on how you develop through life. Dweck (2006) stated that if you believe your abilities are set in stone you are less likely to work through challenges and more likely to see problems as insurmountable. This approach is termed a ‘fixed mindset’. People with a ‘fixed mindset’ believe that intelligence and personality were allotted at birth and that nothing can change that.

Conversely, people with a ‘growth mindset’ view challenges as learning opportunities and believe in their own ability to develop skills through engaging in problem-solving behaviour. Growth mindset people are prepared to work on their learning. Adopting this approach allows you to perceive feedback from others as a way to help map your progress and develop further. To engage with feedback effectively you should not, therefore, view negative feedback as a failure, but as an opportunity to overcome obstacles and facilitate your own development.



IMPROVING RESILIENCE, LIFELONG LEARNING AND EMPLOYABILITY

Using feedback effectively to overcome obstacles helps to build motivation and resilience.

Resilience is another quality that students are advised to develop. Resilience, in both an academic and a professional setting, is the ability to recover from difficulties and setbacks. As a student, it is important to develop techniques that motivate you, particularly when you do not get the grades or feedback that you wanted. If you develop the resilience to stick with your programme despite occasional negative feedback you can visualise yourself receiving your certificate at your graduation ceremony. Duckworth (2016) has found that the difference between the best and worst academic performers is not always due to intelligence. She researched what motivates students to learn and found that intelligence quotient (IQ), which only measures whether students learn quickly and easily, is not the best forecast for how students will succeed in life. She found the most important predictor of student success was resilience and grit.

ACTIVITY 8.1: UNDERSTANDING FEEDBACK



Alice has been given feedback on her first assignment at university. She has been awarded 48% for her essay and would like to know how to improve her grades. Look at the following feedback and think about suggestions you could make to her as a peer so you can support her to develop her writing. You could use a SWOT analysis from *Chapter 12* to help her to focus on what she does well and what she needs to improve for her next assignment.

An example of student feedback

Thank you for your work,

It was evident that you have thought about your development in relation to the NMC standards for pre-registration education progression point 2.

Introduction: The signposting of the answer is an important stage in introducing what you will do in the main body of your essay. It was clear that you would include 2 developmental issues that related to progression point 2 of the NMC (2010) standards for education in the main body of your work.

Section 1. It was evident that you had read current literature to inform your action plan as to how you would meet your objectives.

Section 2. The section on building confidence and time management was less organised. It could have been improved with a little more structure and you need to support all of your statements by referring to current literature.

Conclusion: Here again, you would benefit from study skills advice to be able to showcase your thoughts more clearly.

References and supporting literature: Use the APA guide to help you to reference correctly. You would benefit from reading around each topic a little more generally first to get an overview. Also always try to use the author's surname and date of publication in text citations.

Advice for further improvement: This essay demonstrated that you understood the assessment brief. To improve your marks further, try to support all of your statements throughout your work by referring to the literature you have read to inform your ideas. It may benefit you to seek study skills advice on how to structure your work.

8.4 Feed-forward

This section will look at the ways in which you can turn feedback into *feed-forward*, as a means to improve grades, as well as maintain motivation and build resilience.

Feed-forward offers students the opportunity to adapt their work using feedback from others before the final submission. The aim of this is that students reflect upon the comments and advice and apply these principles to the whole of their assessment (Butters *et al.*, 2013). In other words, feed-forward is a method used to encourage students to make connections between assessment, feedback and learning. Usually this method involves students presenting a sample of their work to a tutor or study skills advisor for comment. When students are proactive and use this approach they have an opportunity to reflect upon feedback and think about designing their own strategy for success.

Your entire journey as a university student is a formative experience. You are continually asked to learn new skills, knowledge and competencies. To gain the best grades you are capable of, you need to proactively plan your own academic and professional development. Taking responsibility for your own formative learning, by making effective use of feedback from one assignment to the next, is essential in becoming an independent and empowered learner (Boud, 2000). Reflection plays an important role in this. Reflecting on feedback, to identify your strengths and weaknesses, allows you to decide what to do with feedback. Developing reflective practice not only benefits your grades at university, it is a key element of lifelong learning (Fry *et al.*, 2009; Schön, 1987). For that reason, reflecting on your feedback, to decide what study skills and subject knowledge you need to develop, allows you to act as your own source of feed-forward, by using feedback from one assignment to improve your performance in the next.

ACTIVITY 8.2: QUICK REFLECTION



Reflection does not always have to be complex and time-consuming. The simplest reflection is often the most effective reflection. Look back on your last piece of assignment feedback and decide what you are going to:

Stop doing

Start doing

Continue doing.

8.5 Action planning

To get the most from feedback, you will need to formulate a clear response to the advice given. One method is to create an action plan (*Figure 8.1*). Action planning turns passive reflection into active reflection.

Action plans are used to focus reflection and create clearly defined responses to feedback. The setting of goals and the motivation to achieve those goals is a key aspect of becoming an effective independent and lifelong learner (Pintrich and Zusho, 2002). Action planning requires you to create a set of realistic goals to improve the skills that have been identified in your feedback.

The following are examples of different strategies and tactics you may adopt in an action plan:

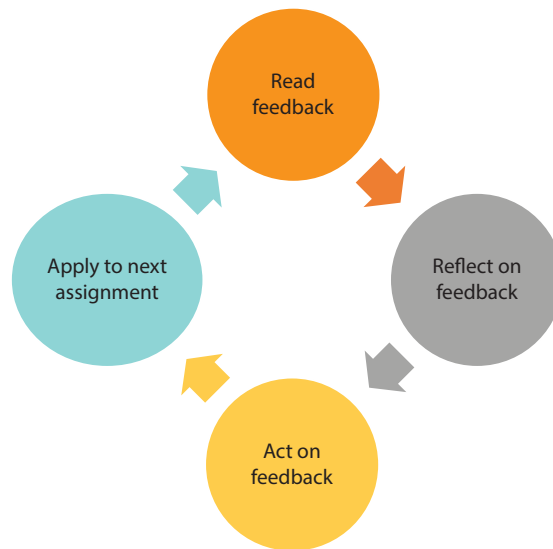


Figure 8.1 Action plan cycle.

- Contact study skills team to get help with referencing
- Attend a development seminar (study skills or practical)
- Make an appointment with, or email your tutor to discuss the theory you did not understand
- Create your own glossary of key terms to help define key terminology
- Give yourself more time to proofread assignments in order to spot spelling or grammar mistakes.

Whatever action you take, use SMART targets to formulate your response to feedback. SMART targets are achievable and practical goals (*Figure 8.2*). An open-ended target, such as ‘improve my academic writing’, is a very broad topic consisting of many different aspects that may be difficult to achieve. To use SMART goals, set specific (S) targets such as ‘develop my use of academic language’. Specific targets are easier to measure (M). For example, in your feedback you may notice that you no longer receive comments such as ‘too colloquial’. Targets that can be measured and tracked also have the benefit of being more attainable (A) and realistic (R); they are within your power to achieve. It is also important that your goals can be achieved in a timely (T) manner, preferably before your next assignment. In this way, SMART targets help you to make consistent progress that will have a positive effect on future assignments.



IMPROVING RESILIENCE, LIFELONG LEARNING AND EMPLOYABILITY

When you enter the workforce you will have regular development and performance reviews. Knowing how to use feedback and SMART targets effectively will help you to improve the care you give to the people you are helping and to make good progress in your career.

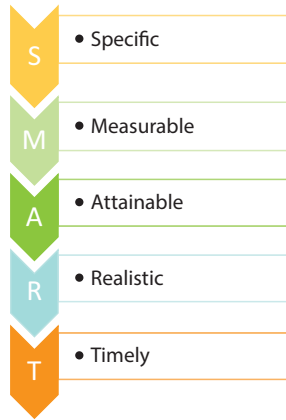



Figure 8.2 Smart targets.

ACTIVITY 8.3: SMART TARGETS 


Break these broad goals into SMART targets.

'Improve my academic writing'


- 1
- 2

'Do better in exams'

- 1
- 2

HELPFUL HINT 

After you have created an action plan using SMART, keep it somewhere you can see it every day, perhaps in the bathroom. This will remind you of your targets and help you to stay motivated to achieve them. When you receive your next piece of assignment feedback, check to see if you have achieved your target. If so, cross it off the action plan; that way you can see the progress you are making in your own development.

ACTIVITY 8.4: ACTION PLANNING 

- 1. Look back and reflect on your last piece of assignment feedback.
- 2. Using the action plan form below, identify which of your study skills are strong and which can be developed further. Mark each skill the feedback mentions from 1 to 5 (1 = weakest, 5 = strongest).
- 3. Make a plan of how you will develop these skills before your next assignment. (Think about what support services your university has that can help you.)

Take control and ownership of your own development – use feedback to create action plans to aid your own progress.

Action plan form

Time management and organisation	Feedback score
Setting and meeting deadlines	
Prioritising	
Reading and research	
Understanding assignment briefs/essay questions	
Managing reading load	
Using credible and reliable academic sources	
Finding further reading	
Reading texts effectively	
Critical reading/thinking	
Academic writing	
Understanding academic/literary genres	
Quoting, paraphrasing, summarising	
Writing to word count	
Editing – first/second/final drafts	
Academic language	
Critical writing	
Editing/proofreading strategies	
Structure and planning	
Introductions/conclusions	
Creating and sticking to plans	
Paragraph structure	
Organising information	
Making an argument/answering the question	
Academic integrity	
Understanding plagiarism	
Referencing	

Time management and organisation	Feedback score
Action plan (How will you develop these skills?) 1. 2. 3.	By when?

8.5.1 Feedback glossary

Use this feedback glossary to identify what your tutor says in your feedback, and what they really mean.

What your tutors say	What they mean
'Too colloquial'/ 'Colloquialism'	This means that your writing includes slang, clichés or conversational phrases (e.g. 'the evidence really paints a picture'). Substitute examples of this for more formal language. Academic writing has a specific set of guidelines, styles and conventions. Follow these guidelines closely and consistently in your own writing.
'Reference needed'/ 'Evidence?'	This means that you have not backed up your point with clear evidence, or that you have included a personal judgement that cannot be supported by the evidence. If you are unsure on <i>how</i> , <i>when</i> or <i>why</i> to reference, it is important to seek advice as soon as possible (see <i>Chapter 7</i> for more information).
'This is not a credible source'/ 'More reading of the literature needed'	This means you have not used reliable and credible scholarly and academic reading material. You should always aim to use academic books and journal articles as opposed to newspapers, blogs and online magazines. Conducting effective research is key to gaining high grades in your assignments (see <i>Chapter 4</i> for more information).
'Be more critical'/ 'Go more in-depth'	This means you have not evaluated or analysed the evidence you have used. Not analysing the evidence you use results in your writing being too descriptive, and not analytical (See <i>Chapter 5</i> for more information).

What your tutors say	What they mean
'How is this relevant?'	<p>This means that what you have written does not help you answer the assignment question.</p> <p>Remember, when writing an assignment you are being asked to answer a particular question or solve a specific problem.</p> <p>Effective planning helps to keep your assignment focused and relevant.</p>
'Your paragraphs need further development'/ 'Paragraph structure'	<p>This means that you have used paragraphs incorrectly. They are either too long, or too short.</p> <p>Each paragraph should be focused on one point or idea. Each paragraph should follow the same basic structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic sentence • Evidence and analysis • Concluding remark

These are only a few examples of common feedback comments you may receive on your assignments. If you receive comments or suggestions you do not understand, book an appointment with your tutor to clarify any queries you may have.

ACTIVITY 8.5: SUBMISSION CHECKLIST



Look back at your last few pieces of assignment feedback, note any recurring comments ('avoid contractions', 'reference needed', 'lack of structure', and so on). Use these recurring comments to create a bespoke and personalised submission checklist to aid editing and proofreading.

Keep tweaking and adapting your submission checklist as your skills develop, as well as in response to new assignment feedback. Take things out that you no longer need reminding about; add new things as they are mentioned by your tutors. This ensures your checklist develops at the same time as you do.

Compare your initial submission checklist to the one you have at the end of the year. This is a good way to see exactly how your skills have developed over time and the progress you have made.

8.6 Marking rubrics

Another method that tutors can use to offer feedback to students following assessment is by using a rubric. Rubrics are a type of matrix that help students and tutors understand a set of criteria or dimensions of quality for any given type of assessment. These are usually designed with a particular assessment in mind (essay, presentation) and offer both student and tutor a means to communicate the assessment expectations and how grade-related criteria need to be met by each student.

All of the grade types and values are listed in a table and show students where they will be marked along the continuum of desired standards (see *Table 8.1*). This usually starts

Table 8.1 *Example of part of a marking rubric*

90–100 (1st class)	Develops new knowledge or novel perspective going beyond the literature	Work produced could hardly be bettered when produced under parallel conditions
80–89 (1st class)	Extensive subject knowledge with detailed insight into and understanding of relevant theory	Sophisticated understanding of complexities of key theoretical models, concepts and arguments
70–79 (1st class)	Extensive, thorough coverage of topic, focused use of detail and examples	Excellent, very sound understanding of complexities of key theoretical models, concepts and arguments
60–69 (upper second)	Breadth and depth of coverage, accurate and relevant in detail and example	Clear, sound understanding of subject matter, theory, issues and debate
50–59 (lower second)	Content generally relevant and accurate, most central issues identified; basic knowledge sound but may be patchy	Reasonable level of understanding of subject matter, theory and ideas; main issues satisfactorily understood
40–49 (third class)	Fairly basic knowledge, limited consistency of depth and accuracy of detail; not all aspects addressed, some omissions	Partial understanding of subject matter, core concepts and relevant issues; basic reference to theory
30–39 (Fail)	Contains very slight detail; content may be thin or irrelevant; issues poorly identified	Very little understanding of subject matter, ideas and issues; may be issue of misreading/misinterpretation of question
20–29 (Fail)	Little relevance of content; unacceptably weak or inaccurate knowledge base	Significant weaknesses and gaps in understanding of subject matter, ideas and issues; misunderstanding of question
10–19 (Fail)	Knowledge base extremely weak; content almost entirely irrelevant or erroneous	Devoid of understanding of subject matter, ideas and issues
0–9 (Fail)	Material not relevant or correct; no evidence of knowledge	No relevant understanding evident; response to question virtually nil

with the highest possible level of achievement in the left column and moves along the continuum to the far right column, which would denote the least-desirable standard. Each of the descriptions of the possible levels of attainment are written in sufficient detail to enable them to be useful for judgement of progress toward the module learning outcomes.

HELPFUL HINT



Use rubrics to provide another opportunity for dialogue between you and your tutor. If tutors do not offer the rubric to you alongside the assessment brief, ask whether this framework for assessment can be given in advance of your summative assessment to give you a better idea of what is expected of you. Rubrics are another opportunity for you to access a snapshot of information about your performance.

8.7 What to do after you receive feedback

- Store, download and save your feedback as soon as you get it. Keep your saved feedback in an easily identifiable location (either physically or electronically).
- Do not just check the overall grade, read all of your tutor's comments. Note down both the positives and the negatives.
- Look for recurring comments or themes. Add these to your submission checklist.
- Create action plans.
- If you need extra guidance and clarity, make an appointment to discuss the feedback with your tutor.

HELPFUL HINT



If you are disappointed with your mark and feedback, be kind to yourself. Have a bubble bath, a pint with friends, walk the dog, or do whatever it is you do to unwind. Then give yourself a day or two to reflect before making an appointment to see your tutor and/or study skills advisor.

8.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the importance of maintaining a positive and proactive attitude to using feedback to aid your academic and personal development. Using feedback effectively allows you to plan your own progress, improve your grades, stay motivated and build resilience. Utilising the methods outlined above will enable you to become a resilient and independent learner, capable of self-assessment and self-regulation, all of which are key elements of lifelong learning.

SUMMARY



Four key points to take away from *Chapter 8*:

- ✓ Learning from your feedback can greatly improve your study skills.
- ✓ Obtaining feedback while writing your assignment can help you stay focused on your work.
- ✓ Feedback can be used to build resilience and lifelong learning skills.
- ✓ Giving and receiving feedback is an important employability skill.

Quiz

1. What is the purpose of feedback?
2. How does feedback benefit your education?
3. What do we mean by the term *feed-forward*?
4. How will building effective strategies to deal with negative and positive feedback affect your future career?
5. What does SMART stand for?
6. What can you do to make the most out of feedback?
7. What does the feedback comment 'Be more critical' mean?
8. What does the feedback comment 'Reference needed' mean?

REFERENCES

- Boud, D. (2000) Sustainable assessment: rethinking assessment for the learning society. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 22(2), 151–67.
- Butters, C., Kerfoot, S., Murphy, P. and Williams, A. (2013) 'I am just so delighted – now I know I can do it!' – How collaboration between nurse lecturers and academic skills tutors promotes students' confidence. *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education*, No. 6. Retrieved from <https://journal.aldinhe.ac.uk/index.php/jldhe/article/view/207> (last accessed 9 September 2019).
- Duckworth, A. (2016) *Grit: the power of passion and perseverance*. Scribner.
- Dweck, C. (2006) *Mindset: changing the way you think to fulfil your potential*. Random House.
- Fry, H., Ketteridge, S., and Marshall, S. (2009) Understanding student learning. In Fry, H., Ketteridge, S. and Marshall, S. (eds) *A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: enhancing academic practice*, 3rd edition. Routledge.
- Hounsell, D. (2004) 'Reinventing feedback for the contemporary Scottish university'. Paper presented at Quality Enhancement Workshop on 'Improving feedback to students', University of Glasgow, 4 June.
- Mortiboys, A. (2005) *Teaching with Emotional Intelligence*. Routledge.
- Nicol, D.J. (2010) From monologue to dialogue: improving written feedback processes in mass higher education. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 35(5), 501–17.
- Nicol, D.J. and Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006) Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: a model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31(2), 199–218.
- Pintrich, R.P. and Zusho, A. (2002) Student motivation and self-regulated learning in the college classroom. In Smart, J.C. and Tierney, W.G. (eds), *Higher Education: handbook of theory and research*, Volume XVII (pp. 55–128). Agathon Press.
- Schön, D. (1987) *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: toward a new design for teaching and learning in the professions*. Jossey-Bass.