

Turning motivation into self regulation.

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Abstract

The focus of the present study is the links between motivational factors and students' academic self regulation. The data for the present study are detailed interviews with 40 undergraduate students undertaking a year long subject in developmental psychology as part of their teacher preparation. The students were questioned about their motivational orientations, their use of learning strategies, their confidence in their ability to cope with the subject, and their reactions to the lecturers who took their tutorial groups and to the structural elements of the subject. Analyses of the interviews revealed widely differing levels in students' self regulation. It is argued that environmental influences may affect the motivation and self regulation of some students more than others.

Introduction

Researchers increasingly are linking the motivational, cognitive, and social/environmental aspects of learning (Bandura, 1993; Boekaerts, 1997; Pintrich & Schunk, 1997; Pintrich & Garcia, 1991; VanderStoep, Pintrich & Fagerlin, 1996; Zimmerman, 1995). Within these three general areas, many constructs are brought into play: for motivation these include achievement goals, causal attributions, self-efficacy, interest, perceived relevance, and affect; for cognition, these include domain specific knowledge, declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, cognitive strategies, and metacognitive strategies; and for the

environment these include the nature of the task and its assessment criteria, the characteristics of teachers and peers, wider life goals, and balancing the various demands of life. In all, a bewildering array of variables whose relationships can change over time. How do these aspects combine to produce self regulated learning?

According to Schunk and Zimmerman (1997, p.195), academic self regulation includes "planning and managing time; attending to and concentrating on instruction; organizing, rehearsing, and coding information strategically; establishing a productive work environment; and using social resources effectively." Schunk and Zimmerman also include within self regulation motivational processes such as goal setting, a positive sense of self-efficacy, valuing of the learning, and emotional responses such as pride and satisfaction when effort pays off. Boekaerts (1997), however, argues that motivational beliefs should be considered separately from cognitive approaches. In her model, cognitive self regulation and motivational self regulation work in tandem to produce overall self regulation.

To date, there has been considerable research into various aspects of this broader model of self regulation, among them the connections among achievement goals, effective learning strategies, and self perceptions of ability; and the central role of self efficacy in students' initiating work on a task. These areas are discussed briefly.

Achievement goal theory (establishing the constructs of a mastery goal, a performance goal, and a work avoidance goal) has provided insights into links between students' motivation and their subsequent thoughts and behaviour (Ames, 1992; Dweck, 1986; Maehr, 1984). There is considerable evidence of a connection between a mastery achievement goal (my goal is to understand the work I have to do/ to improve my skills) and students' reported use of effective study strategies (eg, I try to relate what I am studying in this course to other things I know about; when I work for this course, I set goals for myself; when I prepare an assignment, I try to pull together the information from lectures, tutorials, and my own reading; when I study for this course, I summarise material I get from lectures and from readings) (eg, see Archer, 1994). Similar relationships emerge between a mastery goal and strategy use when researchers measure students' perceptions of teachers' goals (eg, the teacher makes sure I understand the work; the teacher pays attention to whether I'm improving; making mistakes is part of learning) (Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1988). These findings are of particular interest because they point to the social nature of learning and the way in which important people in students' lives can affect their motivational orientation and use of effective strategies.

Another interesting aspect of this research is the role of students' self-perceptions of ability. This term is somewhat similar to Bandura's (1993) construct of self efficacy (one's perception of one's ability to perform a particular task) and refers to students' gauging of how well they are going in a subject compared with other students in the same class. When students are mastery-oriented, their perceptions of their ability do not play a major role in their decision whether or not to undertake a task. What becomes more important is their interest in the task or the perceived relevance of the task and their reckoning of the time it would take them to complete the task. The ego aspect of perceptions of ability (am I looking smart, am I looking stupid) diminishes to be replaced by a more rational question of how likely am I to succeed on the task? This latter way of thinking about ability has much in common with self-efficacy.

Bandura (1993, p. 118) argues that a sense of self efficacy is central to effective self regulation: "self-regulatory social, motivational, and affective contributions to cognitive functioning are best addressed within the conceptual framework of the exercise of human agency." Bandura supports Dweck's (Dweck & Leggett, 1988) distinction between people who think of ability as an area as determined by genetic inheritance and therefore impossible to increase, and people who think of ability as an acquirable skill that can be increased with well-directed effort. This second conception of ability is more desirable, especially for students who worry that they are not "smart" enough to do a task. Otherwise, they are likely to shy away from challenging task because they fear failure and the implication of low ability.

The purpose of the present study was to consider students' motivation, strategy use, and response to the way in which a first year university subject was delivered. What behaviours and attitudes characterise students who performed well in the subject compared with the behaviour and attitudes of students who did not perform as well? Do these characteristics fit current conceptions of academic self regulation? Information was gathered in individually conducted interviews. There are two particular benefits of these interview data: students were talking about their attitudes and behaviours in a "real" educational situation; and students responded spontaneously to the interviewer's questions, rather than being prompted by items in a questionnaire.

Participants in the study

The participants in the study were forty students (18 males, 22 females) enrolled in a Bachelor of Education course in a variety of specialisations (early childhood, primary, and secondary). The total number of students enrolled in the first year of the BEd were 354. They were attending a moderately sized university in Newcastle, Australia. In their first year, all students took a year-long subject in child and adolescent development, usually referred to as Education 1. The subject was run by a group of eight lecturers who took turns to present a weekly lecture attended by all students. In addition, there was a two hour tutorial held each week for smaller groups of students (about 20 to 25 in each group). Each lecturer was responsible for anywhere from one to four of these tutorial groups.

One of the major points of assessment in Education 1, a major essay, was structured to encourage a mastery motivation in students (reported in Archer & Scevak, 1998). Four aspects of the essay were addressed. Firstly, this assignment was to be submitted twice. The first submission would result in a mark out of 10 and written feedback about how the assignment could be improved; the second submission would result in a mark out of 20, and therefore a total mark out of 30. Students also were required to submit a one-page plan with their essay. Secondly, each student was given a 33-page booklet explaining how to go about writing the essay. The six sections of the booklet dealt with finding references in the library, citing references in the essay, taking notes for the essay, planning the essay, examining and improving upon a previous essay, and guidelines for expression and the spelling of key terms.

Thirdly, students were given the choice of working alone on the essay or working with one partner. Both people would receive the same mark for the essay. Fourthly, students were given a choice of topics for the essay. Lecturers taking tutorial groups chose from a central list, offering about six topics including, for example, "Discuss the controversy concerning whether or not there is an adolescent identity crisis" and "Outline the major criticisms of Piaget's theory and argue whether or not you think his theory remains valid."

The twenty-five students participated voluntarily in individually conducted, audio-taped interviews which later were transcribed. A research assistant conducted the interviews. Students were assured of confidentiality and that the grades they received would not be affected by their participation or otherwise in an interview. They were drawn from all specialisations within the BEd. As part of a longer interview, they were asked about their experiences in the subject Education 1: the motivation they held and the motivation they perceived their tutorial lecturer to espouse; the strategies they used to accomplish tasks in Education 1; their responses to the four aspects of the subject designed to enhance students' mastery motivation; and their comparisons of life at university with life at high school. The edited interviews are reproduced in Appendix A. The interview data were analysed according to the grade the students received for the subject (nine of the students received a distinction, twelve received a credit, sixteen received a pass, and three failed the subject).

Results

Distinction grade students

In terms of motivation, the nine Distinction level students all showed a mastery orientation (talking about the importance of understanding the material so as to become better teachers; or how interesting they found the material). Two of the students (D2, D5) also displayed a strong performance goal orientation. They spoke about the "naturalness" of competition, but stressed that winning without understanding the material was of little use. One of the female students (D4) indicated that she doubted her ability to do well and thought she would find the course a struggle: a performance orientation with low perceived ability. However, her interest in the subject seemed to drive her forward. This student had not coped well with stressful situations in the past. She walked out of her end of high school examinations (these are highly competitive, public, state-wide examinations) and worked as a secretary for a few years before coming to university via an enabling programs for students who did not graduate from high school.

The terms these students used for describing their study strategies were remarkably similar: *coming together, making sense, basic themes, getting the whole picture, connecting, relating, looking for what was required, how things fit together, understanding the concept*. These students are searching for a sense of wholeness in the material. One student (D8) could have skipped Education 1 because she had passed a similar subject at another university the previous year. However, she decided to take the subject because she felt she had not understood the content well enough the year before. An important strategy to accomplish this quest was wide reading. The mastery oriented students said they read because they found the material interesting, and made the connection between interest and effort/reading, while the two performance oriented students also used the wider reading to

help them do better in the examination. They all used some form of summarising. Some students discussed the content (eg, sex role stereotyping) with family members. One student (D9) said she reprimanded her mother for her child rearing behaviours in the light of the research evidence!

Environmental influences on their studying were more mixed. Generally, they enjoyed the discussion that was generated in tutorials, and hearing the ideas of others. One of the students (D3) credited her lecturer with generating her interest in the subject; she had gone to the class expecting to dislike it, but was now enthusiastic about it. The anxious student (D4) found herself in a tutorial group that should have exacerbated her nervousness but she indicated that her interest in the subject diminished her nervousness. It was not a relaxed group; the students were very nervous presenting information to the rest of the class. One of the students (D2) described himself as a very independent learner, who would rather solve problems on his own than seek help. His drive to succeed was clearly evident. He would not complain about tutorials or lectures: if they did not provide him with what he wanted, then he would find it in his own way (this strategy worked because he was presented with a University Medal at the end of his degree for an outstanding academic record). Another student (D6), an older student with four children and a husband studying medicine, demonstrated steely self discipline in accomplishing her work.

The students' reactions to the structuring of the subject (booklet, choice of topics, resubmission of essay, and choice of working alone or with a partner) were generally positive. They used the booklet to help them write the essay; they saw the resubmission as a chance to find out where they were going wrong; they used the choice of topics to pick something that interested them; and if they worked with a partner, they did so in the hope of producing a better essay.

Interesting differences in approach emerged, however, for the two highly competitive students (D2, D4). They agreed that resubmission was a good idea, but they were annoyed that the resubmitted essay was worth more marks than the original because this meant that students who had done poorly on the first submission had a chance to "catch up to" those students who had done well on the original submission. One of the students (D2) did not like a choice of topics: it would be more fair if there was only one topic because marking of students' work would be more consistent. One of the reasons for working with a partner would be the pooling of resources and hence the chance of better mark than working individually.

The students agreed that university required more self discipline and more independent learning from students than did high school, but this was something they were prepared to accept. A major part of this independence was finding information through reading, rather than being given information as occurred in high school. There was a sense of confidence in their ability to cope with the challenge of university learning.

Credit grade students

Of the twelve credit grade students interviewed, five displayed a strong mastery motivation. One student (C1) found the subject new and interesting, while another (C6) related what she was learning to the development of her small boy. One mature age student (C8) was determined to succeed as a teacher because he loathed the thought of returning to the job he held before coming to university. The others admitted to enjoying parts of the subject but letting other aspects of their lives (eg, family, work, social, or sporting commitments) get in the way of study for the subject. One student (C3) described herself as a naturally competitive person who worried about her ability to produce work of a high quality.

The strategies these students used to learn material centred around note taking, summarising, and reading over notes and set sections in the textbook. Though three students (C2, C4, C5) spoke of the importance of having their notes fit together logically, there was not the emphasis, noted with the distinction level students, on making sense of the subject as a whole. Only two students (C6, C11) spoke of their extensive reading and how it helped their understanding.

The students enjoyed the tutorials, mentioning in particular the chance to discuss ideas with their peers, and the way the lecturer was able to help them understand the material using real-life stories that exemplified aspects of the theory under discussion. Two of the students (C1, C6) had the same lecturer, though they were in separate tutorial groups, and it was interesting to note that they both spoke of her willingness to help and the skillful way she dealt with wrong answers in class (C6: *people in her workshop are not frightened to answer because they know if they're wrong, they're not going to be put down and feel like idiots*). One student (C12) admitted that she studied because the lecturer insisted that homework was to be completed for each tutorial.

In general, the students responded positively to the structural aspects of the subjects: a choice of topics meant that they could choose something of interest to them; resubmission of the essay meant a chance to improve (although one student, C4, was not too enthusiastic, likening it to medicine that had to be taken); the booklet provided useful information about essay writing. Only two of the twelve (C6, C7) choose to work with a partner on the essay and both enjoyed the experience.

Pass grade students

Of the sixteen pass grade students, nine indicated that their goal was just to pass the subject, nothing more, a work avoidance goal (*happy to be passing, just try and pass, all I want to do is pass*). It is possible that some of the students were not being honest during the interview. The work avoidance stance (this work is so boring or so irrelevant that I'll work to pass, but no more than that) may have been concealing a performance-oriented concern with failing and thereby exposing their incompetence to others. In either event, the students questioned the relevance of the subject to their careers as teachers, especially objecting to

the developmental focus (early childhood, middle childhood, early adolescence, late adolescence), wanting only to look, for example, at the psychology of high school students. Three students (P4, P10, P16) indicated that the lecturer had generated interest in the subject for them (P4: *at the beginning, I thought this looks like it will be terrible, but I really like it now; P16: nothing goes into my head at that stage (the massed lecture), it's only when I come to the tut that everything's put together*). They didn't consider themselves good students, but were prepared to study to gain a respectable mark.

The strategies used by these students included reading the textbook and making summaries. No reference was made to "getting the big picture", and the note-taking techniques were rather loosely described. None of the students mentioned that they read widely in the area; in fact, some of them (P1, P3, P5, P13, P15) admitted that they disliked reading and did as little as possible. One student (P9) described herself as "paranoid" about wasting time reading material that would not be on the test. Two students (P3, P7) admitted that they knew more effective study strategies but they chose not to use them because they had little interest in the subject or they really did not understand it. Some students (P11, P12, P13) were lucky enough to have family members who took an interest in the Education 1 subject and discussed the content with them.

Of interest was the determination of some of them (P1, P3, P7, P8, P14) to reach their goal, even if the goal was just to pass the subject (P3: *I take a lacksadaisical approach to studying...but I don't let it get on top of me...and I don't quit. They'll have to throw me out first; P8: I sort of slug through it; P7: try and keep myself on a pass for everything; P14: I'm not really into this subject..there's a self discipline in what I do..it's on my study timetable to do it, so I get out the textbook and I force myself*). One of the students (P5), though, appeared more to be at the whim of events and people around them: if she was bored, she stopped studying, but if she were in the company of keen students, she would exert herself (*I'd be more enthusiastic to work if I was around people that work a lot*).

Students' reactions to the tutorial sessions generally were positive. They liked the lecturer and his or her attempts to use stories to link theory and practice, and the discussions with peers. In fact, they needed the tutorial to make sense of the work because the massed lecture generally was incomprehensible. But they "switched off" if they got bored, didn't understand, or didn't see the relevance of the subject matter. One student (P9) did not like her tutorial lecturer whom she felt was too distant, presenting information to the group but not stopping to check their understanding. With the examination on its way, the student was beginning to panic.

Most of the students reacted positively to the structural elements of the subject: they used the booklet, they chose topics of interest to them, and they valued the opportunity to re-submit their work to improve its quality. Some, though, chose a topic because they thought it would be easier than the others, or because they already knew a lot about the topic, or because they thought there would be more library resources available for that topic. Some students (eg, P3, P5), however, reacted quite negatively: they made little use of the booklet; one did not want to resubmit, while the other admitted to making only minimal changes; one found it difficult to decide which would be the easiest of the topics, while the other preferred

to be told exactly what to do. This student (P5) also did not enjoy working with a partner on the essay: she understood so little of what her partner had done on the essay that she was unable to make corrections (at this point in the interview she began to cry).

Some naive ideas about the subject matter (developmental psychology) and the nature of learning in general emerged during the interviews. For example, one student (P2) choose not to relate new information to prior knowledge (*I don't try and relate it to other things...I believe this is something new, I put it into another category*). Another (P3) was confused by the notion of a theory (*Everyone's got a different view on child development. You'd think they'd get it right! Take Piaget and every other bloke, and buy 'em all, and just pick the norm*). Another (P6) saw learning purely in terms of passing examinations (*If you don't pass tests, that's basically what you're at uni for....when you go to the tut, you have only about twenty minutes on the actual stuff you have to know for the exam, and then the other hour and twenty minutes is on the real world of situations*).

Four of the students (P2, P5, P8, P9) recalled their high school days with nostalgia: teachers took more personal interest in students and they made sure students kept up with the work. All the work students needed to know was given to them by teachers; they were not expected to find information independently. At university, you were on your own. One student (P8) described the first year of university as a "bit of a shock" and suggested that it be restructured (more hours of teaching) to be more like high school.

Fail grade students

All three of the failing students indicated the sort of passivity that also seemed to characterise one of the passing students (P5). They spoke of boredom, lack of planning, leaving work till the last minute, exerting little effort, needing to be pushed by others to accomplish tasks. Again, they missed the greater personal attention they received at high school (F1, *I need to be pushed and at school I was pushed all the time*; F2, *it's not the lecturers' responsibility...there's no sweat for them...whereas at school they want you to get through*; F3, *you're not pushed as much as you are at high school. If you don't do it you fail...it's your problem*; P5, *at high school when I did hang around people that got higher marks than me, I worked more, did heaps more*).

Discussion

Significant differences in self regulation emerged among the students interviewed, and the differences correspond roughly to the grades they received for the subject. As one might expect, the contrasts were most evident comparing the distinction students with the failing students and some of the pass students.

In line with the literature (Bandura, 1993; Pintrich, 1989; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997; Vanderstoep et al., 1996), the distinction grade students displayed a mastery motivation (some students were performance-oriented in addition to a mastery orientation) and effective use of learning strategies. Their aim was to make sense of the subject as a whole. Wide reading provided a broad view of the field, a base of knowledge from which they could build. They enjoyed the tutorial sessions and responded positively to the elements designed to enhance a mastery motivation. However, for at least some of these students, there was the sense that they would succeed even if their academic environment was uninviting. Their inner resources (confidence in their ability, knowledge of effective strategies, wide reading, energy, search for meaning in their work) would prevail. They relished the relative independence of thought and behaviour that a university provided.

The struggling pass students and the failing students, on the other hand, showed little self regulation. They were not mastery oriented, their goal being to pass the subject. Their strategies, for the most part, were ineffective and piecemeal. In fact, there was not much studying, with work left till the last minute. There was little if any reading of anything bar sections of the set text. There was no chance of getting the wider picture. As in high school, the students wanted to be given a set of facts and instructed to remember them.

To make matters worse, these students seemed unwilling to respond to the support offered in tutorials, or in the structural aspects of the subject. For example, they did not make much use of the booklet and they disliked the resubmission requirement with the major essay. A naive view of learning didn't help, for example, one student (P6) complaining that too much tutorial time was taken up discussing real-world applications of the theory, and not enough on the material that would be in the end of year examination. In comparing these students with the high achievers described earlier, the Bible verse come to mind: *Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath* (Matthew, Ch 25, v 29). Time inevitably will lengthen the distance between the groups, at least in terms of academic progress.

In contrast to the rather passive, "floating with the tide" behaviours of very weak students, some of the pass grade students, though disliking the subject and failing to see much relevance in it, nonetheless demonstrated a resolve to pass the subject because it was compulsory in the degree

program. There was a sense of self efficacy, not to be able to do well in the subject, but to pass the subject. In fact, a work avoidance goal can be seen to contain a self efficacy component: I do not wish to do this, but if I have to do it, then I'm confident that I will succeed at least at a minimal level.

The credit grade students, not surprisingly, displayed a mixture of characteristics, some of them similar to the distinction students, and others to the pass students. For these "middle range" students, environmental supports or constraints appear to affect their achievement behaviour more than they do for high achievers, who perform well regardless of

environment, or for low achievers who do not make use of the support on offer (see Ames, 1992, for a discussion of environmental influences on motivation and self regulation). An enthusiastic lecturer can bring the subject alive for students, stimulate their interest and hence encourage them to read more widely, demonstrate its relevance to their careers as teachers, and help them to integrate the various sections of the subject. Discussion within tutorial groups, both with the lecturer and with other students, can aid learning in a Vygotskian manner (see Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997). The structural elements such as re-submission of work following feedback, a choice of topics, and a booklet explaining how to write an essay would also encourage students to work towards deeper understanding of the subject matter. Lecturers disliked by students, on the other hand, could arouse anger and frustration if the students thought that lecturers were not providing them with sufficient help. In particular, anxious students who doubted their ability to succeed (a performance goal orientation) should find reassurance in responsive helpful lecturers and a mastery-oriented environment.

In fact, the interview data produced few references to a performance achievement goal (I want to look competent in front of others, or, I do not want to look incompetent in front of others). Those students who did mention this goal spoke about it as a natural force in human nature, not as an orientation triggered by environmental factors. As mentioned earlier, however, it is possible that some of students indicating a work avoidance goal may have been disguising a performance goal, the fear of looking incompetent in front of others. Given the positioning of the subject within the degree, few references to competition among students was not surprising. The subject was a first year subject in a four year degree, completed well before students realised that they would be competing against each other for a limited number of jobs. There was no faculty policy of failing large numbers of students at the first year level to allow a smaller number to progress to second year. In another section of the interview (not reproduced in Appendix A), students were asked if they felt lecturers were encouraging a competitive atmosphere in their tutorials. The overwhelming response was that this was not happening (for example, they did not know the marks other students were getting on tests and assignments), and in fact, a number of students mentioned that they would like more information about how they were progressing compared with other members of their tutorial group.

Conclusion

A high level of academic self regulation was evident in some of the students interviewed: they managed their time well; attended lectures and tutorials; read widely to get requisite information; and sought help from others when they felt they needed it. They were confident in their ability to accomplish the work, and they saw its relevance to their teaching careers. They accepted, even relished, the independence demanded of study at the university level. There was the sense that they would continue to do well even if the academic environment lacked stimulation.

On the other hand, other students seemed incapable of self regulation: even if their goal was to pass the subject, they did little to realise it; left work till the last minute; did not attend lectures or tutorials regularly; did little or no reading; and did not take advantage of the help offered to them. They lacked confidence in their ability and pronounced the subject matter boring and of little relevance to their future as teachers. They admitted that they worked best

under close supervision, with teachers keeping a close eye on them and providing them with all the information they needed to pass an examination. Their conception of learning was narrow: you had learned something if you passed the examination.

A third group of students fell midway between these extremes. They lacked the confidence or drive of the high achievers, but they wanted to perform well, even though their conception of what it meant to understand something was not particularly sophisticated. It is this group of students who probably are most susceptible to environmental influences, positive or negative. A lecturer who encourages a mastery orientation (displays enthusiasm, generates interest, explains clearly, demonstrates relevance, models effective strategies, provides useful feedback, focuses on improvement, offers help) can bring a subject alive for students (Ames, 1992). Interest leads to the wide reading vital for a more complete, integrated view of a subject. In addition, many students are only vaguely aware of strategies they need to complete tasks such as academic assignments. These can be modeled for students in tutorial periods (the effectiveness of modelling strategies was demonstrated by Volet, 1991). In the present study, the booklet given to students contained useful advice about writing academic assignments. For many students, having the contents of the booklet discussed and modeled during tutorials would provide a greater level assistance and enhanced self efficacy (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997).

On the other hand, a lecturer who encourages a work avoidance orientation (lacks enthusiasm, provides unclear explanations, sets tasks but provides little guidance, gives no feedback except a mark or a grade, sees teaching as a matter of ranking students rather than helping them to learn) can diminish students' enthusiasm for learning. All too often teaching at the undergraduate university level looks like this. Students are presented with large amounts of information on a topic and set assessment tasks, but with little or no guidance about how to accomplish them. Explicit modeling of important strategies is rare. Under these circumstances, it is unlikely that students who do not already regulate their academic behaviour effectively will gain the confidence or the skills to do so.

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Appendix A: Edited interviews with 40 students (D=distinction grade; C=credit grade; P=pass grade; F=fail grade).

D1: S1 (female; English/History; Distinction grade)

Motivation

I want to do the best I can....when I study it's for myself. I don't think I've got to beat such and such.

If you're enjoying it more, you make an effort to research it more, and so you understand. So when you have to do an examination, or the questions in the classrooms, then you can answer them.

Strategies

It's all sort of structured....it's all sort of coming together, making sense, and it's all sort of fitting in...the mass lectures cover everything. It gives you the topics to study. You've got a chance to read up and do your notes, And then when you come to the tutorials, you can discuss what you've done."

I try to decide what I'm supposed to learn rather than just read over the material...picking out the main points rather than just rushing it and writing out everything.

Environment-academic

She asks everyone what their ideas were. And you think: She's going to ask me. I'd better do some reading so I don't look silly. Paul does most of the answering, and you think, I didn't think of that...sort of getting information from others and seeing what they thought. Just listening to their information and thinking: Oh, that's OK.

University versus high school: There's a lot more reading, and doing things by yourself....you've got to think: well, what's important in what the lecturer is saying? You've got to pick out the main points....whereas in high school you were given the facts to learn.....I think it's a challenge that you've got to do the work by yourself."

D2: S2 (Male: Physical Education; Distinction)

Motivation

I'd mark myself as a five (out of five) on an ability scale because of the marks I've been getting

Competition: it's just a natural human characteristic that you like to do better than the next person....I think teachers should emphasis understanding. People compete naturally anyway. It doesn't need egging on.

Strategies

I read through the textbook and summarise it... I'll try and find basic themes..... in my girlfriend's tut, they get homework every week We haven't been given homework yet...I think giving homework is an important factor....we normally stay for an hour and that's it (the tutorials normally run for two hours).

I'm a pretty independent sort of person, if there's something I don't understand, I'll try and battle it out for myself....for my confidence.

My studying technique is pretty much the same for every subject. So far it hasn't let me down, so you don't want to change a winning thing.

I don't do a lot of planning....when it comes closer to the exams I put a lot of pressure on myself....I would do more work if teachers gave us more progressive assessment....I get as much as I can together, and read through it, try and understand it. Then try and memorise it. Memorising's a pretty big thing for me. I'm able to do that.

Environment-academic

I enjoy them...he'll give us stories...it makes it so much easier.... and everyone wants to tell their stories, it's like a kindergarten class, everyone wants to help encourage each other.

I just accept the way it's being taught and adjust to that. He's got a totally different approach where you don't actually write anything, well you've got to accept it, and look to use your textbook and your notes to try to get the stuff out.

Resubmission: They should make the first part work 30% and the next part 10%. The first part the one's where you've done all the work, not the second part. And I hope they do average the consistency within the marking between the education tuts. I don't know how consistent it is. It's probably my biggest grudge...I know other tuts got higher marks than us and a bigger range.

Booklet: I didn't use it. I flicked through it. I knew it because I did psychology last year as part of my last degree. I read it and then put it away.

Partner: Craig could work the same as me. He got 93 (out of 100) in the HSC (high school examinations), and I got 91, so I knew he wouldn't be a slacker. We could work together and get a pretty good essay going together.

Topics: I don't like the idea because they (the lecturers) don't take into account that some questions are harder than others when they're marking.

Environment-social

I've got heaps. I've got football Tuesday, Thursday, Friday nights. And I play on the weekend. Also work at Grace Brothers. I also tutor maths three night a week.

D3: S3 (female; Languages and Asian Studies; Distinction grade)

Motivation

I think we're at the stage where we're doing it for ourselves. We're not doing it to compete against each other. That's of little relevance....do well yourself and get the best mark you can.

Strategies

I think connecting is the big thing. Some of the topics we've covered: That's never happened to me. I've never seen that happen. What's that got to do with life? And then others I can think: Yeah, I saw that happening to someone else. That's happened to me. And I can relate to that.

If I don't understand something, I always stop and have a break. Go back over itI make summaries with sub-headings, and points, and key words.

Environment-academic

Our tutor's very interesting. She makes it fun for us. And most of the class gets involved...everyone has a say.

I have improved since first semester. That was written on my last assignment...and that's good when it's personal. You know that you're doing better.

I have to admit that I didn't have a lot of interest in the course to begin with. But now I do in tutorials, it's very interesting. She always tries to get us involved...she's always making sure that the point is understood...she will explain it in different ways if the first way's not getting across, find another example...if there's an example it's easier to relate to.

Be open-minded. I was not so open-minded when I started the actual education course, and was quite cynical. But I've opened up since then.

Resubmission: One of things I hated in high school was if you wrote an essay, got it back, twelve out of twenty, no reason why. This is really annoying. They don't tell you what you've done wrong....don't know how to improve it. You're probably going to make the same mistakes again...with this essay we know what we've done wrong and we can fix it up. And it will help with future assignments.

Booklet: Mainly for my introduction and conclusion and referencing.

Topics: You can choose something you're interested in, and if you're interested, you're more likely to read, to find out more information. Whereas for something you're not interested in, you'll just do what you have to and not go any further. And you won't learn anything.

University versus high school: At uni the teachers don't give you all the information. You're not spoon fed. You have to do a lot of reading yourself. Picking up things yourself.

D4: S4 (female; Early Childhood; Distinction grade)

Motivation

In my opinion at the moment, the most important thing is for a teacher to understand the students. Because without that you're not going to be very successful in getting the most out of the children.

This is something that I realise now that I wanted to do all my life (a mature age student), but never got around to it.

I taught swimming for eight years for young children. And I also look after some children for a single mum who's working. And I find that education is helpful in understanding and knowing how to behave with these children...I actually train teachers to teach swimming.

Before I was pretty intimidated by the whole thought of education, psychology. I just thought: Arggh! I can't do this! In my past, if things were too hard, I'd just back away from them. Then I found it really interesting. So it's not that hard.

I've got low esteem. It's going to be a struggle for me all the way through.

Strategies

I read the textbook, then cross referencing things, getting the whole picture...I think that helps a lot...I go through my lecture notes...there's things in there that bring it all together.

You can't get anywhere without reading, everything has to stem from that. I've been able to practise that (in my work) and that's another dimension. It makes it more interesting, and so you read more and learn more.

Environment-academic

I don't enjoy the tutorials...the lecturer's nice sometimes but if she's had a bad day she really gives it to you...you never know where you stand..you can't approach her out of class easily...but I do learn a lot from it...our class is really stiff, we really don't say much, but when people do you can get things from it.

It's sort of selected on the roll, some people have to prepare questions for next week....even me, I get up there, and it's like, you're so nervous, it should be easier now, but it's not. It's sort of painful watching people out there...the hot flushes people get, the nerve rashes.

I don't know whether it's competitive between each other, or within themselves...everyone wants to get the highest marks...everyone wants to do the best they can do, which is a good thing. It's high expectations but the pressure gets too much sometimes. I think we need to know that it doesn't matter (if we don't get high grades).

Resubmission: I do think it's a great idea, but I'm a bit teed off about this because I got nine out of ten, and the comment was: Fix references. Like underline the headings in the references, and type out the plan, 'cos I had that written in handwriting. Well, I went and I said, you know, : Is this what I have to do to get 100%? And she said: Oh, you probably could do a bit more. But the comments weren't on the paper...In theory it sounds wonderful, that you resubmit, but only if you get instructions.

Booklet: It helped me with my referencing, that's about it...just writing a plan and things like that.. But it reinforces and it's right there in front of you, you can just look it up if you have problems.

Partner: I suppose you could call it like a bonding exercise, you know how brothers and sisters fight, well it was like that. Because you've got your own ideas and the other blatantly disagrees...but we learnt a lot that way..it was very rewarding but a struggle...in the textbook they used a reference and we wanted to see what this was about. We went over the library and went through all the books...it was like researching and I loved it...the smell of the old books and that sort of feeling..it was great.

Topics: It gives you a chance to score something you're interested in. And if you think you know something about those ones and you don't know anything about something else, you might want to jump in the deep end, so to speak. I think it's good, you can have an active role in what you do.

University versus high school: At university we're encouraged to actually research, and learn how to find out things for ourselves, more than at high school...it's more what interests you, you do what you want to do. I walked out the day of the (end of high school) exams...the whole stress of it ...I just freaked out. It was very sad going home...I knew that I could do better than I was going to do in my exams, I knew I wasn't as prepared for them as I'd like to be. And I thought: If this exam is going to judge me for the rest of my life, I don't want to do it. It's not what I'm capable of. My parents were floored, they couldn't believe it.

D5: S5 (male; Physical Education; Distinction grade)

Motivation

Rather than worry about if you're going to beat someone else, or if they've done more than me...I think to understand it is going to help you in the long run...I think everything's competition these days, so it's not good sticking your head in the sand and saying that competition doesn't exist. I think you should emphasis that people who work the hardest, try the most difficult things, and try and get through it will probably do better. We all should try as hard as we can to get the best mark. But not to think that's the be all and end all. If you get a good mark, that means you're going to be a really good teacher.

The biggest motivation is to get a high mark, or a good grade.

Strategies

Basically I use the textbook....I go through the chapter, and answer the questions at the back, and use the study guide - they have additional questions...with our exam coming up they've given us guidelines to what the essays could be about.

With essays, sometimes, you know it real well and you want to tell the marker all you know, but it's not so much how you give them the information. It's how you structure it and how it flows. So I tend to write some essays myself, and get into the mode of thinking (note, more information here about preparing for an exam).

The way the course is structured with essay questions, they want your opinion. So that means you've got to work out your opinion, how things fit together, rather than just what other people think. Whereas if they gave you a hundred multiple choice questions you'd have to know exactly what other people think. And you'd have to rote learn a lot of information.

It's only a couple of weeks before the exam. If I do a little bit over a long period of time, I'll remember things better and keep coming back to it...relate them all together.

What I'm studying for has an impact on what I'm doing...I find covering extra material is very important...I find that sort of stuff actually adds to what you're learning, and can be the difference between knowing something and not knowing something.

Environment-academic

We have a fair bit of fun and we get a fair amount of work done...it's laid back to a point, we discuss a lot of things...he has the practical knowledge, brings up experiences he's had...he links what we do in lectures to other things, he picks up the main points...we get our input and our various perspectives...discuss between each other and that's always good.

Resubmission: The marking scale was probably the wrong way around (the first mark was out of ten and the second mark was out of twenty). Someone who does a really good job the first time doesn't have much to improve. Whereas if somebody does a really lousy job they might get six the first time, and then really improve their second job, they might get eighteen or nineteen out of twenty. They're getting all the advantage. I still agree that it's a good idea...because what happens a lot of times that you get an essay marked, you just throw it away and forget about it. Whereas if they give you points that you can improve on, you can go back and think: Yes, I can fix this bit up

Booklet: The book does help you, goes through all the points. Explains about plagiarism, they don't explain that at high school.

Partner: Two of us could get a broader outlook, and cover a lot more. We felt we might be able to cut down on time too...we learned a lot off each other, and different writing styles...so you can incorporate both perspectives and end up with a better product.

Topics: You might have a particular interest in one of them, and there'll be more library resources.

University versus high school: There's no pressure to perform here, it's all self motivation...at high school there's a lot more competition, and the teacher rides on your back...at uni you might spend ages and ages and ages on certain things, but that doesn't matter because you actually like doing it..you're interested in it so you don't think it's a waste of time.

D6: S6 (female, Art, Distinction grade)

Motivation

I have enjoyed them...I just work really hard.

This is the last chance I've got to do the course (a mature age student), so I'm prepared to give it full bore. Some days you feel like giving it away, but I just miss out if I don't go, so I just make the extra effort and overcome it.

Strategies

I try to summarise I find that the text is really hard to understand, I have to read it four times before it sinks in...if I don't understand anything, I go to the lecturer and ask her. I don't leave it, because anything I don't understand will slow me down....I set dates that I have to have certain things done by, and I stick by that.

Environment-academic

She sets homework which gives you that prior sort of knowledge, then discussion groups, and then she might show a film....she's made herself available if you need help..... the whole lesson is discussion... I think she's doing really well...they're really interesting and she makes them different.

Resubmission: When I first looked at the question, I thought I'm never going to be able to do this. Now I think it's a great idea. After spending hours and hours and hours it's paid off because I got really good marks

Booklet: I was in bed with it! I followed that down to a "t."

Topics: Yes. Because with teaching you get different ideas that you might want to do some extra work on.

University versus high school: I think self-directed work should come into it a lot more. At high schools, you get this idea that, I don't know where it's from because noone tells you, that the teachers are the only ones who know this information, and you get it from them now I set my own goals, whereas at high school they'd say what you've got to do.

Environment-social

I've got four kids and a husband. And no money (her husband is studying medicine)...as soon as I leave uni I'm a mother...I have to make the hours between nine and five work totally, otherwise I wouldn't get my work done

D* (female; Primary; Distinction grade)**

Motivation

I like Education tutorials because they're interesting....I'm competitive with myself, but I don't find myself wondering what everybody else got....I like education so I put the effort in.

I start analysing people. And I'm only joking, but I say "Oh, you're one of those people because you do this." That's sort of, I suppose, explaining it to myself. I go home and discuss a lot of education stuff with people at home. Because my mother's quite interested in it.

Strategies

I answer the questions we've been given. Summarise the various topics. Read. Rewrite the topics over and over until it sinks in...once you understand the concept...what I have is little examples. If I've got an example I can understand it more. I can think of the example,

and then I can understand the concept...I do cover extra material, but mainly because I'm interested, not because it's on a test...if I get interested in something, then I read a bit more.

I wish I had a bit more time when I could sit down and read a bit of research, as boring as that may sound. I'd like to get a different viewpoint. Because when you're reading the same text over and over you're not really getting a lot of input from anywhere else.

Environment - academic

We have discussion groups which I find beneficial...when I'm in a group and I don't understand something, I'll find out within the group: "What's this supposed to mean?" Whereas in a big group I wouldn't say anything....I know this is a stupid reason, but if I don't like a teacher, then my marks show it...if I don't feel enthusiastic about being there, then I just sit there and think sarcastic things, and I don't bother listening.

Resubmission: I don't think we should have been given a mark, I think we should have been given suggestions (for improvement)...I think it's putting too much emphasis on the first mark.

Booklet: I found that most of it was just going over what we'd learned in Year 12..but I just read little bits, so it was helpful.

Partner: Yes I did. We thought if we work together, we'd get it done quicker, but I think it worked the reverse way....My partner would write a bit, I'd write a bit, he'd write a bit, I'd write a bit...and then I found that I can't write like that, I need to have continuation of thought. But it's good to have someone to discuss it with...but I don't think we had that flow of information...if we'd left a bit more time to do it, it would have been more effective, but we left it to the last minute.

D*** (female; languages/Asian studies; distinction grade)**

Motivation

What's the point of doing a subject if you don't understand it. I did subjects last year (at another university) that I passed, and I didn't understand them. There was no way I should have passed. This year I'm going back and doing them again. I didn't apply for advanced standing because I knew I didn't know it.

I like to think that I'm going well, but it's not the be all or end all if I don't come first, second, or third. Whereas at high school, I strived to come first, second, or third....it's not important to me how I'm going compared to everyone else. It's just how I'm going on my own. Did I understand it myself? Because you know you have to take it out into the workforce.

Strategies

I read my book. I'll relate it to things I see. Like cognitive development, if I see a kid on a train, I'll wonder what it's like, you know, relate it to life...if you can put it in real life terms, then it applies to real life and it's relevant.

If I find what I'm studying enjoyable, then I actually, shock horror!, might go home and read a bit more about it.

Environment - academic

I find (the lecturer) really good, entertaining...it's got a friendly atmosphere...everyone has their opinion and doesn't mind giving their opinion, noone's worried if they're wrong..she explains it in really simple terms, step by step, and gives examples...makes it relevant.

Resubmission: great idea...essays just shouldn't be about a final mark, they should be about what you know.

Booklet: Used it for referencing.

Partner: No..I put things off and off, but when I do it I like to do it properly...don't want somebody holding me back.

Topics: You can explore what you're interested in...I opted for an easy one, but looking back now I wouldn't do that one. I'd do one I was more interested in...it would have made my essay better.

High school vs university: At university it's up to you to do your work, and that's good, but it's bad... because I'm so disorganised, I really need someone to force me to do something.

C1: S7 (male; Social Sciences; Credit grade)

Motivation

I enjoy education the most because it's something new I haven't done before....it's interesting. It helps explain a lot of things I've never thought about before, but now I'm starting to think about them.

Strategies

I make notes and gradually reduce them, as I read through them, sort of stripping them down. So I've got say a page for each topic, even with just headings. They're sort of triggers, and I remember as much as I can about them. I go back and see if I got it right. ... I'll study like that till I can rattle off Piaget's theory or whatever.

Environment-academic

She's a bit of an entertainer. It's not the continual blah blah blah. She does a lot of activities with us. Like at the beginning of the lesson we have a group discussion, and then we might have an overhead or a film, or she might talk to us for a while. Or we might try some group work. It's always something new and different to keep us interested."

If somebody puts up a wrong answer she doesn't say: *No that's wrong*. She tries to figure out why they've come up with that answer, and see what their point of view is.....She treats us as individuals. We can go and see her or she comes to see us and explains what we're

doing right or doing wrong....She's very approachable...willing to help....you only have to ask and she'll devote her time to you.

University versus high school: At university, you're left up to your own devices, to work things out for yourself...it suits me fine, because I don't like teachers coming in and sticking their noses in all the time when I knew I understood it.

C2: S8 (female; English/History; Credit grade)

Motivation

I'm not motivated to do extra work. I do what I have to do and that's about all I do. I'd rather do other things on the weekend....I like to go and see my family because my family's important.

Like in education you have to go through Piaget and all those things, but I think it should be a bit more interesting. A bit more relevant to how we're going to use it in the classroom. Cos at times it doesn't seem obvious how it's useful to us.

It's more important to know what we're doing rather than competing with the others.

Even though I don't like a subject I'll still work for it. If I do enjoy it, I suppose I'll work a bit harder, but it doesn't affect the way I study.

Strategies

I spend a lot of time on assignments. And do a lot of reading and a lot of note taking.

I don't study differently for any particular subject...when I read things it sort of doesn't stay in my head. I think it just goes straight away, so if I can relate it to something I know, something I've experienced, it makes it easier for me...putting things together logically is the only way I can understand it...I think about how I would explain things to others. I think I do that out of habit because I used to tutor a lot of people in high school...I speak it out aloud after I've read it to explain it to myself out loud. And it seems to help me understand what I've read.

Environment-academic

We get to talk. We get to use our opinions. And it's a lot more informal than a lecture. You feel comfortable because there's not a lot of people and the tutor's willing to listen to what you have to say.....she uses practical examples of the theory which helps us to understand it...and the discussion helps because it gives other people's views of what they're learning.

Resubmission: It sort of lets us know if we're way off track or not..you've got a second chance with this one.

Booklet: It helped me because I didn't really understand how to go about writing it. Or how to go about researching it.

Topics: It lets people look into their interests more.

University versus high school: In high school we're sort of told what to learn, told what to think, told what to do, write down....I think we've got more freedom of thought in university.

C3: S9 (female; Music; Credit grade)

Motivation

I'm a very competitive person naturally. I'm sort of a perfectionist who's too scared to be a perfectionist. I'm scared that it's not going to be good enough.

I'm paying for my own way through university, accommodation, everything. And so my aim is to get through. For most of my subjects the pass is 50%. So my aim is to get over 50%.

Strategies

Essay preparation: I have my number system...what I do is get a page for this, under this heading. And a page under this heading, and a page under this heading. And then I put all the As or all the 1s under this subject...and then I number them in order....I really get into my essays. I get interested and read more than I need to.

I just read over material and make notes from it. I use a lot of highlighting, a lot of colours I try and relate what I'm reading to his stories because his stories make sense...I'm not too good on strategies, I've only got one. And that doesn't work well! I usually just highlight and that's pretty bad, because I really don't take in the reading that well.... Often, I read through and highlight and then take notes from the highlights, and then more highlighting, and then make more notes from the highlights and that works well.

Environment-academic

He gives us little stories to remember, which makes it heaps easier to remember things...stories from his experience....I think discussion is great because I personally get so much out of it.

Resubmission: Really good, because usually you just get an essay back that's not so good. And that's the end of it.

Environment-outside university

Work. I have at the moment two jobs, and I've always got no money. I might have to get a third job. I get Austudy but I don't get enough to cover the rent. And there's no work around Newcastle and so I have to travel to work.

C4: S10 (female; Primary; Credit grade)

Motivation

At the beginning of the year I found it ghastly. I found it really mindless. But it's getting better. I don't know whether it's my maturity or I'm liking the topics we're doing now.

If you're not enthused about the topic, you're not really going to put in effort. It's forget it....

I guess I'm a bit lazy. You'll always find something else to do.

I realise that you have to work hard.... no matter how hard I work, I don't think I'll land up in the top. But if I work at it I will get somewhere.

Strategies

I read the notes I've written....I rewrite them to see if I could get them down....try to put them in logical order....I try to pull together the main parts of what I read. I try to do that, not always successful, but I try to do it.

I guess I use the same strategy each time....I always follow a set way. I'm not sure if it always works...I guess I'm flexible, I can always change it. I'm not so rigid that I wouldn't change it. But I'm not sure that would be the best way.

Environment-academic

We go through the points of the lecture...I'm usually one of the people who answers the questions, that clears it up in my head...other things we've done I haven't been able to see the relevance. When I look back on it, it may be relevant, but at the time I didn't see the relevance...most of the time most people are looking at their watches.

Resubmission: I hopefully don't want to have to do it, but I don't have much choice.... a kind of medicine you have to take.

Booklet: I was able to write with the booklet beside me, and make sure I was going ahead the right way. I was a bit up in the air on this one. I felt I had a more directed way...I wasn't sure how the plan should be...most of the stuff I'd already learned at school so it was basically a refresh rather than new points...just making sure I didn't make any stupid mistakes.

Topics: It allows you to go over ground you want to. If you don't want to do an area of research, you think that: I'm only doing this to get a mark, I don't really want to do this, I'm not going to my all into it.

University versus high school: You don't have the same level of companionship....I feel some of the lecturers are up there and I'm down here...I shouldn't be taking up their time...by the end of year twelve at high school, I knew the teachers reasonably well, and I had no qualms about asking them to help... and they were usually keen to help me...I was always stressed and they would help if I needed it

C5: S11 (female; Early Childhood; Credit grade)

Motivation

My motivation sort of lapses at times... I tend not to keep up with the minor things, then everything comes at you at once and it's a mess...in some ways I use things as an excuse not to get in and study.

Strategies

Trying to make all the topics in this course fit together logically, that's very useful, makes it relevant to everything then.

Environment-academic

Generally they're interesting, some interesting topics are brought up for discussion....the lecturer wants each person to get the most out of the subject they can. And to research further in the areas they're interested in.

We do a lot of group discussion, and then a presentation to the class, which I think is helpful. Because the way everyone works in a small group and gets to know what they're talking and then is able to present the main features to the rest of the class. And then get an overall view of things the other groups have been looking at. That's a very helpful thing.

Resubmission: It will be very helpful.....I think most people do an assignment, get it back, and throw it in the closet and forget it. At least you can work on the same topic and improve your skills in that area.

Booklet: I use that in just about all of my assignments. It's very helpful. I've used it across the board. ...the setting out, the references, that sort of thing...getting the gist of what was expected.

Topics: You could pick something that either particularly interested you or that you thought might be interesting.

University versus high school: At university you sort of get an outline of the subject and you're supposed to go away and do the work, which makes it harder for me whose motivation really lapses at times.....whereas at high school you sit there in class and get it all fed to you.

C6: S12 (female; Primary; Credit grade)

Motivation

It's helped me to understand kids' development...from reading in education I can sit down and I see my son and what he's doing. And I sort of evaluate it through what I've learned, and hopefully he'll grow up into a better person.

It does boil down to how well you do in marks when it comes to getting a job, but I think the understanding of it is more important.

Motivation has a lot to do with you...I think you've got to look to yourself first before you look at the lecturers and say: Well, they could do this to improve it. But they're doing a good job here anyway.

Strategies

Read. I come from Belmont by bus and it takes me an hour and a half to get there and an hour and a half to get back. I have that three hours a day for reading.....I take a lot of notes...you get more out of the mass lecture by doing the set reading first, and even a little bit more on the side of whatever - has set.

The wider you read and the more you read in education the better you understand it.

Environment-academic

She is the most animated lecturer...we get the opportunity to sit in our little groups....we discuss what we've read. I find that to be invaluable because there's sometimes I'll come up against something that I might not understand, but one of the people in the group might understand better and they can explain it to me and therefore I don't have to go to ---- and annoy her and say "Look, I don't understand it. Can you help me out?"

If she asks for an answer, and you're wrong, it's OK. She'll say things like: Oh, that's not quite what I was looking for. Has anyone else got an answer? ...people in her workshop are not frightened to answer because they know if they're wrong they're not going to be put down and feel like idiots...if you're having problems with something,she'll take the time to help you understand it.

A lot of life examples. She'll draw on her own experiences and give them to the students in a way that is really quite wonderful.....she allows us to have our own say as well and draw on our

If I find something is getting on top of me, and it's getting too hard, I'll speak to my friends or come and speak to her. I try to make my summaries as brief as possible but still understandable.

experiences...when you have somebody giving so much of themselves, you start to give of yourselves as well.

If the lecturer makes it interesting, then you want to go out a read more about it.

I'll read, read whatever it is I'll have to learn. I'll write it while I'm looking at it. Then I'll read what I've written, and I'll cover it up and I'll write it again. I'll keep going like that until I've got the bulk that's necessary.

University versus high school: A lot of young people come straight out of high school into university and find the transition really hard (this student is mature-age). Here you only get the bones of it, whereas in high school you were given the whole cow.... that's one of the hardest things, that you're left up to your own devices.

Resubmission: You're going to get a mark this time and it's going to suggest some things to improve it. And then you're going to resubmit it. So you're learning from it rather than getting it back, seeing it, and throwing it in the bin....it will give you an opportunity to learn from your mistakes.

Booklet: Our blue bible...that was by our side the whole time we were writing our essay. And we kept referring to it....gives you an approach to what they expect....it gave you an example of an essay....and worked through it with you...and it gave you examples of how to do a

plan...and you could sort of look at it and think: Yeah, well, that's what I have to do. And then you can put your work in and say: Well, it doesn't look quite the same. Why not? And you can refer back and have something to compare to....if I've got something there I can have a look at, I feel more confident.

Partner: I think it was helpful to have somebody else's input.

Topics: You can concentrate on what you find interesting....if you're interested in something you work harder at it.

Environment-social

I certainly do, a husband and a baby. I've got a lot of work outside, so I've got to be really strict with myself...I've got to make time for my family...I'd probably study worse if I had a relaxing life, if I didn't have to structure my time...I say: I've got two hours now. What can I do? OK, let's get this assignment draft done. So I'll spend a couple of hours on it. Whereas if I was just by myself, I'd sit down and say: OK, I've got four hours to spare. I'll watch TV.

C7: S13 (male, Physical Education, Credit grade)

Motivation

A lack of motivation...I sit down in my room and study, and five minutes later, I'll get up and go out.

Understanding is in the best interests of each student...there should be no bias ...they should be there to teach every student.

Strategies

Things that I can relate to, or things I think I'll need to learn, I'll learn best. Whereas with other things, I just rote learn them to get me through when I need itI just get in there and read it over and over, and just try to learn it basically. I really don't put too much effort into it. Most of the time I can't get motivated...put things off till the last moment.

Environment-academic

He's good, funny, he makes it interesting he tries to relate things to relevant things that affect us in terms that we may have experienced....I didn't go too well at first, and I was a bit down, and he said he'd help me. So I felt a bit better, a bit reassured. Now I'm beginning to enjoy it because there's no chance of me failing now...I've done pretty well in the last two assignments, so as long as I keep going like this I should pass..

Resubmission: It gives you the opportunity to do well overall.

Booklet: Yep, especially with things like how to write the references and citing things.

Partner: The person I choose is good with words...and you can share the workload...it worked out good.

Topics: You can choose one that appeals to you most, which one you think you'll do best in.

University versus high school: You have to be more independent here. There's no one to spoon feed you. It's up to you whether you learn or not.

Environment-social

I'm trying to juggle two careers at the moment, one with the university and one with sport. I may break through into a career in sport (baseball). It's starting to get big...big time

C*** (male; English/history; credit grade)**

Motivation

If I drop out of here, I'm going back to selling (carpets door to door).. It's a very poor existence. Very hated existence by the rest of the community. The other kids coming out of high school, perhaps they don't realise that if they don't succeed here, they have a similar fate waiting for them....I enjoy education. I mean, I was asleep for ten years. Now my eyes are opened and I want to learn. Sure, an education for a career, but education for education's sake....sometimes the alarm wakes me up, and I think it's time to go back to work, but then I realise that, no, this is what I do. And I'm back in the classroom again. It's great.

Anyone that goes through life without making mistakes has never lived. Sometimes you learn more making mistakes than you do not making mistakes.

I don't compete. I work for me. As long as I work hard enough to get the marks I wish, which may be high marks, may be very high marks, which is what I'm aiming for. That's my standard, but it doesn't have to be anybody's standard.

Motivation comes from within..it's not the responsibility of the lecturer.. Even if you don't like what you're doing, you can find a way to love what you're doing. Get interested in it.

Strategies

I read, use a highlighter in the text. I memorise my lecture notes before I come to the tut...and then anything you don't understand can be discussed in the tut...I'm willing to push myself as hard as I possibly can. Because that's what I require of myself.

If I've got the content down, I think, now, how will I teach this? I see myself both as a student and as a teacher...so I'll do a role play in my head.

If I had more time, I'd probably look around at what I should be doing to see if there's a better way of studying than I know of...(that would be) the wise course of action.

Environment - academic

They're (tutorials) great...you can get different points of view, you can get insight...(the lecturer) leaves a lot of margin for interaction...there's freedom there to learn from others.

Resubmission: This way at least I'll know what I can change to get a better mark.

Booklet: (Used it for) apostrophes and referencing.

Partner: No. It's difficult (physically) getting together with someone.

High school vs university: At high school you were told what to think and what to think about...there's a million differences (the student described his high school as a physically violent place - excessive use of the cane)

C*** (female; English/history; credit grade)**

Motivation

I've always been interested in the way the mind works, and when we started getting into Piaget and Freudian theories, I just went "Oh, this is really interesting." And I'd go home and I'd think about it, and I'd try analysing my room mates and friends.

I think a certain amount of competitiveness among students is a healthy thing. You need that to get anywhere...so I kind of pull between encouraging students to work together and to do their best individually, and yet at the same time encourage them to be a bit competitive, but not too much or they get tired of it.

Strategies

I'll go through the notes, and in the textbook and different sources, and make my own notes as far in advance as possible before the exams....if you enjoy something, you're more likely to go about studying with a great more motivation and vigour....I try at the beginning of a semester to try and find out when everything's due and kind of plan a gradual build-up of work.

I try and explain it to somebody else, as though there were somebody else there, sitting with me...and sometimes I get a friend to listen to me, and if they didn't understand, then I'd go back and revise it.

Environment - academic

I find the tuts interesting...the tutor and we have discussions...it's an interactive kind of thing...it's a relaxed kind of environment where you can sort out all the things you don't understand.

Resubmission: a good idea...it gives you the chance to be able to take a thing back and then do something good with it.

Booklet: very useful...especially the referencing section

Partner: No, I find I work better on my own.

Topics: At least you have some chance of being able to pick a topic that interests you.

High school vs university: You have to get yourself motivated to work..it's complete responsibility...I enjoy that kind of thing.

P1: S14 (male; Maths; Pass grade)

Motivation

I want to know how I'm going relative to the rest of the class...I'm not too interested in where I come..happy to be passing.

There's a lot of maths students in my tut, so there's a few of us struggling with this stuff. I'm not up in the top because there's people who really enjoy the subject and are really motivated about it. Which I'm not. I'm not down with the last ones because I do put some effort in, and make sure I do most of the work.

Strategies

I'm not too good drawing sentences together....I don't enjoy reading so I find difficulty with education....Just before tests I pick up what I can in tutorials. And that's about it.

I just sort of look at something, and try to understand it by reading it through....I sort of talk to myself, try to explain it to myself...thinking of how I would explain it to someone else....I summarise things a lot. Put down things on the main topic. Then I get down to a point, I write down as much as I know about it, and then check to see if there's anything else I should put down.

Environment-academic

She directs questions a lot. Got a list out the front, and just randomly picks people's names, to make sure that you're awake....otherwise you're caught out....I don't like being in that situation but it..s necessary for me to feel I'm understanding the question. I don't like it but I have to put up with it."

If we're watching a video, a topical video, it makes you think. She gives us things to read through, and then to summarise. I don't like that much because it involves reading and writing. I prefer the discussions...at the start of the year she gave us questions to complete....I didn't like having to do the questions, but I sort of liked it because it kept me up to date.

Resubmission: My first essay was bad, not because of its content, but the way it was structured, and I had a chance to restructure it, and fix up the grammar mistakes....sort of gave me a second chance.

Environment-social

Sometimes I want to be here doing something, but I've got to out and work. Socially a lot of my time's taken up through the church...so all the nights are sort of taken up....I suppose I should be able to get into the course a bit more...instead of doing assignments in a rush effort...be able to read up a bit more and sort of understand a bit better.

P2: S15 (male; Science; Pass grade)

Motivation

Most people I know just try and pass the course. Don't worry about doing well...I don't know that I actually enjoy it because I have the rest of the day off...it's sort of a hassle.

I believe that if you've sort of read the work and do the work you should be roughly in the middle or at least passing.

Strategies

Just sitting down and learning, sort of writing, and reading.

I don't really try and relate it to other things I know. I believe this is something new, I put it into another category....I don't really try to put in a sort of logical order or anything....I don't exert myself much.

I'm fairly good at visualising things. I've started also putting in a soundtrack. I've got two friends doing music as well...put a soundtrack together, so you actually hear and see things at the same time.....it helps everything come back.

Environment-academic

Classroom discussions are very quiet...very formal...you don't feel like talking too much because it's so formal.

Booklet: That was good...being able to read through exactly how to study.

University versus high school: At school it's sort of very caring, always monitoring your work....at university it's just the roll...they haven't really worried about how you're going.....Sort of more detailed at uni. ...when they stray away from the details, they take me out of my bearing. The (high school) teacher always said: This is what we're going to be doing. You have to have these questions down. And at the end of the year these questions have to be handed in....so if you went away or if you were sick for a week, you knew what had to be done.

Environment-social

It's good to have outside things if you have a bad mark....it's good to be able to say: Right, OK, I'll delete that. Just go out with my friends tonight....you sort of regulate things, rather than spend time sitting around. I've got all day Thursday off, so rather than just sitting around, I say: I'll read that later on...I have to do this morning....if you sort of allocate, sort of regulate yourself.

P3: S16 (male; Design & Technology; Pass grade)

Motivation

That's all I want to do - pass.....I really don't like reading...the night before class tests I'll read up what the test is going to be on and hopefully I'll get by....I'm not motivated to be able to sit at a desk and study for six hours a day.

I take a lacksadaisical approach to studying...sort of casual, laid back, but I don't let it get on top of me....and I don't quit. They'll have to throw me out first.....I don't do the reading...it's not that I don't feel I should. I know I should. But whether I do is another thing. Cos there's always something going on, and I don't want to miss out.

Strategies

I don't do extra reading....it's all irrelevant if I'm not going to be tested on it.

There's one way I like to study. If there are similar questions, I like to do them and see how I go....study strategies? Well, read the material, if there's any questions read and do them. Write key points down in point form.

Advice to incoming students: I'd tell them to do exactly what I don't do, I suppose. I'd tell them to go to your lectures, do the reading up that week. Write notes. Summarise what you've learned for the week. If there's something you don't learn, ask about it in the tutorial. Just do that in week blocks and then study your notes at the end of the year. It's probably the ideal preparation for education. As I say, saying and doing is a different thing.

Environment-academic

You could get along with him like...you could have good discussions with him...but once it started getting over my head I just switched offhe'll relate it back to an experience he's had in real life, so you could see where he's coming from..that's good..

Booklet: Didn't read itI learned how to reference and write a proper essay last year...there probably was stuff in there about how to research education but I sort of knew what I was doing at that stage.

Topics: It made it hard to decide....some topics may be harder to research than others...how can you compare them?

Everyone's got a different view on child development. You'd think they'd get it right! Take Piaget and every other bloke, and buy 'em all, and just pick the norm. This is what the average kid will do.

P4: S17 (female; Primary; Pass grade)

Motivation

I'm working for me and myself only I'm not being ranked like it is for the HSC (end of high school examination)it's a big workload but because I enjoy it, that makes it different.....really, other marks don't interest me. As long as I've passed or got a credit, or something like that, I know I'm doing fine.

Because I didn't do excessively well in my HSC, I had to come to uni to do a bridging course last year. So I wouldn't say that I'm a top student. But I still wouldn't put myself down either, like a big non-achiever because I do like to spend a lot of hours on my work.. I would say that I'm about the middle (of my group). I really wouldn't know.

Strategies

I relate what I'm studying to things I know about...I go into the tutorial and - will be talking and suddenly I think: Yeah, I know about that. And that happened to me when I was on prac. I know what she's talking about.

With some subjects I'm having trouble with, I put myself on tape...not the summaries, but the text. I just read the text onto tape and I listen to it at night before I go to sleep. I find it really effective because I remember it when I get up.

I summarise a lot....I have a couple of exercise books I take home after the main lecture, and sort of rewrite things, highlight definitions, so when there's a test it's all in front of you.

Environment-academic

At the beginning I thought: This looks like it'll be terrible, but I really like it now, this group. You have good conversations, easy to get along with....she's very approachable too....I thought it was going to be such a dry subject. I didn't want to be there...then the lecturer gained our attention by approaching us on a personal level. Like: What do you think about that? And we felt: Oh yeah, I want to talk about that. I want to know more about that, so I'll become involved.

Even some of the tests I've done poorly in, she'll say: Oh, don't worry about it. Like there's always a chance there. It's not the end of the world. And then I look at it and I think: Oh yeah, I understand what I've done, where I've done this wrong, where I haven't grasped the concept well.

She gives equal attention to all of us. Like not to the students who get nine out of ten or ten out of ten. It's like she's there to help all of us....I think she really does worry that if we don't get it, she's not getting across to us, that's not effective teaching.

Resubmission: Just like general essay techniques you can improve so much...it gives me a chance to say: Oh, I can improve that mark and do better in education.

Booklet: I used it a lot in my essay...if there was something I wanted to query, like the style they wanted. Like: This is the style we expect you to have....I found looking at past essays, whether they were good or bad, gave me an indication of the style I had to use.

Topics: I think it could have been more wide, more choice, maybe even had the opportunity to think about topics ourselves.

P5: S18 (female; Maths; Pass grade)

Motivation

I'm probably below average in the class...I really don't understand some things.

I think I'd be more enthusiastic to work if I was around people that work a lot more....at high school when I did hang around people that got higher marks than I did, I worked more. Did heaps more....I could change all my friends and hang around with people that are doing really well, and do a bit better. But I'm not really that worried. I just want to pass and be a teacher.

Strategies

I read things over but I don't think that works too well...I rewrite stuff which helps a bit. But you can't rewrite anything.

If I don't understand something, I usually try to find out. But then I get sick of looking for stuff and I just don't worry about it...I get bored with the subject and then I leave it. And that's not very good study. So my study doesn't work.

I don't set goals at all. I just want to pass. I suppose that is a goal....I sometimes give up when it's difficult..if it's not very interesting I don't do it....I don't study, like I mean I don't read through things that I'm told to read through. I should do that though.

Environment-academic

I think they're good. Some things I don't understand though. Words and things just go straight over my head.....I like my lecturer. She's really good, like she makes things more interesting than what I see they really are. Which is good. I understand things like stories and little examples of things...and she uses a lot of them....I have problems writing essays and things like that, which probably puts down my marks.

I'd probably ask my friends (for help) first...and if they didn't know I probably wouldn't do anything about it ...I wouldn't ask (my lecturer), probably because it'd take too long to find her.

Resubmission: I feel like I've done with it and I don't want to do it again.

Booklet: I didn't really take it in when I first read it.

Partner: I did. I thought it would be easier, but it wasn't really....she was better at English and she fixed up all the technical errors in the whole thing. Which was good but I felt like it wasn't my work when we finished. ...and then when it came to fixing it up, I couldn't do it, because I didn't really understand what she'd changed (starts to cry at this point of the interview).

Topics: I'd rather be told exactly what to dobecause I change my mind three times an hour.

University versus high school: At high school you're spoon fed by teachers...I walked through Year 11 and 12...but here it's like you have to find out for yourself.

P6: S19 (male; Science; pass grade)

Motivation

I don't see the relevance of it...education's word based sort of stuff, and the textbook's pretty thick. I don't think they make it clear enough what you have to do....you go to class and do the homework question, and then for the next hour and twenty minutes you do all stuff that's not related to the course....because in our lectures, they base it on textbook stuff, and then you go to your tuts and they have sort of real world based stuff, so then you get a bit confused.

I find it interesting in some areas, but then other areas don't interest me at all...so I get bored and a bit frustrated with the work we do.

I think it's just a personal goal, to get through uni.....I think I'm just average.

If you didn't pass tests, that's basically what you're at uni for, so you sort of get a bit worried if there's a bit of a fog between what you have to know and exams....when you go to the tut, you only have about twenty minutes on the actual stuff you have to know for the exam, and then the other hour and twenty minutes is on real world sort of situations....you're at uni to pass exams, and this course sort of doesn't attack it from that way. It attacks it from the opposite way.

Strategies

I plan it all out and know what I'm aiming for...if you don't have something, you don't get it done....I like reading and that sort of stuff...if it's difficult it's all the more reason to try harder...it can be harder than you expect...and you put in more effort and try to do better...when the going gets tough you dig in and slog away...being a teacher you sort of think in terms of explaining it to someone else.

Environment-academic

I generally miss the lectures, just read through the textbook.

After the first four weeks (of second semester) it dropped into all the heavy stuff and then it started getting a bit boring and tedious, like fifty year old theories, and like evolution, the child and everything, the development of the child...so you learn a few people's theories...it's all a bit boring and repetitive.

Resubmission: It's a great idea....I spent numerous hours doing that essay, and I got a good mark, six out of ten, but then I got feedback....I find it really hard to write essays and put them all together and structure them correctly...I had twenty pages spread out across the floor. I had to put them all together...so when I got it back I found out all the things that I had done wrong and that can only help you build on your excavating skills.

Booklet: I read that book about five times.

Topics: I think it's a really good idea. Because if you're set something you're not interested in, then you're not oriented to do well in it...you can pick something you're interested in, and that helps you create enthusiasm towards the topic.

P7: S20 (male; D&T; Pass grade)

Motivation

The whole thing doesn't excite me that much....it's not that relevant to what we're going to become...even when we're discussing adolescence, they're not relating it back to classroom things.

It doesn't worry me how I'm going compared to others. It's a matter of passing or failing.

You learn and remember things if it's relevant.

Strategies

I haven't done a great deal (of study for education)...sort of try and keep myself on a pass for everything.

(Note: earlier in the interview, the student described the elaborate and effective summarising strategies he had been taught to use in a rural technology subject in high school)

I just study from the book and the lecture notes (Interviewer: And do you do your beautiful summaries, like you did?). No, not as well as I used to. I just do the summaries of the lectures I don't use any (study) strategies for this course. (Interviewer: do you think you could use some of the strategies you've used for other subjects? Like your summaries?). No, I think you actually have to know what you're talking about before you do that.

Environment-academic

I don't like mass lectures....a torrent of words....going too fast...a waste of time.

He's (the lecturer) a top bloke but he hasn't been with us for long...he relates everything back to being a teacher, and that's good., it gets back to being relevant....we're doing stuff about toddlers, really and truly, you know, dribbling and scratching, it's not relevant to us. We're going to be high school teachers....it's not as if we are all psychologists.

Resubmission: That's really good. You're learning from your mistakes.

Booklet: I did to get the proper form of the essay. That was all I learned from it.

Can't believe how little we've done this year....I know I haven't done enough for this subject, but I'm passing all the others really well...not pushed myself....in this subject I've hardly learned a thing all year.

P8: S21 (male; Maths; Pass grade)

Motivation

You've got to understand the course before you can pass through it. If you're too busy trying to compete with other people, then you're not going to get anywhere.

Because of the wishy washy answers, you can just write it down, even if you don't understand it, and justify what you say...so I sort of slug through it ...my education isn't going well, it's borderline at the moment.

Strategies

Writing things down over and over again seems to implant it in your mind rather than just reading it over.

I just read through my notes...we do notes in the mass lectures and notes in the tutorials, so I read through both of them. What I don't understand I read in the textbook.

Environment-academic

Tutorials are OK, but I sometimes fail to see the relevancy of the things we do, because we're going to be high school teachers....our course has been centred around birth to pre-adolescent....We don't get them till they're thirteen years old, so why go through the child psychology. Tutorials are where you're supposed to discuss things Education is more student-centred, you interact with the teacher which is good.

We go off into little groups every week and we discuss what we've learnt from the mass lectures...and that helps us to enjoy the course. It helps you to understand it more if you're discussing it with someone else in the course, rather than just writing it down and reading through it because you get their ideas on things.

Resubmission: It helps you see what you did wrong...if you get to resubmit it, you learn how to rectify the problem.

Booklet: It helped a bit..being a person who can't express himself on paper, I had to read it through quite a few times. Introduction is a big problem of mine, and conclusions, so that helped.

Topics: Some people understand one topic better than another topic. I think it's good having choice.

University versus high school: It's (university) is much the same as high school...they're a bit more casual here. If you don't turn up, you don't turn up, but you fail your course...the work load here is a lot less...it's more on your shoulders here.

I think more hours at university would help a fair bit...help you to understand it more, especially in first year, because they're used to relying on their teachers. So it's a bit of a shock for first year students.

P9: S22 (female, early childhood, Pass grade)

Motivation

I couldn't care less where I came, so long as I was passing. It'd be wonderful to be a top student, but understanding's more important.

Strategies

I study my lecture notes, summarise my textbook, basically just read over those.

I try and read all my notes and everything like that, but I get very bored with it... it's very dry.

Environment-academic

No, I don't enjoy it.... half the time is wasted because I could be home learning it...it doesn't propel you to want to learn more.....The lecturer has set herself work that she has to tell us, and she tells us, and we go on. Like there's no reinforcing of our understanding. I don't think anybody in our class has any idea of what's going on , which is pretty scary when you've got an exam at the end of the year a lot of us think she really doesn't care... a lot of us are getting paniky about what we don't understand, because of that unmotivating environment

Resubmission: Very good. It gives you a chance to see how well you are going and where your weak points are... so you build on those..and it's very encouraging if you get a good mark.

Booklet: I followed it to the letter!!...it was really practical...a lot of us didn't have any idea of what the lecturers were looking for when they're marking.

Topics: You can pick the one you're most interested in, which gives you more motivation to research it.

I'm finding uni very unstructured, so having all of this time makes you a great timewaster...I'm always paranoid that I'm learning the wrong thing... when I find things difficult I tend to run away...I'm paranoid about covering extra material, it's worthless.

University versus high school: At high school, all the information that was on the board was relevant, so you had it up in front of you to learn. And you knew you were learning the right thing. Whereas at university, you don't know whether you're writing down the right thing or not...at university you've actually got to go digging... you just can't look up your textbook, and the answer's there in black and white.

P*** (female, Science, Pass grade)**

Motivation

I enjoy the tutorials...I don't think we should be pressured into competing against each other, because people will naturally compete against each other....I know I'm not one of the lowest, and I know I'm not one of the highest....If I find a particular topic boring, then I'm less inclined to study for it than I would if I find it really interesting.

Strategies

Reading the relevant parts of the text...."x" sets us homework each week, which might be read pages such and such...you just re-read pages or highlight them...highlighting things is handy.

During the day I'd be writing out the summaries. Then I'd read them into the tape recorder, and then I would lie in my bed with my Walkman on, and listen to it before I went to sleep. It was like a repetitive thing. It worked too. I'd recommend it to anyone who has major topics to study.

Environment - academic

If a mass lecture is clear and concise, then you get a better idea of it. And then when you open your text, it doesn't look so messy, it doesn't look like another language. But when you

sit in a mass lecture and you get really bored, then you don't pay attention. Then they say read page such and such, and it doesn't make any sense. Then it deters you from studying a lot.

The group work is good it's more casual, you don't feel restricted....(The lecturer's) funny...she uses things from her own experience which is really interesting, and then you think "Oh yeah, I remember the time when that happened to me." And you reflect on your own thing. And that's probably what makes it most interesting, actually, when she brings up things that happened to her.

Resubmission: I think feedback is a good idea, but I wasn't really keen on having to do the assignment again, because it seemed to be taking a lot more time...but it's giving us the chance to pull our socks up...I hate it when you do an exam, and you hand it in, and they give you a mark back but they don't give you your exam back. They say it's confidential....but you don't know which questions you got right and which questions you got wrong, so you can't improve upon them. You just keep making the same mistakes over and over.

Booklet: I used the booklet for how to put the references at the end of the essay.

Partner: I thought it would be easier to work by myself. I wouldn't have to worry about conflicting ideas. I could use my own ideas and if they were wrong, then I could completely take responsibility for that.

Topics: I thought maybe I should pick this one because noone else will do it, and that way I'll have less competition.

High school vs university: Here whether you work or not is your own business, which can only be an advantage...you don't have everything handed to you on a platter like you did at high school.

P** (female; Primary, Pass grade)**

Motivation

I like it because it's different...the school leavers that I know, they're very competitive. They're really worried about where they are, but as long as I'm passing...don't worry too much about other people, just focus on what you're doing.

Strategies

Reading the textbook, and reading the notes. Summarising them.

I try and get my husband involved. He likes to read about this subject too. I get him to ask me questions. I write myself questions and answer them. But he asks more questions than I could think of asking myself, which helps.

Environment - academic

(Our lecturer) provides a lot of different examples, and gives us the opportunity to write down our own examples...I try to stick to a program with any subject I do...I've given up work to come here, wasted a lot of money...so I don't procrastinate.

Resubmission: It's an excellent idea because you really don't know if you're on the right track with education.

Booklet: I refer to that all the time actually. The referencing (was helpful) and how to actually go about writing the essay. I had no idea before.

Partner: I didn't....I didn't want to drag the other person down.

High school vs university: I'm much more motivated now

P** (male; design & technology, pass grade)**

(Note: this student is repeating Education 1 having failing it the previous year.)

Motivation

I'm learning a lot about developing children, and I think that's going to help me later in life if I have a family....I find it exciting...the work's very interesting, and I relate it to my brothers and sisters...I'm seeing everything coming together

I find that students are competing against each other to get higher marks, but I only want to better myself from last year...as long as I'm improving I'm happy.

Strategies

I make a lot of notes, making all the main points...and from the main points I usually expand on them to study

My mum always asks me questions, and she's always going on about the education work. She finds it interesting, and she'll sit down and read the textbook occasionally. Asks me questions, and it's good revision for me to be able to answer her.

Doing it the second time around I'm seeing where everything is going towards the end goal, getting it all to come together.

Environment - academic

The tutorials are really good when they go over points in the lecture.

Resubmission: It allows wayward students to get back on track.

Booklet: It helped me...with planning and linking it all together....getting all your points in sequential order.

Partner: Yes. We got the two inputs, and where they differed, and it was good to go out and find where the truth lay.

High school vs university: In school it's 90% of the time rote learning...at university you've got to link the stuff together into a better response...bringing it all together and making it flow

P*** (male; design & technology; pass grade)**

Motivation

I enjoy learning the new material...you just can't get through without understanding the work..parrot fashion's not going to be effective...it doesn't worry me how I go compared with others, as long as I'm passing the course...I think motivation comes from an internal source rather than an external source.

I'm not really passing comfortably. I'm having to work to get the passes I'm getting. I don't think I'll ever get around credits or distinctions....I put my family first because I think that's really important.

Strategies

I try and get the reading done, but I don't get as much done as I want to...I rarely take down a lot of notes...mainly reading...I find the text very heavy reading.

I assess the lecturers, what sort of things do they look for...I try to do what they want, and learn the way they want me to learn.

I talk over the material with my wife, especially in this subject, psychology, because it interests her as well. She reads a lot of books by psychologists, so I can talk to her about what I'm learning. She's almost doing this degree with me.

Environment - academic

(The lecturer) did a lot of emphasising of what's done in the lectures...the first hour's taken up with with questions...and he'd go into related areas, give examples, he'd talk about his family and ask about our children, the stages they're going through...he'd relate the work to students by giving his own background as well.

Resubmission: excellent idea, you learn from your mistakes.

Booklet: very useful...I hadn't actually read through it before we handed in the assignment the first time...but when we got our assessment back there was quite a few points they picked us up on, and so we're going back to the booklet to rewrite it in the form they want...I had no idea how to reference.

Partner: Yes. I chose a mature age partner like me...we both really want to pass...we're both committed, and so we both jump in together.

Topics: If you feel a bit of a masochist you can choose a topic that you don't know much about and get into that.

P** (male; design & technology; pass grade)**

Motivation

I'm not really into this subject. I'm a practical type person, prefer to work with my hands. I'm passing at the moment and that's all I really want.

Strategies

You have a mass lecture, and you have time to read before your tutorial, and then in the tutorial you can discuss it. I read through our textbook after the tut. Then I go to the study guide and look at the relevant sections...there's a self discipline in what I do, I suppose....I work to the extent I have to...it's on my study timetable so I do it. It's get out the textbook, I force myself.

Environment - academic

It can get a bit boring in two hours. (The lecturer) summarises what happens in lectures, and he puts it in easier terms, and he checks to see that everyone's understanding it.

Resubmission: It's a really good idea....gives you a chance to pull up your marks.

Booklet: Quite good...just the referencing and the lesson plan part.

Partner: Yes, a different viewpoint...it was good.

Topics: I liked that because there was a lot of stuff that you weren't really interested in it.

High school vs university: At university it's your own work, it's your responsibility...at high school there's always someone to watch over you...you have to be prepared to work on your own.

F1: S23 (female; Social Science; Fail grade)

Motivation

If I'm bored I just don't want to do any work. I won't bother studying. I really don't go to the mass lectures. That sort of makes things a bit difficult because I'll turn up to the tut not knowing what's been said at the lectures. Then you don't know what's going on in the tut.

If you don't understand the work, you're lost, then you won't be able to do it. And when the exams come round you just sit there not knowing anything.

Strategies

If I don't find it that interesting, I'll probably leave it till last to do ...I usually put off studying until right before a test or assignment. That's true!....I find it difficult to stick to a study schedule. You'll get things you don't like and you think: No way. I'm not going to study for that because I don't like it....mostly, it's reading over and over again, and making notes....sometimes I'll put things up about the place..if I see things that remind me of it, it'll click.

Environment-academic

I find the tutorials fairly boring...need some more interesting activities, more group discussion...all the journal articles are a bit annoying after a while, summarising journal articles, and summarising the book, it's like taking overheads.....She wants us to understand it, and put things in our own words all the time.

A lot of people get fairly stressed (in tutorials). We write our names down on a list, and then she'll pick a name from the list, and ask them a question. And people just cringe...nobody really speaks up in class and says: No, I don't understand.....she explains things thoroughly...she'll give examples that'll help us understand.

Resubmission: It's a good idea...you can fix up what's wrong...it gives you more chance of getting better marks, instead of handing one thing in, and total failure.

Booklet: I didn't use it a lot. But I think it would have been useful.

Topics: It's a good idea, because if you're left with one and you don't like it, or you have no idea, and it's difficult...you can choose the one you like the best.

University versus high school: At high school we were spoon fed....at university you have to write it down yourself, you have to do a lot for yourself....I feel I need to be pushed, and at school I was pushed all the time. But university, it's up to you. Sometimes I need a push.

Environment-social

I need people to push me to do work. So lazy....I think my social life's getting in the way of uni.

F2: S24 (male; Social Science, Fail grade)

Motivation

I wasn't a very conscientious student for the first two years at uni. I didn't put much effort into it

Strategies

Mainly reading over lecture notes, and go through the textbook, then writing down key points.

I don't read. I rarely go home, as I should, and read it over

I just tend to wait till the business end of the year when the exams come up and just sit down and do enough work each day to keep me on track....I'll test myself, ask myself a few questions and think about the questions that'd be on the exam, and try to answer them.

If I had more time, I'd use the library and do more work....I fall into the trap (of not being organised), I can't write a diary or anything like that, I have to remember things.

Environment-academic

She'll emphasise the important parts of the lecture....about how you can relate this to teaching, as well as things that will be useful in the final exam.....She gives us exercises to work with, shows us videos and asking questions afterwards.

If it's a boring tut, it rubs off on you, and you begin to think: Oh no, I can't be bothered doing that.

Resubmission: A great idea. I've been finishing off my second version and I can't believe how bad my first effort was.

Booklet: I did read it for the referencing...it was helpful.

Topics: You choose something you're interested in....it leaves more material available.

University versus high school: You've got to put your own effort into getting your marks up. It's not the lecturers' responsibility to do it, they don't mind if you pass or fail, there's no sweat for them. Whereas at school they want you to get through.

F3: S25 (Male; Science; Fail grade)

Motivation

I don't like competition totally. If you're going to compete with someone it may as well be with yourself.

I think I'm probably in the middle of the group

Strategies

(Note: the tutorial strategies of preparing homework questions were the only ones mentioned.)

Environment-academic

I do like it....we go through the questions in our homework group, and discuss a lot of things, and that makes it more interesting....she gets a lot of class discussion going...we hear other people's points of view.....I think it's beneficial for us to have homework...otherwise I wouldn't do anything

I hate mass lectures...I just sit there and switch off. I can never hope to be taught in that way.

Resubmission: if you get a bad mark, you've been told where you can fix it up.

Booklet: I really didn't like that booklet...it was too long....I've always been good at essay writing.

Partner (girlfriend): we left it till too late...we just didn't want to do it...we just bolted it in.

Topics: You can pick something you're interested in.

University versus high school: you're not pushed as much as you are in high school....if you don't do it, you fail. It's your problem.