

university preparation

A note about the transcripts.

This is a transcript of exactly what the speaker has said. It is important to realise that spoken language is different to written language. When we speak we often make grammatical errors. We also tend to repeat ourselves, and to use short words or sounds like "um", "er" or "ah". These sounds are called 'fillers' because they are used to fill in the gaps while we're thinking of what to say next. These sounds are perfectly normal in spoken English. You probably use similar fillers in your first language; however they may be different sounds. In this transcript you'll notice that the speaker has used some fillers and that in some places the sentences are not always grammatical. This is often because the speaker is thinking about what to say next, or changes her/his mind in the middle of a sentence.

Transcript - Shem

I'm a language and academic skills adviser and our role is to work with students in, from different faculties and to support their learning. And we work with students who've got English as a second language.

If the student comes to us, and says they're having a, having difficulty doing an assignment, what we'll do is we'll look at the question and make sure that they understand what it is they're meant to do. And then, we might brainstorm a few ideas, and get them to tell us what they know about this topic, and what might be a problem about the topic, or what might be, being asked of them in this particular task. Then once we've done that, we think about where they can find extra information, and this is where their library skills come into it, and students need to be able to access information, find other books, find other journal articles from the library, or from the Internet. And to select the bits from those articles which are relevant to the essay they're going to do. So a lot of the time we spend with students is asking them about how, what information they have, and whether they know where they can get other information, and how they can get it.

So that might be the first appointment. We might have a follow-up appointment where students will bring along the information they've got, and perhaps they'll bring along some summaries, and begin to formulate, um, arguments for their, the task that they're going to answer, and we'll begin to look at their writing and see how clear it is, and whether we can give feedback to them about, um, first of all the arguments, and secondly their expression, their grammar and vocab.

Advice for new students

When starting at university, it's helpful to, make contact with your fellow students. So, I know that's sometimes hard to do, but if you've got classmates who you can talk to you, who you might be able to ask a question about an assignment, then you'll feel less alone, you'll feel

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supported in your learning. So even though it may be a hard thing to do, talk to the person next to you in a tutorial or in a lecture. Establish some contact or friends that you can, you can ring if you miss a class, for example, and they can give you the notes for a lecture, or if you don't quite understand what you're meant to do, or where you're meant to be, you can check with them. So I think making contact with other students is one of the most important things but often something that students don't do.

Another important thing for a student to do is to make sure you attend classes. Now often it's not compulsory to go to every class, and if you have few contact hours, then you might think, "Oh look, I can get away with not going to class". But in fact by being in the class, by being in the lecture, you're getting the information that the lecturer is giving, not only about the topic, but important things like when an assignment's due in, or where extra resources might be, so..., my advice would be to try and get to, get along to every class. If for some reason you can't come, then it's a good idea to talk to another student and find out what you've missed. And if it's a tutorial class, it's probably a good idea too, to contact your tutor and just say "Look, I'm away", for, for whatever reason it is.

What should students do if they are having difficulties with their workload?

If you get behind with your studies, I think it's important not to panic. A good thing to do would be to come and see an adviser, and talk to them about how you can plan to catch up. Now, it may mean handing in an essay that's perhaps not the best you've ever done, but at least you can get that submitted, and then you can start focusing on the next task. So don't, um, give up totally. There is always help, there's always people who can help.

If you find you can't get an assignment done on time, you can always ask for an extension. This means going to your lecturer and asking them if you could have another day or two days or a little bit longer. Now the lecturer might say "no", but at least you can ask, and that way you know whether you've got more time or not. It's always better if you think you can't get something in, or you are unable to attend classes to make, to communicate with your lecturer so at least they know what you're doing and if there's a problem later on you can say, "Well, I did ask you about this, or I did come to see you for support" and you're in a better position if there's a problem later on.

Advice for new students

University's a big place. There are lots of people. It can be quite confusing when you first start. I think one of the most important things to do is to, find out where everything is. Find out where the library is, find out where the academic skills offices are, find out where the admin offices are, so that you're not getting stressed by, um, wandering around looking for things. It's important to... be... proactive about your study. Don't wait for people to come and tell you what to do. Read all the handouts. Listen to what your, the advice your lecturers give. Talk to your classmates and find out what's required because often you'll be left to your own devices, you'll be left on your own and nobody is going to be really, checking up for you. We can certainly give you lots of help, but you need to come to us first. We won't be able to find you unless you come and see us first.