

# Research on student time management



## Contexts for research

Research into student time management for the LearnHigher CETL has been carried out by members of the University Study Advice team at the University of Reading. We are a centrally-situated and primarily student-facing learning development service, providing support for students to develop their learning practices through one-to-one advice sessions, generic and embedded workshop teaching, and paper and online self-help guides and resources. Our constituency includes students from all disciplines and all levels of academic study, from Foundation degrees and part-time Certificate courses through to PhD students. We have regular direct contact with a diverse student community, including international and mature students, and students with Specific Learning Difficulties. Some are studying part-time, while others are on placements or are distance learners. Given this privileged, direct and everyday access to a broad demographic of students, their experience of managing time at university and the effectiveness of interventions, it was appropriate for us to adopt an action research approach. As a consequence, we have established an iterative cycle of reflection on our own practice to motivate and identify areas for study.

The research projects listed below were carried out at the University of Reading, 2005-2010.

## Using practice-led enquiry to develop resources for time management in higher education

Presentation reflecting on the use of practice-led enquiry as a tool for research and development in learning development.

[PowerPoint slides available here.](#)

## Managing time at university: a learning development perspective on issues and effective interventions

An overview of common issues with student time management and interventions which have proved effective in practice: developed through taking an action research approach to our work as student-facing learning developers at the University of Reading.

[Full write-up available here \(PDF\).](#)

## Using student feedback to develop resources for time management in Higher Education

This project trialled different formats for resource delivery with students studying in different faculties at the University of Reading. By making the same advice on student time management available in three formats (paper, online and oral) to students in three different subject disciplines, we hoped to gain feedback on preferred formats for delivery of learning development resources, and on perceptions about time management for students in different disciplines.

[Full write-up available here \(PDF\).](#)

[Poster presentation available here \(PowerPoint\).](#)

## **Procrastination in university study: causes and solutions**

Being 'blocked', or putting off starting a study task is something that most students experience over the course of their academic careers. For a few, this is a more serious and persistent problem which may require a co-ordinated approach with referrals to other support services such as counselling and liaison between learning developers providing support and academic and personal tutors. Early intervention with effective strategies may prevent procrastination from becoming habitual and avoid some of the consequences that make it difficult to break the cycle. This paper considers some of the root causes of procrastination, and describes some interventions that have proved effective with students in learning development practice.

[Poster presentation available here \(PowerPoint\).](#)

## **Time management issues for mature students**

While effective time management can be a problem for all students in Higher Education, there are differences in the primary issues for particular groups. In turn, these may motivate the need for particular strategies for interventions by learning developers. While presenting a very broad constituency in terms of age and prior experience, the difficulties reported by mature students are often associated with a specific set of issues that include misexpectations of Higher Education, the need to integrate study and other commitments, and a lack of academic confidence. This paper examines these issues and their effect on student time management, and describes some interventions that respond to them.

Full write-up to follow.