



Motivational Manual For Students Studying with Swann College



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Motivation Manual

Welcome! Congratulations on deciding to undertake a course of study with Swann College. We have been delivering training and assessment in the areas of Automotive and Business for **eight** years.

One of the secrets to our success in the field of Vocational Education and Training (VET) is that we care about our students. We want you to succeed and make it our mission to help you get there.

This Manual is provided to give you some gentle encouragement and study tips along the way. Feel free to keep it handy as you complete your training with us; we've included pages for notes and a calendar for personal planning. You may also like to add your own motivational messages to keep focused on your goals.

This Motivational Manual does not form part of your assessment and its use and completion is up to you. Remember, our trainers are always available for help and you can contact us on **08 8311 0487** any time for advice about your course.

We wish you an enjoyable learning experience and commend you again for taking the first step!

Amrinder Singh





Individual Student Details

This Motivation Manual belongs to:

Name: _____

Contact: _____

I am a student of (course name): _____

I started my course on (date): _____

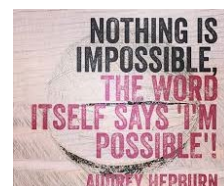
I expect to finish my course on (date): _____

My trainer's name is: _____

Their contact is: _____

My personal goals in doing this course are:

- I am doing this course because I want....



- Something I hope to gain from this study is....

- Some of my other thoughts....

Been a while since you last studied?

Coming back into study as a mature age student or adult learner is very different to study at school. Even if it hasn't been that long since you left school, you may find the need to re-learn and refresh some study skills and learning tactics.

Everyone has a preferred way of taking in information. What is yours? Not sure?

One theory is known as VARK, which stands for:

- Visual
- Auditory
- Read/Write
- Kinesthetic

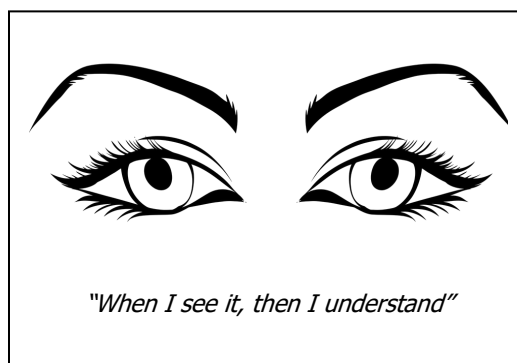
VARK suggests that as learners, we can help ourselves by knowing how we prefer information to be presented to us. Then, we can use particular techniques to help us maximise our preferred methods. Take the VARK test (it's free) at www.vark-learn.com. The 'What is your learning preference' test will give you an answer to how you prefer information to be presented.

Once you've got an idea of what works best for you, remember to capitalise on it. Knowing how you prefer to take information in can make a big difference in terms of how you structure your own study and learning habits.

As a really quick guide, here are some of the characteristics of VARK learners and some suggestions for how to make it work for you:

Visual learners:

- Like to 'see' information; videos, maps, charts, diagrams
- Great at 'big picture', overviews and summaries
- May not remember verbal instructions and may often ask for questions/instructions to be repeated



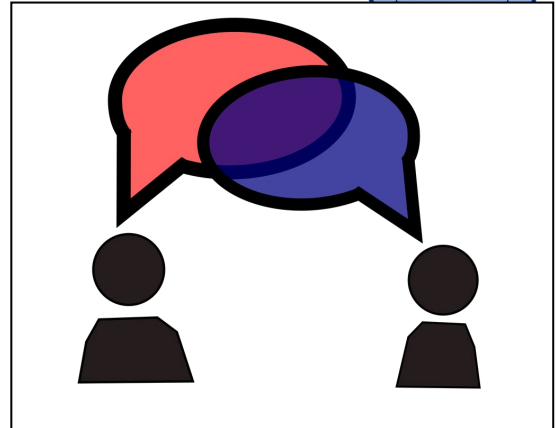
Study tips for visual learners:

- Use underlining, highlighting, different colour coding, symbols and pictures in your notes
- Watch video clips when available to help with the learning
- Try flash cards, mind maps and other visual imagery to help your memory



Auditory learners:

- Like to listen to, and be involved in, discussions, debates and conversations
- May have really good memory for things like song lyrics, past conversations and jokes
- May become quite bored when study work has to be completed silently

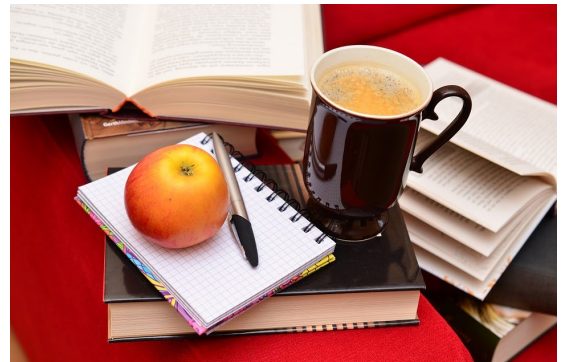


Study tips for auditory learners:

- Attend all possible training sessions, tutorials, classroom learning activities etc.
- Record learning sessions to play back later
- Participate in discussion with others; try some verbal brainstorming too

Read/Write learners:

- Enjoy reading (books and/or online); prefer to read to selves and others than be read to
- Often copious note takers
- Generally, prefer to study alone and quietly



Study tips for read/write learners:

- Take notes when in training sessions; then re-write the notes in your own words
- Take any handouts offered
- After you've read something, summarise it by writing a paragraph or two about it in your own words

Kinesthetic learners:

- Like 'hands on' approaches; learn by doing and solving real-life problems (this is also a characteristic of an adult learner)
- Get fidgety if they have to sit still for too long; need frequent study breaks
- Like to see demonstrations of things
- Feel the need to move their bodies and learn best when doing so

Study tips for kinesthetic learners:

- Move your hands when reading; highlight words or move your finger along the lines, even try squeezing a stress ball or similar
- Understand you may have a short attention span so be kind to yourself; short study blocks with frequent short breaks should work
- Get involved with your learning through trial and error and 'having a go'



Kinesthetic learners like 'hands on' learning

Now that you have some understanding about the different preferences for information intake, what will you do to maximise yours? How do you think your trainer could help you?

Notes:



Tips to get started again

As a learner in VET, or anywhere else for that matter, how much you can be taught is up to you. Learning is something that happens inside of us and it cannot be done *to* us or *for* us. Understandably though, it can be a bit confusing (even a bit scary) if you don't know what to do. Here is a checklist of actions that will point you in the right direction and help get your mindset into study mode.

Self-help checklist

Contacting my trainer:

- ☐ I have introduced myself to my trainer
- ☐ I have my trainer's contact details
- ☐ I know when it is a good time to contact my trainer

Getting familiar with my course:

- ☐ I have read the course overview
- ☐ I have checked I have the course learning materials
- ☐ I know whom I can contact at **Swann College** if I have any queries about my course
- ☐ I have read the student handbook
- ☐ I am aware of how learning and assessment works in a VET course and how this is different to school (see the section in the Manual, 'A word on Competency Based Training')

Self-assessing for support I might need:

- ☐ I have identified any areas within myself that I may need help with e.g. trouble doing calculations or English is my second language
- ☐ I have told my trainer about these and asked for extra support if needed

Preparing to start:

- ☐ I have checked I have the resources I will need to complete my course
 - Computer
 - Internet connection
 - Appropriate computer software (e.g. word processing program to type up assessments. If you do not have Microsoft Office, try accessing freeware versions that contain word processor options like Open Office or Office Libre).
 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - Particular tool of the trade



-
- Personal stationary items etc.
 - ☐ I have received login details for any online components of my course
 - ☐ I have set aside an area at home especially for my study work
 - ☐ I have communicated to the people around me about how important this course is for me and have asked them to encourage and support my study
 - ☐ I have made a commitment to myself to regularly update my trainer on my progress through the coursework

Doing my study:

- ☐ I have read the course learning material
- ☐ I have investigated other sources of learning information
 - Textbooks
 - Workplace documents
 - Credible websites etc.
- ☐ I have looked at what will be required of me in the assessment
- ☐ I know how to submit my assessments
- ☐ I know when I will need to submit my assessments

Progressing in my study:

- ☐ I have checked with Swann College to see what training activities might be coming up about my study subjects
- ☐ I have made connections with some of the other students in my course
- ☐ I am submitting my assessments on time
- ☐ I am developing my study skills including research, writing and responding to assessment questions
- ☐ I am feeling pretty good about my decision to do something good for myself!

Other things I can do to help myself get into study:



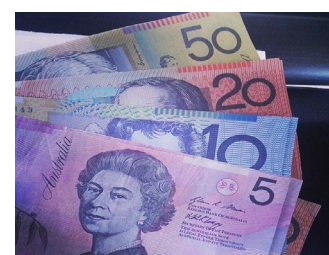
The benefits of more education

Gaining a qualification can lead to many advantages. **Did you know?:**

- There are **education pathways** that will open for you
Depending on what you are studying now, you may be eligible to enter further and higher qualifications in the future. If you are studying a Diploma qualification you may be able to get up to one year's credit against a university degree in a similar subject to that of your Diploma study. If this is you, check with Swann College to confirm what arrangements we hold with which universities.
- **Work pathways** will open for you
Employers look for candidates who possess the skills learned through studying an accredited course and/or qualification.
- **An accredited course and/or qualification** in the Australian Qualifications Framework is recognised Australia-wide. If you are studying these, or a skill set or unit of competency from an endorsed Training Package, you are gaining recognition that will be acknowledged in all states of Australia.
- The more educated you are, the more likely your children are to complete higher education (adapted from Cassells, McNamara, Gong & Bicknell (2011)).
- Your **earning potential goes up** with your education level
A recent study showed that for someone who holds a Certificate level qualification, at age 25, they might expect to earn about \$53,000 per year. Earnings peak in their late thirties at nearly \$64,000, and at age 60, earnings have dropped back to about \$57,000.
In contrast, someone who holds a Diploma qualification may expect to earn about \$52,000 at age 25. Earnings for diploma holders peak at about \$80,000 at around age 50, and fall to \$70,000 by about age 60.

AGE	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59
Certificate Earning\$ p.a.	53,385	62,013	63,868	59,559	60,761	62,280	57,064
Diploma Earning\$ p.a.	51,755	59,830	64,689	75,328	70,683	79,568	69,899

(Source: Adapted from NATSEM calculation, 2009-10 Survey of Income and Housing Basic Confidentialised Unit Record File; as cited in Cassells, Duncan, Abello, D'Souza & Nepal (2012)).





A word on Competency Based Training

By undertaking a course with Swann College you are participating in VET sector education. This is different to the traditional school system and the way you are expected to learn and be assessed is different too. The VET sector uses Competency Based Training and Assessment rather than a graded scale of marks like schools do.

Competency Based Training is all about determining what skills and knowledge you have based on evidence provided. Your assessor will make a judgement on your skills and knowledge according to things like:

- what they see you do
- what reports others give them about your performance
- how you respond to questions
- the types of things you have already produced in the workplace (e.g. documents, things you've made etc.)

All of the above are considered types of 'evidence', and you will be expected to provide evidence to support your claims for competency – things to say "I can do this; I can be qualified in this".

When you are giving any written responses as part of your evidence, be sure to write clearly, in your own words, and answer the questions fully. Importantly, in all assessment tasks, remember to ask for help if you need it, and ask early rather than at the last minute. This will give you a better chance of providing evidence that is complete and of an appropriate standard of quality.

Once your assessor reviews the evidence you submit, a judgment will be made about whether you meet the requirements of the unit, or not. If not, don't panic!

In Competency Based Training and Assessment, there is no 'fail'. If your trainer or assessor returns some of your work to you, it means they need more evidence from you. Perhaps some of your answers weren't quite right or perhaps some extra examples are required to reassure the assessor that you definitely have the knowledge and skills required.

At any rate, a response on one of your assessment pieces saying you haven't yet met requirements, simply means your assessor needs more information; they will give you feedback, and you can ask questions about how to provide what is needed to achieve competency, and ultimately, your qualification.





The juggling act

Being a student of any sort requires a level of dedication. At times it may seem impossible to do everything... work... home life... study life... social life... family... But! It can be done.

A famous quote by comedienne Lucille Ball (and based on one by Benjamin Franklin) is:

**"If you want something done, ask a busy person to do it.
The more things you do, the more you can do."**

It seems crazy to say that a busy person is the one to get things done; after all, surely they couldn't possibly do even more?

But, think about mums with lots of kids, managers of lots of people... somehow, it all happens. It's no doubt it can be a juggling act at times, but with some planning and organisation, you can do it too.

If you're struggling with this a little bit, start with your study environment (after all, it's likely that study is the newest factor in your life).

Here are some simple tips that might help you get settled and into a rhythm...

- Have an organised workspace, free of clutter and distractions
- Try and choose a regular study space
- Know your best time of day. No point trying to hit the books in the morning if you're an afternoon person
- Be committed. Do your best to follow through on doing what you say you will. And honour the commitment to yourself to achieve this qualification!

Also, let your friends and family members know what you are doing, and ask for their support. Support could mean not distracting you whilst studying at home, or not inviting you out to drinks mid-week when they know you have study work you want to get done. You'll end up getting that assessment task completed, feel better about yourself, and have more of a reason to celebrate on the weekend 😊

Tips I can use to manage my time and commitments:

Typical reactions to study

Starting to feel tired? Hungry? Got a headache??

When you are studying expect your brain to hurt at first... it is after all, an organ like a muscle, and it's to be expected that if we haven't studied for a while, certain parts of our brains wouldn't have been used for that reason for some time! Also, expect that you'll be using plenty more energy than usual, so it will be natural to feel tired and hungry in the beginning. Perhaps what can catch students off guard is that unlike physical activity that breaks a sweat, brain activity can leave us feeling just as tired.



So, just like starting back at the gym, expect some brain strain at first... the good news is that with frequent brain exercise, just like with our other muscles, we will get stronger, faster and have more energy for the tasks at hand.

Of course, there are things you can do to be kind to yourself whilst 'getting back into training'. Nutritious food, plenty of water, plenty of sleep and regular exercise is essential for our brain power, memory capability and general health and well-being.

Some foods like nuts, avocados and apples are said to be good for our study brains, and drinks such as green tea to be beneficial in protecting the brain from damage. Plenty of water is always recommended.

Drinks that contain caffeine, such as coffee, tea and energy drinks, give our brains a definite jolt, however beware of too much of a good thing! Too much caffeine will put our nerves on edge and make it difficult to sleep and rest properly. Our brains consolidate the day's activities and our bodies repair and rejuvenate during sleep, so missing out on the right amount of shut-eye can lead to negative effects, not least of which is feeling the need to drink more coffee the next day to stay awake.

And, although foods such as chocolate, chips and lollies may taste good and give a pretty quick 'sugar boost', they aren't really helpful in the long term; for our brain or our waistline!

HEALTHY DIET



Stress

Stress is our body's reaction to an event. Sometimes it's a good reaction, sometimes, not so much. In fact, we actually need some amount of stress to perform at our peak; it's just when it becomes too much or we don't have suitable management techniques, that stress can hold us back.

Taking on a course of study may have you feeling under pressure, and this is pretty typical for most students. Feeling 'stressed' is a normal reaction to pressure, but it does not have to control our own feelings of control, or our well-being.



Try these tips to help alleviate some stress in your life:

- Be realistic. Trying to take on more than is possible is a sure recipe for stress
- Know your limits; learn how to say "no"
- Don't try to control what is outside of your power – focus instead on what you can do
- Look at the big picture and focus on the positive aspects
- Look closely at your habits, attitudes and excuses. Time for brutal honesty with yourself... are you sabotaging your own efforts by procrastinating, telling yourself you "can't" or making excuses for why "this can't be done right now"?

In the time you tell yourself all the reasons why you cannot, you'd probably find you'd have been able to just do it. (And in the process, have eliminated some stress about not getting things done!)

Knowing what things trigger stress for you and also knowing how you respond to those feelings, is a first step in knowing how to overcome negative stress. Use the space below to make some notes about what stresses you, and your typical reactions. You might also like to jot down some ideas for how you plan to manage stress so you can be at your peak study performance:



Finding information

Never before has information been easier to access; there is plenty of it out there and it can be found in all different places – including in our back pockets if we have a smart phone. Remember to expand your researching skills by using more than just 'Google'.

Try looking up different text books, reliable web sites and even journal articles to help you expand your knowledge base.

Basic tips for researching

When researching a topic, break down the question to give you key words, and subject categories

Know where to source information. Books, journals, workplace documents, internet... all great places to start

Be specific in the search terms you use to avoid being taken in a direction different to where you want to go

Ask for and take on board feedback. Your trainer wants you to succeed so will be willing to help

Practice, practice, practice!
Researching is a skill



Managing information

In the course of your study you will likely submit quite a few assessments and create more than a few draft versions. It is important to back up your work to save yourself from heartache should something happen to your computer or your USB.

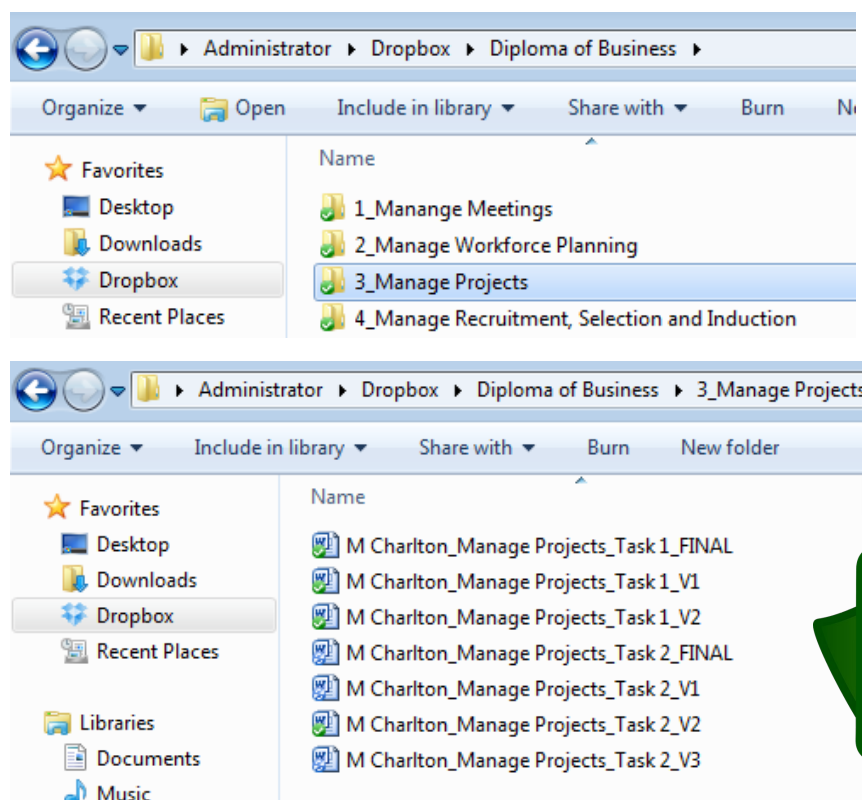
Many a student has learned the hard way that it is no fun having to re-do something that has been lost due to a technological glitch. Consider the ways you can manage this risk. Perhaps using a cloud based technology like Dropbox or Google Drive is a valuable way to go. Just like web based email (Gmail, Hotmail etc.), files in cloud based storage can be accessed via any computer connected to the internet. So even if something happens to your files, having your work backed up in this way will mean less chance of having to start all over again. And of course, it always pays to 'save' as you go.

TIP: Give categories to your work by creating folders for each of your units of study, and within those folders, a folder for each of the assessment tasks. Save your drafts and final submissions for each task under the folder you've created so you don't end up with a list of documents all called something like 'Assessment 1'. It will also help your trainer to easily know whose work they are marking when you include your name in the file name.

Naming conventions mean a lot when organising your information for easy future reference!

Example: Your name_Subject_Task #_Version #

Example: M Charlton_Manage Projects_Task 1_v2





Sharing information

Part of learning is being able to teach. In fact, in order to achieve mastery in a particular field, we have to have learned about it to a point of being able to accurately teach others about it too.

When you have a go at sharing some of your learning experiences with others, it may not only benefit and be of interest to the other person, but it will help cement what you already know. You might get a pleasant surprise when you realise how much you can actually relay with confidence!

And, you never know...

Sometimes when we try to help others, we end up learning a whole bunch for ourselves 😊

The benefit of a study buddy

In fact, if you have the opportunity to pair up with someone else in your course, you will create an opportunity for yourself to be able to share information. Note, that sharing information and discussing ideas is not the same as sharing the answers, which is not appropriate student behaviour.

Listed below are some of the reasons for why having a study buddy is a good idea.

Research has shown that having a study buddy can:

- Help students adjust to the 'culture' of the learning environment
- Give peer support (socially as well as with the course)
- Promote a feeling of empowerment as knowledge is shared between each other
- Help to embed learning as students will often 'teach' each other from their own learnings
- Maintain motivation toward study and help avoid procrastination

Some educational theory states that learning is a social process of constructing knowledge with others.

At the very least, having a study buddy is one way to form connections with other people going through similar experiences as you are with your study.

Try forming a study buddy relationship with people in your course, or virtually through online forums and networks. You'll be surprised how many people are out there willing to share and help!



Staying positive



Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right.

~ Henry Ford

One of the biggest contributors to study success is student attitude. How much you learn is up to you and how interested you are in succeeding, is up to you. Yes, study and learning something new can be hard. Yes, it can be time-consuming, and yes, it can be very much worth it in the end. The trick is to keep a positive attitude about yourself and your studies. If you feel like it's getting you down, or even getting on top of you, try to re-visit your original goals:

- **Why did you decide to study in the first place?**
- **What did you hope to achieve by taking this direction in life?**

If you still want to achieve those things, rather than consider them lost forever, believe that a little readjustment may be all that you need to get there.

Try asking yourself these questions:

- How am I progressing?
- Am I on track?
- What's holding me back?
- What challenges am I facing?
- What's working well for me so far?
- What actions could I try to stay on target or to catch up?
- When can I talk to my trainer for support and guidance?

Above all, continue to believe in yourself.

Keep a positive attitude and choose to 'think you can'.

3 Simple Rules in Life:

1. *If you do not GO after what you want, you'll never have it*
2. *If you do not ASK, the answer will always be 'no'*
3. *If you don't STEP FORWARD, you'll always be in the same place*

Staying focused

Concentration is the FOCUS you give to something. Are you finding yourself easily distracted when all you really want to do is get through the assessment??

Try these simple tips to help with your concentration:

- **Remember the purpose of your study.**
Why are you here? It's easier to focus when you acknowledge 'what's in it for you'. Reminding yourself of your purpose can also help make boring activities less so. Perhaps refresh yourself on your personalised goal notes at the start of this Manual.
- **Take regular breaks.**
Give your brain a chance to recharge.
- **Slow down!**
Don't rush what you are doing lest you make mistakes which will require re-work.
- **Go dark...** yep, turn off the internet for a while. No Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, emails or web surfing will be able to steal your focus, which means you'll be able to get through your planned study activity.



Staying motivated

Suffering from 'lack-of-motivation-itis'?

It can happen, but it can also be cured!

See these tips for suggestions on regaining and maintaining motivation:

- **Plot your progress.**
Where are you sitting in the grand scheme of your journey? Are you nearly there? Or is there work to be done to get back on track. If there's work to be done, don't get discouraged. This is what this 'Staying motivated' list is for!
- **Break up your study goal into manageable chunks.**
Even the biggest, toughest jobs can be handled when they are broken down and become a series of smaller, easier tasks.
- **Talk to people.**
How are your study buddies or other people in your course feeling? Do they have any suggestions that work for them and that may help you too?
Talk to your trainer as well. Their purpose is not to hound you about your studies but rather, to support and guide you as best they can.





- **Make it public.**

Tell people what you aim to achieve by a certain time frame. Of course, don't set yourself up for failure with extreme expectations, but don't make your goal too easy either. And remember, 'small, manageable chunks', so perhaps try a goal for a short-term time frame to start with.

- **Remember your dream.**

Sometimes we get bogged down in doing the steps and can forget about the end goal. Your dream brought you back to study in the first place... how badly do you want it??

- **Make it count and with no comparisons.**

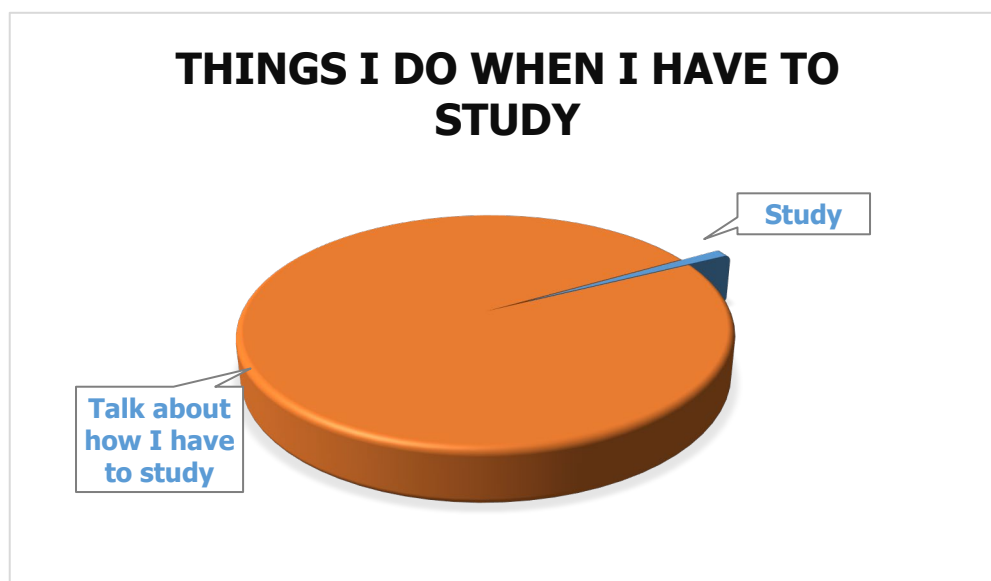
Work with purpose and know that if you give it your best effort, that will be your ultimate contribution. If you know inside yourself you've done your very best, there can be no fault with that.

Also, be interested in what you are doing! 'Lack-of-motivation-itis' can strike even the best of us when we're engaged in a task we might consider "boring". So, even if you find something extremely "boring", make it a personal challenge to try and find at least one thing interesting, or to learn one thing new, about that topic.

Finally, sometimes we can get demotivated when we compare ourselves or our achievements to others. But really, everyone has their own individual story with highs and lows particular to them. No-one but you can earn your qualification, and no one but you can make your dream reality.

Perhaps make some notes below about what distracts you and what you can do to re-ignite your motivation:

Staying on track



Procrastination can be an achievement killer! Managing your time effectively is one small step to taking control of your learning experience.

- Are you using your time wisely?
- Are you getting through the tasks at a rate that will see you on track for timely course completion?
- Are you coping with any extra pressures?

All of these are valid questions to ask yourself. In addition, be aware of any activities or people that may be robbing you of your precious time. Putting some time management strategies in place may be just what you need to stay on track and beat procrastination.

Notes about things that may be using up your time and focus, and ideas to stay on track:



Student reflection

For learners, reflection is an important part of the learning process. It helps to make meaning out of your study, and in turn, adds value to the whole learning experience. It also serves to help a learner recognise the advances they've made in areas such as cognitive skills like handling and processing more complex concepts.

Think about your responses to the following questions. There is space for your answers:

What was the most interesting thing about doing this course?

What did I find the most challenging?

What was something new I learned about myself through doing this course?

How do I think I have changed after doing this study?

What do I know I can now do differently?



Planning calendar

Use this generic calendar to help plan your upcoming training and study activities for the month ahead. There is space to write the date and any personal planning details.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

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