

B) Assignment for 2nd session: Photo Log



In the second session of the Study Smart training, we will **focus on reflection of own learning strategies and on how to implement alternatives**. We will thus focus on the process of how you have learned, rather on what you learned in terms of content.

Tools such as logs, diaries, personal development plans and portfolios have been proven to play a valuable role in fostering reflection on your own learning process (e.g. Cottrell, 2013, p. 56; Falchikov, 2005, p. 12; Payne & Whittaker, 2006, pp. 32-47). Research also shows that digital technologies, such as Snapshot and Twitter, can be useful tools to visualize and keep track of your learning development (Kitsantas, 2013).

In order to reflect on your academic study skills, you are therefore asked to keep a photo log of your **academic** experiences:

You are to take one picture each week that reflects an academic experience, challenge or success that you had in relation to how you have been studying. You have for instance finally been able to master that difficult essay that you have been struggling with for days, or you have been able to participate in a group discussion for the first time, or you have encountered difficulties on how to manage the amount of information you are required to read. Make sure to date your pictures and to write a short explanation (50-100 words) of them in which you reflect on your academic experience. In doing this try to pinpoint

- *external factors* which played a role in the success/challenge. These are factors beyond your control, such as a good tutor, or a splendid lecture, or the amount of reading prescribed.
- *internal factors* which played a part in the success/challenge. These are factors within your control, for instance when you study, with whom and for how long, whether you asked for help; how you manage your time and approach texts that you have to read.
- If applicable, also write down how you solved the challenge at hand or any suggestions for solutions.

By capturing your experiences in pictures, you will create a log of your academic development during the first period, which will be helpful to look back and reflect on that development. It will offer you a standardized format in which you can reflect on your studies progress and study skills.

An Example of a Photo Log Entry



March 8, 2018:

I felt completely overwhelmed by the large amount of readings that we were asked to handle and having just two days to read them. Honestly, I just panicked a little bit.

- External factors to the problem were the amount of readings prescribed (100 pages in just one week) and the fact that they were all in English (and I am Dutch).
- Internal factors concern my reading skills and command of the English language. In terms of reading skills, I am not used yet to digest large amounts of texts at once and I also do not know yet how to approach academic texts. How do I know what is important and what not.
- Solution: I asked our tutor for tips on how to handle academic texts and she suggested to read the title, subtitle, abstract, introduction and conclusion first and to skim the texts to get an idea of how a text is structured, rather than just plunging in. That proved to be really helpful. I also asked other students whether they wanted to meet up before the actual meeting to discuss our experiences with the texts, which was really helpful as well. In addition, I signed up for a language course.