



STUDYING SUCCESSFULLY

Social skills at the University

If you are studying at University for the first time, you will get to know a lot of new people. Some students have a natural talent for this. It seems like they make new friends within a few minutes. However, this is very scary for many other people. You feel too shy to speak to someone, or you don't know what to say on first meeting someone. Do you recognise yourself in this description? If that is the case, it's good to know that there are a number of ways to deal with this social anxiety.

Start making new contacts straight away

It is very tempting to avoid social situations, especially if you have difficulty with them or think that you're not good at them. Moreover, you're busy enough with your study, your room and exploring the city. But the longer you put off entering into social contacts, the more difficult it will become. At the beginning, the groups have not yet been formed and it's new for everyone. Being active in this area will reap rewards. So, approach people and don't wait. Join a club that suits you, for example a student association, study association, CREA, or a sport club. If you do things with people, the social contact will often go more smoothly.

Start with social contact in an easy situation

If you find it difficult to make social contacts, you would be better advised to start talking with someone in an 'easy situation', for example next to you in the lecture hall. This fellow student doesn't have to immediately become a friend. If you have done something easily a few times, you will notice that easier than expected and you can do something more difficult, for example talking to someone who you would like to become friends with. Don't try to take big steps straight away, and savour small successes.

The first sentence doesn't have to be perfect or captivating

Some people think that they will only get someone's interest by saying something very captivating or intelligent. The often works well, but is also extremely difficult. It often acts as a hindrance when beginning a conversation. Make it easy for yourself and say something normal, something that you both have in common, for example the study material, the early hour, the weather or the noise in the café. Clichéd comments are the simplest way to begin a conversation. It is not, namely about the content, but about the message that you want to start a conversation with another person.

Student Services

Student Psychologists' Office - Student Careers Centre - Student Counsellors
Student Service Desk - Office of International Student Affairs

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mind mapping classes

FOCUS perseverance

LECTURES AMBITION

TIME MANAGEMENT peer coaching

self-knowledge CHALLENGE

STUDYING SUCCESSFULLY

self-discipline persistence context

remembering INDEPENDENCE CRITICAL THINKING

flexible thinking EFFECTIVENESS

learning styles repetitions

making connections exams

Letting a conversation run smoothly

You will quickly notice if someone wants to talk to you. Once you have entered into conversation, ask open question. Someone will often give some extra information then, with which you can continue further. If you can listen and also are still able to ask questions as well, you are already very social. However, tell something about yourself in order to make it into a truly personal conversation as well.

And keep in mind that if the conversation doesn't flow, this is a joint responsibility. It's not necessarily your fault. If you think this, you will feel awkward. And it can sometimes happen. If you start thinking about it in a very forced way, that will not help you say more. If you also concern yourself with the (negative) things that the other person is thinking about you at that moment, that will not help you function better. You will become tense and uneasy because of that. You could also imagine if you actually want to carry on the conversation, you are not obliged to speak to someone.

Questions?

Have you still got questions about social contact at the University, or have you got problems with this? Please contact the Student Psychologists' Office: 020-525 2599.

Most important points

- Start making new social contacts straight away!
- Joining a study association, sport club or a course at CREA will ensure that you get to know new people.
- Start with social contact in an 'easy' situation: Have a chat with the person next to you in the lecture hall.
- A conversation consists of the right combination of listening and talking.

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