Reading and Writing Like a University Student

The Context – The Feel of the Place

- Small Liberal Arts University – the only one in Hong Kong
- Close faculty-student relationships – facilitated by residential campus
- International emphasis – high proportion of non-local students and international faculty
- New Academic Framework – 4 Year programme and core curriculum
- You have come to a very good university: RAE 2006, GRE Grants, QAC Commendations

Behaviour of a Successful Student

- Successful students see their instructors before or after class or during office hours about grades, comments on their papers, and upcoming tests. Successful students end up at their instructor’s office door at least once during the semester.
- Successful students turn in assignments that look neat and sharp. They take the time to produce a final product that looks good, and reflects a care and pride in their work.

Behaviour of a Successful Student

- Successful students take responsibility for themselves and their actions
- Successful students attend classes regularly. They are on time. They listen and train themselves to pay attention.
- Successful students demonstrate that they care about their grades and are willing to work to improve them.
- Successful students are attentive in class. They don’t talk, read, or stare out windows. In other words, they are polite and respectful, even if they get a little bored.

Reading

- Why has your teacher given this reference for you to read?
- What is the author trying to say? The author may not be a good writer but he/she is attempting to convey something important.
- What is the author’s position – very few are neutral? They have a view, you may need to find a contrasting view.
- Why is the author’s point important – your teacher thought it was e.g., what contribution does it make to the discipline?
- Do you agree or disagree with the author – just because the author is a scholar in the field, does not make the view/theories concepts right!
- At university level, you are entitled to disagree provided you can support your disagreement!
Reading

- How does the work connect with other work? Does it support, contrast with etc.
- What is the context in which the piece is written? Are there some timeless principles etc or is the work only applicable to a particular context?

Reading

- Ideally read the book from cover to cover or the article in full.
- If you have many references to read and limited time.
  - Read introduction and conclusion
  - Based on the above, read selectively
  - Read opening sentence of each paragraph
  - Based on the above, read the full paragraph
  - Draw out the principles and the arguments

Writing

- Assignment questions – flow
  - linking differences (however, by contrast, nevertheless, on the other hand, despite this etc.)
  - linking agreement (similarly, likewise, equally, in support of this, further confirmation is found in etc.)
  - one idea leading to another (hence, therefore, consequently, as a result etc.)

Writing

- Short Essay Type Examination Questions
  - Read through the entire exam to plan an overall strategy.
  - Look at each exam question to identify key words.
  - Think about what kind of writing the key word or words call for i.e., the directives.
  - Make notes of the points you want to cover in the response.
  - Begin your response by echoing the question.
  - Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you have told them
  - Leave yourself 10 minutes at the end of the test period to re-read both the questions and your responses.

Writing

- Structure of Project Reports
  - Course, Code, Title, Author(s), Date
  - Abstract
  - Table of Contents
  - Introduction
  - Selected literature support
  - Analysis
  - Conclusions
  - Recommendations/Discussion
  - References
Definition of Plagiarism

• Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. Plagiarism is a type of intellectual theft. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

Types of Plagiarism

• Downloading an assignment from an online source and submitting it as your own work.
• Buying, stealing or borrowing an assignment and submitting it as your own work.
• Copying a section of a book or an article and submitting it as your own work.
• Quoting from a source ‘word for word’, without using quotation marks is plagiarism.

How Not to Plagiarise

• Be aware of what constitutes plagiarism

Unintentional plagiarism can result from not knowing how to acknowledge or incorporate sources of information, or from careless note-taking etc.

• Plan your work

Plan ahead and begin writing your assignments well before they are due. Leaving work until the last minute doesn't give you enough time to read, digest, form your own ideas and write information in your own words.

• Learn how to acknowledge your sources of information

The Golden Rule: Make sure your assignments are referenced correctly. See the various methods that are widely accepted e.g., Harvard, APA etc. These methods with examples are available on the internet.