

Day 4 – Strategies

Let's look at strategies for studying smarter. There are 100s of different strategies out on the market; 3Q3R, Buzan, ASPIRE, The Cornell System, Spritz, the list goes on. Rather than re-invent the wheel we are going to combine the best of the best.

I want to briefly touch on attitude. It is important for you to approach your studying with the right attitude. If you are not in a positive frame of mind, do something that will get you there before you sit down to study. For example, play some music, have half an hour on You Tube or your Xbox/PS, go for a walk, do some exercise... whatever makes you feel in a positive frame of mind.



SAMPLE

The first thing you need to do when you have a certain topic to study or a certain book to digest is sample it! Simply put this means that you need to skim the text. Skimming the text allows your brain to notice keywords, get an idea of the way the text is organised, its tone and style and helps refresh your memory. Your brain works via your senses by creating associations between images, colours, key words and ideas. There are certain things that you need to take note of when sampling the text:

- Read the titles
- Skim through the introduction
- Read all headings
- Skim the first line of each paragraph
- Briefly look at any visuals (pictures and captions)
- Read the summary
- Note the number of pages in a chapter – this will help with your planning
- Read all text that is in italics, bold type and coloured font – basically anything that is not the same as the body of the text



QUESTIONS

Make a note of any questions you might have on a certain topic or book, such as whom, what, when, where, how and why. If you have no questions these suggestions may help:

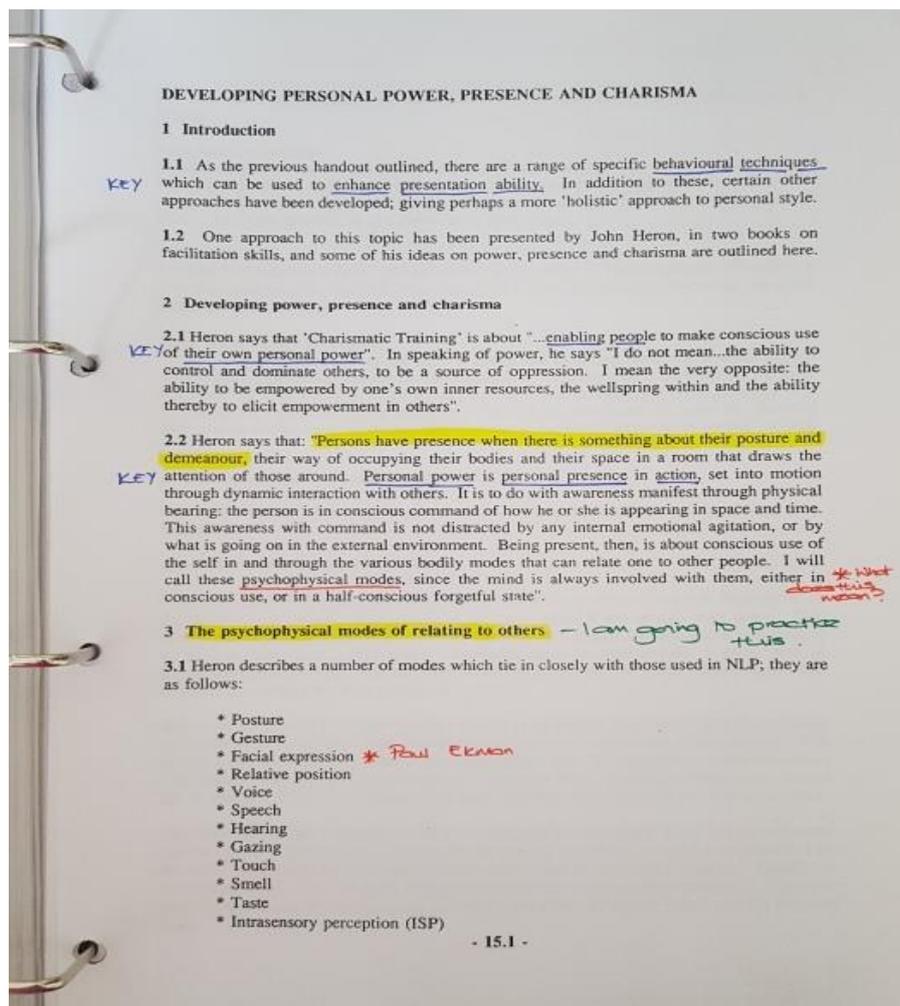
- Look at the subheadings and turn them into questions

- Use the mind mapping technique and ensure you use different coloured writing tools
- Focus on areas you haven't yet mastered



When looking for answers to your questions you can use any of the following techniques:

- Highlight or underline any answers you find (you can use the separate paper used for the questions or make notes in the book (as long as the book belongs to you)
- Add any personalised comments you might have
- Highlight or underline anything that you want to question further; using a different technique to when you find the answer
- Integrate the answers/notes with your mind map
- Focus on areas you haven't yet mastered



Example of highlighting answers and questions.



CHECK

When you have enough information you need to read your questions and answers out loud. Use your own words at this point if it helps. If you are missing information re-read the text.

Go back to Day 3s activity about our representational systems. Make sure that you are using your primary representational system where possible; it will help the information bed in.



REVIEW

Take a short break then re-read your answers, review highlighted text if you are stuck. You may need to do this a couple of times to ensure that you can provide answers without referring to sections of the text or book.

You need to practice, practice, and practice! Remember Day 1 where we talked about the 'Forgetting Curve' and the fact that if we do not practice then the information does not stick.

Study Smart

Hints and Tips

- Important information is generally held at the beginning and end of a chapter/section. This is invaluable information as it may save you many hours reading text unnecessarily
- Spend less time on the areas you already know; do not miss them out though
- If there are difficult areas (things that just are not gelling with you) leave them and go back to them at the end. You can further investigate by:
 - o Investigate alternative sources of information you can refer to such as other text books, websites, experts, tutors, etc.
 - o Ask for support from others such as teachers, friends, family or other experts
- When writing down questions use separate pieces of paper or different colours to differentiate and help the brain take in the information
- Look for any patterns with previous grades. Are there areas you have been told to concentrate on and are they part of your overall plan
- Look back at Day 1 and our discussion on the brain. You need to keep practicing (re-review) to ensure that the information stays in your long term memory
- Are there study groups you can attend as sometimes it feels better knowing others are either 'getting it' or 'needing more help'
- When taking notes it might be helpful to draw a vertical line 2.5 inches from the left side of your paper. This is the recall column of your notes. All your study notes can be taken to the right of this margin. Later key words or phrases can be written in the recall column

Today's Tasks:

- Errrrr, practice!
- Read and re-read this day and then read it again tomorrow. Remember the 'forgetting curve'? Well, this information needs to be in, so read it as many times as you feel is necessary for it to be remembered 😊