



NOTE - This document was a collaborative writing experiment I started as part of my H800 Module with the Open University... the module started in February 2016. It was hosted on Google Docs and openly editable by fellow H800 collaborators... the URL was published privately to fellow H800 students.

In effect, it was a very simple 'Wiki'.

Why not develop this document by collaborating with your colleagues?

- *Darren Rees*

H800 Study Tips

A collaborative writing experiment. Please leave your name with your suggested Tips unless you wish to remain anonymous. If you disagree with anything, please edit or leave a comment. Feel free to re-arrange this list to give priority to what you think is important. Thank you. [Darren](#)

- **Feel good about your contribution to the course!** Your voice and experience make a valuable contribution to the community. (Darren)
- **Plan ahead and be prepared.** Read through future TMAs and work out what activities you intend to focus on for the assignment. You can then prioritise your time. (Darren)
- **Make a list of what you are going to focus on when you next start your study period** - its saves the messing time of finding where you left off. (Anita)

- **Download PDFs to a portable device**. Catch up on reading course reports and articles on the move. I've found this useful as I don't have an internet connection throughout the day. (Darren)
- **Reader with an RSS reader** to make it easier to collate and track multiple forums, blog postings, Diigo group etc. I use RSSOWL which is free and available for Mac and Windows (Darren)
- **Subscribe to all the forums** from the start of the course. That way you won't miss anything. The number of posts from the tutor group forums and student cafe is high to begin with but quiets down quickly after the first week. (Matt)
- **Printout course notes if it helps you**... Did I just say that? Yes, print out a hard copy of notes. When I finish with my course notes I put them on the compost heap. I have the most educated garden worms in the village. (Darren) +1 (Denise) Scribble all over them. (+ Kate): Give them to small children for art work/creativity - unlike your worms, the children are unlikely to read them ;-). (+Matt): You'd be surprised at how much more convenient it is to read them like this.
- **Use the OU Live student sessions** organised via your tutor group, but also if you have the time consider joining others, e.g. the regular weekend ones organised using Big Blue Button on <https://moodlecloud.com/en/> (Darren) +1 (Denise)
- **Turn up to OU Live sessions at least 30 minutes before** they're scheduled to begin. It gives you enough time to iron out technical problems and sometimes the best conversations happen serendipitously before the session begins. BTW, it's "best practice" for tutors to do this. (Matt)
- **Even when you think you are too tired to think - try an activity anyway**. You'll either be proved right or you will complete something and be surprised (Anita)
- **When writing assignments get your ideas down at speed when you are fresh** (*for me this is the daytime*) - you can rework, correct spelling and grammar etc, when you're tired as this doesn't require as much thinking as getting the ideas down initially (*for me I rework assignments in the evening after work*). (Anita).
- Use mind maps: Coggle works for me (Alain).

- Get a good seat on the bus so I can read articles or H800 forums (Denise) +1 (Darren ... or a good seat on the train).
- **Turn off your phone** when you're reading/studying. You'll concentrate better and understand more:
<http://www.danielwillingham.com/1/post/2016/05/texting-and-driving-not-it-can-wait-but-turn-it-off.html>
- Watched few writing workshops on Y-tube - I find it a slog
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3K9ZvuRmiM> (Denise)
- Don't forget to eat! (Janet as [comment](#) on OU Module blog)
- **Get someone else to read your assignment** - by the time you think you have finished you will probably be word-blind (Kate).
- Read your assignment aloud - record it - then read along with your recording. The act of reading aloud is added to the bonus of 'hearing' your words at a distance. You'll be surprised at the changes you can make [Wendy]
- I've been chucking everything in Evernote - using tags like TMA0x and Week xx or interesting Forum post (with date and time for citations!) later I can search for all the ones I want - free for basic plan. Images and pdfs other files - great for short articles like H800 ones that then don't require internet (Anonymous)
- **Use CLEAR TITLES** when posting to Tutor Group Forums, eg. "Activity 4 - Engestrom metaphor discussion" is easier to find and understand than plain "Activity 4". (Darren)
- Forum participation: **Post as early as you can** so it leaves plenty of time for others to read and respond and for conversations to develop before the week ends and you move on to the next bunch of readings and discussions. (Matt)
- **Use a bibliography manager**, e.g. <https://www.zotero.org/> or <https://www.mendeley.com/>, as well as installing the plugins for your word processing software (<https://www.libreoffice.org/>, MS Word, etc.). It'll automatically download papers and metadata from research databases, manage your in-line citations and references list, and save you hours of *tedious work*. (Matt)