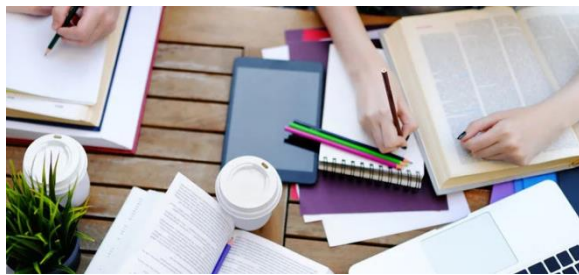


Studying

- isn't this why studygrams exist?



Passage #4 Winter Break, Year 2

25/1/2022

1 Introduction

To DSErs (or some of my classmates/ friends taking UST winter semester, or my fellow CU/HKU friends who have already started their spring semester), have you ever thought about the topic of 'studying' itself, despite being repeatedly told to "study hard" by everyone around you - friends, teachers, parents?

After all, 'studying well' is the ultimate responsibility of students - particularly in a society like Hong Kong that strongly favour those of high education levels (and especially who "follow the rules". After all, I think the purposes of most Hong Kong studygrams are to record their studying journeys and remind themselves to study hard!)

Getting inspired by this topic, I decided to write about studying this week.

But the first question we should ask - is probably "why" to study. What do we wish to get from studying?

2 But... Why do we study?

(i) Quantify knowledge assets for good prospects

The point we focus on the most in the HK society.

- "Knowledge can change one's fate (知識改變命運)"; HK: Access to high-end majors (e.g. medic/ law/ qf) by scoring high in DSE
- *Tendency to get top-tier jobs with high uni GPA Positive correlation of education level and income*
- Provides specialized advantage with low imitation risk with hard skills ▶ solid career options
But... is it really the case in uni? Should it be?

Think about: DSE 2020 Chinese writing '讀書無用論'

(ii) For fun and spiritual enjoyment - YOUR own rules

- Confucius: "isn't it enjoyable to learn from time to time? (學而時習之，不亦說乎 -

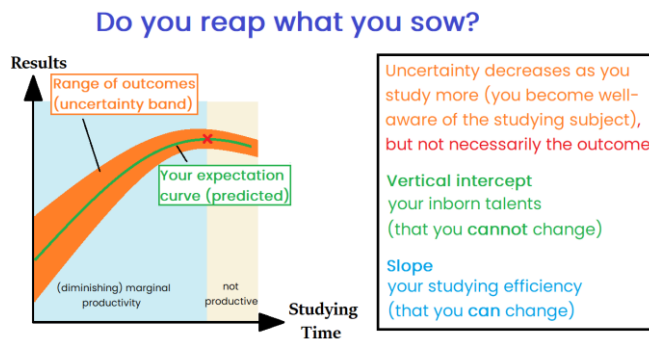
- ▶ 孔子, 學而篇) ”
- ▶ Brain teasers amid relative boredom in life
- Expand your interests and horizons: know more and those you didn't know they exist
- Self-satisfaction (ego, self-efficacy)

(iii) Know what's going on around us

- Demand everything's explanation (打破沙鍋問到底); The world can be much more complicated than one would expect with an inquisitive mind
e.g. psychological theories, modelling of species
- Know how you should behave/act (知書識禮)

3 Studying effectively - Do you reap what you sow?

Since we're small, we're taught that "You reap what you sow (一分耕耘, 一分收穫)", so we are supposed to study hard to obtain good results. But truth is, we don't always get as much as what we deserve for our efforts - which often makes us disappointed. *Why is this happening?*

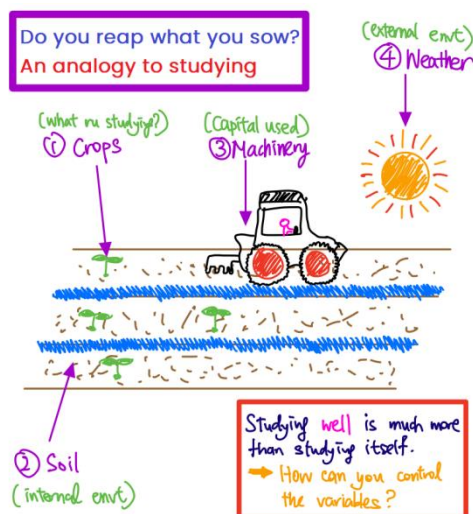


Insights:

- **Law of diminishing marginal returns**
In general, you become non-productive after a certain threshold of studying time, e.g. due to physical fatigue/ mental exhaustion
(See *Teams become more productive when their hours are shorter*, Voxeu 2021)
- Studying more only allows you to **reduce uncertainty** as you distinguish what you know and what you don't know, unless you find/ stick to your methods of **breaking through the limit**.

- ▶ How to increase your efficiency?

Lot of variables affect your output - and by controlling them *in your favour*, it might be that you could ensure you reap *more than, or at least appropriately to* what you sow?



There might be many more factors of such, but let me just list four that I think are significant. I hope they could at least bring you some inspirations in studying well - particularly if you're

studying under a rigid framework like the Hong Kong system:

1) **Crops we sow** - what are you studying?

- Corresponding learning methods
 - (i) Cue cards for humanities/ fact-based items?
 - (ii) Compare & contrast/ marking scheme analysis or sci. subjects (logical deduction)?
- Intercropping: Combining two (or more) subjects' concepts to digest and consolidate might help you understand deeper (e.g. phy electrostatic attraction VS chem intermolecular force strength)
- Avoid cramming (死記硬背 = 揠苗助長) doesn't help in long term

2) **Soil** - are we in a fine mood and level of inspiration?

- Keep yourself focused and of an elevated energy level to produce work of the highest quality - mental 'flow'
 - What makes you inspired and determined to study? Where is your motivation?
 - Importance of studying partners
 - (i) Sources of mental support, esp with matching vibes
 - (ii) Minimize distractions to games/ excessive leisure
 - (iii) Source of (more) reliable benchmarking;
 - reduce information asymmetry
 - pool learning resources together
 - “獨學而無友，則孤陋而寡聞”
- (In some sense, I very much want one whose vibe would suit mine too...)

3) **Machinery** - equip yourself with adequate working capital

Ask yourself, what do you need? How do you fetch them?

eg1 I find having an iPad (notability/ goodnotes) greatly boosting my thinking/ note-taking processes (though I only bought it quite recently)

- I am someone that has extremely short memory span
 - need a device to write on whenever inspiration kicks in

eg2 A schedule book/ sg/ dashboard to keep urself on track

eg3 For thorough digestion of your learning areas, especially under very predictable exams like DSE Math/ M2/ Chem, use organized past paper sources (by-topic [bottom-up] to facilitate initial consolidation/ focus on ur weakness, OR by-year [top-down] if you feel confident) - a.k.a. 刷題

If you don't have such, type and organize urself/ with frds!

Only advised for DSE students: you have more time than uni students to study per subject, and narrower scopes - a perfect condition to be capital-intensive (Economics)!

4) **Weather** - External conditions

- Minimize external distractions (e.g. fam communication/ distractions e.g. noises, “choices” that might zone you out...)
 - ▶ That’s when studying rooms (clubhouses/ in urban areas) and university halls come into play: For you to stay focused on what you want to do!
- Time of the day: Mornings and late-nights are silent but effective periods that encourages someone to be productive (personally, I very much prefer the latter - especially for bursts of creativity and deep thinking)
- Switching locations improves your learning efficiency!

“instead of sticking to one study location, simply alternating the room where a person studies improves retention.” ~Robert A. Bjork, UCLA Psychologist
- If you cannot switch your locations during the pandemic... Why not consider configuring your home environment to be friendly to your endeavors?

Extended readings

Forget What You Know About Good Study Habits

<https://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/07/health/views/07mind.html>

4 Those are just my viewpoints...

I know I might not be the best of the best to comment on “studying”:

- I am not a perfect DSE scorer (barely med-qualified), nor those maintaining above-4 GPA (I slacked a bit this semester so my grades dipped to sub-4 : I know batchmates/ seniors going very hardcore, but decide I don’t want to be them.)

I don’t focus on grade perfection - I maximize my efficacy.
- I typically don’t spend all of my time studying: I might just be just a ‘lazy’ guy in a sense that, don’t spend all of my time being academically/ career-wise productive, but reflect and analyze things I’m interested (and type passages like these) instead.
- I am not in a pedagogical major (e.g. BMED/ 中教) like some of you, so I cannot offer any opinion about studies from a (to-be) teacher’s perspective.

But as you probably know, I am a person that very much asks “why” to anything of my interest, so I decided to type my researched findings of studying here. Hope you guys still like it!