

Manual for Study Support

ELECT Work Package 3



Education and Culture DG



NATIONAL INSTITUTE
FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE

Lifelong Learning Programme

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INTRODUCTORY ISSUES

1. *The ELECT Project*

This manual is a product of work package 3 in the ELECT Project. The Elect project has set out to strengthen Clubhouses as learning communities and promoted access to education and the labour market for people recovering from mental illnesses. The ELECT-consortium includes Clubhouses, Clubhouse Coalitions and Training bases from seven European Countries. The project has been funded through the support of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme. The ELECT project started 1st November 2007 and will last to the end of October 2009.

Clubhouses provide an alternative training setting and learning possibilities for people recovering from mental illnesses. Clubhouses can improve learners' basic skills and learning-to-learn abilities by activating and motivating them to take part in different kinds of short courses, e.g. on career guidance, ICT and languages. Clubhouses help identify learners' educational goals and enable them to follow individual learning pathways. The project enhances co-operation and awareness rising between Clubhouse learning-communities and educational institutes in consortium countries. The project creates a set of supported educational methods for Clubhouse members who have aspirations to study in educational institutes and for students whose studies have been interrupted because of mental illness. Supported education improves the possibilities to begin and continue studies successfully in educational institutes.

2. *What is a Clubhouse?*

A Clubhouse is first and foremost a community of people. Much more than simply a program, or a social service, a Clubhouse is most importantly a community of people who are working together towards common goals.

A Clubhouse is a community intentionally organized to support individuals living with the effects of mental illness. Through participation in a Clubhouse people are given the opportunities to rejoin the worlds of friendships, family, important work, employment, education, and to access the services and supports they may individually need. A Clubhouse is a restorative environment for people who have had their lives drastically disrupted, and need the support of others who believe that recovery from mental illness is possible for all.

"Clubhouse"

The descriptive name of *"Clubhouse"* was taken from the original language that was used to communicate the work and vision of the first Clubhouse, Foun-



tain House in New York City, started in 1948. As the first community of its kind, Fountain House has served as the model for all subsequent Clubhouses that have developed around the world. Fountain House began when former patients of a New York psychiatric hospital began to meet together informally, as a kind of “club.” It was organized to be a support system for people living with mental illness, rather than as a service or a treatment program. Communities around the world that have modeled themselves after Fountain House have embraced the term “Clubhouse”, because it clearly communicates the message of membership and belonging. This message is at the very heart of the Clubhouse way of working.

Membership

A Clubhouse is a membership organization, and therefore the people who come and participate are its members. Membership in a Clubhouse is open to anyone who has a history of mental illness. This idea of membership is fundamental to the Clubhouse concept, as having membership in an organization means that an individual has both shared ownership and shared responsibility for the success of that organization. To have membership in an organization means to belong, to fit in somewhere, and to have a place where you are always welcome. For a person living with the effects of mental illness, these simple things cannot be taken for granted. In fact, the reality for most people with mental illness is that they have a constant sense of not fitting in, of isolation, and rejection. Mental illness has the devastating effect of separating people from others in society.

Worldwide Clubhouse Community in 2008

(Source: ICCD Statistics)

Continents	European Countries
North America 300	Albania 1
South America 4	Austria 3
Europe 87	Denmark 6
Africa 3	England 14
Asia 20	Estonia 1
Australia and New Zealand 13	Finland 22
	Germany 3
TOTAL (around) 427	Iceland 1
	Ireland 4
	Italy 1
	Kosovo 1
	Macedonia 2
	Netherlands 1
	Norway 3
	Poland 2
	Romania 1
	Russia 4
	Scotland 7
	Sweden 10
	TOTAL 87

Note: Majority of Clubhouses are serving their members in North America (USA and Canada).

First Clubhouse in Europe was opened in Sweden, Stockholm in 1980. Since that the network of Clubhouses has been growing. In 2008 it covered 87 Clubhouses in the 19 European countries. But in about 30 countries in Europe the Clubhouse model is not yet in use.

In Europe the Clubhouse model is promoted as a good practice by the national mental health policy and/or government programmes in e.g. Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Scotland.



“Mental patient,” “client” “disabled,” “consumer,” “user” -- these are the terms with which people living with mental illness are accustomed to being defined. The rest of society, then, segregates them according to these labels, and wholly defines them by these images. The person with mental illness, then, is seen as someone who needs something, who is primarily a burden that needs to be managed.

The Clubhouse turns this all around. Here, a person who has struggled with mental illness is seen first as a valued participant, a colleague, and someone



who has something to contribute to the rest of the group. Each person is a critical part of a community engaged in important work. A Clubhouse is designed to be a place where a person with mental health problems is not a patient and is not defined by a disability label.

In a Clubhouse program each member is given the message that he or she is welcome, wanted, needed and expected each day. The message that each member's involvement is an important contribution to the community is a message that is communicated throughout the Clubhouse day. Staff and other members greet each person at the door of the Clubhouse each morning, with a smile and words of welcome.

The daily work of the Clubhouse community, too, is organized and carried out in a way that repeatedly delivers this message. This is not difficult, because in fact the work of the Clubhouse does require the participation of the members. The design of a clubhouse engages members in every aspect of its operation, and there is always much more work than can be accomplished by the few employed staff.

The skills, talents, and creative ideas and efforts of each member are needed and encouraged each day. Participation is voluntary but each member is always invited to participate in work which includes clerical duties, reception, food service, transportation management, outreach, maintenance, research, managing the employment and education programs, financial services, and much more.



Membership in a Clubhouse community gives a person living with mental illness the opportunity to share in creating successes for the community. At the same time, he or she is getting the necessary help and support to achieve individual success and satisfaction.

Values

Clubhouse communities are built upon the belief that every member can sufficiently recover from the effects of mental illness to lead a personally satisfying life. Clubhouses are communities of people who are dedicated to one another's success -- no matter how long it takes or how difficult it is. The Clubhouse concept is organized around a belief in the potential for productive contributions from everyone, even the member struggling with the most severe effects of mental illness. Clubhouse communities hold the conviction that work, and work-mediated relationships, are restorative and provide a firm foundation for growth and important individual achievement (Beard, Propst, Malamud, 1982). In the Clubhouse world it is also a strongly held belief that normalized social and recreational opportunities are an important part of a person's path to recovery.

Meaningful Relationships (the core ingredient)

The Clubhouse environment and structures are developed in a way to ensure that there is ample opportunity for human interaction and that there is more than enough work to do.

Clubhouse staffing levels are purposefully kept low to create a perpetual circumstance where the staff will genuinely need the members in order to accomplish their jobs. Members also need the staff and other members in order to complete the work, but even more importantly, the relationships that evolve through this work together are the key ingredient in Clubhouse rehabilitation. (Vorspan, 1986). The Clubhouse members and staff as a community are charged with prioritizing, organizing and accomplishing the tasks that are important to make the Clubhouse a successful place for members to move forward in their lives.

Relationships between members and staff develop naturally as they work together side-by-side carrying out the daily duties of the Clubhouse. All of the staff have generalists roles in the Clubhouse and are involved in all of the Clubhouse activities including the daily work duties, the evening social and recreational programs, the employment programs, reachout, supported education and community support responsibilities.

Members and staff share the responsibility for the successful operation of the Clubhouse. Working closely together each day members and staff learn of



each other's strengths, talents and abilities. They also develop real and lasting friendships. Because the design of a Clubhouse is much like a typical work or business environment, relationships develop in much the same way.

In a Clubhouse the staff role is not to educate or treat the members. The staff are there to engage with members as colleagues in important work and to be encouraging and engaging with people who might not yet believe in themselves. Clubhouse staff are charged with being colleagues, workers, talent scouts and cheerleaders.

The Basic Components of a Clubhouse

1. A Work Day

The daily activity of a Clubhouse is organized around a structured system known as the work-ordered day. The work-ordered day is an eight-hour period, typically Monday through Friday, which parallels the business hours of the working community where the Clubhouse is located. Members and staff work side by side, as colleagues, to carry the work that is important to their community. All of the work in the Clubhouse is for the Clubhouse and not for any outside agency or business. There are no clinical therapies or treatment-oriented programs in the Clubhouse. Members volunteer to participate as they feel ready and according to their individual interests.

2. The Employment Programs

As a right of membership Clubhouses provide members with opportunities to return to paid employment in integrated work settings through both Transitional Employment and Independent Employment programs. Transitional Employment is a highly structured program for members returning to work in community-based business and industry. Transitional Employment placements are at the employer's place of business, are part time (15-20 hours per week), and include a lot of on the job and off site support from Clubhouse staff and other members.

These placements generally last from six to nine months. Members then can try another placement or move on to independent employment. This program is specifically designed as a vocational rehabilitation program where a member can gain or re-gain the skills and confidence necessary to have a job while he or she is employed in a "real world" position. The only requirement from the member to participate in Transitional Employment is the expressed desire to work.

Independent employment is a program of the Clubhouse through which members, when ready, are given help from the Clubhouse to apply for and acquire a job of their own. The Clubhouse then provides on-going support and en-



couragement for the members as long as they remain employed and request assistance. There is no on-site support at the place of business for members in independent employment. All of the support is at the Clubhouse.

3. The Evening, Weekend and Holiday Programs

In addition to the work opportunities, Clubhouses provide evening, weekend, and holiday social and recreational programming. Members and staff together organize structured and non-structured social activities. These activities are always scheduled outside of the work-ordered day. Holidays are celebrated on the day on which they fall. Activities are scheduled at the Clubhouse and in the community.

4. Community Support

People living with mental illness often require a variety of social and medical services. Through the work day at the Clubhouse members are given help accessing the best quality services in their community. Help is given to members in acquiring and keeping affordable and dignified housing, good mental health and general medical services, government disability benefits and any other services they may need. Members and staff from the Clubhouse provide all of this support and assistance.

5. Reach-out

Part of the daily work of the Clubhouse involves keeping track of all of the active members. When a member does not attend the Clubhouse or is in the hospital a “reachout” telephone call or visit is made to the absent member. Each member is reminded that he or she is missed, and welcome and needed at the Clubhouse. This process not only encourages members to participate but it is an early warning system for members who are experiencing difficulties and may need extra help.

6. Education

Many Clubhouse members have had their education plans interrupted by mental illness. Some have not finished secondary school and others had their university experience disrupted. The Clubhouse offers educational opportunities for members to complete or start certificate and degree programs at academic institutions and adult education programs. The Clubhouse also utilizes the talents and skills of members and staff to provide educational opportunities in the Clubhouse.

7. Housing

Safe, decent dignified housing is a right of all members. The Clubhouse helps members to access quality housing. If there is none available for members the clubhouse seeks funding and creates its own housing program.



8. Decision-making and Governance

Decision-making and governance are an important part of the Clubhouse work. Members and staff meet in open forums to discuss policy issues and future planning for the Clubhouse.

Clubhouses also have an independent board of directors or advisory board that is charged with oversight management, fundraising, public relations and helping to develop employment opportunities for members.

Summary

Although Fountain House started more than fifty years ago and has been replicated more than four hundred times around the world, the clubhouse concept is still a radically different way of working in the field of community mental health. Most program models still focus on assessing a person's level of disability and limiting the expectations based on that assessment. Most use teaching or treatment as the vehicle for providing rehabilitation. In a Clubhouse the expectations are high and mutual work, mutual relationships, and meaningful opportunities in the community are the vehicles of choice. For members Clubhouse is a part of their individual empowerment process where participation in Clubhouse activities is bridging the integrating pathway from mental health services to education, training of different skills and, finally to employment in mainstream labour market.

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3. **Why Make a Study Support Programme in the Framework of Clubhouse?**

It has often been suggested that the western culture has changed from an industrial society to a post industrial society in which knowledge, education and life long learning play a key role. Clubhouses are founded on principles and work ethics which arose in the industrial society. They put emphasis on the daily work and participation in a working community as essential for the development and well-being of the individual member. These values are still valid, but in order to keep up with the development and reach a new target group Clubhouses must take into consideration that society and the content of the work concept has changed. The study support programme is a way of dealing with these fundamental alterations. The focus is still on the individual healing process in a mutual and common working unit, but in the study offer it is studying itself which is seen as work.

A question arises as a result of this change of perspective, and this question is a result of the general individualization which is part of the mentioned sociological change: Are the students just working for themselves, or should their work rather be considered as a contribution to the Clubhouse as a whole? Maybe the apparent conflict implied in the question is not real? The study unit within a Clubhouse is a working community consisting of members. The relation and interaction in the mutual work situation is the kit that holds it all together and constitutes what Clubhouse is all about.

This is also the case when the character and content of work itself changes. The members might be engaged in their own study programmes but at the same time they generally make use of each other as co-workers in their respective projects. They very often use each other for coaching or response giving and it is seen as a common duty to keep the study unit running by doing everything from office work to cleaning the toilets.

This emphasis on empowerment is also evident in the formulated standards. On one hand the clubhouse should support the member in her/his pursue of educational goals, on the other hand this should be done in a way which make use of the member's own resources:

25. *The Clubhouse assists members to further their vocational and educational goals by helping them take advantage of adult education opportunities in the community. When the Clubhouse also provides an in-house educational program, it significantly utilizes the teaching and tutoring skills of members.*



This manual is partly a result of a survey conducted in January 2008 which constituted the first phase of the work in WP 3. Its purpose was to make a road map for the existing *"Support methods for education and training"* in 17 clubhouses in Finland, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Norway, Iceland and United Kingdom.

WP3 consisted of staff members and members from four Scandinavian clubhouses. The next step was an analysis of the questionnaire with focus on those categories of activities that support studying and that appear from the answers. The result was a schematic survey together with a document which enumerates the different activities that support studying in the 6 categories. The categories are: 1 Information about education, 2 Contact to educational institutions, 3 Practical help, 4 Education or classes in the clubhouse, 5 Support, tutoring (Individually & in groups) and 6 Study-techniques.

The aim of this manual is to create/raise consciousness about possible and necessary considerations on opportunities and choices when establishing a study support programme in the framework of a Clubhouse.

4. What Sort of Manual?

Normally, you look for help in a manual if you want to make e.g. an electrical appliance work in accordance with what it is supposed to be able to do. We know manuals from our everyday life: The manual for a new washing machine - how does one activate the different types of washing programmes? A manual like that presents a certain number of possible washing programmes that combine different specified parameters - such as washing time and temperature - in order to get the best result.

We have decided not to make a manual like that.

We have also decided not to make a manual that pretends to present 'best practices' because we do not believe that a good study support programme is created simply by copying and combining 'best practices' from different places and contexts. A practice is not independent from the context in which it was developed and can therefore not simply be copied. This however does not mean that we cannot learn from the experiences of others.

Instead we have made a manual that

Presents a number of parameters that from an empirical point of view have been important to consider when planning to establish a study support programme (*chapters 2, 3, 4, 6*).

Proposes that you use the manual locally and find the parameters relevant for you. And organise your offer accordingly.



AND

Presents a '*tool box*' that contains a number of tools or '*practices*' that have been used and shown themselves useful in the already existing study support programmes - in their context. (*Chapter 5*)

Presents a possible coherence between the various elements of study support as described in an examination of "*The Bookend*" (in Danish Bogstøtten), Fountain House Copenhagen, "*The Cohesive Force*". A coherence which also illustrates how central elements in the clubhouse culture are present in the mentioned study support context (*Appendix 1*).

Appendix 2 and 3 present two examples of specific tools, a '*Members Progress Interview form*', and a '*Study Support Leaflet*'.

THE TARGET GROUP OF STUDY SUPPORT

1. Members of clubhouse Working In the Clubhouse

The following chapter is based on Klúbburinn Geysir's experience and detection. It is important to have the relations between the group/member and other members in mind when identifying a studying member or a studying group. Being flexible is a key word in that context. Studying members are usually young people and/or young adults who have dropped out of school because of their mental illness, and members who want to study to improve their opportunities in society.

Studying members who work in the clubhouse can roughly be divided into two groups:

1. Members who already have a focus and have it as their personal goal to study and utilize support methods provided by clubhouse.
2. Members who by their participation and motivation discover the opportunities involved in improving their education and what it might include.





We can compare studying members to working members. Both groups reflect members longing for improving their skills and abilities. Its functional issue is the idea that a clubhouse is a place to take on new challenges and move forward. Nevertheless, the concept of “*moving forward*” can be explained in different ways. In context of Clubhouse philosophy it is necessary to have in mind that the concept reveals not only the idea of having a role outside the Clubhouse, but also having an important role inside the Clubhouse, as a participating member. In that case attending the Clubhouse is an important routine in a member’s life. It does not necessarily mean that the member has to leave the clubhouse (like a graduate) to move forward.

The two study groups identified here usually use as their first step toward studying, short seminars provided inside the clubhouse and/or supported educational opportunities outside the clubhouse. Continuous steps would be studies in educational institutions in society.

Common characteristics for the two study groups:

Members look at education and provided support as a new opening and an important step forward in their recovery, thus increasing their self esteem and ability to take on new tasks.

Members take part in the work ordered day (hereafter WOD) along with their studies in a different unit, or use their studies and school projects as a task in the WOD. That could include being in a secure place and part of increasing skills in relationship.

Members take part in the clubhouse social program in the evenings and on weekends.

Members share their experiences of being a studying member and thus bring new relationships into their participation/membership. It can be important for the members to share their educational experiences, both because non-studying members are interested in studying members work and the studying members need to express themselves about their progress and interests.

Members value themselves as clubhouse members and as a part of a community. In this case members don’t necessary have to identify themselves as studying members, but rather as a functioning participants in a clubhouse.

Studying members are conscious of their aims and are active in trying to keep up healthy life standards, e.g. diet and wellness.

Members use the clubhouse as an “*anchor*” to connect to educational institutions and keep that connection alive/active. This can be a first step for an inactive member, seeking educational options with support from the clubhouse.



Members come to the clubhouse for homework and preparation for exams and other study related projects.

Members identify themselves as students or studying members. This doesn't necessarily mean that studying members distinguish themselves from the rest of the clubhouse. However if any sign in this direction occurs it should be avoided.

The importance of human relations and understanding of friendship is essential for studying members as for others and should therefore be cultivated. Members often attend the Clubhouse in a break from studying because of their illness. This means that the Clubhouse should always be open for studying members, whether they are actually studying or have to take a break for different mental health reasons.

Segregating characteristics for the two study groups:

We find that the segregating attributes are of a minor scale but what Clubhouses might face is that studying members are not connecting to other studying members, studying members' participation is not part of a personal written goal plan, and studying members are not attending the Clubhouse after graduation.

It should be a priority in Clubhouses providing educational support to focus on issues that unite and not on issues that separate. The segregating topics mentioned here are necessary to address and important to be aware of, however the motivation should be to encourage members to take active part and make their participation in the Clubhouse a thing to be proud of.

The overall basis vital for these target groups is the making of a written personal goal and to hook up with a support staff and/or support member. Support methods for those groups can vary and overlap in different ways but should be based on the members' points of view and their abilities to take on the responsibilities pursued in their studies.

2. Members of Clubhouse Studying Outside the Clubhouse

When establishing a study support programme aimed at **students coming from outside the clubhouse** it is important to consider this:

Since the students are not in the clubhouse to participate in helping running the house, you must find a way of introducing the clubhouse culture to the students. Cf. the experiences made in *'The Bookend (Bogstøtten)'* since Jan.1st 2006, an introductory course for the students ending up with **becoming a**



member of the clubhouse has turned out to be an important contribution. It is the experience that the knowledge the students obtain through such an introduction means that the students get a greater understanding of the community that *'The Bookend (Bogstøtten)'* is a part of, they achieve a deeper attachment to the place and they get an understanding of the sense of community shared by members - no matter whether the members are in the Study Support Unit, the Kitchen Unit or the Office Unit.

It is important to focus on what the clubhouse and the study support programme have in common, – rather than on what makes the study support programme so different from the rest of the house. When planning and establishing a study support programme it is important to find out how to include the rest of the clubhouse with the aim of placing the study support programme as a logical/natural/unbroken extension of the clubhouse concept. A way of getting around this could be by focusing on the **mutual** foundation of the classical clubhouse profile and the study support programme, – rather than focusing on the **particular profile** of the study support programme.

One should consider the implications for the clubhouse in general. For instance that with this target group you might expect a rush of new people and that the clubhouse might not have resources enough as the Fountain House in Oslo experienced (2004-2007)

The mutual foundation mentioned above expresses itself in these principles:

The study support programme is organized as a Clubhouse Unit. The workgroup is organized as any other FH-unit: It consists of staff members and members. All of them have influence and participate according to their abilities and wishes in working in the unit.

The work done in the unit is based on five basic clubhouse values. A good and important element in *'The Bookend (Bogstøtten)'* as an offer of support methods for education is that *'The Bookend (Bogstøtten)'* is a unit in Fountain House. This means that *'The Bookend (Bogstøtten)'* is a part of the clubhouse culture which is based on 5 core values which Fountain House in Copenhagen has summarized as Equality; Focus on Resources, Voluntariness, Community Spirit and Joint Influence.

Most important is the common ground across the units. Fountain House Copenhagen is a big house, but the core values of the house are present in all units, and the students have the experience of being part of something which transcends what they study and the environment where they normally study. In the unit itself it is the support to the studying which at first strikes you, but



similar to the work ordered day for members in the rest of the house the students are not just students but also part of community which in itself can be a support for studying. The 5 values which saturate the house give the students the possibility of being students in other ways than those practiced in the educational institutions.

A study can be structured in a parallel way to the well known work ordered day in Clubhouse. The structured workday is central in the clubhouse concept, partly because it helps structuring the member's time which most people feel a need for, partly because it gives the individual the possibility of using his or her resources, evolving, and feeling useful.

Likewise the structured day of studying is centrally placed in '*The Bookend (Bogstøtten)*' study support. The studying geographically takes place in an environment and in a time span meant for studying. Spare time and other activities than studying are for later and elsewhere. It creates an environment where the students can concentrate and work in peace. In this way the member/student can find the structure most suitable for him and her.

It is an environment of studying: The others at '*The Bookend (Bogstøtten)*' are also there for studying whereby is constituted a community that helps give the members in '*The Bookend (Bogstøtten)*' an identity as students.

The workgroup of '*The Bookend (Bogstøtten)*' which is in charge of the daily running of the unit is also an offer for students who take either long or small breaks from studying. In '*The Bookend (Bogstøtten)*' they find a structured everyday life and have thus the opportunity to stay in an environment of studying even in periods when they do not feel resourceful.

When the students are asked what characterizes the environment in '*The Bookend (Bogstøtten)*', they mention the following: It is capacious, it has focus on your resources and on what you want, and you are recognized for who you are. But first and foremost it is a place where everybody knows how it is to have a bad day and what it means to have psychological difficulties and where the mentality of competition that one finds in the education institutions is absent. In the end the students here get much more energy which otherwise would have been used on keeping up a façade.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

When it comes to partners in establishing a study programme within a clubhouse it is vital:

To get a general view of other stakeholders in the field, that is; players interested in the target group you address. They probably have other agendas and purposes than clubhouse, but they can play an important role for the general life situation of the student. These players might be psychiatric institutions, reaching-out caseworkers, student counselors, centers for academic writing, home work cafés at educational institutions, regional authorities, doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, educational institutions, private NGOs like patient, relation or help organizations, different treatment centers.

To uncover which role or function the players in question play when it comes to the target group. Is it at place for recruitment? Is it a treatment center in relation to which the study support programme can function on a parallel basis or as follow up? Is it support parallel to the study support programme? Is it a potential education programme? Etc.

To find out subsequently what the purpose of an eventual contact or collaboration with the players concerned could be and how the contact should be established and maintained: Is it recruitment, treatment, study support, coaching? Is the contact initial, regular or as follow up?

1. **Contact to Educational Institutions**

To give an example of how a Clubhouse can establish and maintain contacts with educational institutions, a description of Suvimäki educational programme (2006-2008) in the Jyväskylä area follows:

“At the beginning of the project we sat down and discussed which the most important Educational Institutions are for us. After this we discussed the matter of who are the contact persons that are useful to us concerning our needs and goals. And then we got started contacting them. All of them answered us immediately and were interested in working together with us. This helped a lot and made the starting easier. We chose these Institutes because they were the ones our members were interested in (Vocational Institutes, Special Institutes, University and Adult High School).

At the beginning we built up the steering group for the project from the six most important Educational Institutions for us. These six persons have been our contacts in these Educational institutes.



By the good advice we got from our steering group we next contacted the administrative staff and management. This was a very important step to get "the blessing" for the co-operation from the management. And after this it was much easier contacting the operation level workers (student counsellor, curator, etc.). In all Educational Institutes we established good and fruitful contacts that are still alive and working when needed.

Suvinmäki Clubhouse had already some good contacts through its board of trustees. Then we also called the educational institutes (schools) and asked them who would be the right person to contact. And then we contacted her/him. In some cases establishing contact was very easy, just sending the e-mail or calling the person and arranging meeting to discuss the matter further.

The initiative was our idea and we did the first contact with the Institutes. Of course there had been some co-operation before with some of these educational institutes, but now it was done more co-ordinated and so that the educational institutes became aware of us and our wishes to co-operate with them about supported education. The results were good. The co-operation we got going on in 2006 is still alive and working."

To illustrate the experience of the project follows a description from a member concerning applying for acceptance at the Jyväskylä Vocational Institution.

2. Case: Hannu´s Experience¹

Hannu´s experiences with the Elect -project:

¹ Hannu Salo and Ritva Partanen, Suvinmäen Klubitalo, Jyväskylä, Finland.

I think that the most important and useful thing has been to learn about practices of other Clubhouses in Europe and deepening the co-operation with other countries. Also telling about our own practices and compare them with others. The spirit of the meetings has been very positive and warm.

Workpackages (WP) have improved their working because people know each other better.

Hannu´s thoughts about supported education and its meaning:

Very soon I will be starting my studies and I am not yet quite sure about how much support I´m going to need. But if I need some support I know I can get it from the Suvinmäki Clubhouse. I don´t know exactly what kind of support I might need.

Suvinmäki educational program was very useful for me when I applied to the school (Jyväskylä Institute of Adult Education). Me and Ritva went to the school and applications were filled with the tutor from the school. I also got a lot of useful information about the school at the same occasion. I was a little bit nervous but the whole situation was very encouraging.



In general I think there are a lot of members who find out the supporting of education very useful in their studies.

Hannu's plans for the future:

I'm going to finish my studies and orientate myself to working life or maybe to study more.

Hannu's experiences concerning individual meeting with tutor in Jyväskylä Institute of Adult Education:

I wanted to study and because the Clubhouse has a educational program it seemed natural to orientate myself to the studies with help from the Clubhouse. Many times when I have had plans to start the study applying process has been a stressful thing for me. Ritva helped me with many things like contacting the school and before that to getting information about the school.

Applying to the school itself was very different from an actual applying exam. Because the tutor of the school was there alone with me and Ritva had an opportunity to ask questions face-to-face about the studies. Everything from the busses going to the school to the questions about the school in general.

The actual being in the school building and getting to know the place where I am going to start my studies, was very important to me. It also gave me the information that busses go near my home to school.

The tutor gave me a very good impression about the staff of the school.

WHERE TO BEGIN?

Planning any kind of support initiative can be reduced to finding the answers to these questions:

1. *Who Are They?*

To begin with you need to define a target group, or you will not be able to answer the next 3 questions, obviously. But this is not as simple as it sounds. You must carefully consider how widely or narrowly you want to define your target group. When starting a “*study support unit*” what will be considered as “*studying*”? Any kind of education or only certain types?

Example areas could be study habits, economy, treatment, isolation, housing.

2. *What Are Their Problems?*

You have defined the target group you wish to support, now you need to find out which kind of support they need. To this end you must consider: What are their needs? What problems do they have? Try to work out a list of potential problems, but do not try to cover every little detail - what is important at this stage is getting an overview.

This will give you an idea of what you are dealing with, as well as giving you the chance to choose what NOT to deal with, whether for ideological reasons (e.g. therapy, substance abuse), practical reasons (economy, competence), or simply because somebody else is already doing it better than you expect to be able to. Therefore you also need to do some research on which existing support initiatives, if any, are aimed at your target group.

3. *How Can We Help Them?*

And What Kinds of Resources are Required?

You have defined your target group, you have decided which of their needs you wish to address, now you need to know, what is required in order to do so. This may involve:

- a) **Qualifications.** Does a staff person need something extra apart from what we normally expect from a staff member? How much staff is required? Do some staff workers already have some or all of the needed qualifications? Will extra training suffice or do you need to hire new staff?
- b) **Knowledge.** What is available in your area with regards to

education, study-related support. Which rules and regulations may help or hinder your efforts?

- c) **Physical space/equipment.** Should study support be separate, or integrated into existing units, do you have/ do you need extra space for members studying, work stations, internet access etc.?
- d) **Mental/social space.** Finally, creating a study environment, to promote and strengthen the identity of the students as being just that: students, rather than patients, diagnoses - or worse, is also a very important part of study support.
- e) **Financing.** Be aware of the need for sufficient financing resources to start and run a study-support programme. It is necessary to get extra funding for this programme in order not to have to reduce the other activities in your clubhouse.



4. *How Do They Find Us?*

Now your new support initiative is all done and ready to receive! At least on paper. In case you choose a target group from outside the clubhouse, you have to consider how potential members will find their way into your welcoming arms? How will they even know that you exist? You must consider the various ways to contact your target group and decide which of them you believe will be the most effective. Some examples: contacting and/or distributing folders to tutors, guidance counsellors, students' organisations, therapists, hospitals/ wards, school administrations, participating in education-related events.



Another thing you may also wish to consider: How much importance you place on a low rejection rate, i.e. if some methods will attract too much attention from people outside your target group. In the case that you choose people, who already are members and who want to begin studying “*recruiting*” is of course much simpler and perhaps more a question of organization.

After answering the previous questions you now have to organise the planning. No matter the type of target group it is important to establish a project group. Remember to include the entire club house right from the start, as it is very important that study support is integrated into the club house just like any other unit, even though it may be organised in a different way. We advise that instead of introducing various models of organisation, it is more important to: accept that it is possible, and perhaps even advisable, to start small AND focus on how study support initiatives may develop through recurrent evaluation, and try to establish procedures for this.

POSSIBLE ELEMENTS IN A STUDY SUPPORT OFFER

1. Information about Education

The information provided here was collected in the summer and fall of 2008 from 6 Clubhouses active in WP 3 in the ELECT project. *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)"* Fountain House Copenhagen Denmark, Caledonia Clubhouse Scotland, Mosaic Clubhouse London England, Helsinki Klubitalo Finland, Suvimäki Klubitalo Finland, Espoon Klubitalo Finland and Klúbburinn Geysir Iceland.



Basically our approach was to find as many possible ways information about education were shared and displayed in the Clubhouse. There are many options and methods on how individual Clubhouses provide information on education within and outside the Clubhouse. In some aspects one could say that opportunities for getting information are as many as there are Clubhouses worldwide, but on the other hand these options overlap. It is important that all gathering of information and information provided should be part of a study unit's work if that is available. If not, then e.g. the office or administration unit. It is also important that information is visible in the Clubhouse and accessible to members.

Following are some of the most popular methods used. This compilation definitely delivers the messages that all Clubhouses are unique and the information provided should be based on that. It was decided to categorize information into information provided in the clubhouse and information obtainable outside the Clubhouse.



1a. Information Obtainable Inside the Clubhouse, Tools and Methods

Individual counselling related to career planning and discussion:

If Clubhouses offer individual career planning the counsellor is a very important person/staff person for all necessary contact and information.

Display with brochures from educational institutions:

An information display can be put up in various places in the Clubhouse, both printed material and information monitors via intranet.

Information Centre in the Clubhouse:

At a special center members could have access to application forms, deadlines, requirements and former documents needed for their education plans.

Internet information:

For many Clubhouses the Internet is the most important source of information, therefore a good access to the Internet is very important.

Presentation about education given by the representatives of educational institutions:

In some cases it could be important to make contacts to educational institutions and have representatives come to the Clubhouse to inform members and staff on educational institutes policy about educational support provided.

Via telephone:

The telephone is a handy tool for obtaining information.

E-mail and text messages:

This opportunity can often provide an effective result as a first contact to gather information about educational institutions.

Meetings after the WOD specially meant for studying members:

At special meetings members and staff can exchange information and share their experience, where the emphasis is on the importance of peer support.

Information on education as a part of a study unit work:

In a study unit different tasks could be on the agenda, e.g. sharing information about education and collect information from outside resources.



Information on employment options after graduation:

This could be a WOD project in a study unit or employment unit.

Newsletters:

Most Clubhouses print and publish their own material to some extent. A newsletter is a very important medium to reach out to members. Posters, brochures and leaflets provided and made in the clubhouse serve the same purpose and are motivating for members.

1b. Information Obtainable Outside the Clubhouse, Tools and Methods

Meetings/interviews with tutors and counsellors at educational institutions, member alone or with Clubhouse staff:

Often meetings are arranged outside the Clubhouse for members and staff to discuss educational issues related to member's education plan or support required.

Educational Fairs:

Once a year Suvimäki Klubitalo offers an educational fair, where most of educational institutions in the Jyväskylä area have their presentations and displays. In Reykjavík, Iceland, an Open University Day is held, where departments of the University present their study offers. This also goes with colleges in Iceland.

Meetings with local educational institutions and authorities:

This could be a second step after writing a letter or sending an e-mail.

TE placement in educational institution:

This gives opportunities to keep contact and learn more about the activities offered to students.

Peer support in hospitals, educational institutions, at home:

This is a very important support and should be advertised for members and staff being aware of it.

Posters brochures and leaflets from educational institutions:

All educational institutions offer material about their operation and policy. It is important to be aware of all information provided that way in case of benefiting the Clubhouse. One unit could be responsible for accumulating this information, and provide easy access to it.



Possible collaborators:

Here is a guiding list which could be helpful in search of collaborators, when collecting information on education. Principals, tutors, teachers, educational counsellors, ministry of education, other students, administrators for study loans, funds, grants and welfare, the press and media, hospitals, different stakeholders.

2. Practical help²

² *Methodology: the information in chapter 5, 'Support, Tutoring – Individual & Groups' and 'Courses in Study Technique' is based on data collected through a questionnaire answered by Clubhouse Caledonia, Espoon Klubitalo, Fountain House Copenhagen, Helsingin Klubitalo, Suvimäen Klubitalo, Kuopion Klubitalo, Mosaic Clubhouse, Klubburinn Geysir and Fontenehuset i Oslo. – See Appendix 2 for an example.*

In this category you will learn more about what type of practical help a clubhouse can give to members who want to study. First of all we will give you some advice about what you need to consider when a member is thinking about studying. Next we will go deeper into what type of help that is useful for studying members.

Clubhouses support their members in many ways. Many clubhouses have regularly meetings with their members (goal planning, carrier planning, etc). If you already have developed a system you can fit these types of questions in as well.

2a. What Must Be Considered Before Starting to Study?

Here are some key issues and questions:

Home Environment:

- Is it possible to study at home?
- How is your home organised? Do you need any support?
- What other commitments do you have? (family, children, etc)
- Do you have a supportive home environment?

Financial Situation:

- How is your economic situation?
- How will beginning to study affect your economy?
- What types of economic support can you get? (or loose)

Health:

- How is your physical and mental health? How stable is your health?
- What kind of treatment do you get? (Therapy, medication).
How will this affect your studies?
- Have there been any important changes in your life recently?
- How is your social network? Do you have good social relationships?
- Do you do any kind of physical exercise?
- Do you need any kind of special adjustment? How and where can you get this? (extended time during exams and duration of



- study, extra supervision, oral instead of written exams,...)
- How is your situation when it comes to eating healthy?
Being a student means you need a lot of energy.
Eating nutritious food helps.
- Is it possible to study part time? A lot of members from clubhouses have a very good experience with studying part time instead of full time. Maybe you can start part time and increase how much you study after a year or two?
- How do you react to stress? Being a student can often be stressful.
To learn a way of stress management could be a good idea.

Reality check

Why do you want to study? (personal development, improve job possibilities)
Try to give a realistic view on what it means to study in general? (Energy needed, need of structure and organisation, daily routines, social network, pressure). Encourage the member to take an active part in WOD from the morning of to get a better structure and experience about strengths and challenges.
What are your strengths? (Working together at the clubhouse makes us able to give advice about what courses would benefit their individual goals and aspirations)

- What are your challenges? (Concentration, earlier experiences from studying). What are your strategies to cope with/solve these?
- What do you want to study? How is this study? (Length of education, the form of study, individual versus group based, practical versus theoretical).

Visits to the educational institutions can be done by organizing trips to the educational institutions individually or as a group (for example during enrolment days), guided tours to meet the college lecturers, try to connect to members who have studied at the same institution.

How is the study organised? Do you mostly work alone or with others? Are there many lectures? How many people attend the lectures? How big a part of the study do you have to structure yourself? Considering the way the study is organized. Is it possible to function well within these structures?

What kind of job does this lead to? (Talk to someone that has similar job?) How is the labour marked for this job?

2b. What Has To Be Done When a Member

Has Decided to Study?

- Get information about the specific studies.
- Find out about requirements and deadlines.
- Fill out applications.
- Collect and copy certificates from earlier education and other papers required.



Apply for financial support (loans, scholarships, public financial support, etc.). This can be done for example by having contact with a study advisor at a college, get information and help get in contact with different financial support organisations specific to each country. Someone from the clubhouse can also join the member at meetings with social workers regarding financial and study related issues.

2c. How Can The Clubhouse Give Practical Support To A Member In A Study Situation?

- Close contact with the member. Regularly meetings and phone calls.
- Important to remember that even though the member is outside the clubhouse he or she still might need general support, i.e. housing, nutrition, medical (according to our standards).
- Arrange and join student in meetings with advisors etc.
- Support the student: i.e. accompany to lectures and exams, help to find out schedules, deadlines, literature, curriculum, registrations for examinations, paying fees.
- Help to get familiar with and be able to use the computer in a study situation. Maybe the clubhouse has an in-house- computer class they can take.
- Encourage student to take part in the clubhouse social program; i.e. regularly employment and education dinner, coffee-get-together on Fridays, celebrations of holidays.
- Inform and encourage studying members to use other offers at the clubhouse i.e. weight watcher groups, housing support group.
- Specific activities for students: i.e. monthly breakfast; Employment and Education evenings where members can receive peer or one to one support with a staff member, celebration of members who have started or finished their study, good morning sessions (the students are expected at the unit at a certain time and begin the day by telling about the study plans of the day. This could also be part of regular unit meeting.)

2d. Physical Environment

Clubhouses differ in the kind of facilities they can offer the students. There is also a question about whether the clubhouse wants to have students studying at the house or rather want to support them in studying outside the clubhouse. In chapter 6 we will look more thoroughly into these considerations. However, if the clubhouse wants to offer facilities in the house, this is what could be offered: (these rooms could of course also be used by the rest of the clubhouse)

- One or more quiet rooms for reading.
- Access to computers and a quiet room to work.



- A room to relax in.
- Café or another room to meet other people.
- A room for tutoring.

3. Support, Tutoring - Individually & in Groups

There are many ways a clubhouse can support members that are studying or thinking about studying. We can divide these ways of support into three. General support is the type of support clubhouses generally give to its members. Counselling is support given to students who focus on issues related to studying. Tutoring on the other hand is support given to students on a specific subject. The type of support will tell something about the relation between the one that are giving and the one receiving support. In counselling there is an equal relation. The method is to ask good questions in order to start a process. Tutoring is more of an unequal relation where one is the expert and has the answer. Counselling and tutoring are given to members that are already at the clubhouse.

3a. General Support

Clubhouses in general support its member in a lot of different ways. For instance in relation to housing, economy, benefits,... The same type of support is important to members that are studying or want to study. Members often speak of being part of a supportive environment where they are noticed and acknowledged. Being part of a supportive environment makes it possible to regain self worth, purpose and confidence.

Support (-methods) are tools that motivate, inspire, support members. Open up- another word the members resources - i.e. all the things that take place in any clubhouse.

3b. Counselling

Some clubhouses are offering studying members counselling. Counselling includes counselling methods, for instance questioning techniques to kick off a process. Counselling enhances motivation and inspiration. It also makes the members aware of their resources. The member might need counselling in different matters, for instance:

- preparation to cope with an exam
- motivation and inspiration
- develop confidence and self esteem

Here are some examples from *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)"* at Fountain House Copenhagen of different types of counselling:



3c. Counselling in Writing Papers

Counselling in writing papers varies from one session of 45 minutes to a number of sessions over an extensive period of time until the paper is handed in. The contents of the sessions are e.g.: help to define the topic and how to put this definition down on paper, help with how to structure the paper, help in case of writing blockage. Often the typical difficulties the student is faced with are lack of comprehensive view of the task and lack of clarity of the demands and other criteria put up by the place of education. The most useful methods of counselling are e.g.: mind-maps and visualisation of the form and function of the paper.

As opposed to advice given by the place of education on the specific subject the student is writing about, the counselling is concentrated on the form and function of the paper. Actually, the fact that the staff person does NOT have the same specific knowledge of the subject as the student is an advantage because the student in that case will have to make his/her points more explicit in order to be understood by a layman. This tends to make some of the basic structures in the paper clearer and makes it possible for the student to work on the parts of the paper that lacks coherence.

From a staff point of view being ignorant about the subject makes him/her operate in unknown land - like an explorer. The staff worker must make sure to stay on his side of the field so to speak i.e. inquire into the student's situation and ideas in an uncovering?? way. In that way, the staff worker becomes a mirror to the student. As part of the process, he/she must pay attention to keywords or other connections.

The conversation takes place above text level, i.e. the focus is not the contents of the paper but coherence and the logical principles the structure of the paper is based on.

3d. Work Process Counselling

This can work in two ways. Either you take on the job as a guide or sparring partner e.g. during a longer period of time where the student is writing his/her paper. Or you provide counselling sessions where the advice given concerns the process writing papers, i.e. how to construct the paper, which steps are included in the process and where in the process is the student at a particular point. In that way the sessions are about what methods are available in order to solve the task in question.

The difficulties the student face may be problems in obtaining a general view of the long work process as well as being aware of the various parts of the process. The student may also find it difficult to differentiate between the various



modes of writing connected to the different phases of the working process. Lack of knowledge or training reading and taking notes are also important issues. E.g. it is not unusual that the student thinks he/she must have read everything about a subject before actually starting writing. In this case certain study techniques may be of great help. E.g. it is a good idea to skim through the material before you start reading in depth. Or maybe the student needs some advice on efficient ways of notetaking.

3e. Exams Counselling

Often, one or two sessions are needed for this type of counselling, however, the number varies depending on the situation. The person counselling is staff member. A common issue is to make the demands and expectations of the exam clear and to dedramatize the situation and clear up a specific part of the exam. In rare cases staff attend the exam as observers. Typical difficulties/problems are unclear expectations and lack of general view.

Examples of effective methods of exam counselling are: Going through the exam situation in a practical way by working through the various phases of the exam generally and specifically. How long does the exam take? Who is participating? What are their roles and expectations? What is to be said/written? Is there something that the student can prepare herself/himself for? Often, the counselling is about restructuring the idea the student has of an exam as something which is uncontrollable to something where the student actually takes control of the situation. The counselling differs from the guidance given at the places of education in that staff at *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)"* concentrate on form, method, planning and mental preparation - not on giving advice on the contents of the specific subject.

3f. Other Kinds of Study Related Counselling

"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)" also provides counselling in how to handle the situation when the member/student begins at a place of education meeting new people and a new setting, how to get on in a classroom without anxiety, how to conquer insecurity, how to conquer insecurity returning to a course after one or several weeks of absence.

3g. Tutoring

Tutoring has a pedagogical approach and provides the member with help to specific subjects which is part of the student's education.

Individually:

- Carrier planning meetings with a staff member

**In groups:**

- Few houses organise group tutoring. However some have regular groups that meet to learn about study techniques or writing papers.
- A tutor comes and give lectures.

Pre planned. Mostly pre planned over the college year.

By whom? Could be done by all specialist staff, members with experience in the subject or persons from outside the clubhouse (tutor from a college). When using a tutor from outside a staff member will take part in the first meeting together with the member. One clubhouse pay tutors to come to the clubhouse to tutor. There is also an idea to contact with the college or university to hear what they can offer. At the university in Oslo it is possible for students with special need to get a tutor that the university is paying for.

4. Courses in Study Techniques

Several Clubhouses offer organized group courses in different types of study techniques. Form and content may vary. The following chapter presents three examples of courses.

4a. *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)" at Fountain House Copenhagen*

A course in Study Techniques is offered every term and consists of about 10 classes of 3x45 minutes pr. class. The teacher is an outside teacher sponsored by a municipal source (as a principle staff at *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)"* do not teach even though they have the skills for doing so.) The size of the classes is 5-8 students. The small classes give the students the possibility to bring up his/her own topics and open up for sharing their experiences. The course is oriented towards students who at present have an active study-related day and therefore can bring study-relevant issues into class. Both new students and older students who work on their final papers attend the course.

The teacher makes her/his own syllabus which means that the contents vary according to who is the teacher - and who attends the course. Generally, the contents concentrates on different reading- and notation techniques - often combined with exercises. And home work in the form of exercises that take their starting point in the students' own study situations, e.g. a written plan of next week's work, an exercise in taking notes based on one's own reading or an attended lecture. A way of planning a study technique course is introducing a new theme in every class. Themes are e.g. different ways of reading, notation techniques, social issues, working in groups, stress, writing process, memory, setting up goals for one self, motivation and taking exams.



4b. Suvimäki in Jyväskylä

We have organized three study technique courses last year (2007). The first one was held during four evenings, (16.30-18.30 per evening). The second one was held during the work-ordered day, five lessons, once a week one hour. The third one was held over a weekend. It is not a returning offer in the clubhouse.

The teacher at the first course has worked a long time in different special educational institutes and also as a consult. The second teacher is studying at the Jyväskylä University to become a teacher of special adult education.

The first course was about how to change from rehabilitant to student. It was a broad course which consisted of four different items including study techniques: motivation and a right attitude towards studying, what helps me to learn best (study techniques and styles), how to improve your memory and how to work in a group, how to facilitate peer support and mentoring.

The second course was based on discussions. It took place five times with different topics. One of the topics was study techniques.

The third course (weekend course) was about study techniques.
Themes in the course:

- 1) study techniques, -skills, study environment, study targets and plans,
- 2) ability to study, motivation - from rehabilitant to student.

Members who were interested in the matter (students and non-students) participated in the course.

It differs from similar offers in educational institutions and other places because people knew each other and it was held in familiar surroundings. Also people had influence on what happened in the course. All 3 courses gave courage to people and they felt that they learned a lot about themselves and their way of learning. They also felt that it was very important to feel safe and have peers to work with. It gave the opportunity to just let go and be yourself and learn about yourself. Also they felt that it was important that the teacher was dedicated to the subject and was an inspiration to all, but still gave enough space for the participants to be active.

4c. Fontenehuset in Oslo

Our complete offer of Study Techniques was the two following:

- A Study technique course that specifically looked at how to read, how to make notes etc.
The study technique course was in total for about 5 hours.



Two meetings with 3 weeks in between. We did it once a year. The study technique course is presumably quite similar to courses at educational institutions. However, the teachers had a special training that made them more aware of whom they were teaching and did things slowly. It was a safe environment and easy to ask questions.

- A course in how to cope being a student (Studiemestring).
(See Appendix 3). The course in how to cope being a student was one whole day.

Our experience was that the course in how to cope (mestre) being a student was an offer that was very important for the students. Most students had been to more technical courses in study technique earlier and knew how to study. For most of our students the problems was more about self confidence.

At the study technique course everyone at the clubhouse could participate. It was mostly students that showed up, but some other members also took part. The '*how to cope as a student course*' was a regular course they had developed at the student counselling at Østfold University College. We have not heard of other universities giving a course like that. It was developed to support students that were struggling to cope with their studies.

STUDY SUPPORT IN RELATION TO THE REST OF THE CLUBHOUSE



Study support can be organised in more than one way. In this chapter we will present the practice and experience of three different club houses. How a clubhouse organizes their study support is both a matter of resources, space, members' needs and economy. At the end of the chapter we present the experience of a student who benefitted from the study support programme at *'The Bookend (Bokstøtten)'* in Oslo.

1. Study Support as an Integrated Part

This way of organising study support is present in all units. This means that if a member needs practical support or counselling this will be given by staff or members at the unit. The unit can support members that want to study or are studying by:

During unit meeting always asking the participants if someone needs support. Support could be both about housing, community support, but also finding a job or study support. If someone needs study support one can organise to have an informal talk the same day or schedule a meeting.

Offering all members regular carrier meetings or likewise where the focus is also on study related issues. Reaching out (be aware of members that are studying and call them regularly).



One way of making sure that the students are not forgotten is to have photos of them on the wall with their names and what they are studying. This could also be a great inspiration to others.

- Inviting studying members to join the social program.
- Organizing dinners that focus on study related topics.

Collecting information from colleges and universities, and making this information easily available to all members. One unit could be responsible for the collection.

1a. Challenges and Advantages with this Model

The most evident advantage with this model is that the house does not have to be reorganized to give study support. This also means that a lot of extra resources both in terms of staff and space is not needed. It can be organized as part of the work ordered day at each unit. This could also be an advantage for the member who can stay in his/her familiar environment even though he or she starts to study. Many students want to keep engaging in some parts of the unit work in addition to their study. Those members starting to study can also be an inspiration to other members in the unit. If he can do it - I can do it!

Fontenehuset i Oslo had a separate study unit for two years. The greatest challenge was lack of resources. There was an enormous interest from students outside the clubhouse. A lot of students are struggling with mental problems and the universities do not offer sufficient support. Therefore, it is evident that the demand for study support is huge. The clubhouse in Oslo did not have resources to help all of them. To our existing members it did not feel fair. They asked - why can these people just show up and get all this support when there are already so many here putting in hours of work every week and not getting the same type of support? The conclusion at the clubhouse was that study support should mainly be for the existing members as a part of their rehabilitation process. They also concluded that having newcomers that only wanted study support was not good for the clubhouse community. The house had a lot of people coming in every day. However, they struggled covering the regular tasks a clubhouse has to do. There were too many consumers and the partnership model did not work as we want it to be.

Having study support as an integrated part also gives a lot of challenges. It is hard to establish a student community at the clubhouse. The students might not know each other and can therefore only to a small degree seek help and support from other students in the clubhouse.



One could also expect that it will be harder to get counselling since a clubhouse probably does not have specialist/resource staff.

- It is harder to get a good overview of which of your members that are studying.
- If you want to recruit students - fewer will come because it is harder to see that being a student is a possibility in an integrated offer in a Clubhouse.

2. Study Support Offer Integrated into another Unit - for Example the Office Unit

Klúbburinn Geysir has from its foundation 1999 provided support for studying members. In the beginning the support was part of the WOD in the office unit, but now we have been integrating an education/employment unit into the office unit with its special tasks and projects. This chapter is based on the experience and detection we have found out in the process.

It is important that studying members connect easily to the operation of the clubhouse. The member can come to the clubhouse to meet staff and other members, to study, get support and last but not least take part in a work ordered day, thus giving the effect that the studying member is aware of the study support provided by the Clubhouse. All issues involving dislocation or alienation from the rest of the house should be addressed, and be part of the support offered.

2a. Forms of Education Support Methods

There are generally three forms of education support methods related to units and units work available in each Clubhouse

- (A) It can be an independent education unit, often thought more practical for bigger Clubhouses.
- (B) It can be an education unit integrated into another unit.
This approach has been experienced more practical for smaller clubhouses.
- (C) Educational support and educational services provided by any other unit in the Clubhouse, more often the office unit or administration unit. As to Geysir experience we have recognized and practiced forms A and B of support methods for studying members, as roughly categorized here. The implementation is perhaps not what is the most important, but what suits each Clubhouse. The support for members seeking education should be available and visible however the implementation is managed. Education unit for all members It is not necessary that the studying



member's participation is limited to an education unit, even though the unit might be necessary for the member in the WOD.

A member can work in an education unit without the intention of becoming a studying member or have any interests in that what so ever. The bottom line is that the work in the unit is important and of interest to the member.

2b. Studying Members in all Units

It is not essential in an integrated education programme, which unit a studying member signs up for as long as it supports the members planning to study. Part of the support in an integrated study unit is that it can provide in addition more practical help; like individual assistance and counselling, establishing and maintaining contacts and collaboration to educational institutions, space for studying and providing feeling of security and safety. An integrated education unit would have unit meetings with the supportive unit (e.g. office or administration unit). Tasks and projects of the study unit would be discussed and members choose their work just as any other work offered in the unit. In the process of establishing an integrated study unit it is important that all members are included who want to be part of it whether they later become studying members or not.

2c. Study Support in an Integrated Unit

Following a list of work and tools that an integrated unit could provide:

- Introduce information on education, study techniques and study opportunities.
- Supporting members already studying, peer support.
- Providing support for homework and individual projects.
- Offering short introducing seminars in the clubhouse, e.g. on computers, languages, study techniques and goal plans.
- Take part in international and domestic collaboration and seminars.
- Sharing information with collaborators.
- Cooperating with representatives of educational institutions, arranging meetings, counselling. A clubhouse staff who is conscious of the needs of a studying member.
- Access to computers, e-mail and internet.
- Meeting other studying members.
- Safe and secure place to be.
- Individual counselling and goal planning.
- Support for exams, reports and projects.
- Studying members gatherings as part of a social program.



3. Study Support as an Independent Unit in the Clubhouse

What should you consider when planning/establishing study support as an independent unit in the Clubhouse?

In the following, we present the experiences from '*The Bookend (Bogstøtten)*', Fountain House Copenhagen, which is organized as an independent unit in the Clubhouse:

3a. An Independent Unit

1.a. What does '*independent unit*' mean?

As an '*independent unit*', the study support programme '*The Bookend (Bogstøtten)*' is organized as a unit which is separated from - but parallel with - the other units in the Clubhouse.

The running of the unit is managed by members and staff members of the Clubhouse in '*The Bookend (Bogstøtten)*' called '*the work group*'. The members of the work group are in a situation where they have/ used to have/ or want to have an active daily life where studying is in focus. E.g. some of them are unclear about what subject/education they should choose. Some of them are on leave from their studies or they study part time. The staff members of the work group all have educational backgrounds and experience with counselling and other kinds of study-related support.

The difference between '*The Bookend (Bogstøtten)*' and other traditional clubhouse units is that the members welcomed for the most part are students. These members use exclusively '*The Bookend (Bogstøtten)*' as a place where they can get support related to their studies. Members who are students have their own study-structured day and are not expected to participate in running '*The Bookend (Bogstøtten)*' /the Clubhouse.

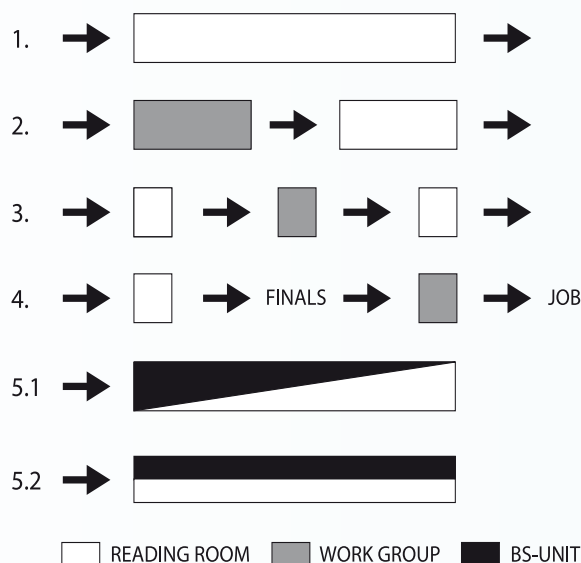
However, although '*The Bookend (Bogstøtten)*' operates in two different ways the member can use support programme - as a member working in the work group and/or as a student using the reading room and the counselling possibilities - it is important to underline the flexibility of the programme. Students are always welcome to participate in work group tasks and members of the work group may find it valuable to use the reading room. The interaction that takes place is what makes the study environment at '*The Bookend (Bogstøtten)*'.

The following table illustrates different ways members who are also students use '*The Bookend (Bogstøtten)*'.



3b. Ways In Which Members Who Are Also

Students Use 'The Bookend'



3c. What Are The Tasks In The Unit?

Apart from running the unit, the tasks include different kinds of support to members who are students. Furthermore, 'The Bookend (Bogstøtten)' does its best to make the tasks and the organisation of the work reflect the needs of the members of the work group so that the work helps stimulate, maintain or develop their study related qualifications. As mentioned above the tasks the studying members are expected to solve are related to their studies, not the unit.

3d. Workstations/Tables as a Central Part of the Programme

The experience at 'The Bookend (Bogstøtten)' is that a secure study environment that leaves a great deal of latitude to the members is a central part of the study support programme. It is important to have a certain number of workstations/tables (there are 20 in "The Bookend") and a common room- plus a spacious room for the work group. These facilities open up the possibility that the student members contribute to an ideal study environment. By coming here, by being active here with their studies and by networking and gathering socially in the breaks, the student members add to the physical environment.

3e. An Identity as a Student

A key feature of the whole study support programme is to view members and studying members as **students** - and to contribute to the process of them developing identities as students. And not - as seen elsewhere - to underline the fact that they are mentally ill/have psychological difficulties. This effort is likely to succeed if the study support programme is organized as an independent



unit. At the same time, the members who presently are in the work group, and who therefore contribute to the running of *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)"*, remain in a study environment. In that way it is easier for them to keep up their identities as students - even in periods where they are not active at their places of education. Or they might get inspired to begin studying again. An effect sets off so to speak.

3f. The Supporting Environment

'The Bookend (Bogstøtten)' makes an annual statistics but it does not give a satisfactory picture of the quality of the effect and the benefit of the work of *'The Bookend (Bogstøtten)'* with regard to its members. The annual statistics show the numbers of members, new and old, how many exams were taken and grades achieved, how many members completed their education, moved on to full time work, the numbers of individual counselling-sessions and many other facts about *'The Bookend (Bogstøtten)'* and its activities. These statistics are used in the documentation necessary to maintain funding and plan ahead.

To create not only a quantitative but also a qualitative description we developed The MSC-project, in which members' own words describe the difference that *'The Bookend (Bogstøtten)'* make for the members' motivation and ability to study. The study consists of a series of interviews with members made by staff and members together; using the *'Most Significance Change'* (MSC) technique, a means of participatory impact monitoring that involves collecting and systematically interpreting participatory stories of change.

These stories have given a new and improved picture of *'The Bookend (Bogstøtten)'*, which emphasises the importance of the supporting environment tried to create. To describe this a pedagogic consultant was hired to write the paper titled *"The Cohesive force at the Bookend"* (see appendix 1).

Many of the activities at *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)"* are statistically measurable, but can be equally important to members. This might be breakfast every other week, casual conversations in the sofa during a break from studying, or just getting the feeling of being welcome no matter one's mood, or as one of the members puts it: *'This place gives me the feeling that it is important that I am here. I know I just sit at my desk reading and writing most of the day, chat with others at lunch and during breaks, but still, it feels like I am important just doing that and being here. And that feels good.'*

3g. Working Together With and Using the Rest of the Clubhouse

Most of the student members in *'The Bookend (Bogstøtten)'* are *'recruited'* from outside the Clubhouse - e.g. via hospital wards, student counselling offices, places of education, social workers. But also those members from other units



of the Clubhouse who feel ready to begin an education, have the possibility of changing unit to *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)"* - wholly or partly.

The student members use the facilities of the Clubhouse such as the canteen and the café - and they help doing the dishes when needed!

"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)" draws on guidance resources in the Clubhouse when these are not obtainable from members and staff workers in *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)"*. E.g. guidance on issues relating to the healthcare system, economy and regulations, and work related guidance on topics such as clarification of one's qualifications and the possibility of getting a trainee period. Often, *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)"* is represented when the Clubhouse receives guests.

The student members participate in the social gatherings in the Clubhouse. The members of the work group participate in the Clubhouse rotation system, e.g. in relation to being in charge of meetings.

In order to find out what the rest of the house thought about *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)"* a little survey was done. Members and staff were asked what difference they thought it meant to have a study unit within Fountain House, and what contributions the unit made to the house as a whole. The answers were numerous: *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)"* participates in meetings, they come up with ideas and suggestions etc. *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)"* inspires the rest of the house to deal with meetings and everyday life in a more structured way. *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)"* is considered to be a kind of avant-garde for instance when it comes to working with statistics and documentation - a lab where new possibilities are put to the test. As a result of their very different academic backgrounds the students come up with solutions to problems - solutions which probably would not have occurred otherwise. One could say that Fountain House benefits from the academic and methodological approach to problem solving which is present in *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)"* and goes beyond the more regular conduct in the house. It was also mentioned that *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)"* adds prestige to the house by being such a success: In general its members do very well at exams. It attracts young people to the house which is considered to be inspiring. For young people in other units in the house *"The Bookend (Bogstøtten)"* functions as a good example. Its members prove that it is possible to take an education despite psychological difficulties.

3h. Summary

The central feature of being organized in an independent unit is that all of the activities in the unit are study related, and that all members in one way or another are related to the field of studying. This strengthens the general effort of keeping studying in focus and mobilising resources of support.



On the other hand, the vulnerability of this construction is the separation from the running of the rest of the Clubhouse and the risk of standing outside the Clubhouse culture - cf. the consideration about this in *Chapter 2*.

When establishing and developing a study support programme, one must keep an eye out to the integration aspects in relation to the rest of the Clubhouse and be able to make adjustments.

4. Personal experiences and thoughts about studying and being a member at Fontenehuset in Oslo

Being a member at clubhouse is of course about much more than getting study support. Being a member has meant a lot to me in many respects. Being a member include different aspects of being a human being. For example work, studies and social activities. These aspects interact with each other, and will often in sum be much more than the simple addition of the different aspects.

I will in this text try to illustrate this through my own experiences with the clubhouse model. I am a man born in 1953. I became a member in 2003. I had at that moment been completely out of work for a ten years due to mental problems.

My personal reasons for becoming a member of the house were mostly economical. I wanted T.E* in order to be able to pay for a bigger apartment. I needed this because my daughter and her one-year-old son lived together with me. After two T.E.s I got a regular 20% job at the same employer where I had my last T.E. My Clubhouse helped me getting this job.

* *Transitional employment placement*

At the time of beginning my second T.E I began thinking about taking up studying. Four years prior of becoming a clubhouse member I became a student at the university of Oslo. The reasons for this were not to get a job, but to fulfil an old dream of mine. A dream that mental problems did shatter.

I took two preliminary exams and entered the study of history of religion. But I felt I was struggling alone at the university, and was not able to fulfil my studies and take my exams.

When I became a member of the clubhouse in 2003 the house had begun to plan to start the Bookend (Bokstøtten) a special program for students at Fontenehuset based on the Copenhagen model. I began to study again, and with the good support of the study unit I got my exam. After this I have continued studying alongside with participating in the work of the clubhouse and attending my 20% payed work outside the clubhouse.



Why did I succeed this time? The answer to this I think is to be found in the clubhouse model. This model is as I see it based on members interacting with other members, giving and taking, with participation of staff when needed. Communication and sharing are key words.

What does this mean? In my case it has been being in an environment where I am not only a passive receiver of help, but also where I can participate as a whole human being, not only in solving my own problems, but also in helping others.

During the six years I have been a member I have studied for 5 1/2 years as a part time student. During these years Fontenehuset has tried out a wide range of different ways of dealing with students: First some years with no special support to students, then a period for two-three years with The Bookend (Bokstøtten). Except for a little time together with another unit, we had our own unit called Studie-enheten. After The Bookend (Bokstøtten) closed down the clubhouse has not been able to find a study support strategy. In the two years that has passed since, fewer studying members have attained study support. But some of the members that began studying during The Bookend (Bokstøtten) continued to study.

The fact that Fontenehuset after The Bookend (Bokstøtten) has not been able to find a study support strategy does not mean that the studying members of the house have not got any study support. Hege who was employed as resource staff for the study unit has, after The Bookend (Bokstøtten) ended, worked as a generalist at the clubhouse. She does represent continuity for those of us who are studying. In addition to this I think that the years of having a study unit at the house, meant a breakthrough concerning the attitudes of both employees and non-studying members at the clubhouse toward students at the clubhouse. The clubhouse has also kept having the physical improvements, quiet rooms for reading and writing, which were introduced during the Bokstøtten project.

How have I personally experienced the clubhouse different policy toward students?

The first year I studied the house had no specific support to students. This made it very hard to study. Though members and staff were benevolent to studies they had little understanding of the fact that studying demands full awareness from the student. Sometimes I had the feeling that the others expected me to study after participating fully in the work orientated day.

It was also difficult to get understanding for silent rooms for reading and writing. I felt that some felt that I could use the facilities at the university for this.



But just as an ordinary member of a clubhouse needs the special supportive environment which the work orientated day can give, the student often have the same needs. This need for supportive environment, both for work and studies, can last for a short time or for a long time. This is often dependant on the age and the degree of mental disability, and how long the members have struggled with this.

For example a young well functioning person with a short episode of mental illness will often need a short time at the clubhouse before she or he can go back to work or studies. While a much older person who has been out of work for many years often will need much longer time. And some wish to work or study at the clubhouse for the rest of their carrier. Personally I think it is important that the clubhouse has a strategy that accommodates all these different needs.

The years we had an own study-unit at the house I consider to be the best period for the students at the house, both personally and for the students as a group. Being in an environment that knew what it was like to be a student, and where I could receive and give assistance. The fact that the members of the unit were numerous, and consisted of students of all ages was a good thing.

After The Bookend (Bokstøtten) ended I have continued to study. I feel that I am now established as a student and do not need as much help as I previously needed. But when I ask for help I get it. I feel that both members and employees take a lot of interest in my studies and are very supportive. But I sometimes feel that studies and participation in the work ordered day are not equally looked upon. For example when I applied for TC3 course one of the reasons given to me for not choosing me was that the candidate chosen was more active in the work ordered day.

I am not saying that this was a wrong decision; there could be a number of reasons for choosing the one chosen. But if the clubhouses want to equalize studies with activity in the work ordered day, studies must be looked upon as proper work, and the student must be given the same possibilities as the other members. It must not be used against anyone that they choose to improve their qualifications.

I am fully aware that the clubhouse-movement according to the clubhouse-standards today does not equalize study activities in the house with the work oriented day. But it is my personal hope that this one day should be the case.

As I see it there could be a conflict of interests between running a clubhouse and allowing members to study. Running a clubhouse is a lot of work. Finding members and staff to do all the different tasks is a constant struggle. Releasing



members to work with their studies, and at the same time releasing staff and other members to support and tutor studying members requires work that not benefit the house directly in the same manner as other kind of work can do.

This conflict has also an ideological aspect namely a conflict of interest between the solitary work of the student, and the main idea of the clubhouse which is rehabilitation through running a clubhouse members and staff together side by side.

But I personally think that this conflict is superficial. The main purpose of any clubhouse is to help the members to empower themselves to a meaningful life, and by doing so this also can be to the benefit of the house.

I will illustrate this through some examples. A member of the Oslo clubhouse work today as the director of the Kongsberg clubhouse. Another, former, member of the house is working as one of three staff members starting up a new clubhouse in Oslo. Thus they use both their education and their experience as former active members to make a major contribution to the clubhouse movement. Both these two members and others studying members, including myself, has done a lot of clubhouse-work alongside with studying-activities. And we have done lot of work which would have been impossible to do without the qualification study, and being a studying member of our clubhouse has given us.

Using me as an example, writing this essay would not be possible without my experiences as a studying member of the house. The time I have used writing this text I could have cleaned numerous toilets and floors. This would have been much more visible to staff and members of the house, and would perhaps earn me much more appreciation. But by writing this I hope to make a special contribution to the clubhouse community.

In order to integrate the studying members in the work-orientated day it is important that they make their work visible to the others in the clubhouse. For example when I am writing an essay for the university at my clubhouse it is important that I write this up at the white-board. Also when I need some assistance in studies from staff or other members I should do likewise. Doing these simple things alongside with communicating to others what I do at the university, which things create worries in my studies, what brings me joy, and so on?

In the nearly six years as a member my clubhouse has helped me reach a lot of very important personal goals. I have achieved getting a 20% paid job, I soon will have a bachelor of arts. I have been at conferences. I have cleaned floors, made food for others, I have written in the clubhouse-paper. I have presented



the house to two former prime ministers and to the crown-princess of Norway. And most important I have gained a lot of friends and have been given the opportunity to do a lot of work together with others to a cause I do truly believe in.

I am a grown up middle-aged man with certain self-confidence, with a good stable economy doing my studies in my own tempo. I study because it gives me much at a personal level, and not because I need it for work. I think it must be much harder for a young person with a history of mental problems to study, and who has a lot more of economical and time pressure on him/her. I have had a lot more resources to get along with my studies at my clubhouse. It is my hope that in the future such a young student can get the help from the clubhouses round the world which he or she needs to get an education. And alongside with this gets a bag full of good experiences of interacting with good hearted, caring, interesting and helpful fellow members of a clubhouse.

FACTS ABOUT THE BOOKEND (BOGSTØTTEN) FOUNTAIN HOUSE COPENHAGEN

THE COHESIVE FORCE AT THE BOOKEND (BOGSTØTTEN)

The Bookend

The Bookend is a study support unit in Fountain House in Copenhagen. It has existed since 1995. It is aimed at students within and outside the club house. The idea of the Bookend is to help students who have psychological difficulties.

The Bookend offers a nice study- and work environment and a possibility of gathering socially, too. There are rooms for reading and there are also computer rooms. Furthermore, there is a living room where you can read newspapers and have a cup of coffee during breaks. Additionally, there is a wide range of counselling offers and courses for example in study technique (information searching, reading strategies, writing processes and exam training). Relevant courses are established if there are enough students to attend them. Social offers are for example a monthly dinner, a monthly breakfast and sometimes other events that take place outside the house.

As a member of the Bookend you will be introduced to Fountain House and become a member.

The Bookend is run by a work group which consists of three staff members and a number of students who are not active studying at the moment. Participating in the work group enables students to have an active and structured workday and helps them to create a basis of re-establishing the possibility of returning to their studies.

The Cohesive Force at the Bookend*

A description of a study environment

By Julie Marie Isager

**See page 65.*

Julie Marie Isager is a pedagogic consultant at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Copenhagen University, and has a Master of Rhetoric Studies. For a number of years she has studied study techniques, learning and writing processes, and has been employed as a part-time teacher at the Bookend teaching these subjects.

Julie is neither a member of the Bookend nor of Fountain House.



Introduction

To finish an education is challenging - especially if you have mental difficulties. Since 1995 The Bookend has tried to create an environment for members with mental difficulties as a special programme for those who wanted to finish their education. Since then the Bookend has grown considerably in size. The programme works - as the numbers from 2007 show:

- Number of members affiliated: 120
- Applications per year: 130
- Daily attendance, average: 25
- 41 members have finished 85 exams
- From these 14 have finished their education.
From these, 9 at a university

These statistics from The Bookend still hold true.

This paper will try to describe why the programme works. Which *“tools”* and *“methods”* have been decisive for the members? The goal is not to describe the content of the programme in a formal way because there are many different kinds of counselling, committees, work groups etc.

Both among student-members and employees it is the common impression that it is not decisive which *“supplementary courses”* The Bookend can offer. It is not the number of courses in word processing and study technique which makes the difference, even though, of course, they have a useful function. The decisive factor is more palpable, an attitude toward structure and relations which is shown in an environment in which one feels comfortable - by some called the cohesive force - that which keeps all the parts together.

Why must a programme for students with mental difficulties be at Fountain House? Because our basic values at Fountain House stress the importance of *“the cohesive force”*! Since the 40's, the experience with people with mental difficulties, has shown that the structured workday with the focus on resources and the sense of community help people with mental difficulties. Students with mental difficulties therefore can be helped by the structured *“study workday”*. The focus is not on the differences between *“ordinary people”* and students, but on the fact that the students by and large have the same needs.

By moving the programme for students with mental difficulties away from the educational institutions we prevent that these students feel *“special/different”* by having to use the special premises for *“those with problems”*. Besides, the counselling opportunities at the educational institutions are limited.



This piece of writing is built on 5 important aspects of *“the cohesive force”*. These 5 aspects all are cohesive, mesh with and have an impact on each other. To differentiate them from each other is strictly speaking an artificial exercise, but nevertheless necessary in order to describe a totality consisting of different parts. The quotations in italics are from interviews with members from The Bookend; they are compiled and made anonymous.

Structure and the Workday

The Study Workday Is Challenging in Different Ways

In the eyes of many studying has great advantages because of the freedom to arrange your own time, the independence in choosing direction and the focus of tasks. But for many students - both with and without mental difficulties - study life offers a lot of challenges which take time, self-confidence and practice to manage.

Studying is demanding because the academic work in its nature takes place at the highest mental level. Clearheaded one has to understand connections between arguments, perspectives and dynamics, one has to be able to be critical, relate - and not the least you have to make a product. The responsibility for your own learning is a mantra that runs through the educational system: it is of no importance to the university whether you deliver your papers or not or whether you show up for class. Only the technical/economic aspects play a role. When the university reacts to the individual student, it is in a confronting way: you have not passed your exams and can therefore not continue your studies. You are just student number 152 out of 400.

It is Difficult to Separate Studying from Spare Time

You alone have the responsibility to succeed as a student. It takes work, discipline and planning. Because there are always more books to be read and more references to be checked, there is a real risk of getting stressed and forgetting to take time off for yourself. That hurts the body, makes it difficult to sleep and affects your ability to study in a negative way. The main thing is to learn how to separate study time from the spare time, which is so essential:

I've benefitted a great deal from being tired, having a headache and not being able to read, because then a staff worker stopped me and said that I should relax. As late as yesterday, I noticed that I wasn't able to study, then I started not to and though I haven't told her this, it's something that I've learned.



It is an active process for this member to find the balance between studying and spare time. To learn to get something done without pressuring yourself too much is a balancing act. It requires that you can “be allowed” to take time off and still believe that your work effort is sufficient. It helps allowing yourself to admit that you cannot always study 100 %.

I know the feeling of sitting in a reading room, thinking “wow, all the other students are concentrated” and getting a bad conscience over surfing on the internet. The freedom in The Bookend makes it possible to talk about surfing on the internet - everybody does it. In that way I overcome the notion that everybody else is so much more focused and disciplined than I am.

It takes time to learn to separate study time from spare time. But as it becomes possible to live a reasonable life when not studying, the feeling of wanting to study gets stronger. Perhaps you get the energy to study something even though it might not lead to a specific exam:

For instance in January when I didn't have any exams and I had no classes to go to, I studied something that I really wanted to study. It was relevant to my studies, but it wasn't concrete study materiel. Earlier when I studied - well, I didn't study day and night, it would be an exaggeration to say so, but in a way it consumed all my time, even at times when I wasn't really sitting studying, even then I always had it in the back of my mind that I had to study. - And at the same time I knew very well that it wasn't good for me to study at night, because then I get overexcited and then I have trouble sleeping. So I knew quite well that it wasn't good for me but it was difficult for me to say: “I mustn't do this.”

- But nevertheless it has helped here. Is it because the opening hours in the Bookend are shorter, or is it more a mental thing?

It's actually both. Partly because the opening hours are shorter and you have to be here earlier and then I can go home earlier and then I found out how nice it is to have the evenings off.

Partly it's a mental thing, because I was beginning to have anxiety attacks about the quality of my final paper. Was it ok? It was so extremely unpleasant that I thought that something drastic had to happen this time. I had to contain these feelings - which meant postponing them to this time of the day (The Bookend's opening time 8:30 - 16). I couldn't stand it the other way. I simply stood with my back against the wall.

Having a reason to get out of bed

Danish students are expected to study at home and are not offered study places at the educational institutions. Generally it is a great challenge to divide spare time and time for studying without moving yourself physically. Getting



offered a physical space to study carries a lot of advantages, especially in a framework that generate social relations and has a positive focus:

Now, I really need to get up in the morning because I have to study. I get out, get some exercise and some fresh air which maybe makes me able to study better in stead of my staying at home, picking up a book and going back to bed. (...) It's ingenious. (...) I need a clear cut structure, otherwise I can't get up.

The Bookend's physical location outside home and the opening hours implement itself in a structure which the members can use as rudimentary structure for their everyday life.

I need these "bars" around me, otherwise I get nothing done. My study life has changed, so now I sit down to study. Beforehand I thought: Pff, now I have to study and it never got further than that. I did displacement activities which I never even completed.

Working with this tight everyday structure can slowly be abandoned.

Focus on Resources instead of illness

The preliminary meeting - you do not talk about illness

A lot of the students with mental difficulties have been in contact with the established psychiatric system. Here they have been examined, evaluated and diagnosed in psychiatric terms. A member tells us how the meeting with these professionals was:

They have a certain way of looking at you and then they go: "Well...well...I can see that". You sit down and talk and talk and they ask about all the things that are already written down in your medical record. These are deeply personal things which I don't feel like telling strangers but which over time have turned into a habit doing. My mother doesn't even know.

The experience of laying bare your specific problems in front of the hospital staff directs the attention towards the differences between people with mental difficulties and 'normal' people. It might on the one hand give an explanation or a clarification, but on the other hand it becomes a kind of branding. The diagnosis' answer to 'what's wrong with me' is not a focal point at The Bookend. It is not a therapeutic programme but a member run clubhouse. And a diagnosis in itself is not the answer to how you as a student/member move on from an unsatisfactory situation.

The member's experience of the encounter with The Bookend is vastly different from the encounter with the psychiatric institution which can be seen in this conversation between a member ("I") and a staff worker ("you"):

You didn't have my medical record and you didn't ask about it. (...) Then there weren't a lot of things to be examined, (...) and "Yes, we can see that you suffer from a severe depression, like the prior examinations have shown..."; - and what am I supposed to do with that?

- So it was really the absence of all those aspects of the illness which made the difference?

Yes, it was an ordinary human being whom I was talking to. That it wasn't... And now I don't want to say that you're not professional..., but it was just two people sitting and talking in an ordinary fashion.

Practically, you do not ask question about diagnoses and about the course of the illness. Instead at The Bookend you attempt to find out if the member's expectations can be fulfilled within the framework and traditions of the organization. There are no fixed boundaries in beforehand which the member must stay within and live up to. In that sense you attempt to overcome the member's unwillingness to belong to the category of people with mental difficulties by not addressing the difficulties but the human being:

It was the spacious environment which changed my scepticism. I came here where no one had reservations towards me because of my mental difficulties - instead they addressed me as a person. They said: "Ah, it's nice to see you". It was nice to see me because they meant that it was nice to see me. Not because I got out of bed in the morning. It wasn't related to my mental difficulties but related to me.

The mental difficulties do not matter

There are no taboos regarding mental difficulties, on the other hand there are no expectations that you tell 'what's wrong with you'. It is up to the member to decide whether he feels like talking about his mental difficulties. Several have tried for a period of time to see themselves as a walking diagnosis and this way of looking at yourself gets turned upside down when you encounter the attitude at The Bookend.

Focus is on resources and on moving on, and difficulties linger as a (silent) common understanding which provides latitude. It feels natural being here and like with a lot of other things, you can talk about your difficulties if you need to without it becoming a big issue. No one becomes frightened if a member feels like sharing experiences or reactions. The member himself defines the boundaries and they are respected:



In a way I find it really nice not having to busy myself with it. When I started here, I thought that everything was very difficult. Now three months have

passed and I think that during those three months I've gained more access to my own resources because they slowly have been put to work.

Still the mental difficulties serve a purpose in the daily dynamics. In order to enter the door to The Bookend you have to accept a community with other members with mental difficulties. This means that you in beforehand can expect to meet like-minded people - the others are in the same situation. You need not put your history, your mood, yourself in the closet and act 'normal'.

You know how it is to feel really sick mentally, but you can also get into a situation where you think that "today I'm not the one feeling the worst".

I don't feel alone with my problem. I'm not the only person in the world with the difficulties I have - mental difficulties. And there are people feeling worse than me, actually.

This silent community which comes into existence because everyone is perceptive of the special circumstances they have in common, implies that the members at The Bookend are free of the competitive spirit which is widely spread in the educational establishments. This implies that the member gets an identity as a student rather than as a sick person.

Seeing others conquer their problems inspires hope

The members at The Bookend are at different places in relation to their mental difficulties and to their studies. Often someone has come further in his studies and feels mentally stronger. As a newly started or as a member insecure about your future you meet others, who have been through rough periods in their lives, and yet have become successful:

Also seeing the students who have been working at their final paper for four years finish that means something. You feel that people have a history being here. I think that a person like..., with her you don't even sense that she has had mental difficulties. You don't even sense that she's been through rough times. She probably did and it's probably a long time ago. The fact is that she is writing her final paper and she is functioning in a group. The fact that some people come here who, you can feel, have had a rough time makes me think: Then I can finish my studies too.

Witnessing success among the members emphasizes that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Constructive suggestions is not an attempt to be domineering

A member describes the meeting at a café arrangement as part of the treatment at a psychiatric hospital. Here you were supposed to act in a specific way as you do in cafés - and whether you really wanted to be present in the social space, did not matter:

Everything was arranged: "This is the way you need to behave. This is what you have to do to get out into the real world". I was always the patient. Always the depressive patient who needed to be treated accordingly.

The control over one's own life was limited because a higher authority had the expertise to make the choices for when 'the patient' behaved well enough to be declared cured. Afterwards it can be hard to maintain the balance between keeping your right to decide on your own and receiving help and good advice from others.

[There is a realization in] that someone else but me knows what's good for me without it being an attempt to decide on my behalf. Beforehand [before my time in The Bookend] I experienced every suggestion from others as an attempt to take control over me which meant that I didn't involve others in my decisions until they were made.

It takes confidence to make use of other people's good advice. The member now experiences something positive and constructive in the suggestions instead of an attempt to take control.

Discovering and Developing Qualifications

instead of "Removing Flaws"

As a supplement to every day life as a studying member, The Bookend has a workgroup which takes care of different tasks related to the operation of the clubhouse including the Bookend. Here you can take part to a greater or lesser degree:

What I got out of being part of the work group, was I wouldn't say that I learned new things, but I discovered things, potentials, opportunities, I had, which I could choose to pursue if I wanted to.

That is the way a member describes how she saw potentials in herself which otherwise would not have become an object of attention. It is about gaining access to your resources or to rediscover them and experience that they are appreciated by others.



I learned to have these introductory meetings and gained some experience with what to ask, how to handle people that are more or less falling apart because of their situation. Over time I started seeking out these situations myself. Because I thought: this is great. I liked it a lot. Anyways, I discovered competences I didn't know that I possessed and could put to use.

The road to discovering and developing one's own abilities usually moves from a very concrete level towards the more abstract one. Through a concrete activity you are able to achieve realization on more abstract levels. Here is a conversation between a member and a staff worker:

I see a psychologist. It's been like this: "I can't study...", and then he goes: "It's because your self esteem is low". And then: "Is that right. What can I do?". Here at The Bookend I have received specific study technique papers(...) - In this way you increase your self esteem by learning a new study technique? - Yes, I actually think so.

Even though, in this specific case it is the concrete reading exercise which triggers an improved self esteem, the essential is not to offer the student a course in reading technique. The exercise is only a means. The essential is the following evaluating dialogue which puts the specific activity into perspective: "How did it go? Well, it was a bit challenging... But you tried! That's good enough!". Focusing on the positive outcome, on the progress is important:

Both members have been supportive, but to a high degree, when I've been way out, also one of the counsellors (staff workers) could say: "All right, let's sit down for a talk RIGHT NOW in order for you to get back on the right track - to focus on something positive or constructive: Couldn't you do like this?" It's been an enormous help (...). I suddenly looked at my paper differently. I went home with a feeling that things were going to be fine (...) and still get up in the morning and keep working. This is a huge change for me.

The Balanced Encounter

Equality between staff worker and member

A staff worker believes that one of the most important aspects is that you as a member, from the first instance you set foot in the door, must experience the sense of equality. Practically speaking, it means that you will be greeted, asked after. It is an unwritten rule that everyone will greet new members at the Bookend. One member finds that you get raised into this culture because it is the one you meet - "that's just the way it is":



What is so special about coming here, is that it's not like a doctor's appointment. You are a human being as well, not just one who comes out of the mass production line and get met with a distant attitude. Here (at The Bookend) humanity really exists as opposed to a 800 dkr. per hour conversation with a psychologist or a 10 min. consultation at the doctor's. (...) Also, at a hospitalization - there is no personal relationship. (...) It's a huge difference from being a patient, client or whatever you are - here you have a name. You are a human being with a problem, but you are also a student.

The lack of 'professional distance', which separates The Bookend, from psychiatric treatment/ therapy springs out of the relationship between staff workers and members and the common daily routines. A real workplace has been established.

I really don't feel institutionalized. (...) Here I don't get the feeling of sitting on the other side of the desk, which I've experienced in other places. In those places there were persons of authority, but not in a negative sense. (...) You seem like whole people.

Even the psychologist I saw for many years and was very fond of - I knew nothing about her. You could say that she didn't offer a part of herself. (...) It was okay but somehow it created a distance between us. This is of importance. Here the boundaries are more fluid.

A staff worker uses the expression "appropriate self-disclosure" about how you as an employee must pay attention to the balance between being personal and private. When a staff worker tells something about himself a relation is created which is more 'common' than a distanced professional one. The relation is mutually respectful.

Cooperation and social contact

It is difficult to maintain contact with your fellow students at your educational institution

Study environments are often characterised by competitiveness. You have to be clever, smart, quick and attractive. The problems other students have are often not visible at lectures and in class and it is natural to feel different - you are the one having mental difficulties.

I never really knew what to talk to them about. I felt inferior compared to them because I was behind, I have been ill and I have my story.



And even if you actually maintain relations with your fellow students who do not have mental difficulties like you, there are still things that are different and need to be dealt with.

I see now that I have hidden many things along the way, at times when I sat unable to concentrate until 7 p.m. like the other students and didn't learn from my efforts. (...) I have experienced that they didn't have the same problems and they haven't been a part of finding solutions to the study technique problems that I had to face.

You can practice human contact

As a consequence of feeling different due to your mental difficulties it takes something extra to be sociable and meet new people. If you are a vulnerable student it takes more time to build human contact:

I got the opportunity to practice without demands being made and suddenly I found myself in a non-committal social context in which I could be present without having to say a whole lot. There was room to be the one, I was...

Contact arises - if given time:

Sooner or later you'll say "hi" or "could you pass me the tea?" Then you have become part of a social interaction. This is probably a typical way of starting out, though different people do it at their pace.

Slowly you build up a network which removes the feeling of being special or different. The mental difficulties lay the foundation or the starting point for the relations but slowly other things take over. A lot of members are pleased sharing their study with others. They see the interdisciplinary communication as a resource. It might help them realize that perspectives from other studies on a common theme is a useful contribution to their general understanding.

K has given suggestions to some not too theoretical literature on interviewing, which I would never have found myself. The fact that you can just talk about your studies. Suddenly your studies become substantial. They become real.

The social relations, the professional exchange and cooperation remove the focus away from diagnoses and mental illness and support the important functions that all human beings need:

If I hadn't had The Bookend, I would have felt extremely lonely. There is no doubt about that. Then I'm not even sure that I would have continued studying.



Availability

The members decide how often they want

to make use of The Bookend

The Bookend is a flexible programme. There is room for individual progress. The members will not be met with specific demands of attendance. You can come and go as you please even at the beginning. This underlines the voluntariness and the decision to accept to join The Bookend is yours:

You told me that I could try joining The Bookend. Just for lunch and such. I think I came by like that for two to three weeks. Just a bit before lunch - and then for lunch and just about that time. Just to feel comfortable about it all. Just to kind of getting to know people.

The Bookend is in that regard easily accessible because there is no obligatory attendance in order “to keep your spot” - which at times is somewhat of a surprise to the members. Even though you have been away for a long time the life term membership assures that you are always welcome to return.

The workgroup can supplement studying

The Bookend is a place to come even when you are not actively studying. There can be many reasons for a having period without study activity. This does not mean that you have to cut off your relations with this place. Members at The Bookend have different reasons for not studying for a period of time or only for a limited time per day. Still, you can make use of the Bookend by joining the workgroup instead of having a study place.

The workgroup, apart from the staff workers, always consists of a number of members who are taking or partially taking a break from their studies. All conceivable combinations of studying and at the same time being part of the workgroup are possible, agreed upon individually, as well as full time study or workgroup obligations. In that sense the workgroup functions both as an activity of support in itself and as a service body!

My study group dissolved and we ended up mentally and figuratively tossing things at each other. So I gave up taking my exam and my house of cards collapsed. (...) I was in the workgroup full time for the next 6 months - and then I returned to my studies part time and then full time and now I'm in the process of finding a job.

The workgroup functioned as a kind of anchor point for this member, a safety net, which meant that her daily life at The Bookend was not that of being an ac-



tive student, but being part of the workgroup resulted in her returning to her studies after six months, instead of actually quitting all together.

You use each other, not only the staff workers

There are three staff workers at The Bookend. With their wide professional foundation, specific qualifications and experiences, they are able to offer attractive counselling which the members appreciate as an opportunity. With the average of a daily attendance of 25 members, they cannot always be available. This implies that the responsibility for a lot of activities gets transferred from the staff workers to the members - you use each other. This applies to practical matters as well as to matters like daily contact, social interaction, greetings like *"how are you doing?"* and exchange of experiences: *"In a similar situation, I handled it like..."* In this way The Bookend becomes the foundation for the individual to get access to contact and support from staff workers and like-minded people. At the same time you can pass on your own experiences, 'become somebody for someone' and experience that you become the person helping change the perspective for someone else.

A lot of counselling sessions take place or have their starting point in the open setting meaning that often other members get involved. Sometimes the members take over the counselling of other members. This serves a purpose for both the counsellor and the one receiving counselling because it supports the sense of equality, responsibility and interest in each other. Still, as described earlier, there is great understanding in keeping the balance between sharing and respecting each other's boundaries.

Summary

This paper has attempted to describe 'the cohesive force'; a culture which through more specific activities supports the development of the members. The Bookend works because we have succeeded in creating an environment where students with mental difficulties feel like spending their time, because they both feel attracted to and benefit from the variety of opportunities. They get a chance to work with structure and stability, experience the sense of community and latitude, get support and challenges without being treated as sick and inferior. The mental difficulties are not treated as an essential part of the person. They are on the other hand not ignored, they are accepted without being focused on. The mental difficulties are an integral part of the member's history, elements, which must be accepted but put in the right perspective.

The competences you get a chance to develop are very basic: contact with other human beings and a constructive and active approach towards studying/work and constantly maintaining the basic belief that you will succeed - success stories show the way - despite what might seem poor odds.



The concept of The Bookend has been developed over many years as a cooperation between members and staff workers. The fact that the Bookend is run by and developing by members and staff workers, creates a feeling of ownership and in this way the basic values of the clubhouse can be realized. It has been (and is still) a success having created a programme that makes the members/students (re)gain their self esteem and drive - despite all obstacles.

The material used in the paper 'The Cohesive Force' derives from the following study:

Most Significant Change

- A qualitative study on the significance of "Bogstøtten" for the members

A reason why the measure of quality within "Bogstøtten" is important, is to open up the world behind the numbers.

The MSC-project uses the members own words to describe how "Bogstøtten" matters and the difference "Bogstøtten" makes for the members' motivation and ability to study, write papers, take exams and eventually graduate. The reason why we need the members' own words is that we feel the numbers from the annual statistics kept by "Bogstøtten", does not give a satisfactory picture of the quality of the effect and the benefit of the "Bogstøtten" work towards the members.

The annual statistics show the numbers of members, new and old, how many exams were taken and grades achieved, how many members completed their education, moved on to full time work, the numbers of individual counselling-sessions and many other facts about "Bogstøtten" and its activities. These statistics are used in the documentation necessary to maintain funding and plan ahead.

Many of the activities at "Bogstøtten" are not in the same way statistically measurable, but can be just as important for the members. This might be the breakfast every second week, casual conversations in a sofa during a break from studying, or just getting the feeling of being welcome no matter ones mood, or as one of the members puts it: *'This place gives me the feeling that it is important that I am here. I know I just sit at my desk reading and writing most of the day, chat with others at lunch and during breaks, but still, it feels like I am important just doing that and being here. And that feels good.'*

The study consists of a series of interviews with members made by staff and members together, using the 'Most Significance Change' (MSC) technique,



a means of participatory impact monitoring that involves collecting and 'systematic participatory interpreting' stories of change. This method was originally developed in 1993 by Rick Davies and used by NGO in developmental work, but has since then been widely used in many other areas when a qualitative approach is needed. Its primary purpose is to facilitate program improvement by focusing the direction of work towards explicitly valued directions and away from less valued directions. We have used the method as dialogical, story-based interviews.

The interviews - 9 in all - have been edited and made anonymous in a little publication called *"Significant Changes"*. We have started to analyse the material and what it tells us.

The interviews and our subsequent work on them have opened up for a very giving and constructive reflection on the many elements of 'Bogstøtten' and why and how 'Bogstøtten' works.

MEMBERS' PROGRESS INTERVIEW FORM

(FOUNTAIN HOUSE, COPENHAGEN)

Members' Progress Interview

The interview is an offer to members of Fountain House every third month.

Duration 1 hour

Formalities

Name:

Unit:

Member of staff:

Member from the unit:

Date:

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The purpose of the MPI is

- To talk about your life in the house and your wishes concerning the use of the house.
- To help you in the process of uncovering your wishes and motivation - the foundation that will help you find a direction.
- To support you to actually take the time to talk about wishes/purposes.
- To focus on descriptions of your daily life (as it is now and in 3 months).
- To make room for an awareness of your present situation and wishes, and to help you make plans based on this awareness.
- To talk about results/learning processes/possible plans.
- To put down what you have learned/acquired.
- To sum up your plans for the coming period.

What characterises a good Members' Progress interview?

- It has a structure and a time framework. The various points for consideration must be talked through and rounded off within the time framework. If necessary, you may increase the amount of time.



- It provides a personal space and a room for a trusting conversation.
- It is characterized by attentive listening, openness, involvement, a calm atmosphere and plenty of time.
- Both parties should prepare themselves in advance so that they are able to approach the interview with a necessary readiness.
- It is the person who should be in focus - not the form.
- The starting point is what is on the member's mind - issues that take up energy in his/her daily life.
- The pivotal point is the working day and the social context in Fountain House.
- The interview must be rounded off properly.

Introduction to how to use the form

It is important to underline that the form is meant to be used by the member. The form is a tool that supports the interview and works as a kind of memorandum.

It is not the point that certain questions must be answered. The point is that selected points and insights are kept visible by being put on record.

Together with the form you will find a guide to be used as inspiration for the conversation.

The form will be kept on file in the unit.

The interview takes its starting point in a 'here and now' situation and focuses on perspective and direction for the coming period.



MPI Form

Date:

1. Introductory notes: What is your situation now? /What issues take up your time? And what issues are no longer so much in focus?

2. Status - take your starting point in the last MPI

3. In which direction do you want to go? /Goals and Plans/Visions?/Dreams?



4. How? What will help you?/What kind of support do you need?/Who takes care of what?/Tools?/Agreements?/Working hours?/Pre-rehabilitation?/.....

How often do you want to come to Fountain House?

	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>
<i>Hours</i>					

5. Is there anything you need to talk about that we haven't talked about yet? What should your unit know about your thoughts, your objectives/ goals and plans for the coming weeks/months?/Rounding off/How was the interview?

New date for the front page:



Guide to the MPI

The subjects below should be understood as an uncompleted list of inspiration. The list is arbitrary and we encourage you to start off with the subject you find the most relevant. For some people it could be specific issues like working hours; for others the issues are more abstract such as talking about challenges or the like.

Regarding no. 2: "Status"

SINCE LAST CONVERSATION

- the work in the unit/ TE/ labour market
- training/ education/ courses/ classes
- meetings/ committees
- influence on/ in the house
- breaks
- working hours/ attendance
- agreements/ stability
- suitable challenges/ obstacles/ what is difficult
- progress since last conversation.
- victories/ conquests/ fulfilled expectations
- changes/ the process/ dynamics
- pre-rehabilitation/ rehabilitation
- housing situation
- contact with social worker
- private economy
- treatment

WELL-BEING

- relations to members/ users/ staff members
- contact with members in and outside the clubhouse
- understanding and confidence
- relations with nearest family
- network/ friends
- motivation
- health/ healthiness/ abuse/ hygiene

Regarding no. 3: "In Which Direction....."

- work in the unit./ TE/ labour market
- 'resource profile'
- pre-rehabilitation/ rehabilitation
- contact to social worker etc.



- education
- (new) challenges
- changes - concerning what areas?
- working hours
- housing situation
- agreements
- private economy
- priorities

STUDY SUPPORT LEAFLET

(STUDIESTØTTEHEFTE - FONTENEHUSET, OSLO)

Mastering studies

MASTERING / COPING WITH / YOUR STUDIES

As a result of the mastering studies class, which was held at the Fountain House of Oslo, in the autumn of 2005 we have developed this document. The class was held by Marianne Klever Ness at the Student Counseling office at Østfold University College. We would like to give some good advice and tips on how to create a more rewarding student period.

In order to cope with school and studies improvement can be achieved by focusing on the following:

- Self instruction - how to enhance your self esteem - think positively and not negatively.
- Memory.
- Concentration.
- Strategies on how to continue to work when it seems to difficult.

Over the next pages we have collected some information and tips on how to master the studies and the student days in a better way. Some may be familiar to you and some might be new. To get new skills it is important to take time to read and reflect over the advice. There are several exercises that can make your knowledge of your student habits better. Hopefully after you have gone through the material you will get a deeper insight on what you should work with to achieve more. It is only a start to read through this. Study techniques and techniques for mastering must be worked on continuously by us all.

Exercise 1: Fill out the questionnaire on the following pages.

The goal of this questionnaire is to get familiar with oneself as a learning individual!



Study habits, study technique and reading technique

	Yes	?	No
1. Do you often study at your desk?	—	—	—
2. Are you disturbed by sound or other things when you are studying?	—	—	—
3. Do you listen to the radio or other sources while studying?	—	—	—
4. Is the light source right where you are studying?	—	—	—
5. Are all the books you have on the subject or subjects placed in front of you or placed so you can see them while studying?	—	—	—
6. Have you made sure that you get enough sleep when you are studying?	—	—	—
7. Do you have a good working position while studying?	—	—	—
8. Do you find concentration easy?	—	—	—
9. Do you have an overview of the whole syllabus, and do you know how it is founded?	—	—	—
10. Do you plan ahead of how and what to study?	—	—	—
11. Do you keep up with your plans?	—	—	—
12. Do you work more than 1-2 hours without break?	—	—	—
13. Do you work at times according to a planned weekly schedule?	—	—	—
14. Do you plan how to work through the most important items?	—	—	—
15. When you study, do you read out loud or in silence?	—	—	—
16. When you want to understand the main content in a book or article, do you read every single word?	—	—	—



	Yes	?	No
17. When there are words you do not know the meaning of, do you look them up?	—	—	—
18. Do you have a good overlook of the literature before you start to read?	—	—	—
19. Do you read the content list thoroughly?	—	—	—
20. Do you read through the text rapidly before you read more thoroughly?	—	—	—
21. Do you hear (examine) yourself?	—	—	—
22. When you read, do you systematize the material by underlining?	—	—	—
23. Do you write head words (cues) in the margin?	—	—	—
24. Do you take notes as you read?	—	—	—
25. Do you use a special technique for making notes?	—	—	—
26. Are your notes in an order?	—	—	—
27. Do you manage to keep your notes to the most important?	—	—	—
28. Do you read through the text for a second time within 24 hours after you read it the first time?	—	—	—
29. Do you examine yourself / repeat in different ways?	—	—	—
30. Have you been to a tutor / study counsellor?	—	—	—
31. Do you make sure to take some time off every day?	—	—	—
32. Do you have a healthy diet?	—	—	—
33. Do you spend some time for relaxation and doing breathing exercises every day?	—	—	—
34. Do you work out /exercise every week? (go for a walk, swim, run, etc.)	—	—	—



Exercise 2: When you have answered all the question, point out two you are satisfied with, and two you want to do differently. The aim is that by observing yourself you can find out what works well and if there are things you want to change. Sometimes, small changes can make a big difference! It is the person that finds something challenging that has the answer and can find a strategy that leads to a larger degree of mastering.

Learning/ accomplishing knowledge:

"The total learning" meaning that learning is a continuing process which happens all the time. It is necessary that new knowledge is built up on old knowledge. We must therefore remember and revive what we knew from before. All previous knowledge is important for new achievements.

Meta-cognition: Reflecting / Thinking about your own thinking.

It is important to think about and be aware of how we accomplish knowledge and how we remember things, because this varies from person to person.

Reading

Reading is a skill which can regress in time if not practiced enough. By keeping on reading one has the possibility to improve oneself. If you have troubles understanding while reading the solution is to keep on reading! Things will get better! You can read anything in the target language and you will experience that you will read faster and faster after a while. Each of us develops their own reading techniques. Reading is an individual process. It is important to begin by reading things you like/are interested in for keeping your motivation alive. Make reading enjoyable. Think about how you are reading when reading magazines, user instructions, fiction or specialist literature (technical, scientific etc). Specialist literature demands more concentration and abstract thinking and understanding. One has to ask oneself critical questions and make sure that he /she understands what the text conveys / communicates.

The heart during reading = get ready to start reading

- Get familiar with the book (get an overall view of the literature).
What is it about?
- Use the table of contents of the book. Ask yourself questions and reflect upon them. Old knowledge might get alive!
- Get familiar with the book, look through it!

Your heart will beat harder when you start reading, but this is not dangerous! Just go on!



Some useful reading suggestions:

Before:

- Make sure to get an overall view over the literature you need for an exam/syllabus.
- Get an overall view over the book /article you are going to read.
Find out how it is built up:
 - *Is there a table of contents?*
 - *Is there an appendix at the end of the book?*
 - *Are there many pictures / illustrations? What is their significance?*
- Find out what the main issue /theme you need to concentrate on is:
 - *Do you need to read the whole book? / Is the whole book requested for the exam / paper you are going to prepare?*
 - *Are all the chapters important?*
 - *Can you collect the same information from other places?*
(For example from another books).
- What kind of expectations do you have towards what you are going to read? What more do you know about the issue from before?
 - *Remember that relevant knowledge is not only accomplished from books or taught in schools. There are many things we learn from other places. Try to get in touch with and use this knowledge as well.*
- Make a realistic plan of reading:
 - *Think about what, how and when you are going to read.*
 - *The overall view you have got over the reading material will help you structure your reading.*
 - *Think realistically about your physical and mental resources and limitations (health, family situation, living conditions, prior knowledge you might have about the issue and so on).*

While reading:

- *It might be useful to first read fast through the chapter to get an overall view and sort out your expectations. It is important to read in your own speed (take into considerations the difficulty of the text, your own study technique etc).*
- *Stop for a dialog and reflection (inner and outer). You must know whether and when the meaning will slip.*
- *What you have not understood should be made clear by help from dictionaries, from others or decide to continue waiting for*



an explanation this will be given in the previous text or in the context.

- Notice titles and footnotes.

- Spend time on studying figures and tables, test the context verbally.

After:

- *Repetition - it is VERY IMPORTANT and it should not be a long time between reading and repetition.*
- *Repeat the essence of what you have read with your own words, speak out loud with yourself or others, if possible make it visual.*
- *We repeat when we use what we have read, look through notes, speak about it or read it all over again.*

NOTES:

When you read critically it is important to rephrase what you read into your own words. Can it work with a marker pen? It can often pick out the most essential points. Here are two techniques worth testing:

- **Technique 1:** The title gives you some information about the content, what the chapter is about. Try to give a title to each paragraph, so you understand the essence of the paragraph. In this way you will be more concentrated while reading. It is therefore easier to remember and a good tool for repetition.
- **Technique 2:** Use notes (for example post-it notes). Make notices for each page you read, so you have a good tool when repeating.

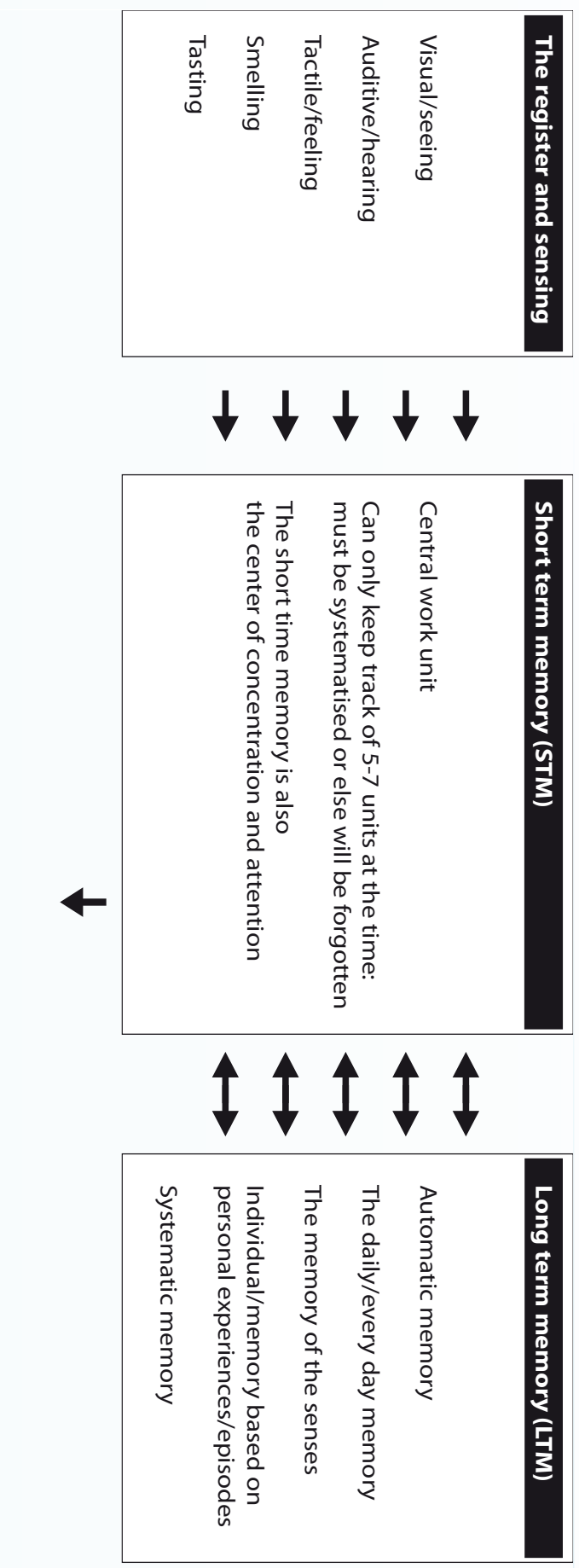
Memorizing

Two totally different ways of memorizing:

- The brains natural way of remembering / achieving knowledge: a primitive and immediate memory which is based on a "photographic" way of memorizing.
- A deeper and more permanent way of memorizing / achieving knowledge based on active use of techniques which systemize the knowledge by creating categories and logical connections.

=> The brains natural way of photographing the information
+ active use of tools of systemizing the knowledge
= Memorizing / accomplishing knowledge

HOW IS THE BRAIN DEALING WITH NEW INFORMATION:





MEMORY TIME ASPECT:

We have three parts or memory: the short-term sensation memory, the short-term memory (STM) and the long-term memory (LTM)

1. When something happens, the memory transports what is perceived from sense to the brain. Here the senses stop for some seconds.
2. They disregard them or send them to the brain's central information -hippocampus. In the hippocampus the memory is stored approximately one year as a short-term memory.
3. After this period either the memory is deleted or the hippocampus sees to that it is stored as a long-term memory and moves it to the brain.

LONG-TERM MEMORY

can be divided into several different processes:

1. **PERSONAL MEMORY** (Episodic memory) - Here episodes and happenings which we have been a part of are stored, and we can decide time and place for them. Emotions play a great role. When it affects us strongly then the production of a stress hormone will rise. This will be the signal to the brain whether to store the episode or not.
2. **THE KNOWLEDGE MEMORY** (SEMANTIC MEMORY) - comprises the general knowledge we have stored in your brain. Here we will find what we have achieved in school and another general knowledge we have got. This is knowledge which generally does not affect our emotions (kind of objective knowledge).
3. **THE AUTOMATIC MEMORY** - is important for all the movements we are able to do: going, swimming, cycling and so on are activities we do almost automatically. We just do it, without thinking too much about the learning situation when we accomplished this kind of knowledge.
4. **THE EVERYDAY MEMORY** - we use it when we identify things in our every-day life and environment, for example different tools and objects we use in our everyday life. For example when we see a bicycle we know instantly what it is. This type of memory is also automatic and contains plenty of very important knowledge.
5. **THE MEMORY OF THE SENSES** - stores memories connected to our perceptions: smells, sounds, things we have seen and so on. This type of memory helps us make associations and connections with things and experiences of our senses we have from before. This is also a type of automatic memory, a memory which appears when we for example feel a smell we have smelled before etc.



THE CURVE OF FORGETTING:

- Without repetition we forget about 75 % of what we have read after 24 hours.
- With one repetition we remember about 50 % of what we have tried to accomplish for about a month.
- With two repetitions we recall 75 % of what we have learnt after one month.
- Use 60% of your time for reading and 40% for repeating, so you will be able to remember about 30% more.
- We get almost all the information through our eyes (about 90%).
- Only 10-30% of the words in a text are important for the understanding of the text.

Exercise 3: Here is a story about 10 different men. Use a few minutes to read through it and try to remember what it is told about them.

The tall man had a tie.
The short man had a hat.
The kind man bought some milk.
The young man ate an apple.
The old man drove a car.
The noisy man liked cats.
The strange man made some coffee.
The unknown man had a bike.
The quite man bought some CD's.
The bald man sold potatoes.

Which technique did you use to remember the details? Are there other techniques which. We remember through visualising (seeing through images), making associations (create a story) or rationalising (picking up only the essence of a text so that we need to keep in mind and memorize only that).

Exercise 4: Write your name with the hand you normally write with. After that, write your name with the other hand. Notice the difference in difficulty level! We are by nature either left-handed or right-handed. During this task, we will have to repeat writing with the other hand (train up this skill). It is possible to train up the other hand so that we can achieve high performance level.

SELF INSTRUCTION / SELF EDUCATION

We all have both positive and negative experiences which become a part of us, of who we are. We often tend to focus on the negative experiences. We often tend to think that things are going to go wrong instead of having the positive expectations to one situation. It is important to remember that we have the possibility to choose having a positive focus and keeping it. How we choose



to meet new challenges will have great importance for how we will cope with them. We can choose to pick up the good experiences and the times we managed what we did from our memory.

Exercise 5: Use a minute to think about and write down some of the good histories keep your memory. A history about you managing a situation. What did you do in that specific situation which could be the key to your success? Analyze the situation carefully. Is this an experience you could use in the situation you are in now? You have a possibility to train up your capacity to keep a positive focus. What you hold focus on and train on will improve. It is a good idea to combine this with relaxation techniques. If you are relaxed you'll manage to keep a positive focus.

MENTAL FOCUS:

Exercise 6: Draw a line, a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is a miserable student and 10 is the Super student. Place yourself on the scale.

Miserable student												Super student
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Where on the scale do you have to be to be a good student according to your view?
2. What are you doing differently when you consider yourself to be good enough?
3. How can you manage to get one step closer to this goal? What are you doing differently then?

Exercise 7: Make another scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is unmotivated and 10 is highly motivated. Place yourself according to how motivated you are to be a better student.

Unmotivated												Motivate
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

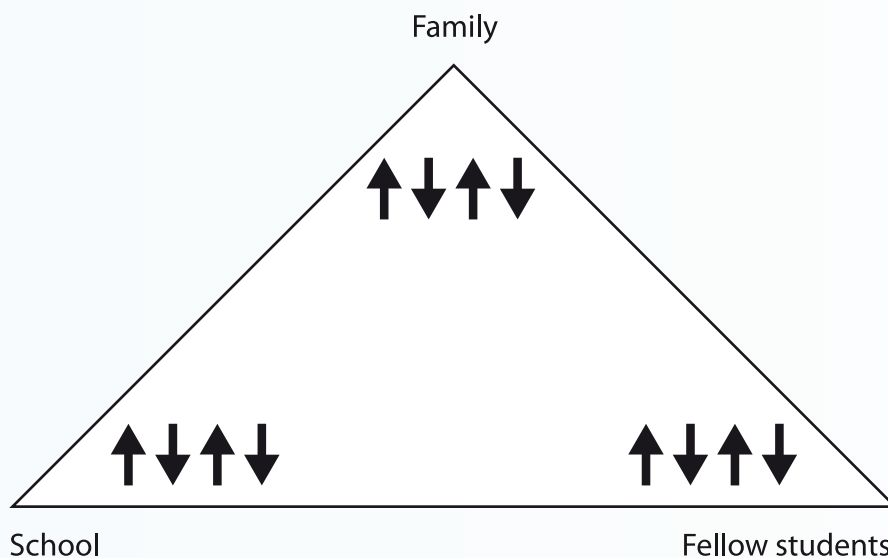
Ask yourself this question:

1. How low on the scale can you go (how little can you do) for it to still be good enough for you?



It is important to have as a focus that is should be good enough! Sometimes there is a mismatch between your expectations and the university/colleges. Everyone does not have the capacity to live up to the expectations from the university/college. It is important that we make our own realistic goals in order to be able to follow our pace. Sometimes the set date for the exam is not the right timing for me. Maybe one should look at the coming exam as a trial exam and rather see the exam in the following semester as the real one.

THE TRIANGLE OF EXPECTATIONS (David Kvebekk)



We all have to make some limits to how much other can expect of you. However, a lot of students experience that the highest expectations comes from themselves. Meaning, we have to do a job. Sometimes we also think others have other expectations to us than they have.

Affirmation

Your inner critic - affirmation is a way having a dialogue with you inner critic. We have to repeat until we believe it! For example:
I am so glad to have become a better student. I am so happy that I am a good enough student.

Make a sentence that is your. The sentence has to contain I. It has to contain feelings. And must not contain any negative words. The sentence should be repeated often. It is important to give yourself self acknowledgement (recognition). Put a note on your fridge, on the mirror...



The importance of having a network

Exercise 8: Make a map of your network: counsellors, fellow students, family, friends, etc. You need a group of people that believe in you and think you can do it.

People that believe in me:

When you cannot sleep

If you struggle sleeping at night - get up and write down all your worries. Next day you can go through them and decide what needs to be solved now and what can wait till next month, next year, in ten years.

Step 1; write down all your worries.

Step 2; sort them and make a plan to how and when the different worries can be solved and who might help you.

Planning

Make a plan for reading that can work as a tool. Use the example on the next page. You can use different colours for different activities. For example blue for lectures, pink for regular commitments, green for time with the family, yellow for things you enjoy a lot. We need a plan to know when to do things - and to make time for both work and spare time.



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

