

# English for Specific Purposes

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Course : English for Specific Purposes (English 1)

Coefficient : 01

Level : First-year Preparatory Cycle

1.0 May 2024



*NHSM -Sidi Abdellah-*

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# Objectifs

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At the end of this whole ESP course, first-year preparatory-cycle students at NHSM will be able to:

- **Understand** study skills and their importance.
- **Recognize** the multiplicity of learning styles and preferences.
- **Outline** the different ways of overcoming academic obstacles.
- **Design** a comprehensive study plan that integrates study skills, personal learning styles and preferences, and strategies to overcome obstacles and cultivate a growth mindset.

# Chapter Three : Overcoming Obstacles and Developing Effective Study Skills

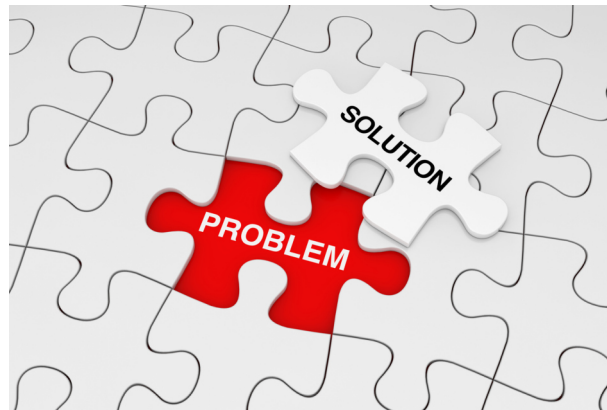


Figure 7 : There Is a Solution to Every Problem

Navigating academic challenges requires more than just knowledge—it demands the development of effective study skills. In this section, we will delve into **identifying barriers to success**, and **exploring strategies for overcoming them** while honing essential study skills. By equipping themselves with these tools, students can conquer academic hurdles and pave the way for success in their educational journey.

## 1. The Specific Objectives of This Chapter

At the end of this third chapter, students will be able to:

- List common barriers to academic success.
- Identify strategies to overcome learning obstacles.
- Demonstrate their understanding of the growth mindset in learning.

## 2. Strategies for Overcoming Obstacles

### • Identifying Barriers to Success:

Students often encounter various barriers that impede their academic success. These challenges can manifest in different forms, such as time management issues, difficulties in understanding complex concepts, or struggling to stay motivated. One common obstacle is procrastination, where students delay tasks until the last minute, leading to rushed and incomplete work. Additionally, ineffective study habits, like passive reading or cramming, can hinder comprehension and retention of course material. Moreover, external factors such as personal obligations, financial constraints, or health issues can further complicate students' ability to focus on their studies.

To overcome these barriers, students can employ various strategies to enhance their academic performance and achieve their goals. Implementing effective time management techniques, such as creating schedules, setting realistic deadlines, and prioritizing tasks, can help students allocate their time more efficiently and reduce procrastination. Moreover, adopting active learning strategies, such as summarizing, self-testing, and engaging in discussions, can enhance comprehension and retention of course material. Seeking clarification from instructors, attending study groups, or utilizing online resources are also valuable strategies for overcoming challenges and mastering difficult concepts.

- **Developing Resilience:**



“**Resilience** is the quality of being able to withstand times of difficulty or change in such ways that you can either cope reasonably at the time or bounce back afterwards. It isn't that you never feel stressed, disappointed or out of your depth: it is about developing sufficient inner resources to get through and to keep going. There will be times as a student when resilience will be of real benefit.” (Cottrel, 2013, p. 22\*).

Building **resilience** is essential for students to navigate the inevitable setbacks and challenges they encounter during their academic journey. Resilience enables students to **bounce back from failures, setbacks, and disappointments**, and continue striving towards their goals with **determination and perseverance**. One key aspect of developing resilience is cultivating a growth mindset, where students view challenges as opportunities for growth and learning, rather than insurmountable obstacles. By reframing setbacks as learning experiences and focusing on their ability to overcome adversity, students can build resilience and develop a sense of optimism and perseverance. Additionally, practicing self-care and stress management techniques can help students cope with the demands of academic life and maintain their well-being in the face of challenges. This may include prioritizing physical health through regular exercise, adequate sleep, and healthy eating habits, as well as incorporating mindfulness and relaxation exercises into their daily routine. **Seeking support** from friends, family, or mental health professionals can also be beneficial in developing resilience and coping with academic stressors.

- **Seeking Support Networks:**



“Seeking academic help has a positive impact on students' ability to handle challenges, leading to improved academic success. As the academic landscape becomes more competitive, the importance of students seeking and using academic support is widely recognized for enhancing their learning experience and achievements.” (Li et al., 2023, p. 1\*)

As per the quote above, utilizing **support networks** is essential for students to overcome challenges and thrive academically. **Peer groups, mentors, and academic resources** can provide valuable guidance, encouragement, and assistance throughout students' academic journey. **Peer groups** offer opportunities for collaboration, discussion, and mutual support, enabling students to share ideas, study tips, and resources. Additionally, mentors, such as professors, advisors, or older students, can offer personalized guidance, academic advice, and encouragement to help students navigate challenges and achieve their goals. Moreover, academic resources, such as tutoring centers, writing labs, or academic advisors, provide students with additional support and assistance in specific areas of need. Whether seeking help with understanding course material, improving writing skills, or navigating academic requirements, these resources offer valuable assistance and guidance to students seeking to overcome challenges and succeed academically. By actively engaging with support networks and utilizing available resources, students can enhance their academic performance, build resilience, and achieve their full potential.

### 3. Practical Study Skills for Success

Developing practical study skills is essential for students to excel academically and achieve their goals. In this section, we will explore three key study skills that are crucial for success: time management techniques, active learning strategies, and utilizing resources effectively.

- **Time Management Techniques:**



*Cottrel (2019, p. 125)\** reminds us that: "Your success as a student will be strongly affected by the combination of two time-related factors: ★ How much time you spend in study ★ How well you use that time."

**Effective time management** is fundamental to academic success, enabling students to juggle their academic responsibilities, extracurricular activities, and personal commitments efficiently (*Cottrel, 2019\**). Strategies for managing time effectively include **creating a study schedule** or **timetable** to allocate specific time slots for **studying, attending classes, and completing assignments**. Prioritizing tasks based on urgency and importance helps students focus on high-priority activities and avoid procrastination. Additionally, breaking larger tasks into smaller, more manageable chunks can make them feel less overwhelming and more achievable.



**The Eisenhower Matrix** (*Bast, 2016\**) and **the Pomodoro Technique** (*Cirillo, 2009\**) are two techniques that could help you manage your time effectively.

- **Active Learning Strategies:** Engaging in active learning techniques is essential for enhancing comprehension, retention, and critical thinking skills. Active learning involves actively participating in the learning process through activities such as summarizing, questioning, and applying knowledge. Techniques such as summarizing course material in your own words, asking questions to clarify understanding, and applying concepts to real-world scenarios help reinforce learning and deepen understanding. Moreover, incorporating interactive activities such as group discussions, debates, or problem-solving exercises fosters collaboration and engagement among students, enhancing the learning experience (*Eison, 2010\**).
- **Utilizing Resources:** Leveraging textbooks, dictionaries (e.g., *Downing, 2009\**), online resources, and academic support services is crucial for optimizing learning outcomes. Textbooks provide foundational knowledge and serve as valuable reference materials for understanding course content. Online resources, such as educational websites (e.g., Khan Academy), tutorials, and digital libraries, offer supplementary learning materials and additional explanations of complex concepts. Furthermore, academic support services, including tutoring centers, writing labs, and academic advisors, provide personalized assistance and guidance to students seeking help with specific academic challenges. By utilizing these resources effectively, students can enhance their understanding of course material, improve their academic performance, and achieve their learning goals more effectively.



The library team is helpful and is ready to receive your suggestions regarding any books or other resources you think are must-have for math students.

In a nutshell, incorporating these practical study skills into their academic routine empowers students to take control of their learning, maximize their potential, and succeed academically. By mastering time management techniques, engaging in active learning strategies, and utilizing available resources, students can enhance their academic performance, build confidence in their abilities, and achieve their educational aspirations.

## 4. Cultivating a Growth Mindset

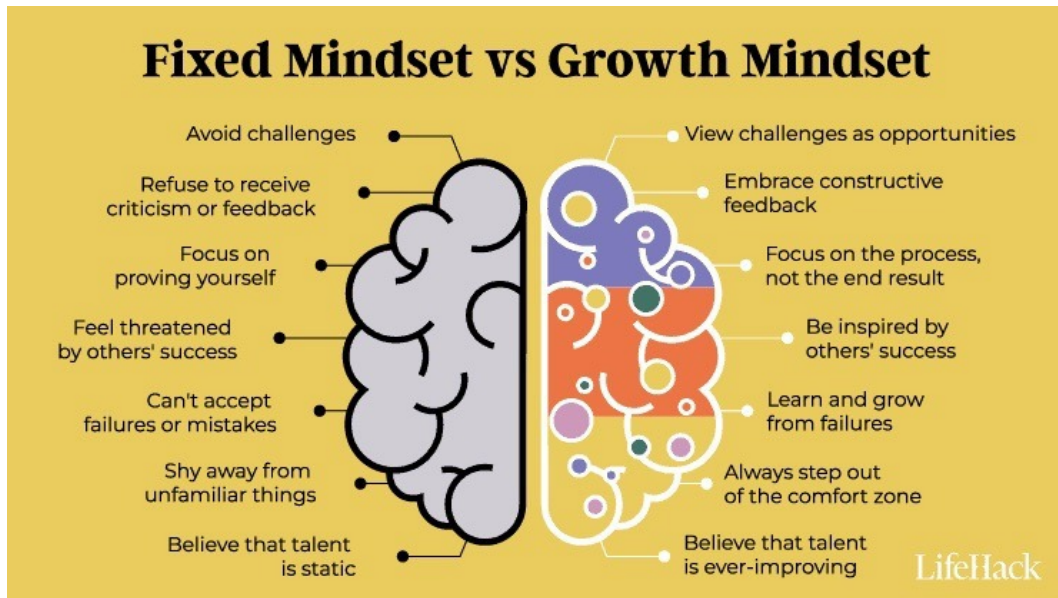


Figure 8 : Growth versus. Fixed Mindset

Cultivating a **growth mindset** is crucial for students to navigate challenges, build resilience, and unlock their full potential. In this section, we will explore three key components of cultivating a growth mindset: **embracing challenges**, **promoting self-efficacy**, and **maintaining motivation**.

- **Embracing Challenges:** Viewing challenges as opportunities for growth and learning is central to developing a growth mindset. Instead of fearing failure or setbacks, students with a growth mindset embrace challenges as valuable learning experiences that help them develop new skills and abilities. By reframing challenges as opportunities for growth, students can approach difficult tasks with a sense of curiosity, resilience, and determination. Moreover, embracing challenges fosters a mindset of continuous improvement and resilience in the face of adversity, enabling students to persevere and thrive in the face of obstacles.
- **Promoting Self-Efficacy:** Building confidence and belief in one's ability to succeed is essential for cultivating a growth mindset. Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to set ambitious goals, exert effort, and persist in the face of difficulties. Strategies for promoting self-efficacy include setting realistic and attainable goals, celebrating small victories and achievements, and seeking out positive affirmations and encouragement from others. Additionally, engaging in self-reflection and acknowledging past successes can help students develop a sense of competence and confidence in their abilities, empowering them to tackle challenges with confidence and determination.
- **Maintaining Motivation:** Staying motivated and focused on long-term academic goals is key to sustaining effort and achieving success. Strategies for maintaining motivation include setting clear and meaningful goals that align with students' values and aspirations, breaking goals down into manageable tasks, and tracking progress over time. Moreover, cultivating a sense of purpose and intrinsic motivation by connecting academic pursuits to personal interests, passions, and long-term aspirations can enhance students' commitment and perseverance. Additionally, establishing a support system of peers, mentors, and family members who provide encouragement, accountability, and guidance can help students stay motivated and focused on their academic journey.



Incorporating these strategies into their daily lives empowers students to **cultivate a growth mindset, embrace challenges, and achieve their academic goals**. By embracing challenges as opportunities for growth, promoting self-efficacy and confidence in their abilities, and maintaining motivation and focus on long-term goals, students can develop the resilience, determination, and mindset needed to succeed academically and beyond.



When students adopt a growth mindset, they are more inclined to: Attributing failures to factors within their control ("I need to study harder next time."), and less likely to attribute failures to things out of their control ("The grading system was unfair.")

## 5. Exercice : One answer quiz : I Should Be Aware of The Difference It Makes

[solution n°1 p. 12]

When students embrace a **growth mindset**, they tend to :

- ☐ attribute failures to things out of their control (the grading system is not fair to me)
- ☐ attribute failures to factors within their control (I need to put more effort in order to succeed in the exam next time)

## 6. Exercice : Paragraph writing : Time to put your thoughts into words !

Imagine you're a student who has a major assignment due in a week. You know it's important, but every time you sit down to start, you find yourself getting distracted. Maybe you scroll through social media, watch videos, or convince yourself that you'll do it later. Days go by, and now the deadline is just two days away. You start to feel stressed and anxious, realizing that you've left it too late, and you rush through the work, not giving it your best effort.

### Reflect on the Scenario:

- Think about the scenario of procrastination described above. Have you ever found yourself in a similar situation? How did it affect your work and stress levels?

### Identify the Barrier:

- Write down why procrastination can be a significant barrier to academic success. Consider factors like stress, time management, and the quality of your work.

### Brainstorm Solutions:

- Reflect on strategies that could help you overcome procrastination.

### Questions to consider:

- What small steps could you take to start the assignment earlier?
- How could breaking the task into smaller parts help?
- What role could a growth mindset play in changing your approach to procrastination?

**Remark :** Your answers should be submitted via email in a Word or a PDF format before 25-05-2024.



# Exit Test

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## 1. Exercice : Please, answer the following questions related to the elements learnt in the previous chapters.

[solution n°2 p. 12]

### Defining Study Skills

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**Question:** What are study skills?

- ☐ a) Techniques that aid in learning and retaining information
- ☐ b) Skills needed for physical education
- ☐ c) Artistic abilities
- ☐ d) None of the above

### Importance of Study Skills

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**Question:** Why are study skills important for academic success?

- ☐ a) They help manage time effectively
- ☐ b) They improve comprehension and retention of material
- ☐ c) They reduce stress and anxiety related to studying
- ☐ d) All of the above

### Test your understanding of Gardner's theory !

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Please, fill-in the gap.

According to Gardner, the learning style that involves learning through hands-on activities is \_\_\_\_\_.

### Exercice

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What is a "growth mindset" ?

- ☐ Believing that abilities and intelligence can be developed with efforts and practice.
- ☐ Believing that success is solely based on luck.
- ☐ Believing that success is based on effort and practice.
- ☐ Believing that failure is a permanent condition.

## 2. Exercice : Homework : Design Your Own Study Plan

Following the information provided to you in the three previous chapters, please design a **comprehensive study plan** where you articulate: your **learning style** and **preference**; **your type of intelligence based on Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences**; your **study techniques** you think you should adopt to make your learning process run **smoothly** and minimize the **learning challenges** you might face along the process. This design should not exceed two Word pages. The submission deadline is on: 01/06/2024 before 23:59.

## Conclusion

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In conclusion, mastering mathematics requires not only a thorough understanding of concepts but also the adoption of effective study strategies. These strategies can transform the learning experience from daunting to manageable and, potentially, even enjoyable. By applying the study skills discussed in this course, students will be better prepared to address mathematical challenges with confidence.

# Solutions des exercices

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## Solution n°1

[exercice p. 8]

When students embrace a **growth mindset**, they tend to :

- ☐ attribute failures to things out of their control (the grading system is not fair to me)
- ☒ attribute failures to factors within their control (I need to put more effort in order to succeed in the exam next time)

## Solution n°2

[exercice p. 9]

### Defining Study Skills

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