I have lots of assignments due and am feeling really stressed out. I know I shouldn't, but if I could just copy something from the internet for one assignment it would make it so much easier. Help!

Assignments always seem to be due at the same time, so if you have a bunch of deadlines approaching fast it's important that you get organised. Don't panic or resort to dodgy fixes because there are simple things you can do to help your situation without compromising your academic integrity.

It's the end of semester and you have three assignments, one group presentation and an exam. You don't know where to start and have been looking for any distraction, rather than starting these assignments (you wish you had not played that ultimate Frisbee game all yesterday afternoon). Having just sat at your desk and realised the magnitude of your workload you are now panicking that there is no way to get it all done in time. Maybe you're thinking it would be so much easier if you could just copy something from the internet for one assignment... Stop right there!

What can you do?

- Prioritise the most important tasks first, e.g. the one to start with might be the assignment that is due first or an assignment that is easiest and can be finished most quickly

- Timetable your activities. See Managing Time and Tasks for some very helpful advice. Try to set realistic goals in the times you have allocated. If you notice you are consistently not completing tasks in the time you have allocated yourself then give yourself more time per task. This might mean not doing some of the other things you would like to do (no three hour Ultimate Frisbee game tomorrow) or saving them for when you've completed the work

- Break the tasks down into smaller tasks. When you look at all your assignments at once it can seem insurmountable. Break the assignments down into smaller tasks and set yourself small goals that you can achieve in a few hours e.g. write paragraphs 2 and 3

- When preparing an assignment you may sometimes feel like you are getting nowhere; you might write two sentences in a few hours and even these don't seem very good. This happens to everyone. The best option is to accept this as part of the writing process and acknowledge that you are not going to sit down at your desk and write War and Peace in four hours. Perhaps take a break for 20 minutes (get some exercise perhaps, have something to eat) and then go back to it. Often a period of feeling you are getting nowhere is followed by a quite productive burst; don't beat yourself up

- One method of writing is to write what comes out of your head without worrying about the grammar, spelling, readability etc as you go. Then you can go back to edit these things later. It is a good way of getting into the vibe of writing

- Limit your distractions, turn off your email, Facebook, Twitter. Work in an environment with limited distractions e.g. another faculty library where you will not be distracted by passing friends

- Plan a reward for yourself after all the hard work – the Ultimate Frisbee world games perhaps...

- For further resources see: http://services.unimelb.edu.au/academicskills/flyers. The brochures on managing stress, Managing Time and Tasks, and Beating Writers block are particularly helpful

In the future, you may want to try to prevent getting into this situation again.

This link has some good tips on achieving work life balance.

If you find stress is a problem for you, you may want to consider speaking to a counselor at the University: http://services.unimelb.edu.au/counsel

- For further resources see regarding reducing stress, writers block and other issues go to: http://services.unimelb.edu.au/counsel/resources/publications