

BOOK

1

Communication Skills



Bunda College of Agriculture

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University of Malawi: Bunda College of Agriculture

James Sitima

Felix Maulidi

Mathius Mkandawire

Experencia Chisoni

Samu M Samu

Martin Gulule

Geoffrey Salanje

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Andrew Moore

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Orientation to the Text

Introduction

Welcome to the Bunda College of Agriculture's (BCA) Communication Skills course! This textbook has been designed to support students who are studying Communication during the first semester of the first year. This textbook has been created by your lecturers here in Bunda. They have written new materials but have also used and adapted material from all around the English speaking world to suit the specific needs of this course.

This short orientation section of the textbook is designed to provide readers with a clear understanding of how the text has been arranged.

Chapters

This text has been designed to closely follow the lectures and activities of the Communication Course: The chapters are:

1. Orientation to the Text
2. Study Skills
3. How to use the Library
4. Listening Skills
5. Reading Skills
6. Writing Skills
7. Examination Skills

Course Objectives

The intention of the Communication Skills course and this textbook is to provide students new to tertiary education, with the prerequisite language skills required to excel in the higher education environment. To this end the course's objectives are:

All students at BCA on completion of the Communication Skills course should be able to:

- use study techniques to process, store and use the information and skills taught in their subjects;
- apply the various systems and processes used by the institutional library to search and retrieve information;
- listen actively and create accurate comprehensive and accurate notes;
- read books and resources and retain the information gleaned therein;
- express themselves clearly using the written word;
- perform well in examinations and tests.

The writers of this textbook from the Department of Language & Development Communication and the College Library have the same outcomes in mind and have selected and adapted materials to further these objectives.

Text Source & Structure

The materials contained within this text have been either written specially for the course or have been adapted from Open Education Resources (OER). These resources have been created at other eminent Universities and Colleges by language professionals and have also been copyrighted in such a way that they can be shared and adapted. The staff at this University have customised these resources to suit local needs. Part of the adaptation process was designing a number of tasks to support the foreign content. These tasks and activities have been designed to enhance your understanding of new concepts and also to provide an opportunity to practice your new language skills. The following icons have been used to identify specific types of activities:



Seminar Activity

This type of activity requires you to work in groups. Your lecturer and tutors will allocate you a group or alternatively you can form your own group of friends to practice the new skills.



Self Study Activity

This type of activity is to be done on your own during your own time. Self study is seen by the university as an important learning strategy so you will need to have the discipline to complete these activities if you want to continue in Higher Education.



Assessment Task

These tasks will be for marks or some type of grading. They are used as a component of the grading process. Make sure you complete and submit all assessment tasks. There is at least one assessment task per chapter.



Alternative Resource

Sometimes there are additional materials and activities outside this text. They might, for example, be on a CD-ROM or accessed from the Internet. Read carefully to find out where the alternative resource is. Use these activities for enrichment.



Copyright

In many instances the original material was shortened so that it would fit into this text. If you feel you would understand the chapter better by seeing it as it was before it was changed then go back to the original. You can find the original resources by following the copyright links.



Glossary

Many of the chapters also have a glossary to help you understand specialised terminology or concepts special to language. Use the glossary to find a simple English definition of these special terms.

Participation Profile

This textbook and the Communication Skills course has been designed to provide essential English language proficiencies to new students studying all courses at Bunda College of

Agriculture, University of Malawi. However, students at other African higher education institutions will find this textbook beneficial to their studies.

Copyright

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Study Skills

Transition to College

In this section you will learn about the importance of knowing how to study properly in order to achieve your goal of succeeding at College. This section will cover the following areas: timetabling, planning for your work, sourcing for information, the process of making meaning or knowledge, note taking and note making, student health, study techniques, and listening to lectures.

Deciding to go to college is an important decision in your life. Getting admitted to college is a significant accomplishment. Succeeding in college is an even more significant accomplishment.

There are many differences between secondary school and college. Because of the differences, students often find the transition from secondary school to college to be very challenging. In fact, some students who enter college struggle to successfully complete their first year.

Here are some of the important differences between secondary school and college that can make a successful transition difficult. For each, you will find suggestions to help you successfully handle the difference.

The academic work in college is more difficult than it is in secondary school. This means that you will have to work both harder and longer. Secondary school students typically study 2 to 3 hours a week for each class. Since most college classes meet for 3 hours a week, you will have to study 3 times as much in college than you did in secondary school. Be prepared to take on this commitment.

In secondary school you are required to attend every class session. This is often not the case in college classes. Many college lecturers don't take attendance register. It will be easy for you to find things you would rather do than go to class. Don't give in to temptation. Students who attend and participate in classes on a regular basis get higher grades than students who don't. Make every effort to attend every class session.

You are going to have to be an independent learner in college. Secondary school teachers often check to see that you are doing your assignments and readings. College lecturers simply expect you to do these things. It is up to you to make sure that you do.

Your schedule of classes in college will be more spread out than your classes in secondary school. Secondary school classes typically meet daily. College classes meet 2 to 3 times a week. It is very important for you, therefore, to carefully manage the time in between classes. Creating and sticking to a study schedule is crucial.

Tests in secondary school classes are often given frequently and cover a small amount of information. Tests in college classes are given less frequently and cover a great deal of information. Sometimes the only test is the final examination. Make-up tests are rarely given in college, and you usually cannot raise a low score by doing extra credit work. To do well on tests

in College, you must take good notes in class and from your textbooks. You should also have a good strategy for taking tests.

College is not simply a continuation of secondary school. It is a new experience that requires you to approach success in new ways right from day one. The same will apply to those of you who have been out of school for a long time. You will need to adjust from your work schedule to a college schedule. You will still have to plan based on your own self motivation. You will have to take into account how you learn and develop useful and effective study habits.

OUTCOMES

When you finish this section you will be able to do the following:

- plan and write your own study timetable;
- take and organize your notes from lectures and textbooks;
- develop the following helpful study techniques that will help you to succeed in college:
 - setting goals
 - overcoming procrastination
 - working with study syndicates
 - understanding your learning preferences
- take care of your health.

Timetabling

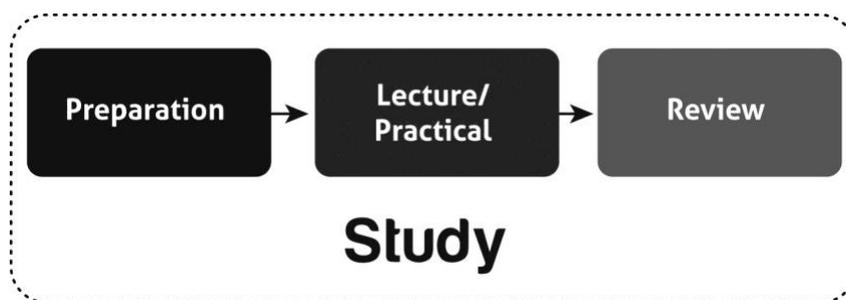
Your timetable at school was worked out for your class. Every class member did more or less the same thing as everyone else with the exception of a few options in the final years. At tertiary level everyone has his/her own timetable. Consequently you need to invest time in preparing your timetables correctly right at the beginning of each semester if you are serious about your studies. On another level you will have to develop your own study timetable to ensure you give your various courses sufficient time for self study. BCA uses the following timetable templates.

CLASS TIME TABLE

This is an example of a class timetable. Insert your courses in the empty cells for Monday to Friday. Note the lecture times appear in the first column. Also ensure you know where the class will meet (e.g. LT1 or Rm4). Remember to incorporate ALL your courses and not only those you enjoy!

Times	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
0700-0750					

0800-0850					
0900-0950					
1000-1050					
1100-1150					
1200-1330	LUNCH				
1330-1420					
1430-1520					
1530-1620					
1630-1720					



STUDY TIMETABLE

Study is really composed of three components: Preparation / The Lecture / and then Review. If you complete this routine you are then in fact studying. A rule of thumb is for every hour of class you need to work an additional 2 hours. In the diagram those 2 hours are made up of preparation and review.

For every lecture/practical, plan to do preparation before the lecture/practical, then a review session after the lecture or practical. Also schedule additional study time around tests and examinations.

In the specialised timetable below there are study slots early in the morning and then again in the evening. Time on the weekends and free periods too can be incorporated into your study programme. Also note that not all slots have to be filled! Rather give yourself some slack so that you can respond to unforeseen disruptions to your programme.

TIMES	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
0500-0600							

0600-0700	BREAKFAST						
0700-0750							
0800-0850							
0900-0950	Class Schedule						
1000-1050							
1100-1150							
1200-1330	LUNCH						
1330-1420							
1430-1520							
1530-1620							
1620-1720							
1700-1800	SUPPER						
1800-1900							
1900-2000							
2000-2100							
2100-2200							

WHERE TO STUDY?

You should have a specific place where you can do your study. It could be in the library, your room, or one of the classrooms. Some prefer to study in one of the Libraries in town or in the bush. Whatever place it is, and wherever it may be it should a place where you are safe, comfortable and able to concentrate on your study. Build into your study schedule breaks for refreshing.



**SELF STUDY ACTIVITY 1:
Timetables**

1. Make a copy of the templates presented above and fill in the missing detail so that you have your own personalised copies. Keep your class timetable handy for easy reference such as on the front of your files or as a card in your wallet. Your study timetable should be posted above your place of study.
2. Try out your new study timetable over the next week. Make notes about your experiences. Then consider:
 - Are all the study slots equally useful? For example if you are early to bed do you lose some of the late night study options?

- Perhaps you are an early morning person and would like to start earlier than 5:00 am?

3. Revise your timetable accordingly to suit your personality.

Customise your version of the table above to incorporate these learning preferences.

Note Taking

TAKING LECTURE NOTES¹

In classes your lecturers will talk with authority on topics that you are studying. Besides improving your knowledgebase the details of each lecture will be important for you to know when you take tests and examinations. Consequently you will need to take down accurate notes. Taking good notes is a three-stage process. There are things you should do before class, during class, and after class. Here are the three stages of note taking.

GET READY TO TAKE NOTES (ACTIVITIES BEFORE CLASS)

Prepare for the lecture so that you will be more likely to predict the organization of the lecture. Check the course outline to see if the lecturer has listed the topic or key ideas in the upcoming lecture. If so, convert this information into questions.

If an outline or handout is given out at the beginning of class, skim it quickly. Underline or highlight topics, new vocabulary, key questions and/or main ideas.

Sit as near to the front of the room as possible to eliminate distractions.

Have a proper attitude. Listening well is a matter of paying close attention. Be prepared to be open-minded about what the lecturer may be saying, even though you may disagree with it.

Have extra writing materials ready, or extra lead for mechanical pencils in case a pencil breaks during the lecture.

Write down the name of the lecturer, the title of the lecture, and the date.

TAKE NOTES (ACTIVITIES DURING CLASS)

Listen carefully to the introduction (if there is one). By knowing this outline, you will be better prepared to anticipate what notes you will need to take. Decipher this outline by listening for:

- A topic for each section.
- Supporting points or examples for the topic.

Copy what's written on the whiteboard, especially the outline. To make sure that you get everything, get in the habit of skipping words like "the" and "a" and make use of shorthand and abbreviations. Summarize your notes in your own words, not the lecturer's. Remember: your goal is to understand what the lecturer is saying, not to try to record exactly everything he or she says.

Recognize main ideas by signal words that indicate something important is to follow. See the tip on signals below. Jot down details or examples that support the main ideas. Take down examples and sketches which the lecturer presents. Indicate examples with 'e.g.' Give special attention to details not covered in the textbook.

If there is a summary at the end of the lecture, pay close attention to it. You can use it to check the organization of your notes. If your notes seem disorganized, copy down the main points that are covered in the summary. It will help in revising your notes later.

¹ Adapted from WikiHow: How to Take Lecture Notes. Available online at <http://www.wikihow.com/Take-Lecture-Notes>
(CC-BY-NC-SA)

At the end of the lecture, ask questions about points that you did not understand.

REWRITE YOUR NOTES (ACTIVITIES AFTER CLASS)

Revise your notes as quickly as possible, preferably immediately after the lecture, since at that time you will still remember a good deal of the lecture. Also it is a good idea to reread your notes within 24 hours of the lecture. It may be a good idea to rewrite or type your notes to make them clearer and more organized. Review the lecture notes before the next lecture.

GENERAL TIPS

1. Write notes for each course in one place, in a separate notebook or section of a notebook.
2. Use an erasable pen or pencil.
3. Sometimes use a loose-leaf notebook rather than a notebook with a permanent binding.
4. Enter your notes legibly because it saves time. Make them clear.
5. Draw a box around assignments and suggested books so you can identify them quickly.
6. Mark ideas which the lecturer emphasizes with a highlighter, arrow or some special symbol.
7. When the lecturer looks at his/her notes, pay attention to what they say next. Check any notes you may have missed with a classmate.
8. Do an outline. For every new section of your subject, you have a new bullet then title it and use smaller bullets,(-),or number them to put information down.
9. Incorporate different colours of ink, diagrams, drawings of your own. Make your notes *your* notes. Take advantage of how you learn (visually, orally, or actively) and write/draw your notes according to that style.
10. Watch for signal words. Your lecturer is not going to send up a rocket when he states an important new idea or gives an example, but he will use signals to telegraph what he is doing. Every good speaker does it, and you should expect to receive these signals. For example, they may introduce an example with "for example" as done here. Other common signals:

"There are three reasons why...." (Here they come!)

"First...Second... Third...." (There they are!)

"And most important,...." (A main idea!)

"A major development...." (A main idea again!)

They may signal support material with:

"On the other hand...."

"Pay close attention to this"

"On the contrary...."

"For example...."

"Similarly...."

"In contrast...."

"Also...."

"For example...."

"For instance...."

They may signal conclusion or summary with:

"Therefore...."

"In conclusion...."

"As a result...."

"Finally...."

"In summary...."

"From this we see...."

They may signal very loudly with:

"Now this is important...."

"Remember that...."

"The important idea is that...."

"The basic concept here is...."

If you can, and it's allowed, bring a tape recorder. Still take notes but listen to the lecture later where you can stop and play while taking notes on the lecture. **Good notes will depend on how well you listen to your lecturers.**

Activity



SELF STUDY ACTIVITY: Note Taking

It's time to try out your note taking skills...

1. Tune a radio to the BBC (98.0 Mhz) or to any local station where you can hear some commentary. If you can also use a TV news broadcast.
2. Prepare yourself to take notes of what is being said.
3. Take notes for a period of 5 minutes.
4. Identify how you might be able to improve the level of accuracy in your notes.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACH: THE CORNELL NOTE TAKING SYSTEM²

There is more than one way to take notes. Back in the 1950's Walter Pauk, an education professor at Cornell University devised a system to help his students take better lecture notes. Variations on his method have been adopted by numerous tertiary institutions around the world. The system we encourage you to use here at Bunda College is similar. Firstly prepare your note-taking sheet...

² Adapted from McKinlay, A et al (2000). Multimedia Study Skills. Douglas College. Accessed 2nd June 2009 at <http://douglas.bc.ca/services/learning-centre/multimedia-tutorials.html> Copyrighted as CC-BY-SA 2.0

The Note-taking Sheet

Divide up an A4 page so that there are four distinct areas on the page:

Notes Column

During lectures, record the main ideas, facts and concepts on the right side of the page in the notes column. However, don't try to write down everything verbatim but rather rephrase the information into your own words before writing it down. Use symbols and abbreviations or write down key words and phrases. Also skip a line between ideas and a few lines between different topics. Also to speed up the recording process only write on one side of the sheet but use as many sheets as you need.

Recall Column

As soon after class as possible, review the notes in the notes column and clarify or correct any confusing information. If possible compare the information with any textbook and/or other students' notes. Then pull the main ideas, concepts, terms, places, dates, and people from the right column and record them in the left-hand recall column.

Summary Panel

In the summary panel prepare a short overview of the lecture material. The summary may be in sentences or short phrases but should include only the main ideas from the lecture. When it comes to preparing for tests and exams you would use both the information in the Recall and Summary sections and refer to the Notes column for clarification.

Recall Column (width 30%)	Name Course & Lecture Title Date
	Notes Column (width 70%)
Summary Section	



SELF STUDY ACTIVITY 3:
Putting pen to paper

In order to practice and gain success in the skill of note taking we would like you to complete the following tasks:

1. Understand the process used in the Cornell Note taking System section described above before the next Communication Skills lecture.
2. Create notepaper pages to use during the next lecture. If you have a computer you can use the facility available at: <http://eleven21.com/notetaker/>, otherwise just use paper and pen.
3. Use the Cornell Note Taking System during and after the lecture.

Study Techniques

In this section we will look at why it is important to set goals, identify one of the major barriers to effective study; procrastination and also look at the benefits of working in groups.

GOALS³

Wikipedia defines a goal as a projected state of affairs that a person or a system plans or intends to achieve, a personal or organizational desired end-point in some sort of assumed development.

The process of goal-setting ideally involves establishing specific, measurable and time-targeted objectives. Goal setting at College can serve as an effective tool for making progress by ensuring that students have a clear awareness of what they must do to achieve or help achieve an objective. Goal-setting comprises a major component of personal development. Each study goal

³ Adapted from Wikipedia: Available on [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goal_\(management\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goal_(management)) (CC – BY – SA)

should explicitly state WHAT it is you intend to achieve as well as WHEN you intend to achieve it by.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOALS

Your goals should be:

1. Within your skills and abilities. Knowing your strengths and weaknesses will help you set goals you can accomplish.
2. Realistic. Setting a goal to learn the spelling of three new words a day is realistic. Trying to learn the spelling of fifty new words a day is not realistic.
3. Flexible. Sometimes things will not go the way you anticipate and you may need to change your goal. Stay flexible so when you realize a change is necessary you will be ready to make the change.
4. Measurable. It is important to be able to measure your progress toward a goal. It is especially important to recognize when you have accomplished your goal and need to go no further. Failure to measure your progress toward a goal and recognize its accomplishment will result in effort that is misdirected and wasted.
5. Within your control. Other than when working as part of a group, accomplishment of your goal should not depend on other students. You can control what you do, but you have little or no control over what others do. You may do what you have to do, but if others don't, you will not accomplish your goal.

Many times your parents, lecturers, and counsellors will set goals for you. Be accepting when they do. These are people who know what is important for you and are very concerned with your success. They can also help you accomplish the goals they set. Set goals that provide you with direction and lead to success.

Activity



SEMINAR ACTIVITY: Goal Setting

Let's work as a group to create a set of goals...

1. As a group study the picture below and then discuss what the individuals pictured there might have had as their goals.
2. Now reflect and identify your long term goals. Record them.



PROCRASTINATION

What is procrastination?

Procrastination is putting off or avoiding doing something that must be done. It is natural to procrastinate occasionally. However, excessive procrastination can result in guilt feelings about not doing a task when it should be done. It can also cause anxiety since the task still needs to be done. Further, excessive procrastination can cause poor performance if the task is completed without sufficient time to do it well. In short, excessive procrastination can interfere with school and personal success.

Why do students procrastinate?

There are many reasons why students procrastinate. Here are the most common reasons:

- **Perfectionism.** A student's standard of performance may be so high for a task that it does not seem possible to meet that standard.
- **Fear of failure.** A student may lack confidence and fear that he/she will be unable to accomplish a task successfully.
- **Confusion.** A student may be unsure about how to start a task or how it should be completed.
- **Task difficulty.** A student may lack the skills and abilities needed to accomplish a task.
- **Poor motivation.** A student may have little or no interest in completing a task because he/she finds the task boring, difficult or lacking in relevance.
- **Difficulty concentrating.** A student may have too many things around that distract him/her from doing a task.
- **Task unpleasantness.** A student may dislike doing what a task requires.
- **Lack of priorities.** A student may have little or no sense about which tasks are most important to do.

How do you know if you procrastinate excessively?

You procrastinate excessively if you agree with five or more of the following statements:

- I often put off starting a task I find difficult
- I often give up on a task as soon as I start to find it difficult.

- I often wonder why I should be doing a task.
- I often have difficulty getting started on a task.
- I often try to do so many tasks at once that I cannot do any of them.
- I often put off a task in which I have little or no interest.
- I often try to come up with reasons to do something other than a task I have to do.
- I often ignore a task when I am not certain about how to start it or complete it.
- I often start a task but stop before completing it.
- I often find myself thinking that if I ignore a task, it will go away.
- I often cannot decide which of a number of tasks I should complete first.
- I often find my mind wandering to things other than the task on which I am trying to work.

What can you do about excessive procrastination?

Here are some things you can do to control excessive procrastination.

- Motivate yourself to work on a task with thoughts such as “There is no time like the present,” or “Nobody’s perfect.”
- Prioritize the tasks you have to do.
- Commit yourself to completing a task once started.
- Reward yourself whenever you complete a task.
- Work on tasks at the times you work best.
- Break large tasks into small manageable parts.
- Work on tasks as part of a study group.
- Get help from lecturers and other students when you find a task difficult.
- Make a schedule of the tasks you have to do and stick to it.
- Eliminate distractions that interfere with working on tasks.
- Set reasonable standards that you can meet for a task.
- Take breaks when working on a task so that you do not wear down.
- Work on difficult and/or unpleasant tasks first.
- Work on a task you find easier after you complete a difficult task.
- Find a good place to work on tasks.
- Above all, think positively and get going. Once you are into a task, you will probably find that it is more interesting than you thought it would be and not as difficult as you feared. You will feel increasingly relieved as you work toward its accomplishment and will come to look forward to the feeling of satisfaction you will experience when you have completed the task.

STUDY GROUPS (STUDY SYNDICATES)

A study group can be helpful when you are trying to learn information and concepts and preparing for class discussions and tests. Read to learn about the benefits of a study group. Then read on to learn about how to start a study group and the characteristics of a successful study group. Finally, be sure to read about the possible pitfalls of a study group.

Benefits of a study group

A study group can be beneficial in many ways. Here are the most important benefits:

- A support group can “pick you up” when you find that your motivation to study is slipping. The other group members can be a source of encouragement.
- You may be reluctant to ask a question in class. You will find it easier to do so in a small study group.

- You may become more committed to study because the group members are depending on your presentation and participation. You will not want to let them down.
- Group members will listen and discuss information and concepts during the study sessions. These activities add a strong auditory dimension to your learning experience.
- One or more group members are likely to understand something you do not. They may bring up ideas you never considered.
- You can learn valuable new study habits from the other group members.
- You can compare your class notes with those of the other group members to clarify your notes and fill in any gaps.
- Teaching/explaining information and concepts to the other group members will help you reinforce your mastery of the information and concepts.

Let's face it – studying can sometimes be boring. Interacting with the other group members can make studying enjoyable.

Getting a study group started

Study groups don't just happen. Here is what you should do to get a study group started:

Get to know your classmates by talking with them before class, during breaks, and after class. When selecting a classmate to join your study group, you should be able to answer YES for each of the following questions:

Is this classmate motivated to do well?

- Does this classmate understand the subject matter?
- Is this classmate dependable?
- Would this classmate be tolerant of the ideas of others?
- Would you like to work with this classmate?

Invite enough of these classmates to work with you in a study group until you have formed a group of three to five. A larger group may allow some members to avoid responsibility, may lead to cliques, and may make group management more of an issue than learning.

Decide how often and for how long you will meet. Meeting two or three times a week is probably best. If you plan a long study session, make sure you include time for breaks. A study session of about 60 to 90 minutes is usually best.

Decide where you will meet. Select a meeting place that is available and is free from distractions. An empty classroom or a group study room in the library are possibilities.

Decide on the goals of the study group. Goals can include comparing and updating notes, discussing readings, and preparing for exams.

Decide who the leader will be for the first study session. Also decide whether it will be the same person each session or whether there will be a rotating leader. The leader of a study session should be responsible for meeting the goals of that study session.

Clearly decide the agenda for the first study session and the responsibilities of each group member for that session.

Develop a list of all group members that includes their names, telephone numbers, and email addresses. Make sure each group member has this list and update the list as needed.

Characteristics of a successful study group

Once started, a study group should possess the following characteristics to be successful:

- Each group member contributes to discussions.
- Group members actively listen to each other without interrupting. Only one group member speaks at a time.
- The other group members work collaboratively to resolve any concern raised by a group member.
- Group members are prompt and come prepared to work.
- The group stays on task with respect to its agenda.
- Group members show respect for each other.
- Group members feel free to criticize each other but keep their criticisms constructive. This can encourage group members to reveal their weaknesses so that they can strengthen them.
- Group members feel free to ask questions of each other.

At the end of each study session, an agenda including specific group member responsibilities is prepared for the next session.

Above all, the positive attitude that “we can do this together” is maintained.

Possible pitfalls of a study group

A study group can be a very positive learning experience. However, there are pitfalls to be avoided. Here are some cautions:

Do not let the study group get distracted from its agenda and goals.

Do not let the study group become a social group. You can always socialize at other times.

Do not allow group members to attend unprepared. To stay in the group, members should be required to do their fair share.

Do not let the session become a negative forum for complaining about lecturers and courses.

Do not allow one or two group members to dominate the group. It is important that all members have an equal opportunity to participate.

The information you just read will help you decide when a study group is appropriate for you and will help ensure its success.

YOUR PREFERRED LEARNING STYLE

A learning style is a way of learning. Your preferred learning style is the way in which you learn best. Three learning styles that are often identified in students are the auditory learning style, the visual learning style, and the tactile / kinaesthetic learning style. Read about each of these learning styles to identify *your* preferred learning style.

Are you an auditory learner?

Auditory learners learn best when information is presented in an auditory language format. Do you seem to learn best in classes that emphasize lecturer lectures and class discussions? Does listening to audio tapes help you learn better? Do you find yourself reading aloud or talking things out to gain better understanding? If yes, you are probably an auditory learner.

Are you a visual learner?

Visual learners learn best when information is presented in a written language format or in another visual format such as pictures or diagrams. Do you do best in classes in which lecturers do a lot of writing at the chalkboard, provide clear handouts, and make extensive use of an overhead projector? Do you try to remember information by creating pictures in your mind? Do you take detailed written notes from your textbooks and in class? If yes, you are probably a visual learner.

Are you a tactile / kinaesthetic learner?

Tactile / kinaesthetic learners learn best in hands-on learning settings in which they can physically manipulate something in order to learn about it. Do you learn best when you can move about and handle things? Do you do well in classes in which there is a lab component? Do you learn better when you have an actual object in your hands rather than a picture of the object or a verbal or written description of it? If yes, you are probably a tactile / kinaesthetic learner.

Your learning style is your strength. Go with it whenever you can. When you can choose a class, try to choose one that draws heaviest on your learning style. When you can choose a lecturer (if you have the opportunity), try to choose one who's teaching method best matches your learning style. When you choose a major and future career, keep your learning style firmly in mind.

Health

It is also important that you look after your health while you are involved in tertiary study. This is important because a healthy student is usually an efficient and satisfied student. You will flourish if you balance your lifestyle.

Make sure you eat healthily! Fresh fruits and vegetables should make up a portion of your diet. Yes it's fun to splurge on 'junk food' but over time it is only detrimental to your overall well being. Make sure you take in plenty of natural foods and water.

Alcohol is often accessible at tertiary education institutions but needs to be consumed in moderation. If alcohol is not handled properly then it can interfere with your ability to learn. You are here at BCA to advance yourself.

RELATIONSHIPS

Social relationships are a good thing and many unions have famously begun at university. Be careful, however, that your involvement in a relationship does not become distracting and harm your ability to complete your studies. Enjoy the new associations but remember to put your studies first.



SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Your years here at BCA can also be an important time for your spiritual development. There are a number of clubs on campus that encourage people to develop themselves in this area. Faith can play an important role in helping you cope with some of the stresses you will experience. Aileen Ludington says,

Trust in God supplies a missing piece in our lives. It brings quality, fulfilment, and hope for the future.

However, like all things it is important to balance your energies and remain focused on your studies. There are instances of people who have become consumed by spiritual issues and consequently have failed to excel in their studies.



EXTRA CURRICULA ACTIVITIES

Look out for extra curricula physical activities. Exercise is an important component of a healthy life style. So see if you can join up with a sporting group. Also don't forget to give your mind a rest too! Become a member of a club or society so that you enjoy both the social and mental challenges of pursuits outside the strict boundaries of your study programme.



Summary

This short section has introduced a number of important study issues. Namely, manage your time well, be prepared to take accurate lecture notes, set yourself some goals, form a study syndicate and protect your health. Some of these issues will be dealt with in much more detail in subsequent sections.

Task



CHAPTER TWO: Assessment Task

This chapter assessment task is for marks so ensure that you submit the task to your lecturers:

Assemble the following documentation:

1. A copy of your completed 1st semester timetable
2. A copy of your personalised study timetable
3. The members' list of your study syndicate
4. 200 word paragraph explaining what you believe your learning style is and why you believe it is so.
5. A single copy of the template you have designed to enable the effective recording of lectures. (Don't submit the one printed above. We want to see if you have adapted it to your leaning style)

RESOURCE



Additional Enrichment Resources

The following resources are highly recommended and will offer enrichment to your studies:

NAME	WEB ADDRESS / CD REF
Cornell-Notes.com, <i>Automatic Cornell Note Page Maker</i>	http://eleven21.com/notetaker/
Wikipedia, <i>Cornell Notes</i>	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornell_Notes
How-To-Study.com, <i>Managing Your Time</i>	http://www.how-to-study.com/study-skills/en/studying/34/managing-your-study-time/
How-To-Study.com, <i>The Ten Study Habits of Successful Students</i>	http://www.how-to-study.com/study-skills/en/studying/39/the-ten-study-habits-of-successful-students/

Introduction

Bunda College Library is the heart of teaching, learning, research and consultancy activities of the College. As part of your studies you are required to supplement whatever you learn in class, field, laboratories, etc with information available in the Library. Users, especially students, need to know how best to use the Library.

OUTCOMES

At the end of the chapter it is expected that you will be able to:

- identify the various sections of the Library and their contents
- describe the University of Malawi regulations
- identify the various information sources
- describe the information searching process
- describe information searching tools

Library Staff and Sections

The Library comprises a College Librarian, Assistant Librarians, a Secretary, Library Assistants, Library Guards and Messengers/Cleaners. The College Librarian is the overall in charge of the Library. Library staff assists users in:

1. Searching and retrieving information
2. Issuing out and receiving Library materials
3. Provision of special services such as printing, scanning, lamination, photocopying, ID production and Internet/email access.
4. Allocating Library equipment, such as computers; audio-visual materials and study carrels.

Part of Bunda College Library Building



The Library is composed of the following sections/areas:

- Entrance foyer
- Guard's desk
- Offices
- Information desk
- Long term/short loans desk
- Malawiana collection
- Audio-visual
- Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) collection
- General books collection
- Bound periodicals section
- New periodicals display rack
- References
- Computer room
- Maps and atlases section
- Study carrels
- Open study/reading areas
- Newspaper reading area

Library users are free to visit or take an available seat or reading desk in any of the Library sections/areas.

All registered Library users are issued with pockets to be used for borrowing Library materials. The number of pockets and the period a user can borrow items before returning, depends on the category of the user as stipulated in the University of Malawi Libraries' regulations.

Activity



SELF STUDY ACTIVITY: Library Sections

Pay a visit to the Library and familiarize yourself with each section and area as outlined above. Take note of their contents and/or activities.

1. Describe what you do if you want to take a book out the Library.
2. What are the two major differences between Malawiana and general books collections?
3. From which section(s) are you allowed to take out Library materials?

Library Regulations

Bunda College of Agriculture Library is part of the University of Malawi (UNIMA) Libraries. University of Malawi has a library in each of the five constituent colleges. As such all UNIMA libraries follow the same regulations. All Library users must know these regulations and follow them; otherwise there are stipulated penalties for not doing so. The following are some of the regulations:

- No eating or drinking in the Library
- Library materials must be handled with care; no scribbling, soiling or tearing or turning down pages
- Noise must be minimized to maintain a good study environment.

- Cell phone use in the Library is not permitted.
- Games or offensive materials on Library computers are prohibited
- Leave hats, bags, umbrellas at the Guard's desk
- Some Library collections which are appropriately marked 'Not To Be Taken Away' or 'Malawiana' or 'Thesis' shall not be removed from the Library, except under very special circumstances and at the discretion of the College Librarian.
- The Librarian reserves the right to withdraw or refuse Library facilities to anyone who contravenes the Library Regulations.

In summary, treat the Library and its contents with care and respect and it will serve you and future students well!

Activity



SELF STUDY ACTIVITY: Library Regulations

Go through University of Malawi Libraries Regulations posted on the Library Guard's Desk.

- How long are you allowed to borrow a Library material from the Reference section for?
- What are penalties for users who lose books or delay in returning a book?

Types of Information Sources

- Printed materials
 - Books
 - Periodicals
 - Unpublished materials
- Electronic Resources
 - Electronic journals
 - Online databases
 - Computer/local databases
 - CD-ROM
 - Electronic books

Activity



SELF STUDY ACTIVITY: Book & Periodical Details

1. Get any book from the shelves and write down the author(s)/ editor(s) (if any), title, publisher, date of publication, index pages (if any) and glossary (if any).
2. What is the difference between a book and a periodical?

Information Searching Process

Searching information in the Library involves having an idea of what one is looking for. A Library user has to plan before doing the searching. The plan should include knowledge of the information source, tool(s) to use, section(s) of the Library holding the information source and what steps to take if you don't find the information you are looking for.

Tools for Information Searching

LIBRARY CATALOGUES

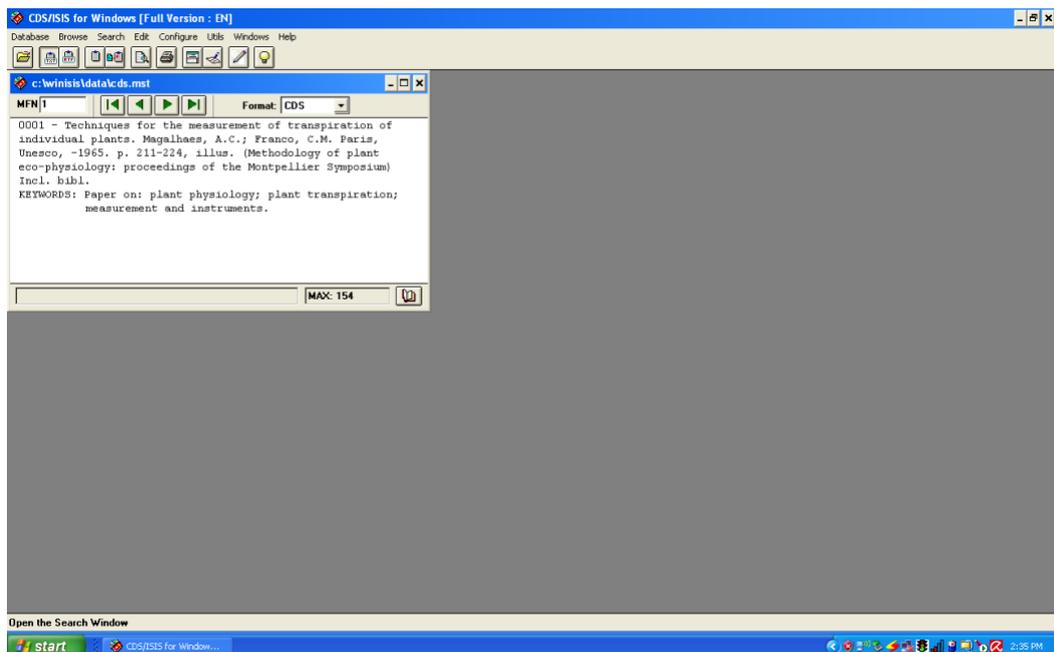
Library catalogues are a listing of all what is contained in the Library in a certain order. Bunda College of Agriculture Library uses classified and alphabetical order. The Library has two types of catalogues namely card catalogues and online public access catalogues (OPACs) that uses computers. Card catalogues situated near the main entrance, contain records for books acquired from Bunda College of Agriculture inception to 1990 when computers were first used. The card catalogue is in two parts: *Author/Title and Subject catalogues*. The cards contain bibliographical details of an item such as author(s)/editor(s), publisher, place of publication, date, imprint, physical description, class mark and subject(s) the item covers. Class mark is the location of an item in the Library. Cards in the catalogue are filed in alphabetical order.

Students Searching for Library materials using a Card Catalogue

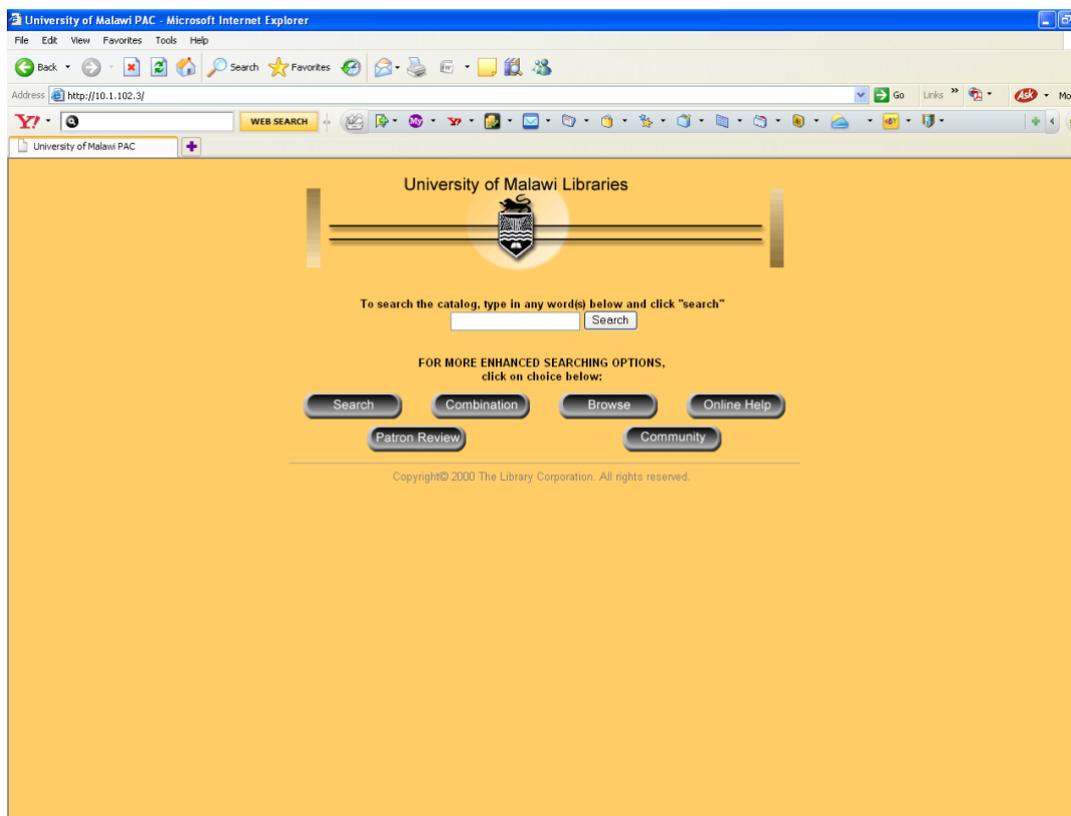


From 1990 to 2001 the Library created online databases for its books and pamphlets using a database management system called CDS/ISIS. The databases contain bibliographical details of an item.

Online Database



Bunda College Library Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)



In using a Library catalogue, a user takes note of the class mark before s/he retrieves an item. If a record for an item is not available in the catalogues ask Library staff. Likewise if an item is not available on its location in the Library, seek Library staff's assistance.

Books in the Library are classified using a Library of Congress Classification Scheme. Library of Congress Classification Scheme divides knowledge/subjects under the universe into letters from A–Z.

ONLINE INFORMATION RESOURCES

The Library has access to various electronic information resources. Some of the resources are for free whilst others the Library subscribes to. The Library has produced a list of all the electronic resources available to Bunda College of Agriculture Library users. The list provides the name of the resource, a brief description of the resource and universal resource locator (URL), and where necessary username and password. Almost all the resources are IP (Internet Protocol) authenticated as such users do not require inserting a username or password. Most of these resources are supposed to be used within Bunda College of Agriculture campus. A list of the electronic resources available to Bunda College of Agriculture Library is available on the Library's Information Desk.

Activity



SEMINAR ACTIVITY: Search Tactics

With the assistance of a Library staff, search the following book: *Fundamental of Organic Chemistry* by T.W. Grahams Solomons in the card cataloguing. Using OPAC, search for the same book.

With the assistance of a Library staff search in at least two electronic resources the term: ***pasture management***.

Task


**CHAPTER THREE:
Assessment Task**

1. Using any of the Library catalogues give class marks of books by:
 - a. Roling, Niels G. titled '***Extension Science Information: Systems in Agricultural Development***'.
 - b. Bennion, Marion titled '***Introductory Foods***'.
2. Mention three things you need to know before you start searching for information / a book in the Library.
3. Using any of the Library catalogues give the title of a book by:
 - a. Palalia, Diane E. A
 - b. Edited by Owen, J.B. and Oxford, R.E.E.
 - c. Ngalande Banda, Elias E.
4. In which collection do you find books with a class mark that is preceded by?:
 - REF
 - MAL
5. Give author(s) and title of the books whose class marks are:
 - a. QP 31.2 SCH 1990
 - b. REF SB613 .S6 BRO 2006

RESOURCE


Additional Enrichment Resources

The following resources are highly recommended and will offer enrichment to your studies:

NAME	WEB ADDRESS / CD REF
How-To-Study.com, <i>Using Reference Sources</i>	http://www.how-to-study.com/study-skills/en/studying/41/using-reference-sources/
About.com, <i>Using a Library</i>	http://homeworktips.about.com/od/libraryresearch/a/using.htm
Wikipedia, <i>Dewey Decimal Classification</i>	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dewey_Decimal_Classification
VUMA! Portal, <i>Research</i>	http://www.vuma.ac.za/drupal/?q=content/research-0



4

Listening Skills

The Theory of Listening

Active Listening is one of the communication skills that you will need to acquire here at Bunda College in order to succeed in your studies. Various skills relate to Active Listening; these include **note-taking, effective questioning, non-verbal communication plus semantic markers.**

However, you will find that all these skills are relevant and necessary in other sections of this text, such as reading skills, study skills etc. In study skills for instance, you have covered some topics on note making.

Note taking is a crucial skill and one that we would encourage you to develop as early as possible in your studies here at Bunda. It is very much about listening actively as opposed to passively. This means making sense of what you are listening to at that particular point in time and keeping a record for yourself, a record that you can go back to later on, whether for revising for examinations or for making links with later parts of the course.

Effective Questioning is another important skill under Active Listening that you need to acquire here at Bunda in order to coordinate your study life and activities and the work of other people. Most of the times you need to know more of what other people are thinking, wanting, planning and you want to understand your lecturers' explanations thoroughly.

Nonverbal Communication is also one of the most important skills you need to master. It is comprised of various important elements, such as good posture that will help you to concentrate more on the speaker and avoid other distractions such as dozing, a talkative neighbour, etc. Likewise, it will give the speakers motivation to speak because they know you are interested; gesture a non-vocal bodily movement is intended to express meaning. Be aware of the gestures you show as you listen to others, such as nodding of the head, they help the speaker to know if you are following the speech or conversation. In addition, observe speakers' gestures, such as speech related gestures; they are used to emphasize the message that is being communicated; eye contact is the meeting of the eyes between two individuals. It is important to maintain eye contact with your lecturers and speakers, as eye contact has a positive impact on the retention and recall of information and may promote more efficient learning and finally, semantic markers, usually phrases that cue speakers' gestures. Active listening requires, taking full attention to even the small aspects, such as semantic markers. Small as they may appear, they play a very significant role as they point out to the speaker's meaning.

In order to benefit more during lectures and conversations in general, we require you to learn these skills and develop them as early as possible. In so doing, you will acknowledge how easy it will be for you to acquire the information you need to succeed in your studies here at Bunda. Active Listening requires the use of all these skills in every learning context, both in the classroom and outside. Nevertheless, there are obstacles and / barriers to active listening that you need to be aware of and know how to handle them when they arise.

In this chapter, you will learn about the skills that will help you become a successful active listener. These are introduced above and discussed in detail below.

OUTCOMES

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Distinguish types of listening.
- Apply the appropriate type of listening in a listening situation.
- Take comprehensive and accurate notes.
- Ask questions more creatively and open-ended.
- Observe speakers' nonverbal signals.
- Apply all necessary nonverbal skills in every listening situation.
- Maintain eye contact with conversational partners.
- Maintain good posture when listening to speakers.
- Recognize different types of barriers to active listening

WHAT IS ACTIVE LISTENING?

Active listening is a structured way of listening and responding to others. It focuses attention on the speaker. Active listening is intent to "listen for meaning". Active Listening encompass three major important points:

1. *Purpose*

When interacting, people often are not listening attentively to one another. They may be distracted, thinking about other things, or thinking about what they are going to say next, (the latter case is particularly true in conflict situations or disagreements).

Suspending one's own frame of reference and suspending judgment are important in order to attend fully to the speaker.

2. *Tactics*

It is important to observe the other person's behaviour and body language. Having the ability to interpret a person's body language allows the listener to develop a more accurate understanding of the speaker's words. Having heard, the listener may then paraphrase the speaker's words. It is important to note that the listener is not necessarily agreeing with the speaker—simply stating what was said. In emotionally charged communications, the listener may listen for feelings. Thus, rather than merely repeating what the speaker has said, the active listener might describe the underlying emotion ("You seem to feel angry" or "You seem to feel frustrated, is that because...?").

Individuals in conflict often contradict one another. This has the effect of denying the validity of the other person's position. Either party may react defensively, or they may lash out or withdraw. On the other hand, if one finds that the other party understands, an atmosphere of cooperation can be created. This increases the possibility of collaborating and resolving the conflict.

In the book *Leader Effectiveness Training*, Thomas Gordon states, "Active Listening is certainly not complex. Listeners need only restate, in their own language, their impression of the expression of the sender.... Still, learning to do Active Listening well is a rather difficult task..."

3. *Use*

Active listening is used in a wide variety of situations, including tutoring, medical workers talking to patients, HIV counselling, helping suicidal persons, management, counselling and journalistic settings. In groups, it may aid in reaching consensus. It may also be used in casual conversation to build understanding, though this can be interpreted as condescending.

The benefits of active listening include getting people to open up, avoiding misunderstandings, resolving conflict and building trust. In a medical context, benefits may include increased patient satisfaction, improving cross-cultural communication, improved outcomes, or decreased litigation.

TYPES OF LISTENING:

There are two major types of listening, informational and reflective.

1. *Informational Listening*

The process of informational listening focuses on the ability of an individual to understand a speaker's message. It is a huge part of everyday life, and failing to understand the concept of informational listening can be very detrimental to one's contribution to society, and indeed, detrimental to quality of life in general. Much of the listening people engage in on a regular basis, falls under the blanket of listening for information. In the office, people listen to their superiors for instructions about what they are to do. At school, students listen to teachers for information that they are expected to understand for quizzes and tests. In all areas of life, informational listening plays a huge role in human communication.

2. *Reflective listening*

This is a communication strategy involving two key steps: seeking to understand a speaker's idea, then offering the idea back to the speaker, to confirm the idea has been understood correctly. It attempts to "reconstruct what the client is thinking and feeling and to relay this understanding back to the client". Reflective listening is a more specific strategy than the more general methods of active listening. It arose from Carl Rogers' school of client-centred therapy in counselling theory.

When listening for information, you need to remember the purpose for which you are listening. This requires you to distinguish between the following subcategories of informational and reflective listening: discriminative, critical or evaluative, therapeutic or empathic, appreciative and self-listening.

Discriminative listening covers the conscious reception of all pertinent auditory and visual stimuli. This may include listening for comprehension where, basic efforts on the part of the listener to retain and understand a speaker's message are necessary.

Critical or evaluative listening describes situations where the listener makes judgments about the speaker's message. As such, critical listening often accompanies persuasive speaking. The critical listener attends closely to such matters as speaker and evidentiary source credibility and the structure of and support for the speaker's arguments.

In contrast, **therapeutic or empathic listening** emphasizes understanding a message from the speaker's perspective in situations where the speaker needs to be heard or talk through an issue. In these moments, the listener provides the minimum necessary direction for the

speaker's perspective to be clear. Counselling and psychology provide excellent exemplars of this type of listening.

Appreciative listening occurs when we listen for enjoyment, aesthetics, or sensory impressions, such as consuming a television sit-com or occupying ourselves with music.

Self-listening often gets neglected, but conscious engagement with one's own physical reactions, attitudinal biases and prejudices, or mental markers while listening comprises a helpful listening category. Such reflection mostly takes place in one's head, but still requires conscious application techniques similar to those one would apply while listening to the talk of another person.

Now that you understand what Active Listening is, it is time to look at the various skills that make up Active Listening; these include; note-taking, effective questioning and non-verbal communication. Let us look at these skills one by one.

Note-taking

Note taking is one of the active listening skills that you will need to acquire here at Bunda College in order to record accurately what you hear in lectures. However, you will find that this skill is relevant and necessary in other chapters of this text, such as reading skills, study skills etc. In study skills for instance, you have covered some topics on note making. It is important that you learn the difference between note making and note taking.

Note taking is a crucial skill and one that we would encourage you to develop as early as possible in your studies. It is very much about listening actively as opposed to passively. This means making sense of what you are listening to at that particular point in time and keeping a record for yourself, a record that you can go back to later on, whether for revising for examinations or for making links with later parts of the course. Therefore, taking notes does not imply simply taking things down more or less word for word, of what the speaker says. Rather, it is a selection and it needs to be organised and it will include the most important or interesting parts of the lecture that you have been listening to.

Active Listening requires concentration, you need to give all your attention to the lecturer and where appropriate, you have to summarize and reflect on what they say. You also need to be aware of the factors that may be personal and environmental that can interfere with your ability to receive and interpret signals. These may include, among other things, clarity of speech, noise outside the room and room temperature.

HOW TO TAKE NOTES⁴

Trying to get everything down is very time consuming. One way of both cutting down the time spent taking notes and keeping them to an appropriate length is to make use of symbols, shorthand and abbreviations. You might already know some, to which you can add others that you make up throughout your time as a student. We use a whole range of symbols and abbreviations some of which are reproduced right.

In addition, we use our own form of shorthand, which sometimes entails leaving out vowels or cutting off the end of words. This method is particularly effective where longer words are concerned. For example, concentrated becomes cone, advantage and disadvantage become adv. and disadv. respectively, and consequently becomes consq. Developing your own version that makes sense to you can be extremely time efficient and after a while it becomes a language of your own which flows from the pen easily.

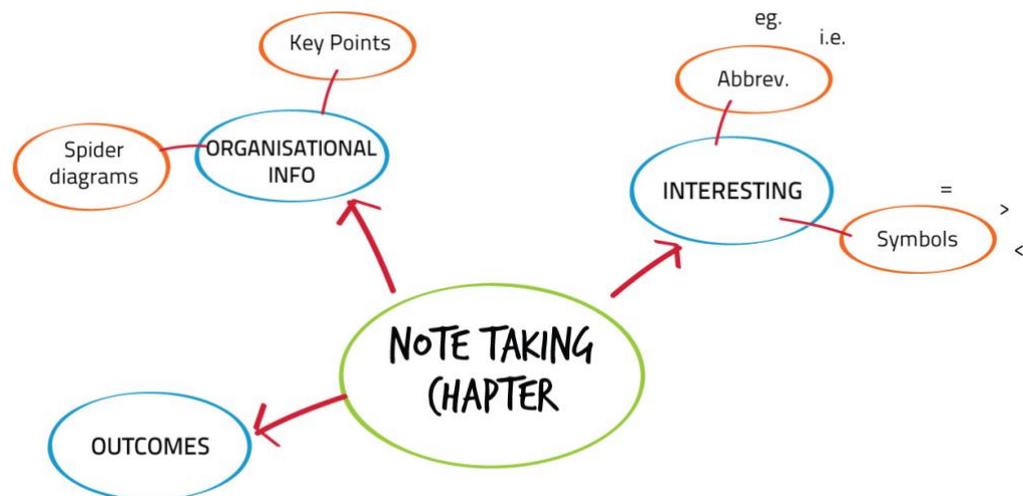
=	EQUALS
IN+	IN ADDITION
<	LESS THAN
>	GREATER THAN
↑	INCREASE
↓	DECREASE
cf.	COMPARED WITH
C	WITH
eg	FOR EXAMPLE
ie	THAT IS
//	IN PARALLEL TO
i.r.t.	IN RELATION TO
re	REGARDING
.∴	THEREFORE
→	LEADING TO/RESULTS IN

⁴ Adapted from OpenLearn (2009) Reading and Note Taking – Preparation for study: Open University. Accessed 2nd June 2009 at <http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/mod/resource/view.php?id=190358>. Copyrighted as CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0

HOW TO ORGANISE NOTES

Organising notes happens after the lecture, as soon as you find time. You can make notes in an organised way that is useful to you in several ways. Here at Bunda, we encourage you to use the Cornell Note Taking System (refer to Study Skills Chapter, Note Taking section), identify a list of key points and draw a diagram. Apart from using the Cornell Note Taking System to organise notes, you can use it during the actual process of taking notes from the lecturers. However, the following two strategies also work:

1. **Identify for yourself a list of key points;** probably no more than five or six, that is what we would imagine from an hour lecture. Then under each of those, you might put some subsidiary points or examples that illustrate what these main points are and so in that way you are organising your notes as you make them and when you come back to them, they are much easier to understand and they are much easier to remember later on.
2. **Draw a diagram.** You need to have a piece of paper on which you will draw circles or boxes and put some of the central questions or themes into the shapes. Then make links between ideas in one circle and another big idea in a different circle. You could have little subsidiary circles that make further links. (See diagram below). The emphasis is to identify some sort of pattern or organization.



In this section, the emphasis is on taking notes using your own words, using your own thoughts in that process, but it is also important that you keep reflecting on how you take notes. It is also important to develop a formula that works for you. As you keep on refining that process, you will realize that the notes you are taking towards the end of this course, are rather different from the notes you are taking now.

Activity



SELF STUDY ACTIVITY: Lecture Notes Evaluation

In order to check your progress in acquiring the note taking skill, you need to sit down and do some self-evaluation. Here are some activities that you can start with:

1. Take your notebooks and check your notes; whether you have incomplete sentences and instances where the logic in the sentence is lost.

2. After that, you should check how short your notes are. Your notes need to be short, because it will be easy for you to revise as you prepare for examinations, long notes are tedious.
3. While looking at your notes, ask yourself the following questions:
 - Do I use abbreviations and symbols when taking notes?
 - What formula do I use to organise my notes?
4. If you do not have a formula that you use to organise the notes, this probably means that you have not revisited your notes. Ask yourself; when was the last time I revisited my notes.

Activity



SEMINAR ACTIVITY: Comparisons

Take the notes that you evaluated above and this time, meet in your groups and do the following:

1. Compare the different ways each one has used to organise the notes.
2. Compare the central question or themes each one has extracted from the notes.
3. Compare if you have similar subsidiary points.
4. Debate on the issues in 2 and 3 and come up with the best central questions or themes and subsidiary points.
5. Write the central themes and subsidiary points individually in your notebooks. These are your main ideas from that lecture.

Note taking is one of the skills in active listening. It is a crucial skill and one that develops over time. In this section, among other things, you have learnt how to keep up with the lecturers' speed, by using abbreviations, taking the important parts of the lecture and avoid copying word for word. You have also learnt how to organise your notes using the Cornell Note Taking System, identification of the main points and drawing a diagram. It is very important to keep practicing using the ideas spelt out in this section in order to perfect your note taking skill. This will help you excel in your studies here at Bunda College.

Effective Questioning

As we wrestle with each new challenge in life, we ask others and ourselves a continuous stream of questions. Asking questions is one of the main ways that we try to get a grip on whatever is going on, but we are usually not very conscious of the quality of questions we ask. Asking questions is one of the important skills within Active Listening. Asking questions helps you to focus or concentrate more on what the speaker is saying; it helps you when making a summary of what you heard, when reflecting and interpreting the material. However, not all questions can help you get the information you are looking for. In this section, you will look at closed questions and open-ended questions and see which ones you need to attach great value. There are two major categories of questions:

CLOSED QUESTIONS

Closed questions are those that invite yes/no responses. People usually ask these types of questions but actually, they tend to shut people up rather than letting them open up.

Compare the following two questions:

1. "Did you like the food/movie/speech/doctor?"
2. "How did you like that food/movie/speech/doctor?"

The first one is an example of closed question. It requires you to answer either yes or no. The second one is an example of open-ended question and it will evoke a more detailed response than the first one.

Also, consider the difference between two versions of the same question, as each might occur in a conversation between two people in a close relationship:

1. "Well, honey, do you want to go ahead and rent that apartment we saw yesterday?"
2. "Well, honey, how do you feel about us renting that apartment we saw yesterday?"

The first version suggests a "yes" or "no" answer, it however, favours "yes" and does not invite much discussion. A person hearing such a question may feel pressured to reach a decision, and may not make the best decision.

Both versions imply a suggestion to rent the apartment, but the second question is much more inviting of a wide range of responses. Even if our goal is to persuade, we cannot do a good job of that unless we address our listener's concerns, and we would not understand those concerns unless we ask questions that invite discussion. When you are under time pressure, it is tempting to push people to make yes/no decisions. Nevertheless, pressing forward without addressing people's concerns has played a key role in many on-the-job accidents and catastrophes.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Open-ended questions are those that allow for a wide range and detailed responses. Using open-ended questions in your studies here at Bunda and life in general could help you in:

- solving problems in a way that meets more of everyone's needs,
- getting to know and understand subjects better and people around and
- creating richer and more satisfying conversations, both academic and social.

In the sub-section above you have come across two examples of open-ended questions. Below, are more examples of open-ended questions:

- "How comfortable are you with Plan B?"
- "How could I modify this proposal to meet more of your requirements?"
- "What kind of information do you need in order to go forward?"
- "What do you think about moving the office to the Aquaculture department?"
- "How are you feeling about all of this?"
- "How ready are you to ...?"

ASKING QUESTIONS MORE CREATIVELY

What sort of questions are truly worth asking? When we ask questions, we are using a powerful language tool to focus conversational attention and guide our interaction with others.

Nevertheless, many of the questions we have learned to ask are totally fruitless and self-defeating. Such as this question asked by a parent to a pregnant teen; "Why!? Why have you done this to us?" In general, it will be more fruitful to ask "how" questions about the future

rather than “why” questions about the past, but there are many more creative possibilities as well. Of the billions of questions we might ask, not all are equally fruitful or illuminating; not all are equally helpful in solving problems together.

Learning to ask conscious, fruitful questions of others, of oneself, and about one’s situation or task, is an important part of the training of many professionals: psychotherapists, engineers, architects, mathematicians, doctors and others. All of these groups ask deeply penetrating questions. They do so in order to apply a body of knowledge to solve problems in a way that respects the unique elements of each new situation, person, piece of land, broken leg, canyon to be bridged, and so on.

QUESTION ASKING: A TOOL FOR EVERYONE!

The many examples of exploratory questions given by Donald Schön in *The Reflective Practitioners*, suggest that we use questions to make a kind of ‘space’ in our minds for things we do not know yet (in the sense of understand), or have not decided yet, or have not invented yet, or have not discovered yet. “Hmmm,” an architect might think, “how could we arrange this building so that it follows the contour of the land?” The answer will involve a complex mix of discovering, inventing, understanding and deciding, all pulled together partly by the creative power of the question.

This thinking process is easier to imagine when we use visual examples, such as designing a house to blend into a hillside (but not cause a landslide!). However, these same elements are present in all our problem-solving activities. Asking questions can allow us to start thinking about the unknown, because questions focus our attention, and provide a theme for continued exploration. Questions are like the mountain climber’s hook-on-the-end-of-a-rope: we throw the hook into the unknown, and we pull ourselves into the future. However, we need to learn how and where to throw, so that we pull ourselves into a better future.

Asking conscious, creative and exploratory questions is not just for professionals; it is for all of us as students. We are each engaged in the process of trying to build a better life, a better student, a better family, a better workplace, a better world, etc. We can apply in our studies some of the styles of creative questioning that engineers use to build better bridges, psychotherapists use to help their clients and negotiators use to reach agreements.

As far as we know, there is no straightforward set of rules about how to ask questions, which are more helpful or more tuned to the needs of a particular situation. However, you can get an intuitive sense of how to do it by studying a wide range of creative questions. The seminar activity below will give you a chance to try out some of your best questions ever asked.

Activity



SELF STUDY ACTIVITY: Open Ended Questions

In order to practice and gain success in the skill of writing open-ended questions we would like you to complete the following tasks:

1. Take each of these examples of open-ended questions and rewrite each question as an open-ended question that includes some content from your life:
 - “How comfortable are you with Plan B?”
 - “How could I modify this proposal to meet more of your requirements?”
 - “What kind of information do you need in order to go forward?”
 - “What do you think about moving the office to the Aquaculture department?”
 - “How are you feeling about all of this?”
 - “How ready are you to ...?”

Activity



**SEMINAR ACTIVITY:
Comparisons**

The list of questions presented below contains the most intense and creative questions we have been able to find, drawn from the works of many deep question-askers. Next to each question in the table below, we have given the field in which the question was encountered.

- In your groups, take each question on the list and imagine a situation in your life in which you might ask that question. (In real life, it works better if you let people know what kind of conversation you want to have, before you start a conversation that includes challenging questions or intimate inquiries.)
- As a group brainstorm on possible situations then,
- Each member of the group should come up with their own answers,
- Compare your answers and appreciate the similarities and differences that may have been generated.

Question	Source Fields	When and where you could ask these questions in your own life
1. How does this feel to me?	Gestalt therapy and general psychotherapy.	
2. What (am I/are you) experiencing right now?		
3. How could I have done that differently? How could you have done that differently?	General psychotherapy	
4. What could (I / you) learn from this... (situation, mistake, painful experience)?		
5. What kind of explanations do I give myself when bad events happen?	Martin Seligman’s research on learned helplessness, optimism and explanatory style 6. Conflict resolution, negotiation and management.	
6. How easy would it be for me to view this difficult situation as temporary, specific to one location and partly the result of chance?		
7. What is the most important thing that I want in this situation?		
8. What solutions might bring everyone more of what they want?		

Asking questions is one of the skills that you would need here at Bunda in order to get other people to clarify their points and explain more. However, not every question brings up these results. Some questions, closed questions, tend to shut people up. If you are fond of using closed questions, this is the time to realize that they will only waste your precious time here at Bunda and elsewhere. Go for the open-ended questions that open people up. These are the questions to which you should attach great value. Remember, questions are like the mountain climber's hook-on-the-end-of-a-rope: we throw the hook into the unknown, and we pull ourselves into the future. However, we need to learn how and where to throw, so that we pull ourselves into a better future! Asking questions is everyone's tool, it is your tool; grab it now! You will see how it will help you succeed here at Bunda!

Nonverbal Communication

Another important aspect of active listening is nonverbal communication (NVC). NVC is usually understood as the process of communication through sending and receiving wordless messages. NVC can be communicated through gesture and touch, by body language or posture, by facial expression and eye contact. NVC can be communicated through object communication such as clothing, hairstyles or even architecture, symbols and info-graphics. Humans send and interpret such signals unconsciously. Speech contains nonverbal elements known as paralanguage, including voice quality, emotion and speaking style, as well as prosodic features such as rhythm, intonation and stress. Dance is also regarded as a nonverbal communication. Likewise, written texts have nonverbal elements such as handwriting style, spatial arrangement of words, or the use of emoticons.

POSTURE

Posture can be used to determine a participant's degree of attention or involvement, the difference in status between communicators, and the level of fondness a person has for the other communicator. Posture is understood through such indicators as direction of lean, body orientation, arm position, and body openness.

Studies investigating the impact of posture on interpersonal relationships suggest that mirror-image congruent postures, where one person's left side is parallel to the other's right side, leads to favourable perception of communicators and positive speech; a person who displays a forward lean or a decrease in a backwards lean also signify positive sentiment during communication.

Leaning forward also helps you to concentrate more on the speaker and avoid other distractions such as dozing or a talkative neighbour. Likewise, it gives the speaker motivation to speak because they know you are interested. In this way, you both benefit from the communication. In order to listen actively, try leaning forward. This way you will be physically and psychologically active in every lecture you take and you will excel in your studies here at Bunda.

GESTURE

A gesture is a non-vocal bodily movement intended to express meaning. Gestures may be articulated with the hands, arms or body, and include movements of the head, face and eyes, such as winking, nodding, or rolling ones' eyes.

Gestures can also be categorised as either speech-independent or speech-related. Speech-independent gestures are dependent upon culturally accepted interpretation and have a direct verbal translation. A wave hello or a peace sign are examples of speech-independent gestures. Speech related gestures are used in parallel with verbal speech; this form of nonverbal communication is used to emphasize the message that is being communicated.

Semantic markers

Usually the speaker will make it clear which ideas s/he wishes to emphasize by the way in which s/he present them. In other words, the main ideas are cued. The speaker does something (a facial expression and /or gesture) that points out to her/his meaning. This guides the listener on the action they must take. Semantic markers are usually phrases that cue speakers' gestures. For example,

- I would like to emphasize ...
- The general point you must remember is...
- It is important to note that...
- I repeat that...
- The next point is crucial to my argument...

Often also, examples and points of lesser importance are cued. The speaker may use such phrases as,

- Let me give you some example...
- For instance...
- I might...
- To illustrate this point...

Active listening requires noticing even the smallest aspects of communication such as semantic markers. Small as they may appear they play a very significant role in pointing out the speaker's meaning.

EYE CONTACT

Eye contact is the meeting of the eyes between two individuals. The study of the role of eyes in nonverbal communication is sometimes referred to as oculusics. Eye contact can indicate interest, attention and involvement. Gaze comprises the actions of looking while talking, looking while listening, amount of gaze, and frequency of glances, patterns of fixation, pupil dilation, and blink rate. In human beings, eye contact is a form of nonverbal communication and is thought to have a large influence on social behaviour. Eye contact plays a role in effective communication.

Communicating attention

A person's direction of gaze may indicate to others where his or her attention lies. Everyone knows what attention is. It is the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought. Focalization, concentration and consciousness are of its essence. It implies withdrawal from some things in order to deal effectively with others, and is a condition which has a real opposite in the confused, dazed, scatterbrained state which in French is called *distracted*.

Facilitating learning

Recent studies suggest that eye contact has a positive impact on the retention and recall of information and may promote more efficient learning. We get useful information from the face when listening to someone.

Good posture, paying attention to speakers' gestures and semantic markers and looking into the speaker's eyes, facilitate and promote learning. Paying attention to what your lecturer and/or speaker is saying and doing is key to success in your studies and life in general.

Barriers to Effective Listening

All elements of communication, including listening, may be affected by barriers that can impede the flow of conversation between individuals. It is important for you to know the barriers to listening, so that you are able to deal with them. The following are the major types of barriers to listening: shift response, interrupting, glazing over, pseudo listening, ambushing and content-only response.

SHIFT RESPONSE

Shift response occurs when one competes for attention in a conversation by changing the subject in order to favour oneself. The opposite of this occurrence is support response, which is constructive to appropriate listening. Both genders use shift response in conversation, but men utilize shift response more often than women. The overuse of this practice is an obstacle to competent listening because it leads to conversational narcissism, which marks inefficiency in the ability to share interest in the others' topics in conversations because of an excess of shift response and a deficiency of support response.

INTERRUPTING

Interrupting is something we all do. It's natural for listeners to evaluate a speaker, but our impressions should not interfere with our listening. The content (what the speaker is saying) should be judged on its own value to you and the speaker. Sometimes you may be tempted to tune out the speaker because of his or her appearance. If an instructor is sloppily dressed and careless about their appearance, you may conclude that what is being said isn't worth listening to. Avoid the temptation and do not let your personal feelings interfere with your learning.

GLAZING OVER

Glazing over occurs when the listener's attention wanders, dozes off or daydreaming begins.

PSEUDO LISTENING

This happens when someone pretends to listen during a conversation and attempts to disguise inattention. Typical responses include "Mm-Hmm", "Really?", and "Uh huh". During this time of inattention, the pseudo listener is unfocused, therefore, it can be very frustrating for the speaker.

AMBUSHING

Ambushing is an example of negative listening in which the listener ignores the strength of the message, instead looking for weaknesses in order to attack what the speaker says. Although the listener is attentive, the problem stems from the fact that responses are rebuttals and refutations of the speaker's message.

CONTENT-ONLY RESPONSES

This type of response occurs when one focuses on the content of the message, but ignores the emotional side. This type of response does not recognize feelings and comprehends only the literal meaning of messages.

Activity



SELF STUDY ACTIVITY:
Open Ended Questions

1. Make a copy of the following list. After the next lecture, decide if the behaviour described in the first column is true of you. Yes answers indicate the need for a change in your behaviour in order to be a better listener and overcome common barriers.

I usually think of this class as boring.	YES	NO
I pretended to be paying attention.	YES	NO
I didn't like the instructor's mannerisms (e.g. pacing, phrasing, cough).	YES	NO
I tried to make notes on everything that was said in class.	YES	NO
I tried to write my notes in complete sentences.	YES	NO
The subject for this class was way too difficult for me.	YES	NO
Some personal problems kept my mind busy during the lecture.	YES	NO
I didn't waste paper in copying down information from the chalkboard or the overhead transparencies	YES	NO
I was really angry about something the instructor said in class	YES	NO
I definitely enjoyed distractions (e.g. late student, books falling) more than the lecture.	YES	NO
I spent much of the lecture having a good daydream.	YES	NO
I didn't really understand the lecture but asking questions is not my thing.	YES	NO

2. In order to gain success in acquiring good posture, maintaining eye contact and paying attention to speakers' gestures, here is evaluation exercise that you can try out. Next time you attend a lecture, ask yourself the following questions:
 - Am I seated appropriately (congruent) and close enough to the lecture/speaker?
 - Am I leaning forward?
 - Am I able to see the lecture's face really well?
 - Am I maintaining eye contact with the lecture/speaker?
 - Have I focused all my attention on the speaker's message?
 - Am I acknowledging the points in the speech non-verbally; nodding when I am following or shaking my head when I cannot follow?
 - Am I actively responding to questions and directions?

All questions above require you to have a 'Yes' response. However, if you have a 'No' response to some of the questions, list them down. In your free time, before another lecture if possible, try to identify any problems that made it difficult to do what you were supposed to do.

- After identifying the problems, sit down and try to find some workable solutions for each of the problems.

- Before the following lecture, go through the list of solutions to remind yourself.
- During the lecture, apply all the solutions to the problems.
- After the lecture, sit down and check how it all worked out.
- Continue this evaluation exercise, until you are able to answer 'Yes' to all questions above, after each and every lecture.

This is a constant evaluation exercise. If you get into the habit of doing this, you will acknowledge how easy it is to listen meaningfully to lectures and gain success in your studies!

Summary

In this chapter, you have learnt about the skills that will help you become a successful active listener. Note taking is one of the skills in active listening. It is a crucial skill and one that develops over time. In this chapter, among other things, you have learnt how to keep up with the lecturer's speed, by using abbreviations, taking the important parts of the lecture and avoid copying word for word. Also by now, you have learnt how to organise your notes using the Cornell Note Taking System, identification of the main points and drawing a spider diagram.

In addition, question asking has been discussed. It is also one of the skills that you need here at Bunda in order to get other people clarify their points and explain more. However, not every question brings up these results. Some questions, closed questions, tend to shut people up. It is clear from this chapter that you need to go for the open-ended questions that open people up. These are the questions to which you should attach great value. Also most importantly, is to learn how and where to throw the questions, so that we pull ourselves into a better future!

Furthermore, good posture, paying attention to speakers' gestures and semantic markers and looking into the speaker's eyes, facilitate and promote learning. These are some aspects of nonverbal communication that we have covered in this chapter. Emphasis has been put on paying attention to what your lecture and/ speaker is saying and doing as it is key to success in your studies and life in general. This is why we have listed the common obstacles/barriers to listening; by being aware of the barriers that exist in conversational situations, one is able to avoid them and/or find remedies. In order to succeed in your studies, here at Bunda, you need to employ all the aspects of Active Listening discussed in this chapter as these aspects do not work in isolation!

Task



CHAPTER FOUR: Assessment Task

Note taking

- Read the following passage below entitled 'Education - For What?' from *Secondary English, Book 3*.
- Identify and write down two central themes
- Identify and write eight subsidiary points.

EDUCATION – FOR WHAT?

There are three kinds of education in Africa. There is the old tradition; there are the remains of the colonial schooling, which varied according to the way the European power, saw African requirements; and there is the post-Independence attempt to find an education suitable for the needs of modern Africa.

In Malawi, the merits of the traditional education that prepared youths for their role in society are now widely recognized by eminent educationists. Much of this education was informal. The child learnt through his relationship with his parents, and other people in the community. Much of the child's education was concerned with acquisition of productive skills. As soon as Malawian children were weaned, they began to learn useful skills by observing and imitating their parents. The girls learnt domestic work from their mothers, while fathers and male relatives taught boys to hunt and herd. Most Malawian tribes sent boys from the age of five onwards to help the older children herd animals. Later they were organised in age groups that went hunting, fishing, and learnt to defend themselves and their community. Youths in certain tribes like Ngoni were required to pass elaborate initiation ceremonies before they were called to the royal kraal for military training. This included long marches and other endurance tests, such as catching a bull by the horns and tail, and knocking it down.

In all tribal communities, as well as passing on skills, traditional education transmitted values of loyalty, unity and respect for elders or those above one in an organization. From an early age, the child was taught to maintain the correct relationship with others, the dead as well as the living. (The interdependent relationship between the living and the ancestors was constantly emphasized because it formed the basis of our religion).

The unity and interest of society as a whole were central to our philosophy of life. Land ownership was communal, although land use and grazing were practiced individually. However, there was an insistence in sharing what was available as widely as possible.

This traditional form of education had the advantage of preparing a child for life in the community; in general, it did not encourage him to be ambitious or independent or teach him the needs of the modern world. In the colonial years, the mission schools taught the kind of things that children in Europe were taught, and these often had little to do with African needs. In Nyerere's world, colonial education was 'motivated by a desire to inculcate the values of the colonial society and to train individuals for the service of the colonial state'.

The state interest in education in Malawi was in those days based on the needs for cheap labour for the plantations, mines and manufacturing industries within the three British colonies of Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe (then called Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia respectively): hence the comparatively well-developed primary school education system.

The secondary school system was much smaller, dictated mainly by the need for local clerks and junior officials. There was thus a heavy emphasis on subservient attitudes and white-collar skills. Yet paradoxically, the products of these schools tended to be indoctrinated with ideas of superiority and elitism, thus dividing them from the mass of the people.

In sum, the kinds of education provided, served the purpose of disengaging young people from traditional economy, which was self-sufficient, and pushing them into the labour market.

In the post-Independence era, African needs are being rethought. Not all African countries approach the problem of education from the same point of view, but they all share very similar practical concerns. For example, how many universities should a country have, when half of the age group may not gain formal education at all? Highly trained engineers are needed for the countries power stations and industries, yet Africa also needs men skilled in the relatively simple skills of wooden bridge construction, laying roads, building houses, servicing vehicles and railway locomotives, and so on. Civil servants especially need a good secondary education if they are to deal with matters ranging from organising finance for a new agricultural scheme to collecting information for government approval of a new road system. To respond to these needs, a developing continent must clearly be practical.

While an expanding education system is therefore necessary, it also has drawbacks. In many countries in Africa, secondary and college education means that young people have to leave rural areas for the towns, and later, as men, they are not returning to work on the farms and produce the food: the opportunities, amenities and leisure attractions of the towns are too tempting. Thus, a huge country like Nigeria is

currently a net importer of food. It is for reasons like this that, in Malawi, attempts have been made to develop education in the rural areas.

2. Question Asking

(a) Adapt each of the following yes/no questions into an open-ended question.

(i) On talking with a person who looks disappointed...

“So you didn’t like that, huh?”

(ii) (A pilot to a new co-pilot...)

“Did you know how to fly this thing?”

(iii) (A nurse to a patient...)

“Have you been taking your medication?”

(iv) (Parent to teen...)

“Don’t you think it would be better if you did your homework first?”

(b) Write down what problems could arise from each of the yes/no questions above.

(c) Create a table with two columns and in the 1st column record ten yes/no questions that you have encountered in your life that would have been better stated as open-ended questions. Record your open-ended question next to each yes/no question in the 2nd column.

RESOURCE



Additional Enrichment Resources

The following resources are highly recommended and will offer enrichment to your studies:

RESOURCE	LOCATION
How-to-Study.com, <i>Good Listening in Class</i>	http://www.how-to-study.com/study-skills/en/notetaking/26/good-listening-in-class/
WikiHow, <i>How to Solve Problems Using Mind Maps</i>	http://www.wikihow.com/Solve-Problems-Using-Mind-Maps
WikiHow, <i>How to Take Notes Quickly</i>	http://www.wikihow.com/Form-a-Study-Group

Glossary



These words and terms are used in this chapter.

WORD	DEFINITION
Evoke	Stir up or induce something
Wrestle	Struggle of fighting challenges
Value	The rate of importance you attach to something
Psychotherapist	A person whom you consult for the problems of the mind
Architect	A person who does planning and designing as his job
Gestalt	<i>Die Gestalt</i> is a German word for form or shape. It is used in English to refer to a concept of 'wholeness'
Illuminate	Revealing or helpful
Canyon	A gap or rift
Intuitive	Something that is inborn or natural

Cornell	American University in New York State, USA.
Formula	A defined way of doing things
Grasp	To understand with the mind
Passive listening	A way of listening in which listeners do nothing to assist their memory later
Theme	Major idea in a passage or a piece of writing
Shorthand	A method of writing that uses abbreviations, symbols and a special letters to speed up the recording process
Subsidiary	Supporting points
Focalization	Process of putting central attention on something
Cue	Indicate or signal something
Emoticons	Pictures that show emotions
Prosodic	The accent of a syllable
Rhythm	Sound of words as you speak
Intonation	Tone of speech (the way you raise and lower words when speaking)
Stress	Pressure you put on syllables when pronouncing/saying words
Paralanguage	Nonverbal elements contained in speech
Infographics	Symbols/devices used in writing/print to convey meaning
Winking	Closing and opening an eye
Scatterbrained	Thinking of so many things that distract attention



5

Reading Skills

Introduction

Reading is one of the language skills that you will study and practice in this textbook. Remember reading is one of the most important activities any successful student does in any course of study. It is important to note that reading is an *active* process; you need to apply strategies that will enable you make sense of what you read.

The chapter aims at making you a good reader; somebody who will be able to monitor your rate of progress as you read and improve your understanding. To do this you will be introduced to a number of strategies or approaches at both surface and deeper levels. There will also be opportunities for you to practice. Specifically, you will be introduced to strategies of reading namely: skimming, scanning, SQ3R, active reading, reading for comprehension. You will also be introduced to resources within a text such as graphics conventions, symbols, layout, punctuation, figures, diagrams, tables, pictures and word roots in sciences. Then the chapter will also discuss some barriers or obstacles to effective reading.

OUTCOMES

By the end of this chapter you should be able to:

- Describe a variety of reading strategies effective readers use as they read a text for comprehension.
- Apply a chosen strategy to read an identified passage
- Discuss common barriers to effective reading
- Suggest ways of solving problems readers experience during their reading activities.
- Read any resource efficiently using any of the reading strategies discussed
- Read texts critically to help you evaluate the given information.

A good way of getting started on developing your reading skills is to think about how you read a text or passage. There are three main reading techniques that you can use: scanning, skimming, and focused reading. Let's discuss each in turn.

Scanning⁵

The technique of scanning is a useful one to use if you want to get an overview of the text you are reading as a whole – its shape, the focus of each section, the topics or key issues that are dealt with, and so on. In order to scan a piece of text you might look for sub-headings or identify key words and phrases which give you clues about its focus. Another useful method is to read the first sentence or two of each paragraph in order to get the general gist of the discussion and the way that it progresses.

Scanning is used to find a particular piece of information. Run your eyes over the text looking for the specific piece of information you need. Use scanning on schedules, meeting plans, etc. in

⁵ Adapted from OpenLearn, Available at <http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/mod/resource/view.php?id=200709&direct=1>

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order to find the specific details you require. If you see words or phrases that you don't understand, don't worry when scanning.

Scanning is what you do to find an answer to a specific question. You may run your eyes quickly down the page in a zigzag or winding S pattern. If you are looking for a name, you note capital letters. For a date, you look for numbers. Vocabulary words may be boldfaced or italicized. When you scan for information, you read only what is needed.

Examples of Scanning

- The "What's on TV" section of your newspaper.
- A telephone number in the directory
- A horoscope guide

Skimming

Skimming is used to quickly gather the most important information, or 'gist'. Run your eyes over the text, noting important information. Use skimming to quickly get up to speed on a current business situation. It's not essential to understand each word when skimming.

Skimming is covering the chapter to get some of the main ideas and a general overview of the material. It is what you do first when reading a chapter assignment. You don't read for details at this point.

Here is how you skim a chapter:

- Read the first paragraph of the chapter line by line.
- Next, read all the bold print headings starting at the beginning.
- Read the first sentence of every paragraph.
- Study any pictures, graphs, charts, and maps.
- Finally, read the last paragraph of the chapter.

As you skim, you could write down the main ideas and develop a chapter outline.

Examples of Skimming:

- The Newspaper (quickly to get the general news of the day)
- Magazines (quickly to discover which articles you would like to read in more detail)
- Business and Travel Brochures (quickly to get informed)

Focused Reading

Focused reading employs two sub skills namely extensive and intensive reading. However, the idea is to have an area of emphasis or focus. In other words, it is a purposeful kind of reading, during which you target a specific area of study. Let us examine how the two skills relate to and differ from each other.

EXTENSIVE READING

Extensive reading is used to obtain a general understanding of a subject and includes reading longer texts for pleasure, as well as business books. Use extensive reading skills to improve your general knowledge of business procedures. Do not worry if you do not understand each word.

Examples of Extensive Reading

- The latest marketing strategy book
- A novel you read before going to bed
- Magazine articles that interest you

INTENSIVE READING

Intensive reading is used on shorter texts in order to extract specific information. It includes very close accurate reading for detail. Use intensive reading skills to grasp the details of a specific situation. In this case, it is important that you understand each word, number or fact.

Examples of Intensive Reading

- A laboratory report
- A journal or newspaper article
- A business letter

Activity



SEMINAR ACTIVITY: Skimming

As a group think of various situations where you would use the three skills above and answer these questions:

- Explain when and why you would use the skimming technique in the context of your studies here at Bunda.
- Who in your seminar group is an effective reader? Discuss and justify your choice.
- To what extent is reading an *active* process?

Once you get the skimming, scanning and focussed reading down pat, you are ready to move on to the SQ3R reading method which employs each of these three techniques.

What is the SQ3R?

SQ3R was first developed by researchers at Ohio State University. SQ3R is a useful technique for understanding written information. It helps you to create a good mental framework of a subject, into which you can fit the right facts. It helps you to set study goals and prompts you to use review techniques that will help you to remember.

The acronym SQ3R stands for the five sequential techniques you should use to read a book: Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review.

Survey (S)

Scan the entire assignment to get an overview of the material. Read the headings to see the major points. Read the introductory paragraphs and the summary at the end of the chapter. Do not forget to look at the tables, pictures, etc. Remember, you are scanning the material and not actually reading every sentence.

Question (Q)

Make questions that can be answered during the reading of the material. This will give a purpose to your reading. Take a heading and turn it into a question. For example, if a heading in a chapter about Cell Division is in your biology text, make a question

by turning the title around: “How does cell division occur?” or “How many steps are involved in cell division?”

Read (R)

Now you read the material trying to find answers to your questions.

This is a careful reading, line by line. You may want to take notes or make flashcards.

Recite (R)

As you read, look away from your book and notes and try to answer

your questions. This checks your learning and helps put that information in your memory.

Review (R)

To check your memory, scan portions of the material or your notes

to verify your answers. Review the material and note the main points under each heading. This review step helps you retain the material.

The SQ3R method is just one technique that can be used to retain information you collect while reading. Students learn in different ways. Therefore they should be aware of their learning styles. Knowing whether you are an Auditory (learn by hearing), Visual (learn by seeing) or Kinaesthetic (hands-on) learner helps you to understand your best learning environment. The SQ3R technique of reading can help to enhance your reading skills no matter what your style is.

Activity



SELF STUDY ACTIVITY:

Scan, Skim and Focus

1. Scan *Action Aids* article below for the following key words and phrases. In which paragraphs do they appear:
 - Environmental management policies
 - Flood induced migration
 - Climate related activities
 - Disaster preparedness
2. Now *skim* the article and see if this time you can also work out the meanings of the terms above using the context in which they are used. Also develop a set of questions for further investigation.
3. Though you are familiar with content of the article, read it again, this time in a more *focused* way. Think about each section of the text, breaking off at regular intervals and ...
 - Extract the main points or examples about climate change in Malawi.
 - Jot down some notes and questions that come to mind as you read.
 - Use other reading resources that discuss issues of climate change in Malawi answer the questions you developed in ‘2’ above.

Climate Change and Smallholder Farmers in Malawi:

Understanding poor people’s experiences in climate change adaptation



Source: Marion Khamis, ActionAid International

Key message 4: Climate change exposes the underlying causes of food insecurity.

Droughts and floods are exposing the crisis in livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Malawi. In the past, nearby small-scale sugar and tea plantations were sources of employment for most people in Nsanje. However, farmers say that flood-induced migration means that there are now many more people seeking work on the plantations than there are jobs available. They also believe that the limited income opportunities in the face of increased floods and droughts have forced women to engage in unsafe sex practices, exposing them to greater risk of HIV. They say that girls as young as 13 are being forced into early marriage due to hunger, thus aggravating the impact of HIV and AIDS. In addition, the destruction of property and infrastructure places a huge burden on already strained health care systems. "I am very worried about the future of the AIDS orphans that I am looking after and my family which depends on me. I am asking if ActionAid could help me purchase a garden of my own so that I can maintain and provide a better future for my family," said Selimani Zaina, 79 year old victim of the 2005 drought.

Key message 5: Existing local government capacity cannot support the challenges smallholder farmers face in adapting to climate change.

Lack of knowledge of disaster and environmental management policies, limitations on funding and damaged equipment within the district is weakening support towards community adaptation. For example, the District Disaster Preparedness committee has not been functioning efficiently due to lack of resources." These were sentiments expressed by a member of the District Assembly in Salima. The current limitations to adaptation are poor formulation of policies, lack of knowledge of policies, and their lack of implementation at the district level.

⁶ Except from ActionAid International, (2006), Climate Change and Smallholder Farmers in Malawi, Available at www.actionaid.org.uk/doc.lib/malawi_climate_change_report.pdf

The National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) for Malawi, drafted by the Environmental Affairs Department, is the key guide to adaptation priorities. As it stands, there are concerns that NAPA exists in isolation of other key sectors, for example, the document currently addresses issues of agriculture and environment, but health and gender are ignored. District staff in both Nsanje and Salima were ignorant of its existence, a situation that confirms that not all sectors were involved in drafting the document. This has far reaching consequences for its implementation.

An element of concern in Malawi is the lack of intersectoral coordination that currently affects implementation of climate-related activities. The planning and management of climate change and disaster management is currently carried out on a sectoral basis and the involvement of local communities is limited. The absence of an overall planning and management strategy, developed with the participation of community users, hampers successful adaptation. There are also currently limited skills and resources at the local level to implement new policies.

Task

CHAPTER FIVE:
Assessment Task: SQ3R

Reflect on the meaning of the SQ3R method of reading and:

Explain how you would survey the above Action Aids article?

- List down any three questions you would ask as you plan to read it comprehensively.
- Give the main points you would recall.

Active Reading⁷

Whatever the specific objective of reading, as a student you will always need to read in an active way. Active reading involves reading with a purpose; that is reading in order to grasp definitions and meanings, understand debates, and identify and interpret evidence. It requires you to engage in reading and thinking at one and the same time in order to:

- Identify key ideas.
- Extract the information you want from the text.
- Process that information so that it makes sense to you.
- Re-present that information in assessments, using your own words.

It may involve you pausing at intervals to think about what you have just read, checking that you have grasped the main point and perhaps even noting down questions that come to mind or highlighting key words that you might want to return to at a later date. A crucial part of active reading is matching the way you read to the purpose you have in mind – that is reading for a purpose.

Active reading includes:

- Applying what you know (prior knowledge)
- Interacting with the author (responding critically to the text)
- Predicting (trying to determine the importance of the selected text)

⁷ Adapted from Learn NC. <http://www.learnnc.org/reference/active+reading> (CC: BY NC SA)

- Solving problems (slowing to understand confusing passages)
- Summarizing (at the end of each page or where convenient)

Resources Within a Text

WORD RELATIONSHIPS

One of the graphic organizers is the use of synonyms, antonyms and homonyms which readers use when learning vocabulary in the course of reading any resource. This is done with the understanding that in some ways words are similar in one way or another. To begin with, synonyms are words that mean the same despite having some morphological differences. For example, words like cute/beautiful; huge/gigantic are synonyms. An antonym, on the other hand, is a word that has an opposite meaning of another word. Words such as pretty/ugly; strong/weak; tall/short exposes different meaning and should be used differently. Further, homonyms are words that have similar sounds if pronounced and somebody might hardly recognize their difference if carelessly done so. Think about words like their/there; reach/rich; fit/feet. Reading in this case which has to go with pronunciation has to take care of the possible differences that ought to be there.

Note: Synonym is for *sameness* in meaning
 Antonym is for *an opposite* meaning
 Homonym is a word which can be *heard like* another word

So, from the forgoing, it is observed that words are related in many other ways such that they are alike, different and related to each other. This means that understanding how words relate to each other helps readers to increase their vocabulary, enables them to analyze and synthesize any information they read from any reading resource at any level of study which leads to one's building of a useful vocabulary.

Activity



SEMINAR ACTIVITY: Synonyms

Read the following sentences and identify words or phrases that have similar meanings within the sentences.

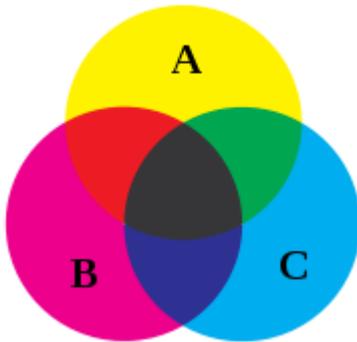
1. Scientists believe that these days people are using up resources at an increasing rate. The acceleration in consumption is partially a function of the steady improvement in the standard of living
2. When phosphate, a pollutant, is emptied into a pond, algae grow very fast. Then when algae flourish, the water supply may be affected.
3. The recent data on students' performance at Malawi School Certificate of Examination indicate that quality of education in Malawi is going down. The information also indicates that students' interest in schooling is low.
4. Should politicians regulate the amount of tuition in tertiary institutions? Some academicians do not believe that politicians' control is the solution to the rising cost of feeding students in colleges.
5. Industrious students usually succeed in their studies. It is evident that all students who worked hard in the previous years are in high positions.

GRAPHIC AND SEMANTIC ORGANIZERS

Graphic organizers illustrate concepts and relationships between concepts in a text or using diagrams. Graphic organizers are known by different names, such as story maps, chain of events/webs, graphs, charts, cause and effect, etc. Graphic organizers do help readers focus on concepts and how they are related to other concepts. They also help students read and understand textbooks. Therefore, graphic organizers can:

- Help students focus on text structure 'differences between fiction and nonfiction' as they read.
- Provide students with tools they can use to examine and show relationships in a text.
- Help students write well-organized summaries of a text.

Here are some examples of graphic organizers:



Venn-Diagrams

Venn diagrams or *set diagrams* are diagrams that show all hypothetically possible logical relations between a finite collection of sets (groups of things). Venn diagrams were conceived around 1880 by John Venn. They are used in many fields, including set theory, probability, logic, statistics, and computer science.

A Venn diagram is constructed with a collection of simple closed curves drawn in the plane. Venn diagrams normally consist of overlapping circles.

For instance, in a two-set Venn diagram, one circle may represent the group of all wooden objects, while another circle may represent the set of all tables. The overlapping area (*intersection*) would then represent the set of all wooden tables. Shapes other than circles can be employed, and this is necessary for more than three sets.⁸

Storyboard/Chain of Events

Used to order or sequence events within a text. For example, listing the steps for carrying out an experiment.

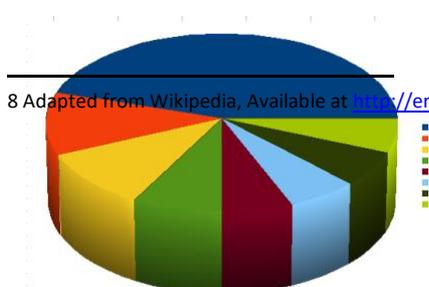
Story Map

Used to chart the story structure. These can be organized into fiction and nonfiction text structures. For example, defining characters, setting, events, problem, and resolution in a fiction story; however in a nonfiction story, main idea and details would be identified.

A Chart

A chart is a visual representation of data, in which the data are represented by symbols such as bars in a bar chart or lines in a line chart. A chart can represent tabular numeric data, functions or some kinds of qualitative structures.

The term "chart" as a visual representation of data has multiple meanings. A data chart is a type of diagram or graph that organizes and represents a set of numerical or qualitative data. The four common charts are histogram, line, bar and pie chart. The following is an example of a pie chart.



⁸ Adapted from Wikipedia, Available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venn_diagram (CC: BY-SA)

A histogram typically shows the quantity of points that fall within various numeric ranges (or bins).

A bar chart uses bars to show frequencies or values for different categories.

A pie chart shows percentage values as a slice of a pie.

A line chart is a two-dimensional scatter plot of ordered observations where the observations are connected following their order.

Cause/Effect

Cause and effect essays are concerned with why things happen (causes) and what happens as a result (effects). Cause and effect is a common method of organizing and discussing ideas.

It is worth noting that writers of a cause and effect essay do distinguish between cause and effect. To determine causes, they ask, "Why did this happen?" And to identify effects, they ask, "What happened because to cause this?" The following is an example of one cause producing one effect:

ROOT	MEANING	EXAMPLE	DEFINITION
Agri	field	agronomy	field crop production
Anthropo	man	anthropology	study of man
Demos	people	democracy	government by the people
Thermo	heat	thermometer	instrument for measuring heat
Zoo	animal	zoology	study of animals
Psycho	mind	psychology	study of the mind
Circum	around	circumference	distance around something
Auto	self	automatic	self regulating machines

Additional Strategies for Reading Science

ADVANCED ORGANIZERS:

Students pre-read the science text to understand its structure and the scope of its content. By consciously analyzing and recording the author's outline and advance organizers, students are better prepared to understand the text when they read it.

MIND MAP

A mind map is a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks, or other items linked to and arranged around a central key word or idea. Mind maps are used to generate, visualize, structure, and classify ideas, and as an aid in study, organization, problem solving, decision making, and writing. The elements of a given mind map are arranged intuitively according to the importance of the concepts, and are classified into groupings, branches, or areas, with the goal

of representing semantic or other connections between portions of information. Mind maps may also aid recall of existing memories of what is read⁹.

CONCEPT MAP

A concept map is a way of representing relations between ideas, images or words, in the same way that a sentence diagram represents the grammar of a sentence, a road map represents the locations of highways and towns <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concept>. They are graphical tools for organizing and representing knowledge. Concepts, usually represented as boxes or circles, are connected with labelled arrows in a downward-branching hierarchical structure. The relationship between concepts can be articulated in linking phrases such as "gives rise to", "results in", "is required by," or "contributes to". The technique for visualizing these relationships among different concepts is called "Concept mapping"¹⁰.

KWL TABLES AND CHARTS

A KWL table, or KWL chart, is a graphical organizer designed to help in learning. The letters KWL are an acronym for "what we **know**", what we **w**ant to know, and "what we **learned**". A KWL table is typically divided into three columns titled Know, Want and Learned. The table comes in various forms as some have modified it to include or exclude information. It may be useful in research projects and to organize information to help study for tests.

The chart is a comprehension strategy used to activate background knowledge prior to reading and is completely student centred. The teacher divides a piece of chart paper into three columns. The first column, 'K', is for what the students already know about a topic. This step is to be completed before the reading. The next column, 'W', is for students to list what they want to learn about the topic during the reading. This step is also to be completed before the reading. The third column, 'L', is for what the students learned from the reading. This step, of course, is done after finishing the reading. The KWL chart can also be used in reading instruction at the beginning of a new unit.

Here is what the KWL chart can look like:

K What I <i>know</i>	W What I <i>want</i> to know	L What I <i>learned</i>
Write the information about what the students know in this space.	Write the information about what the students want to know in this space.	After the completion of the lesson or unit, write the information that the students learned in this space.

A KWL chart can be used to drive instruction in the classroom. The teacher can create lesson plans based upon. KWL chart activates students' prior knowledge of the text or topic to be studied. By asking students what they already know, students are thinking about prior experiences or knowledge about the topic. Next, KWL charts set a purpose for the unit. Students are able to add their input to the topic by asking them what they want to know. Students then have a purpose for participating and engaging in the topic. Also, using a KWL chart allows students to expand their ideas beyond the text used in the classroom¹¹.

9 Adapted from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_mapping (CC: BY-SA)

10 Adapted from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concept_mapping (CC: BY-SA)

11 Adapted from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KWL_table (CC: BY-SA)

ROOT WORDS

Students learn how to construct and decipher scientific words by understanding the meanings of roots, prefixes and suffixes common to biology, chemistry, physics, and the earth and space sciences.

CLOZE

This is a reading activity in which a passage has some missing words for the reader to fill in either before or after reading. The activity is used to assess the readability of a passage. The higher the cloze scores for a given population, the more readable the passage. In this chapter we introduce cloze as a technique for developing and assessing reading comprehension.

JIGSAW

Jigsaw is a technique whereby students develop reading skills by dialoguing with others, preparing notes, and teaching their peers. Initially, students are given some reading texts to master and in this case each student becomes an expert of his/her text. After mastery is when then they share with others either in pairs or groups. It is a best method because it promotes a 100% participation in the reading task.

COGNATES

The word cognate derives from Latin cognatus "blood relative". In linguistics, they are words that have a common etymological origin. An example of cognates within the same language would be English shirt and skirt, the former from Old English scyrte, the latter loaned from Old Norse skyrta, both from the same Common Germanic *skurtjōn-. Words with this type of relationship within a single language are called doublets. Further cognates of the same word in other Germanic languages would include German Schürze and Dutch schort "apron".

Cognates need not have the same meaning: dish (English) and Tisch ("table", German) and desco ("table", medieval Italian), or starve (English) and sterben ("die", German), or head (English) and chef ("chief, head", French), serve as examples as to how cognate terms may diverge in meaning as languages develop separately, eventually becoming false friends. The understanding of this relationship helps readers of texts to know word meanings easily by referring to other words with similar structures¹².

Cause: You are out of fuel.

Effect: Your car won't start.

Sometimes, many causes contribute to a single effect or many effects may result from a single cause¹³.

LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

The comprehension of language includes linguistic knowledge, background knowledge, making inferences, and the self-regulation of comprehension (or meta cognition).

LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE

Comprehension of a text is reliant on an individual's knowledge of the language system. We build up this knowledge with repeated exposure to how language is used. As we interact with

12 Adapted from Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognate_\(etymology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognate_(etymology)) (CC: BY-SA)

13 Adapted from Wikipedia, Available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphic_organizer (CC: BY-SA)

the language so we begin to understand certain nuances. A language system is made up of phonology, semantics (this includes word meanings and also morphology), and its grammatical structure.

For example phonology is about how a language sounds and how sounds are used to communicate differences in meaning. Semantic knowledge looks at the various meanings of words, phrases or sentences that allow us to comprehend knowledge. In order to improve your linguistic knowledge you need to read widely and be exposed to words and meanings in varying contexts. In addition, word study and instruction that includes orthography, morphology and spelling can strengthen your vocabulary learning.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

We are constantly building our background knowledge. By the end of your secondary school education you have already amassed background knowledge of the world and its social and cultural contexts. Continued reading and reading broadly will grow this knowledge further.

INFERENCES

Comprehension beyond the word level requires the reader not only to activate background knowledge but also integrate meaning across sentences. As the message becomes less familiar, the reader needs to make inferences. Readers need to actively construct a mental model of the text that draws upon the text and their own background knowledge. This is sometimes called active construction of meaning from text whereby we need to infer the meaning.

SELF-REGULATED COMPREHENSION

To be a good reader one needs to reflect and evaluate your understanding of what you have read. Self-regulated comprehension involves activating knowledge, making predictions about meaning, reflecting on what has been understood, and if necessary drawing new conclusions about your understanding. Readers need sufficient background knowledge to be able to understand what they read.

INTERACTING WITH THE TEXT

An effective reader engages actively with the text. There should be a swapping of ideas between the reader and the text, or the speaker and the listener. This is called a transaction. The transaction enables readers to negotiate the meanings of the texts they read. Transactions increase motivation and can further develop comprehension.

WORD ROOTS

One of the ways of understanding the content of a subject through reading is to know the appropriate meaning of words used in a text. Words are used to communicate ideas. There are two types of words: *content* and *functional* words. Content words usually contain ideas, concepts and the latter, links words for clarity following grammar of a particular medium of instruction. Words also have denotative and connotative meanings: a *literal* or intended meaning like in the example, 'She is a star', meaning she is one of the heavenly bodies and an *evaluative* or deeper meaning she performs well.

SPECIFIC WAYS TO DETERMINE MEANING¹⁴

Incidental learning of vocabulary occurs through one's own reading of a variety of resources either for leisure or focused. As the reader does this some new words are mastered on how to pronounce and use them. Readers may also get to know a number of new vocabulary words by participating in a conversation with other speakers of the language. The conversation can be in form of a debate, an ordinary chat or a discussion of a topic at hand. It is imperative therefore that any reader interested in increasing his/ her vocabulary should engage in some conversation.

Through **direct instruction**. This is enhanced through teacher's well thought lessons meant to teach learners some lesson based words, activities on new words and giving learners possible meanings of words.

Self instruction is done as students consciously try to learn new words on their own. In this case the teacher's role is to provide strategies for learning new words.

Using **context** to predict meaning, for example:

- Definition / description : words are directly defined by a sentence e.g. a king cup is a yellow flower
- Appositive phrase meaning of a word is in phrase set by commas e.g.
 - Damiano and Gorla, Bunda students, are hard working.
 - Chambo, a type of fish, is very delicious

Authentic settings: natural environment in which words are used. For example in a laboratory there are: spatula, crucible, etc which can best be understood in that environment. Think about your examples.

Extensive reading: wide reading of self-selected material provides rich source of new words.

Intensive reading: in depth reading in a particular area/ subject. Check on examples above.

Capsule vocabulary: readers listen, speak, read and write words related to a particular topic to this environment as possible. For example, you take a laboratory situation and write as many words as possible.

Use a **dictionary** especially a subject dictionary to learn how particular words are pronounced, used and what they mean.

Word detectives (e.g. math morpheme)

<u>morpheme</u>	<u>math usage</u>	<u>general usage</u>
bi (two)	bisect, bimodal	bicycle, bilingual
poly (many)	polygon	polygamy
equi (equal)	equilateral	equator, equinox

Or we may use the following sequence to easily understand how we can use word roots to master some vocabulary:

14 Sitima, J.(2009). *Communication Skills Lecture Notes*, Bunda College of Education (CC: BY-SA)

Activity**SEMINAR ACTIVITY:**
Prefixes

Think about Physics as a course of study and:

- Identify 15 technical words from Physics and ensure they have prefixes
- Say what the prefixes mean, and;
- Construct a possible definition of each of the word based on your knowledge of the prefixes.

Activity**SELF STUDY ACTIVITY:**
Word Meanings

What do the following words mean?

- Epidermis
- Hydroponics
- Equilateral
- Magnify
- Macroscopic
- Precede
- Tripod

Summary

In this chapter you have learnt that reading is an active process through which you understand the writer's meaning. Readers use a variety of reading skills to enhance their understanding of the reading resource. Careful readers apply a number of strategies to decipher the meaning of any new vocabulary whether functional or content word. However, as we read we may display or face a number of obstacles or barriers which affect our uptake of the text. However, care must be taken each time we read in order to understand the read materials.

Task



CHAPTER FOUR: Assessment Task

This chapter has discussed several ways you could use to learn new words. Explain any five ways you could learn new vocabulary in your science courses. Give an example in each case.

(20 Marks)

RESOURCE



Additional Enrichment Resources

The following resources are highly recommended and will offer enrichment to your studies:

NAME	REFERENCE
Books for Change, Disaster Preparedness & Related Publications	www.booksforchange.net
Adler, C.R. (Ed). (2001). <i>Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read</i> , National Institute for Literacy, pp. 49-54,	http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/reading_first1text.html .
Edwards, A.W.F. (2004). <i>Cogwheels of the Mind: the story of Venn diagrams</i> , Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London.	
Ogle, D.M. (1986). <i>K-W-L: A teaching model that develops active reading of expository text</i> . <i>Reading Teacher</i> , 39, pp. 564-570	

Glossary



These words and terms are used in this chapter.

WORD	DEFINITION
Intensive reading	Intensive reading is used on shorter texts in order to extract specific information. It includes very close accurate reading for detail
Extensive reading	Extensive reading is used to obtain a general understanding of a subject and includes reading longer texts for pleasure, as well as business books.
Prefix	Word element attached before a word root
Word root	Main part of a word which cannot be further segmented
Barrier	Any disturbance as we read a passage

SQ3R	Survey, question, read, recite, recall
Graphic organizers	Word relationships which uses of synonyms, antonyms and homonyms which readers use when learning vocabulary in the course of reading any resource.
Homonym	Word which can be <i>heard like</i> another word
Synonym	Words with similar meaning
Antonym	Words with opposite meaning
Skimming	Reading focusing on general information
Scanning	Reading for specific information
Meta cognitive	Thinking about thinking



6

Writing Skills

Why Write?¹⁵

Of all aspects of studying, writing is probably the most challenging. That is because when you write down an account of your ideas for other people to read you have to express yourself particularly carefully. You can't make the mental leaps you do when you are in conversation with others or thinking about something for yourself. To make your meaning clear, using only words on a page, you have to work out exactly what you think about the subject. You come to understand it for *yourself* in the process of explaining it to others. So writing makes you really grapple with what you are studying. In other words, it forces you into a very deep and powerful kind of *learning*. That is what makes it so demanding. When you write you are really putting ideas to use.

In some writing that you have done previously you may have 'taken in' ideas from books, articles, TV and so on. But it is only when you can *use* these ideas to say something for yourself that you have really 'learned' them. Ideas only become a properly functioning part of your thought-processes when you can call on them as you *communicate* with other people. It is very valuable to debate issues with other students in discussion groups. But an even more exacting way of using ideas in argument is to do it in writing.

A key part of using ideas effectively is to be able to write clearly, pleasantly and persuasively. In our society this is a very valuable skill. It puts you on a much better footing with other people if you can present your point of view forcefully in writing. Perhaps you started out on your studies with the idea only of learning more about Biology, Chemistry or Mathematics, but you may discover that one of the most valuable things you gain is the ability to write much more effectively. Whether you start with a rather weak writing style or a fairly well-developed one, there is always plenty of progress to be made.

So writing tends to be both the most demanding and the most rewarding part of any course of study. And, because it contributes so much to what you learn, you have to put a lot of your time and energy into it.

OUTCOMES

By the end of this chapter you should:

- be able to explain why writing is so important;
- have an understanding of and be able to use critically the main criteria of good essay-writing;
- be aware of the basic technical and stylistic considerations involved in writing;
- be able to write appropriately any given form of writing;
- state the rationale for referencing and citation;
- quote texts from different sources in different ways in scholarly documents;
- write endnotes/footnotes and references/bibliographies from different sources using the APA and MLA formats.

What is an Essay?

The different science, arts and humanities subjects make their own particular demands on you. You may have to do various kinds of writing – projects, logs, lab reports, case-studies – or even write creatively. In this chapter, though, we are going to concentrate on the essay because that is by far the most common form of writing in higher learning.

The word ‘essay’ originally meant ‘an attempt’ or try at something, but now it usually means a short piece of writing on a specific subject. It is a *complete* piece of writing that can stand alone – it must make sense to the reader ‘in itself’. You are given an essay title or question, which sets out the issues you need to address, and a word limit of around one or two thousand words – possibly a bit shorter to begin with. You work from the title, putting together an *argument* that leads the reader towards a conclusion. Your lecturer marks your essay, making comments not only about *what* you have said but also the *way* you have structured and written the essay. These ‘criticisms’ are meant to help you develop both your grasp of the subject and your powers of expression. So an essay opens up a teaching–learning dialogue between you and your lecturer. In fact, it does still have some of the original sense of ‘trying your hand’ at something, with the idea that you can get better at it through practice.

Your lecturer will usually grade your essay too, so that you can see where you ‘stand’ in relation to whatever standards apply to your course. This means that, over time, you can see what kind of progress you are making.

KEY POINTS

Writing essays is a very important part of studying because:

- it deepens your learning of the subject you are studying;
- you learn to use ideas to argue a case;
- it enables you to enter into a dialogue with your audience like lecturer through which you can extend and refine your thinking, and your writing skills;
- it enables your lecturer or supervisor to assess your progress.

What is a Good Essay?

CRITERIA FOR GOOD ESSAY-WRITING

When a lecturer reads your essay, she or he will be asking the following questions:

- Have you answered the question in the title?
- Have you drawn on the relevant parts of the course for the main content of your essay?
- Do you show a good grasp of the ideas you have been studying in the course?
- Have you presented a coherent argument?
- Is the essay written in an objective, analytical way, with appropriate use of illustration and evidence?
- Is the essay clearly written and well presented?

SHOW A GOOD GRASP OF THE IDEAS

To show your grasp of the ideas you have been studying, you have to express them for yourself, *in your own words*. Your lecturer will certainly be looking out for signs that you understand the centrally important issues. Your lecturer has to be able to see your thought-processes at work in

this way in order to give you the kind of advice and support that will help develop your understanding. So what you must avoid doing is using other people's words.

Plagiarizing

When you are writing an essay you are often working with ideas and terms you are not familiar with. This makes it difficult for you to produce a clear, coherent argument and you may become anxious about whether you will 'get it right'. To be on the safe side, some students are tempted to 'lift' sections of words from textbooks and articles and put them in their essays without using quotation marks or acknowledging the source. In other words, they try to pass these words off as their own. This is known as 'plagiarism'.

Lecturers are usually very familiar with the difference between the way students write and the way experienced authors write, and soon notice when a student lurches between an 'expert' and a 'beginner' style. A particular giveaway is when most of the words are as in the original except for one or two (changed for purposes of camouflage), which stick out like sore thumbs because they are in a different style. Another is when smoothly flowing sections of writing are interspersed with short, inelegant linking phrases. It seems that most people write particularly badly when they are trying to stitch together someone else's words. Because you are not in control of 'making' the sense as you write, plagiarizing actually makes your writing worse.

This approach will not get you good marks. Indeed, when lecturers spot what is going on (which is not difficult) they will tend to assume you understand very little and mark you down. Worse, you do not develop your own writing style. If you become locked into the sterile and tedious business of parroting other people's words rather than expressing thoughts for yourself, then you are likely to remain a beginner for a long time. And you will not learn much about the ideas in the course either.

There is only one way to learn to *use* ideas in writing and that is to practise expressing them in your own words. They may not come out very well to begin with but, like a learner in any field, you have to be prepared to make mistakes sometimes. It is through letting your weaknesses show that you learn how to do something about them, and allow others to help you learn.

PRESENT A COHERENT ARGUMENT

Presenting a coherent argument is closely linked to 'answering the question'. The essence of an essay is that it sets out to be an argument about the issues raised in the title. Even if you have a lot of good material in it, it will not be judged 'a good essay' unless the material is organised so that it hangs together. This implies two things:

1. You need to sort out your points into groups so that they can be presented in a *structured* way, giving the essay a beginning, a middle, and an end.
2. You need to keep a *thread of meaning* running through your essay. Each sentence should flow on from the previous one, with adequate *signposting* to help your reader follow the moves you are making.

Presenting a coherent argument is also closely linked with 'showing your grasp of ideas'. One of the reasons why your writing tasks are set in the essay form – the form of an argument – is because that makes you *use* the ideas you have been studying to *say* something. Anyone can copy material from books. The point of an essay is to make you *think*. When you present a coherent argument you are showing that you can *take hold* of the ideas and *organise* them to

do some work for you. The writer must be objective, precise, logical, and concerned to back a case with evidence.

TAKE AN OBJECTIVE, ANALYTICAL STANCE

An essay should be 'objective'. What does that mean? Being objective about something means standing back from it and looking at it coolly. It means focusing your attention on the 'object', on what you are discussing, and not on yourself and your own (subjective) feelings about it. Your ideas should be able to survive detailed inspection by other people who are not emotionally committed to them.

An essay should argue by force of reason, not emotion. You must make deliberate efforts to develop a style of writing that is cool, dispassionate and fair to all sides. That means you yourself must be open to doubt and criticism. Your arguments should be presented in the spirit that your reader might not agree with them. And if you want to dispute a claim someone else makes, you are expected to have analysed that claim carefully, to argue your case and provide evidence for your point of view, rather than setting out to criticise or cast doubts on your opponent's character or motives. You should be respectful to other writers. You should assume that you are writing as a member of a community of equals, all of whom are intelligent, open-minded, fair people. You should write on the assumption that your readers are also members of that community, and that they will be interested only in your reasons for thinking what you do. They will not be interested in you as a person, or in your ideas because they are your ideas.

WRITE CLEARLY

A good essay is easy to read. Grand-sounding phrases and elaborate sentences do not make an essay impressive. Clarity and economy are what count. Such ease of reading is achieved at several levels.

Technical Considerations

HANDWRITING

Nowadays most people use a word processing package to write essays while some people may use a typewriter. However, if you don't have access to either of these you will need to hand-write your essay. Should this be the case, the ease of reading depends on the quality of your handwriting. It is only fair to your lecturer to try to make your writing as legible as possible. This will take time and care. But when you have spent a long time putting an essay together, it is a waste if what you say is misunderstood just because your writing is misread. It is also prudent to take care. It would be an angel of a lecturer who was not a bit impatient at having to spend ages trying to make out your handwriting. If it is really dreadful you will have to get someone to tell you which letters are hardest to read and practise straightening them out, rounding them more, or whatever is required. Having said that, most lecturers have resigned themselves, in the course of duty, to becoming expert at deciphering all kinds of scrawl. They will usually do their best not to be too influenced by it. (Actually, a lot of students complain that they can't read their lecturers' or supervisors' scribbled comments on their essays or reports. Therefore, this is not a one-way street.)

LAYOUT

When using a word processing package, it is best to use a font like Times New Roman which is sober and easy to read. Set the font size to 11 or 12 points and use double line spacing. You should also make sure that there are generous margins – the default settings are usually sufficient. If you are writing by hand, your essay is easier to read if it is set out neatly on the page. You should use lined A4 paper and leave generous margins for your lecturer to write comments. Write on one side of the paper only – this makes it much easier to cross-refer from one section of the essay to another. Make sure you leave spaces between paragraphs. This is all straightforward stuff, but the point is that you should ‘stand back’ from your finished essay and look at it as an ‘object’ you have created. Does it look inviting to read? It is surprising how many essays have words squashed onto every square centimetre of the page. Be ‘page-proud’ and generous with space. Unless your essays look as if *you* care, why should anyone else?

GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION AND SPELLING

As we have seen, these contribute enormously to ease of reading. The whole point of punctuation is to help the reader approach your words in the right way, and the rules of grammar are what enable the reader to construct the sense intended by the writer. Mistakes in either make the reader stop to work out what is being said. Poor spelling can also cause frequent interruptions. Meanwhile, the reader ‘loses’ the thread of your meaning. None of these abilities is easy to improve quickly, and all fall beyond the scope of this book. But if you think you are particularly weak in them you should seek help. Take comfort from the thought that your lecturer will usually try to ‘read through’ to your intended meaning, and will also try to help you improve. A common grammatical mistake is the ‘dangling modifier’. Let’s take a closer look at this common grammar problem:

Dangling Modifiers

When writing it is always important that you communicate your meaning clearly. A common error amongst student writers is to create **dangling modifiers**. This normally occurs when you leave out the **subject** or only infer a subject in your sentence. Inserted additional information (the **modifier**) then seems to describe the **object instead**. Consider this example¹⁶;

“Walking down Main Street (no subject), the trees were beautiful.”

Here the "walking down" participle or modifier seems to connect to "the trees" because the sentence has no subject, when on reflection it really should connect to the invisible speaker of the sentence. The speaker is the one walking down the street (and finding the trees beautiful). Strunk and White's, *The Elements of Style*, provides another kind of example, a misplaced modifier (another participle):

“ I saw the trailer peeping through the window. ”

Presumably, the speaker means he or she was peeping through the window, but the incorrect placement of "peeping through the window" makes it sound as though the trailer was peeping through the window. Because the modifier has been placed at the end of the sentence instead of at the beginning it seems to describe the object rather than the subject. Ambiguous modifiers have sometimes been used for humorous effect. A famous example of this is by Groucho Marx as Captain Jeffrey T. Spaulding in the 1930 film, *Animal Crackers*:

¹⁶ Adapted from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dangling_modifier (CC: BY_SA)

**“One morning I shot an elephant in my pyjamas.
How he got into my pyjamas I'll never know.”**

Groucho Marx

Though under the most plausible interpretation of the first sentence, Captain Spaulding would have been wearing the pyjamas, the line plays on the grammatical possibility that the elephant was somehow within his pyjamas. So make sure that when you compose a sentence as part of a report, essay or assignment you have clearly identified a subject and an object and that the modifier or participle is located next to the correct subject or object.

Let's see if you can do it?

Activity



SELF STUDY ACTIVITY: Dangling Modifiers

Study the examples of dangling modifiers below and:

- 1] identify why each sentence does not work properly.
- 2] rewrite the sentence so that it is expressed correctly.

Examples:

“Having completed the essay, the radio was turned on.”

“Having been thrown in the air, the dog caught the ball.”

“While walking across the street, the bus hit her.”

“After reading the article, the newspaper is aimed at the working class.”

“The self study activity was a failure, not having studied the paragraph on ‘Dangling Modifiers’ carefully.”

“Last week I caught a cold at school.”

LANGUAGE

Your language should be direct rather than fancy. Don't strive for effect. You should always go for short and simple sentences where you can – especially when you are building up a basic essay-writing style. You can play with more elaborate words and grammatical structures later, when you have established a secure basic technique. Don't beat about the bush; pitch straight into answering the essay question in a direct, purposeful way.

FLUENCY

Try to make your essays flow from one sentence to the next. As we have seen, this is partly a matter of structure and partly of signposting. It is vital to think of your essay in terms of its overall structure – to move points around, and cut and trim, in search of a clear sequence for your ideas. Then, having worked out a structure, you have to ‘talk’ your reader through it, emphasizing the key turning points in the essay, summarising where you have got to, showing how each new point follows from the last, and finally bringing it all to a conclusion.

EXPLAINING

You need to be able to think of things from your reader's point of view. The reader cannot see into your mind so you have to explain your points quite fully and carefully. You need to give examples to illustrate what you are talking about and to justify what you say. In other words,

you need a sense of your 'audience' and you have to work out how to 'speak' to these readers in the right 'tone of voice'.

ALSO...

Finally, a few key messages to take from this unit. One is that there is no great mystery or magic about what good writing is. We can recognize it just by reading it. The difficulty is how to produce it. However, since there are different aspects of writing well, you will find it useful to return to the 'Criteria of good essay writing' from time to time to consider how your writing is developing. When you are about to submit an essay or report to a lecturer, or after you get it back with comments on it, you can check through the list to see what progress you are making on each front.

Last, take away the knowledge that *you don't have to get your writing perfect before submitting it*. In fact, there isn't such a thing as 'perfect' anyway. There are many different ways of writing a good essay. A good learner in any field is prepared to make mistakes and learn from them.

Activity



SELF STUDY ACTIVITY: Essay Comparisons

Critically read the following two student's essays and critique them using the guidelines outlined above:

Masozzi's Essay

Eighteenth century society expected women to have accomplishments such as the ability to embroider, play the piano and sing. They were supposed to be fragile, delicate and innocent; they were taught at smart boarding schools or by private lecturers, social skills to fit them for the role expected of them at the time, as 'embodiments of their husbands' and fathers' status'. Life in the country during this period of history offered little scope for the indulgence of these skills owing to the scarcity of the population and the difficulty of transport, as women from the higher ranks were constrained to mix only with their own kind.

Thus the lives of these well born ladies were immensely boring. It was not considered fitting that a woman should take any part in the management of a country estate, or in the country pursuits of riding, hunting or fishing as enjoyed by the men and she was therefore reduced to spend her time reading or writing letters. However, in an urban environment, it was acceptable that women could socialize on a much wider scale and even organize and plan social events, an added dimension to their very constrained lives. Because of this, and because an urban environment offered women so much

Kondwani's Essay

Joyce Ellis presents to us a portrayal of woman living around the eighteenth century. The women who lived a fairly comfortable style of life belonged to a class of society where the father or husband would be a land-owner, these males were orientated to country life and all it entailed so they expected their wives or daughters to fit in to a standard of life they felt gave a certain status to the country way of life. These were under-privileged women as the boredom of country life could become frustrating to them, does it not make you see a resemblance to the modern day young woman, she can combine marriage, raising children, and holding on to a career as well.

With society becoming more wealthy it was possible for the fathers and husbands to provide an even better standard of life for their wives and daughters, more servants could be provided to do the work and this left the woman more time than ever to develop the social skills of the era, but this in turn led to extreme frustration among woman of that class. The country was no place now to exercise these new skills they had been taught, for one thing females outnumbered males at that time, also few chances arose to meet and mingle with crowds of people, but

more scope, not only to display their accomplishments but also to indulge their own desire for sociability, amusement and companions', the female population of England's towns expanded dramatically.

In view of the somewhat prescribed role forced upon women in the eighteenth century by the male dominated society which formulated social mores, it was inevitable that women would be attracted to the towns where the skills that society required of them could be more widely indulged and more fully displayed. In the towns there were more people of the same rank, so that women could socialize on a wider scale, and as there was public transport they had greater mobility. They therefore fled from the country in order to escape the restrictions and consequent boredom placed upon them by the very limited pastimes that a high ranking woman in the eighteenth century was permitted to indulge.

In effect, I think that the high ranking women of the eighteenth century were neither mainly attracted to the towns, or escaping from the countryside, what they were seeking to do was to fulfil the very limited role with which society had burdened them as fully as was possible."

most importantly the demands of propriety meant that their conduct should be impeccable at all times any error would be seen in such a limited environment so therefore woman began to long for the urban or city way of living, if even for a short period so that they could deploy the art of socializing and mingling with a greater amount of society

Towns offered woman a great variation of respectable ways in which to carry out the social skills, indeed many women have gone down in history as being great experts as organizers of social events thus enhancing their husbands standing. In a town or city, women could meet with many more of the female sex than they did in the country, they could exchange views and learn new ideas from each other, also they could meet with more of the male population as the cities had theatres concert halls, and many places where both sexes could mingle together respectably. In many ways going into urban life from the countryside was beneficial to woman of the upperclass.

This transition was not without a certain amount of jibes from the male population against the women of that time, who looked on them as being inferior in many ways, and considered those who chose to get away from boredom of the country as being improper in outlook.

Nevertheless woman, whether wealthy or poor need the stimulus of company and the need to escape from routine and boredom and so will continue to seek for the things that will be in their favour.

Activity Tasks

1. As you read, note any places where you have difficulty grasping the point, and write any other thoughts that come to you in the margins. Pencil in any alterations you think could usefully be made. (If possible, work on printed copies of the essays.)
2. When you get to the end of the essays, take a sheet of paper and write two headings: 'Strengths' and 'Weaknesses'. Note down the good things about Kondwani's essay and the weak points. Then do the same for Masozi's.
3. Try to weigh up the quality of these essays. Do you think that one of them is better than the other? (Can they be good in different ways?) Overall, do you think that they are good essays or poor ones? How much of that is to do with the quality of the ideas in them and how much to do with the way the ideas are presented?
4. Finally, can you draw any general conclusions about the qualities a good essay should have? (Look back over your answers to 2 and 3 above.)

Activity Advice / Tips: Judging Writing

This is an interesting activity and it will take you some time. You may not do the best at this stage. However, it is *worth doing*. It will be time well spent because you need to develop your ability to see what works in writing and what doesn't. It is not helpful to try to learn formal 'rules' of writing. Rather, you have to become a reasonably good judge of real pieces of writing, including your own. 'Marking' other people's work helps you understand what you should be aiming for in your own writing.

Activity



SELF STUDY ACTIVITY: Essay Writing

- Use the notes you have made as a critique for the two essays to rewrite the essay so that it is a much better essay that meets the discussed criteria.
 - Give your essay to a colleague to mark using the criteria given by stating strengths, weaknesses and suggestions about what could be done to make the essay even better
-

Referencing and Citation

In institutions of higher learning, like Bunda College of Agriculture, students are required to write their documents such as projects and assignments with scholarly professionalism. In this unit, you will go through different forms of referencing and citation that can help you write academic texts. You will particularly also be exposed to MLA and APA styles of referencing.

Referencing is generally all about acknowledging the sources of information used in either written or oral scholarly work or text. References are therefore, a list of texts used in an academic work. In a related term, a bibliography, however, is a list of recommended readings on a given topic which may or may not have been used or cited in a scholarly text (document). Citation is synonymously used with referencing. As the term connotes, citation refers to locating the 'cites' or places where information has been taken from in a document. Citation could be in the form of endnotes or footnotes or embedded (included) notes as we will see later. Here at Bunda College of Agriculture, you will be expected to cite all the sources of information that you have used in your assignments or research projects. Otherwise, using people's information without acknowledging the sources is tantamount to 'academic theft' called plagiarism. Your lecturers will punish you for plagiarism and the punishment could include failure in the assignment or research project that you present to them.

JUSTIFICATIONS FOR REFERENCING AND CITATION

Among the reasons why scholars, like you, are expected to make referencing and citations are that doing so helps in:

- Locating and verifying the places where information is said to have been taken from.
- Directing readers to read more on the topic under discussion in your paper or text.
- Showing a sense of belonging to the group of academic scholars that abide by the given referencing requirement.
- Standardising the way scholars write; hence it is easier to assess and compare different academic work based on the same principles.
- Protecting the intellectual property of thinkers that contribute(d) to the world through their work through the crimes that arise from plagiarism.

- Continuity of research and intellectual development because it shows what is already done by others.

STYLES OF DOCUMENTING SOURCES OF INFORMATION

There are basically two popular styles of documenting sources of information that one can use in scholarly work. The first is the American Psychological Association's format, hereafter abbreviated as APA. The APA citation style refers to the rules and conventions recommended by the American Psychological Association on how to document sources of information mainly used in research papers. The second style is the Modern Language Association's format, hereafter, abbreviated as MLA. The MLA citation style refers to rules and conventions established and recommended by the Modern Language Association on how to document sources of information used in scholarly work, like research papers. The APA and MLA conventions on acknowledging sources of information are different in some way and so different institutions and lecturers prefer different styles mainly due to their expositions to them. You are, therefore, supposed to know both of them in detail so that you use the right convention for the right institutions and people you present your scholarly work to.

QUOTATIONS

In referencing, quotations refer to the way of acknowledging direct words or phrases or statements formally used by other people. Quotations appear in inverted commas when quoted word for word or paraphrased when one uses someone's ideas in his/her own words. In both cases, you need to cite the source of information. When writing an academic text, there are some times when you may have to include a footnote or an endnote to supplement what you have written in the main text. A footnote is similar to an endnote in that the content is the same. The only difference is that a footnote is placed at the bottom of the page while an endnote appears at the end of a text like a chapter. Take note that there are two types of footnotes/endnotes. The first type is called citation/reference which locates the source of information used in a text. The second type, called content footnote/endnote only add more information (notes) to the issues discussed in the text which if put in the main text might be not that necessary to the reader. In other words, footnotes and endnotes of this type are most often used as an alternative to long explanatory notes that could be distracting to readers.

The APA Style

American Psychological Association (APA) style is a widely accepted style of documentation, particularly in the social sciences. APA style specifies the names and order of headings, formatting, and organization of citations and references, and the arrangement of tables, figures, footnotes, and appendices, as well as other manuscript and documentation features. APA style uses the author-date style of parenthetical referencing, with such source citations keyed to a subsequent list of "References." Also known as the Harvard Style.¹⁷

INCLUDED OR EMBEDDED CITATION

Reference citations in texts are done using parenthetical acknowledgement. Most often, this involves enclosing the author's surname and the date of publication within brackets, separated by a comma, generally placed immediately after the reference or at the end of the sentence in which the reference is made. However, it is also common for the authors to be the subject or object of a sentence. In such a case only the year is in parenthesis. In all cases of citation, author

¹⁷ Adapted from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/APA_style (CC: BY-SA)

name(s) are always followed immediately by a year, and years are never presented without author name(s) immediately preceding it. In the case of a quotation, the page number is also included in the citation.

Full bibliographic information is then provided in a Reference section at the end of the article. APA style defines that the reference section may only include articles that are cited within the body of an article. This is the distinction between a document having a Reference section and a bibliography, which may incorporate sources which may have been read by the authors as background but not referred to or included in the body of a document.

Single author

Format should be Author's last name followed directly by a comma, then the year of publication. When one makes the reference to the author(s) directly as a part of the narrative, then only the year (and page number if needed) would remain enclosed within parentheses. The same holds for multiple authors as you can see in the following examples.

A recent study found a possible genetic cause of alcoholism (Pauling, 2005).

Pauling (2005) discovered a possible genetic cause of alcoholism.

Two authors

Authors should be presented in order that they appear in the published article. If they are cited within closed parentheses, use the ampersand (&) between them. If not enclosed in parentheses then use expanded "and".

A recent study found a possible genetic cause of alcoholism (Pauling & Liu, 2005). Pauling and Liu (2005) discovered a possible genetic cause of alcoholism.

Three to five authors

With three to five authors, the first reference to an article includes all authors. Subsequent citations in the same document may refer to the article by the principal author only plus "et al." However, all authors must be present in the references section.

A recent study found a possible genetic cause of alcoholism (Pauling, Liu, & Guo, 2005). Pauling, Liu, and Guo (2005) conducted a study that discovered a possible genetic cause of alcoholism. Pauling et al. (2005) discovered a possible genetic cause of alcoholism. A recent study found a possible genetic cause of alcoholism (Pauling et al., 2005).

Six authors or more

The correct format is (First Author et al., Year). In the reference section, all six authors' names should be included.

Pauling et al. (2005) discovered a possible genetic cause of alcoholism.

Multiple publications, same author

If an author has multiple publications that you wish to cite, you use a comma to separate the years of publication in chronological order (oldest to most recent). If the publications occur in the same year, the Publication Manual recommends using suffixes a, b, c, etc. (note that corresponding letters should be used in the reference list, and these references should be ordered alphabetically by title).

Recent studies have found a possible genetic cause of alcoholism (Pauling, 2004, 2005a, 2005b). Pauling (2004, 2005a, 2005b) has conducted studies that have discovered a possible genetic cause of alcoholism

Multiple publications, different authors

Follow the rules for one author above, and use a semicolon to separate articles. Citation should first be in alphabetical order of the author, then chronological.

Recent studies found a possible genetic cause of alcoholism (Alford, 1995; Pauling, 2004, 2005; Sirkis, 2003)

Direct quotes

The same rules as above apply here, the format being (Author, Year, Page Number).

When asked why his behavior had changed so dramatically, Max simply said, "I think it's the reinforcement" (Pauling, 2004, p. 69).

REFERENCE LIST

The APA style guide prescribes that the *Reference* section, bibliographies and other lists of names should be accumulated by surname first, and mandates inclusion of surname prefixes. For example, "Martin de Rijke" should be sorted as "De Rijke, M." and "Saif Al Falasi" should be sorted as "Al-Falasi, S." (The preference for Arabic names now is to hyphenate the prefix so that it remains with the surname.)

Print sources

A] Book by one author

Sheril, R. D. (1956). *The terrifying future: Contemplating color television*. San Diego: Halstead.

B] Book by two authors or more

Smith, J., & Peter, Q. (1992). *Hairball: An intensive peek behind the surface of an enigma*. Hamilton, ON: McMaster University Press.

C] Article in an edited book

Mcdonalds, A. (1993). Practical methods for the apprehension and sustained containment of supernatural entities. In G. L. Yeager (Ed.), *Paranormal and occult studies: Case studies in application* (pp. 42–64). London: OtherWorld Books.

D] Article in a journal paginated separately

Crackton, P. (1987). The Loonie: God's long-awaited gift to colourful pocket change? *Canadian Change*, 64 (7), 34–37.

E] Article in a journal with continuous pagination

Rottweiler, F. T., & Beauchemin, J. L. (1987). Detroit and Narnia: Two foes on the brink of destruction. *Canadian/American Studies Journal*, 54, 66-146.

F] Article in a weekly magazine

Henry, W. A., III. (1990, April 9). Making the grade in today's schools. *Time*, 135, 28–31.

G] Article in a newspaper

Wrong, M. (2005, August 17). "Never Gonna Give You Up" says Mayor. *Toronto Sol*, p. 4.

I] Government document

Revenue Canada. (2001). *Advanced gouging: Manual for employees* (MP 65–347/1124). Ottawa: Minister of Immigration and Revenue.

Electronic sources

For electronic references, websites, and online articles, APA Style asserts some basic rules, including to direct readers specifically to the source material using URLs which work, include the access date and include all other relevant APA style details for the source Internet article based on a print source (With exact formatting of original)

Marlowe, P., Spade, S., & Chan, C. (2001). Detective work and the benefits of colour versus black and white [Electronic version]. *Journal of Pointless Research*, 11, 123–124.

A] Internet article based on a print source (Formatting differs from original)

Marlowe, P., Spade, S., & Chan, C. (2001). Detective work and the benefits of colour versus black and white. *Journal of Pointless Research*, 11, 123–124. Retrieved October 25, 2007, from http://www.pointlessjournal.com/colour_vs_black_and_white.html

B] Article in an Internet-only journal

Blofeld, E. S. (1994, March 1). Expressing oneself through Persian cats and modern architecture. *Felines & Felons*, 4, Article 0046g. Retrieved October 3, 1999, from <http://journals.f+f.org/spectre/vblofeld-0046g.html>

C] Article in an Internet-only newsletter

Paradise, S., Moriarty, D., Marx, C., Lee, O. B., Hassel, E., Bradford, J., et al. (1957, July). Portrayals of fictional characters in reality-based popular writing: Project update. *Off the Beaten Path*, 7 (3). Retrieved October 3, 1999, from <http://www.newsletter.offthebeatenpath.news/otr/complaints.html>

D] Stand-alone Internet document, no author identified, no date

What I did today. (n.d.). Retrieved August 21, 2002, from <http://www.cc.mystory.life/blog/didtoday.html> [Fictional entry.]

E] Document available on university program or department website (note that APA spells website Web site)

Rogers, B. (2078). *Faster-than-light travel: What we've learned in the first twenty years*. Retrieved August 24, 2079, from *Mars University, Institute for Martian Studies* Web site, <http://www.eg.spacecentraltoday.mars/university/dept.html> [Fictional entry.]

F] Electronic copy of a journal article, three to five authors, retrieved from database

Costanza, G., Seinfeld, J., Benes, E., Kramer, C., & Peterman, J. (1993). Minutiae and insignificant observations from the nineteen-nineties. *Journal about Nothing*, 52, 475–649. Retrieved October 31, 1999, from *NoTHINGJournals* database. [Fictional entry.]

G] E-mail or other personal communication (cite in text only)

(A. Monterey, personal communication, September 28, 2001)

H] Book on CD

Nix, G. (2002). *Lirael, Daughter of the Clayr* [CD]. New York: Random House/Listening Library.

I] Book on tape

Nix, G. (2002). *Lirael, Daughter of the Clayr* [Cassette Recording No. 1999-1999-1999]. New York: Random House/Listening Library.

J] Movie

Gilby, A. (Producer), & Schlesinger, J. (Director). (1995). *Cold comfort farm* [Motion picture]. Universal City, CA: MCA Universal Home Video.

The MLA Style

According to the MLA book catalogue description, since first being published in 1985, the MLA Style Manual has been "the standard guide for graduate students, scholars, and professional writers." MLA style "has been widely adopted by schools, academic departments, and instructors for over half a century"; the MLA's "guidelines are also used by over 1,100 scholarly and literary journals, newsletters, and magazines and by many university and commercial presses," and they are "followed throughout North America and in Brazil, China, India, Japan, Taiwan, and other countries around the world" ("What Is MLA Style?")¹⁸.

PURPOSE

The MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing, 3rd ed. (2008), by the Modern Language Association of America (based on the work of Joseph Gibaldi with co-author Walter S. Achtert for The MLA Style Manual [1985], revised in the 2nd ed. in 1998), is addressed primarily to academic scholars, professors, graduate students, and other advanced-level writers of scholarly books and articles in humanities disciplines such as English and other modern languages and literatures. Many journals and presses in these disciplines require that manuscripts be submitted following MLA style.

MLA style provides a bibliography of "Works Cited" listing works cited in one's text and notes (either footnotes and/or endnotes), which is placed after the main body of a term paper, article, or book.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OR WORKS CONSULTED

In addition to "Works Cited", MLA style also provides other possible options for bibliographies such as more-selective lists headed "Selected Bibliography" or "Works Consulted."

18 Adapted from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_MLA_Style_Manual (CC: BY-SA)

Content notes

In composing "content notes" (formatted as either footnotes or endnotes), one is directed to "avoid lengthy discussions that divert the reader's attention from the primary text" and advised: "In general, comments that you cannot fit into the text should be omitted unless they provide essential justification or clarification of what you have written" (259). "You may use a note, for example, to give full publication facts for an original source for which you cite an indirect source" (259). MLA style "content notes" use the same method of "Parenthetical Documentation and the List of Works Cited," with sources keyed to the list of "Works Cited", discussed in Section 7: "Documentation: Citing Sources in the Text" (240–60).

FORMATS FOR BIBLIOGRAPHIES IN MLA

Book

Author's name [last name, first name, middle initial or middle name (as given)]. Title. Place of publication: publisher, date. Print. Supplementary information (if any). Example

Hodgkinson, Tom. How to Be Idle. New York: Harper, 2005. Print.

Article in a periodical (magazine or journal, as well as newspapers)

Author's name [last name, first name, middle initial or middle name (as given)]. "Article title." Title of periodical Volume number ("for a scholarly journal"). [period] issue number ("if available, for a scholarly journal") Date of publication within parentheses ("for a scholarly journal, the year; for other periodicals, the day, month, and year, as available"): Pages ("inclusive"). Print.

Brophy, Mike. "Driving Force." Hockey News 21 Mar. 2006: 16-19. Print.

Kane, Robert. "Turing Machines and Mental Reports." Australasian Jour. of Philosophy 44.3 (1966): 334-52. Print.

If the journal uses only issue numbers, cite the issue number alone.

If citing a "locally-published newspaper" whose city of publication is not in its title, the city is put in square brackets (but not italicized) after the title of the newspaper (178–79).

Internet Resource

Name of author of webpage (last name, first name, middle initial or middle name [as given]). "Article Title." Title of Webpage [publication]. Sponsoring Agency, date of publication (or date page was last modified). Web. Date accessed.

CNN and Reuters. "Boston Columnist Resigns Amid New Plagiarism Charges." Cable News Network. Turner Broadcasting System, Inc., 19 Aug. 1998. Web. 6 Mar. 2009.

CD ROM

Name of author (last name, first name, middle initial or middle name [as given]). "Article title of printed source." Periodical title of printed source, or title of printed analogue Date: inclusive pages. Title of database. CD-ROM. Name of vendor or computer service. Electronic-publication data or data for access.

Reed, William. "Whites and the Entertainment Industry." Tennessee Tribune 25 Dec. 1996: 28. Ethnic News Watch. CD-ROM. Data Technologies, Feb. 1997.

Personal Interview

Name of person interviewed (last name, first name, middle initial or middle name [as given]).
Personal interview. Date interviewed.

Pei, I. M. Personal interview. 22 July 1993.



CHAPTER SIX: Assessment Task

This chapter has discussed several ways you could reference your sources. See if you can perform these tasks:

1. Study the information below taken from a book, *Using Moodle*, and reference this book using both APA and MLA techniques.

Using Moodle, 2nd Edition, Second Edition

by Jason Cole and Helen Foster

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2. Study the information below from a book called *An Introduction to Classroom Observation* and reference it in both APA and MLA Styles

First published 1994 by
Routledge
Second edition published 1999
by Routledge
11 New Fetter Lane, London
EC4P 4EE

This edition published in the
Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2002.

Simultaneously published in the
USA and Canada
by Routledge
29 West 35th Street, New York,
NY 10001

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Publication Data*
A catalogue record for this book
is available from the British
Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging in
Publication Data*

Wragg, E. C. (Edward Conrad)
An introduction to classroom
observation / E. C. Wragg. —
2nd ed.

p. cm.
Includes bibliographical
references (p.) and index.
1. Observation (Educational
method) 2. Teachers—
Training of.

I. Title.
LB1731.6.W73 1999
370'.71—dc21 98-36040
CIP

ISBN 0-415-19440-7 (Print Edition)
ISBN 0-203-01895-8 Master e-book ISBN
ISBN 0-203-20040-3 (Glassbook Format)

Provide an APA reference for an online open access journal article called, *A Pictorial Technique for Mass Screening of Sorghum Germplasm for Anthracnose (Colletotrichum sublineolum) Resistance* by Louis K. Prom, Ramasamy Perumal, John Erpelding, Thomas Isakeit, Noe Montes-Garcia, Clint W. Magill. Available at <http://www.bentham.org/open/toasi/openaccess2.htm>

RESOURCE



Additional Enrichment Resources

The following resources are highly recommended and will offer enrichment to your studies:

RESOURCE	LOCATION
How-to-Study.com, <i>Writing Techniques</i>	http://www.how-to-study.com/study-skills/en/language-arts/18/writing-techniques/
How-to-Study.com, <i>A Word Identification Strategy</i>	http://www.how-to-study.com/study-skills/en/language-arts/16/a-word-identification-strategy/
VUMA! Portal, <i>How to Improve your Writing Skills</i>	http://www.vuma.ac.za/drupal/?q=content/how-improve-your-writing-skills-0
VUMA! Portal, <i>Basics of Good Writing</i>	http://www.vuma.ac.za/drupal/?q=content/basics-good-writing
VUMA! Portal, <i>Five Ways to Improve Your Writing Style</i>	http://www.vuma.ac.za/drupal/?q=content/five-ways-improve-your-writing-style

Glossary



These words and terms are used in this chapter.

WORD	DEFINITION
APA	American Psychological Association. Style for acknowledging sources of information formally used in a text.
Bibliography	This is a list of recommended readings which may have been used and cited in an academic work or not. It is written in alphabetical order of authors' surnames.
Citation	This refers to ways of acknowledging or showing the location of information used in an academic text.
Endnote	The source of the information in the text, or additional information about the text placed at the end of a document.
Footnote	The source of the information in the text, or additional information about the text, placed at the bottom (foot) of the page.
MLA	Morden Language Association. Style for acknowledging sources of information formally used in a text.
References	A list of texts used and cited in an academic work in alphabetical order of authors' surnames



7

Examination Skills

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide you with skills in order to complete examinations successfully. You will be shown how to devise strategies for reviewing material, developing a revision timeline and also learn to identify the areas of study on which you should concentrate. You will also be given helpful tips on reviewing and learn how to use past examinations as a guide for future ones.

OUTCOMES

By the end of your study of this chapter you should be able to:

- Devise a revision strategy.
- Manage your time effectively during revision and examination.
- Identify specific areas of study.
- Practice sample examinations or tests.
- Avoid unacceptable examination practices.
- Follow examination instructions.
- Recognize the precise requirements of the examination or test.

Initial Preparation

The most important thing any student can do to prepare for an examination is to start studying early. Even if you got distinctions at MSCE (“O” level) with little effort you will discover that such an approach is not going to work at College level. College courses contain a lot more content and require far more effort to prepare for the examination. *Daily* preparation is crucial. Preparation for examinations should be seen as part of your daily study routine. Earlier in the Study Skills chapter it was recommended that you should spend 2-3 hours outside of class studying for every hour of class time. For a straightforward lecture course try the following:

- Every day before class preview the material for 15-20 minutes.
- Attend every lecture. Seems simple but missing classes is the biggest mistake you might make.
- Take good notes. (Review the Study Skills & Listening Skills chapters for advice on how best to do this.)
- Spend another 20-30 minutes after class going over the notes.
- Use this time to get any confusing points cleared up in your head; much better now than later. This will make preparation for examinations much easier closer to the time.
- Once a week, review the material to get a more complete overview of the information.

Preparing a Study Schedule

If you've been doing the activities described above on a daily and weekly basis you will be in good shape when it comes time to get serious about preparing for a specific examination. The first thing you will need is an examination study plan or schedule. You need to answer some questions:

- What is my schedule like during the week of the exam?

- Do I have other exams or papers due?
- Will I have all week to prepare or will I have to study over the weekend?
- How many pages of notes are there?
- How many chapters do I have to read?

All of these questions will help you answer one basic one: How much time will I need? For a single examination identify the day one week before the examination. That's the first day to start studying in earnest. Literally plan out how many hours you will spend each day studying until the exam. Make a schedule and stick to it. Be sure to leave time for group study or review sessions. Also break up the material into parts and cover a little each day. Consider these questions:

- How much material will I cover each night?
- How much time will I spend studying with a friend?
- When are the review sessions?
- Will the Prof. or lecturer be available to answer any questions that come up?

Study Methods

Once you have a study schedule it's time to get to work. There is no one way to go about this. Remember it is important to come up with a system that works for you. Below is a suggested plan of action.

Activity



SEMINAR ACTIVITY: Study Steps

In your seminar groups work through the five steps and additional tips below. Discuss their effectiveness as a way of preparing for your examinations. How might you adapt them?

Step 1

Get a blank piece of paper and list the material you need to study. Start with big topics and leave room for subtopics. Fill in the information as best as you can. Get another sheet of paper and start over if necessary. Once you see all the units of information in front of you it will be easier to organize your study plan.

Step 2

Do this step alone in your quiet study place. Read through each unit and paraphrase the content into smaller sections. Break the study material into smaller chunks and study each one. This is when you start to memorize the information you'll need later. Write down any questions that you may have.

Step 3

The next step is to work with someone else to clarify anything that is confusing. Work with another person. Go to review sessions, see a lecturer, work with the professor or with one of your peers. It is important to make sure that everything is clearly understood. This is crucial because if this step is skipped you're left memorizing facts that have no real meaning to you. Not only is this information difficult to memorise but you will also easily forget it later. No real learning would have taken place.

Try working with someone else who will ask you questions about the material. If you can answer and explain concepts without too much effort then you're in good shape. Usually this helps to expose areas that require more attention and study.

Step 4

Now it's time to put the information into your brain for retrieval. If you've been working all along you will already remember much of it. Make sure nothing is left out. Also try to use as many senses as you can. Employ touch by writing out key points, auditory stimulation by reading your notes out aloud, visual stimulation by reviewing your notes etc.

Step 5

If the previous step went well then all you have left is to work on weak areas and a general overview of the material. If you didn't do well explaining the material you'll need another round of steps 3 and 4. Make sure you leave time for this in your study schedule.

If you planned well and kept up with the work there should be little anxiety the night before an exam. If you started late or waited to get questions answered then you'll be busy the night before. This will add extra stress and you'll likely make stupid errors on the exam. At the very least you'll be more susceptible to getting sick which will worsen your situation. The only thing that should be going through your mind the night before is a sense of confidence. It's ok to be a little afraid or anxious but not panicky.

Below are listed some other study suggestions.

OTHER TIPS

- *Use flashcards: These help to memorize facts but not understanding*
- *Work in groups: Groups work well when you need to work through difficult material: Quiz each other for understanding.*
- *Review sessions: Only go to early ones, last minute reviews sometimes cause needless confusion.*
- *Make use of your lecturers and tutors: Employ their help early. Waiting till the last minute only fosters aggravation and panic.*

PAST EXAMINATION PAPERS

Using past examination papers is very useful strategy for your revision programme. Past examination papers allow you to test your knowledge, in depth on real degree questions. Trying to answer these degree questions can identify areas of weakness allowing you to revise areas you may otherwise have overlooked.

Past examination papers will give a good indication of the level of difficulty you're likely to experience in the actual examination. Often you will also see that in different years the papers revolve around specific key points and themes. Make sure you revise these areas thoroughly but do not 'spot' or focus exclusively on the materials covered in previous papers. This could be disastrous as examiners love to change the focus from year to year.

Activity



SEMINAR ACTIVITY: Success Strategies

In your seminar group answer the following question:

- a) When did you each last take an examination?
- b) What kind of examination was it?
- c) How did you feel about it?
- d) Were you successful?
- e) Explore with the group the factors that contributed to each of your successes and failures. List the factors that contributed to success.

Activity



SELF STUDY ACTIVITY:

A Revision Time Table

Use a blank timetable and prepare your own study schedule for a set of examinations in six weeks time. It should include the following:

- a) A selection of the key topics you will need to revise in each subject area to get an overall sense of the volume of work.
- b) An assessment of how much time you will need to spend on each topic based on familiarity with the subject matter, frequency of questions on past exam papers and the skills to practice.
- c) An estimation, based on how much needs to be covered, of how much time you will need to study each day.
- d) A scheduled time to study each day. You can be somewhat flexible here, but generally you should try to study every day and where possible at the same time every day.
- e) Include scheduled time for leisure activities and rest.

Examination Day

DEALING WITH ANXIETY

You all feel some degree of anxiety upon discovering that you will be taking an examination. How could you not? Having someone other than your lecturer to invigilate is a scary notion. You should begin your examinations by addressing your anxiety.

Activity



SEMINAR ACTIVITY:

Test Day Tips

As a group discuss the following *Test-Day Tips*. Not everyone may need additional support in this area but it is worthwhile spending some time familiarising yourself with these stress reducing strategies.

Test-Day Tips

- a) Relax and get a good night's sleep the night before.
- b) Prepare yourself the night before. Organize pencils, pens, a calculator, a bottle of water and earplugs. Earplugs are great if you are easily distracted by noise.
- c) Eat breakfast. It is essential for the energy you'll need for the test.
- d) Give yourself plenty of time to arrive calmly at the testing centre. If you arrive 30 minutes early, a brisk walk around the site can clear your mind and energize you.
- e) Sit down on a bench and take some deep breaths.

- f) Do not study on the testing day!
 - g) Don't panic if you seem to forget something. It's normal when you are nervous. It'll come to you in the test.
 - h) When the test is given to you, write down on an extra sheet of paper, any math formulas, measurements or things you've needed to memorize. This will free up your mind.
 - i) Try to pace yourself. Put your watch on the desk in front of you and be aware of the time.
 - j) If you don't know a question, skip it and come back to it later. Complete all the things you know first and return to the harder questions.
 - k) After the test, let it go. Stop thinking about it and do something to reward yourself.
-

EXAMINATION INSTRUCTIONS

Every test or examination has instructions. These are usually printed on the examination cover sheet. It is very important that you study them in detail before you start writing. They inform you about how much time you have to complete the examination. They also outline any choices you might have to make in terms of questions. Occasionally, it is not necessary to answer everything on the question paper so make sure you know what options are available. Also if the paper is going to be marked by different people you might also have different answer booklets so make sure you are aware of what sections need to be answered in which booklet.

Allow yourself plenty of time to familiarise yourself with these instructions.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

When you look at an examination question read it more than once so you are absolutely clear about what is required. Identify the scope of the question, how much detail will the answer require? In the question look for clues. Are there dates, locations or other parameters that outlines the scope required? For an additional clue also check the mark allocation for that question. Make sure that you allocate the appropriate amount of time for the appropriate number of possible marks. For example, don't write an answer that is pages in length when only a few marks are at stake.

For the important questions, before you put pen to paper, spend a few minutes developing a small plan or outline to your answer. This way you can create a structured answer that covers all the information you have learned in a logical and sequential manner. This will demonstrate full understanding and impress the markers. It is very poor to write down random thoughts onto the paper as they come to mind.

Activity



SEMINAR ACTIVITY: The Examination Paper

Work in pairs, study a past examination paper and discuss how to interpret the instructions and examination questions. Respond to these questions:

- a) How much time should you spend reading the questions?
- b) In which order should you answer the questions?

- c) What do you do if you cannot answer a question?
- d) How will you monitor the time?
- e) Why is timing so important?
- f) In an essay question, do you work from an outline?
- g) Should you allot time to read through your answers?

Discuss the responses with the group and list effective strategies. Write down suggestions that may be useful.

Summary

In this module you have gone through a process that you would follow before you take examinations and during examinations. During preparation for examinations you are expected to do the following: devise a revision strategy, manage your time during revision and examination, recognize the precise requirements of the examination or test, identify areas of study you need to work on and practice answering sample examinations or tests. You have learnt that during the examinations you have to follow examination instructions and avoid unacceptable examination practices.



RESOURCE

Additional Enrichment Resources

The following resources are highly recommended and will offer enrichment to your studies:

REFERENCE	LOCATION
CampusAccess.com , Exam Preparation Tips	http://www.campusaccess.com/student-life/academics-exam-preparation.html
WikiHow , How to Write Flash Cards	http://www.wikihow.com/Write-Flash-Cards
Using English , 28 Top Tips for Exams and Tests	http://www.usingenglish.com/resources/exam-tips.html
VUMA! Portal , Exam Preparation	http://www.vuma.ac.za/drupal/?q=content/exam-preparation-1
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VUMA! Portal , Top Tips For Passing Exams	http://www.vuma.ac.za/drupal/?q=content/top-tip-passing-exams

Glossary



These words and terms are used in this chapter.

WORD	DEFINITION
Factoids	a small and often unimportant bit of information
Retrieve	to save something from being lost, damaged, or destroyed
Aggregation	collected together from different sources and considered as a whole

Scary causing fear or alarm

Clue Hint or an explanation or reason for something that is difficult to understand



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The following Open Education Resources (OER) were used and adapted in the construction of each chapter:

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<http://www.wikihow.com/Take-Lecture-Notes>
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