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Skills Pathway Program – Study Guide MCC

Civil Force Training is a division of Macquarie Commercial College Ltd a non-profit organisation that was established in 1993 and is a National Registered Training Organisation (RTO # 3923) with Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)
Skills Pathway Program Overview

How to Use This Study Guide

This Guide is provided as the foundation for all higher education studies at the Macquarie Education. To assist in developing your competence in core areas of the program we have included a number of activities. These activities are identified using the following symbol

Activity Symbol

All activities in this Guide are compulsory and will assist you to gauge your understanding of various concepts.

Resource Material

There are a number of resources freely available to supplement practical sessions and this Study Guide. Where appropriate, these resources are outlined within the relevant sections.
Preventing for Further Study at Civil Force Training

Introduction

The transition from secondary to VET education involves a number of adjustments for every student. These adjustments will include taking more responsibility for learning, managing time, making decisions about current and future life and learning directions, and many personal factors including to balance living, study and social arrangements.

This program, the first of its kind, is compulsory for all VET students at Civil Force Training a division of Macquarie. We named it the Skills Pathway Program because we acknowledge all students gain entry to our VET programs with some skill however, this program will enhance and assist you to continue develop the essential skills you will require in both personal and professional life. It will certainly enhance your progress within VET studies at Macquarie or with any other VET provider. Statistics about activity in VET education also reinforce why skills enhancement is important to you:

- Nationally, only 64% of students actually complete their program.
- About 30% of students with high secondary school scores experience serious difficulties when adjusting to the VET environment including at least one subject fail during their studies;
- 72% of students who don't complete their studies acknowledge time management issues as their biggest problem. 57% also highlight a lack of understanding regarding submission requirements such as the structure of written materials;
- 96.5% of students successfully completing skills enhancement at the School have also been successful in their VET studies; and
- Government figures show around 92% of graduating students are employed within 4 months.

Obviously, VET education is a two way street — we provide the program and you are expected to absorb information, comply with various task requirements and meet assessment criteria. In theory this appears simple however the application of knowledge and skills required for the entire VET program is not necessarily an easy task, it requires a great deal of time, effort and discipline. You must remember your results and grades will potentially be of interest to employers and also considered when you seek advancement or promotion within the workplace. If you move on to other VET education, your results and grades will also influence the success of any application for admission i.e. entry into most post-graduate courses require a credit average.


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With all this in mind, it makes sense that you adjust to VET life in a logical, sequential and personally suitable way. Hence, this program has been developed by staff at the School whom, have also been through this process. Their lessons and experience will further assist you achieve academically and in life generally.
**Essential Skills**

The following competencies are generally recognised as critical to effectively participate in current and emerging forms of work organisation. They were identified by the Mayer Committee in a report to the Australian National Training Authority outlining common needs of the Australian workforce:

1. **Collecting, analysing and organising information**
   The capacity to locate, sift and sort information in order to select what is required and to present it in a useful way, and evaluate both the information itself and the sources and methods used to collect it.

2. **Communicating ideas and information**
   The capacity to communicate effectively with others using the range of spoken, written, graphic and other nonverbal means of expression.

3. **Planning and organising activities**
   The capacity to plan and organise one's own work activities, including making good use of time and resources, sorting out priorities and monitoring one's performance.

4. **Working with others and in teams**
   The capacity to interact effectively with other people both on a one-to-one basis and in groups, including understanding and responding to the needs of a client and working effectively as a member of a team to achieve a shared goal.

5. **Solving problems**
   The capacity to apply problem-solving strategies in purposeful ways, both in situations where the problem and the solution are clearly evident and in situations requiring creative thinking and a creative approach to achieve a desired outcome.

6. **Using mathematical ideas and techniques**
   The capacity to use mathematical ideas, such as number and space, and techniques such as estimation and approximation, for practical purposes.

7. **Using technology**
   The capacity to apply technology, combining the physical and sensory skills needed to operate equipment with the understanding of scientific and technological principles needed to explore and adapt systems.

You should keep these essential skills in mind throughout your time at the School and continue to develop them where possible.

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2 Mayer Committee. Putting General Education to Work: The Key Competencies Report (Sands & McDougall, Australia, 1992)
Adjusting to Tertiary Education Requirements

Students interviewed consistently raise the same issues they say impacted upon their first year VET studies. These issues are:

- Changes in motivation
  
  If a student has recently completed secondary education, they will recall the effort required and how they achieved their results. The student worked hard and had to complete a number of tasks during their final year within a rigid and predictable learning environment. After VCE, many first year students are drained. They have achieved their high and now in contemplation of their next major goal (a higher education qualification) a number of years away, many experience motivation problems.

- Variations in teaching and assessment
  
  Within secondary education, learning is conducted in a more controlled and supervised environment. There is a closeness between students and teachers with ample time for questions and student/class participation. Learning content and subject assessments are generally predictable, with clear boundaries developed.

  In higher education, learning is more open ended and often, there is no right or wrong answer to particular problems. The focus is on understanding, actively questioning concepts and making or suggesting various corrections or adjustments where applicable. This results in building upon earlier thinking or put simply – progressing.

- Learning strategies
  
  In secondary education teachers usually manage subject content, monitor and review tasks and easily identify issues that might impact upon quality outcomes for individual students.

  Issues relating to performance are discussed between teachers and students and, where necessary between teachers, students and their parents. Outcomes of this are usually to put in more study time or occasionally to adjust the students’ study technique within the predictable boundaries of the course or subject. There is no requirement in secondary education for students to take independent control of their learning. This means, on entering first year VET environments, students have not been trained in how to independently take control and responsibility for their future learning. Hence, the importance of Skills Pathway Programs as a foundation for all future VET learning.
Remote learning

Tertiary learning varies substantially from secondary education in aspects of delivery and support. It is more remote with a strong emphasis on independence, retention of knowledge for exams, self-driven skill development for research and investigations tasks, and developing competence for the submission of written materials. All courses expect students to complete large amounts of work on their own but will rarely check to ensure progress is appropriate. This can result in many students only completing what has to be done for assessment and not necessarily focusing on their personal development along the way. Consequently unnecessary work is considered unimportant and therefore rarely completed. This surfaces in deficiencies in both personal and academic development.

Isolation

For many years in secondary school, students have developed strong support groups and friendships. Teachers, fellow students and school administrators know them individually. Within higher education (especially the universities), this does not always apply and the student tends to become a number rather than an individual. This results in many students feeling overwhelmed and isolated which can reduce their abilities to effectively learn. At Macquarie Education we encourage students to network and develop strong support groups.

Social life and living habits

For many students, studying at VET level can also involve moving from the family home and into shared or other accommodation. This also involves moving away from the strict rules of home and the discipline expected to complete life and educational tasks. There are many temptations at this time of life including the opportunity to experiment socially and in relationships, to try drugs or alternative lifestyles and to party hard! It is important that one focuses on maintaining an appropriate balance involving social and personal priorities and the demands of VET study.
Summary

A summary of the key differences is outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and comprehension is the emphasis of secondary school</td>
<td>Critical analysis of concepts from many sources involving thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes within a set environment involving primarily the same teacher(s)</td>
<td>A series of sizeable lectures involving students from a number of programs supported by smaller practical tutorials, field visits and relevant scenarios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessments</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally, final exams after a number of mid-term assessable tasks within set boundaries</td>
<td>Strong focus on critical analysis of concepts discussed in various written submissions, research and investigations. Most subjects also involve major examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timetable</strong></td>
<td>Students attend various sessions with a full-time load of 12 hours in any week. The remainder of time is spent involved in “independent” learning, calculated as two hours for every single hour of delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are timetabled for each hour of each day of attendance with a substantial amount of work completed in class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td>Students will be expected to use reading lists as a basis only and must investigate outside prescribed and recommended texts by identifying relevant materials in the library or other sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are generally given set readings or parameters of reading that is applicable to their subject area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notes and Support Materials</strong></td>
<td>Students are expected to take comprehensive notes upon which to base course content followed by further investigation and analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are generally given materials upon which to base their learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written Materials</strong></td>
<td>All written materials must strictly comply with the conventions as outlined in the Macquarie Education Style Guide contained in your Student Diary. This includes referencing, format and style. Please note School rules regarding plagiarism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although some materials are similar to VET requirements, the submission of written materials such as essays is not as advanced or technically demanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interactions with Teaching Staff</strong></td>
<td>Students will potentially have eight teaching staff when on a full-time study load (4 lecturers and 4 tutors). These staff are generally sessional and therefore not necessarily contactable on a daily basis after classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student interaction is regular and ongoing whilst at school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Learning</strong></td>
<td>Students are expected to base their studies on information from lectures and tutorials and take responsibility for their own further academic development. This means they must understand the concept of independent learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers usually manage subject content, monitor and review tasks, and easily identify issues that might impact upon quality outcomes for individual students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Changes in Thinking and Bloom's Taxonomy

As you further develop during your studies at the School, you will realise that your thinking is also changing. This change is discreetly encouraged within the program and subject content and will enhance your life and professional development.

You will move from merely gathering facts to understanding and questioning concepts including connections or comparisons between them. This is best evidenced through Bloom's Taxonomy.

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom headed a panel of psychologists who classified levels of intellectual behaviour important in learning. They argued that 95% of problems students encounter require them to think only at the lowest possible level - recalling information. Examples of recalling information could include:

- Describe a system of work; or
- List the major reasons for offending behaviour; or
- Identify the recommended actions of staff when confronted with violence in the workplace.

Bloom identified there are actually six levels or classifications within the cognitive domain, from simple recall or recognition of facts, as the lowest level, through increasingly more complex and abstract mental levels, to the highest classification - evaluation.

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3 Bloom, B.S. (ed.). Taxonomy of educational objectives - The cognitive domain (David McKay, New York, 1956)
Consider the following, which has been adapted from: Bloom, B.S. (Ed.) (1956) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

- Knowledge
- Understanding
- Application
- Analysis
- Synthesis
- Evaluation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Skill Demonstrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Observation and recall of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• knowledge of dates, events, places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• knowledge of major ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• mastery of subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Question Cues: list, define, tell, describe, identify, show, label, collect, examine, tabulate, quote, name, who, when, where, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding (Comprehension)</td>
<td>Understanding information, grasp meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• translate knowledge into new context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• interpret facts, compare, contrast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• order, group, infer causes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• predict consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Question Cues: summarise, describe, interpret, contrast, predict, associate, distinguish, estimate, differentiate, discuss, extend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Use information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• use methods, concepts, theories in new situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• solve problems using required skills or knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questions Cues: apply, demonstrate, calculate, complete, illustrate, show, solve, examine, modify, relate, change, classify, experiment, discover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Seeing patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• organisation of parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• recognition of hidden meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• identification of components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Question Cues: analyse, separate, order, explain, connect, classify, arrange, divide, compare, select, explain, infer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Skill Demonstrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Synthesis  | Use old ideas to create new ones  
|            | • generalise from given facts  
|            | • relate knowledge from several areas  
|            | • predict, draw conclusions  
|            | Question Cues:  
|            | combine, integrate, modify, rearrange, substitute, plan, create, design, invent, what if?, compose, formulate, prepare, generalise, rewrite |
| Evaluation | Compare and discriminate between ideas  
|            | • assess value of theories, presentations  
|            | • make choices based on reasoned argument  
|            | • verify value of evidence  
|            | • recognise subjectivity  
|            | Question Cues:  
|            | assess, decide, rank, grade, test, measure, recommend, convince, select, judge, explain, discriminate, support, conclude, compare, summarise |

So what does this all mean to you? Consider the following:

- Without exception, all students will experience difficulty adjusting to VET environments to some extent. What makes one student more successful than another is their capacity to manage difficulties whilst adjusting to new ways of doing things and new environments;
- Students should look forward to the changes that VET life brings and not feel intimidated by them but they must also recognise that they do not have the full set of skills required to effectively move forward - therefore;
- The Skills Pathway Program is an essential strategy upon which to base both academic and general life development or, put simply, it is another part of your journey in life.
Activity 1 – Independent Learning

Based upon what you have learned so far, explain independent learning in approximately 100 words (VET writing requires strict compliance with word limits and academic penalties will apply where students are outside the 10% exception).
Academic Knowledge

Knowledge Can Change

During your studies with Macquarie Education, you will be exposed to many theories, issues, concepts, models and strategies. However, is today's information totally accurate, true or the best information tomorrow?

One must note that academic knowledge changes. People once believed the earth was flat! They also believed some women were witches and should be burned at the stake!

Of modern times, DNA analysis (D(eyoxyribo)N(ucleic) A(cid)) - a nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix; associated with the transmission of genetic information] has revolutionised forensic approaches to criminal investigation. Similarly, the scientific move from IQ testing [Intelligence Quotient - a measure of a person's intelligence as indicated by an intelligence test; the ratio of a person's mental age to their chronological age (multiplied by 100)] to emotional intelligence testing (EI - refers to the personal and interpersonal competencies that guide how we feel, think, and act in different situations) is arguably more important and realistic in gauging human intelligence.

Based upon the above, we should accept that today's knowledge may vary tomorrow.

Building From the Past

Although today's knowledge may vary tomorrow, the "old" theories or approaches can still provide the foundation for academic studies in certain areas. For example, in basic psychology there is still reference to the work of Freud as a pioneer. Similarly, early studies in law enforcement focused on police as the sole responsibility for crime control. Today, partnerships between police and other entities are considered a more appropriate approach to crime control (ie neighbourhood watch, licensed premises accords, etc).

As you progress through your program, always consider the foundations of any area, controversial issues and developments to date. A review of Bloom's Taxonomy will assist.
Theories Between and Within Disciplines

Within your program, a number of conflicts may appear within the various disciplines of study. Competing theories between and within disciplines regularly arise. For example, if one examined theories of political behaviour and representation based upon race in Australian politics, two competing ideological dimensions would apply: a left-right economic dimension and a racial issues dimension. Similarly, if one addressed the same topic from a human rights perspective, there could be dimensions based upon individual, group and community concerns.

During your studies, it is important that you consider the basis and perspective of theories and not merely discount concepts because they do not align with your current thinking in the subject area.

Developing Your Academic Knowledge

We recommend the following:

1. Remain objective within your studies. It is easy to take a position based upon your own values or beliefs at this time of your life. For example, you might have a current view about drug use, gambling or sexual activity that does not necessarily align with common community or family views. Although your current view is not necessarily right or wrong, experience and additional knowledge may vary your views in the future;

2. Ask questions and challenge issues, concepts and beliefs (even your own). This will develop your objective thinking and considering options or alternative approaches rather than acceptance of current knowledge as a static or fixed concept;

3. Treat "theories" as "theories of today." This means, scientific or other approaches may vary or modify them tomorrow as nothing is "carved in stone" and

4. Remain critical. As a society we can only move forward when existing practices or thinking is challenged. If this practice or thinking stands the rigor of investigation and analysis, it is reinforced and more firmly entrenched (at that time). If it does not stand the rigor of investigation and analysis, a new practice or thinking has evolved. That's called progress.
Learning Environments

During your studies at the School, you will be exposed to a variety of learning environments. These will include lectures, tutorials and seminars or workshops. The obvious difference between each will be the size and therefore the number of students that might attend (see below).

Lecture

A large group of students

Tutorial

A small group of students

Seminar or Workshop

Groups of varying size
Lectures

There are clear differences in purpose between lectures, tutorials and seminars or workshops.

The purpose of a lecture is to:

- Provide an overview of the subject matter from history to current approaches;
- Highlight relevant key points including various theories that might apply;
- Stimulate and motivate interest and thinking about the subject matter; and
- Outline literature and further information about the area.
- As lectures are sizeable there is limited time for questions and discussion. This is usually done in tutorials.

To gain the most from a lecture you should:

- Print the lecture notes from the subject page on the website prior to the lecture. The notes will be in dot points and you can supplement these by adding more comprehensive notes in the lecture;
- Prepare by reading the subject matter as indicated in your subject outline making point form notes. Preparing in this way will help you understand the context, focus and various approaches that might apply to the area. It will also allow you to identify your level of comprehension based upon your reading and subsequent reinforcement based upon your attendance;
- Adjust and/or amend your prepared notes as necessary; and
- Review your notes at the first available opportunity whilst the information is still fresh in your memory.

Tutorials

The purpose of a tutorial is to:

- Draw together the information addressed during the lecture;
- Provide a practical environment where students are able to address issues;
- Clarify information that was not clearly understood in the lecture; and
- Interact with other students and the tutor in a practical and involved sense.
- As tutorials involve small groups there is ample time for questions and discussion. This is encouraged and if students have completed readings prior to attendance, the tutorial is a worthwhile time to reinforce current thinking and actions whilst also providing an opportunity to explore alternative concepts and approaches.
To gain the most from a tutorial you should:

- Prepare by reviewing any set readings or tutorial problems given prior making point form notes. Preparing in this way will help you understand the context, focus and various approaches that might apply to the area. It will also allow you to apply concepts in a practical sense;
- Adjust and/or amend your prepared notes as necessary; and
- Review your notes at the first available opportunity whilst the information is still fresh in your memory.

**Seminars or Workshops**

The purpose of a seminar or workshop is to:

- Provide an outline of a new concept or subject area;
- Apply practical applications into the relevant work or professional area;
- Introduce any constraints or applications; and
- Identify from where additional information might be obtained.

Although seminars or workshops can be sizeable, there is usually ample time set aside for questions and discussion.

To gain the most from a seminar or workshop you should:

- Take a note pad and any pre-session support materials;
- Compile comprehensive notes in point form with any additional references that might apply; and
- Review your notes at the first available opportunity whilst the information is still fresh in your memory.
Adding Value to Your Learning

Consider the following for all your learning at the School:

- Be punctual;
- Turn your mobile telephone off;
- Sit toward the front;
- Be prepared — complete any pre-session reading, etc
- Avoid people who engage in private conversations;
- Actively listen to the presenter;
- Note critical points or highlights of the presentation;
- Make notes of key points;
- Identify the link between concepts and sessions where possible;
- Prepare flow or link charts where appropriate; and
- Network with other students such as study groups, etc.
What Does the College Expect of Its Students?

- Ask questions and interact where possible
- Express your point of view whilst respecting others
- Seek advice and assistance of staff where necessary
- Develop an active and critical approach to your studies
- Read widely
- Be an independent committed learner
- Network with other students and further develop team skills
- Reference correctly and acknowledge all sources
- Prepare and submit written materials as required
Getting Started at Macquarie Education

It is important to start off on the right foot in your VET studies. Following our guidelines below will help.

Rules of Learning

- These rules should be reviewed regularly.

Have a Positive Outlook

All behaviour comes from our thoughts therefore you can talk yourself up or down. Adjusting to your new environment will not take long, so ask questions, interact with as many people as possible, and enjoy the experience.

Obtain 'Quality' Information

During your studies at Macquarie Education you will receive advice from many sources (ie fellow students, teaching staff, administrators, friends, parents and others). As part of your personal development, you will need to consider the reliability or otherwise of any advice. Although fellow students may provide advice on many things, always remember many have no more experience than you and, on any serious matter, you should only accept advice from the School.

Develop a Plan

You should plan and then follow your learning plan using your student diary as the basis for meeting various commitments. This is addressed in more detail under "Time Management" and Skills enhancement practical sessions.

Attend All Classes

It is sometimes easier to skip a class than make a concentrated effort to attend, especially when conflicting priorities apply. Even if you have someone else take notes on your behalf you are immediately disadvantaged. By not attending you have missed the focus and emphasis of the session. Your note taker will not be able to compensate for this although they might have the best of intentions. Remember, your results and gradings carry weight for your future, so attend classes and gain the benefit of the experience.

Examinations and essay topics are sat and/or discussed during classes. You are further penalising yourself by not attending. The lecture notes on the website are not a substitute for attendance. In all subjects, 80% attendance is also required or a fail is automatically recorded.
Student Resources

As a minimum, students studying at Macquarie Education should have the following items (tick relevant boxes)

- Carry bag
- Student diary
- Two blue, two red and two black pens
- Highlighters
- Folder for each subject to place support materials and your notes
- Laptop for note taking
- Access to prescribed and recommended texts for each subject
- Access to previous assessment materials online
- Access to computer
- Access to all subject reading lists and/or study guides
What You Should Know or Possess

There are a number of things you should know when commencing studies at NCPS. Each box of the following check list should be ticked where appropriate

- Enrolment details confirmed
- Student card received
- Diary received and read
- Travel concession card obtained
- Timetable received and class details correct
- Location of classes are noted in diary
- Trimester dates and classes entered in diary
- Note names and contact details of key people
- Subject outlined obtained for each subject
- Requirements for each subject are known and entered into student diary
- Plan of subject commitments made on single page
- Macquarie Education website and TURNITIN system passwords obtained
- Know you student representative
- Student services available

Remember, you are now in VET education — a process that requires you to develop a number of competencies based upon independent learning. Do not waste the effort you have made to get here — strategically work toward your next goal in life!
**Plan of Commitments**

A plan of commitments should be put in a conspicuous place and referred to regularly. Some students will place this plan above a computer at home and others insert it as the first page of a study folder. Placement of the plan is your choice however it should be in a prominent place. Below is an example of a plan of commitments:

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**Activity 2 – Plan of Commitments**

Please complete your first plan of commitments’ to be completed within the first few weeks of studies at Macquarie Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject 1</th>
<th>Subject 2</th>
<th>Subject 3</th>
<th>Subject 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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Learning Styles

Introduction

Everyone has preferences about the way they work with information. This means, you will have a preferred learning style which includes the way you take in and convey ideas and information. It is important you understand your preferred learning style as it will help you to learn more effectively and productively. Although we will have different learning styles, it is important to remember that we can also learn from a combination of styles (primary and secondary).

Types of Learning Style

There are three common types of learning style:  
1. Visual;
2. Auditory; and
3. Tactile or Kinaesthetic

Visual Learners

Visual learners learn best through seeing. This means they process information randomly and absorb primarily through what appears before their eyes. Therefore, visual learners will:

- Benefit from visual representations such as flow or link charts, graphs, diagrams, videos, and demonstrations;
- Need to watch their teacher including the teachers’ body language, facial expressions and visual aids;
- Learn better after seeing or writing information;
- Tend to translate verbal messages into images; and
- Generally have a preference for detailed notes, flow or link charts, etc to absorb information.

If you are predominately a visual learner, you are distracted by obstructions such as persons moving around in front of you during a class or blocking your vision of teaching activity.

Auditory Learners

Auditory learners process information in the sequence it is received and need to focus on oral content otherwise they can find other activity at the same time distracting. They are also assisted by further discussion after a presentation or class.

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This means, auditory learners will:

- Benefit through hearing lectures, tutorials, group discussions including a sensitivity to tone, volume and speed of oral information;
- Enjoy question and answer sessions;
- Not need excessive visual stimulation as they tend to be excellent listeners;
- Be attracted to group discussion or a debate of issues; and
- Learn best through auditory alignment such as verbalisation by reading text aloud, use of acronyms and listening to audio tapes.

If you are predominately an auditory learner, you are distracted by activity with a strong visual focus and will not necessarily perform well where there is a requirement for written rather than verbal responses.

**Tactile or Kinaesthetic Learners**

Tactile or kinaesthetic learners perform best when they are able to adopt a hands on' approach. This means, they learn best by doing such as performing simulated or actual tasks. These learners are at their best when their entire body is involved. This means, tactile or kinaesthetic learners will:

- Benefit through being able to move around, touch and manipulate items during the learning process;
- Tend to skim through written materials to gain an overview before conducting a more detailed analysis of it;
- Enjoy chewing gum and tapping a pen or pencil during class;
- Need to take regular breaks during study periods; and
- Often have problems listening for extended periods of time.

If you are predominately a tactile or kinaesthetic learner, you can have difficulty maintaining concentration during lengthy oral presentations. You can also tend to fidget, doodle or gaze and not listen to teaching content. This means you will have to work harder to achieve outcomes consistent with other learners. Many tactile or kinaesthetic learners like to listen to music whilst studying.

It should be remembered that we can have more than one learning style and that by understanding our styles will ultimately assist with developing an appropriate learning and studying strategy.
ACTIVITY 3 – LEARNING STYLE QUIZ

The following quiz is reproduced with permission from the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation, Canada. Place a tick in all the boxes that best describe you. The list with the greatest number of ticks is your dominant learning style.

Visual Learning Style

- frequently asks for verbal instructions to be repeated
- watches speakers’ facial expressions and body language
- likes to take notes to review later
- remembers best by writing things down several times or drawing pictures and diagrams
- good speller (spells by seeing - visualising the words)
- turns the radio or T.V. up really loud
- remembers things best when written out
- prefers information to be presented visually, (e.g. flip charts or white board)
- skilful at making graphs, charts, and other visual displays
- can understand and follow directions on maps
- feels the best way to remember something is to picture it in their head
- follows written instructions better than oral ones (forgets names but remembers faces)
- good at solving jigsaw puzzles
- gets the words to a song wrong
- good at the visual arts
### Auditory Learning Style

- [ ] follows oral directions better than verbal ones and learns better by listening
- [ ] would rather listen to a lecture than read the material in a textbook
- [ ] understands better when reads aloud
- [ ] struggles to keep notebooks neat
- [ ] prefers to listen to the radio than to read a newspaper
- [ ] frequently sings, hums or whistles to themselves
- [ ] dislikes reading from a computer screen especially when the backgrounds are fuzzy
- [ ] when presented with two similar sounds, can tell if sounds are the same or different
- [ ] requires explanations of diagrams, graphs, or maps
- [ ] enjoys talking to others and prefers to contact people by phone
- [ ] talks to self
- [ ] uses musical jingles to learn things
- [ ] would rather listen to music than view a piece of art work
- [ ] uses finger as a pointer when reading
- [ ] likes to tell jokes, stories and makes verbal analogies to demonstrate a point
### Tactile/ Kinaesthetic Learning Style

- [ ] reaches out to touch things
- [ ] collects things
- [ ] talks fast using hands to communicate what they want to say
- [ ] constantly fidgeting (e.g. tapping pen, playing with keys in pocket)
- [ ] good at sports and games
- [ ] takes things apart, puts things together
- [ ] prefers to stand while working
- [ ] likes to have music in the background while working
- [ ] enjoys working with hands and making things
- [ ] likes to chew gum or eat in class
- [ ] learns through movement and exploring the environment around them
- [ ] may be considered hyperactive
- [ ] good at finding their way around
- [ ] comfortable touching others as a show of friendship (e.g. hugging, handshakes)
- [ ] prefers to do things rather than watching a demonstration or reading about it in a book

**Score**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual</th>
<th>Auditory</th>
<th>Tactile / Kinaesthetic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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</table>

Your dominant learning style is

Remember that learning styles aren't mutually inclusive. You may learn best through one style or a combination of two styles. Or you may be a multi-sensory learner who uses all three modalities.
Time Management

"The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot." -- Michael Althsuler

Introduction

The idea of time management has been around for over a 100 years and really means Self Management in handling, supervising, managing or controlling ourselves. Each day we make decisions or choices that impact upon what occurs immediately and into our future. Research shows that good time managers are generally successful in life. This is particularly evident in business where professionals will need to meet deadlines associated with any number of tasks. In higher education, there is an abundance of evidence that discloses students who perform poorly are usually poor time managers. This means, you need to be well organised.

In reality, the term time management creates a false impression of what we are able to do. Time cannot be managed - it is uncontrollable and we can only manage ourselves and our use of time!

Remember — if you do not manage your time (yourself) appropriately, your quality of work will suffer. We believe your ability in this area directly correlates to your results and future development as outlined below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Time Management Skills</th>
<th>Poor Time Management Skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Grades</td>
<td>Poor Grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Deadlines/Commitments</td>
<td>Struggling to Meet Deadlines/Commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Stress/Anxiety</td>
<td>High Stress/Anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discloses Actual/Potential Competence</td>
<td>Unable to Show Actual/Potential Competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steadily Improves Skills</td>
<td>Rarely Improves Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earns Confidence of Others</td>
<td>Other Have No Confidence In You</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Often students are not really open to time management strategies until they have had some hard life lessons or disasters such as failing to meet a deadline. Eventually, as you mature, you will make a decision that something has to change.

*Routine, Important and Urgent Tasks*

Poor time managers get caught up responding to regular urgent matters. These matters quite often have become urgent because they were not attended to at the appropriate time, that is when they were either routine or important tasks.

Knowing the difference between routine, important and urgent tasks allows us to be proactive in goal setting and prioritising our activities. This means, one must be able to prioritise between the:

- Mental;
- Spiritual;
- Physical; and
- Social.

*Time Wasters*

Time wasters are easily identified however the causes and solutions lie with each individual. By identifying what wastes time means you are able to eliminate or work around them. Time wasters can be categorised as:

- Human — can include disorganisation, an inability to prioritise tasks, socialising rather than working, and being unable to say "no" to unnecessary interruptions;
- Environment — can include telephone interruptions, poor study procedures, unnecessary duplication of work, or poorly planned research or investigation; and
- Unpredictable — can include unexpected delays through to emergencies that could not have been predicted such as a power failure or internet outage.

To cope with all or any of these time wasters, these issues need to be thought through.
ACTIVITY 4 – TIME MANAGEMENT QUIZ

Complete this simple 10 point quiz to test your time management skills

I’m a perfectionist in everything I do; near enough is never good enough for me
☐ True ☐ False

I am always very organised; anyone who knows me would agree
☐ True ☐ False

Daily planning is nice in theory but is really a waste of time
☐ True ☐ False

My academic goals are very clear to me; they fully align with my career aspirations
☐ True ☐ False

I work better when there are tight deadlines therefore leave my work to the last minute
☐ True ☐ False

I am very motivated and rarely do I not get straight into a new project
☐ True ☐ False

It is easy to keep studying and avoid distractions such as calls and text messages
☐ True ☐ False

I have ample time to pursue leisure activities and never let them impact upon study
☐ True ☐ False

Friends should feel free to drop in or call me whenever they want
☐ True ☐ False

I use my diary on a daily basis including the listing of all commitments
☐ True ☐ False
How To Be Productive

Being productive is based upon a plan. Always remember - to fail to plan is to plan to fail! Here are a number of tips provided by some former students (whom are now your teachers!):

**Develop your plan and refer to it regularly**

Your plan should be kept in front of you at your primary study position such as next to your computer at home and it should always be followed. Avoid the temptation to work or study without reference to your plan.

**Organise whilst commuting**

Even when commuting be disciplined and organise yourself such as reading over class notes, drawing a flow or link chart, making memory prompt notes, etc. This also means you should write brief notes when ideas enter your mind as you might not remember a good idea later! You can also refer to memory prompt cards to reinforce concepts.

**Set yourself targets**

Set yourself realistic and achievable targets for each day and week, taking care not to overload.

**Plan the night before**

Planning the night before means you will be properly prepared for the following day's activity. Also, you are less likely to forget books, files, etc if you make notes in your diary and refer to them.

**Exercise, eating and sleeping**

Research shows that students who exercise regularly, eat properly and rest appropriately achieve better results than those who don't. Exercise and rest will rejuvenate and ensure you have a balance! If you don't get enough sleep your ability to concentrate will also suffer. Many students cut into their sleep time when needing a few extra hours for study or socialising. This should be avoided as it means your clock time and productive time will not align and you will use up to 4 hours clock time for 1 hour of productive time. This is poor time management. Ever heard the expression brain food? This means your diet can impact upon your ability to concentrate and also your mental alertness. We recommend you avoid heavy meals before studying but rather have small light meals such as cereals, rice and fish. Not pastas, breads and greasy foods. Plan regular breaks during your study time. It is recommended that for each hour take between 5-15 minutes, depending upon how you are feeling. However, do not extend longer than 15 minutes — this would be wasting time!
*Isolate yourself where possible*

You have to impress upon others that your study time is valuable. You must avoid distractions where possible unless taking a break.

*Identify your best study time*

Everyone has high and low periods of attention and concentration. You need to identify if you are a morning person or a night person. Once you have determined this, use your power times to study and the other times for activity that requires less mental effort.

*Ensure you allow time for entertainment and social activity*

It is important you allow time for entertainment and social activity. Higher education is more than just studying. You need to have a balanced life which includes socialising both within and outside the College.

*Coping with a mental block*

A mental block is not uncommon, especially when you are balancing a number of subjects, private life, social and other commitments. To merely try and study through a mental block is not productive and probably will end with you feeling more frustrated. Where you have a mental block - take a break and think about what might be the basis for it.

A mental block can occur because you have too many other things occurring that occupy your mind, a lack of motivation, stress or ignorance of how to start or work through a task. There is plenty of help available at the School and we suggest you discuss any concerns with your lecturer, tutor or student counsellor.

It should be remembered that most mental blocks are overcome after a short break.

*A word on procrastination*

It has been said people can be divided into three groups:

- Those who make things happen;
- Those who watch things happen; and
- Those who wonder what happened!

Procrastination means for one to postpone or delay needlessly. This means you can control whether you procrastinate or not.
There are a number of reported reasons for procrastination, they include:

- Poor time management
- Having too much time
- Anxiety
- Self-deprecation
- Low discomfort or tolerance
- Pleasure seeking
- Poor task approach
- Lack of assertion
- Hostility with others
- Stress and fatigue

You need to specifically consider this to ensure you remain focused and motivated to complete your specific tasks.

An Overview of Time Management Strategies

- Establish your priorities — you need to consider how important your study is including the long-term benefits of higher education
- Plan your time, schedule and commitments accordingly
- Break large tasks into manageable tasks then complete a task before moving on to the next
- When researching, avoid getting lost. This means, you will come across lots of interesting material but must stay focused on the task in hand
- Avoid procrastination by listing each step of the task and then work through them now (not later)!
- Be organised by making notes, writing down sources when they are located and keeping information together for later reference. Not doing it this way will mean you waste time trying to 're-locate' information
- Plan the objectives of each study session — don't just read for the sake of reading
- Never underestimate your study time — it is better to over-estimate!
### Activity 5 – Managing Time Wasters

Think about your current lifestyle including your educational, social and personal needs. During the next year a number of distractions and priorities will arise that will impact upon you and your academic progress.

List the ten most likely distractions in the area below and how you will manage them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Waster</th>
<th>Strategy to Manage the Time Waster</th>
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Effective Reading

Introduction

Study at VET level requires a substantial amount of reading. Each subject will have prescribed and recommended readings and you will be expected to review most, if not all of it. Over time, you will develop an ability to target your reading against your goals. However, even though you can target your reading, you still need to develop skills that are active and critical.

Efficient Reading

Efficient reading involves the selection of a technique that is appropriate for your particular need. These techniques will usually involve:

- Surveying;
- Skimming; and
- Scanning

Surveying means to quickly identify the information within a book or article that you need. We do this regularly such as finding a telephone number in a telephone book, identifying the map reference of a street in a street directory or surveying a magazine to decide if we want to buy it.

In academia we also do this to identify and locate the particular information suitable for an essay or other task or merely to ensure we have a general understanding of the various prescribed and recommended readings for a subject.

Surveying typically involves:

- Reading the title and key words on the cover to anticipate content;
- Review of the contents and index pages to understand the general coverage;
- Quickly review chapter headings, sub-headings and key words; and
- Read the introduction or preface, or the abstract of a journal article.

Skimming

Skimming means to quickly review an article or chapter to gain an appreciation of its content and general focus. We quite often skim newspaper or electronic articles to decide if we will read the article in full.

In academia we also do this to select particular materials upon which we might base a more intensive analysis. We do this by reading fast, skipping bits and gathering an overall meaning rather than focusing on specific detail — that is done later.
Skimming typically involves:
- Reading the title and sub-headings to quickly predict the content of the text;
- Reviewing pages quickly taking note of diagrams, lists and key words;
- Briefly reading selected parts that grab your attention with topic sentences; and
- Skimming the final paragraph or conclusion.

Scanning
Scanning means to quickly locate specific information. Examples of scanning in daily life include checking a television guide to see what is being broadcast at a particular time or scanning an index to find a topic on a particular page.

Scanning is used extensively in academia and helps you locate specific information without having to read throughout an entire article. You can use scanning to find information upon which to support or progress an argument or any other time where you just want to quickly locate information.

Scanning typically involves:
- Scanning to locate a key word, name, date or other specific information;
- Taking no notice whatsoever of other information;
- Quickly moving your eyes down or across pages; and
- When the information is located, conducting a more extensive review of the content.

Targeted Reading
Once you have mastered surveying, skimming and scanning, you should now learn how to delve further to gain a more complete understanding of the reading material.

This approach will help you to understand context, identify ideas and themes including opinions and the general focus of the author.

Two levels apply here:
1. Reading to identify the primary or main idea; and
2. Reading in detail to gain an in-depth understanding of the subject area.

Reading to Identify the Primary or Main Idea
You may not need to know anything further about the material at this time therefore reading in more detail is unnecessary.
To identify the primary or main idea you might:

- Gloss over detail;
- Read quickly;
- Look for key words or themes;
- Note or highlight important areas; and
- Summarise (mentally and in writing) the primary or main idea(s).

Reading in Detail

If you need a more detailed understanding to determine the logic or basis for arguments, concepts or themes, you might:

- Take time to read precisely;
- Identify and highlight important areas of the materials for later analysis or deeper thought;
- Link or note ideas such as problem/solution or cause/effect; and
- Reinforce the author's focus and your understanding through noting, highlighting and summarising.

References

Ellis, D 1997, Becoming a master student, 8th edn, Houghton Mifflin, USA.
Gawith, G 1991, Ripping into research, Longman, NZ.
ACTIVITY 6 – SPECIFIC READING QUIZ

Complete this simple 10 point quiz to test your understanding of this area.

Statement: Reading in detail should be used:

1. When reading exams questions
   □ True  □ False

2. To identify main points in an article
   □ True  □ False

3. In preliminary research to note subject matter
   □ True  □ False

4. When reading instructions
   □ True  □ False

5. When gathering basic information for an essay
   □ True  □ False

6. To follow a procedure
   □ True  □ False

7. When seeking to understand important points in an article
   □ True  □ False

8. When you are unable to meet time commitments
   □ True  □ False

9. To gain a general understanding of the content of a book
   □ True  □ False

10. To analyse, and evaluate ideas for an assignment
    □ True  □ False
Preparing to Read

In the interests of both your time and efficiency, you should consider the following before commencing to read.

1. The objective — what do I need to achieve from this reading?
2. The appropriateness — is the content of the material appropriate for my objective? (are there other articles more appropriate?)
3. The dates and jurisdiction — are the dates and jurisdictions suitable? (e.g. — Contemporary Management in Europe, 1968 is not recommended compared to Contemporary Management in Australia, 2003)

If you do not follow these basic steps, you will waste time. Be selective by adopting the above tips each time you embark on a project — your output and quality of work will improve substantially.

Reading an Article

The following is recommended when reading an article:

- Read the abstract;
- Read the introduction;
- Read the first sentence of each paragraph as it will (should) outline the theme of that paragraph; and
- Read the conclusion.

Reading a Chapter in a Book

Identify the relevant chapter to ensure it aligns with your objective - then:

- Read the introduction;
- Read the first sentence of each paragraph as it will (should) outline the theme of that paragraph;
- Read the conclusion; and
- Read any study guides at the end of the chapter.

Remember - following the tips in this section will improve your output and quality of work substantially. Investing a little time before you actually start reading is wise and will save you enormous time and stress in the long term.
Increasing Your Reading Speed

It is suggested our eyes move across a page in a series of staggered movements. However, we also fixate at least once on a word across a line of print. To improve your reading speed you must take in more words with each fixation, rather than make your eyes move faster.

- Avoid the temptation to focus on every word. You can increase your reading speed by looking at groups of two to three words as outlined below:

- Responsible serving of alcohol - is supported - by regulatory authorities - nationally.

- If you move your lips or read out aloud this practice slows you down. You need to force yourself to read faster so you can’t move your lips or read aloud.

- Broaden your vocabulary. Learn new words so they don’t distract you when you read them again.

- Follow our tips for targeted and effective reading. You might only need to survey, skim or scan at this time.

- If your concentration is poor when reading, read for a maximum of 10 minutes at a time and gradually increase.

- Each day, spend a few minutes reading faster than normal using a finger to guide your eyes down the page. After a few days you’ll find your normal reading speed has increased.
Note Taking

Introduction

Entering VET education involves the development of many skills. This includes changing from previous study habits, including the way you take notes. Much time is spent in VET studies being an independent learner. You will also attend a number of sessions including lectures, tutorials and occasionally a seminar or workshop. Each of these learning environments will vary, so will the teaching methods of staff.

Many academic staff members practice in specialist areas and although some subjects will link into others, you will have to identify and understand the link(s). This is because teaching staff are focused on their own discipline, have probably researched extensively and have their own high level specialised skills and focus. For example, studies of individual behaviour from a human resources approach will vary to studies of individual behaviour from a psychological approach. Clearly there is a link but the approaches will be quite different. If there wasn't there would be no need for both subjects! A good starting point for any new area of study is to fully understand terminology, concepts and principles. It is important that you are familiar with the foundations of your study, hence the importance of note taking at this time. Like building any structure, if the foundations aren't strong, the structure can't be strong.

Principles for Effective Note Taking

The following principles are highly recommended:

Abbreviations

Develop and use abbreviations. You can always develop your system further when you are comfortable with it. When you use abbreviations, they will help you to focus on the ideas being presented rather than getting notes down.

Note Essential Information Only

Only note essential information and avoid trying to write down every word used by the lecturer. This means you must be able to extract important points and note them you need to keep your critical faculties operating when taking notes. Don't just treat it as a mechanical exercise.

Develop a Noting System

Like abbreviations, you should also develop a system from compiling and managing your notes. Many students keep folders for each subject and then add note pages relevant to particular areas in the folder. Others prefer to have their notes (which also are a summary) at the front of the folder for that subject.
In addition, you should consider colour coding and highlighting. For example, some students will use coloured ink to easily identify core and supporting information such as a legal principle in black ink whilst all other information about that principle written in blue ink. Key words might also be highlighted with a highlighting pen. The choice is yours but you should spend time developing your own system, noting it on the same page as your abbreviations which means the key is always known and can be referred to should the need arise.

**Use Space for Amendments**

Use space for later adjustments or additional information when you review your notes after a session. Typically, if you leave a line between each point noted there is ample room to add information.

**Be Organised**

Be organised - both before and after a lecture to complete your notes of that session or review of a textbook or other materials. This means both your system for noting and time must be appropriate to be effective.

**The Cornell System for Noting**

Let's examine a system that is recommended in many VET environments, the Cornell system. This system proposes that taking notes should be designed to save time and be highly efficient as there is limited rewriting involved. This means do it right the first time!

1. **Preparation**
   - Use a large, loose-leaf notebook.
   - Use only one side of the paper (you then can lay your notes out to see the direction of a lecture.)
   - Draw a vertical line 6 centimetres from the left side of your paper. This is the recall column. Notes are made to the right of this margin. Later key words and comments are written in the recall column.

2. **During the Lecture**
   - Write notes in point form;
   - Do not write every word and only note key concepts, etc;
   - Skip lines to show end of key concepts, etc;
   - Using abbreviations to save time; and
   - Write legibly.
After the Lecture

Your actions after a lecture or study session will set the scene for your subsequent outputs. Don't forget this essential area.

Organise and Review

There are many reasons for organising and reviewing your notes as soon as possible after a lecture or study session. Central to this is reliability — if you review whilst information is fresh, you will be able to include additional information, use examples that might have been presented or draw visual prompts such as link or flow charts.

In addition, you will also be able to highlight and then follow up information that was confusing or unclear. You will also be able to note additional readings if required.

It is argued, immediate review results in better retention than review after a longer period of time. Research shows if you review longer than 24 hours after the lecture or study session, your retention has dropped which means you will be relearning rather than reviewing.

Annotate - Don't Rewrite Your Notes.

The following suggestions may be helpful:

- Underline or colour code key points, principles and ideas;
  Use signal marks such as an asterisk to indicate importance; and
- Use margins or blank pages for coordinating notes with a prescribed or recommended text. You could also indicate relevant pages of the text in your notes.

Strategically Using Your Recall Column

Use the recall column to note important information. This encourages you to anticipate key concepts and other important information for assessments. It is also useful as a later reference, even when you complete your studies at the School.

By condensing, you are ensuring key information is available for later reference and reinforcement.

Mind Mapping

Mind mapping can be useful for the following reasons:

- It is a visual method for identifying relevant concepts or points;
- It allows you to connect concepts or points where necessary;
- You can feature key words within the map as needed; and
- You can centre the main or primary issue whilst still noting secondary or less influential information.

Mind mapping is useful to visually outline concepts from a text.
**Introduction**

The School is proactive in detecting plagiarism and has expelled students for acts of plagiarism. We have implemented world standard strategies to minimise the risk of plagiarism by students whilst maximising the chance of detection. Clearly, it is not worth the risk.

The School considers that students seriously disadvantage their development including abilities to write well by succumbing to the temptation of plagiarism. In general terms, we are intolerant of intellectual fraud and theft.

Students are reminded that cheating, whether by fabrication, falsification of data, or plagiarism, is an offence subject to College disciplinary procedures. Work that is obtained from other sources, whether directly quoted or simply referred to, MUST be appropriately acknowledged. To do otherwise will constitute plagiarism, the most serious of academic offences, which the School will not tolerate.

Definition: Plagiarism in oral, written or visual presentations is the presentation of the work, idea or creation of another person, without appropriate acknowledgement, as though it is one's own. Plagiarism is not permitted and may result in charges of academic misconduct which carry a range of penalties including cancellation of results and expulsion from the course.

Plagiarism often results purely from poor time management; essays are left until the last minute, and it just seems easier to use someone else’s work and pretend it is your own. IS IT WORTH RISKING YOUR ENTIRE ACADEMIC FUTURE FOR THIS? Although plagiarism may be difficult to detect and students do get away with it in all VET institutions, a student who plagiarises WILL eventually get caught. The School has implemented strategies to detect plagiarism, such as electronic checking of essays, using plagiarism detection software and manual checking of print resources. This is both extremely costly and uses considerable staff time and resources.

It is also a disciplinary offence for students to allow their work to be plagiarised by another student. Students are responsible for ensuring that their work is kept in a secure place. Students should also be aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding the use of copyright material.

Students must sign a statement on each Assignment Cover Sheet declaring that the written assignment is their original work, unless indicated by the use of appropriate referencing.

It will not suffice to claim a mistake in referencing, especially when alleged plagiarism occurs more than once in materials. Intent is irrelevant.
Claiming not to know how to avoid plagiarism is also no defence. The Skills Pathway lectures deal extensively with correct referencing and how to avoid plagiarism; missing any of these very important classes is no defence to a charge of plagiarism. IF IN DOUBT, ASK YOUR LECTURER AND FOLLOW THEIR ADVICE, even if it may slightly contradict information you have obtained from elsewhere - after all, they are marking your work, and they have very definite ideas about what they will and will not accept.

Second and subsequent offences incur more severe penalties, culminating in expulsion. Any student committing plagiarism will have all subsequent work carefully scrutinised.

### Detection Strategies

The College actively seeks to detect plagiarism through the following:

- Electronic checks of written materials with other electronic materials (including previous submissions by other students);
- Requirement to lodge an electronic copy of materials at the time of lodging a paper copy (if detection occurs, all previous electronic copies will be checked); and
- Staff are trained to detect variations in writing style.

### Statistics on Plagiarism

The below information has been extracted from the plagiarism.org website in the United States. The statistics do not vary greatly from similar research in Australia.

- A study by The Centre for Academic Integrity found that almost 80% of college students admit to cheating at least once;
- According to a survey by the Psychological Record 36% of undergraduates have admitted to plagiarising written material;
- A poll conducted by US News and World Reports found that 90% of students believe that cheaters are either never caught or have never been appropriately disciplined;
- The State of Americans: This Generation and the Next (Free Press, July 1996) states that 58.3% of high school students let someone else copy their work in 1969, and 97.5% did so in 1989;
- A study conducted by Ronald M. Aaron and Robert T. Georgia: Administrator Perceptions of Student Academic Dishonesty in Collegiate Institutions found that 257 chief student affairs officers across the country believe that colleges and universities have not addressed the cheating problem adequately;
- According to the Gallup Organisation (October 6-9, 2000), the top two problems facing the country today are: (1) Education and (2) Decline in Ethics (both were ranked over crime, poverty, drugs, taxes, guns, environment, and racism, to name a few); and
Plagiarism Prevention

Introduction

In academic writing you will regularly present a combination of your own ideas that have been built on existing materials. Many inexperienced students believe they should not disclose other sources throughout their work. This thinking is incorrect and against the basic principles of academic writing.

It is expected that both supporting and dissenting views will be highlighted when writing. Remember, in the social sciences many topics are controversial and will attract differing opinion.

The skill of the writer is to provide an instructive, informative and argumentative piece of work. This will require bringing together credible evidence to provide the basis and/or enhance or support your own ideas and work. You must also balance appropriately so that your work is not merely a series of cited materials nor a distinct absence of cited materials.

What Must be Acknowledged?

You are required to acknowledge the contribution of another author when:

- You draw upon the exact words of that author (quoting);
- You use the basic sentence structure and most of the words of that author, even if you have changed a few words around, or have left out a few words;
- You paraphrase that author in your own words;
- You use one or more ideas of that author; and/or
- You use diagrams, illustrations, photographs, or any other material that is the property of that author.

Good Practices

In both planning and writing your work we recommend you adopted the following good practices:

Collate Your Resources

From the time you commence researching your subject you should collate every resource. This is easily done if using a software program such as Endnote.

Cite When There is Any Doubt

Rather than put yourself in a difficult position, it is better to cite your source(s) if there is any doubt.
Paraphrase Rather Than Quote

Although quoting directly is quite necessary in some circumstances, the writer should demonstrate their understanding, their writing skill and therefore strengthen their work by paraphrasing rather than quoting extensively.

Paraphrasing

To paraphrase is to restate someone else’s idea(s) in your own words without losing context or meaning. The following is NOT paraphrasing:

• Changing a few words in a sentence;
• Removing some of the words in a sentence; or
• Adjusting the sequence of sentences or words.

A paraphrase is also:

• a legitimate way of introducing another’s writing or ideas (when cited correctly); and
• a more detailed piece of writing than a summary which basically highlights the key concepts or ideas only of writing.

The Benefits of Paraphrasing

There are many benefits of paraphrasing. These can include:

• providing support for the writer’s ideas or work;
• adding credibility to the writing by introducing appropriate sources;
• giving examples of differing views on a topic;
• providing a foundation for current work, practices or ideas;
• highlighting or supporting a position taken by the writer;
• distinguishing an idea or view; or
• demonstrating broadness in reading and research on the topic.

There are also personal benefits for the writer such as helping to avoid over-quoting. In addition, the mental process required for paraphrasing helps the writer understand the full meaning of the original work.
Steps in Paraphrasing

The following steps will assist students to paraphrase appropriately:

1. Read the entire article or chapter, noting key points and relevant ideas;
2. Summarise in your own words the relevant idea or key point(s);
3. Consider whether it is more effective for the writing to be quoted directly; and (if not)
4. Paraphrase the article or chapter — noting the source for a later citation.
Academic Writing

Introduction

Assessment criteria and general expectations at the College require students to write well. This is a fundamental requirement and students who do not meet this are seriously disadvantaged. Although there are a number of different writing requirements in academia, the College has a strong focus on essays and to a lesser extent, reports. Occasionally there may be other requirements of which you will be advised by subject coordinators.

Whatever the writing requirement, your work should:

• have clear meaning, expression and be in the correct format (see NCPS Style Guide extracts on the following pages or on the NCPS website, current student page);
• contain information that demonstrates the writer's understanding of the subject;
• provide sufficient evidence that supports the information (where appropriate) such as recognition of authoritative sources that are correctly cited); and
• have an appropriate structure, focus and is presented in a logical sequence.

Key Components of Academic Writing

Academic writing is a discipline and students proceeding through VET studies are expected to write in an appropriate and recognised style. It is suggested you review some articles contained within academic journals to gain further insight. Key components are:

• It is formal (i.e. polite, not too technical for the potential range of readers, critical but not aggressive, and not subjective but rather is objectively approached);
• It is generally presented in a passive voice or the third person (i.e. 'it is recommended that' rather than 'I recommend that' or 'a review of statistics disclosed' rather than 'my review of statistics disclosed'
• It avoids definitive but rather makes tentative statements such as 'the evidence suggests' or 'it appears that' or 'it could be argued'
• It does not use slang, jargon or profanity;
• It does not use 'padding' (unnecessary wording) such as 'therefore most persons within that particular community who were classed as employment by ...' but rather 'therefore most employed members of the community...'
• It does not use abbreviations or contractions such as 'she's' but rather 'she is'; and
• It involves more nouns (nominalised phrasing - changing verbs into nouns) such as 'the gradual decline in robbery has resulted from ...' rather than 'robbery is declining gradually which has resulted from ...' (the verb 'is declining' has been replaced by the noun group 'the gradual decline' which means more content is contained in the one sentence).
Planning Cues for Writing

Introduction

There are three important planning cues for writing:

1. Task;
2. Scope; and
3. Readers.

The task will be outlined in the problem or question requiring the writing. For example, a problem might be posed as:

"Elderly citizens are considered easy or soft targets and therefore will be disproportionately represented in crime statistics. Analyse and critique this statement."

A review of the table below will assist you to understand task word(s) and therefore how to think about the best way to address the topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyse</td>
<td>Break into parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>Identify similarities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Identify differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique</td>
<td>Express opinion about specific aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define</td>
<td>Give precise meaning; identify specific parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>To trace the form or outline of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop</td>
<td>Expand upon, elaborate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Appraise, judge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>Give reasons for, make clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify</td>
<td>Choose, select</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrate</td>
<td>Give examples of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret</td>
<td>Explain the meaning or significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Re-examine, look over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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If you submit written materials and receive feedback indicating, ‘did not answer question’ or ‘failed to fully address the problem’ it is most likely you did not meet the requirements of the task (words).

**Scope**

Scope means the degree of coverage required to meet the writing task. Typically, scope involves:

- Meeting word limits; and
- Adequate coverage.

Another critical factor that impacts upon scope is whether you can complete your assignment within the relevant time requirements. This is where time management and your ability to prioritise will impact.

When you receive multiple assignments at the commencement of a trimester or study period, you should ensure you quickly review available materials. In particular, you need to ensure there is sufficient background material upon which you can base your assignment.

**Readers**

This important area is regularly forgotten by students. Whether you are writing purely for marking within the School or a potential external source, consider the following:

- What information/knowledge will the reader already have about the subject?
- What information should be provided to ensure the reader understands the subject area?
- Are there any preconceptions that might need to be addressed as part of meeting the requirements above
Writing Assignment

Introduction

Writing an assignment takes a surprisingly long time, even for the experienced writer. You should therefore begin your assignment early to ensure satisfaction with, and timely completion of the assignment.

The stages of writing include inventing, organising, drafting, revising and editing. Effective writers spend effort and time on each of the five stages of writing, often revisiting an earlier stage before continuing with the next, thereby ensuring that the finished product shows academic strength in both content and presentation.

Writing Process

Inventing

The first stage of writing, inventing, includes coming to terms with the question or assignment task as well as undertaking appropriate research to provide you with enough information so your research paper is convincing and academic.

Question analysis

Assignment questions largely fall into three categories:

What and how

which requires you to write an explanation.

Why

which requires you to argue and defend your point of view (thesis). This involves giving reasons for your thesis and defending your reasoned argument.

Discuss

which requires you to present both sides, concluding with your opinion and reason for that opinion.

Before you begin your research you will need to define the key terms and phrases in the assignment question. An effective means of defining the key terms and phrases is to analyse the question by identifying the following: task words, content words and limiting words.

Task words

Task words tell you what to do (i.e. compare, discuss, critically evaluate, explain, argue and so forth). They are usually verbs. When preparing for a written assignment underline the task or instruction words in the question and, if necessary, check their meanings in a dictionary and in the context of the question.
For example:
Define and explain the four basic types of products suggested by the Boston Consulting Group.
What are the advantages and disadvantages of using this matrix?

**Content words**

Content words tell you which ideas and concepts should form the knowledge base in the assignment (usually nouns). They should appear in your unit outline as specific topics to be studied.

For example:
Define and explain the four basic types of products suggested by the Boston Consulting Group.
What are the advantages and disadvantages of using this matrix?
Check the meaning of unfamiliar words, using a specialist subject dictionary for technical words, and a good general dictionary for non-technical words.
Understand the relationships between the key words and phrases you have underlined.

**Limiting words**

Limiting words help you limit or narrow the scope of your assignment. These words are usually nouns.

For example:
Define and explain the four basic types of products suggested by the Boston Consulting Group.
What are the advantages and disadvantages of using this matrix?
The final question analysis:
Define and explain the four basic types of products suggested by the Boston Consulting Group.
What are the advantages and disadvantages of using this matrix?

**Task words**  content words  limiting words
Once you have analysed the question:

- Find out what the question is saying explicitly and implicitly. For example, when a comparative essay is needed, it may not always be explicitly stated in the essay question.
- Check your course outline or with your lecturer/tutor about the marking criteria - what you are required to do to answer the question.
- Paraphrase the question by rewriting it using simpler language and more explicit explanations. Discuss your written interpretation of the question with your lecturer/tutor/study buddy/study group.

**Research**

Once you are satisfied with your question analysis, begin your research. The following information on resources will assist you when choosing which sources to use for a particular assignment:

Keep accurate publishing details of the sources used and make notes as you read and this will save you a lot of time later.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What types of information sources are there?</th>
<th>Why use this source?</th>
<th>How do I access this source?</th>
<th>How do I evaluate this source?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Journals (also known as serials, magazines, periodicals) | Provide current, up to date information  
Are related to a specific topic  
Provide summaries of previous research  
Are published regularly (weekly, monthly, quarterly) | Use the library's electronic databases  
Use the Internet and type in the name of the journal | Use peer reviewed journals (do an advanced search and click on the ‘scholarly journals and peer reviewed’ window when using databases) |
| Newspapers | Provide current up to date information on global, national and local issues  
Indicate trends  
Cover topics generally to meet general audience needs | Use the library's electronic databases to access particular articles (ABI/Inform, Social Science etc)  
Use the Internet  
Use a hard copy | Select reliable newspapers (national, state) |
| Books | Provide detailed information | Use the library catalogue  
Check the recommended texts in the course outline | Check for recency  
Check author’s credentials |
| Internet | Gives access to the world wide web  
Gives access to newspaper and journal articles, research papers, university sites, government sites and much more  
Provides current information on almost any topic | Use the search engines  
Visit university sites  
Search for specific journals and newspapers  
Type in URL’s from course outlines | Choose reliable sites, namely those that end in gov, edu, org (even some of these are not always totally reliable) |

**Organising**

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Throughout your academic career you will be expected to write many different types of assignments. These may include case studies, literary criticisms, argumentative or persuasive essays, seminar and tutorial papers, literature or film reviews, analytical reports and the like. Each of these may be referred to as a written assignment, yet each has its own unique characteristics. Knowledge of the characteristics of the type of assignment you have been asked to write is the first step in coming to terms with how to organise the materials from your research.

The second step in organising the information researched is to look more closely at the question, for unless your lecturer or tutor provides an example or model response you will have to rely on the structure of the question to determine the structure of the assignment you need to write. The structure in the following question, for example, can be found within the question.

Define and explain the four basic types of products suggested by the Boston Consulting Group.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of using this matrix?

Implicit structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define and explain the products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: The structure

Yet many assignment questions do not provide you with a clearly defined structure. You may therefore have to create a structure of your own.

One way of creating an assignment structure is by concept mapping. Begin your concept map by writing the subject or thesis in the centre. Continue by connecting the subject or thesis to supporting ideas or concepts related to the thesis. You can further develop the concepts by connecting them to the supporting evidence you will use. Finally, prioritise the concepts. Each of the concepts should provide an outline of at least one paragraph in your assignment.

Whichever method you choose, it is very important to organise your work into a plan or outline before you write. This helps ensure you have a clear argument or thesis and clear supporting ideas which lead to a strong conclusion.

**Drafting**
The first draft involves writing, arranging, ordering and rearranging information. Sometimes it may be necessary to reject material as you come to terms with the subject matter and what to say about it. It is therefore easy to underestimate the time it takes to write an assignment, and this can result in inadequate handling of the subject matter and disappointment with the results. The important key to success is allowing yourself enough time to adequately process the information.

The following is a list of common problems with drafting and how to deal with them:

- **Getting started**: If you aim for perfection in your first draft, you may spend needless time trying to complete each small section of the whole. Instead, concentrate on getting the ideas to flow. Writing a provisional introduction quickly can help to get you started. You can flesh it out and revise it once you have finished the assignment. If that doesn’t work, choose one of the ideas from your concept map and begin developing that idea into a paragraph.

- **Getting stuck half way through the assignment**: Decide whether this is because of inadequate research and note-taking or because you really don’t understand the concepts. If it is the former, you may have to research further or revise your plan and explain the concepts in more detail. If it is the latter, see your tutor or lecturer for assistance with understanding the concepts.

- **Losing track of the original argument**: Sometimes in the course of writing and thinking about the subject you may find the evidence seems mainly to support another stance or aspect of the argument. If this is the case, then develop this new stance as your main argument and use your previous points as counter arguments. You may need to redevelop your plan to structure your new flow of argument. However, if you have been sidetracked with another issue, you will need to go back to your original plan and compare it to your writing. Locate the point in your writing where your argument was on track and decide what should come next. Your plan or concept map should help get you back on track.
Writing too much

If your draft is more than 10% over the word count, analyse the question again and ensure that the information included in your draft is relevant, that is, answers the question. Also look for repetition of ideas, as well as expression that is not precise and concise, and amend your work accordingly.

Writing too little

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If you find you are considerably below the desired word maximum, then look closely at the points made and check that they have been thoroughly developed and supported. If, however, your examination reveals that the each point has indeed been developed thoroughly, you may not have provided enough information and may need to do more research.

**Revising**

Because the writing process is recursive, you have probably revised sections of your first draft along the way. In the final revision, you will need to look critically at the content and the structure of your writing.

**Revising content**

1. Is the key issue or problem clearly identified? Is it identified early enough in the essay? Is the content organised around a statement of argument concerning this issue? Has all irrelevant material been eliminated?
2. Evidence from your reading plays an important part in any good essay. However, remember that evidence is relevant only when it is used to support intelligent arguments. Check that your argument is intellectual and convincing.
3. Check that you haven’t presented a series of rash generalisations for which you produce no factual evidence. Also ensure that you haven’t merely presented factual material for its own sake.
4. Is there an appropriate conclusion? Does it address the issue identified in the introduction? Does it avoid introducing material not previously examined?
5. Is the assignment too long? Check that all information relates to the argument and is stated precisely and economically. Is the assignment too short? Check that all ideas have been explained and developed using supporting evidence from the literature.

**Revising structure**

1. Is there a clear hierarchy of the main issue and (sets of) subordinate issues?
2. Are all the subordinate issues related to the main point?
3. Are there previews, guides and transitions to show the overall plan and the connection between sections, paragraphs, ideas?
4. Does each paragraph have a clear function? Does it flow rather than jump from the previous paragraph and to the following paragraph? Does it have a topic sentence?
5. Can each sentence be understood in one reading? Are pompous and over-long sentences simplified and stated directly? Are vague and abstract expressions explained?
Editing

Editing is the final step in the writing process. It involves examining sentences for problems with grammar, punctuation, mechanics, spelling and word choice. You edit after you are satisfied with the content and organisation of your paper. It is your last chance to "get it right" before presenting it to your reader.

Editing involves far more than just reading through the paper. It is a process that includes reading slowly, asking and thinking about changes, making and perhaps struggling with changes, and looking up answers.

The editing process is summarised by the following diagram:

![Figure 5: The editing process](image)

1. Check for grammar, punctuation, mechanics and effective words
2. Create a list of your most common errors
3. Do a final computer spell check
4. Do a final computer grammar check
5. Edit a hard copy
6. Leave your writing for several days (preferably three days)
7. Read the paper out loud
8. Go through the paper more than once
1. Check for grammar, punctuation and sentence structure

Knowledge of the basic rules of spelling, grammar, and punctuation can give you the confidence required for effective editing and make the computer spell and grammar check more meaningful. Attend a class, and/or acquire a book with clear explanations, practical examples and plenty of exercises with supplied answers. Know how to use a dictionary and a thesaurus.

You should have knowledge of common grammatical errors, punctuation and sentence structure.

2. Create a list of your most common errors

Knowing your most common errors can help you decide what to look for in future assignments. Make a list of all the errors marked in one or more of your recent assignments. Your list might look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Look for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spelling independant or permanant</td>
<td>Independent/permanent</td>
<td>Words ending with 'ent' or 'ant'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apostrophe/possessive it's, your's</td>
<td>Its, yours</td>
<td>All possessive pronouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comma missing</td>
<td>After however</td>
<td>Sentences beginning with however</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence fragment</td>
<td>Begins with although</td>
<td>Sentences beginning with although</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Do a final computer spell check

Be aware of the spell checker’s limitations. For example, it will not differentiate between 'to' and 'too', or know that you meant 'form' rather than 'from'.

4. Do a final computer grammar check

Again, be aware of its limitations. Unless you have a sound understanding of grammar, it could mislead you. For example, while it identifies passive voice and active voice, reflexive and relative pronouns, it is left to the reader to decide what to do.
5. Edit a hard copy

When you have made your final corrections on the screen using the spell and grammar checker, print a hard copy of your writing and read it carefully.

6. Leave your writing for several days (preferably three days)

Plan to complete your writing at least three days before the due date. The purpose is to detach yourself from it, and see it as the reader might see it.

7. Read the paper out loud

Read exactly what is on the page, not what you assume is there. Read each sentence slowly and mark any problem areas.

8. Go through the paper more than once

You should edit your paper at least twice. This will give you the best results and enable you to spot different sets of errors per reading.
Printing

Final presentation

When you have finished editing and are ready to submit your assignment, you must ensure it is presented according to the required academic style.

Follow the presentation instructions in the course outline. In the absence of instructions in the course outline, use the following presentation guidelines.

Typing

All assessments are to be typed on a word processor. No hand-written essays will be marked unless permission has been sought from the unit coordinator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Font</th>
<th>Serif font, for example Courier or Times New Roman.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Font size</td>
<td>12 point in text, headings may be larger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line spacing</td>
<td>One and a half (minimum).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pages</td>
<td>Double or single-sided (preference is single).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page size</td>
<td>International size A4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper type</td>
<td>Plain bond white.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margins</td>
<td>Four (4) centimetres on either the left or right margins, two (2) on the remainder. If you do not have at least one four (4) centimetre margin, your marker will not be able to provide adequate feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page numbers</td>
<td>To appear as a header with student number in the top right hand corner of each page. The student name should not appear in the header.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cover

Use a proforma cover sheet. One sheet should be kept by students as a master and photocopied when required, for each essay. This is the only cover sheet an assessment requires. Please ensure that all details are correctly provided including tutorial day and time and the correct name of your tutor. Also indicate clearly what assignment topic is discussed in the paper. This should also appear at the top of the first page, before the introduction.

Binding

Ensure all assignments are firmly bound with a staple in the top left-hand corner. Loose sheets in folders are not an acceptable form of binding. No folders/plastic sleeves of any description are to be used.

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Editing basics

Common grammatical errors

Controlling the grammatical errors that you commonly make is a matter of firstly determining whether the error was made through carelessness or whether it was a favourite error, that is, a pattern error, and secondly, knowing the grammatical principles that apply. The following grammatical principles that underpin clear and correct prose provide a starting point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject, verb and pronoun agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The verb must match its subject in terms of singular or plural.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The assignment is due tomorrow. The assignments are due tomorrow.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Care is needed in longer sentences to match the verb with its subject.

The relationships between sleep length, sleep quality and worry require methodical investigation.

Studies have shown that proximity reduces costs related to communication and information, and thus increases the effectiveness of collaboration.

Punctuation

The most frequent punctuation errors people make involve the incorrect use of apostrophes, the wrong use of semicolons and colons, a lack of consistency when using capital letters and the random use of commas.

The Apostrophe

The apostrophe is frequently misused, despite the fact that there are only two applications. Contractions - The apostrophe is used to show that letters have been left out when two words are contracted. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>do not</th>
<th>=</th>
<th>don’t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is not</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>isn’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we have</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>we’ve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it is</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>it’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Possession - The apostrophe is used to show ownership. Decide if the owner is singular or plural. If it is: singular add ’s eg. a student’s notes, plural add an apostrophe after the s eg. lecturers’ notes can be found, plural, but does not end in an s add `s eg. people’s desires; fish’s deaths...

However, 'it' never takes an apostrophe unless used as a contraction for 'it is'. For example: 'It’s raining today' but 'The glue did its job and attached the note.'

**ACTIVITY 7 - PUNCTUATION**

The building had been surveyed and it’s main floor was damaged by the fire. The managers discretion was required to determine what was to be saved.

Why is the punctuation incorrect where words are underlined?

To finance its own political campaign the State Government siphoned off money in the 1980s, however the amount of money did not cover parliamentarian’s spending and so the party’s assets had to be sold.

This sentence contains incorrect punctuation and incorrect grammar. What is wrong?
The Semicolon

The semicolon joins clauses that are closely related and are of equal weight:
To lose one parent may be said to be unfortunate; to lose two looks like carelessness.
The semicolon can also be used to separate items in a list, when those items are phrases rather than single words. The advantages of communicating well are: you are more easily understood; you are more likely to get the outcome you are aiming for; you can get higher marks!

Activity 8 – Semicolon

Rewrite the following sentences placing semicolons where appropriate:
1. Talent without genius isn’t much genius without talent is nothing.

2. The first book he picked up was a romance the second book was a thriller.

3. To complete an assignment you need to analyse the question draw up an initial plan read and research write several drafts and complete final edits.
**The Colon**

The colon can be used in three ways:

1. to introduce a list of items (such as this);
2. to introduce an example or a quotation, eg. We fear before we hate: the person who fears change comes to hate it; or

   Bailey (1984, p.63) states:
   
   ‘One function of the colon is to introduce quotations. It brings the sentence to a sudden, temporary halt and gives a cue for the quotation which is waiting in the wings.’
3. to show the balance of one phrase or idea against another, eg. Man proposes: God disposes.

**Capital Letters**

In general, capitals are used far less than they once were. However, capitals should be used for:

Proper nouns - which designate a specific person, place or thing. Like proper nouns, words derived from proper nouns also begin with a capital, (Australian terrier, Indian fig, Victorian wine). The names of things like government agencies, departments, organisations and companies should also be capitalised as well as significant plants or product names. You need only capitalise the “the” when it is part of the official title.

- The Royal Brisbane Hospital
- the Confederation of Industry
- the Twentieth Festival of the Arts

Confusion often exists between proper nouns and common nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proper noun</th>
<th>Common noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supreme court</td>
<td>a federal court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunya Mountains</td>
<td>the mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Hemisphere</td>
<td>the western world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byzantine era</td>
<td>a bygone era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry SC101</td>
<td>chemistry class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**The Comma**

The comma has three main uses:

1. It separates the clauses in a sentence.
   
   It rained for most of the day, but when the sun came out we went outside.

2. It separates items in a list.
   
   The room was dark, dank, dingy and smelly.

3. A pair of commas can act like brackets in a sentence to isolate a clause.
   
   The method, which had never before been tested, worked like a charm.

**Grammar**

Correct grammar is really only effective communication not only because its use helps to avoid misunderstandings but also because most people recognise improper grammar. Fine points may be overlooked but major errors distract the attention of a reader or listener. When errors are made the focus of the reader or listener changes to looking for more errors and not on the content being delivered.

**Sentence structure**

Sentences are made up of clauses and phrases. A clause consists of a group of words that contains at least a subject and a verb.

- A simple sentence is made up of one independent clause.
- A compound sentence is made up of two or more independent clauses. Each clause is of equal importance. The independent clauses can be joined using a coordinator, a conjunctive adverb or a semi-colon.
- A complex sentence is made up of one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. In a complex sentence the idea in the independent clause is more important than the idea in the dependent clause.
- A compound-complex sentence has two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.
Assignment Types

**Essays**

What do markers look for in an essay?

According to Clanchy and Ballard (1997) markers look for:

- Relevance to the topic
- Critical use of written sources
- A reasoned argument
- Appropriate and competent presentation

What are the implications of the above criteria?

When writing an essay, you need to:

- Analyse the question and identify key issues to focus your research
- Read widely, selectively and critically
- Develop ideas that are supported with evidence
- Plan the paper so that ideas are presented sequentially and logically
- Edit for appropriate grammar, sentence structure, style and spelling

An academic paper/essay is largely about making a claim (thesis) in relation to the question and presenting persuasive and convincing reasons from your readings to defend that claim. According to Aristotle, developing a persuasive and convincing argument involves a careful blend of logos, pathos and ethos, that is, reasoning, credibility and emotion. In other words, an argument must be based on knowledge that is credible, reliable and acceptable to the audience, and presented logically. Developing an argument therefore involves:

- selecting information/evidence from your reading that is relevant and important to the issue/s and objectives of the essay, as well as acceptable to the audience. For example, in a business subject statistics and diagrams may count as valid evidence, whereas in a literature subject the critiques of others would count as evidence.
- presenting evidence logically and coherently so that new evidence advances the argument smoothly and effortlessly. This is valued in all subjects.
- analysing and interpreting the evidence for each step in your argument so that it is clear to the reader exactly how the evidence supports the claim/thesis/argument.
- integrating counter arguments or other positions into your writing to dispose of some of the reasons your reader may have for not accepting your argument. Use these to strengthen your position; do not dwell on them.
- documenting the evidence using an appropriate citation/referencing style
Selecting information

An effective way of selecting and prioritising information is by mapping. Begin by writing your claim/thesis in the centre. Then write the reasons that support the thesis. Start by including all of the reasons from your readings that you could use to support the claim you are making. Connect the reasons to the thesis with lines. Next, outline the evidence/details that explain the reasons and connect the evidence to the reasons with lines. In this way a visual image of the body of information that could potentially be used in your paper is created. Finally, number the reasons in order of importance and delete any reasons that are weak or do not support the thesis.

Presenting evidence logically and coherently

If your argument just doesn’t flow or it is hard to follow, then you may have problems with the arrangement of ideas and coherence. Firstly, check that the ideas have been arranged logically. For example, the evidence in your essay could be arranged in order of most important to least important, or maybe it should be ordered chronologically. Decide on an arrangement of ideas that advances the argument sequentially, logically and persuasively.

Secondly, check your coherence ie. that you have created a sense of unity by appropriate repetition of key terms and careful use of transition signals.

The use of the transition signal ‘another’, showing addition, links this sentence with the previous one. Repetition of the key words ‘remuneration package’ in the second sentence not only links it with the previous sentence but ensures a smooth transition from old to new information contained at the end of the sentence.

Analyzing and interpreting the evidence

Each paragraph should explain and/or explore a central idea/reason that furthers your argument. Give your paragraph direction by beginning it with a strong topic sentence that clearly states the main idea to be explored in the paragraph. Fully develop the idea expressed by providing supporting evidence from your readings. Only evidence that supports the main idea expressed in the topic sentence should be included in the paragraph. Avoid the temptation to repeat yourself or to digress from the topic.

Paragraph analysis

The first sentence states the topic clearly. The topic is the information system should support the overall function of the organisation. The second sentence elaborates on the claim made in the previous sentence by stating that the system should be appropriate to the organisation’s goals and objectives. The third sentence elaborates further on the need to establish a technical system that meets the technical needs of the organisation. The fourth sentence provides specific examples of the technical system. Note the use of also to link the ideas expressed in this sentence to the previous sentence. The fifth, sixth and seventh sentences provide more specific examples of the technical system, and also state their benefits to the organisation. The last sentence concludes the paragraph by restating that technical requirements will depend entirely on the needs of the organisation.

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Documenting the evidence

The most persuasive arguments are based on knowledge from credible and reliable sources. Ensure that evidence from such credible, reliable and published sources is appropriately acknowledged using the Macquarie Education referencing style.

Reports

Reports usually follow a standard format and require a clear sense of purpose, an understanding of the reader’s expectations, investigation and research, and an ability to communicate clearly.

Even a small amount of planning at the beginning of an assignment can save you time later and ensure you meet the objectives effectively.

- Identifying the purpose
- Identifying the audience
- Drafting the plan
- Conducting the research

Differences between reports and essays

Both reports and essays:

- are formal in style
- have an introduction, body and conclusion
- are analytical

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report</th>
<th>Essay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informs</td>
<td>Argues, persuades, explores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses headings and sub-headings</td>
<td>Uses minimal headings, if at all (check instructions in Course Outline)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes graphics (tables, diagrams, charts, photographs)</td>
<td>Rarely uses graphics (check instructions in Course Outline)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes an executive summary or abstract</td>
<td>Rarely includes an abstract unless specifically requested by the lecturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides recommendations and includes appendices</td>
<td>Rarely has recommendations or appendices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses short, concise and precise language; can use dot points (check with lecturer)</td>
<td>Must be cohesive and lead to a logical conclusion; is written in prose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structuring the report

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The section headings outlined below are fairly standard in business reports. However, your instructors may have preferences that differ from the outline below. For example, letters of transmittal are not required for all types of reports, and the recommendations in some reports are placed after the executive summary. Check your instructor's preferences and read the assignment guidelines carefully.

Each section of the report has a specific function. The possible parts of a report are:

- Title Page
- Letter of transmittal
- Table of contents
- List of figures, illustrations and tables

A separate list of figures, illustrations or tables is included if the report contains a large number of graphics. The list of figures, illustrations or tables should appear with the number, title and page number on which each occurs.

- Summary

The purpose of the executive summary is to give the reader an overview of the processes involved in writing the report, the main report findings and the recommendations.

- Introduction

Contains: name(s) of the person(s) who requested the report, an outline of the issue or problem which sparked the report ie the purpose, background information, the methods/sources used to gather information eg. questionnaires interviews, research etc, the scope of the report ie its parameters, coverage, terms of reference, and an explanation why some topics were omitted, acknowledgement of people who assisted in the preparation of the report.

- Discussion

The discussion makes up the main part of the report. This is where you present your interpretation and analysis of the relevant information (literature) in a readable and logical sequence. Acknowledge the sources by using the preferred referencing system. The information presented should be broken up into sections and sub-sections with carefully considered, easy to follow headings and sub-headings. The headings and sub-headings should be numbered using either an alphanumeric or decimal system.

- Conclusion/s

The conclusion consists of: a summary of the report's findings, an evaluation of the main results of your investigation. Check that the conclusions drawn are consistent with the objectives stated in the introduction. No new information should be introduced, and as with the summary, avoid the use of direct quotations.

- Recommendations (not all reports require recommendations)
Recommendations are made from your interpretation of the conclusions and offer solutions and specific courses of action. Present each recommendation separately as a point or paragraph, and if you wish, place the recommendations in order of priority.

- Bibliography/References (check the unit requirements)
- Glossary (optional)
  The glossary defines and explains technical terms and is required only if a number of technical terms have been used
- Appendices (optional)

**Case Studies**

A typical case study will describe a problem or a situation at a specific time; that is, it will provide a snapshot of that situation. The case described may draw on real events and situations to illustrate points of principle related to the course you are studying.

One of the objectives of a case study analysis is to identify the real problem and provide a considered solution that is related to your practical and theoretical knowledge. Another objective of the case study analysis is to sharpen your analytical and problem solving skills.

**Steps in analysing a case study**

**Step 1: Comprehend the situation**

- Read the case study several times
- What are the key issues?
- Try to separate fact from opinion and avoid making judgements.

**Step 2: Define the problem/decision**

- Identify the real problem. What we first think is the problem often isn’t the real problem.
- What are the symptoms that suggest a problem exists? (Symptoms are effects; problems are causes)
- Keep asking, ‘Why?’
- State the problem/decision. What is the primary - and secondary - problem/decision to be addressed?

**Step 3: Identify alternatives**

- What actions might provide solutions to the problem/decision?
- Be creative - brainstorm ideas.
- Organise and prioritise the alternatives. Eliminate the alternatives that do not directly address the problem.
Step 4: Evaluate alternatives

- What criteria should be used to evaluate the alternatives generated in Step 3?
- The following factors could be considered when making a decision: time, resources, motivation, the possible consequences, expertise etc.
- Examine each alternative in terms of each criterion.

Step 5: Recommend Action

- What specific actions should be taken and why? Decide who should do what, where and when.
Referencing

Referencing, or citing, means acknowledging the sources of information and ideas you have used in an assignment (e.g. essay or report). This is a standard practice at university and whenever you write an assignment that requires you to find and use information, you are expected to reference the source of the information in your writing. Sources could include books, journal or newspaper articles, pictures, diagrams or items from the internet. The two most common types of referencing systems used are:

- author-date systems—such as the Harvard system, APA and MLA
- numeric systems—such as Chicago or Turabian, Vancouver and Footnote.

Quoting, paraphrasing and summarising

Academic writing involves incorporating the ideas and information from the experts in the field (from wide and critical reading). When including this information in your writing, try to use a combination of direct quotations, paraphrases and summaries so that your work flows smoothly and is more interesting to read.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quoting</th>
<th>Paraphrasing</th>
<th>Summarising</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>matches the text word for word</td>
<td>does not match the original text word for word</td>
<td>does not match the original text word for word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the words quoted appear between quotation (single for Harvard style)</td>
<td>involves interpreting a passage from a text in your own words</td>
<td>involves putting only the main ideas of the marks original passage in your own words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>must acknowledge the original source</td>
<td>involves retaining the meaning of the original</td>
<td>is usually much shorter than the original</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>must acknowledge the original source</td>
<td>must acknowledge the original source</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Learning Centre, University of New South Wales
www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/sumpara.html

Quoting

Skills Pathway Program – Study Guide MCC

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A quotation reproduces the original text, whether spoken or written, verbatim – that is, word for word. While carefully selected quotations can provide powerful evidence, they should be used sparingly and should support a point made in your writing.

**How to quote**

When using direct quotations:
- place the direct quotation in inverted commas and retain the exact wording
- acknowledge the source and page number

The following direct quotation is an example of quoting.

‘Rehearsal of new information in short-term memory helps the working memory hold onto it’ (Cottrell 1999, p.207).

or

Cottrell (1999, p.207) states that ‘Rehearsal of new information in short-term memory helps the working memory hold onto it’.

An integrated quotation interrupts the flow of the sentence and ideas less than a full or long quotation.

For example:

Cottrell (1999, p.207) emphasises the need to ‘rehearse new information’ in order to retain it in short-term memory.

When using long direct quotations (30 words or more):
- begin a new line
- indent the quotation
- use single-line spacing
- omit inverted commas
- acknowledge the source

Glaser (in Cottrell 1999, p.188) states:

Critical thinking calls for a persistent effort to examine any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the evidence that supports it and the further conclusions to which it tends.
Paraphrasing

A paraphrase keeps the same meaning as the original and is written using your own words. Sometimes a paraphrase is longer than the original version.

A paraphrase is usually used with short sections of the original text.

How to paraphrase

In order to paraphrase:

- ensure that you understand the original by reading it several times
- underline the key words (subject and action) and replace them with synonyms
- change the structure of the sentence and/or the voice (passive/active)
- change the order in which the ideas were presented in the original

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking calls for a persistent effort to examine any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the evidence that supports it and the further conclusions to which it tends (Glaser in Cottrell 1999, p.188).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paraphrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>According to Glaser (in Cottrell 1999, p.188) critical thinking involves careful and robust scrutiny of the facts used to support opinions and their inferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information used in support of opinions and their inferences should be subject to robust scrutiny for critical thinking to take place (Cottrell 1999, p.188).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summarising

A summary not only provides an overview of the original text, but it also reduces the original to its main ideas and concepts. It is useful if you want to identify the claims made by an author or just want to provide the main points without the details. A summary is usually used when incorporating longer pieces of information into your writing.
How to summarise

In order to summarise:

- identify and note the main points made in the original source
- omit details and examples
- write the main points in your own words using your notes and not the original text

Original

A view of human nature that ignores the power of emotions is sadly shortsighted. The very name Homo sapiens, the thinking species, is misleading in light of the new appreciation and vision of the place of emotions in our lives that science now offers. As we all know from experience, when it comes to shaping our decisions and our actions, feeling counts every bit as much – and often more – than thought. We have gone too far in emphasising the value and import of the purely rational – of what IQ measures – in human life. Intelligence can come to nothing when the emotions holds sway (Goleman 1994, p.7).

Summary

Emotions are often far more powerful than IQ in influencing our judgements and deeds (Goleman 1994, p.4).