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# STUDENT SERVICES



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# STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

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## Student Support at Belgium Campus

### Student Counselling at Belgium Campus ITversity

Our Counselling Department consists out of 2 full-time Professional Counsellors and 1 part-time Educational Psychologist. The Educational Psychologist supervises the Professional Counsellors. The Professional Counsellors will refer a student to the Educational Psychologist if advanced psychological help is needed (when not in their scope of practice).

At Belgium Campus, we have trained and professional counsellors that are here to assist our students in their academic career for them to be successful candidates. We are aware that life has obstacles and does not always go according to what we plan. External factors and situations can interfere with your actual motivation, financial status, relationships, etc. Balancing the negative and positive aspects of one's life is a tool to learn and master. To help our students through these possibly unpleasant episodes in their lives, Belgium Campus provides free counselling and guidance for all students who need support, by a qualified psychologist and two professional counsellors who are part of the permanent staff. We provide these services at all our campus. The sessions are based on emotional, psychological and academical support, depending on the student needs.

#### *The way to the Student Support Counselling Department:*

Students can contact the student counsellors their selves (via e-mail or Microsoft Teams) and book an appointment or students can go to the reception at the academic office and book an appointment for a session via the receptionist. Everyone is welcome. Session can either be online or face-to face Sessions with our student counsellors are treated confidential.

Dr G Steyn:

[steyn.gg@belgiumcampus.ac.za](mailto:steyn.gg@belgiumcampus.ac.za)

Mrs Alisha Blom (Pretoria + Port Elizabeth Campus):

[narine.a@belgiumcampus.ac.za](mailto:narine.a@belgiumcampus.ac.za)

Ms Zwonaka Netshikwati (Pretoria+ Kempton Park campus):

[netshikwati.z@belgiumcampus.ac.za](mailto:netshikwati.z@belgiumcampus.ac.za)

### What is counselling?

Counselling is a process by which people are helped to gain fresh insight, to have different perspective and to find motivation. Over a series of one-to-one sessions in a confidential and supportive setting, counselling can help you make changes in your life. Counselling facilitates the sharing of thoughts and feelings. It aids the process of empowering people to discover their own answers, and to feel more control of their life.

#### **A counselling session contains:**

- Explaining confidentiality.
- Building rapport (trust).
- Discussing expectations.
- Establishing goals.
- Motivating students to take ownership and to be responsible.
- Creating a mutual understanding between counsellor and student.

#### **Confidentiality**

•Confidentiality is necessary to build enough trust in the relationship between the counsellor and the student. Student counselling sessions must be confidential. A student counsellor cannot break confidentiality except on the following exceptions.

- When the student is a danger to himself.
- When the student is a danger to others.

By law (when the Court summons you).

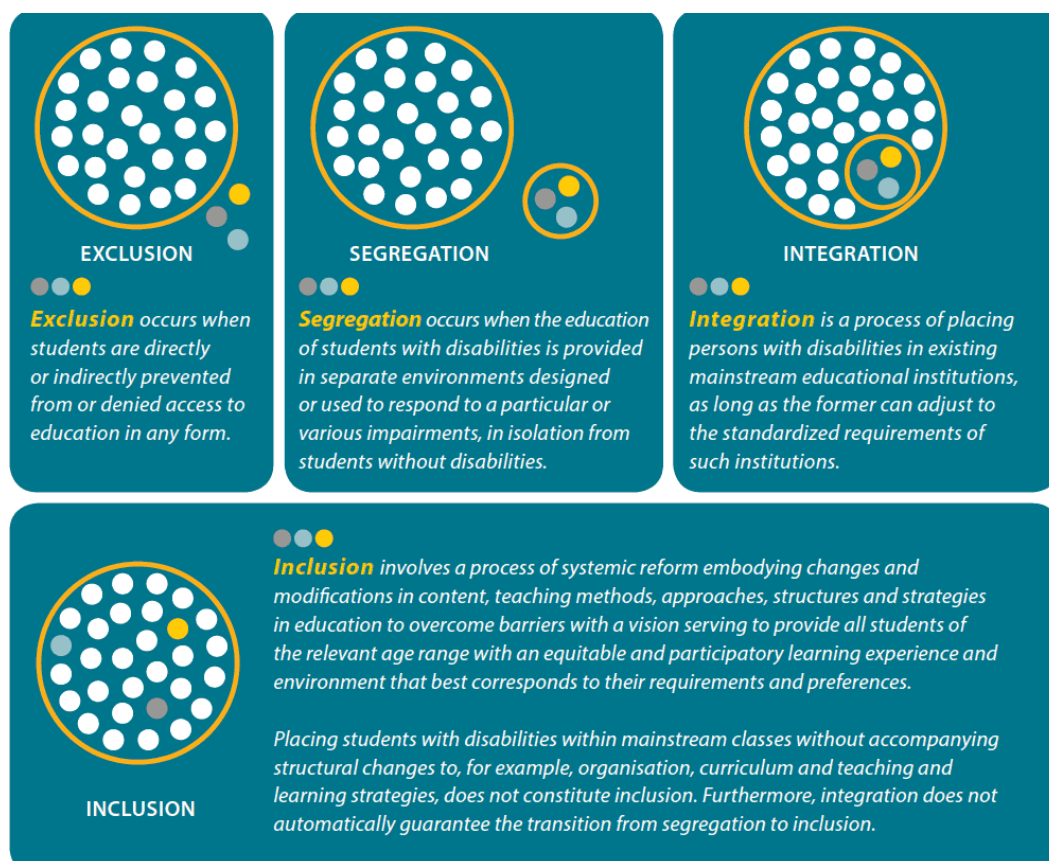
## When does the counsellors reach out to students?

- The student counsellors identify students who are struggling academically and contact the students to schedule a session.
- The lecturers identify students who are struggling academically or notice other problems in class and refer the students to the student counsellors.

*A student will never be forced to see a student counsellor. If a student is not willing to talk to a student counsellor, the student counsellors will respect that decision. An email should be sent to indicate that assistance is not needed.*

### Students with Special Needs

At Belgium Campus iTversity we have students with ADD, ADHD, learning disorders, dyslexia, ASS, physical disabilities, visual disabilities, hearing disabilities, narcolepsy, epilepsy, Albinism, anxiety disorders, depression, personality disorders, OCD, diabetes, etc. We are proud to be the first South African institution to have a special program for deaf, hearing impaired and disabled student. We employ the services of three South African Sign Language interpreters. They do not only assist in class, but in communication with other students and campus staff as well to create an inclusive environment to all our students at all our campus. Belgium Campus iTversity is committed to offering people with disabilities or specific needs access to all courses (Depending on the student ability). If you suffer from a long-term medical condition, disability or have specific needs, we may be able to provide you with assistance to complete your studies at Belgium Campus. As an educational institution we can offer to you a flexible, accessible ways of learning and endeavour. The student counsellors focus a lot on inclusion and inclusive education to make sure that Belgium Campus is an institution for everyone. The student counsellors have a program where in they try to create a more inclusive mind-set at Belgium Campus, amongst all staff members and all students. The picture below illustrates what we at Belgium Campus iTversity works towards:



Source: United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities General Comment No. 4

Student counsellors assist in the following.

- Assist you to participate fully, as your circumstance allow, in all aspects of study
- Help you study effectively and on equal terms with other students.
- Assist you to build towards national qualifications through formal assessment.

*You are asked on enrolment to indicate if you have a disability, health problem or other specific need that might affect your studies. To assist you further, we have an Application for Special Assistance form within 'Relevant Forms and Documents', under the Information Pack. If you require special assistance (during class, tests, exam, etc.), you should e-mail the form to one of our student counsellors.*

## Assisting students concerns

We have the Student Representative Council that represents the students of Belgium Campus. We hear the student's problems, challenges, and difficulties that they may encounter through the SRC.

The SRC: Students can report complaints to their representative to deal with a problem on their behalf and feedback will be given.

Administration office: Complaints can be told to the receptionists or can be written in the complaints and suggestions book or the maintenance book.

Lecturers (Academic office): Problems related to academic matters should first be discussed with the lecturer involved. Extra classes can be arranged when necessary. Dean (Academic office): Students can book an appointment with the dean for any academic matter or students can fill in an academic complain form online.

Management: An open-door policy exists with management. Students can request for an appointment whenever they have tried the above-mentioned route without success. The director will attend to any students' problem without prejudice.

**Administration office:**

**info@belgiumcampus.ac.za**

**Administrative Dean:**

**kritzinger.t@belgiumcampus.ac.za**

**CEO: Enrico Jacobs:**

**enrico@belgiumcampus.ac.za**

**Director of Operations, Mrs Rombouts:**

**natasja@belgiumcampus.ac.za**

## Study Advice

### Lectures

What is a Lecture?

Lectures are used to give an overview of the topic which you are studying. Different lecturers work in different ways. You will get used to the different methods that each lecturer prefers. Some will lead the whole session without interruption, while others will involve students and encourage discussion.

They may use overhead projectors, write on the board, and give out hand-outs to help you take notes or use online methods. They also may use films, slides, and the internet to show you images and help illustrate what they are explaining. Some lecture notes may be available before the lecture. A lecture will differ depending on which course you are studying. There can be anything from 5 to over 24 people attending a lecture. A lecture can happen in a classroom or virtually. At Belgium Campus we have a combination of classes that is on campus and classes that happen via Microsoft Teams.

Missed a lecture? now you can review video's online of the lecture it is **NEVER** advisable to miss a lecture, but we are aware that life has some obstacles. Catching up will be quite difficult, so try to not put yourself in that situation.

A lecture may:

Show you how arguments and explanation work.

Explain how to apply techniques.

Demonstrate how the language of the subject is used.

Explain a combination or a variety of information and views on a topic from a variety of sources.

Give evidence and examples.

Simplify technical terms and essentials facts.

Test your knowledge.

Explain and guide you to relevant further research.

Most Important create an understanding of the work.

**Before the Lecture:**

It is useful to find out what the topic of the lecture is or its purpose beforehand, available in study guide for each subject. This will allow you to prepare yourself by reading or doing a bit of additional research about the subject or

topic first and look up any unfamiliar technical terms used. You will also be able to make a list of questions that you may find answers to in the lecture. Remember to take note-taking equipment with you! It is always beneficial to be ready and prepared as this is the first element to your success.

#### **During the Lecture:**

Lecturers often speak very quickly allowing little time to write clear notes that you can refer to at later stages. It would be near impossible to write down everything that a lecturer says. Instead try to:

Note key words and phrases.

Use clear heading, subheadings, underlining and circling. Highlight important key factors.

Use diagrams for example, spider graph to illustrate how issues link together.

Leave margins and spaces so that you can add information later.

Write down anything that you think of yourself i.e., Comments, criticisms, questions.

It is more productive to listen rather than write frantically missing key parts. You can write further notes later jogged by your headers. If you are given hand-outs at the beginning of the lecture you may need to take few notes. Avoid writing details and diagrams that you can get later from textbooks.

If the lecturer allocates time for questions do not be afraid to ask out loud. You are unlikely to be the only student who did not understand or have that question in mind.

#### **After the Lecture:**

Go through your notes as soon as possible and fill in details and diagrams either from your memory or textbooks. Discussing the lecture with other students may allow you to swap notes missed, gain other views on the topics, and make certain points clearer. Check any points or technical terms that you did not understand and sum up the most important points of the lecture. Any question that you may have from the lecture could possibly be asked in a connecting tutorial.

By reworking and completing your notes you can build up topic summaries that aid your understanding of the subject. This will provide you with plentiful revision materials and essay resources. Follow up any further reading or references suggested during the lecture. Lastly, date and label your notes and file carefully for future reference, especially for examinations.

### **Adjusting to online classes:** The golden rules to a successful way of learning online.

**Make a schedule for lecture time and revision time.** – Having a routine in place is important.

**Eliminate Distractions-** Be aware of what your attention span is and what tends to make you lose focus, try to avoid those distraction after a time.

**Have a dedicated workspace-** Be Comfortable of your space.

**Adjust how you communicate online-** Get your pool of friends to assist you and double check your findings with them online

**Ask questions in class-** Do not be afraid to ask questions and reach out for better understandings.

**Use your resources-** Research additional information of the subject or topic

**Be wary of online fatigue-** have your eyes take a break, work for a certain amount of period and take a break according to your attention span.

### **Finding your learning style**

At Belgium Campus iTversity you will be expected to be an independent student, which means taking responsibility and accountability of your academic success. You need to carefully think what you are learning styles and what best suits you. Use this section of the document to assist you, if you are unsure please contact one of the counsellors:

### **Learning Styles Questionnaire**

Circle the response which best suits you.

1. *Do you usually remember more from a lecture when:*
- a) You do not take notes, but listen very carefully
  - b) You sit near the front of the room and watch the lecturer
  - c) You take notes

2. *Do you usually answer a problem by?*
- a) Talking to yourself or a friend
  - b) Using an organised, systematic approach like lists, etc.
  - c) Walking, pacing or some other physical activity

3. *Do you remember phone numbers (when you cannot write them down) by:*
- a) Repeating the numbers orally
  - b) Seeing or visualising the numbers in your mind
  - c) Writing the numbers with your finger on the table or wall

4. *Do you find it easier to learn something new by:*
- a) Listening to someone explain how to do it
  - b) Watching a demonstration of how to do it
  - c) Trying it yourself

5. *When you try to remember something do you:*
- a) Try to see it happen in your mind
  - b) Hear in your mind what was said or the noises that occurred
  - c) Feel the way 'it' reacted with your emotions

6. *If you do not know how to spell a word, do you:*
- a) Sound it out
  - b) Try to see it work in your mind
  - c) Write the word in several ways and choose the one that looks right

7. *Do you enjoy reading most when you can read:*
- a) Dialogue between characters
  - b) Descriptive passages that allow you to create mental pictures
  - c) Stories with lots of action in the beginning (because you find it difficult to Concentrate early on)

8. *Do you remember people you have met by their:*
- a) Names
  - b) Faces
  - c) Mannerisms, movements, etc.

9. *Are you distracted mainly by:*
- a) Noises
  - b) People
  - c) Environment (temperature, comfort of furniture, etc.)

10. *Do you have problems sitting still to read? If so, do you:*
- a) Talk with a friend
  - b) Watch TV or look out of the window
  - c) Fidget in your chair, or cannot lie still in bed

- |   |
|---|
| <p>Count the total number which one do you fall into mostly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) ..... Auditory (by hearing)</li><li>b) ..... Visual (by seeing)</li><li>c) ..... Hands On (by touching, doing, or moving)</li></ul> |
|---|



## Tips on your learning styles

As a visual learner, try the following:

- Visualize what you are studying
- Use color in your notes (colored pens, highlighters, etc.)
- Visualize what the instructor is lecturing about
- Draw pictures and diagrams
- Use mind maps/sider diagrams in your notes
- Use picture and graphics to symbolize your understanding and reinforce learning
- Do additional work- Learn from videos either on YouTube or the videos your lecturer put up.

As an Auditory learner, try the following:

- Listen to tapes of recorded videos
- Record your own summaries or notes and reflect on them
- Read out loud
- Talk over ideas from the lecture and what you are studying with other students
- Participate in class discussions

As a hands-on learner, try the following:

- Stand up and move around while you are studying
- Take frequent breaks while studying
- Make use of your hands and write things down as you study
- Be physically active; experiment with objects
- Memorize while walking or exercising

As a Multi-sensory Learner

It does not matter how you learn, there is no correct or right way, if you use the methods which suit you. Bear in mind though, combining the use of all the senses is the best way to learn. It appears that on average you will remember:

- 20% of what you read.
- 30% of what you hear.
- 40% of what you see.
- 50% of what you say.
- 60% of what you do.

***But you will remember 90% of what you say, hear, see, and do.***

## Other study tips for effective learning

- Remember to take frequent and consist breaks.
- Create a safe and warm environment which is best for you
  - Avoid noise and distraction
  - The venue in which you are studying, the temperature is not too hot or too cold
  - Be comfortable
  - Good lighting.
- Breakdown large tasks into smaller parts so it is easier for you.
- Eat regularly and drink plenty of water.

## Reading and Taking Notes either for a face-to-face or online lecture

It is important to understand what you are reading whether it is a presentation, PowerPoint, or textbook. There are two main questions you should ask yourself: first is what type of text this is and what is the aim of what I am reading. There are different techniques of reading and purpose of reading. These are known as:

- Reading to create an overview- what is the general outlook of what is been said in the text
- Skimming- get an idea of what the text is about, what is important in the text for you.
- Normal Reading – to understand fully of what the text is saying
- Intensive Reading- to read the text in detail so you can recall information.
- Selective Reading – Find certain information that is applicable for you to use.



You decide which reading you will do to prepare for your assessment. Remember, it is never a good idea to *Just Read*. Divide your reading according to your time which also assist in planning and preparing for a subject. For Example:

Divide as:	
Introduction: get an understanding of the topic or overview of what is being communicated	45 minutes
Do a Mind Map of your understanding	10 minutes
Take a break	10 minutes
Read sections that you have left out	10 minutes
Write a summary of what you understand	10 minutes
Take a Break	10 minutes
Do some additional research	30 minutes
Discuss with other group members/friends	30 minutes
Go back to class and confirm if your understanding is on the right direction	

This might seem time consuming but once you get into the routine, it will be much easier for exam preparation and to recall information.

## Reading Strategies

Reading strategies to study

### **Before You Read (Preview)**

- Getting the big picture enhances retention of details. You learn best from general to specific.
- Read chapter objectives, headings, and subheadings.
- Look over charts and pictures in the chapter
- Read the bold and italicized words to become familiar with the chapter vocabulary.
- Read chapter summaries and questions at the end of the chapter.

**Question.** Determine what you want from the assignment. Turn each heading into a question. Write down your questions and look for answers as you read. For example, if the heading is “Transference and Suggestions,” ask yourself, “How does transference relate to suggestion?”

### **While You Read (Reflect)**

Take a moment to ask yourself what you already know about this subject. As you read:

- Visualize the material. Form mental pictures of the concepts presented.
  - Read aloud especially if it is complicated. You will remember better if you hear the material too.
  - Answer the questions you created. Try to predict the answers and read to find out if your predictions were correct.
- Highlight.** Be selective. Read the paragraph first. Underline key passages with pencil. Recite what you remember to yourself, then go back and highlight. Avoid highlighting more than 20% of the passage.
- Circle key terms and write short definitions in the margin or on note cards.
  - Write Q’s in the margins for possible test questions.
  - Draw diagrams, pictures, tables, or maps that translate text into visual terms.
  - Use the backside of your lecture notes to take corresponding reading notes. When studying for the test all the material for the topic will be in the same location in your notes.
  - Write summaries of the main ideas at the bottom of your notes. Putting information in your own words promotes mastery of the material.

### **After You Read**

**Recite.** Talk to yourself or to someone else about what you read. Studies show that you can profitably devote up to 80% of your study time to active reciting.

**Review.** Reviewing within 24 hours moves information from short-term to long-term memory. Spend 15 minutes looking over your notes and reciting the main points again.

**Review again.** Weekly, spend 5-10 minutes rereading your notes and highlighting portions of your text. This keeps neuron pathways accessing the information for better recall.

### **When Reading Is Tough?**

- **Read it again.** Difficult material is often easier the second time around.

- **Read it aloud.** Read the passage out loud several times with different inflections. Pretend you are the author talking.
- **Stand up.** Changing positions can combat fatigue. Stand as you read aloud, especially if you get stuck on a tough passage.
- **Hold a mini review.** Pause briefly to summarize. Stop at the end of the paragraph and recite in your own words what you have read.
- **Look for essential words.** Cross out all the adjectives and adverbs and read the sentence without them. Find the important word.
- **Skip around.** Jump to the end of the chapter and read the summary or conclusion to get the big picture.
- **Pretend you understand, then explain it.** Pretend the material is clear as a bell and try to explain it to another person, or to yourself. You may know more than you thought you did.
- **Mark it.** When you feel stuck, put and “S” for “stuck” in the margin. A pattern of marks over several pages will indicate the questions you want answered in class.
- **“Google” it.** Look up confusing concepts on the web and read the explanation in “user friendly” language.
- **Stop reading.** Admit confusion and take a break. Allow some time to process the information. When you return, you will see it with fresh eyes.

### **Keep in Mind**

#### **What to Read**

Know how much of your test is based on lecture notes and how much is based on material from the textbook.

#### **Where to Study**

Read in a location free of distractions... Busy locations have distractions that compete for your attention.

Be comfortable but not too comfortable... Your bed is not a good idea, it will put you to sleep.

#### **When to Read**

Read during the day when you are alert and attentive.

Read for 30 to 45 minutes and then take a 10-minute break.

Read each day. If you fall behind and must catch up on reading, you will find yourself skimming and missing a lot of important information.

#### **How to Retain It**

Set up study groups to discuss text information. Discussion moves new material from short term to long term memory. Reading aloud will not only help you engage in the text but will also aid in information retrieval.

## **Taking Notes Technique for face-to-face or online classes**

Note-taking is a critical skill that can increase or determine your academic marks, decrease study time, making preparation easier and ease the process of completing assignments. However, many students are not sure on how to take notes or which note taking technique will suit them. Regardless whether you are attending face-to face or online classes, Note taking is important and should be done at each lecturer.

How do I take notes during a lecture?

You will probably have to take notes during your lectures, tutorials, and presentations. It is common for people to write vast amounts of notes that are stored away and never seen again. You may also make notes from other resources such as book, the internet, film, artwork, and video, or on your research methods.

Note taking is very important during your programme as it can:

- Assist you with concentration during lectures and seminars.
- Enable you to understand with ideas and concepts.
- Provide a resource you can refer to.
- Supply essential revision material.
- Be useful preparation information for Examinations.

There are 3 best effective ways to take notes, read through and see which one suits you.

### **1. Outline**

The outline is possibly the most popular form of notetaking. The outline format is highly organized; the main topics act as headers, with accompanying details listed under them. With the outline format, students often use Roman numerals, an alphanumerical combination, or bullets. This type of notetaking is especially helpful in the mathematical subjects, where information is often intrinsically organized into categories and groups. In addition, this technique of

notetaking can function quite well in classes where lecturers lecture in a concise manner. Furthermore, the outline tends to be a beneficial way of recording notes when students read textbooks. The disadvantage of this would be that demonstrating the way ideas are connected or when referring to abstract subjects. *An example of this will be:*

Volkswagen Vechiles:

#### Cars

VW POLO

VW JETTA

#### Bakkies

VW CADDY BAKKIE

#### 4X4

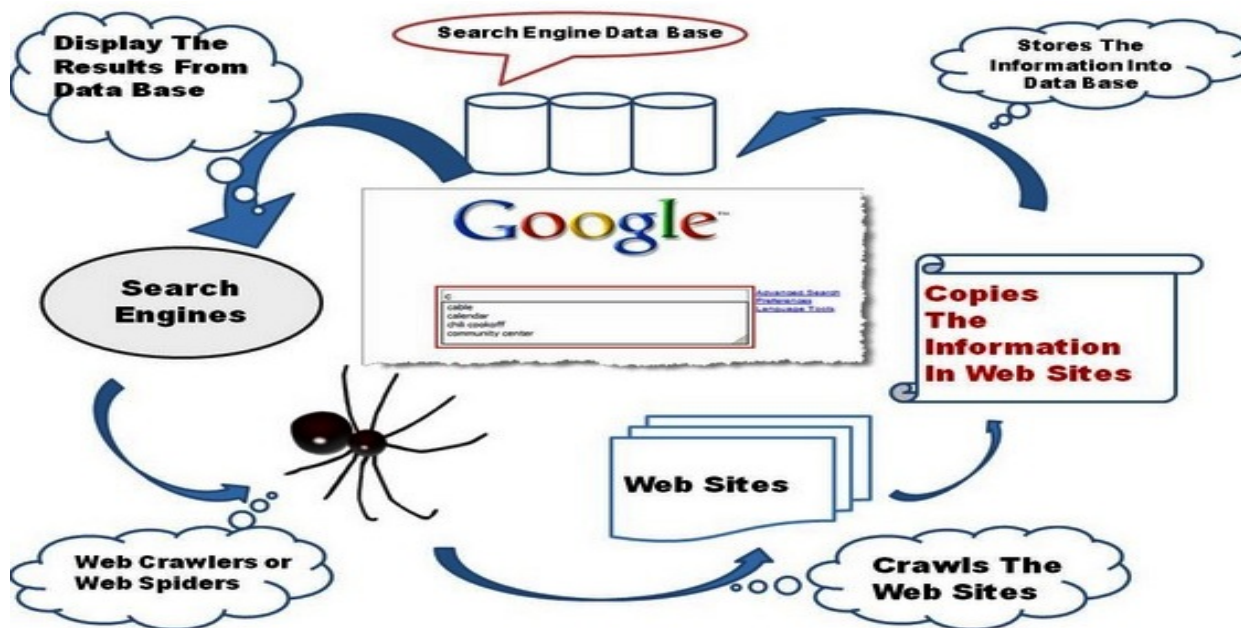
VW Amarok

## 2. Web

The web is referred to: concept mapping. This is where ideas and facts are represented visually. The web taking notes are more graphic. Main points are represented in bubbles and linked to ideas branch off the sides. Lines are normally drawn between ideas to show the relationship between the concepts/ideas. The advantages of using the web technique is that it gives you the ability to see different perspectives and explore your thinking ability. This method of notetaking is best for those who are visual learners. You can explore what suits you, many add color-coding to their webs, and they can express their ideas even more effectively. Remember choosing what suits you, not what others are doing. What works for others might just not work for you. An example of this would be:

The Spider graph/gram:

A spider graph is a visual diagram that uses circles, squares, and arrows to connect key words or phrases. The main concept/idea is placed in the centre. Each associated word or phrase is positioned around the centre, connected by an arrow or line. This should lead to the creation of a spreading pattern in all directions rather than just words that start at the top of the page and work towards the bottom. Assists in deepening your understanding of the overall concept/topic/subject.



Making a spider diagram in 3 easy ways:

1<sup>st</sup>: select a topic, write it in the middle of the page and draw an oval/square/whatever shape you like around it.

2<sup>nd</sup>: Write down your subtopics and link each of these back to the central theme with a line or an arrow. You can put these subtopics in a circle or oval if you like. Whatever works for you.

3<sup>rd</sup>: Add more detailed sub-ideas around your subtopics until you have all your information present in the diagram. You can add colour and customize the diagram with images if you like.

**FUN FACT!** Scientifically proven that spider diagrams are most effective tool: they more closely resemble the way our brains are structured, with lots of interconnected ideas shooting off in all directions. In fact, according to one 2006 study, concept mapping (such as a spider diagram) is more effective than “reading text passages, attending lectures, and participating in class discussions”.  
(<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/00346543076003413>)

## Make a mind map

Mind Maps are often used for brainstorming, but you can also create summaries of textbooks in the form of a mind map.

What is a mind map?

A mind map is a visual diagram where you visualize the relationship between thoughts, knowledge, or information. In the middle of the page is the main idea. Using lines, you visualize the relationship between different ideas and sub ideas. You will get an overview of the structure and all parts of a text.

How to make a mind map of a text?

Read the text.

Underline key words in the text.

Using a sheet of paper put the title of the chapter in the centre of the sheet.

Write the title of the first paragraph (right) and make a line (in colour) from the centre to that point.

Use the key words from the text to make branches around the title of the first paragraph. Use the same colour.

Use key words and abbreviations. Do not write sentences.

Write the title of the second section at the bottom right. Make a line (in a different colour) from the centre to that point.

Use the key words from the second section to make branches.

Continue until you have all the sections and keywords used.

### Why does a mind map help you to memorize a text?

You are actively making connections, allowing you to remember the content better.

You can test yourself because only key words are in the mind map. The schedule forces you to retell the content in your own words so you understand it better and you will remember it better.

Each chapter focuses on a single page, so you have a good overview of the chapter and you see clear links.

When you create a visual schedule, you use your right hemisphere and with that part of your brain you can remember data better.

### 3. Cornell method,

Is a method that functions for both taking notes and studying after lecture. To use this technique, you must divide your paper into three sections. First, fold the paper up two inches from the bottom, then fold the left side over approximately three inches. When you unfold your paper, you should be able to see three sections. Make use of the spacious right-hand portion to take notes in whichever style works best for you or use a combination of styles. Record all the detailed information on the right-hand side. On the left-hand side, list the main points. Once you have finished taking notes, utilize the bottom section of your paper to create a summary of what you have learned from the lecture. The advantage of using this method is a better understanding of what was said and putting it in your own words.

## Making Summaries

Make a summary to study

If you must study a lot, it is convenient to make a summary of the substance. If you have a summary, you do not have to read the whole textbook while studying for a test or exam, you only must study your summary. As you read, you force yourself to separate major and minor issues, to think critically and to organize the material. You read in an active way, so you understand and remember the material better.

There are several ways to make a summary:

### Summarize the text by paragraph:

You can summarize a paragraph of text as follows: Read the paragraph.

Underline the main keywords. Write the key words on a paper

Rewrite text under these key words in your own words. It is very important to write it in your own words because then you can be sure you understood the text.

Compare your own text with the original text and make sure you have written down all the important things. Ensure that you make a clear distinction between major and minor issues. Only write the major issues in your summary. Keep your summary short and use abbreviations. Otherwise, there will be a risk that your summary will be too long.

### **Key phrases:**

A complete text is often composed of several paragraphs. The first sentence is often the core sentence of a paragraph. This sentence contains the most important information. The rest of the sentences in that paragraph are to clarify the main idea. Examples can be used to clarify. When you make a summary, it is important that you get the core sentences (the main idea) as a starting point for your summary.

### **Structure words:**

Authors often use signal words, such as first, second, then, besides, etc. These words give structure to the text. If you make a summary, these structure words are important clues to find the main idea of the paragraph. These structural words also say something about the kind of information: cause and effect, chronology, opinions, and arguments etc.

### **Make a columns schedule:**

When you must study large amounts of text, you can do this effectively with a columns schedule. It will not take too much time, and it will prepare you for a test or an exam as you select the most important information. For a test or exam, you do not have to read the whole textbook again, but you can use your schedule.

Before you create a column, you must look at the structure of the text: enumeration, chronology, comparison, problem-solution, cause-effect, process etc. After looking at the structure, you can start making your column schedule.

## **A column schedule usually consists of five columns:**

Column 1: The main issue ☐ when you read the title and introduction of a chapter, you immediately know what to expect because the author often gives a brief overview of the content of the text. You have found the main issue. The first column is the main issue in fewer words.

Column 2: The aspects ☐ in a chapter you can find several sections which are all part of the main issue. These are the different aspects. Put these aspects in the second column of your schedule.

Column 3: The sub aspects ☐ a study text can be long and therefore it consists of several sections. There is a lot of information in one paragraph. These sections are called aspects; the different topics within a section are called sub aspects. Put these sub aspects in the third column. So, the third column is more precise information.

Column 4: The explanation ☐ the level of the fourth column is the level of real text and is called the explanation. You should still search through the text to find the important information. Do not read the entire text, but note the different printed words, the core sentence of a paragraph, definitions, and signal words. Illustrations can also be important. When you put information in the fourth column, you should ask yourself every time whether it belongs to the aspect or the sub aspect. There is no place for useless information. Use symbols and abbreviations to keep it short.

Column 5: Examples ☐ when there are examples mentioned in the text that can help you better understand the (sub) aspects, write them in a fifth column.

### **How to create a column schedule?**

Start with the main issue in the first column. Continue by writing down an important aspect (column 2). Then continue with the associated aspects (column 3) and then the explanation (column 4). Then you start again with the next aspect in the second column, the sub aspects in the third column and the explanation in the fourth column. You switch

between the columns and work down until you have done the whole chapter/article/book. Creating a column schedule is a time-consuming job but also remember its benefits: you prepare immediately for your test or exam, you will remember a lot of information, you can find the structure in a text, and you are able to separate main and side issues.

## Effective Study Methods

What is the most effective way to study? Re-reading? Highlighting? Summarizing? This may work for some but is NOT effective for all and can be time consuming. MOST effective = combining different strategies; visual, auditory, hands on, special, etc.

Top 7 strategies for EFFECTIVE learning:

### 1. Strategy: "Spaced Practice"

- ✓ No Cramming!!!
- ✓ Consistent, short study sessions over time
- ✓ Same amount of time, spread out over study period
- ✓ Allows for consolidation of information
- ✓ Less stressful – more information is absorbed

### 2. Strategy: "Interleaving"

- ✓ Switching between different topics/types of questions within the same subject
- ✓ Do not focus on one topic for too long
- ✓ Study enough information to understand an idea before you switch, otherwise it can get confusing
- ✓ Go at a pace that works for you; do not switch before you understand, but do not linger too long on one topic
- ✓ Each time you study; switch the order in which you go through certain topics to strengthen your understanding

### 3. Strategy: "Elaborate"

- ✓ Ask, explain, connect
- ✓ Ask yourself questions about how and why things work
- ✓ Explain and describe ideas with as much detail as possible (write/speak)
- ✓ In your explanation, connect new info to things you already know. Makes it easier to understand and recall later E.g., this formula is almost like that one, but these things are added...
- ✓ How to do this, start by making a list of what you need to know, ask yourself questions about how these ideas work, why, etc. Go through your class material (notes, summaries, textbooks) to look for answers to these questions, elaborate in describing them in detail, connect them to what you already know by comparing similarities, differences etc. Questions you ask and how you explain them depends on what you are studying: E.g., MATHS

You are studying calculus. The topic is "derivatives". How do derivatives work? Well, they are the rate of the change. How does that work? You look at one point, then you look at a prior point, over some interval. And then you take the difference divided by the interval. As that interval approaches zero, you have the instantaneous rate of change. Why does this happen? Because "instantaneous" means that the interval is nothing.

### 4. Strategy: "Concrete examples"

- ✓ Helps demonstrate and explain ideas, which helps you understand them better
- ✓ Memory hooks onto concrete ideas, better than abstract ones
- ✓ Thus.... Real life examples = easier to remember



- ✓ Thinking of your own examples is most helpful, but you can take examples from textbook or lecturer as well
- ✓ Just make sure your examples are accurate and relevant

## 5. Strategy: "Dual Coding"

- ✓ Combining words and visuals
- ✓ 2 ways of understanding & remembering info later
- ✓ Find or create images/ graphs/ mind maps/ pictures to represent written text
- ✓ How to the words describe what is in the image?
- ✓ Examine how the image represents what is described by the text
- ✓ Create different ways to represent the info (graphs, diagrams, tables, scales, mind maps, cartoons...

## 6. Strategy: "Retrieval Practice"

- ✓ Practice retrieving everything you know about a certain topic
- ✓ Put away all your notes/books and write down everything you can remember
- ✓ WHY- Reinforces what you have learnt, makes it easier to remember later, Improvement comes with practice
- ✓ How you plan on doing this: Take as many practice tests as you can, you can make up tests/ swop with a friend, start with a blank paper, pick a topic, and write down everything you know, make sure to do this only after you have studied for a while and covered everything relating to a topic, once you are done, check what you have written against your notes/textbook, what did you get right? Wrong? Forgot completely? Now you know where you can improve

## 7. SUMMARY:

- ✓ No Cramming
- ✓ Switch
- ✓ Ask, explain, connect
- ✓ Examples
- ✓ Words and visuals
- ✓ Recall what you know.

### What methods can I use to study more effectively? "

#### M.U.R.D.E.R." - A Study System

**Mood:** Set a positive mood for you to study in. Select the appropriate time, environment, and attitude.

**Understand:** Mark any information you do not understand in a particular unit. Keep a focus on one unit or a manageable group of exercises.

**Recall:** After studying the unit, stop and put what you have learned into your own words.

**Digest:** Go back to what you did not understand and reconsider the information. Contact external expert sources (e.g., other books or an instructor) if you still cannot understand it.

**Expand:** In this step, ask 3 kinds of questions concerning the studied material:

- If I could speak to the author, what questions would I ask or what criticism would I offer?
- How could I apply this material to what I am interested in?
- How could I make this information interesting and understandable to other students? Review: Go over the material you have covered.

**Review:** what strategies helped you understand and/or retain information in the past and apply these to your current studies

#### Index study system

Here is a method of studying that gives you an accurate perception of how well you know the material. This forces you to think about it, rather than just look over it.

Review your notes and readings frequently, so the material is "fresh".

as you are reading your text or reviewing your notes, generate and write down questions about the material. Imagine you are teaching the course. What questions would you ask on the exam?

Keep track of any terms you need to know.

Write each question or term on the back of an index card

On the front of each index card, write an answer or an explanation for the question or term on the back. Use your notes and text for a reference but put the answer or explanation in your own words whenever possible.

Shuffle the index cards (so you cannot figure out any answers based on their location in the deck)

Look the card on the top of the deck. Try to answer the question or explain the term. If you know it, great! Put it on the bottom of the deck. If you do not know it, look at the answer, and put it a few cards down in the deck (so you will come back to it soon).

Proceed through the deck of cards until you know all the information.

### **Some Tips when using this study method:**

Carry your cards with you everywhere. Take advantage of little pockets of time. Test yourself while you are waiting in line, riding the bus, etc.

If you think you know an answer, but cannot put it into words, you probably do not know it well enough. Being able to explain the information is the only way to be sure that you know it. It is also the best way to prevent test anxiety.

Consider testing yourself someplace where nobody can see you (and think you are crazy) and reciting the answers out loud. That is the best way to be sure that you can explain them, Study with a friend from your class. You can share ideas and help each other out with concepts. Also, you can use each other to make sure that you are explaining your answers adequately.

## Assessments

How will I be assessed?

You will be assessed by your lecturer on a continuous basis to determine whether you have the required knowledge and skills of a subject. One of the assessment methods that you will encounter during your course is an examination. You will have probably already taken an examination at school or another higher learning institute. For most students, an examination is the one form of assessment that causes the most stress.

The different types of examinations and tests that you will encounter are:

- ✓ Essay based - for example, answer a set of questions in 500 words.
- ✓ Traditional - the questions are unknown, and you are not allowed to take notes or materials (books) into the exam/test room.
- ✓ Open Book - the questions are unknown, but you are permitted to take notes and materials into the exam or test.
- ✓ Open Question - the questions are known but you are not allowed to use any notes or materials.
- ✓ Short Answer - many questions where the answer can range from one word to a paragraph in length.
- ✓ Multiple-choice - many questions where you can select one answer from a list of suggestions.
- ✓ Practical – questions are given, and you must solve them by using a computer. Questions are usually in the form of a problem or scenario that you will have to solve.

Each type of examination/test is used to test a different skill. Open Book exams/tests test your ability to express ideas logically and clearly; whereas Short Answers requires you to recall the entire subject area.

When you have received your course handbook, check to see what method you will be assessed by and what type the exams/tests are. Be aware of what is required of and from you. Being in a classroom and writing your examinations is different to writing online. Adjustments to prepare for examination needs to be made.

*Before an Examination/Test for a classroom setting:*

- Check nearer to the time of the exams/tests exactly
- When and where the exams/tests are.
- When and where the exams/tests are.
- How long the exam/test is.
- Look at the outcomes in the study guide.
- Do all the questions have the same value?
- Are there any mock exams/tests that you can try first?
- Can you look at any old papers?

Knowing what the examiners are looking for in the paper will help you to concentrate on the areas where the most marks can be gained.

Make sure that you have organised any special requirements as soon as possible. Do not leave it to the last minute.

*Before an Examination/Test for online setting:*

- Check your computer – software installed that is needed
- Make sure your webcam is working
- Be Realistic in your expectations
- Be Persistence
- Have an effective Time Schedule (Plan Ahead)
- Avoid Distractions
- A good working/study environment, a quiet environment
- Finally, have fun and participate!!

### Planning your Presentation

Firstly, find out what type of presentation you have been asked to give. What should the length be, how many people will be present? What will be the title or are you expected to talk on a more general topic? Gather as much information on the topic you are to present and do as much background reading as possible. The more you know about the subject the more confident you will be to speak about it. You need to understand what you are talking about to present and explain it to the audience. Use visual aids to help you if appropriate. Slides, film, and hand-outs can help to illustrate ideas. Make notes to use throughout your presentation. Do not write down exactly what you going to say. Notes should contain key points, statistics, or quotations

### How will I make a presentation?

As part of your course, you may be asked to make a presentation. You might be asked to work as a group or on your own. They are useful methods of encouraging discussion in a group while submitting a variety of perspectives. Presentation can provide you with an alternative way to demonstrate your ability and knowledge on a subject if you find essays difficult. They also prepare you for future employment interviews by practicing your verbal skills and gaining confidence.

There are many different styles of presentations. We mention just a few:

- **Narrative Presentation**  
The presenter will tell a story, often a personal narrative. An example could be you describing some voluntary experience.
- **Persuasive Presentation**  
This involves trying to 'win your audience over' to your point of view by presenting a logically developed argument.
- **Analytical Presentation**  
This can be your thesis or an essay. You have an introduction, main body of information, and a conclusion. Speaking in front of a group of students may be very daunting but with careful preparation and practice you will feel more at ease.

Final Checks should be:

- ✓ Make sure you can see the time to ensure that you do not talk too much or too little.
- ✓ Are your notes legible and in the right order?
- ✓ Check that any equipment you are using is working and within easy access.
- ✓ Do you have enough hand-outs and are they in the right order?
- ✓ Start by introducing your talk and check that everyone can hear you clearly. Remember that the audience is on your side!

## Presentation skills

Presentation skills are the skills you need in delivering effective and engaging presentations to a variety of audiences. These skills cover a variety of areas such as the structure of your presentation, the design of your slides, the tone of your voice and the body language you convey.

### We have 3 ways to make a good presentation

#### Emotional impact

Good presentations are memorable. They contain graphics, images, and facts in such a way that they are easy to remember. A week later, your audience can remember much of what you said. Great presentations are motivating. They bring the audience members to the point where they make a buying decision: either a final decision (We want this product now) or an interim one

#### Information

*good presentations contain valid information.* Each piece of data is thoroughly fact-checked, accurate, and never misleading. Good presentations provide honest data in an honest way. *Great presentations contain minimal information.* Any information that's not 100 percent relevant is stripped away, including information noise such as fancy slide work. What's left is only that information that drives toward a decision.

#### Storytelling

*Good presentations include stories.* Unlike facts, speak to the heart, and every good presentation uses stories to illustrate points and to help people make an emotional connection to the message. *Great presentations are stories.* Rather than containing stories, great presentations take the audience through an emotional journey that creates a reason to decide right here, right now.

### **5 Steps to consider when preparing a Presentation**

#### **Step 1: Analyze your audience**

The first step in preparing a presentation is to learn more about the audience to whom you will be speaking. It is a good idea to obtain some information on the backgrounds, values, and interests of your audience so that you understand what the audience members might expect from your presentation.

#### **Step 2: Select a topic**

Next, if possible, select a topic that is of interest to the audience and to you. It will be much easier to deliver a presentation that the audience finds relevant, and more enjoyable to research a topic that is of interest to you.

#### **Step 3: Define the objective of the presentation**

Once you have selected a topic, write the objective of the presentation in a single concise statement. The objective needs to specify exactly what you want your audience to learn from your presentation. Base the objective and the level of the content on the amount of time you have for the presentation and the background knowledge of the audience. Use this statement to help keep you focused as you research and develop the presentation.

#### **Step 4: Prepare the body of the presentation**

After defining the objective of your presentation, determine how much information you can present in the amount of time allowed. Also, use your knowledge about the audience to prepare a presentation with the right level of detail. You do not want to plan a presentation that is too basic or too advanced. The **body** of the presentation is where you present your ideas. To present your ideas convincingly, you will need to illustrate and support them. Strategies to help you do this include the following:

Present data and facts

Read quotes from experts

Relate personal experiences

Provide vivid descriptions

#### **Step 5: Prepare the introduction and conclusion**

Once you have prepared the body of the presentation, decide how you will begin and end the talk. Make sure the introduction captures the attention of your audience and the conclusion summarizes and reiterates your important points. In other words, "Tell them what you're going to tell them. Tell them. Then, tell them what you told them."

During the **opening** of your presentation, it is important to attract the audience's attention and build their interest. If you do not, listeners will turn their attention elsewhere and you will have a difficult time getting it back. Strategies that you can use include the following:

Make the introduction relevant to the listeners' goals, values, and needs

Ask questions to stimulate thinking

Share a personal experience

Begin with a joke or humorous story

Project a cartoon or colorful visual

Make a stimulating or inspirational statement

Give a unique demonstration

### **Two Important things to consider on the day of the presentation**

#### **Body language**

Non-verbal Communication is the process of communication through sending and receiving wordless messages. It is the single most powerful form of communication. On-verbal communication cues you into what is on another person's mind, even more than voice or words can do. Understanding your body language and other physical queues is very important when you are presenting material in front of an audience. Your non-verbal communication skills are just as important as your verbal skills. Combined they make up the complete communication package that you use when you are presenting your material.

## **Gestures**

Gestures are an important tool for a presenter. The challenge is to make your gestures support what you speak and reinforce your ideas. Below are several basic rules for the use of gestures. Make most gestures above the waist (below-waist gestures suggest failure, defeat, and despair). Hold your forearms parallel to your waist, with your elbows about 3 inches from the side. Make your hands part of your forearm, opening them, with your fingers slightly curved (Limp hands may indicate a lack of leadership). Use both hands to convey power. Gestures of direction, size, shape, description, feeling, and intensity are all effective when speaking.

### **These tips may help you in preparing your presentation:**

#### **Practice to build confidence**

Some people think that if you practice too much, your speech will sound rehearsed and less genuine. Do not necessarily memorize your presentation but be so familiar with the content that you are able to speak fluently and comfortably and adjust, as necessary.

#### **Be flexible**

This is easier to do if you are comfortable with the material. Do not attempt to present something you just learned the previous night. You want to know your material well enough to answer statements. And, if you do not know something, just admit it, and commit to finding the answer.

#### **Welcome statements from the audience**

This is a sign that a presenter knows what he or she is talking about. It builds audience confidence, and people are much more likely to trust what you say and respect your message.

#### **Use slides and other visual aids**

These can help you deliver a confident presentation. The key point here is to learn how much visual information to give the audience, and yet not distract them from what you are saying.

#### **Keep your visuals simple and brief**

Do not use too many pictures, charts, or graphs. Your slides should summarize or draw attention to one or two items each. And do not try to fit your whole presentation onto your slides. If the slides cover every single detail, then you have probably put too much information on them. Slides should give the overall message, and then the audience should know where to look for supporting evidence.

#### **Manage your stress**

Confidence has a lot to do with managing your stress levels. If you feel particularly nervous and anxious, then those emotions will probably show. They are such strong feelings that you can easily become overwhelmed, which can affect your ability to perform effectively. A little nervousness is useful because it can build energy. But that energy may quickly turn negative if nerves build to the point where you cannot control them.

If you have anxiety before a presentation, try some of these stress management tools:

Use physical relaxation techniques, like deep breathing and visualization, to calm your body and ease your tension.

Use imagery to help keep calm and visualize yourself delivering a successful presentation.

Learn strategies to build your self-confidence in general. The more assured you are about yourself and your abilities, the better you will feel when you get up in front of people and say what you want to say.

When you present with confidence and authority, your audience will likely pay attention and react to you as someone who is worth listening to. So 'pretend' if you need to, by turning your nervousness into creative and enthusiastic energy.

## Essays

How can I write a proper essay?

"An essay is a piece of writing which is written to a set of writing conventions." ('Moving On'). You will probably write many essays throughout your diploma/degree course. It usually involves responding to a question or title and often takes the form of an argument. Before planning: Know the key words of an Essay:

- ✓ Analyze= Break up into parts.
- ✓ Compare Similarities and differences =perhaps reach a conclusion to show your preference.
- ✓ Define =set down meaning of word or phrase.
- ✓ Describe= give detailed account.
- ✓ Discuss, investigate, or examine = argument or debate.
- ✓ Distinguish =show the differences between.
- ✓ Examine Look closely into.
- ✓ Explain= Give reason for something.
- ✓ Justify= show adequate grounds for decisions and conclusions.
- ✓ Summarize= give a concise account of the main points. Leave out details and examples.

An essay should consist of three main parts, which are:

### ***An Introduction-***

A brief explanation of your approach to the subject or question, your understanding of it, and what content you intend to cover.

### ***The Main Body-***

The main discussion, arguments or analysis of the theme or topic. Each paragraph should be consistent and link together with the next. This is where you will need to show your ability to discuss different viewpoints with relevant evidence and evaluate source material.

### ***The Conclusion-***

Summarise your essay showing the conclusion of your analysis of the evidence that you presented in the main body. Show how you have answered the initial question and make recommendations.

### ***References and Bibliography-***

In the bibliography, include everything that you have read for the assignment whether you have directly referred to it in the essay or not. All the sources that you have directly referred to must be listed in references. Follow the guidelines given by your lecturer on how to correctly present your references. Stick to what is required either APA or Howard method. Use the bibliography function on word document to assist you.

Tips when writing an essay:

- ✓ Check the deadline.
- ✓ Plan your time.
- ✓ Collect as much information as possible at the start. Record your bibliography and references as you use. Keep to the word limit set.



- ✓ Always keep a paper copy and a backup in addition to the one on your computer. Proofread. Check your spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Make sure that when you read through it you understand it.

## Doing your research

Researching information can seem an impossible task. Therefore, knowing how and where to find relevant information are the key steps to acquiring good research skills. Where to find relevant information

- ✓ Course reading lists.
- ✓ Internet.
- ✓ Journals and periodicals.
- ✓ Special text collections.
- ✓ How to select the most relevant information
- ✓ Check to see if there are any texts on your reading list that have been marked as essential reading.
- ✓ Check the date of publication.
- ✓ Scan contents, reference sections and introductions to check if the book contains information you need and to look for the most relevant chapters.
- ✓ Use Library catalogues to find the most recent journals in your subject area.
- ✓ Use reliable sources, e.g., well known journals.
- ✓ Select the most up to date material.
- ✓ If uncertain, clarify information with your lecturer or supervisor
- ✓ Research should be happening to all the subjects you are doing; this also can be regarded as additional work which is beneficial.

## Independent Study

### ***What is Independent Study?***

When in higher education, you are expected to take responsibility for your own learning. Independent or private study is probably one of the most noticeable changes of studying that you will notice. It can also be one of the hardest forms of studying. Private study requires a large amount of motivation and organisation. You may spend this time researching in the library for essays and presentations, or for preparation for lectures. You may find it easier to work at home or in a group with other students in your class. The amount of private study needed will increase, the nearer you get to exams and assignment deadlines. The sooner you make time for studying the easier it will be to manage your time in busy periods.

## Time Management

Students' misuse of their time is the most common form of sabotage that students use to undermine their attempts to study. However, planning your time makes you think about it strategically and, even if you must alter your study plans, you will benefit from having previously defined your tasks and prioritising your activities. Time Management is very important as it assists with stress, anxiety, and organisation.

### **How can I manage my time effectively?**

Learning methods at university are split between formal methods such as lectures and self-motivated study like reading and researching. You will be expected to manage your independent study yourself and prioritise your commitments. By organising your time efficiently and effectively, you will be able to commit the necessary time to each method of studying whilst still allowing time for yourself. Studying is a full-time commitment, the challenge is to allow time for personal commitments such as

employment, family, friends, and of course a social life. Planning your study schedule will allow you to keep track of deadlines and busy study periods so that you can spread the time spent on your studies evenly.

*Before planning consider which of these is true for you:*

- ✓ Often rush things at the last moment.
- ✓ Find little time to relax.
- ✓ Keep appointments.
- ✓ Often late for meeting or lectures.

These are the most common time problems to occur and possible solution to it:

1. Are you disorganized and frequently misplace things?

- Organize your learning space.
- Take control of where you work, and you can then control how you work.
- Keep a clear desktop
- Place pens, pencils etc. in a desk tidy or jar
- Organize your notes by using a separate ring binder for each subject
- Use colored dividers to separate lecture notes into date order
- File handouts with the appropriate lecture notes

2. Put off doing the work

- Use a diary or wall planner to clearly mark assignment deadlines for every module
- Start tasks sooner rather than later
- Be realistic about how long things will take and
- set appropriate time slots for specific tasks e.g., planning an essay will take longer than reading short extract
- Break tasks down into manageable parts and allow time to tackle some of it every week

3. Easily distracted

- Negotiate study time with friends so that they know when you are not to be disturbed Be aware of the times of day you can learn and concentrate
- Set clear start and finish times for each study session
- Take regular short breaks

#### 4. Over commitment and leaving things to the last minute

- Try not to over commit your time
- Plan social time into your week and mark clearly in a diary or wall planner
- Priorities tasks; do the most urgent tasks first

If you feel that your time management in any of these areas needs improvement there are a few things that you can do.

**Year/Term Planner – Yearly/Term Management**

Use a year or term planner on your wall to record the following:

Assignment deadline dates for the term (or year if possible).

All personal commitments such as birthdays, weekends away, employment commitments or periods of demand.

#### ***Exam dates.***

Any other commitments such as clubs or societies.

You can also estimate busy study or revision periods and mark these on your planner. By having your planner visible to family and friends they will be aware of periods that you will be unavailable, and times during which you will need their support.

#### ***Diary - Daily Planner***

You will be provided with your timetable for the year at the beginning of each academic year. Lectures and tutorials will have a regular slot leaving what seems a large amount of free time for you. The majority of this 'free time' is for private study. You will have to be self-motivated to achieve the amount of study needed to be successful at your course. Each person works differently. If you are returning to study from employment you might find that staying with the work style of 8:00 – 17:00 may be best for you, leaving your evening free for you. If you are working part-time or have family commitments, you may need to study more flexibly.

If you have been away from education, you may find that studying is difficult. Tasks may take longer than you think and resources longer to find. Tasks will become easier and quicker as you study and practice. As you gather more notes from research and reading you will build up a resource to refer to. Remember that some weeks will be more productive than others.

#### ***Tips on Time Management***

Make a list of things to do for the day. Tick each one as you complete it. This will help you to remember tasks and give a sense of achievement when you complete them.

Prioritise your tasks and change them daily if needed.

Allocate study time in the library, or meetings, close to teaching times to capitalise the time you are on campus.

Trial your timetable for a few weeks. If it is not working, try changing some things around. Remember that you are entitled to take breaks from studying. Use a Timetable or a task to do list. An example of a time timetable is illustrated below: do a timetable according to you needs and be realistic.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
08-10H00							
10-12H00							
12-13H00							
13-17H00							
19-22H00							
22-23H00							
23H00	Sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	Sleep		

### ***Tips on Saving Time***

Develop your skills such as word-processing, reading, and note-taking. Use keywords, abbreviations, and headers when taking notes to avoid writing whole sentences.

Be organised with your notes. File them in one place using a system such as colour coding.

Keep note of any references and a bibliography as you go along.

Try to read only what is relevant. Make a note of anything that looks interesting but not relevant to your current research to come back to later.

### **Preparations to Succeed**

How can I prepare myself to succeed in my studies? Try to develop and appreciate the following habits:

Take responsibility for yourself, responsibility is recognition that to succeed you can make decisions about your priorities, your time, and your resources.

Centre yourself on your values and principles.

Do not let friends and acquaintances dictate what you consider important.

Put first things first.

Follow up on the priorities you have set for yourself, and do not let others or other interests, distract you from your goals.

Discover your key productivity periods and places. Morning, afternoon, evening; study spaces where you can be the most focused and productive. Prioritize these for your most difficult study challenges. Consider yourself in a win-win situation. You win by doing your best and contributing your best to a class, whether for yourself, your fellow students, or even for your lecturers and instructors. If you are content with your performance, a grade becomes an external check on your performance, which may not coincide with your internally achieved benefits.

First understand others, and then attempt to be understood. When you have an issue with an instructor, for example a questionable grade, an assignment deadline extension, put yourself

in the instructor's place. Now ask yourself how you can best make your argument given his/her situation.

Look for better solutions to problems. For example, if you do not understand the course material, do not just re-read the material. Try something else! Consult with the lecturer, a tutor, an academic advisor, a classmate, a study group

## Examination / Test Anxiety

Test anxiety is a psychological condition in which people experience extreme distress and anxiety in testing situations. While many people experience some degree of stress and anxiety before and during exams, test anxiety can impair learning and hurt test performance. Test anxiety is a type of performance anxiety. In situations where the pressure is on and a good performance counts, people can become so anxious that they are unable to do their best.

### **The most common causes of examination/ test anxiety are:**

#### **Expectations**

Many students' perceptions of what others expect are inaccurate. If you worry that you will alienate people you care about unless you do well, you may become fearful and anxious that you will disappoint them or make them angry. If you believe that you can't live up to the expectations of others, tests may make you especially anxious.

#### **Grades and self-esteem**

Failing a test or getting a low score for some students translates into "I'm stupid" or "I don't have what it takes to be a physician" material. These feelings may lead to a loss of self-esteem and more anxiety. One real value of testing is that it gives you an opportunity to find out what information you understand well enough to associate with material that you will learn later. Before your next exam, you can give this material a quick review. Mistakes on a test pinpoint areas that you need to study more thoroughly for the next exam.

#### **Feelings of helplessness**

If you have an external locus of control, you may not see the connection between study and grades. You may become anxious because you cannot predict the outcome of a test. Even if your locus of control is internal, you may feel temporarily helpless in a testing situation when you know you have not studied enough. Feeling guilty for not meeting your responsibilities may cause you to experience test anxiety.

### **Overcoming Test Anxiety -Here are some strategies to help:**

Avoid the perfectionist trap.

Do not expect to be perfect. We all make mistakes and that is okay. Knowing you have done your best and worked hard is really all that matters, not perfection.

Banish the negative thoughts.

If you start to have anxious or defeated thoughts, such as "I'm not good enough," "I didn't

study hard enough," or "I can't do this," push those thoughts away and replace them with positive thoughts. "I can do this," "I know the material," and "I studied hard," can go far in helping to manage your stress level when taking a test.

Get enough sleep.

A good night's sleep will help your concentration and memory.

Make sure you are prepared.

That means studying for the test early until you feel comfortable with the material. Do not wait until the night before. If you are not sure how to study, ask your teacher or parent for help. Being prepared will boost your confidence, which will lessen your test anxiety.

Take deep breaths.

If you start to feel anxious while you are taking your test, breathe deeply in through your nose and out through your mouth. Work through each question or problem one at a time, taking a deep breath in between each one as needed. Making sure you are giving your lungs plenty of oxygen can help your focus and sense of calm.

### **Progressive relaxation**

Tighten your hands into fists and simultaneously tense the muscles in your upper arms and shoulders. Hold for 10 seconds and relax for 15-20 seconds. Repeat until you can feel some physical release of your stress. Do this same exercise with tightening the muscles in your face, chest, legs, neck, back. You can do this exercise before the exam, working through all parts of the body. During the exam you can use progressive relaxation in the classroom for shorter periods of time and focusing on your areas of that hold the most stress.

### **Meditation**

One type of meditation is simply stopping all thoughts, which is much harder than it sounds. After meditation, you can resume activities with clarity. You can perform very simple meditative activities before and during exams. When you are experiencing your test anxiety during the exam, turn your exam over and close your eyes. Breathe in slowly for several breaths, focusing ONLY on the sensations as the breath moves in and out of your body. You can do this numerous times until you feel focused enough to carry on with your test.

### **Important facts to consider**

#### **Before the exam/test:**

Put things in perspective. Remind yourself that your entire future does not depend on this exam. There will be other exams and other courses. Many students fail a course or two but go on to graduate from Belgium Campus and have successful careers. Over-study for the exam. This will increase your confidence. Also, if you know the material to the point of facility, you will be better able to answer test questions despite your test anxiety. Remind yourself of past successes. Think of a tough course in which you struggled but eventually succeeded. Tell yourself that if you did well on that past exam, you can do well on the upcoming exam.

### **During the exam/test**

Try to avoid talking with other students right before the exam/test. Their anxieties may rub off on you. Choose a seat in a place with few distractions (probably near the front). Remind yourself of how hard you studied, how well you did on another exam, and how you have practiced anxiety control. Do not obsess about running out of time on the exam/test. Check the time periodically (say after you have finished a third of the exam/test), but avoid checking too frequently, as this will only distract you and make you more anxious. Remind yourself that it is better to miss a few points by not quite finishing the test than to lose your concentration and thus miss many points.

Approach your studying seriously but think of the exam/test as a game. Your goal is to collect as many points as you can in the time available. Do not worry about a particular question. If you are unsure of the answer, guess and move on. Remind yourself that you can miss a few questions and still get an A.



## Stress

### What is Stress?

Stress is the way human beings react both physically and mentally to changes, events, and situations in their lives. People experience stress in different ways and for different reasons. The reaction is based on your perception of an event or situation. If you view a situation negatively, you will likely feel distressed, overwhelmed, oppressed, or out of control. Distress is the more familiar form of stress. The other form, eustress, results from a “positive” view of an event or situation, which is why it is also called “good stress.” Eustress helps you rise to a challenge and can be an antidote to boredom because it engages focused energy. That energy can easily turn to distress, however, if something causes you to view the situation as unmanageable or out of control. Many people regard public speaking or airplane flights as very stressful—causing physical reactions such as an increased heart rate and a loss of appetite—while others look forward to the event. It is often a question of perception: A positive stressor for one person can be a negative stressor for another.

### How Can I Eliminate Stress from My Life?

The first step is understanding yourself better—how you react in different situations, what causes you stress, and how you behave when you feel stressed. Once you have done that, take the following steps: Set priorities. Use the time-management tips. Make a To-Do list. Decide what is important to get done today, and what can wait. This helps you to know that you are working on your most immediate priorities, and you do not have the stress of trying to remember what you should be doing. Practice facing stressful moments.

Think about the event or situation you expect to face and rehearse your reactions. Find ways to practice dealing with the challenge. If you know that speaking in front of a group frightens you, practice doing it, perhaps Introduction to Stress management is key to academic success. If the pressure of taking tests causes you to freeze up, buy some practice tests at the school bookstore or online and work with them when there are no time pressures. Examine your expectations. Try to set realistic goals. It is good to push yourself to achieve, but make sure your expectations are realistic. Watch out for perfectionism. Be satisfied with doing the best you can. Nobody is perfect not you, not your fellow Cadet, nobody. Allow people the liberty to make mistakes and remember that mistakes can be a good teacher.

Live a healthy lifestyle. Get plenty of exercise. Eat healthy foods. Allow time for rest and relaxation. Find a relaxation technique that works for you, prayer, yoga, meditation, or breathing exercises. Look for the humour in life and enjoy yourself. Learn to accept change as a part of life. Nothing stays the same. Develop a support system of friends and relatives you can talk to when needed. Believe in yourself and your potential. Remember that many people from disadvantaged backgrounds have gone on to enjoy great success in life. At the same time, avoid those activities that promise release from stress while adding to it. Drinking alcohol (despite what all those TV commercials imply), drinking caffeine, smoking, using narcotics (including marijuana), and overeating all add to the body's stress in addition to their other harmful effects.

### How can I manage stress better?

- Schedule time for vacation, breaks in your routine, hobbies, and fun activities.
- Try to arrange for uninterrupted time to accomplish tasks that need your concentration. Arrange some leisure time during which you can do things that you really enjoy.
- Avoid scheduling too many appointments, meetings, and classes back-to-back. Allow breaks to catch your breath. Take a few slow, deep breaths whenever you feel stressed. Breathe from the abdomen and, as you exhale, silently say to yourself, “I feel calm.”
- Become an expert at managing your time. Read books, view videos, and attend seminars on time management. Once you cut down on time wasters, you will find more time to recharge yourself.
- Learn to say “no.” Setting limits can minimize stress. Spend time on your main responsibilities and priorities rather than allowing other people's priorities or needs to dictate how you spend your time.
- Exercise regularly to reduce muscle tension and promote a sense of well-being.
- Tap into your support network. Family, friends, and social groups can help when dealing with stressful

events.

### **How Can I Tell What is Optimal Stress for Me?**

There is no single level of stress that is optimal for all people. We are all individual creatures with unique requirements. As such, what is distressing to one may be a joy to another.

And even when we agree that a particular event is distressing, we are likely to differ in our physiological and psychological responses to it.

The person who loves to arbitrate disputes and moves from job site to job site would be stressed in a job which was stable and routine, whereas the person who thrives under stable conditions would very likely be stressed on a job where duties were highly varied. Also, our personal stress requirements and the amount which we can tolerate before we become distressed changes with our ages. It has been found that most illnesses are related to unrelieved stress. If you are experiencing stress symptoms, you have gone beyond your optimal stress level. You need to reduce the stress in your life and/or improve your ability to manage it.

Become aware of your stressors and your emotional and physical reactions:

- Notice your distress. Do not ignore it. Do not gloss over your problems.
- Determine what events distress you. What are you telling yourself about the meaning of these events?
- Determine how your body responds to the stress. Do you become nervous or physically upset? If so, in what specific ways?
- Recognize what you can change: you change your stressors by avoiding or eliminating them completely?
- Can you reduce their intensity (manage them over a period instead of on a daily or weekly basis)?

Can you shorten your exposure to stress (take a break, leave the physical premises)? Can you devote the time and energy necessary to making a change (goal setting, time management techniques, and delayed gratification strategies may be helpful here)?

### **Reduce the intensity of your emotional reactions to stress:**

The stress reaction is triggered by your perception of danger, both physical danger and/or emotional danger.

Are you viewing your stressors in exaggerated terms and/or taking a difficult situation and making it a disaster?

Are you expecting to please everyone?

Are you overreacting and viewing things as critical and urgent? Do you feel you must always prevail in every situation?

Work at adopting more moderate views; try to see the stress as something you can cope with rather than something that overpowers you.

Try to temper your excess emotions. Put the situation in perspective. Do not labour on the negative aspects and the “what ifs.”

### **Learn to moderate your physical reactions to stress:**

- Slow, deep breathing will bring your heart rate and respiration back to normal.
- Relaxation techniques can reduce muscle tension. Electronic biofeedback can help you gain voluntary control over such things as muscle tension, heart rate, and blood pressure.
- Medication, when prescribed by a physician, can help in the short term in moderating your physical reactions. However, they alone are not the answer. Learning to moderate these reactions on your own is a preferable long-term solution.

### **Build your physical reserves:**

- Exercise for cardiovascular fitness 3 to 4 times a week (moderate, prolonged rhythmic exercise is best, such as walking, swimming, cycling, or jogging).
- Eat well-balanced, nutritious meals.
- Maintain your ideal weight.
- Avoid nicotine, excessive caffeine, and other stimulants.
- Mix leisure with work. Take breaks and get away when you can.
- Get enough sleep. Be as consistent with your sleep schedule as possible.

### **Maintain your emotional reserves:**

- Develop some mutually supportive friendships/relationships.
- Pursue realistic goals which are meaningful to you, rather than goals others have for you that you do not share.
- Expect some frustrations, failures, and sorrows.

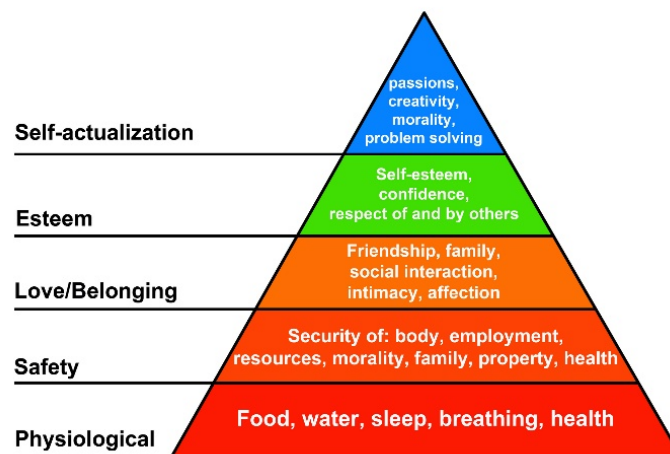
- Always be kind and gentle with yourself, be a friend to yourself.

## Counselling

We are always available to assist and support you not only with your academic studies but emotional and psychological support and look forward to hearing from you soon. If you have any questions, please contact us on 010 593 5368 and ask to speak to any of the student advisors. If you want individual study advice, you should make an appointment with one of our student counsellors. Our counsellors work by appointment only. You can book an appointment with our receptionist at the Academic office or via e-mail. Everyone is welcome. Sessions with our student counsellors are confidential.

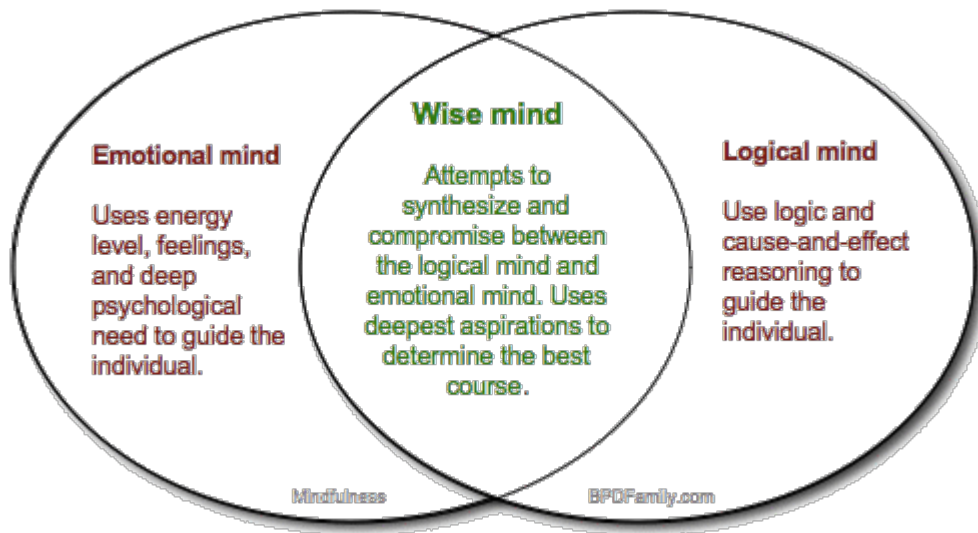
### Academical, emotional, psychological, and social support

- **Academical support:** This is about assisting students to cope with their educational difficulties. The student counsellor's guide and support student in different aspects that are part of their academic career. They observe the students' results and identify their struggles and discuss this with them. After that the counsellors try to implement a counselling strategy that helps the student effectively. This includes study advice, time management, structure, discipline, planning, organizing, implementing etc.
- **Emotional support:** This is about supporting to lift someone to higher ground so he or she can see their way through the difficulty. Emotional support is needed after a trauma that happens in a person's life that makes it difficult for this person to cope with their day-to-day activities (break up, argument with a friend/family/lecturer, exam stress, accident, death, divorce, abuse etc.).
- **Psychological support:** This is about assisting an individual to reach self-actualization. Self-actualization is one of our basic needs in life. We need this to function properly. (Maslow's hierarchy of needs)



- **Social support:** The student counsellors identify the student's social network (parents, siblings, family, friends, lecturers etc.) and encourage students to make use of their social network to support them in their life and academic career. They also encourage students to support each other as they are going through this educational experience together.

**Do the wise mind exercise: (An emotional and Psychological exercise)**



Describe an experience you had with each state of mind. State each Mind you were in and what decisions were made: did you learn from this situation.

If you have any concerns, challenges, issues that needs assistance, we are here for you as the student support department. Contact us on:

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Do not wait for it to be too late!