School of Allied Health, School of Cancer Medicine, School of Nursing and Midwifery, School of Psychology and Public Health, and School of Rural Health

**Health Sciences**

**Survival Guide**

**2015**



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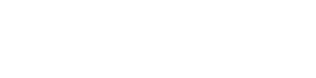
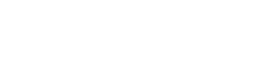
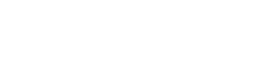
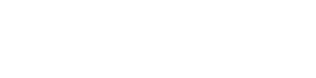
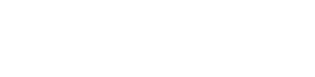
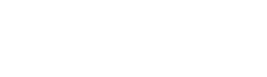
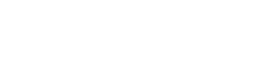
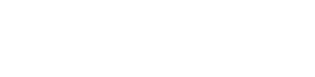
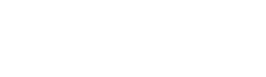
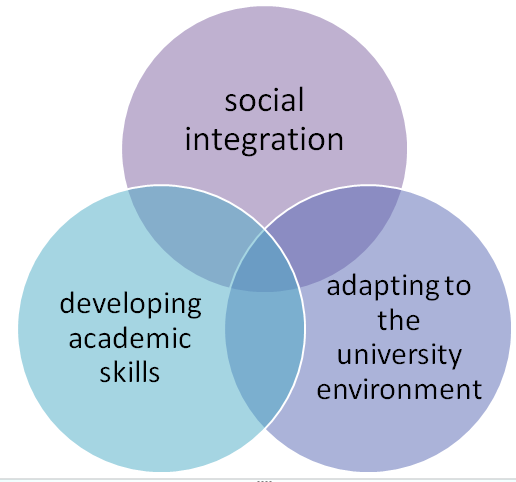
**Introduction**

Welcome to the College of Science, Health and Engineering (SHE) at La Trobe University. The Schools of Allied Health, Cancer Medicine, Nursing and Midwifery, Psychology and Public Health, Rural Health sit within this College.

If this is your first time studying at university you will notice that there are a lot of new things to get used to.

This *Survival Guide* has been written to introduce you to university life and study and to help you to develop the academic skills you will need, not only to *survive*, but to *thrive in your studies!*

In the following pages, you’ll be introduced to independent learning skills, academic writing style and basic grammar, referencing and paraphrasing, guidelines for the common assessment tasks of essays and oral presentations, and tips for doing exams.



What clubs should I join?

Where do I go for lunch?

How do I use the LMS?

Who will I make friends with?

How can I contact my lecturer?

How do I do my timetable?

Where’s the office?

How do I manage all my reading?

What’s APA

referencing?

**1**

**Learning in Health Sciences**



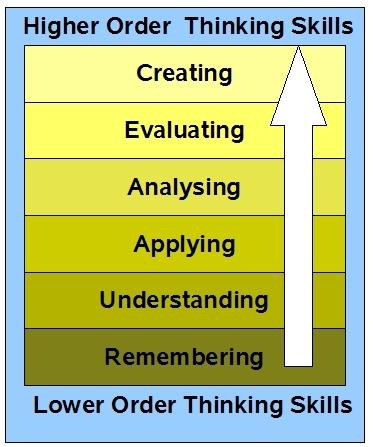
**Learning to learn at university**

Learning at university is different from learning at high school or in the workplace. If you are prepared for these differences, you can really enjoy the challenging and stimulating learning environment of university. The table below summarises some of the main differences between secondary schooling and tertiary study.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Secondary school** | **University** |
|  guided homework tasks to assist learning |  self-directed revision throughout semester –  need to set your own homework |
|  time often structured by teachers  / curriculum / homework |  need to manage your own study time |
|  study tasks fairly evenly spread throughout the year |  may have many assessments due at the same time |
|  concepts often simpler |  concepts often more challenging   need to develop higher order thinking skills such as applying, analysing and evaluating |
|  information often presented as  black and white ‘facts’ |  a more critical approach to information required   need to understand that some ‘facts’ are more certain than others and there may be different opinions about what is true |
|  writing tasks may not require in- text references and reference lists. |  in-text references and reference lists required for most writing   very specific rules for referencing |
|  smaller amounts of directed reading |  extensive reading of text books and journal articles required   need to critically evaluate what you read |
|  less emphasis on online materials |  LMS used to communicate important information e.g. lecture notes, assessment information. There may be a large component of your workload online. |
|  easy to ask for help |  help is available, but need to know who to ask or where to look online as universities are large institutions with many staff |
|  class mates tend to be the same age |  team work with people of different backgrounds |

**Learning about learning**

Learning is not the same thing as simply remembering. At university you will need to develop higher order thinking skills (see Bloom’s Taxonomy below). Many assessment tasks will require you to go beyond simply remembering and repeating information. You may be asked to apply what you have learnt to new situations or to analyse and evaluate information. This could mean pulling apart a writer’s arguments and evidence (analysing) and making judgements about them (evaluating). The highest level thinking skill is *creating*. This refers to the creation of new knowledge that has never been known before. This is a skill that is normally developed at postgraduate level.



**Bloom’s Taxonomy**

(cognitive domain) *Anderson and Krathwohl (2001)*

Source: [http://edorigami.wikispaces.com/Bloom's+Digital+Taxonomy](http://edorigami.wikispaces.com/Bloom%27s%2BDigital%2BTaxonomy)

Although you will be focussing mainly on other people’s research, it’s important to understand that your course is like *an apprenticeship in creating knowledge*. The idea that knowledge is *made* doesn’t mean that it’s *made up*! – but simply that what

we know depends on what we ask, where we look for answers, and how we interpret what we find. In your course, you will be learning

 what kinds of questions people ask in your discipline

 what sources they go to for answers

 what methods they use to gather information

 what ideas influence their interpretation of what they find

 how they evaluate its significance

 how they present what they have learned to their discipline community

As an apprentice member of an academic or discipline community, you will be participating in all these activities through your lectures, workshops, tutorials, online forums and assignments.

**Monitor your learning**

It takes time to develop the learning strategies you need to be successful at university. You may try several approaches to a task before you find a set of strategies that work for you. Monitoring your learning strategies involves a way of thinking called metacognition.

Cognition means ‘thinking’ and meta means ‘about’ or ‘beyond’.

Metacognition, therefore, means thinking about the way you think, or learning about the way you learn. In this process, you are both the person doing the learning and the person ‘watching yourself’ and reflecting on your learning.

Students who develop their metacognitive skills are more successful learners than those who don’t. It’s not difficult to become skilled at using metacognitive strategies to assist your learning. It just takes a bit of thought and awareness. You might like to

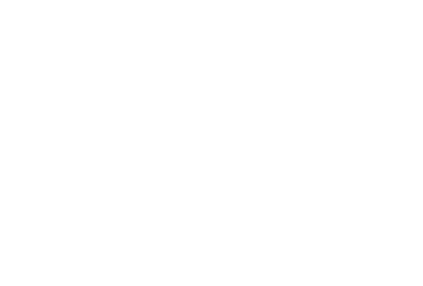
think of it like playing a sport. When you are on the playing field, you are caught up in the moment and reacting to immediate tasks at hand. You can also mentally shift yourself to the grandstand and ‘watch yourself’ playing. You can observe and

analyse your performance and think about how you might perform better next time. You may even be able to apply what you’ve learned about yourself to your performance in a different sport.

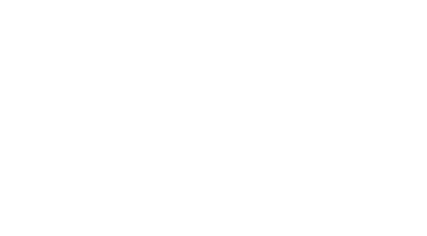
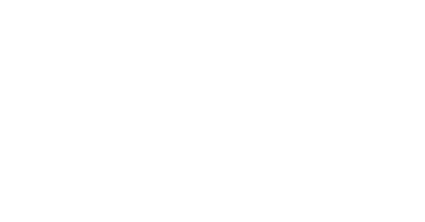
In the same way, you are ‘on the playing field’ when you are studying for an exam, doing an assessment task or taking notes in a lecture. You can also watch yourself doing the task ‘from the grandstand’. You can reflect on what works for you to help with your learning and what doesn’t work. For example, you may have found that when memorising a series of symbols or words, it was useful to practise recalling them out loud while walking or listening to music and plan to use this technique again.

Alternatively, you may have wasted hours reading unrelated material when preparing an essay. Next time, you may decide to target your reading more closely to the essay question.

When engaging in a learning or assessment task, ask yourself the following questions:



**Reflection *in* action OBSERVE & MONITOR** How am I doing? Are the strategies I am using effective? Should I change the way I’m doing this now?



**Reflection *on* action**

**PLAN**

How can I improve my approach next time?

What new strategies can I

try next time?

**Reflection *on* action**

**EVALUATE**

Was my approach to the task effective? What worked? What didn’t?

**What is your learning style?**

Are you an *active* or *reflective* learner? A *sensing* or *intuitive* learner? A *visual* or *verbal* learner? A *sequential* or *global* learner? Everybody has a different mix of learning styles. It is helpful to know which ways of learning you favour so that you can adapt your study techniques accordingly. Would you revise more effectively in a group or on your own? Would drawing diagrams be more helpful to you than linear notes or summaries? Would skimming a chapter of a text book aid your understanding or be a waste of time?

To find out about your learning styles, take the Index of Learning Styles Questionnaire, devised by Soloman and Felder at NC State University in the USA: [www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.](http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb) When you have completed the online quiz, read about the study strategies that suit your learning style.

Once you have identified your preferred learning style(s) you can focus your attention and study time more effectively.

Consider the range of skills and knowledge you will need to develop in each subject and prioritise your efforts accordingly.

Knowing your strengths and weaknesses will better enable you to identify when you need to work on your own and when to seek assistance from others.

Be clear about your learning goals and monitor your progress towards achieving them.

## University learning environments

At university, you will experience some or all of the following learning environments:

* Online learning – e.g. Learning Management System (LMS), La Trobe University website, LTU Ready4Uni website, LTU Library website, LTU Student Learning website, external websites
* Blended learning – a mixture of face-to-face and online learning in a subject
* The flipped classroom – online material and activities followed up with face-to-face activities
* Face to face learning on campus - lectures, seminars, tutorials, laboratory classes, workshops, group work
* Face-to-face learning off campus - field trips, placements, group work

Managing all of these different learning environments can be challenging. People have different learning environment preferences, so you may find some environments suit you better than others.

**Online learning environments: A brief overview**

All universities are increasing the amount of online learning opportunities offered to students. This is not happening because it is cheaper to offer online learning instead of face-to-face learning. In fact, online learning costs significantly more to design, develop and maintain than face-to-face learning. Doing some or all of your learning online offers you significant benefits. It gives you more flexibility as you can learn online at a time that suits you best. It also allows you to work at your own pace and enables you to go back over things you find difficult to learn.

Online learning environments at La Trobe University may involve:

***Fully online subjects***: usually offered through the LMS (see below) and may make use of videos, reading resources, podcasts and online discussion forums and blogs as tools for learning. A small number of subjects are currently offered in this mode.

***Blended subjects:*** subjects which combine face-to-face learning with online learning. This gives you the flexibility to learn at a time and pace that suits you as well as giving you the opportunity to benefit from the expertise and enthusiasm of our academic staff. In a blended subject, the online learning is directly related to and complements face-to-face learning.

***Flipped learning***: a form of blended learning where students first engage with subject content online. This is followed up/reinforced in a face-to-face environment e.g. a tutorial, seminar or practical class.

***The Learning Management System:*** Whether you are studying in a fully online subject or a subject that is mostly delivered face-to-face, you will need to use the online Learning Management System (LMS - also known as Moodle). The LMS is your central point to manage your university study. It is where you’ll find all of the important information for your subjects, as well as links to useful help and resources. You should check the LMS for each of your subjects at least several times a week. Make sure you have set up your username and password. More detailed information about getting started with LMS can be found here: <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/students/it/teaching/lms>

## Tips for managing online and blended learning

The following section will help you to manage learning in online and blended environments. There are tips on using the LMS and learning and communicating online.

***Navigating the LMS***

1. There is an LMS site for each of the subjects you are enrolled in each semester
2. Don’t expect all LMS subject sites to have exactly the same layout. While many things are the same, different lecturers set up their LMS sites differently, according to what suits the subject matter. Spend some time getting to know where everything is on each subject LMS site.
3. Your list of subjects includes the Academic Integrity Module. This is a compulsory quiz that all commencing students MUST complete. This shows the university that you understand academic integrity rules and how to avoid plagiarism.
4. On the LMS site for each subject, make sure you check out the toolbar at the top of each LMS page. It gives you four options: La Trobe Home, Library Home, Students, Staff. Clicking on the student link will enable you to access:

* A link to where you can get help with using the LMS.
* A link to student IT support
* A link to information about copyright
* A link to the Student Learning website where you can find useful resources to help you study.
* A link to information about the Peer Learning Advisers who can help you with your study
* A link to the Academic Referencing Tool to help you with referencing for your assignments.

***Learning and communicating online***

1. Online activities are designed to help you learn. What you learn in an online activity may help you to get more marks in a different assessment task or in exams. Even if there is only a small number of marks allocated to the online activity itself, completing the activity may help you to be more successful in the subject overall.
2. In an online discussion in a subject, you don’t usually need to write in an academic style similar to how you would write in academic assignments. Each online environment is different, but most online discussions are not especially formal. You probably don’t need to write as formally as you would in an academic assignment. However, you may need to be more formal than you would when communicating online with people you know well. Check with your subject teaching staff if you are unsure what style of language is acceptable.
3. You usually need to be much more careful about writing something that might offend someone in the online environment. Of course, it is never acceptable in any environment to use language that may offend or intimidate others. However, you need to take extra care when communicating online. In the online environment, you don’t have the benefit of seeing people’s facial expressions or gestures to know if they are feeling offended by your comments. It is also easy to ‘get the wrong end of the stick’ in online communications. Make sure that what you write could not be interpreted in a different way.
4. A good rule of thumb when communicating online is you shouldn’t say something to or about a person online that you wouldn’t be prepared to say to their face. Even if you are communicating anonymously, respect for your fellow human beings is always important. That doesn’t mean you can’t disagree with others. It is possible to disagree respectfully by making sure that criticisms are restricted to the arguments and evidence and not used to make personal attacks on people.
5. Using CAPITAL LETTERS in online posts is equivalent to shouting at someone face-to-face. This is not a respectful way to communicate.
6. Sometimes, you may need to email a lecturer with a request for help, but how formal do you need to be? Some lecturers expect you to write formally in emails (e.g. Dear Peter); others do not (e.g. Hi Peter). It’s best to err on the side of caution when emailing a lecturer for the first time. If they write back to you using informal language, it is usually OK to respond in a similar tone. When asking a lecturer for help, it is best to be specific about your request. You are far more likely to receive a response from a busy lecturer if you ask a specific question rather than stating that you don’t understand a whole topic. Where possible, your first action when you don’t understand something is to post a question on the LMS discussion forum for that subject.
7. Spelling and grammar are still important when communicating with others online. Good spelling and grammar aids communication, so it is always good to pay attention to these. Poor spelling and grammar can make a negative impression and distract people from what you are saying.
8. It’s not polite to always correct other people’s grammar, spelling and typos in online communications. Everyone makes grammar and spelling mistakes from time to time, particularly if English isn’t their first language. Correcting other people’s writing errors can come across as ‘nit-picky’ and pedantic. It also distracts from the topic of discussion.
9. It is perfectly fine to disagree with others, both online and face-to-face. The key is to restrict discussions to the arguments and evidence, and not make it personal. Disagreeing respectfully is a very important skill to develop.
10. The rules for copyright and plagiarism also apply to the online environment, so it’s not OK to use other people’s images and text without acknowledgement. Other people’s ideas and images belong to them and so need to be acknowledged, regardless of the environment. The style of acknowledgement may vary, though. You may not need to use a formal referencing style, as long as you make it clear who the idea/image belongs to. Check requirements for individual subjects.

**Further Resources**

University of Newcastle Netiquette Guide: <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/Resources/Teaching%20and%20Learning/In%20The%20Online%20Environment/Teaching/Module%204%20-%20Communicating/Netiquette_guide_august08.pdf>

University of New South Wales Student Guide to Online Study: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/online-study>

**Face-to-face learning environments**

Face-to-face learning environments include lectures, tutorials, seminars, practical classes, workshops and group work. The following tips will help you develop the skills and strategies you will need to manage lectures and tutorial/seminar classes.

***Tips for lectures***

1. It is a really good idea to print off your lecture notes if they are available on LMS and bring them to the lecture so you can annotate them. You can skim the slides before the lecture to get an idea of the content, and you can save time during lectures by simply annotating rather than writing detailed lecture notes.
2. It is usually best to do prescribed reading before the lecture and use the lecture as a summary of your reading on a topic rather than an introduction to the topic.
3. Ask questions during the lecture if there is an opportunity to do so. Most lecturers encourage students to ask questions. It shows you’re interested and can help other students too. Be careful not to dominate though!
4. Make a note of anything you don't understand in the lecture. It is really helpful to do this after each lecture so that you can then follow up these questions.
5. Don’t email your lecturer every time you find something difficult to understand. Most subjects have an LMS discussion forum where you can post questions. Check first to see if your question has already been answered there, and if not, post it. In some subjects, lecturers and tutors answer questions on LMS discussion forums. For questions of a personal nature that you don’t wish to share with other students, it is appropriate to email your lecturer, tutor, facilitator or demonstrator.
6. Don’t re-write your lecture notes after every lecture. This would be overkill and is probably not a good use of time. Many first year students fall into the trap of mindlessly rewriting notes, often while thinking of something else. Don’t be one of them!
7. When you’ve finished a series of lectures on a topic, use your lecture notes, prescribed reading and/or textbook to create revision notes, ideally in the form of diagrams or mind-maps. This allows you to get your head around a whole topic and you can synthesize information from a number of sources into a really good set of revision notes. The more active and visual you can be with your note-making, the better you’ll remember and understand material for exams.

***Tips for tutorials and seminars***

1. Check (usually through LMS) if there’s any required reading or activities to be done before the class.
2. Do the reading/activities and try to understand the main concepts presented.
3. Think about your responses to the ideas in the readings/activities. Do you agree with them? Do you think the ideas are well-argued and well-supported? Are there any different ways of thinking about these ideas? University is not simply about rote learning information. It is also important to think critically about ideas and come to class ready to discuss your responses with others.
4. Unless specifically asked to do so, there is no need to write a detailed summary of the required reading in preparation for every tutorial or seminar. This would take too long and your time would be better spent on other study activities.
5. Make a note of any questions you have about the reading or related lecture material so that you can ask in the tutorial or seminar. Identifying what you DON’T understand is incredibly important for your learning. Face-to-face classes like tutorials and seminars are a really good opportunity to ask questions to expert teaching staff.
6. It is always a good idea to think about how each piece of information or each idea you are learning fits with the main concepts presented in the subject. Think of each subject as a jigsaw puzzle of a landscape. You need to understand how the sky pieces, the tree pieces and the water pieces fit together to make the whole picture. In the same way, you need to think about how each piece of information or each idea fits with the main concepts of the subject to make up the picture of the whole subject.

**Planning made easy**

To be successful at university, you need to **study consistently throughout the semester**, right from the first week. The biggest adjustment for many students is structuring your time to accommodate all your commitments. You may have as little as 3 “contact hours” a week in each subject – lectures, workshops and tutorials – but the bulk of the work is the reading and writing assigned in your subject guides. There can be up to 9 more hours of reading/writing/thinking per subject, and it all adds up to a full-time job or more.

Nobody will tell you when and how to get it done, so it’s important to figure that out soon. And this challenge means that you will train yourself to manage your time and tasks independently – just one of the skills you develop in your course that will be important for the rest of your life (remember to talk it up when you have job interviews!)

It’s actually not so hard to manage if you remember that the week’s work is made up

of many small study tasks -- for example:

**Study tasks**

 read an article

 go to the library to borrow a book

 watch a section of a film that you need to observe closely and make notes on

 make an entry in your subject’s LMS discussion board, create a UCROO study group

 think of some questions to write about in your reflective journal

 review lecture notes, highlighting things to remember and things to follow up;

 download next week’s lecture notes and note what ideas and concepts are coming up

 have coffee with a study partner to clarify your understanding of that week’s

work

 brainstorm what you know about your essay topic and what else you need to know.

Most of these can be done in an hour or less! That time between one lecture and the next, or between your tutorial and your lunch, is the perfect time to get that one thing done and not have it hanging over you.

If you don’t study until you have a big free block of time, you may find it harder to

concentrate for all that time, and it’s hard to remember what you studied last time.

Make good use of the library Help and training services and seek assistance from library staff or a Peer Learning Advisor.

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/library/help-and-training>

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/library/help-and-training/ask-a-pla>

**Organising your time**

A **semester planner** is a good way to start. It’s a good idea to make a big one to put up on your wall. Here’s a small section of one to give you an idea.

WEEK

**1 2 3 4 5 6**

SUBJECT

XXX Library orientation

Tue

Group meeting Mon

Feedback on group exercise Mon

Enquiry report Wed (15%)

**SEMESTER**

**BREAK**

ZZZ Group exercise

Tue

(2.5%)

Group task Thu (5%)

A **grid** can be useful to organise ***when*** to study. This grid is based on a 9 to 5 time frame – you can include evening

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Mon** | **Tue** | **Wed** | **Thu** | **Fri** | **Sat** | **Sun** |
| 9.00 |  | study | workshop |  |  | work, study or leisure | work, study or leisure |
| 10.00 | study | workshop | lecture |
| 11.00 | workshop | study | study |
| 12.00 |  | lecture |
| 1.00 | lecture |  |  |  |  |
| 2.00 |  | lecture | workshop |  |  |
| 3.00 | study | group  meeting | lecture | group  meeting |
| 4.00 |  |  | Online forum |  |
| 5.00 |  |  |
| Evening |  |  |

A **‘to do’ list** can be useful to organise ***what*** to study. Sort the things you need to do (like those in the study tasks bullet list on the previous page) under each subject and keep it in front of you day and night. It is very satisfying to cross each one off as you go!

Use the Library electronic ***Assignment Calculator***. This is a great tool for working out how much time you need to get all your tasks done by the due dates. <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/library/assignment-thesis-support/assignment-calculator>

**Plan your time well**

It is important to be realistic. Don’t set impossible goals for yourself. You’ll be more

likely to stick to your plan if you take into account the following points:

**Allow for the limitations of your attention span.** Avoid scheduling large slabs of time for one subject. Alternating subjects for study will help you to sustain your concentration and interest.

**Work in terms of tasks not time.** Rather than having a vague aim to ‘study anatomy for two hours’, set a particular section of work for each study period. A sense of achievement comes from successfully completing small tasks, and breaking the work up into smaller sections makes the whole process of study seem less daunting.

**Budget for demanding weeks.** These will include the weeks leading up to when assignments or presentations are due. Plan for when assessment tasks are due and manage your time where there may be two or more tasks due at the same time. Sometimes you will need to actually complete a task before the due date so that you have enough time to focus on others.

**Allow time to redraft assignments**. When you enter an assignment’s due date on your semester plan, move back a couple of days and enter “draft” of that assignment. It’s very rare to write a good assignment once, and wiser to write a number of drafts.

**Review your approach.** If your study plan is not working effectively, review your strategies and consider making changes. For example, you may have attempted to fit too much into your timetable, or your timetable may not be flexible enough to accommodate unexpected events. Resist the temptation to throw away your plan and allow yourself to fall in a heap. Some minor adjustments may be all you need to stay on track.

**Make sure you include some recreation time.** If you *allocate* time for recreational activity you will be less tempted to throw it all in and waste time avoiding study because of unrealistic demands you have made upon yourself.



**Dealing with all the reading**

In most of your subjects at university, you are expected to do a large amount of reading. You will need to do reading related to your lectures to help you to understand the main concepts. You will probably have to read sources of information for essays, reports and other written assignments.

**Reading for your subjects**

Your workload will be much easier to follow if you read your textbook or other required reading ***before you begin a task****.* Even a quick skim read of the relevant pages will give you some idea of the main concepts. You will also be more prepared to ask questions if you are familiar with the topic beforehand.

**After an online task or lecture** Re-read the relevant sections of the text book in more detail, then do the following:

*Check your understanding*

Make a note of anything you do not understand and follow it up by:

 reading about the same topic from another source

 posting a question on the LMS discussion forum

 asking your lecturer, facilitator

 asking another student in your class

*Make notes*

Use your reading material and your notes to make your own revision notes. There are several strategies for making effective notes from your reading. The more active you are when producing the notes, the better you will learn. Copying whole sentences from your textbook or lecture notes is a very passive way to study and hence is not effective. Simply highlighting large chunks of information is also not a very effective strategy for revising. Here are some suggestions for note making strategies:

**Reading for assessment tasks**

Many assignments require you to use ideas from sources such as books and journal articles in your writing. It is very important that the information you use in your assignments comes from high quality, reliable, academic sources.

Information about finding and evaluating information sources can also be found on the Library website [www.latrobe.libguides.com/libskills](http://www.latrobe.libguides.com/libskills)

**Reading a journal article**

In some subjects, you will use text books. You will also need to read *journal articles* (also called *papers*), which is where you’ll find the latest research. Journal articles in health sciences are written *by* experts *for* experts. These articles are published in *journals* which are usually available through the library in electronic format. Journals, such as those shown below, are usually published several times a year.





Some journal articles can be very difficult to understand at first year level. They often contain many technical terms and assume knowledge of complex concepts. When reading a journal article at first year, you are probably only looking for fairly basic information on a topic. It’s good to make questions to guide your reading, so you know what you are looking for.

**What information can you find in a journal article?**

Before you begin reading a journal article, you need to stop and think about exactly what information you’re looking for. Different sections of a journal article will contain different types of information.

**Abstract**

This gives you an overview of the whole journal article. It can provide some useful background information; tell you something about the problem being researched, and give you a summary of the main findings.

**Introduction**

You will usually find more background information and analysis about what is already known about the topic and what other research has been done. Often there is an outline of the contents of the rest of the paper.

**Method**

You will find this in papers that report on investigations, trials and new research. The Methods section usually describes the setup of the research, the materials used and how it was done. Investigations can be done in different ways which can sometimes explain why researchers come up with different results.

**Results**

This section gives a detailed description of the results of the investigation.

**Discussion**

The discussion usually starts with a brief description of the main findings of the investigation. It then goes on to explain these findings in detail and compares them with the findings of other studies. You may find this section useful if you need to report on the current state of research about a particular topic.

**Read for a purpose**

When reading a journal article, it is often a good idea to print it out and write comments and notes on the paper itself.

Before reading and taking notes, it is very important to ask yourself,

“What information am I looking for?”

Set questions which you answer as you read.

This gives your reading a purpose which helps you to focus and concentrate. W hen you read through the journal articles you have found, you should be searching for answers to your questions.

**What is Enquiry-Based Learning?**

In the College of SHE you will be introduced to Enquiry-Based Learning (EBL) which is a teaching-learning approach that focuses on collaboration, independent learning and problem solving.

In EBL you will:

 use real-world situations as a context for learning,

 focus on thinking skills: critical analysis, problem-solving, and decision- making,

 use skills and behaviour from different professional areas,

 take responsibility for your own learning and share your learning in small groups,

 develop life-long learning and teamwork skills and

 develop self directed learning and evaluation as a health professional.

With its emphasis on self-directed learning, EBL offers you greater opportunities than traditional teaching-learning approaches to develop the skills you need for life-long learning.

**Why learn this way?**

Each of the health professions has identified a range of competencies necessary for professional practice. EBL will help you to develop the skills of critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and reflective practice expected of a health professional. Moreover, you will get to work in teams in an interdisciplinary context which is an important aspect of health professional practice.

EBL is a reversal of the traditional order of learning, where you had to learn the information and then apply it. In EBL, learning centres on an enquiry, or real-world project, which provides the context for group collaboration in research, exchange of information, and the presentation and evaluation of ideas in relation to a given enquiry problem.

**The Enquiry**

In an enquiry, you need to carry out individual learning activities and work with other members of your team. For example, you could be locating relevant sources, gathering key information related to a problem and sharing these with the group. Structured learning tasks include lectures, and workshops for group work led by a facilitator. Throughout an enquiry, you will participate in workshops and group meetings which will support your oral presentations, group posters, and written tasks. **Example of an Enquiry**

*The aim of the enquiry is to explore the benefits of using a team-based approach for the delivery of health and human services from the perspectives*

*of the consumer, health and human services organisations and their staff. The enquiry problem centres on the need for health agencies and local*

*government to combine efforts to address the increasing number of injuries among young people in the Cooinda Region.*

*An interdisciplinary project team would be engaged by the Cooinda Regional Community Committee, established to bring together health and human service agencies, local government and community representatives in the*

*Region, to investigate the issue and to present the findings to a meeting of the*

*Committee.*

*You will begin this enquiry by considering the concept of a team using reflections on your own observations of teams in popular culture. Different models of teamwork, obstacles to effective teamwork and managing issues that arise when working in a team will be examined. In the latter part of this enquiry, you will focus on different types of teams that exist in the health and human services sector and how their function impacts on the outcomes for the consumer, their family, the organisation and its staff.*

*You and your team are required to submit a number of pieces of work for this enquiry.*

*The individual task involves three stages. Firstly, you prepare a short summary of a text allocated to you in the first phase of the enquiry. Then you share your review with those prepared by other team members of their allocated text. Finally, you locate a text, such as a journal article or section or chapter of a text, relevant to your work in this enquiry. You will need to*

*prepare a summary of a specified length synthesising the main points from the various texts you have read for this enquiry.*

*The team task is to prepare a team poster and an oral presentation. The poster presents the team’s exploration of interprofessional collaboration. Your oral presentation should support the content of your poster. Both individual and team tasks will be assessed according to specific learning outcomes in relation to team work, academic skills, and communication skills.*

**Facilitator’s role**

Adapted from Enquiry 1, Interprofessional Practice A (HLTIPA), 28 October, 2008.

The role of the facilitator is to:

 support you in making your team an effective learning unit

 encourage teams to become autonomous

 promote development of learning skills

 monitor your progress

 question and challenge students in applying their learning to their investigation

 provide you with feedback on achievement of learning outcomes

 serve as a resource person and promote the use of a variety of resources. Facilitators may differ in the way they run their groups. This may be due to the different expectations across subjects and across years, and of course, facilitators need to respond to individual team differences.

**Student’s role**

The role of the student is to:

 think like a health professional: problem-solve, make decisions, think critically and creatively

 accept responsibility for own learning and be a self-directed learner

 take an active role in planning, organising and evaluating own learning

 be an effective group member: share information with group members by contributing to research, group discussions, making decisions about and evaluating group processes

 evaluate own and group members’ learning/achievement of learning

outcomes.

Adapted from Penny Little, PBL Pty Ltd

**Resolving an enquiry**

An enquiry has 6 phases. Some of these will be repeated and may run over several weeks depending on the complexity of the task. It is worth having an idea of the whole process at this point, as this will help you to manage any enquiry. The phases are:

**a. Consider the enquiry problem or task.**

To do this you need to discuss as a team: What are the facts?

Are these really facts or are they assumptions team members are making, based on opinions?

What are the critical questions?

**b. Free enquiry.**

In this phase you need to question your understanding of the meaning of words

and concepts that are used in the enquiry presentation. These give valuable clues to the real meaning of the task. If you see any inconsistencies in the information presented these should be identified and discussed. You also need to identify what you already know that is relevant to the enquiry. Find the limits of existing knowledge within the group.

**c. Identification of learning issues and making an action plan.**

Learning issues are everything that needs to be learned to resolve the enquiry.

Questions and suggestions raised in phases a. and b. are the starting point for this phase.

Focus on what needs to be known to resolve the enquiry and how this may be found. You may do this several times to clarify and find everything that is needed. Follow up the learning issues with an action plan. Each team member should follow up one or more of the learning issues, to report back to the team at the next workshop. This step is repeated each week until the enquiry is fully resolved.

**d. Peer teaching.**

Workshops typically start with each team member taking turns to teach the others the most important points from their follow-up from the action plan.

The most important points are those that are most critical to the enquiry task. In this way, all relevant knowledge and ideas are shared by the team.

**e. Knowledge integration.**

The cycles of identifying learning issues, finding sources or data, and peer teaching, help you to form a deeper understanding. Each time you need to review your existing knowledge to integrate it – bring it all together in a meaningful way. This should be done individually, and as a team. When the enquiry is nearly finished, knowledge integration by the team leads to the final step.

**f. Resolution of the enquiry.**

At this point the presentation and/or report is prepared. The team members have identified all of the relevant information and data, and shared this among the members of the group. Preparing a presentation or a report provides a focus for knowledge integration, leading to a final resolution of the enquiry.

**2**

**Communicating Effectively in Health Sciences**

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**How to use language effectively**

Our use of language is one of the most important ways we communicate our understanding, gather new information, participate in the academic and professional world, and interact socially. In academic studies, written English is particularly important. You will need to master ways of using appropriate language and communicating in different subject areas.

In both professional and social settings, we adapt our language according to the situation. The central element of all spoken and written communication is the context: the purpose of the communication and for whom it is intended.

**Purpose**

A good academic communicator always has an over-riding objective. You can see this by checking if the communicator’s intention is to:

* + present a point of view?
  + critique a theory or argument?
  + report research findings?
  + evaluate evidence from research?
  + disseminate information?
  + negotiate an arrangement?
  + promote a policy/service?
  + complain about a product/service?

**Participants**

The relationship between the writer-reader / speaker - listener and the situation affects the type of language and level of formality used. You can realise this by checking if the relationship is one of:

* + health care professional and client/patient?
  + colleagues in a professional setting?
  + colleagues in an academic setting?
  + school teacher and parent?
  + colleagues in a social setting?

**Formal and informal language**

Context affects the level of formality of the language we use. We use informal language with other students for face-to-face and telephone conversations and emails. We use formal language in lectures, speeches, research reports and academic essays. However, in many types of communication at university, you will use a combination of formal and informal language, for example when you participate in workshops. The table below contrasts the main features of each.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Informal** | **Formal** |
| **Phrasal verbs (verb + preposition)**  e.g. look at, hand in | **Single verbs**  e.g. investigate, consider, observe; submit |
| **Informal vocabulary**  e.g. get bigger, got, a lot | **Formal vocabulary**  e.g. increase, obtained, considerable |
| **Active voice**  e.g. Researchers developed a new vaccine. | **Passive voice**  e.g. A new vaccine was developed. |
| **Uses personal pronouns**  e.g. You can see the results in  Figure 1.  (active voice) | **Avoids personal pronouns**  e.g. The results can be seen/are shown in Figure 1.  (passive voice) |
| **Contracted forms**  e.g. haven’t, fridge, ‘cos | **Full forms**  e.g. have not, refrigerator, because |
| **Slang**  e.g. whinge, bucks | **Standard words/expressions**  e.g. complain, dollars |
| **Abbreviations**  e.g. i.e., ASAP | **Full words/expressions**  e.g. that is, as soon as possible |
| **Informal greeting**  e.g. Cheers, Regards | **More formal greeting**  e.g. (Yours) Sincerely |

Note: both active and passive voice are used in informal as well as formal styles of communication, however, the passive voice is more frequently used in formal writing, for example a research report.

**Using formal language**

An academic essay is an example of formal written communication. You should, therefore, avoid conversational English and wordy expression.

While all subject areas require assignments to be written in a formal style, there may be differences in the degree to which features of informal style can be used. For instance, in a Social Work assignment involving personal reflection, you are likely to make greater use of personal pronouns. Furthermore, different types of assignments may involve a greater use of certain grammatical structures. For example, if you are reporting on the Methods you used, you are more likely to use passive verbs.

**Avoid personal language**

It is advisable to avoid using personal language, particularly pronouns which refer to the reader e.g. *you, your, us, our*. It is sometimes acceptable to use *I* and *we* in academic writing, but this varies throughout the different scientific disciplines.

* *If you want to improve this investigation, you should increase the sample size.* [informal]
* *To improve this investigation, the sample size should be increased*. [more formal]

**Avoid colloquial language**

Colloquial language is everyday language which may be suitable when speaking, but should not be used in formal, academic writing.

* *Every day, more and more electronic stuff is chucked out and ends up in the tip.* [informal]
* *Electronic waste is an increasing problem with 75% of computers bought annually in Australia ending up in landfill (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006).* [more formal]

**Avoid emotional language**

The use of emotional language may weaken an academic argument.

* *It will be a tragedy if these graceful and beautiful animals are lost to the world forever.* [emotional & informal]
* *It is vital that conservation measures are immediately put in place to save this vulnerable species from extinction*. [more formal]

**Avoid contractions**

Formal, academic writing uses the full forms of words rather than shortened versions (contractions). NB This Guide is *not* a formal, academic piece of writing and so we have used contractions.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * is not | * isn’t |
| * will not | * won’t |

**Be clear and concise**

You need to:

* eliminate sentences and paragraphs not directly relevant to the essay question
* reword sentences so that your message is conveyed as simply as possible
* avoid overuse of the pronouns “this” and “it” in the same sentence or paragraph to limit the possibility of confusion or ambiguity. Each time you use these words, make sure that what they are referring to is very clear.
* check that you have used punctuation correctly. Sometimes, misuse of commas can result in confused writing.

**Use specific terminology** where appropriate

* *A machine was used to see how the cornea changed when the stuff was put in the eye.*
* *A spectrophotometer was used to measure the absorbance of the sample solution in order to determine the concentration of haemoglobin.*

Be careful with words like ‘it’ and ‘they’. Sometimes it is better to be specific about what ‘it’ is or ‘they’ are.

* *After a while it went up.*
* *After 10 minutes, the patient’s temperature had increased by 3.50C.*

**If you are under the word count**, you need to add more content rather than ‘pad out’ your writing with extra words. Adding ‘filler ‘words will not get you any extra marks. It’s the number of ideas that are marked, not the number of words.

* *In my opinion, up until the present time, it seems relatively unclear as to which will, in the long run, emerge as the best method of sampling to use in order to obtain the desired results in the shortest possible time.*
* *It is not known which sampling technique is the most efficient.*

**Use of academic style**

While you will need to use different styles of writing for different subjects and tasks, there are some characteristics of academic writing which are common to all subject areas.

**Order points logically**

This is important at the planning stage of your writing. It is very difficult to make a piece of writing flow well if the ideas are not presented in a logical order. Make sure you have one main unifying idea per paragraph and that the ideas within the paragraph lead logically from one to the next. Also take note of the order of paragraphs so that there is a logical progression from one main idea to the next.

**Link ideas within and between paragraphs**

Good flow in a piece of writing can be achieved by making clear links between your ideas and also making it clear how each main idea is related to the topic. Where possible, linking words and expressions should indicate the relationship between ideas. The point in one sentence should also be connected to the following sentence. For example, if you want to show that a second sentence is a result of the first sentence, you could start the second sentence with ‘as a result’.

**The following table gives a brief list of linking words and expressions.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Function** | **Linking word examples** | **Examples in sentences** | |
| **Similarity** | Similarly,  Likewise,  In a similar way,  A similar study… | **Similarly**, the plasma membrane plays several roles…  **A similar study** of hyperthermia also found a correlation between … | |
| **Contrast** | In contrast,  Conversely,  On the other hand, (less formal)  While…, …  Although…., …  ….; however,…  ….However,… | **In contrast**, the blood flows at high velocity …..  **While** there has been much discussion about the factors that contribute to the development of an eating disorder,………  **Although** the design of the study was adequate, insufficient planning had gone into the implementation stage.  There was an increase in the health adjusted life expectancy of women; **however**, there was no change in… | |
| **Cause → Effect** | X causes Y  X leads to Y  X results in Y  X leads to Y  X brings about Y  As a result of  Because of X, …Y happened  Due to X, … Y happened  Owing to X, … Y happened  As X happened, Y happened  Since X happened, Y happened  Because X happens, Y happened | A reaction of this type **causes** extensive damage to the cells.  Acclimatization to cold **leads to** a higher tolerance to exposure..........  **As a result of** the discussion of the pros and cons of excision, the patient ............  **Due to** the small sample size, significant results were not obtained.  **As** this behaviour has not been observed in any other cohorts, further research is needed to determine…  **Since** there was no significant effect detected, it was decided to run the experiment again using a different sample. | |
| **Effect → Cause** | X results from Y  X was caused by Y  X may be due to Y  X could be a consequence of Y | | A build up of pressure **results from** this interaction.  The skin rash **could be a consequence** of a food allergy. |
| **Additional point** | \*Moreover,  Furthermore,  In addition, | | **Moreover**, there are no specific advantages of using this type of pathogen as a model.  **In addition**, these types of molecules have the disadvantage of forming aggregates.  **\*** These linking words should be used infrequently. It is not necessary to have a linking word between every sentence. It is also much better to use more specific linking phrases e.g. “**A further disadvantage is**…” |
| **Chronology (time order)** | First,  Firstly,  After that,  Then,  Next, | | The sample was **first** treated with nitric acid in order to…  **After that**, the trace metal was extracted with…  The sample was **then** analysed using a… |
| **Summary** | In conclusion,  To sum up,  In summary,  In short, | | **In conclusion**, no significant difference between males and females in weight gain reduction was found. |
| **Example** | For example,  To illustrate,  …such as… | | **For example**, social and psychological constraints are a major factor on recidivism. |
| **Purpose** | To  In order to  So that  So as to | | The legislation is in place **to** ensure duty of care is enshrined in the workplace.  The patient’s details are checked **in order to** confirm identification.  The handover notes were completed **so that** clear communication was in place for the incoming shift. |

**Use sources to develop and support your academic opinion**

An academic essay needs to present your academic opinions, which are arguments you develop from what you are learning. For your essay to be credible, you need to draw on ideas and evidence from a range of appropriate sources. You will need to develop your argument by discussing ideas and evidence from research and literature. All material drawn from sources you read should include a reference in brackets within or at the end of the sentence.

**Use examples to support your arguments**

In developing your argument, you should avoid vagueness and overuse of generalisation. General statements about claims you make should be supported by evidence and examples and should be correctly cited.

Use high quality academic sources of information with adequate and accurate acknowledgement

It is VERY important to use reliable sources of information for your written assignments. For most (but not all) subjects, websites are NOT acceptable academic sources. Commercial (.com) websites are the most likely to be unreliable. The author of a commercial website is often not known and the pages may contain biased or inaccurate information. Ask your lecturer, facilitator or tutor whether website information is allowed for a particular assignment.

When you use information from sources such as books and journal articles, you are using ideas that you did not create yourself. As these ideas were developed by someone else, it is important to acknowledge the person or people who created the ideas. In academic writing, this is done by providing references to show where the ideas came from. We discuss this further in the next section.

For more information on finding credible sources and evaluating websites go to: <http://latrobe.libguides.com/home>

To view the library’s short YouTube clip *‘Why can’t I just Google’* go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N39mnu1Pkgw>

**General Language**

**Use good general and technical dictionaries efficiently**

You can learn a lot about language from your dictionary. The first few pages explain the symbols used; these will alert you to the kind of things dictionaries can teach. In addition to grammatical information, many current dictionaries provide information about differences in usage between spoken and written language, as well as groups of synonyms. Dictionaries are also very useful for checking your spelling and will explain possible variations, for example, where there are differences between American English on the one hand, and British and Australian English on the other.

**Use a thesaurus with caution**

Many students consult the thesaurus on their computer (especially when attempting to paraphrase material from sources they read). Be careful though. You should check the meaning of the synonym you have selected in a good dictionary. Although it may be a synonym, it may not be appropriate in the context in which you want to use it. In other words, synonyms often differ in usage.

**Consult a writing guide**

Writing guides generally cover all aspects of academic writing, including basic principles about writing style, grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary choice, and good paragraphing. You can find guides on the University Learning site and in the Further Reading section below.

**Further reading**

Dykes, B. (2007). *Grammar for everyone: Practical tools for learning and teaching grammar*. Camberwell, Vic.: ACER Press.

Giltrow, J. (2002). *Academic writing: Writing and reading in the disciplines*. (3rd ed.). Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press.

Higgs, J., Ajjawi, R., McAlister, L., Trede, F., & Loftus, S. (2008). *Communicating in the health sciences* (2nd ed.). South Melbourne, Vic.: Oxford University Press. (see chap 6 “Learning to do academic writing)

Johnson, S. & Scott, J. (2009). *Study and communication skills for the biosciences.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Palmer, R. (2002). *Write in style: A guide to good English*. (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Rolls, N. & Wignell, P. (2009). *Communicating at university: Skills for success* (3rd ed.). Darwin, N.T.: Charles Darwin University Press.

Swales, J. (2004). *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills.* (2nd ed.). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

**Recommended English language dictionaries**

English dictionaries are available via the La Trobe University Library, both in print and online via library subscriptions.

Some are also freely available via the internet (usually not comprehensive versions – for complete versions use the library). Ask at your campus library for help with any type of dictionary.

See the links below for examples:

*The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*:

[http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/counselling/)

*The Australian Oxford Dictionary*:

[http://library.latrobe.edu.au/record=b2569688~S5](http://www.vts.intute.ac.uk/detective)

*Macquarie Dictionary: Australia’s National Dictionary Online*: [http://library.latrobe.edu.au/record=b2541783~S5](http://latrobe.libguides.com/google)

*Cambridge Dictionaries Online*:

[http://dictionary.cambridge.org/](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/library/help-and-training)

*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*:

[http://www.ldoceonline.com/](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/students/learning/academic-integrity)

**Medical Terminology**

In your studies in Health Sciences you will come across unfamiliar medical terms that you will need to understand and use. Being able to decode these terms to work out their meaning is a valuable skill. The following examples provide an introduction to the way medical terms are structured and the meanings associated with the root, prefix and suffix parts of the term. For quick reference you can start your own medical terms dictionary by entering terms as you encounter them in a pocket sized alphabetical notebook.

**1. The basic structure of medical terms**

Medical terminology can be decoded by looking for the root or core of the word and then looking at the attached prefix and/or suffix. The exact spelling or word form depends on the various combinations and how the word is pronounced.

Example:

**HEPATITIS : liver inflammation**

**HEPAT -**  root that shows the affected organ (liver)

**-ITIS -** suffix that shows what the problem is (inflammation)

**2. Core words**

**Parts of the body:**

Cranio- skull

Cerebro- brain

Laryngo- larynx

Thoracic chest

Cardio- heart

Pneumo- lung

Gastro- stomach

Hepatic liver

Spleno spleen

Cysto- bladder

Cholecysto- gall bladder

Laparo- loin or abdomen

Renal kidney

Haemo- blood

Osteo- bone

Arthro- joint

**Suffixes**

These suffixes indicate conditions that occur:

-itis inflammation

-pathy disease

-trophy related to growth

-oma abnormal cell growth, tumour

Examples:

Laryngitis inflammation of the larynx

Arthritis inflammation of the joints

Cardiopathy heart disease

Neuropathy nerve disease

Muscular Dystrophy muscle disease resulting in weakness and wasting

Melanoma abnormal growth of melanocytes

These suffixes indicate procedures undertaken:

-scopy act of examining

-otomy opening surgically

-ectomy removing surgically

-stomy creating an opening

Examples:

Arthroscopy examination of joint

Craniotomy surgical opening of skull

Splenectomy surgical removal of spleen

Colostomy creating an opening of colon to surface of abdomen

Three other suffixes refer to important body fluids:

-emia in the bloodstream

-uria in the urine

-emesis vomit

Examples:

Glyceamia blood glucose level

Haematuria blood in the urine

Haematemesis vomiting blood

**Prefixes**

These prefixes are often used to indicate quantity or amount and can be directly linked to some suffixes.

a-, an- lack of

oligo- few, little

poly- many, excessive

hypo- abnormally low levels of

hyper- abnormally high levels of

dys- difficult, painful, bad

Examples:

Atrophy Wasting or decrease in size

Anaemia Literally, lack of blood

Anorexia Absence of appetite

Oliguria Reduced urination

Polyuria Excessive urination

Hypothermia Low body temperature

Hyperglycaemia High level of glucose in bloodstream

Dysuria Painful urination

Dyspnoea Painful or laboured breathing

**References**

Harris, P., Nagy, S., & Vardaxis, N. (2006). *Mosby’s dictionary of medicine, nursing & health professions* (Australian & New Zealand ed.). Sydney: Elsevier Australia.

**Online sources of information on medical terms**

Online Medical Terminology Course (Des Moines University) -- self paced information with quizzes

[http://www.dmu.edu/medterms/](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/library/assignment-thesis-support/assignment-calculator)

Sweethaven Online Medical Technology Series : Medical Terminology

[http://www.free-ed.net/sweethaven/medtech/medterm/default.asp](http://latrobe.libguides.com/libskills)

Word Parts and What They Mean (MedlinePlus – National Library of Medicine)

[http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/appendixa.html](http://edorigami.wikispaces.com/Bloom's+Digital+Taxonomy)

**Ebooks** available to La Trobe University students via the La Trobe University Library catalogue:

Steiner, S.S. (2011). Quick medical terminology: a self-teaching guide (5th ed.). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Ebook: [http://library.latrobe.edu.au/record=b3091667~S4](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/)

(2009). Medical terminology made incredibly easy! (3rd ed.). Ambler: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

[http://library.latrobe.edu.au/record=b2476610~S5](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/library/help-and-training/ask-a-pla)

**Print books** available at La Trobe University Library

Chabner, D. (2007). The language of medicine (Australian & New Zealand ed.). Sydney: Saunders Elsevier.

Cohen, B. J. (2011). Medical terminology: an illustrated guide (6th ed.). Baltimore, MD: Wolters Kluwer Health/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

**A word about Microsoft Word grammar checker and spell checker**

Automatic spelling and grammar checkers are not as accurate as a human editor. The Microsoft Word spell checker and grammar checker make mistakes, particularly the grammar checker. For example, the grammar checker often misses subject verb agreement errors or identifies a sentence as containing an error when it doesn’t have one. Grammar checkers are useful for writers who have a knowledge of correct grammar. They can alert the writer to inadvertent mistakes and typos, but ultimately, it is the writer who makes the final decision whether to accept or reject the suggestion.

**Common grammar errors**

In order to understand simple grammar errors, you need to know a little bit about basic sentence structure.

**What is a sentence?**

In order for a sentence to be complete it must usually contain a **subject** and a **verb**. A sentence must also convey a complete thought. For example, *‘A student is.*’ contains a subject and a verb but doesn’t express a complete thought. It doesn’t convey any information and is thus not a complete sentence.

**The subject** says who or what does the action e.g. ‘who wrote?’

|  |
| --- |
| **The verb** is the ‘doing word’ and describes an action or state.  For example,  The students wrote.  ***(subject) (verb)*** |

A simple sentence can also have other elements:

|  |
| --- |
| **An object** answers the question ‘what’ after the verb e.g. ‘wrote what?’  For example,  The students wrote a report.  ***(subject) (verb) (object)*** |

|  |
| --- |
| **A complement** says what something is/was etc.  For example,  The students were confused.  ***(subject) (verb) (complement)*** |

|  |
| --- |
| **An adverbial** tells us *how, when, where*, or *why*.  For example,  The students wrote their reports carefully.  ***(subject) (verb) (object) (adverbial - how)***  Eventually**,** the students wrote their reports carefully.  ***(adverbial - (subject) (verb) (object) ( adverbial -* how) *when)***  Notice that we use a comma when the adverbial element comes before the subject. |

**Some of the most common grammar errors**

**Comma splice error**

A comma splice error occurs when two complete sentences are joined together by a comma. For example:

* *The benefits of this kind of therapy are substantial, there are relatively few adverse side effects.*

Comma splice errors are quite common, particularly for native speakers of English. They often result from the desire to avoid writing short sentences. A comma splice error can be fixed in different ways, depending on the length of the sentences.

* If the two sentences are short, it is best to join them with a conjunction (‘joining word’) such as ‘and’, ‘so’, or ‘but’, as in the following example:
* *The benefits of this kind of therapy are substantial, and there are relatively few adverse side effects.*
* If the two sentences are short and they are of equal grammatical weight and value, it is best to use a semicolon.

* *The benefits of this kind of therapy are substantial; the adverse side effects are relatively few.*
* If the two sentences are already rather long, it is better to put a full stop between and have two separate sentences.
* *The reported benefits of this kind of therapy are substantial, particularly when used in conjunction with more traditional approaches. However, there are relatively few adverse side effects and these are generally not severe.*

**Run on sentence**

Run on sentences are the same as the comma splice errors described above, except that there is no comma placed between the two sentences. These are less frequent than comma splice errors and can be fixed in the same way.

* *The benefits of this kind of therapy are substantial there are relatively few adverse side effects.*

**Sentence fragment**

A fragment is an incomplete sentence. Fragments may be missing a verb or a subject or they may not convey a complete thought.

**Example of a fragment that has a subject and a verb but does not express a complete thought.**

* *Because the lemming was heading towards the cliff.* ⇦ FRAGMENT

The above fragment contains a subject and a verb, but it does not contain a complete thought. We have the reason for something, but we don’t have the ‘something’. This is the most common form of fragment error. The word ‘Because’ at the beginning has turned a complete sentence (‘*The lemming was heading towards the cliff.’)* into a fragment, which requires another part to be a complete sentence.

To correct this sentence it needs another part. For example:

* *Because the lemming was heading towards the cliff, others decided to follow.*

There are many words similar to ‘because’ that when used in this way, require another part to make a full sentence. Some examples are given in the table below. Don’t be confused. This doesn’t mean that you can’t start a sentence with ‘Because’ (a common urban grammar myth!). You *can* start a sentence with ‘Because’ as long as you make sure to include the *other* part of the sentence.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Fragment example** |
| because | Because measurements were not taken at regular intervals. |
| although | Although the fracture was not observed. |
| whereas | Whereas the left ear showed no sign of swelling. |
| since | Since there were no other parameters. |
| unless | Unless future studies find otherwise. |

All of the fragments in the above table could be corrected by adding another sentence part with a subject and a verb.

**Example of a fragment with no verb or subject**

* *Being a very headstrong and independent lemming with a mind of her own.*

This fragment does not contain a full verb or a subject. The word ‘being’ at the beginning of the sentence looks like a verb, but it is really only part of one. To be a full verb, an –ing word needs to be combined with a ‘helping verb’ such as am, is, are, was or were. (e.g. The lemming *is being* stubborn). To fix the fragment in the above example, another part needs to be added to make it a complete sentence.

* *Being a very headstrong and independent lemming with a mind of her own, Fifi did not join the others in their rush towards the cliff.*

Here’s another example of a fragment.

* *At the edge of the extremely steep cliff near a group of boulders.*

The example above is a fragment because it only tells us the ‘where’ part of the sentence. It does not contain a subject or a verb. We don’t know who is doing what. The fragment needs another part to make it a complete sentence.

* *At the edge of the extremely steep cliff near a group of boulders, the lemmings gathered for a brief, final meeting.*

**Subject verb agreement**

In English grammar, subjects must ‘agree with’ verbs. We use different forms of verbs for different types of subjects. The following table gives some examples.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **subject** | **example of subject** | **Verb** | **object** |
| I | (I) | Like | learning grammar.  that game.  doing it.  chocolate. |
| You | (You) |
| We | My friends and I |
| They | The people in the pub |
| He | That guy in our lab | Like**s** |
| She | The woman in the photo |
| It | (Even) my dog |

Subject verb agreement with the verb ‘to be’ is a little more complicated.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **subject** | **example of subject** | **verb (to be)** | **complement/adverbial** |
| I | (I) | Am | a great example.  extremely unreliable.  in the right place.  Intoxicated. |
| You | (You) | Are |
| We | My friends and I |
| They | The people in the pub |
| He | That guy in our lab | Is |
| She | The woman in the photo |
| It | (Even) my dog |

Making subjects agree with verbs is fairly easy when the sentence is short and the subject is right next to its verb. However, when sentences are long and complex, subject verb agreement can be more difficult, as in the following example.

* ***Punctuating*** *long sentences, such as the ones in the following examples,* ***cause*** *difficulties for many writers.*  *(verb)*
* ***Punctuating*** *long sentences, such as the ones in the following examples* ***causes*** *difficulties for many writers.*

*(verb)*

In order to check whether the subject agrees with the verb, you first need to identify the main verb in the sentence (‘cause’ in the sentences above) and then ask who or what causes difficulties? The answer is ‘punctuating’. Punctuating = ‘it’, so we need to use the verb form with the ‘s’ i.e. punctuating… causes difficulties…

Errors also frequently occur when the sentence starts with ‘there is/are’.

* *There is not many studies which have investigated the science of navel gazing.*
* *There are not many studies which have investigated the science of navel gazing.*

**Problems with commas**

Few people writing in English know how to use commas correctly. A lot of the time, this doesn’t matter as many sentences ‘requiring’ a comma can be easily understood even without the comma. However, there are some instances where a sentence becomes ambiguous, or even unreadable, without a comma.

**Example 1**

*I told them to eat****,*** *Lucy.*

*I told them to eat Lucy.*

The difference in punctuation is small, but the difference to Lucy is considerable.

**Example 2**

*When we finally packed up the instrument had already completed the scan.*

*When we finally packed up, the instrument had already completed the scan.*  
 **(introductory bit) (main part of sentence)**

The first sentence is difficult to read because it may seem like the instrument was packed up. In the second sentence, the comma after the introductory bit makes the meaning much clearer. The introductory part of the sentence is not a full sentence on its own. If there is an introductory bit at the beginning of a sentence, it’s a good habit to always place a comma between it and the main part of the sentence.

**Example 3**

*In the workshop reports were made about people altering data to fit the hypothesis.*

*In the workshop, reports were made about people altering data to fit the hypothesis.*

**(adverbial) (main part of sentence)**

This is similar to example 2. The first sentence is difficult to read and its meaning is not clear because the words ‘lab’ and ‘reports’ are often used together as a compound noun. In the second example, a comma separates the adverbial element ‘in the lab’ from ‘reports’ and so makes the meaning of the sentence clear.

**Example 4**

* *Recent studies on the mating behaviour of the endangered three toed sloth from South America, have analysed the frequency of the ‘ay-ay’ mating call.*
* *Recent studies on the mating behaviour of the endangered three toed sloth from South America have analysed the frequency of the ‘ay-ay’ mating call.*

**Do not use a comma after the subject of a sentence.** When the subject of a sentence is very long, you may feel that you need to put a comma between the subject and the verb. This is not correct.

**Parallel structure**

Problems with maintaining parallel structure often occur when constructing lists, either as dot points or within a sentence. Items in a list should be the same type of word in terms of grammar, for example, a list of nouns or a list of verbs. The following examples should illustrate.

* *The objectives of this review are:*
* *Outlining the main conceptual areas behind the science of navel gazing*
* *To give an account of the controversy surrounding the benefits of navel gazing*
* *The different ways to navel gaze*

Each of the dot points has a different grammatical form. To give the items in the list parallel structure, they should have the same grammatical form as in the list of verbs (actions) below.

* *The objectives of this review are to:*
* *outline the main conceptual areas behind the science of navel gazing*
* *give an account of the controversy surrounding the benefits of navel gazing*
* *describe the different ways to navel gaze.*

**Apostrophes**

Apostrophes are notoriously difficult to use correctly. There is even a website showing examples of ‘apostrophe abuse’ on signs from around the world:

[www.apostropheabuse.com/](http://latrobe.libguides.com/referencingmodules)

However, once you know the rules, it’s really not that hard.

Apostrophes are used for two main reasons:

**To denote a missing letter**

When we put two short words together, we use an apostrophe to show that a letter is missing. It is **not common** to use these shortened forms in academic writing. Here are some examples.

do not ⇨ don’t

is not ⇨ isn’t

you are ⇨ you’re

it is ⇨ it’s

we are ⇨ we’re

We do not use an apostrophe to make an abbreviation or acronym (e.g. CD, USB, ATM) plural. Also, we do not use an apostrophe when making years plural. So,

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| CD’s | CDs |
| USB’s | USBs |
| ATM’s | ATMs |
| 1960’s | 1960s |
| 90’s | 90s |

**To denote possession**

Apostrophes are used to show possession or ownership of something, as in the following examples. Note that the apostrophe is placed after the ‘s’ if the noun is plural. We can also use *pronouns* in place of the noun. The table below contains some examples.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **singular nouns** | **pronoun** | **plural nouns** | **pronoun** |
| The student’s writing | his/her | The students’ writing | their |
| The paper’s references | its | The papers’ references | their |
| The bee’s knees | its | The bees’ knees | their |
| The computer’s functions | its | The computers’ functions | their |
| Robyn’s office | her | n/a | n/a |

We do not use apostrophes before an ‘s’ in plural nouns where there is no possession.

**A point of confusion**

The words that cause the most confusion when using apostrophes are ***it’s* and *its*.**

***It’s*** – the apostrophe denotes a missing letter (i.e. short form of it is)

***Its*** – is used to show possession but has no apostrophe (e.g. Its ears are big).

**Commonly confused words**

The English language can be very confusing, so it’s hard to avoid mistakes. Some commonly confused words are listed below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **word confusion** | **explanation** |
| effect/affect | **Effect** is usually a noun.  e.g*. There was no* ***effect*** *on the reaction rate.*  **Affect** is usually verb (action).  \* remember ‘**a’** for **a**ction & **a**ffect  e.g. *The reaction rate was not* ***affected****.* |
| would of/would have | ‘**Would of’** is incorrect. ‘**Would have’** is correct.   * The experiment would of worked. * The experiment would have worked |
| few/less | Use **few** or **fewer** with ‘countable’ nouns.  e.g*. There were* ***few*** *errors.*  Use **less** with ‘uncountable’ nouns.  e.g*. There was* ***less*** *air in the container.* |
| comprise/consist | Use **comprise** without ‘of’.  e.g. *The sample comprised 42 males and 47 females.*  Use **consist** with ‘of’.  e.g. *Water consists of hydrogen and oxygen atoms.* |
| its/it’s | Use **it’s** as a short form of ‘it is’  Use **its** as a possessive |
| practice/practise | **Practice** is a noun.  e.g*. I need more practice with this technique.*  **Practise** is a verb.  e.g. *I need to practise this technique.* |

**Singular/plural confusion**

Some commonly used words in the sciences have irregular plurals that can be confusing. The table below gives some examples.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Singular** | **Plural** |
| hypothesis | hypotheses |
| criterion | criteria |
| phenomenon | phenomena |
| thesis | theses |
| datum | data |
| medium | media |
| appendix | appendices/appendixes (both correct) |
| bacterium | bacteria |
| stimulus | stimuli |
| index | indices/indexes (but different meanings) |
| analysis | analyses |
| axis | axes |
| formula | formulae/formulas (both correct) |
| basis | bases |
| diagnosis | diagnoses |
| parenthesis | parentheses |
| genus | genera |

**3**

**Paraphrasing and Referencing**



**Why Paraphrase? Why use references?**

Using **references** in your writing enables readers to check your ideas or follow up your sources for themselves and also gives due credit to the person/people who produced the original information. When you use someone else’s idea in your writing, it is important to clearly show the difference between your own ideas and theirs. If you do not make this difference clear, and / or if you copy and do not acknowledge the source, you may be accused of **plagiarism**. This is seen as a form of cheating and may result in failing an assignment or even a whole subject. A further reason for using references in your writing is to give your assignment weight and authority and back up your arguments.

In order to avoid plagiarising, it is important to know the guidelines for academic integrity and how to acknowledge. You will learn about La Trobe’s guidelines and your responsibilities when you do the **Academic Integrity Module (AIM)** <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/students/learning/academic-integrity>**.** All first year students must successfully complete the AIM, and this is recorded on their Academic Transcript (the final marks document). When you enter your Learning Management System (LMS), you will see the AIM. The ***Referencing at La Trobe University*** website will also give you information and advice about avoiding plagiarism and where to get help

<http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/arm/>

When you use information from sources, most of the time you need to put it in your own words (called **paraphrasing**). The person who marks your writing will want to see evidence that you have understood the concepts you are discussing. Writing something in your own words shows that you have understood what you are writing about. Paraphrasing also helps to give your writing a consistent style as you blend your own sentences with paraphrased information from other sources into your own personal style.

**How to reference**

There are two places where references need to be included in a piece of writing:

1. **In-text references (citations)** - in the text of your writing
2. **Reference list** - at the end of your writing (before the appendix)

Every source (e.g. text book, journal, electronic source) that you cite in your writing (in-text references) must be included in the reference list, and every reference included in your reference list must be cited in your writing.

It is VERY IMPORTANT to use the correct format for in-text references and reference lists. There are hundreds of different referencing styles. In first year subjects in the Health Sciences, you are expected to follow the **APA** style of referencing, unless told otherwise. In second year and beyond, you may be expected to use a different style of referencing. You should always check the referencing style required for all written work submitted.

For more information on the APA referencing style and other referencing styles used at La Trobe University, go to the guides in the library: [http://latrobe.libguides.com/referencingmodules](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/appendixa.html)

**In-text references**

Every idea that is not your own (e.g. information from a book or journal article) needs to include an in-text reference (also called a citation) to show where the idea came from. Even if you have put the information in your own words (paraphrased) you **must** still provide an in-text reference. If your ideas / opinions are the same as those you have read in a book or journal, provide the reference to give weight to your opinion.

***General Rule***

In-text references in APA format give the author’s surname(s) and the year of publication.

Note that there is always a comma after the author’s name and before the year, and that the full stop is positioned after the citation.

When authors’ names are used as part of your sentence, the word ‘and’ is used to separate the last author.

For citations within parenthesis, the ampersand (&) is used to separate the last author.

**Tolan and Dodge (2005) argue that mental health problems in children and adolescents are in crisis in the United States.**

**Students need opportunities to practice academic writing so that they can master the academic conventions of acknowledgment (McGowan & Lightbody, 2008).**

**Author or idea focus?**

In-text references can either focus on the *author* or the *idea,* depending on which is the most important. In first year, you will probably focus more on the idea than the author. Author focused referencing is more commonly used when citing important research or experimental work. The following examples show these two types of in-text reference.

**Idea focus**

***Example:***

Mosquitoes puncture the skin of their prey with one of six sharp mouthparts and inject saliva to stop the blood coagulating (Hickman, Roberts, & Larson, 2001).

**Author focus**

*Example:*

Anderson et al. (1999) found that West Nile (WN) virus samples, isolated from two species of mosquitoes and two species of birds in Connecticut were most similar to WN isolates from Romania.

**Using et al**

If a piece of work has three, four, or five authors, list all authors in the first citation. In subsequent citations, include only the first author followed by the Latin abbreviation et al. (short for et alia, meaning ‘and others’). Note there is always a full stop after ‘al’ and that it is not necessary to use italics for ‘et al.’ in APA format.

*Example:*

Higgs, Ajjawi, McAllister, Trede and Loftus define communication as ‘conferring through speech, writing or nonverbal means (including body language) to create a shared meaning’ (2008, p. 3). Effective communication is vital for good professional practice, which means that health professionals need to develop their communication competence (Higgs et al., 2008)

If a piece of work has *six or more* authors, apply the *et al.* rule for all citations. Write the name of the first author followed by *et al*. (as above).

**Same idea from more than one source**

Sometimes you may find the same idea in two (or more) sources. After you paraphrase the idea, you may be unsure about which source to cite. The simple answer is to cite them both. When doing so, order the citations alphabetically, based on the *first* author surnames. Do *not* change the order of authors within a piece of work. Separate the citations with semicolons.

*Example:*

In insects, gas exchange occurs by diffusion through a system of tubes called trachea, which are connected to the external environment through holes called spiracles (Knox, Ladiges, & Evans, 1994; Purves et al., 2004).

**Secondary citations**

Sometimes, you may want to use a piece of information that another author has cited from a different source. If the source you are reading contains citations from another source, the ideal thing to do is to find that original source, read it, paraphrase the relevant information and cite the source. Sometimes, it is not possible to find the original source and you may have to secondary cite the source. A secondary citation contains the original author and the year plus the secondary author (where you read the information) plus the year.

*Example:*

Between the years 1954 and 1994, the population of sooty terns on Ascension Island fell from 500,000 to 200,000 (Ratcliffe et al., 1999, as cited in Reynolds et al., 2008).

original source source you read

**Electronic sources**

Electronic sources, particularly websites, should be used cautiously. Not all information found on the Internet is reliable. Websites with URLs that end in *.com* are commercial sites and may not be reliable (they may contain bias or inaccurate information). If you are unable to identify the *author* (person or organisation) or the *date* of an Internet source, it is less likely to be reliable, and probably should not be used as a source in your writing.

To learn more about how to find, evaluate and reference Internet sources see the following web tutorial: *The Internet Detective* [www.vts.intute.ac.uk/detective](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/)

The library has a module which will teach you how to find appropriate sources from the internet. You will be able to do this during your course.

*Wikipedia* can be a useful source of background information in the initial stages of researching a topic. However, because the authors of the information are not identified, it is advised NOT to cite *Wikipedia* in reports, assignments, essays etc.

If possible, a reference to an Internet source in the Reference List should include:

* The author of the document (this is often an organisation rather than an individual)
* The year of publication or most recent update
* The title, or a description of the document
* The date the document was viewed *if the information is likely to change*
* Either
  + The URL (i.e. http//www….) or;
  + The doi (the digital object identifier is a sequence of numbers)

**Reference Lists**

As well as using in-text citations, you must also include a reference list at the end of your piece of work. A reference list is different from a bibliography, which lists all works read, whether or not they are cited in your work. A reference list contains only those works that you have cited in your writing.

In APA referencing style, references are listed at the end of your piece of writing, in alphabetical order of the first authors’ surnames (**A – Z**). Do not change the order of authors’ name in a particular source. Reference lists should be single spaced with a single line space between each reference, and a hanging indent. The format of the reference list depends on the type of source you are citing. It is important to carefully note all details such as the **order** of details, when to use **italics**, where to put **full stops** and **commas**, **capitalisation** of words, and **parentheses.**

Below is a **sample reference list**. If you look carefully, you will notice that there are slight variations in the format for references from different types of sources. There are different formats for books, book chapters, journal articles, online sources.

**References**

Barr H. (2005). *Effective interprofessional education: arguments, assumption and evidence***.** Oxford: Blackwell.

Jessup, R. (2007). Interdisciplinary versus multidisciplinary care teams: Do we understand the difference?. *Australian Health Review*, 31(3), pp 330-331.

Stone, N. (2007). Coming in from the interprofessional cold in Australia. *Australian Health Review,* 31(3): 332-340.

WHO (2010). *Framework for action on interprofessional education and collaborative practice.* Available: [http://www.who.int/hrh/resources/framework\_action/en/index.html](http://www.ldoceonline.com/)

**Using DOIs and URLs**

When citing an electronic resource, APA referencing style recommends the inclusion of uniform resource locators (URLs), or a digital object identifier (doi). URLs map digital information on the Internet, however they are susceptible to error when a document is moved, reconstructed, or deleted. The doi system allows consistent identification of sources: a unique doi is assigned to particular content, allowing readers direct access to such content regardless of its location on the Internet. The doi is often located alongside copyright information on the title page of an electronic journal article (top right corner), and looks like this: 10.xxxx/xxxx-xxxx.xx.x.xxx. If no doi can be located, provide a URL with the prefix ‘Retrieved from’. If the document you are citing contains information that is likely to change, include a retrieval date in the following format:

Retrieved Month Date, Year, from http://www.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do not place a full stop at the end of a URL or doi. This may create confusion for the reader when searching for the information.

**4**

**Academic Integrity**



**What is Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity means being honest in academic work. The research carried out at University builds on the work of others and requires appropriate acknowledgment of this work. If you are dishonest and cheat you will be penalised.

Examples of academic dishonesty could include

* Handing in someone else’s essay as your own
* Handing in the same essay in two different subjects
* Writing your assignment together with someone else ( known as collusion)
* Copying sections from books, journals, reports or other written formats and putting them in your assessments pieces without acknowledging where you found the information by referencing
* Copying even one sentence from someone’s else’s work without acknowledging where you found the information by referencing.

Academic integrity also means taking responsibility for learning the conventions of scholarship. You need to learn how to acknowledge the source of the evidence you use in your work; this means learning how to reference properly.

Latrobe University has committed to helping students develop their referencing skills and there are a number of different ways the University does this.

* As part of your studies, you are required to complete an Academic Integrity Module which includes both explanations about aspects of referencing as well as practise activities.
* The library also has modules on specific referencing styles (such as APA or Harvard) to help you learn the rules of referencing as well as a more general introduction to aspects of Academic Integrity.
* Your lecturer will let you know when you have neglected your responsibilities in this area in your writing. If you see the phrases ` Are these your words?’ or `Where does this information come from ?’ you will know you need to pay more attention to referencing.

There are a range of penalties for students who do not pay attention to the conventions of academic scholarship.

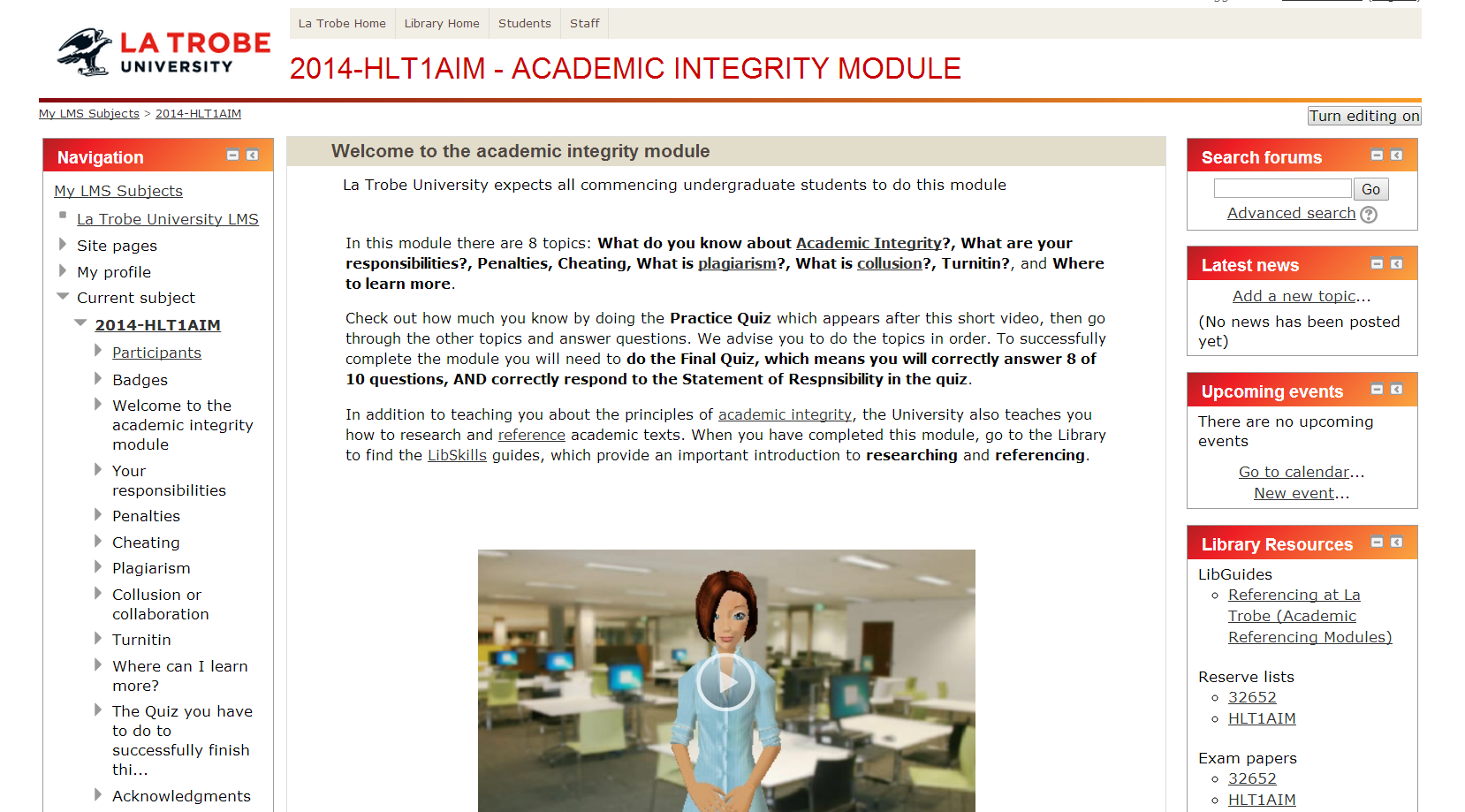
* You may fail the assessment piece
* You may be asked to resubmit the piece
* You may be summoned before a board to discuss the suitability of continuing your studies

**The Academic Integrity Module (AIM)**

The University is keen that students take the opportunity to be informed about La Trobe University's standards and rules. The AIM teaches students about La Trobe's values and its academic integrity guidelines to minimise the chances of academic misconduct.

All commencing undergraduate students are expected to complete AIM as part of their course requirements and the result will be recorded on your Academic Record.

The ‘Academic Integrity Module (AIM)’ is located on the Learning Management System (LMS) which you can work through at your own pace. AIM will provide the information you need to understand and avoid academic misconduct. AIM will guide you through your responsibilities; provide examples of academic misconduct; and show you where to find useful information and examples of referencing styles specific to your course. AIM also includes a quiz to evaluate how well you understand these topics.



**How do I enrol in AIM?**

You should have been enrolled in a special subject titled ‘Academic Integrity Module’ when you enrolled in your other subjects. It is a compulsory part of your course however you will not be charged any fees for the AIM subject. If you are enrolled in AIM, the subject will appear on your Statement of Account; when you log into the LMS; and when you check your enrolment in StudentOnLine. Please contact your Faculty Office if AIM does not appear.

**How can I log in to AIM?**

Once you have enrolled and received your LTU Username and Password, simply log on to the LMS. Go to the University Home page (www.latrobe.edu.au) and click on the ‘Current Students’ link. On the ‘Students’ page, click either on the link in ‘Student Tools’ titled ‘LMS’ or the link under ‘Learning Resources’ titled ‘Learning Management System’. Enter your Username and Password when the ‘Log In’ page is displayed and then click the ‘Login’ button. This should take you into a home page that shows all LMS subjects for which you are enrolled. Click on the ‘Academic Integrity Module’ link to begin.

**Do I have to pass the AIM and if so, by when?**

La Trobe University requires that all commencing undergraduate students pass the AIM. You can log in to AIM as soon as you receive your La Trobe University (LTU) Username and Password. There is no need to wait until semester begins. However, you must make time to complete AIM by the end of the first week of Semester.

To pass AIM you must complete the final quiz, which can be found in the ‘The final quiz’ block and includes the ‘Statement of Student Responsibility’. The ‘Statement of Student Responsibility’ is simply a statement acknowledging that you understand your responsibilities. If you do not understand the text in the statement or you require clarification of that text, please email your First Year Coordinator or ask one of the academic staff for advice.

To pass ‘The Final Quiz’, you must answer at least 80% of the questions correctly and respond to the ‘Statement of Student Responsibility’. You may attempt the AIM quiz as many times as needed to achieve a ‘Pass’ score of at least 80%.

Your final AIM result will be automatically recorded as a ‘Pass/Fail’ result and it will appear on your Academic Transcript along with your other results at the end of the semester.

You are strongly encouraged to complete AIM as soon as possible. By doing so, you will ensure that you are well prepared prior to the submission of any other assessment.

Most of the information in the AIM is also available at: www.latrobe.edu.au/students/learning/academic-integrity

If you have further questions about Academic Integrity or Academic Misconduct, email those questions to your First Year Coordinator or ask one of your academic staff for advice.

**Turnitin**

**What is Turnitin?**

Turnitin is a web-based text-matching software system which can be used to teach students how to properly acknowledge quotations.

Turnitin have compiled a massive database of digital material by continually cataloguing and indexing the entire Internet using automated web robots. The robots retrieve millions of documents from the internet every day. When a paper is submitted to Turnitin, it uses advanced pattern-matching technology to identify suspect passages of eight words or more in submitted documents. The system returns customised Originality reports that provide links to all instances of matching sources which are highlighted and coded.

Turnitin provides a report on any text matches. Turnitin makes no attempt to interpret the report nor to dictate action in response to the report, nor does access to the software, in itself, imply any requirement to act on the report. Those questions remain properly the responsibility of the University's academic processes.

Using Turnitin is part of La Trobe University's educational approach to minimise plagiarism and ensure the highest standards of academic honesty in assessable work. Students and lecturers can use Turnitin to check that quotations in student writing have been properly acknowledged.

Turnitin has a massive database of digital material compiled by continually cataloguing and indexing the Internet using automated web robots which retrieve millions of documents every day. When a paper is submitted, Turnitin uses advanced pattern-matching technology to identify passages of eight words or more in submitted documents. The system returns customised Originality reports providing links to all instances of matching sources which are highlighted and coded.

All work submitted to Turnitin is checked against three databases of content:

* a copy of the publicly accessible Internet (more than 2 billion pages updated at a rate of 40 million pages per day) as well as archived copies of the Internet
* millions of published works (including ABI/Inform, Periodical Abstracts, Business Dateline, and tens of thousands of electronic books)
* every student paper ever submitted to Turnitin.

**Frequently Asked Questions about Referencing**

***Where do I find out how to reference properly?***

On the library site you will find the Academic Referencing Module (ARM) and the Academic Referencing Tool (ART). The ARM explains why and when you reference; the ART shows you examples and explicit details about how to reference properly using the APA system.

***If I write something in my own words, do I need to provide an in-text reference?***

Yes, you need to reference ideas, not just the words used to express them; you need to show where the original idea came from. Most sentences without a reference are considered to contain your own ideas, so you must make it clear whether your sentences contain ideas that are your own or someone else’s.

***Does that mean I need to provide a reference for nearly every sentence?***

Well, not quite every sentence, but in first year it is likely that you will not have a great deal of your own knowledge of the subject matter, so much of the information you use in your writing will come from other sources and thus will need a reference. Sometimes, if it is clear that two or three sentences come from the same source, it is only necessary to reference one of the sentences.

Example:

Jackson et al. (2008) investigated the soil texture and soil penetration resistance of three populations of Juliana’s golden mole. They found that differences in the distribution of soil particle sizes affected the distribution of the golden moles.

In the above example, the second sentence is clearly from the same source as the first. Thus, it is not necessary to provide an in-text reference for the second sentence.

***When can I use an idea and so do not have to provide a reference for it?***

This is a very tricky question. There is not always a clear dividing line between what constitutes your own knowledge and what is knowledge from others and hence needs to be referenced. It can sometimes be difficult to decide whether you need to put a reference or not. As you progress through your studies your own knowledge base will increase and you will be able to express much more information without needing to look it up in a reference. In first year, there is very little information that you can ‘own’, so it is usual for first year pieces of writing to contain many more references than, say, a postgraduate piece of writing.

***Can I summarise from one source into a paragraph and just put the reference at the end?***

No, if you do this, you may be accused of plagiarism. Any sentence which cannot clearly be attributed to another author is considered to be your own. A person reading your work would have no way of telling which sentences in the paragraph were your own and which came from another source. It is actually not good practice to take large slabs of information from a single source. It is much better to synthesise information from several sources.

***Can I reference lecture notes?***

Rather than citing your lecture notes, it is better to find the same information in a text book.

**Paraphrasing**

In addition to providing references, you also need to paraphrase information from other sources. This means you must put the ideas in your own words. This may seem strange and difficult at first, especially if the information is complex and hard to understand, but there are good reasons for paraphrasing.

Paraphrasing shows the person who is marking your work that you understand what you are writing about. It also helps you to keep a consistent writing style. Every writer has their own style and your writing will flow more smoothly if all of the sentences are written in your own natural style. You still need to paraphrase information before you include it in your written assignment or use quotation marks to indicate the words are not your own even if you provide a reference. If you don’t, you may be accused of plagiarism.

There is a detailed guide to paraphrasing and avoiding plagiarism in the next section.

**How to paraphrase**

Many students find paraphrasing difficult. In order to paraphrase well, you must first understand what you are reading. Poor paraphrasing is often the result of poor understanding of the text. Some students try to paraphrase at the sentence level rather than the ideas level. Just changing a few words and shifting parts of the sentence around may not result in a good paraphrase. A better way to paraphrase is to read a section of the text, write down a few key words that summarise the main idea(s) and then build up a sentence in your own words without looking back at the original sentence(s).

**Example 1**

*Original text:*

‘Some dinoflagellates reproduce in enormous numbers in warm and somewhat stagnant waters. The result can be a ‘red tide’, so called because of the reddish colour of the sea that results from the pigments of the dinoflagellates’ (Purves et al., 2004, p. 552).

*Paraphrase:*

Because of their red coloured pigments, some dinoflagellates can cause a ‘red tide’ when they reproduce in great numbers in warm, still seas (Purves et al., 2004, p.552).

**Example 2**

*Original text:*

‘There are some orchids whose flowers mimic the shape and colouring of female insects. The mimics are so realistic that male insects will attempt to copulate with the flower, thereby pollinating them’ (Knox et al., 1994, p. 827).

*Paraphrase*

Some orchids attract male insects by having flowers which imitate the appearance of female insects so that the male insect attempts to mate with the flower and inadvertently pollinates it (Knox et al., 1994, p. 827).

**Paraphrasing & Summarising**

Sometimes, only some of the information you read is relevant to what you are writing about. If so, it is possible to select the parts of the text that are relevant. Look at the following example from Raven, Evert, and Eichhorn (2005):

**Example**

*Original text*

“It is the mesophyll – the ground tissue of the leaf – with its large volume of intercellular spaces and numerous chloroplasts, that is particularly specialised for photosynthesis. The intercellular spaces are connected with the outer atmosphere through the stomata, which facilitate rapid gas exchange, an important factor in photosynthetic efficiency” (Raven, Evert, & Eichhorn, 2005, p. 564).

*Paraphrase*

Gases are exchanged between the external environment and the intercellular spaces in the mesophyll of the leaf via the stomata (Raven, Evert, & Eichhorn, 2005, p. 564).

**Paraphrase or quote?**

If you need to use the exact words of the original, then you can use a direct quote. To show that it’s a direct quote, use quotation marks to enclose the quoted text and include the page number.

Quotations are generally used less frequently in the sciences than in the humanities because the ideas expressed are normally more important than the words used to express them. You must have a good reason to use a quote. Being unable to write a better sentence than the original is *not* a good reason. Your lecturers are more interested in your understanding rather than your ability to locate the perfect quotation, so it is much better to put the information into your own words and then reference it.

Sometimes, however, the exact words may be important, as in the following example from Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species*. (Sometimes, however, a key concept or theory you may use throughout your work is best defined using the original words of its author because it is so well- known?)

**Example**

“I have called this principle, by which each slight variation, if useful, is preserved, by the term of Natural Selection” (Darwin, 1859, p. 61).

**5**

**Guidelines   
for   
Assessment Tasks**



**Essays**

**N.B.** **These are general guidelines only. Therefore, it is VERY IMPORTANT that you check specific requirements in each of your subjects. This information will be in your subject guides or on LMS. If you are not sure, check with your tutor.**

**The process of academic essay writing**

No matter what field of study you are engaged in, the same basic process can be used to plan and write your essay. This process can be divided into five\* steps:

1. **Analyse the question -** identify key instruction words, the topic/s and specific aspects to be discussed. You will need to read and re-read the essay topic many, many times!
2. **Research the topic -** ask a series of questions about your topic to focus your research. Seek information from a wide range of sources. Keep a record of all sources used so that you can include them in your in-text references and reference list.
3. **Plan the essay -** organise key ideas and related themes, taking into consideration format restrictions and word limits. Make sure you record which sources you used for which information. The easiest way to do this is to write an in-text reference next to your notes.
4. **Write the essay -** construct these ideas into the key elements of an essay: an introduction, a discussion (or body) divided into a number of paragraphs, and a conclusion. The writing style is formal and impersonal. Edit for errors.
5. **Write your reference list** – make sure you use APA style.

\*While the sequence of these steps is logical, you will need to repeat some steps and return to the steps when you review your writing before you submit it.

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|  |
| --- |
| **Common essay ‘instruction’ words**  **Analyse -** break subject into parts and show how they relate to each other.  **Comment** - express your view or interpretation of a statement contained in the question. Support your view with argument and/or experience.  **Compare and contrast -** show similarities and differences between two or more systems, ideas or concepts.  **Criticise** - make judgments, favourable and/or unfavourable, using fair argument and balanced evidence.  **Define -** give clear concise meanings of terms. If necessary, use examples.  **Describe** - give an account with clear, well organised, logical structure. Present the different aspects of a problem. Judgements are not required.  **Discuss** - present different points of view about a subject from the readings. Give a balanced range of information. Investigate by argument and analysis.    **Evaluate** - make judgments using argument, opinion and evidence. Similar to ‘criticise’ but emphasis is on establishing standards of quality.  **Examine** - similar to ‘analyse’, with a little more emphasis on judgment.  **Explain** - interpret meanings clearly by analysing events or systems, giving reasons, describing how things develop. Ask ‘how’ and ‘why’ of an issue.  **Identify** - select particular factors or circumstances required by question.  **Illustrate** - use figure, diagram or example to explain/clarify a problem.  **Relate** - show how things are connected, correlated or cause one another.  **Review** - examine a subject critically, dealing with a number of explanations or theories; listing, relating and contrasting the evidence being used to support for a theory.  **Summarise** - give a brief statement or account that covers the main points in sequence; without critical comments.  **Verify** - confirm or verify by logical reasoning and evidence. |

**The essay writing process will be demonstrated using the essay question below. It is drawn from a** **first year** **student’s Psychology essay**.

*Evaluate the evidence for differences in cognitive processing across age groups when engaging in complex tasks such as driving. Can rates of car accidents in younger drivers be directly attributed to these differences? Based on this information, what would you recommend to policy makers seeking to reduce car accidents in the 18–25 age group?*

1. **Analyse the question**

Identify the key instruction words and think about what they mean in relation to the essay topic.

***Evaluate*** *the evidence for differences in cognitive processing across age groups when engaging in complex tasks such as driving.* ***Can*** *rates of car accidents in younger drivers be directly attributed to these differences? Based on this information, what would you* ***recommend*** *to policy makers seeking to reduce car accidents in the 18–25 age group?*

**Evaluate** the evidence – this instruction indicates that there is some debate about whether there is a difference in cognitive processing across age groups when engaging in complex tasks such as driving. We can assume that studies have been conducted in an attempt to determine the answer, but that different studies have found different things. Some findings may have supported a difference in cognitive processing across age groups when engaging in complex tasks and some may not have. When researching the essay, you would need to search for different studies representing a range of findings and then **evaluate** the evidence from the studies. This means you need to ‘weigh up’ the evidence on both sides and come to a conclusion based on this evidence.

Evidence **AGAINST** a difference in cognitive processing across age groups during complex tasks

Evidence **FOR** a difference in cognitive processing across age groups during complex tasks

**?**

**Can** rates of car accidents in younger drivers be directly attributed to these differences? This instruction is asking you to apply the evidence you have evaluated to a specific situation – rates of car accidents. If you think there is a difference in cognitive processing across age groups during complex tasks, could this be contributing to higher rates of car accidents among young people? If you think there is no difference, then you might need to argue that there is a different cause of the higher rates of accidents among young people.

What would you **recommend** to policy makers seeking to reduce car accidents in the 18–25 age group? This part of the question asks you to make recommendations based on your response to the first two parts of the question. You may need to think about who the policy makers are. You may also need to consider what current policies there are to reduce the rate of car accidents for this age group and whether these policies relate to cognitive processing. If they don’t, should they?

1. **Research the topic**

Start by making a list of research questions. This will help you to search for and read the exact information that you need in order to answer the question. For the example essay topic, these questions might include:

What evidence is there that younger drivers have more accidents? Is this evidence recent? From Australia?

What is cognitive processing?

What is a complex task? examples?

Are there any differences in cognitive processing across age groups when engaging in complex tasks? If so, what are they and what causes them?

What cognitive processing occurs when driving?

Which has the greater influence on accident rates among younger drivers – inexperience or cognitive development?

How do the stages of brain development in 18 – 25 year olds affect their decision making, hazard perception and risk taking behaviour?

What current policies aim to reduce car accidents in the 18 – 25 age group?

Do any policies base their recommendations on cognitive processing differences in young people?

Begin with what you know from lectures and tutorials then proceed to books and journal articles. Use library catalogues – including electronic data bases and seek the assistance of your subject librarian.

1. **Plan the essay**

This involves three main steps. Firstly, brainstorm. Jot down everything you can think of from your research related to the topic. The next step of grouping is critical. This is where you attempt to find common ideas within the brainstorm. Give your grouped ideas a heading. These groups then become the themes for your essay. Finally, outline the essay in detail with each theme becoming a main point supported by factual evidence. Write down all necessary referencing details as you plan.

1. **Write the essay**

Construct these ideas into the key elements of an essay: an introduction, a discussion (or body) divided into a number of paragraphs, and a conclusion. Next in this chapter you will find an analysis of the structure of an essay. The writing style is formal (see chapter 2 for guidelines on writing in a formal, scientific style).

1. **Write your reference list**

Make sure that all references cited (in-text) are included in your reference list and all references in your list have been cited in your essay (see the previous chapter on referencing).

**The structure of academic essay writing**

The following examples illustrate the essential elements of an essay – an introductory paragraph, a body paragraph and a concluding paragraph.

**Model introductory paragraph**

The introductory paragraph sets the scene for the whole essay. It consists of four sections which move from general to specific information.

Introduce the general topic of your essay in an interesting way.

Give background or context which gives relevance to the discussion.

Include a thesis statement which is the main point of the essay

List subtopics/themes to indicate the order of discussion to follow (each theme mentioned in the introduction, is addressed in the same order in the body).

A brief definition may belong in the introduction (one sentence only).

Keep all information relatively general (no detailed evidence).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The rate of fatal car accidents among young drivers (defined in this essay as drivers aged 18-25 years old) is proportionally greater than those among other age groups.In Victoria in 2008, 24% of car accident fatalities were in the 18–25 year old age group, though this age group makes up only 12% of the Victorian population (*Age Group Statistics*, 2009). During adolescence and into early adulthood changes continue to occur in the brain (Dahl, 2008). This ongoing brain development means young people are still developing and refining cognitive processing skills, which impacts upon their ability to engage in and complete complex tasks (McAnarney, 2008), such as driving. As a result, it can be argued that higher rates of car accidents involving young drivers can be directly attributed to differences in their cognitive processing abilities compared to more mature drivers**.** To support this statement this essay will discuss brain development in young people, particularly in relation to decision making, engaging in risky behaviours, hazard perception and the ability to divide attentional resources. Finally, it will conclude by reviewing and suggesting ideas policy makers could utilise to reduce car accidents among young drivers. | **Introduce**  **topic**    **Background or context**  **Thesis**  **statement**    **Themes or**  **sub-topics** |

**Model body (discussion) paragraph**

Each body paragraph develops or expands the original thesis statement in a logical manner using evidence to illustrate the specific point being made.

1. **Topic sentence =** the specific topic of this paragraph (only one per paragraph)
2. **Supporting sentences =** evidence to support the topic sentence
3. **Concluding sentence =** may restate initial point made, lead into next paragraph, provide a link to overall argument or make a final statement
4. **Connectives =** words and phrases that link one idea to another and show the relationship between them. They provide the logic and cohesion for the essay.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Engaging in risky behaviours is a major cause of accidents among young drivers.This may be due to cognitive factors.Development in frontal and parietal regions of the brain continues into early adulthood (Dahl, 2008). This part of the brain (dorsolateral prefrontal cortex or DLPFC) is where neural networks involved in risk taking behaviour reside. Beeli et al. (2008) suggest the DLPFC does not mature until late adolescence, when many young people are driving. This late maturation of the DLPRC may explain why young drivers take risks, including speeding and driving after drinking alcohol. Indeed, Steinberg (2010) hypothesises that young people’s heightened risk taking behaviour is due to immature self-regulatory systems combined with easily aroused reward systems. Two studies suggest there is a strong link between risky driving behaviours of young drivers and their higher rate of traffic accident involvement. Fergusson, Swain-Campbell, and Horwood (2003) completed a 21 year longitudinal study of New Zealand children. They reported that 90% of young drivers who participated admitted to risky driving. In addition, an Australian study by Vassallo et al. (2007) using data from the Australian Temperament Project (ATP) reported similar results. Thus, it can be argued that brain development may be linked to risk taking behaviour of young drivers involved in accidents. | **Topic sentence**  **Supporting sentences**  **Concluding sentence** |

**Model concluding paragraph**

The concluding paragraph rounds off your essay by reminding the reader of your **main point**, the supporting *themes or sub-topics* and a strong final comment. There are **four** aspects to consider in the conclusion.

1. **Signal** the end of the essay with a connective: “In conclusion; To summarise”.
2. **Paraphrase** your **thesis statement** (the main point of the essay).
3. **Paraphrase and summarise** the **sub-topics/themes** addressed in the essay to remind the marker of your main discussion points.
4. Leave the marker with a **strong effective comment**; a message they will remember.

* **Don’t** add any new material.
* **Avoid** detailed information – the conclusion is a more general statement.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| In conclusion, the underlying cause of higher car accident rates among young drivers may be directly attributed to differences in their cognitive processing abilities when compared to more mature drivers. Young peoples’ brains are still developing in regions responsible for making decisions, participating in risk taking activities, perception of danger and capacity to concentrate. Hence, young drivers are more likely to engage in risky driving behaviours and have less developed cognitive processing skills to enable them to drive safely. To address this problem, it was suggested to policy makers that there is a continued need to try to limit or reduce the risks young drivers are able to take, and to cater for more practice of decision making and hazard perception skills and more effective use of attentional resources. Although the Victorian Graduated Licensing Scheme helps to address such concerns, it is also recommended that stronger young driver education programs, and more parental and community involvement be included. This will help change young drivers’ attitudes towards risky driving behaviours and ensure they are better informed about their own abilities and the risks associated with driving. | **Paraphrased thesis statement**  **Summary of paraphrased**  **themes**  **Final comment** |

**Giving an Oral Presentation**

**These are general guidelines only. Therefore, it is VERY IMPORTANT that you check specific requirements in each of your subjects. This information will be in your subject guides or on LMS. If you are not sure, check with your tutor.**

**Preparation for the oral presentation**

Preparation is the key to a successful oral presentation. Your speech will only be as good as the amount of work you put into it. It is also the best way to decrease nervousness.

1. **Define the purpose:** Are you informing/instructing or reporting?
2. **Analyse the audience:** For example,how many people will be there? Make sure you have enough handouts. Consider such factors as level of knowledge.
3. **Consider context:** Formal or informal? Will you need to bring anything?
4. **Identify main ideas of topic:** Brainstorm the main ideas needed to get the message across and then order them into a logical sequence.
5. **Research supporting material:** Ensure yougather strong factual evidence to support the main points. Is it current, relevant, accurate and documented? Unlike an essay, personal experience can also be relevant to illustrate your evidence.
6. **Group presentations:** Ensure that both preparation and presentation **time is equally** **shared** amongst all group members. Each team member should briefly introduce the next presenter and what they will talk about.

**Writing the oral presentation**

1. **Planning the material:** Focus on the purpose of the speech at all times. Logically order each main point and its supporting evidence. Prepare an outline plan in conjunction with the marking criteria.
2. **Writing the presentation:** An oral presentation is structured and each section has a specific purpose and organisation.

**Introduction**: aims to catch the audience’s attention and introduce the topic.

* Open in a way that **stimulates interest**. Tell a short story (anecdote), present an interesting fact, statistic or image related to your topic.
* Provide some **background or context** for the topic. In other words, indicate to the audience why your topic is important and/or describe the problem you are working on. Don’t assume that the audience is already familiar with your topic or project.
* Give a clear statement of the **main premise/point** of your presentation.
* Provide **a plan** of your presentation by outlining the main points to follow.

**Discussion/ Findings (body of the presentation):** aims to inform your audience.

* Present **only 3-5 main points**. It is better to discuss each point in depth.
* **Support each point** with strong factual evidence.
* Use a **variety** of examples, diagrams, graphs and statistics.
* Use **relevant personal experience** (yours or others)*where appropriate*.
* Use connectives to **link your ideas**, such as Firstly, Secondly, In addition, Finally, However. This provides cohesion and logic for the audience.

**Conclusion:** isoften overlooked! It is important to end on a strong note.

* Give a **clear signal** that you are concluding: In conclusion, In closing,
* **Restate the original premise** or point of view.
* **Summarise the main points** used to support that premise.
* **End effectively** with a relevant anecdote, recommendation or challenge.
* **Invite questions** if appropriate.
* Complete your talk with a suitable *“Thank you”* rather than *“Well that’s all”!!*
* Reiterate your strong message.

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**Using PowerPoint Effectively**

**Keep it Simple**. If using a template, choose a simple one with easy to read fonts. Avoid special effects and animations unless they are related to a point you are making. Do not overuse colour.

**Avoid overcrowding slides**. Use bullet points if appropriate (but do not assume all text should be bulleted). Never use full sentences; use key words only. It is better to use more slides with fewer points on each than to overcrowd slides.

**Make it readable**. If the audience cannot read what is on your slides, there is no point in including it. Font size should be at least 20. Avoid capital letters. Diagrams can be a very effective way to convey information, but make sure they are easily readable. Make sure you guide the audience through your diagram by pointing to the relevant parts as you speak.

**Delivering the oral presentation**

**Avoid reading** the presentation as there is an automatic drop in both audience attention and marks. However, it is unwise to attempt to memorise the whole speech. Some useful hints:

1. **Use power point slides as cues:** Summarise each main supporting point. Use headings and sub-headings, a numbering/lettering system and key words. Try using the ‘presenter view’ function on PowerPoint. This enables you to see which slides are coming up next, while the audience only sees the slide you are presenting.
2. **Practise, practise, practise!** Practise the complete presentation **aloud and many times.** Practise in front of an audience such as family, friends, videotape or **a mirror! Time** the speech and **stick to given limits**.
3. Have a **backup plan** in case the technology fails!

**Use visual aids** to add interest, to help simplify the message and to increase audience understanding. Visual aids need to be large, clear, simple and relevant. Make any handouts available before the speech begins. Refer directly to the visual aid in the speech. Know how to usethe technology and ensure that equipment works before the presentation begins.

**Know what’s coming up next**. Be sure to know which slide is coming up next so that you can introduce it and link it to the previous slide *before* you hit the page down button. For example, “So after I designed and built my robot, I needed to test it” (the previous slides would have shown how the robot was designed and built and next slide would show how the functionality of the robot was tested).

**Voice signals are vital.** Speak more slowly, pronounce words more clearly than normal,raise your voice and project towards the back wall, andavoid “conversational” language such as “um, er, gonna and youse”.

**Body signals are also important.** Always face the audience (never board or screen unless you need to point to something on a diagram)andstand straight with chin up to direct your voice to the listeners.Keep hands open and avoid nervous gestures. Eye contact is essential. Be sure to scan across the audience rather than focusing on one or two individuals.

***Remember nervousness is normal.***

Thorough preparation and practise decreases anxiety**.** Organise equipment and visual aids earlyand ensure power point slides are simple and clear. It may help to bring detailed notes to get you started and as a ‘safety net’ throughout the presentation. Breathe deeply. Develop positive mental thoughts.

**If fear is extreme see a counsellor!**

**Know the criteria for assessment**

It is important that you plan your presentation with reference to the criteria for assessment. In general, assessment criteria cover two broad areas: content and delivery. Marking schemes also often include marks for quality of visual aids. Below is a list of the kinds of things that may be assessed:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sample marking criteria sheet for assessing oral presentations** | | | | |
| **Level of competence:**  **1 = poor, 2= fair,**  **3= good**  **4 = excellent** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **Content** | Student does not have grasp of subject matter; student cannot answer questions about subject. | Student is uncomfortable with subject matter and is able to answer only rudimentary questions. | Student is at ease with subject matter, but fails to elaborate. | Student demonstrates full knowledge (more than required) of subject matter and elaborates on subject. |
| **Organisation/structure** | Presentation is difficult to follow because it is not ordered logically. | Presentation is difficult to follow because student jumps from subject to subject. | Presentation is in logical sequence and able to be followed. | Presentation is in logical and interesting sequence. |
| **Communication aids (visual or auditory)** | Student uses superfluous aids or no aids. | Student occasionally uses aids that rarely support text and presentation. | Students’ aids relate to text and presentation. | Students’ aids explain and reinforce screen text and presentation. |
| **Writing/editing of visual aids** | Presentation has four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors. | Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors. | Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors. | Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors. |
| **Delivery** | Student mumbles, incorrectly pronounces terms, and speaks too quietly for students in the back of class to hear. | Students’ voice is low. Student incorrectly pronounces terms. Audience members have difficulty hearing presentation. | Students’ voice is clear. Student pronounces most words correctly. Most audience members can hear presentation. | Student uses a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms so that all audience members can hear presentation. |
| **Questions** | Responds to questions inadequately. | Misses some opportunities for interaction and does not always comfortably handle questions. | Generally responds to audience comments, questions and needs. | Consistently clarifies, restates, and responds to questions effectively and sensitively. |

**Some tips for taking exams**

**Managing stress and staying motivated**

Although a small amount of stress before exams may aid your performance, too much anxiety will negatively affect your exam performance. Around exam time, the La Trobe counselling service on the Melbourne campus runs group seminars on exam success. The counselling webpage [http://www.latrobe.edu.au/counselling/](http://www.apostropheabuse.com/) has information about study timetables, goal setting, planning and priorities. If you feel overwhelmed by exam stress or study motivation problems and unable to cope, you can make an individual appointment with one of the counsellors on your campus.

There are several general strategies you can try to reduce your anxiety before and during exams.

* **Start early and stay on track with your exam preparation** to reduce your stress levels.
* **Look after your health.** Get plenty of sleep, eat healthy food and try to find time to exercise. Many people find that yoga and breathing exercises can help keep them in tune both physically and mentally.
* **Keep things in perspective.** Although it may seem at the time that the next exam will be the most important event in your entire life, this is probably not really the case and thinking like this only puts more pressure on yourself.
* **Take a break**. Notice when you are tired or losing concentration. If you feel like this late at night, you could make more effective use of your time by going to bed and getting up earlier the next morning to study when your mind is feeling fresher. A good way to refresh a tired mind is to go on a brisk 15 minute walk. A 15 minute TV break is not usually refreshing and can easily turn into a one hour break.
* **Set rewards for yourself**. Rewards for good progress can assist with motivation. Try setting yourself a goal and rewarding yourself when you achieve it.



**Preparing for exams**

**Linear summaries** for each topic. Numbering each point can help with recall in the exam*. Keep summaries brief*.

**DIGESTION & NUTRITION**

**Feeding mechanisms**

1. **Particulate Matter**
2. **Food Masses**
3. **Fluids**

**Nutritional requirements**

* + - 1. **Carbohydrates**
      2. **Proteins**
      3. **Fats**
      4. **Water**
      5. **Mineral Salts**
      6. **Vitamins**

**Mind Maps** or other diagramssuch as flow charts and grids. During an exam, it is often easier to recall information which has been represented diagrammatically. *Colours* are particularly helpful to stimulate the memory.



There are a number of websites where you can get mind map software, e.g. Freemind, Inspiration, Thinkgraph, and Visual Mind. Some of these are free or freeware programs and others are commercial.

**Flash cards.** If you have access to past exam papers or revision questions on LMS, you can copy and paste the question on one side and the answer on the other. This is especially useful for multiple choice questions. If you don’t have past questions or revision questions, you can create your own based on the topic areas you have studied.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **(FRONT)**  **The tissue that always has a free surface exposed to the internal or external environment is?**   1. **Epithelial tissue** 2. **Connective tissue** 3. **Muscle tissue** 4. **Neural tissue** 5. **Contractive tissue** | **(BACK)**   1. **Epithelial tissue** |

**Glossary.** You may find you have many new terms to learn. Learning them gradually over the semester is the most effective way to remember them. Try keeping a small notebook where you can record new terminology for each of your subjects, as in the example below. Some of your first year subjects may have a glossary available on LMS or in your lab manual.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Term** | **Definition** |
| Cardiac Muscle | Specialized muscle of the heart |
| Cilia | Tiny, hair like projections on cell surfaces that move in a wavelike manner |

**Types of exams**

**Multiple choice questions**

Many students believe that to answer a multiple choice question they need only be able to *recognise* material and so need only do minimal revision. A well-written multiple choice examination, however, will require you not only to have a thorough knowledge of the subject, but also to be able to integrate and apply information and to discriminate between similar answers.

* Carefully note the connecting words as well as the key words in both the question stem and possible answers.
* Beware of double negatives. For example, the question might ask, “which of the following is true?”, and the first answer may read, “(a) it is *not* the case that...”
* Think carefully about sentences with words such as *never* and *always.*
* Try considering each alternative of a multiple choice question as a true/false statement and then choose the odd one out.
* If you see an answer that you think is correct, check to make sure that the others are *in*correct. You may find that you’ve been a bit hasty.
* Does the question contain any clues to the answer? Do the alternative answers give clues? Through careful analysis and a process of elimination it may be possible to arrive at the correct answer even if at first sight you did not have any idea.
* If you are not quite sure of an answer, guess (unless of course there is a penalty for incorrect answers).

Do not pay attention to old myths such as, ‘if you don’t know the answer always tick the first box’ or, ‘always pick the shortest or the longest answer’. An educated guess after careful consideration of all the options is more likely to score an extra point. Another popular myth is that if you change your answer you are more likely to change it to an incorrect answer. In fact, studies have been done which prove just the opposite.

**Short answer and essay questions**

Your main aim is to provide a clear, logical explanation that can be followed easily by your examiner.

* Don’t rush into a question. Give yourself time to think about and plan your answer. Before writing, make notes or a brief outline to aid your memory if you have a mental block later.
* *Short answer* - summarise the main points in the first sentence. This means that you will have to carefully plan your answer first. Also, if you run out of time your examiner will be able to see where you were heading with your answer.
* *Essay* - your introduction should outline the main points of your argument. The body of the essay should consist of a *logical* sequence of these ideas. Have one main idea per paragraph and express the main point of the paragraph in the first sentence. The conclusion should provide a summary of your argument.
* If you run out of time or misjudge things and still have a question to go, then write notes/points. Set out a plan of how you would have answered the question if you’d had time. A well-structured outline is often sufficient to achieve a pass for that question.
* In a short answer question, content must be strictly relevant. Make sure that your answer is clear and concise. Padding wastes time and may lose you marks.
* If appropriate, include clearly-labelled graphs or diagrams. These may help you to remember things which you have forgotten or provide you with a basis for your writing.

**Problem-solving questions**

* Read the question carefully. Take note of each part of the question you will have to address.
* Check carefully what data you have been given and what has been left out.
* Think about which principles could be applied to the data. List any formulae you will need to answer the question, without placing the given values in them. This will help to avoid unnecessary slips resulting from a faulty transcription of the formulae.
* Decide the order of the steps you will have to take in order to get to the answer.
* Double check your arithmetic before moving onto the next step. Make sure you haven’t misplaced any decimal points or made an incorrect substitution in the formula.
* Include all of your calculations in your answer. That way even if the final outcome is incorrect, your examiner will be able to see where the mistake was made and may still award you some marks for your approach to the question.
* If the dimensions of the final result do not seem right, check your computations again and if you still come up with the same answer, write down whether or not you believe it to be valid and provide a possible explanation for such a result.

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