A Guide to Reading and Writing at University

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Illustrations by Stacey Stent
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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Reading with purpose</td>
<td>Melina Ojambo &amp; Frank Karigambe</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Paraphrasing (using your own words)</td>
<td>Michelle Chinaka &amp; Melina Ojambo</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Planning your Assignment</td>
<td>Melina Ojambo</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Developing an argument</td>
<td>Melina Ojambo</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5: Introduction and conclusions</td>
<td>Michelle Chinaka</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6: Coherence and cohesion</td>
<td>Melina Ojambo</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7: Let your voice be heard (Voice)</td>
<td>Melina Ojambo</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>How to make an appointment with the writing centre</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

At University you will be expected to write well thought out texts (or written assignments). The goal of writing is to communicate ideas clearly and concisely. Right from the beginning, the reader should have a good understanding of what your text is about and why you are writing it. They should be able to see the central idea (or argument) of your text (assignment) and be able to identify the main ideas or points in your argument. Therefore, your text needs to have a clear structure from the beginning to the end with a strong introduction, a well-structured body (with paragraphs) and a clear conclusion. The ideas in your assignment should flow logically from one to the next and support your central argument.

At university you will also be expected to integrate the thoughts and ideas of other authors in your texts (assignments). It is therefore important to know how to select, read and understand different kinds of academic texts (e.g. journal articles and textbooks). It is also important to know how to integrate the ideas of other authors in your text. The first two chapters of this workbook look at these key issues. The chapters that follow look at how to achieve clarity in your writing and begin by looking at how to plan your assignments (chapter 3) and how to develop a strong argument (chapter 4). Following this, chapter 5 discusses how to write strong introductions and conclusions, while chapter 6 looks at how to structure the body of your assignments and improve the flow of ideas within your text. The final chapter in this workbook (chapter 7) looks at how you can make your thoughts (or opinions) clear to the reader as you write texts.
CHAPTER 1: READING WITH PURPOSE

At university you will be expected to write your assignments with a higher level of understanding than high school. You therefore need to be able to read and understand your course readings (journal articles, text books) as well as identify and extract important information from the readings. Below are some tips that you should keep in mind as you read a text.

1. **KNOW YOUR PURPOSE**

Before you begin to read a text you should know why you’re reading it and the kind of information that you need to extract from it. You therefore need to know your purpose for reading the text. For example, if the purpose is to write an essay, then you would need to use the essay topic to guide you as you read the text. The essay topic would be helpful in identifying specific information or content that is relevant (in the text). However if your purpose is to prepare for a test or exam then the range of topics that you would need to cover (as you read the text) would probably be much wider.

Knowing your purpose can also help you select appropriate texts. Different kinds of assignments may require you to use different kinds of sources or reading material. For example, if you need to design an academic poster raising awareness about a current health issue in society, you may need to use sources that are current like “newspapers” and “up to date websites” as well as journal articles and your text books. However if you are writing an academic essay about a particular theory or concept, you would probably draw most of your information from academic literature like your text books and journal articles.

The sources (e.g. readings) that you use should be appropriate to the subject, course or discipline that you are doing. For example, if you are writing a psychology
essay it would be best to use sources that are within or related to the discipline of psychology (e.g. psychology textbooks/journal articles) rather than using sources from a different discipline (e.g. law). Although different disciplines may sometimes discuss similar topics, they will usually look at different aspects of these topics.

In the early years of university your lecturers and tutors will often provide you with a list of specific readings to do. This does not mean that you are not allowed to read any other material. In fact, reading additional literature will usually give you a better understanding of your course material as you get to explore a wide range of opinions and perspectives.

2. FOCUS ON THE MEANING OF THE TEXT

The second tip that you should keep in mind when reading is to focus on the general meaning of the text rather than the meaning of each word on the page. Many people believe that reading is about knowing and understanding BIG words, however, reading is more about understanding what the writer is trying to say. Good readers do not need to understand every single word on the page rather, they try to "guess" what the writer is trying to say when they come across words that they do not understand. If you come across a word that you don’t understand, skip it, and read to the end of the sentence/paragraph, then come back to it and use the sentences around the word to try and work out the writer's meaning. This is called “intelligent guessing.”

If you cannot work out the meaning of a word yourself, then you will have to turn to the dictionary. This is not a bad thing to do, it is just that in some reading situations it should be treated as a last resort, as it can be very difficult to follow an author’s argument if you are constantly having to interrupt your reading to consult the dictionary...Once you have worked out what a word means, or looked it up, it is worth trying to remember it, so that you don’t have to look it up again next time you see it, and also so that it is available to you when you write your essays and assignments. Some students keep a little notebook in which they write down all the new words they are learning, and the explanations of those words...Try using your new vocabulary in tutorials, assignments and essays, as the feedback you receive will help you to modify and refine your understanding of new words, especially those that are subject specific.

‘This extract is taken from ‘Studying at University: A guide for first year students’ available in open access at: http://open.uct.ac.za/handle/11427/2635
3. **INTERACT WITH THE WRITER**

Good readers establish a relationship with the writer and read critically. Therefore, as we read texts we should interact with the writers and what they are trying to say. For example by asking questions, jotting down thoughts/comments, and highlighting important points. What do you think about what the writer is saying? do you agree/ disagree with their views? Why? Do other authors agree/ disagree with the writers ideas? This is known as “active reading” (Hutchings, 2014).

![Image of a woman speaking]

Professionals need to be life-long learners and reading is an important part of acquiring information and learning. Therefore active reading is a skill that will benefit you for years to come!

4. **USE A READING STRATEGY**

There are many different reading strategies. One strategy that can help you become a better reader is the **preview, overview and inview strategy** (P.O.I)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preview</td>
<td>Quick/ broad perusal of a reading/ text to see whether it is appropriate and relevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>This is a more detailed perusal of the text than the preview, but is still a broad (not detailed) perusal. The aim is to help the reader understand the main ideas in the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inview</td>
<td>Detailed reading of the text to get an in-depth understanding.</td>
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**Preview**

Many times people go to the cinema to watch a movie because they watched the trailer (or preview) of the movie and this gave them an idea of what the movie is about. The trailer therefore probably helped them decide whether the movie was worth watching. Previewing readings follows the same logic. You quickly look through a reading to see what it is about and this helps you decide whether you would like to read it or not. Previewing helps you select appropriate/ relevant texts. Even when you have been given a list of readings previewing the sources on the list may help you decide which of them are most relevant and this can help you decide which source to read first.
To do a preview look at the features of the source that will give you important information quickly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Text Features to look at when previewing a source</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The title and subtitle of the source</td>
<td>These usually let you know the main issues or topics that will be discussed in the source</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The front and back covers of text books | These usually include:  
- A short summary of what the book is about.  
- Comments by reviewers: these help us see what other people think of the book.  
- Information about the author(s) of the book for example their discipline and level of expertise. As mentioned earlier the sources you use should be appropriate to the subject, course or discipline that you are doing. If you are working on a biology assignment then a book by a biologist may be more appropriate to use than a book by a psychologist. Even though both sources may discuss the same topic they will usually look at different aspects of the topic.  
- The target audience that is who the book is written for. This may help you decide whether the information in the source is appropriate for your purpose. For example If the target audience is high school students, although the topic may be relevant the information provided in the book may be too basic for a university assignment. |
| Journal Titles | If the source is a journal article, the title of the journal in which the article is published is also important as it highlights the discipline/subject area of the article. |
| Abstracts of journal articles | These provide concise summaries of the articles which can immediately help you decide whether it’s relevant or not. |
| Table of Contents | This is always found in the first few pages of the book and includes the titles (and possibly sub-titles) of each chapter. This indicates what the different chapters in the book are about and can help you decide which chapters are useful. If the book is written by multiple authors the contents page also lets the reader know who authored each chapter. If an author is well known in a particular subject area (that is relevant), you may want to start by reading that chapter. |
| The printing history | This is also usually found in the first few pages of the book. It shows the year the book was published and how many re-prints and editions of the book have been released since then. The printing history will therefore indicate how up to date the information in the book is. If you have been asked to do an assignment on a current health issue (e.g. the impact of a new health system) it would be important to use current sources. The printing history can help you determine how current the sources are. If a book was originally published a long time ago but has been re-issued several times this indicates that the information in the book is probably still useful. Thus the printing history can help you determine the relevance or usefulness of a source. |
Preview exercise 1

Using the preview tips discussed above, preview one of the sources that you need to read for one of your assignments and answer the questions that follow:

  - How did you identify what kind of text it is? Why is it important to know what kind of text it is?
- Is it likely to be reliable (accurate) and authoritative (can it claim to be taken seriously)? Why do you say so?
- How up to date is it? Does this matter?
- Who is the author? What authority does he/she have in respect to the subject (expert vs. merely reporting)?
- For whom is it written and for what reason? (target audience)
- With your assignment topic in mind, think about what information you need from this particular reading. Will this reading fulfill this need? Is it relevant?

Preview exercise 2

Imagine that you need to write an essay on “The role of family and friends in helping patients cope with cancer.” Read through the table of contents below (from a hypothetical book with chapters written by various authors) and answer the following questions:

- Do you think this reading is relevant? Why?
- If it is, are there particular chapters that you would explore in more detail than others? What chapters are these and why would you explore them more?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 What is a terminal disease? ................................................. M. Dlamini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The effects of terminal diseases on patients ........................ J. Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 The role of the multi-professional team in caring for patients.... W. Obote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 How patients cope with terminal illness ................................ M. Dlamini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 The impact of social support on emotional well-being ............ M. Dlamini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 The role of Health professionals in the healthcare system........ W. Obote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Stress and Burn out amongst health professionals................ L. Carington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Health professionals coping with stress............................... L. Carington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Future research options ...................................................... J. Smith</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overview

Once you have previewed and selected a source to read, the next step is to do an overview of the reading. Overviews provide a more detailed understanding of readings than previews however, the understanding is broad rather than in-depth. Overviews help the reader identify the main ideas in the text.
Let’s say that a friend of yours wants you to go on a blind date with someone they know. Before you agree to go on the date you will probably ask your friend to give you some information about the person (e.g. their name, what they do and where they are from). You may also go on to the internet to look for information about them (for example through their facebook profile). This information would give you a basic idea (preview) of who the person is and help you decide whether you would like to meet them or not. In the same way previewing a text helps you decide whether to read it or not. If you decide to go on the blind date, during the first meeting you would probably ask your date general questions about themselves with the aim of gaining a better understanding or overview of who they are. You probably would not jump straight into asking them personal questions about themselves. In the same way, you should not jump straight into exploring the details of a reading after you have previewed it. Rather do an overview first as this will give you an understanding of what the text as a whole is about. There are several features of a text that you can look at in order to do an overview. Some of these are listed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Text Features to use for overviews</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introductions and conclusions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-titles (headings and sub-headings in the text)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Words that are in italics, underlined or bold type</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First and last paragraph of each section or the first and last sentence of each paragraph</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diagrams, pictures, graphs, charts or tables and their captions</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Overview exercises**

1. Think carefully about the book title “The poor quality of healthcare in hospitals”
   - Does the title help the reader discover the main idea of the reading?
   - What does the title tell us about the reading? What are some of the ideas that may be discussed in this reading?
2. Do an overview of a journal article (a suggestion is given below) and answer the questions that follow.
   - Look at the title and read the abstract
   - Skim the reading, focusing on headings and sub-headings
   - Read the introduction and conclusion
   - Read the first few sentences of each section
   - Look at pictures, graphs, charts and their captions.
   - Look at words that are in bold or italics or other typefaces


a) What is the article about? Discuss the main ideas conveyed by the author.
b) What is the overall purpose of the reading.
c) Look at your first assignment topic and think about whether you can use this reading as a source for your assignment. If it is relevant, decide whether you would need to read the whole article or focus on specific sections.

3. Look at the table of contents, the preface (foreword) and the introduction of one of your text books (a suggestion is given below). What does this tell you about the book?


4. Do a preview and an overview of the reading below and answer the following questions:


- What is dignity conserving care?
- *What is the difference between dignity* conserving care and focusing solely on the treatment of disease?

**Inview**

Once you have completed the overview and understood what the text is about in general, you can begin to do an in depth exploration of the reading. This detailed reading of the text is referred to as the “inview”. The main aim is to get a sound understanding of the author’s ideas, opinions and/or argument. As you read the text you should identify the ideas or points that the author has presented in support of their main argument and/or conclusion. You should also think about how the different ideas presented in the text are connected. Finally, you should not only think
about what the author is saying but also think about your response to what they are saying. Therefore, you need to interact with the text by asking yourself questions for example ‘do I agree or disagree with the author? Why?’ As you do the inview you may need to go back and re-read some sections or paragraphs of the text to make sure that you fully understand what the author was trying to communicate. This interactive approach to reading will help you develop a critical and analytical approach to the information and ideas you are reading about.

Below are some questions that you can ask yourself as you do an inview of a reading.

- What is the main point of the text? What is the author trying to say through the text?
- Do I agree/ disagree with the author’s views? Why?
- Are the author’s views similar to other authors or are they different?
- How does this relate to other readings I’ve read on this subject?
- Is the author’s conclusion clear and logical. What evidence did he/she present in support of the conclusion? Is the evidence credible?
- Did you find information that is relevant (link to your purpose)? If you did, how can you effectively use the information you have found, and for what purpose?

MAKING NOTES FROM READING MATERIALS

Making notes is a good way of identifying and remembering the main points of a reading. Good notes serve as a “store” from which you can draw ideas for your assignments.

There are different ways of making notes from your readings.

1. **Underlining** or **highlighting the main points** in the text. You should be careful not to underline or highlight every single sentence in the text as this means that you haven’t identified the main points. One way to avoid this is by underlining the main points after you have read through a section of the text. Once you’ve read through the section ask yourself what is the main point of this paragraph/section?

2. **Making notes in the margins.** These notes should also indicate what the main points in the text are and can be written in different ways. For example, some students may use one word to summarise the main ideas of each paragraph. Others may write brief summaries of sections in their own words.
3. Making notes on a separate page. These notes can also be written in different ways e.g. mind maps, summaries or bulleted lists. Making notes on a separate page can help you test how well you understand your readings as you use your own words to outline the main points of the reading.

“...It is important that your notes reflect your understanding of the material, as well as your own critical response to it...” (Hutchings, 2014).

Inview exercise 1

1. Do an inview of the reading below and make notes as you do so.


2. Write a summary or draw a mind map of the content of the article. After this answer the following questions:
   - What is the author’s purpose or goal in this article? What does he or she set out to explain, argue, or prove?
   - Does the author present an argument in the article? What is their main argument?
   - What points/ evidence did the author use to support their main argument? Is this evidence convincing? Is the conclusion logical and well supported?
   - Does the author present alternative points of view when needed? What are they?
   - Do I agree with the author’s ideas? Why?
   - What are the implications or consequences of the author’s reasoning and/or ideas and Arguments (direct or implied) in this article?

Inview exercise 2

Do an inview of the reading below and answer the questions that follow:


1. If you were the Minister of Health, would you be interested in health professionals in South Africa giving their patients dignity conserving care or focusing on treatment of diseases only? Why?

2. Briefly explain why it is challenging for health professionals to provide dignity conserving care?

3. Give two reasons why health professionals do not always think it’s important to have meaningful dialogue with the patients.
CHAPTER 2: PARAPHRASING

The world we live in is full of stories, ideas and opinions. Often we come across stories and ideas (in books, the media and conversations) that we find interesting and want to tell others about. When we share these ideas with others we often do not repeat what we heard or read word for word, but often use our own words to share the idea. Paraphrasing is when we relay someone else’s ideas, thoughts and/or opinions using our own words. In a paraphrase, “the ideas and meaning of the original source must be maintained; the main ideas need to come through, but the wording has to be your own” (Vineski, 2006: 1)

WHERE DO I START WHEN I WANT TO PARAPHRASE?

When paraphrasing it would be helpful to remember the following acronym (R.A.P.) (Collins et al, 1989:4)

1. Read a paragraph (or extract) from your readings
2. Ask yourself: "What is the main idea?" and "What are the important details?" in this paragraph extract?
3. Put this in your own words
PARAPHRASING STRATEGIES

There are various strategies (such as using synonyms) that you can use to paraphrase information from your text-books and readings. **It is advisable to use more than one strategy at a time** as will be illustrated below.

1. **Using Synonyms:**

   - A synonym is a word or phrase that means exactly or nearly the same as another word or phrase in the same language. E.g.:
     - Dignity – self-worth, respect, self-esteem
     - Speak – talk, share, open up
     - Important – significant, valuable, pertinent
   - The synonym strategy:
     - Read through a short passage and select a few words that you can replace with synonyms. Replace these words with synonyms that come as close to the meaning of the original as possible.
     - Compare the definitions of the original word with your synonym. If the definitions do not correspond, come up with a new substitution.
     - Reread the original passage with the new word(s) in place and see if it makes sense. If it changes in meaning, come up with new synonyms.

   **Synonym Example**

   - **Original quote**: “There are many ways of seeing and experiencing the world that depend on our upbringing and beliefs” (Gibson, Swartz & Sandenbergh, 2002: 74)
   - **Paraphrase**: There are several ways of understanding the world around us. Our views of the world are influenced by our values and how we were raised.

   *Exercise: In the paraphrase, the words in bold are synonyms of some words in the quote. Identify which words in the quote were replaced by each synonym in the paraphrase.*

2. **Using Varied Sentence Patterns/ Changing the order of ideas:**

   In this paraphrasing strategy the pattern of the sentence or the order of ideas in the sentence is changed without altering the meaning of the sentence.

   **Altered Sentence Example**

   - **Original quote**: “Our past experiences influence our lives in the present” (Gibson, Swartz & Sandenbergh, 2002: 45)
   - **Paraphrase**: How we live in the present, is influenced by our past experiences.
Key Questions:

- Does the altered sentence mean exactly the same as the original?
- Is the meaning clear?
- Does the altered sentence read smoothly?
- **Note**: when you alter sentences, it is advisable to use synonyms in the paraphrase to replace some of the words from the original quote. In this way you are using more than one strategy to paraphrase from the original.

3. **Breaking Long Sentences Into Shorter Ones:**

When paraphrasing long sentences, it may be helpful to break the sentence into shorter sentences. This strategy can be used in conjunction with synonyms and altered sentence patterns as is illustrated in the example below.

![Image of two figures, one running and jumping, the other running and stopping]

Example:

**Original quote**: Mental disorder is undoubtedly a serious problem in our society, and as a result, dozens of different psychotherapeutic procedures have been developed over the past few decades, but to date these procedures rarely lead to a complete cure, so psychologists continue to search for new theories concerning the origin of mental problems and to look for new techniques for eliminating the distress of mental patterns (USCA writing room, n.d).

**Paraphrase**: Over the past thirty or forty years various psychotherapeutic procedures have been developed to try and deal with the important issue of mental illness in society. However, people who receive these treatments rarely recover fully. As a result, psychologists have continued to look for new explanations and causes of mental illness, as well as new ways of treating mental illness.

_In the example above, the original quote which was one long sentence was broken up into shorter sentences in the paraphrase. The order of ideas in the original quote was also changed and synonyms were used to replace some of the words._
4. **Making complex ideas more concrete (easier to understand)**

You will often come across complex, abstract ideas in your readings. These may be definitions, concepts, theories, descriptions of procedures etc. When paraphrasing complex ideas, it may be helpful to break them down into simpler ideas and sentences that are easy to understand.

**Example:**

Original quote: “...negative feelings can trigger reflexive interrogation of experience that ultimately enhances learning and practice” (Olckers, Gibbs & Duncan, 2007: 7).

Paraphrase: Negative feelings can prompt people to think about and analyse the experience that triggered these feelings. This may help them learn from the experience and improve how they behave in future (Olckers, Gibbs & Duncan, 2007).

In the paraphrase above, the original quote is broken down into two simple ideas: 
1) That negative feelings can sometimes help people think about or analyse an experience they have had
2) That this analysis can help the person learn from the experience.

- Try to use several paraphrasing strategies when writing your assignments.
- Ensure that the paraphrase captures the meaning of the original quote.
- When you paraphrase ideas in your text you should **always** acknowledge the sources that you got the ideas from. You need to **reference every idea used** (whether it’s a paraphrase or a direct quote) to avoid plagiarism.
- There are various kinds of referencing styles and most lecturers and/or tutors will tell you which style to use. Many universities provide guidelines on how to reference. These guidelines are also available on the internet.
PARAPHRASING EXERCISES

Exercise 1
Split into small groups of about 3 students. Each student in the group should share one word with their group members (e.g. speak). The other group members should then respond by providing synonyms of the word that was shared.

Exercise 2
In Pairs or small groups, paraphrase the paragraphs below

Paragraph 1: (Northouse and Northouse, 1998: 140)
The interview process can be divided into four phases. (1) preparation, (2) initiation, (3) exploration and (4) termination. For the purposes of our discussion, each phase will be analysed separately, however, in actual interviews the phases blend into one another.

Paragraph 2: (Northouse & Northouse, 1998: 170)
The length of time it takes to move through all four phases of the interview process depends on factors such as the goal of the interview, the severity of the client’s problem, the skills of the clinician and the number of problems that emerge. In general, movement through all four phases will occur more rapidly (1) when the goal is information sharing rather than therapeutic change, (2) when the client’s personality is well integrated as opposed to severely disorganised and (3) when there is only a single problem rather than several problems.

Exercise 2
1. Read an extract from one of your course readings/ text books.
2. In your own words, tell the person sitting next you what the main/ important ideas are in the extract.
3. Write a paraphrase of the extract.
CHAPTER 3: PLANNING YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Imagine that one day you received an invitation from the dean of your faculty to present the grievances of undergraduate students at a meeting with various university officials. After the panic has worn off, you would probably begin to think about and plan what you are going to say. In fact, you may even develop an outline of the points you would like to discuss at the meeting. In the same way, before you begin to write long texts, it's important to think about what you are going to say and how you are going to organise and present this information.

You therefore need to ensure that you understand the assignment topic well as it tells you what content to cover. It also indicates what kind of information you need to look for in your readings/sources. Understanding the topic will therefore help you read with purpose. In light of this, this chapter begins by looking at how to analyse and understand assignment topics. Secondly, it looks at how to organise your ideas in a logical manner and develop an assignment outline.

UNDERSTANDING ASSIGNMENT TOPICS

A task analysis is a systematic examination of the topic. Academic topics usually comprise 3 important parts: Key (macro) areas of focus, minor (micro) areas of focus and action words.

1. **Key areas of focus** are the broad topic (content) areas that need to be discussed in the text. They tell us what content should be discussed in the assignment and therefore help us identify relevant content from our sources.

2. **Minor areas of focus** are narrower than the key areas of focus. They highlight specific information that should be included in the discussion of the broad topic areas. They can be used to limit the scope of the discussion. For example, assignment topics often indicate that specific time periods, contexts, locations, readings, sources or authors should be used in the discussion. These are examples of minor areas of focus.
3. **Action or instruction words** are the words/ phrases in the topic that indicate how you should present the content. That is they tell you what action you should take in dealing with the content for example: discuss, compare and contrast, and summarise (a list of action words and their definitions is provided at the end of this chapter).

**How to do a Task Analysis**

When you receive an assignment topic:
1. Identify and underline the key areas of focus, the minor areas of focus and the action words.
2. Think about whether the topic requires you to take a position/ stance. If it does, then you need to keep this in mind as you develop your assignment outline.

**Note:** *Rewriting the topic in your own words may help you understand it better.*

**Example: Task Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minor areas of focus</th>
<th>Action word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Drawing on your course readings and community visits <strong>discuss</strong> the impact of poverty on the health of individuals living in impoverished communities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In this task analysis example, the key content areas are ‘poverty’ and ‘health’, that is the impact of poverty on the health of people living in poor communities. The minor areas of focus are ‘include information and examples from your course readings and community visits’. Therefore the writer should keep this in mind as they discuss the key areas of focus. Finally the action word ‘discuss’ indicates that the writer should explore and examine the topic through argument. The writer therefore needs to develop an argument; that is they need to have an opinion that is clear to the reader and provide credible evidence to support their opinion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DEVELOPING ASSIGNMENT OUTLINES**

Once you've done a task analysis (before you begin to gather information from your readings/ sources) you should create a first draft of an assignment outline using the key and minor areas of focus as a guide. An outline is plan that shows what points/ ideas you may want to discuss in the assignment and how you intend to organise these points. This outline can be drawn up in different ways for example a mind map or a list of points. Coming back to the topic used in the task analysis example above, the first draft of the outline might look like this.
The first draft of the outline should be used to guide and focus your search for information from your sources as it highlights what you need to look for. After you've read some sources, you can refine the outline and add more information to it (see the example below).

**Assignment outline- draft 1**
1. What is poverty? Define Poverty
2. What is health? Define Health.
3. How does poverty affect the health of people living in poverty?

*Include information and examples from the readings and the community visits.*

The key and minor focus areas of the topic were used to develop a logical rough outline. Before we can discuss “the impact of poverty on health”, we would need to understand what poverty is. It therefore makes sense to start the assignment by discussing what poverty is. This point is put first in the outline. Similarly for the second key focus area “health of individuals in poor communities”. We would need to have a good understanding of what health is before we can discuss how health is affected by poverty. This is therefore put down as the second point in the outline.

**Assignment outline- draft 2 (refined outline)**
1. Define poverty: There are various definitions of poverty
   - Absolute poverty
   - Human poverty
   - Relative poverty
2. Define health? Health as holistic wellbeing (not just absence of disease).
3. Discuss various aspects of health
   - Emotional health
   - Physical health
   - Social health
   - Mental health
4. Discuss how poverty affects the emotional, physical, social and mental health of individuals.
5. Conclusion: Poverty can have a negative impact on the physical and mental health of individuals. However in some communities poverty can also have a positive impact on the social and emotional health of individuals due to factors like ubuntu” and community spirit.
Continuously refer back to the topic as you develop and refine your assignment outline. This will help you avoid going off topic and ensure that your outline contains relevant information. The points in your outline should be organised logically as this will help you make your assignment more coherent. Therefore, as you develop your assignment outline ask yourself questions like: What point should I discuss first? Which point should come second? Which point should be discussed last? Why?

In addition, as you develop your outline you need to determine whether you are expected to take a stance or position on the topic; that is whether you are expected to develop an argument. If you are then your outline should be structured around your argument. How you organise the points in your assignment affects the clarity of your views, opinion or argument. It is important to build the points/ideas in your assignment towards a central logical conclusion. The next chapter “developing an argument” discusses how you can organise the ideas in your text such that you develop a strong argument.

**LIST OF ACTION WORDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Word</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summarise</td>
<td>Objectively describe the main points of a source.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>Examine one object, theory or event in relation to another. Show both similarities and differences, emphasising similarities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Describing the difference(s) between two or more entities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Account For</td>
<td>Provide reasons for something or show causes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse</td>
<td>Find and describe the main ideas through careful argumentation showing how they are related and why they are important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Discuss briefly giving own observations and criticisms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticise</td>
<td>Give your considered judgment or opinion in a well reasoned argument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>This is the most widely used action word. It is purposefully open-ended. It generally invites an exploration of the topic through argument and your own opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate</td>
<td>Show by reasoned argument why a particular opinion, judgment or assertion is true.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Discuss advantages and disadvantages reflecting on your own opinion or analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine</td>
<td>Explore from different angles, showing cause and effect relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline</td>
<td>Give a short summary, focusing on main points and omitting minor details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>Give a detailed account in words (create a word picture of something).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify</td>
<td>List and describe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>Make clear and intelligible in a fairly detailed way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define</td>
<td>State the meaning of something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrate</td>
<td>Give examples to make your meaning clear.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Action words from: Task analysis Handout UCT Writing centre; DOH 1005F course guide)*
EXERCISES

Using the assignment topics below (or a topic from one of your class assignments):

1. Do a task analysis.
   a. Identify the action words, key and minor areas of focus.
   b. What is the action word asking you to do?

2. Develop a draft assignment outline.

3. Using the task analysis and outline discuss what kind of information you might need to gather from your sources.

**Topic 1:** Drawing on your course readings and visits to healthcare facilities discuss the role of the multi-professional team in the provision of healthcare in South Africa.

**Topic 3:** Provide a critique of the following statement, “Health professionals do not need to have people skills in order to treat patients. What they need is medical knowledge.”

**Topic 4:** compare and contrast the role of a physiotherapist and an occupational therapist in the provision of health care. Use examples to illustrate your points.

**Topic 2:** Over the past few years changes in South Africa have made the society more inclusive of people living with disabilities. However Smith (2010) and Dlamini (2012) have proposed that not enough has been done to improve the quality of life of people living with disabilities. Discuss what health professionals can do to improve the quality of life of those living with disabilities.
CHAPTER 4: DEVELOPING AN ARGUMENT

During the planning phase of your assignment as you do the task analysis, it’s important to determine whether the topic requires you to take a stance or present an argument as this influences how you structure or organise the ideas in your text. At university you will often be expected to present your opinion/view/stance on a topic. This stance should be structured around a central idea (referred to as your argument or thesis). How you organise the ideas in your text affects how clear your central argument is to the reader. Below are some strategies you can use to ensure that the central arguments in your assignments are clear to the reader.

1. DEVELOPING A CENTRAL ARGUMENT/THESIS

As mentioned above, your paper or assignment should have a central argument which can be summarised in a few sentences. This summarised version of the argument is referred to as a “thesis statement.” Once you have gone through your readings/sources, you should ask yourself: what is my view or stance on the topic? What do I think? This will help you determine what your thesis statement is. When developing your thesis statement ensure that it includes both a topic and a controlling idea. The topic revolves around the broad content areas under discussion in your assignment (key areas of focus) while the controlling idea revolves around your stance or view on the broad content areas. You may need to refine your thesis statement as you write your assignment.

**Example 1: Developing a thesis statement**

**Assignment topic:** Drawing on your course readings and community visits discuss the impact of poverty on the health of individuals living in impoverished communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Controlling idea</th>
<th>Thesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>Poverty has both positive and negative effects on health</td>
<td>Poverty can affect the health of individuals living in impoverished communities in both positive and negative ways.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example 2: Developing a thesis statement**

**Assignment topic:** Discuss the role of the multi-professional healthcare team in the provision of comprehensive care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Controlling idea</th>
<th>Thesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiprofessional teams, comprehensive care</td>
<td>Multi-professional teams are essential in the provision of comprehensive care</td>
<td>Multi-professional healthcare teams are essential in the provision of comprehensive (holistic) care to patients. Without multi-professional teams comprehensive care can never be realised.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **SUPPORTING POINTS/ CLAIMS**

Once you have determined what your central argument (thesis statement) is, you need to think about what points/ claims you have (from your readings/ sources) in support of the central argument. One way to discover what your supporting claims are is to ask yourself: why do I believe this central claim? Why do I hold this view? Answering this question may help you think through some of the supporting points you can discuss in your assignment.

**Example 3: Developing supporting points**

Coming back to the thesis statement from example 1 above, you would ask yourself: why do I think that poverty has both positive and negative effects on people’s health? What points do I have from my readings/ sources that support this central argument? Possible answers may be:

1) There are different aspects to health. Health is not just about the physical health of individuals but also looks at other aspects like emotional, mental and social health.
2) Poverty affects these different aspects of health in different ways. Some in positive ways and others in negative ways.
3) In some impoverished communities there are factors that have a negative influence on the physical and emotional health of individuals in the community e.g. lack of income to pay for health services, lack of transport to get to health facilities, crime and insecurity, stress etc.
4) However, there are also factors that influence the social, emotional and physical health of individuals positively in some impoverished communities. For example community spirit, unity, the presence of primary clinics that provide free healthcare etc.

*The points above would become the supporting claims/ points in your assignment.*

As can be seen from the example above, each supporting point should be clearly linked/ related to the central idea/ argument. In addition, each paragraph in your paper should revolve around one supporting point. Therefore, the central argument should be woven into the text from the beginning to the end of the paper. For example both the introduction and conclusion will usually present the thesis statement of the paper. The reader therefore should know what the argument is right from the beginning to the end of the paper.

3. **EVIDENCE**

Once you have decided what your supporting points are, it’s important to ensure that they are explained clearly and supported by evidence from your readings and sources. Integrating and referencing credible literature in your text can strengthen your argument. Therefore as you do your readings you need to constantly ask: How does this relate to the topic and my central argument? Regularly refer back to your assignment topic and central argument to ensure that your supporting points and evidence are aligned to the topic.
4. **USE YOUR THESIS STATEMENT TO STRUCTURE YOUR TASK**

The way in which you word your thesis statement should indicate to the reader how you will structure (organise) your assignment. See the examples below.

**Example 1: Structuring your task**

**Assignment topic:** Describe the different interview phases and discuss why it's important for health professionals to be empathic and non-judgmental when interviewing patients.

**Thesis statement:** “Empathy and non-judgmentalism play an important role in each phase of the interview process. It is therefore important for health professionals to be empathic and non-judgemental throughout the interview process.”

With this thesis the writer promises a chronological structure, which requires discussing the interview phases in order, with a paragraph or more given to each one. The writer may discuss the role of empathy and non-judgmentalism as they describe each phase, or may choose to describe each phase of the interview first and then move on to discussing the role of empathy and non-judgmentalism in each phase.

**Paragraph 1**
After the introduction paragraph, the first paragraph in the body of your assignment will probably state that interviews are made up of various phases and then list the phases (preparation, initiation, exploration and termination phase).

**Paragraph 2**
You would then describe the first phase of the interview (preparation) and discuss the role of empathy and non-judgmentalism in this phase.

**Paragraph 3**
Next would be the description of the initiation phase, as well as the role of empathy and non-judgmentalism in this phase.
Paragraph 4
Followed by the description of the exploration phase and the role of empathy and non-judgmentalism in this phase.

Paragraph 5
Finally, you would describe the last phase, the termination phase and discuss the role of empathy and non-judgmentalism in this phase.

Note: Sometimes you will need to use more than one method of organising/structuring the ideas in your assignments. See example 2.

Example 2: Structuring your task

Assignment Topic: Discuss whether the Comprehensive primary health care approach is the best way to ensure that all people living in South Africa are able to access healthcare.

Thesis Statement: Although the comprehensive primary Health care (CPHC) approach has been criticised for being idealistic and difficult to implement, the advantages of this approach outweigh the disadvantages. CPHC is the only way that health for all in South Africa can become a reality.

After reading this thesis the reader may expect the writer to employ a ‘claim to counter claim’ structure as well as a ‘general to specific’ structure. The introduction would probably describe the CPHC approach in general. The rest of the paragraphs may then move on to the specifics of the CPHC approach by presenting the flaws of the CPHC approach, followed by counter-claims of the benefits of the CPHC approach.

Introduction
General description of the CPHC approach.

Paragraph 1
Discuss the first possible flaw of the CPHC approach.

Paragraph 2
Discuss the benefit of the approach that counters the flaw discussed in the first paragraph.

Paragraph 3
Discuss the second possible flaw of the CPHC approach.

Paragraph 4
Discuss the benefit of the approach that counters the flaw discussed in the third paragraph.
There are various methods you can use to organise the points/ideas in your assignments. Some examples are presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of organisation</th>
<th>Description of the method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sequence in time or space</td>
<td>this method is characterized by explicit time markers. e.g. firstly, secondly, the first step, following this, next. It is used for narrative or descriptive writing e.g. experimental procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical Order</td>
<td>this method is often used to structure arguments. One sentence/paragraph is a proposition and the next is a conclusion or result.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause and Effect</td>
<td>State and explain the causes of a phenomenon and then identify, explain, and discuss the effects, relying on the logical order principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-Solution</td>
<td>Identify problems and propose solutions to those problems, relying on the logical order principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General to specific</td>
<td>explaining a topic, idea, or concept beginning with general information and moving toward specific aspects of this topic, idea or concept. This may include clear concepts or categories to be developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplification</td>
<td>one sentence/paragraph clarifies an earlier one by defining, qualifying or illustrating it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accumulation</td>
<td>one sentence/paragraph introduces an idea or example similar to that of preceding sentence/paragraph – often introduced by transitional words such as likewise, also, and, moreover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>highlight the differences between ideas by contrasting the idea of one paragraph with that of another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>Bring out similarities and differences in ideas by comparing the idea in one paragraph/sentence with that of another paragraph/sentence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claim to counter-claim</td>
<td>One paragraph/sentence presents a particular view on a topic, concept, idea and the next paragraph/sentence counters this view by presenting a different/alternative view of the topic or idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question to answer</td>
<td>One paragraph/sentence answers a question that was presented in an earlier paragraph/sentence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DEVELOPING ARGUMENTS EXERCISES

Exercise 1
For the thesis statement below use the ‘general to specific’ organization strategy to compose main points (topic sentences) for a five to six paragraph essay.

“If health professionals truly desire to be competent and efficient professionals, they need to be knowledgeable, empathic and reflective. That is they need to be integrated health professionals.”

Exercise 2
Read through the thesis statements below and discuss what organisation strategy you would use to structure the paper/ assignment. Develop an assignment outline for a 5 to 6 paragraph essay.

1. “Reflection is an integral part of learning. If health professionals do not regularly reflect on the knowledge they’ve learned as well as past experiences with patients and colleagues, they will continue to make the same mistakes.”

2. “Stress management is important for health professionals because they work in highly stressful environments. Health professionals therefore need to have stress management strategies to prevent burnout.”

3. “Multi-professional healthcare teams are essential in the provision of comprehensive (all-round) care to patients. Without multi-professional teams comprehensive care can never be realised.”
CHAPTER 5: INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

These are very important parts of an essay. What do you think the purpose of an Introduction and Conclusion is?

Introductions are used to:

- Set the scene/ context – that is provide some history or background about the topic
- Define some important terms – avoid dictionary definitions!
- Raise a question that you will answer in the rest of the essay
- Outline some of the main points to be covered in the body of your assignment.
- State your approach or position on the topic/ argument. DO NOT however just repeat or state the essay topic, or get into detail right away.
- Attract your reader’s attention- this can be through having an interesting title or by using a provocative title that makes the reader look forward to reading it.

Conclusions are used to:

- take us back to round things off
- restate you central argument
- explain the importance of what you have just learned
- look to the future and offer suggestions/predictions/recommendations
- point out your limitations/what you have not been able to cover in your essay
REMEMBER!

1. do not introduce any new material in the conclusion
2. It may be helpful to write a rough conclusion first, before writing your essay, so that you know where you are going. Rewrite it, if necessary, when you have finished reviewing and editing the essay.

INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXERCISES

In groups, discuss the following introductions and conclusions from students' essays. Think carefully about how the extracts are structured and answer the following questions:

- What kind of information do they convey about the topic under the discussion?
- Do they satisfy the requirements and purpose of introductions and conclusions in academic essays?

Essay Topic: Discuss the importance of the Integrated Health Professional and the A,B,C,D of Dignity conserving care.

Essay 1

INTRODUCTION

As an aspiring health professional that is integrated, I need to read, learn and understand the A, B, C and D of dignity conserving care and the dimensions of the integrated health Professional (IHP). In this essay I will be discussing the concept of the IHP which includes three dimensions: reflection, empathy and knowledge. I will also go into detail about the “A”(Attitude), “B”(Behaviour), “C”(Compassion) and “D”(Dialogue) of dignity conserving care and finally link the three dimensions of IHP while explaining the ABC and D of dignity conserving care.
CONCLUSION

This essay illustrated the importance of the A, B, C and D of dignity conserving care in an IHP. As an aspiring health professional of tomorrow, I have learnt that patients need to be cared for and that medicine is more than just giving patients pills, but is an interaction between practitioner and patient where both parties profit in the end. Care-giving, compassion, love, trust "embrace the very essence of medicine" (Chochinov, 2007:187).

Essay 2

INTRODUCTION

This essay deals with professionalism in the workplace of healthcare providers. In elaborating on this I will be highlighting the dimensions of Integrated Health Professional (IHP) and the A, B, C and D of Dignity Conserving Care and the roles which they play in professionalism.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion the IHP and the A, B, C and D of dignity health care are clearly linked as they deal with dimensions of compassion, attitude, behaviour and dialogue which link with knowledge, empathy and reflection which in the long run leads to good professionalism when dealing with patients.

Essay 3

INTRODUCTION

Health professionals have different views of what it means to be a health professional and what skills they should have. Some seem to believe that all that is needed to practice efficiently is specialised knowledge and technical skills. However, for health professionals to be competent, they need several different kinds of skills, not only technical expertise. They therefore need to be integrated health professionals (IHP’s). In this task, I will begin by describing the IHP framework and briefly look at its various components. I will then describe a bad experience that I had during a consultation with a doctor, and will use this experience to discuss why it's important for health professionals to become integrated health professionals.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, as can be seen from this discussion, if health professionals truly desire to be competent and efficient professionals, they need to be knowledgeable, empathic and reflective. These characteristics of an IHP are important as they affect how patients respond to the health professional. They also affect what patients think
and how they feel about themselves. The IHP framework is a useful tool for developing health professionals to use, both now and when they eventually practise. As Chochinov (2007: 187) states “One of the essential qualities of the clinician is interest in humanity, for the secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient.”

Other essays:

The introductions and conclusions below were taken from the ECO1110H Language and Communications course reader.

Topic: South Africa’s hosting of the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup

Essay 4

INTRODUCTION

The 2010 world cup has been a talking point for many months now and I will be assessing whether or not it will leave South Africa poorer than before.

CONCLUSION

I can therefore conclude that with every advantage there is also a disadvantage that comes along with it. My opinion is that I personally can only judge the situation when the Soccer world cup is finished so that we can see the everlasting effects of the event and so that we can see where we are moving as a nation. There are many ways to criticize the World Cup but also many reasons to praise it as well and I am 50/50 on the topic and I have no intention of changing my stance any time before the world cup.

Essay 5

INTRODUCTION

The soccer world cup to be hosted in South Africa is an explosive event. South Africa is the first country on the face of African continent to host a soccer world cup. For a developing nation like South Africa, the excitement has placed much pressure on South African authorities to pull off a smashing event. According to Bohlmann (2006) there have been questions as to whether “mega events are a worthwhile investment”. These mega events often come at an astronomical cost. This essay will investigate whether the benefits of hosting the soccer world cup will ultimately outweigh the costs for the South African economy.
CONCLUSION

Even though it may seem as though FIFA 2010 will leave South Africa poorer in the short term; in the long term hosting FIFA 2010 promotes a bright future for South Africa’s economy. The past has proven that “developing countries usually require much larger capital investment in order to prepare for events of this nature,” Bohlmann (2006). Thus, the present opportunity cost of hosting this event is that the poverty stricken won’t benefit from FIFA 2010 right now. However, in terms of international recognition and foreign direct investment, hosting this event will give South Africa’s reputation a boost—on a goal scale ---that would not be able to get without hosting this event which will result in economic growth in the future.

Homework: Go through your next portfolio task question and start thinking about how to structure your introduction and conclusion.
CHAPTER 6: COHERENCE AND COHESION

Now that we have looked at how to write introductions and conclusions, we will move on to the body of your assignment. The body should be made up of well-structured paragraphs and should be coherent.

**Coherence** means that there is a logical flow to the ideas in your assignment/ text. It looks at whether your ideas and paragraphs link well.

**Cohesion** means that the sentences in each paragraph (in your assignment) are linked and that the ideas in each paragraph flow in a logical way. Having a clear progression from one sentence to the next helps the reader follow your reasoning.

**WHAT IS A WELL-STRUCTURED PARAGRAPH?**

1. Each paragraph should have one main idea, usually the first sentence, giving the most general sense of what the paragraph is about.

2. All further material in the paragraph should link to the main idea in a clear way, for instance expanding the main idea, explaining it further, giving examples, or developing the main idea systematically.

3. Every sentence should connect with the previous sentence. There are different ways of linking sentences in paragraph (some tips are provided in the next section).

4. The last sentence in the paragraph should have a connection with the next paragraph.

*(Van Pletzen, n.d)*

Remember, the goal of writing is to communicate ideas clearly and concisely. Cohesion and coherence help to make your writing clear.
HOW DO WE CREATE COHESION IN OUR PARAGRAPHS?

1. Use the “known-new contract”: Begin sentences with information, or with reference to information, that is familiar to your readers - usually information you've just given them. End sentences with information that is new to your readers.

   **Example**
   
   The Integrated health professional (IHP) framework is a tool that is used to help developing health professionals discover what it means to be good health professionals and the various skills that they need to be competent, holistic practitioners. **This framework** (known information) **also helps them become more aware of which skills they lack and as a result know how they can develop** (New information) (Ockers, Gibbs & Duncan, 2007: 4).

   *The second sentence uses the “known-new contract”. It starts by referring to known information (the IHP framework that was defined in the first sentence) by using the words “this framework.” The sentence then goes on to provide additional “new” information to the reader.*

2. Using *Pronouns* such as “these”, “they”, “it”, referring back to nouns.

   **Example**
   
   “Listening is a fundamental skill in many areas of work. Without being able to listen to **people**, to really understand what it is **they** mean and what **their** needs are, we are unable to help **them**...” (Gibson, Swartz & Sandenbergh, 2002: 19)

   *The pronouns “they”, “their” and “them” in this example refer back to the noun “people”.*

3. A *repeated word* can make a connection between one sentence and the next.

   **Example**
   
   ...If **the doctor** had taken the time to greet me as he entered the room or asked a few questions to help him understand what I was experiencing perhaps I would not have felt so insignificant. As Chochinov (2007: 12) states “not being treated with dignity and respect can undermine a sense of value or worth.” An empathic response from **the doctor** would have prevented my initial withdrawal and confusion as well as the final confrontation that happened. He would also have been able to get more information from me which would have helped him make a better-informed diagnosis.

   *In this example, the word “doctor” is repeated and this helps to link some of the sentences in the paragraph.*
4. Using **Synonyms** to make a connection between one sentence and the next.
   - Synonym: A word or phrase that means exactly or nearly the same as another word or phrase in the same language, for example *speak* is a synonym of *talk*.

   **Example**
   During my visit to the doctor’s office he gave me the room to talk and I therefore shared what was troubling me. As a result I felt understood and validated and realised that it’s important for health professionals to encourage their patients to speak during consultations.

   *In this example the words “talk”, “shared” and “speak” are synonyms that help to connect the sentences.*

5. Using **connectors/linking words** and phrases such as:
   - Time and sequence words: e.g. “Firstly...”, “Secondly...” “and then”, “before this happened, I decided to...”, “afterwards, I felt...”
   - Words indicating a shift/contrast e.g. “however”, “Although”
   - Words that show that you are adding to what you’ve said “furthermore”, “in addition”
   - Using cause and effect words like: “Because of my parent’s sacrifice, I succeeded in life...”
   - Illustration words: “For example”

6. Clear concepts or categories can be developed to structure your task.

   **Example**
   “Her life story clearly illustrates the benefits of being empathic rather than sympathetic. The individuals who felt sympathy for her pitied her and were so overwhelmed by her story that they were unable to help her adequately, however, those who showed empathy understood what she was going through and in so doing helped her feel comforted and heard.”

   *Here the paragraph is structured around two concepts (empathy and sympathy) that are discussed systematically. In some of your courses you may be asked to apply concepts or theories to case studies, your own or someone else’s experience. Concepts are key ideas, while theories are systematic explanations of the world around us. The example above illustrates how one can apply the concepts of “empathy and sympathy” to someone’s life.*

   *Note: You will probably need to use more than one cohesion strategy in a paragraph.*
**REMEMBER!**
Coherence means that there is a logical flow to the ideas in your assignment. It looks at whether your ideas and paragraphs link well. Therefore your assignment should be clearly structured as is illustrated below.

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### Additional examples of linking words/ connectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Linking words/ phrases</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sequence/ order words</strong></td>
<td>Firstly, secondly, first, second, next, finally, afterwards, before, earlier, to begin with, previously, in the past, historically, currently, presently, subsequently, then, thereafter, since, shortly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Addition words</strong></td>
<td>In addition, furthermore, moreover, further, not only...but also, again, also.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cause and effect words</strong></td>
<td>Therefore, consequently, as a result, because, hence, thus, for this reason, since, so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contrast words</strong></td>
<td>Although, though, but, conversely, even though, however, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the other hand, yet, in contrast, regardless, at the same time, still, notwithstanding, unlike, dissimilarly, despite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comparison (indicating similarity) words</strong></td>
<td>Similarly, likewise, in the same vein, in the same way, in similar fashion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emphasising words</strong></td>
<td>More importantly, most importantly, above all, significantly, certainly, indeed, in fact, off course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explanation and</strong></td>
<td>As aforementioned, as mentioned earlier, again, that is, to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COHESION AND COHERENCE EXERCISES

Exercise 1
Read through the paragraphs below:
1. Identify the main idea in the paragraphs
2. Explain how the author achieved cohesion in each paragraph i.e. how they linked the different ideas and sentences in each paragraph.
3. How did the author organise the ideas in the paragraph? (e.g. did they use chronological order/ statement to example/ general to the particular/ problem to solution etc?)

The concept of stress is useful in helping us understand the ways in which people respond to changes and transitions. Stress is a person’s response to a stressor, an event that provokes some sort of reaction. Stress takes two basic forms - eustress (positive stress) and distress (negative stress). Stress is sometimes an important and necessary component in helping us deal with challenges. It can provide us with the motivation or the energy we need to tackle an obstacle and in this sense, it is positive. Sometimes, though, stress can be harmful, especially if it makes us feel overwhelmed or if it continues for too long (Gibson, Swartz and Sandenbergh, 2002: 105).

Interviewing is a process that has the same transactional and multidimensional characteristics we discussed earlier in regard to interpersonal communication. An interview usually takes place between two people in face-to-face interaction and as a rule it involves both verbal and nonverbal messages. Like the communication process, the interview process involves sharing information through a common set of rules. Although all interviews involve interpersonal communication, not all interpersonal communication in healthcare involves interviewing (Northouse & Northouse, 1998: 25).
**Exercise 2**

Fill in the Gaps below with words/ phrases that enhance the cohesion in the paragraph below. Discuss why you used the words you selected.

The IHP framework contains three different spheres- knowledge, reflection and empathy- that help us understand what being a professional is all about. Health professionals should have different kinds of knowledge. ............... they need knowledge about their profession; that is they should be able to understand and apply the specialised skills required in their profession. ........ also need to be up to date about new discoveries in their field and should be committed “to life-long learning” (Olckers, Gibbs & Duncan, 2007: 2). ................., health professionals need to have other skills that are not specific to their profession but are still important for their practice; ................ listening and communication skills. ................, they need to know and understand the cultural practices of the communities that they serve and understand the environment in which they work (Olckers, Gibbs & Duncan, 2007: 3).

*Words to use: In addition, Finally, They, For example, Firstly*

**Exercise 3**

*Exercise developed by Ermien van Pletzen, currently co-ordinator of the Academic Development Programme at UCT*

Each box below contains sentences from one paragraph, however the sentences are not in the correct order.

- Put the sentences in the right order such that the paragraph is coherent.
- Discuss why you put the sentences in that order and what links the sentences to each other?

**Correct Order:**

1. for example, surgical operations, injections, biopsies or venesection.
2. It is probably also the commonest symptom encountered in clinical practice –
3. In this chapter I will be examining some of these
4. a feature of many normal physiological changes such as pregnancy, childbirth, or
5. there are social, psychological and cultural factors associated with it that also need to be considered.
6. Many forms of healing or diagnosis, too, involve some form of pain:
7. But in each of these situations there is more to pain than merely a neurophysiological
8. Pain in one form or another is an inseparable part of everyday life.
Exercise 4: Fill in the gaps below

This diagram represents different kinds of connecting words that are used to make good writing cohesive. Fill in the appropriate joining words in the blank spaces from the list given at the bottom of the page.

LIST: unlike; first; but; for example; and; therefore;

(Exercise taken from the Language and communications Course Reader, Eco1110H, UCT)
Exercise 5

Write a coherent paragraph about the excitements and challenges of being a health sciences student (ensure that your sentences and ideas link to each other within your paragraph).

Exercise 6

Read through the following task and discuss:
- Whether the writer achieved coherence in the task.
- How the task could have been made more coherent.

Tip! Look at:
- The introduction
- Paragraph structure
- Links within and between sentences
- Links between paragraphs
- The organisation of ideas
- The conclusion

Health professionals have different views of what it means to be a health professional and what skills they should have. Some seem to believe that all that is needed to practice efficiently is specialist knowledge and technical skills. However, for health professionals to be competent, they need several different kinds of skills, not only technical expertise. They therefore need to be integrated health professionals (IHP’s). In this task, I will describe the IHP framework and briefly look at its various components. I will then outline a bad experience that I had during a consultation with a doctor, and will use this experience to discuss why it’s important for health professionals to become integrated health professionals.

The IHP Framework

The integrated health professional (IHP) framework is a tool that is used to help developing health professionals discover the various skills that they need to be competent, holistic practitioners. This framework contains three different spheres - knowledge, reflection and empathy - that help us understand what being a professional is all about (Olckers, Gibbs & Duncan, 2007: 4).

Health professionals should have different kinds of knowledge. They need to have the specialised skills required in their profession, and also be willing to learn about new discoveries in their field. They should be committed “to life-long learning” (Olckers, Gibbs & Duncan, 2007: 2) and be willing to learn inter-personal skills like listening and
communication. Finally, it's also important for them to learn about the culture of the communities they serve (Olckers, Gibbs & Duncan, 2007: 3).

Health professionals therefore need to have a wide-range of knowledge however, if they want to develop or grow they need to take this a step further. They need to reflect on what they know, and how they are putting this knowledge into practice in order to be able to evaluate how well they are doing. This would make them more aware of their strengths and weaknesses and as a result help them think about how to improve or work on their areas of weakness (French & Swain, 2008: 6). Reflection is necessary for growth therefore, health professionals need to consistently look into themselves to try and understand their thought processes, feelings and reactions to situations and patients (Olckers, Gibbs & Duncan, 2007: 3).

Reflection helps health professionals become more empathic, as the reflection process makes them more aware of how they treat and interact with others (Hoffman, 2009: 1). “Empathy means entering the private world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it...it means moving about in it delicately without making judgements...as you look with fresh and unfrightened eyes at the elements of which the individual is fearful” (Rogers, 1975 quoted by Olckers, Gibbs & Duncan, 2007: 3). This means that for health professionals to be truly helpful to their patients, they need to understand their experiences and perspectives without judging them. Overall, health professionals need to be knowledgeable, reflective and empathic that is-integrated health professionals (IHP’s). However the sad reality is that many are not IHP’s and this can have detrimental consequences as I witnessed during a bad experience with a health professional.

My bad experience with a doctor

Once when I was in Matric I fell sick in school. My parents were called and my father took me to the doctor. I was put in a consultation room and asked to lie on the bed in the room. The nurse did some basic tests on me and then asked me to wait for the doctor to come. After some time the doctor came into the room, however he did not greet me and was very cold towards me. This made me very nervous, anxious and quiet. He asked me what was wrong and I told him. He examined me for a short while but did not say anything else to me. He then wrote a prescription and walked out of the room. At first I thought that he would come back to explain what was wrong with me, however he did not come back, and the nurse came and told me to go and buy the medicines that the doctor had prescribed.

I was quite confused, because I had no idea what was wrong with me, or what the medicines were for as the doctor hadn’t told me anything. I then began to wonder why he had treated me the way he did, and thought that perhaps he thought I was too foolish to understand what was wrong with me, and therefore did not deserve an explanation. This made me feel sad, belittled and insignificant and my first instinct was to keep quiet and just go and buy the medication. However, the more I thought about what had happened the angrier I became. “How dare he treat me like that! I deserve better treatment!” I thought to myself. I also decided then that I would not buy any medication without a proper explanation. Although I was still sick, my anger took over and I walked to the nurses’ desk. With a scowl on my face, I demanded to see the doctor again. The doctor was called back and I asked him why he had treated me like that. The doctor was not apologetic and proceeded to tell me how he did not have
time for this. My anger turned to rage, and I raised my voice and told him how disrespectful he was, and that his services were mediocre. This led to a verbal confrontation by the nurse’s desk.

**The importance of being an IHP**

Thinking about this experience and how it made me feel helped me understand why it’s important to be an IHP. As I mentioned earlier, knowledge is a critical component of being an IHP (Olckers, Gibbs & Duncan, 2007: 2). However my experience with the doctor opened my eyes to the fact that many health professionals do not truly understand the kind of knowledge that they should have and this negatively affects the kind of care that they give to patients. Several health professionals believe that technical expertise or specialised skills are all that they need to adequately care for patients, but this is not true. Health professionals need to have knowledge of other skills such as active listening and clear communication (Gibson, Swartz & Sandenbergh, 2002). Therefore in future as a health professional, I will do my best to gain knowledge not only about my profession but also about listening and communicating with patients.

I also need to learn to be empathic so that in future I will be able to understand what my patients are going through without judging them or making them feel insignificant (Olckers, Gibbs & Duncan, 2007: 3). This will help me practice dignity conserving care (Chochinov, 2007: 184). If the doctor had taken the time to greet me as he entered the room or asked a few questions to help him understand what I was experiencing perhaps I would not have felt so insignificant. As Chochinov (2007: 12) states “not being treated with dignity and respect can undermine a sense of value or worth.” An empathic response from the doctor would have prevented my initial withdrawal and confusion as well as the final confrontation that happened. The doctor would also have been able to get more information from me which would have helped him make a better-informed diagnosis.

Finally my experience with the doctor showed me the need for me to be a reflective health professional. If the doctor had reflected on his actions and behaviour as he was examining me perhaps he would have realised his error and become more empathic. In line with this, Hoffman (2009: 1) points out that “using reflection allows us to develop empathy and self-awareness, take responsibility and make empowered choices.” As an emerging IHP, I need to regularly reflect on my interactions with patients so that I can treat them with the dignity that they deserve. Reflection will help me see what my strengths and weaknesses are and in doing so, help me work on my weaknesses (French & Swain, 2008: 6).

In conclusion, as can be seen from this discussion, if health professionals truly desire to be competent and efficient professionals, they need to be knowledgeable, empathic and reflective. These characteristics of an IHP are important as they affect how patients respond to the health professional. They also affect what patients think and how they feel about themselves. As Chochinov (2007: 187) states, “One of the essential qualities of the clinician is interest in humanity, for the secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient.” The IHP framework is a useful tool for developing health professionals to use, both now and when they eventually practise.
Exercise 7
Now look at one of your tasks and evaluate whether it is coherent:
- Is the structure of your task is clear
- Is the flow of ideas logical and coherent.
- If I read a sentence, does it link logically to the sentences before and after it?
- If I read each paragraph, is all the content in the paragraph relevant and necessary? Does this content link to my argument/central idea?
- If I read the introduction, first & last sentence of each paragraph and conclusion of my text, can I see the development of my argument?
CHAPTER 7: LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

WHAT IS VOICE (STANCE)?
When we write academic texts (essays, tasks, etc) our views, thoughts and ideas should be clear to the reader. The reader should come away from the text thinking ‘Oh I see, this is what this author thinks, their views are quite clear.’ The reader should also be able to distinguish your views and words (as the writer) from the words of the authors referenced in the text. See the example below.

Example: distinguishing voices

“A major task for the health professional in the preparation phase [of interviews] is to plan for the first meeting with the client (Stuart & Sundeen, 1995). Interviews are more likely to be effective if the clinician is prepared and if the physical setting is also ready. Preparation can include studying about recent advances in treatments, getting assessment forms ready, having educational materials available, or locating an appropriate place to meet.”

Extract from Northouse and Northouse (1998)

In the extract above the writers’ views and words are distinct from those of the authors they referenced. In the first sentence, the writers (Northouse and Northouse) paraphrase an idea drawn from Stuart and Sundeen (1995). The writers then build on Stuart and Sundeen’s idea by sharing their own views in the rest of the paragraph (See the table below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point</th>
<th>Voice of</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health professionals (HP’s) should plan for the first meeting with clients in the preparation phase of interviews.</td>
<td>Stuart &amp; Sundeen (1995)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews are more likely to be effective if HP’s prepare for the interview.</td>
<td>Northouse &amp; Northouse (1998)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples of what can be done to prepare for the interview.</td>
<td>Northouse &amp; Northouse (1998)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When we write we also need to think about our audience (the reader), how do we get the reader to understand and see what we are saying clearly? How do we convince them that what we are saying is credible? How can we interact with them in a way that draws them into a conversation about the text with us (the writers)? These questions highlight that in writing, it is not only what we say that is important but also how we say it.
Voice is also about how you (as a writer) position yourself in relation to other writers. What is your stance (position) in relation to other authors’ views? Do you support their ideas or not? What do you think of their ideas? Is the reader able to distinguish your ideas from those of other authors in your text? The reader should be able to clearly see what your stance is, in other words your voice should be clear.

When we are learning how to write academic texts (e.g. essays and assignments) the issue of voice can be quite confusing. Our voice often gets lost amidst the voices of many other authors. Often students say: ‘it seems like I don’t have any thoughts of my own as I always have to reference the ideas of others. How do I make my thoughts clear when I have to include the ideas and thoughts of other authors in my essay?’ This chapter will look at how we can make sure that our voice is heard clearly in our writing.

**HOW DO WE MAKE OUR VOICE HEARD?**

Your voice can either be strong or weak. There are various tools that writers can use to make their voice (opinions, views, stance, thoughts) clear. These tools help them show the reader what they think and feel about particular ideas.
a) Boosters (commitment)
When authors believe that a particular proposition is accurate and have enough evidence to support this view, they often use boosters. Boosters are words or phrases that indicate that the author strongly supports a particular idea, proposition or view. Boosters show that the author is fully committed to the proposition they are making. They therefore use boosters to convince the reader that what they are saying is reliable and credible (Hyland, 2005). When you want to make a strong claim (and have enough evidence to support it) you can use boosters in your text. Some examples of boosters are: *It is clear, clearly, of course, obviously, actually, indeed, demonstrate, always, definitely, it is true that.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples (Boosters)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The results <em>demonstrated</em> that smoking is associated with the development of lung cancer. Therefore, <em>it is clear</em> that smoking is bad for your health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A certain amount of stress occurs all the time. <em>In fact</em>, there is no life without some degree of stress (Ross &amp; Deverell, 2004: 302).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Hedges
Authors sometimes use words or phrases that show they believe a particular proposition is true, but cannot fully ascertain that it is true. They therefore write in a way that allows them to present their opinion but also acknowledge that it may not always be accurate. This is referred to as hedging. “Hedges indicate the writer’s decision to withhold complete commitment to a proposition, allowing information to be presented as an opinion rather than accredited fact” (Hyland, 2005: 178). Some examples of hedges are: *may, would, could, might, possibly, seem, perhaps, appear, it is possible, suggests.* Hedging can be used when one does not have enough evidence to make a strong claim. It can also be used when something may be true in one instance but not true in another.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples (Hedges)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• These results <em>suggest</em> that stress <em>may</em> lead to burn out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>It is possible</em> that anger <em>could</em> lead to aggression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The patient’s symptoms indicate that they <em>possibly</em> have tuberculosis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One error that many students make is that they hedge when they have enough evidence to make a strong claim. If hedging is used throughout the text, this weakens the voice of the author and can make them seem unsure or tentative. On the other hand sometimes students make strong claims and sweeping generalisations without providing enough evidence to support their claims. Both boosters and hedging should be used in the text where appropriate.

c) Reporting Verbs
The verbs that writers use when introducing other authors’ ideas in their text tell the reader what they think about those ideas. It shows their degree of support for the other authors’ ideas. It is advisable to use a variety of reporting verbs when writing a long piece.
Example (reporting verbs)

- Lee (1994) **claims** that empathy can build trust between health professionals and their patients.
- Lee (1994) **proves** that empathy can build trust between health professionals and their patients.

*In the sentences above the underlined reporting verbs show the extent to which the author supports (endorses) Lee’s proposition of ‘empathy building trust’. In the first sentence the author does not clearly indicate whether he/she agrees with Lee’s proposition and remains somewhat neutral. However, in the second sentence the author shows that they fully support Lee’s proposition by using the reporting verb “proves.”*

Additional Examples of Reporting verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less endorsing (supportive)</th>
<th>More endorsing (supportive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claim</td>
<td>Comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contend</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggest</td>
<td>Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argue</td>
<td>Declare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In X’s opinion</td>
<td>Announce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe</td>
<td>Write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reckon</td>
<td>Tell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assume</td>
<td>Say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presume</td>
<td>Put forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speculate</td>
<td>Observe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goes as far as to suggest</td>
<td>Describe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That</td>
<td>Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propose</td>
<td>Cite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Point out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


d) Integrating sources/ Literature

How we integrate sources in our text affects the strength of our voice.

1. Quotes versus paraphrasing

Very often students integrate sources (readings) in their assignments by including numerous quotes from other authors. Although it is advisable to draw from the ideas of other authors, when we use numerous quotes in our writing this weakens our voice, as the words of other authors become the focus rather than the ideas we are trying to communicate. It is therefore better to paraphrase when integrating sources/literature in our assignments/texts. Quotes should be used sparingly. (see chapter 2 for more information on how to paraphrase).
2. Foregrounding versus backgrounding sources
How we paraphrase other authors’ ideas in our text affects the strength of our voice. When we paraphrase we can either push the sources that we have drawn ideas from into the foreground or background. This foregrounding or backgrounding of sources can greatly impact our voice in the text as will be seen below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foregrounding sources (other authors)</th>
<th>Back-grounding sources (other authors)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Foregrounding is when we start the paraphrase with the name of the author that we are drawing the ideas from. E.g. Olckers, Gibbs and Duncan (2007) state...</td>
<td>1. Back-grounding is when we start the paraphrase with the idea (point) that we are trying to communicate rather than the name of the author that we are drawing the idea from. E.g. “Health professionals should have different kinds of knowledge. They need to have the specialised skills required in their profession, and also be willing to learn about new discoveries in their field. They should be committed “to life-long learning” (Olckers, Gibbs &amp; Duncan, 2007: 2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This <strong>emphasises the source</strong> rather than the ideas that are being discussed.</td>
<td>This puts the <strong>emphasis on ‘you’ the writer and what you are saying</strong> rather than on the source. It therefore allows you to position your sources in support of what you are saying.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. Foregrounding allows you to position yourself in relation to the source. You can select reporting verbs to indicate whether you agree or disagree with what the source says:  
  - Smith (1994) suggests...  
  - Smith (1994) would have us believe that...  
  - Smith (1994) proves... | 2. Backgrounding allows you as a writer to develop a clear flow of ideas and can strengthen your voice. |
| 3. If every sentence in our text begins with another author’s name (foregrounding) this can sometimes break the flow of ideas in our text and weaken our voice. **Example**  
Oloo (1994) suggests that anger can lead to aggression. However Anderson (2005) disagrees with this and claims that anger does not always lead to | 2. Backgrounding allows you as a writer to develop a clear flow of ideas and can strengthen your voice. **Example**  
Anger can lead to aggression (Oloo, 1994). However it has been found that anger does not always lead to |
aggression. In the same vein Oladepo (2010) suggests that other factors like self-control influence the relationship between anger and aggression.

other factors like self-control that influence the relationship between anger and aggression (Oladepo, 2010).

e) Self mention
How writers refer to themselves in texts is influenced by the discipline in which they are writing (e.g. psychology, medicine, engineering). In the sciences the use of the first person “I” is usually discouraged as it is thought that this detracts from the information/ argument that the writer is putting across. It is suggested that the use of first person in scientific writing makes the content seem less objective. On the other hand, in the humanities (with the exception of some social sciences) writing in the first person “I” is encouraged as it allows the writer to identify themselves with a particular proposition/ argument (Hyland, 2005). Therefore before you write your assignments it is important to ask your lecturers whether they expect you to write in first or third person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example: Self- mention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• First person: In this paper I argue that anger leads to aggression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Third person: In this paper it is argued that anger leads to aggression.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VOICE EXERCISES

Exercise 1
Read through the sentences below and discuss the impact of the different reporting verbs used. What do they suggest about the author’s views of Northouse and Northouse’s proposition?

1. Northouse and Northouse (1998: 83) claim that health professionals should understand how small groups function because their use in health care is rising.

2. Northouse and Northouse (1998: 83) state that health professionals should understand how small groups function because their use in health care is rising.

3. Northouse and Northouse (1998: 83) demonstrate that health professionals should understand how small groups function because their use in health care is rising.

Exercise 2
Evaluate the writers voice in the excerpts below:

• Rate from strongest voice (1) to weakest voice (3). Explain your reasoning.
• Underline the words and phrases that gave you an indication of stance/voice (e.g. hedges, boosters, foregrounding/backgrounding of authors etc)
1. Northouse and Northouse (1998: 83) suggest that groups can help people cope with illness and possibly also extend their lives.

2. It is clear that groups help people cope with illness. Furthermore, groups often extend the lives of those that are ill (Northouse & Northouse, 1998: 83).

3. It is important to note that groups can be used to help people cope with illness. They may also extend the lives of those that are ill (Northouse & Northouse, 1998: 83).

**Exercise 3**
Read the extracts below:
- identify the different propositions made in each extract and the authors that made them.
- Identify which propositions were made by the writers of the extracts.

**Extract 1**
“Although burnout can occur in any occupation, professions that have been identified as particularly vulnerable to it include lawyers (Maslach & Jackson, 1978), police (Maslach & Jackson, 1979), teachers (Fimian & Blanton, 1987), nurses (Fimian, Fastenau & Thomas, 1988), social workers (Arches, 1991) and speech language pathologists and audiologists (Swidler & Ross, 1993). Nevertheless, although healthcare professions are usually very demanding, individual practitioners are likely to respond differently to demands made on them. Some thrive on these demands while others burn out.”

*Ross & Deverell (2004: 306)*

**Extract 2**
Open questions do not restrict clients’ responses; they allow clients to give extended and unlimited answers. As Benjamin (1981) points out, ‘The open question is broad;...allows the interviewee full scope;...invites him to widen his perceptual field;...[and] solicits his views, opinions, thoughts and feelings’ (p. 73).

Open questions are often used in therapeutic interviews as the primary means of encouraging clients to explore their personal thoughts and feelings. In an analysis of the communication used by expert nurses, Brown (1994) found that expert nurses frequently used open-ended questions in their interactions with clients. Open-ended questions were used by expert nurses at the beginning of interviews to elicit clients’ concerns and again later in the interview to follow up on more personal issues, after rapport had been established between the client and the nurse. Open questions draw clients out, allow for catharsis, and assist clients to express pent-up emotions. For medical patients, open questions are a means of getting patients to tell their story of what is wrong with them and to freely disclose about their situation (Sharf, 1984).

*Northouse and Northhouse (1998: 182)*
Extract 3

“The effectiveness of a multidisciplinary health team can be described as the success it has in addressing the total health care needs of the community, and by so doing improving the health and well being of the community. To achieve such success, the team must be innovative, creative and flexible, and must have clearly defined and shared objectives to cope with the constant changes which occur in the environment and the social system. In addition the members making up such a team must provide the right combination of expertise and experience to achieve effective results.

Poulton and West (1993: 921) are of the opinion that if a team is to be effective, it must possess a definite vision and shared objectives, it must practise participation and sharing of information, it must commit itself to excellence and must have strong support for innovation and the initiation of new ideas.

The advantages of effective team work are many and varied. Pritchard (1981: 47) refers to the value of teamwork with regard to increasing job satisfaction, reinforcing health education, improving the standards of care and making the best use of the special skills of team members. What is however, of greatest value to the recipients of health care is the synergistic effect of successful teamwork and interdisciplinary co-operation. Effective teamwork addresses the critical need for closer co-operation between all elements of a health team, a factor which is of vital importance if the ever increasing health care needs of a changing society are to be addressed effectively. There is ‘no stronger force in this world than a group of people working willingly toward the same specific goal’ (Lightfoot 1991: 1). Without the synergism achieved through effective teamwork, optimal health for all members of the community will never be attained.”

(Dennill, King, & Swanepoel, 1999:62)

Exercise 4

Look at extract 3 above (King, 1999) and evaluate the strength of the author’s voice. Discuss how they could have strengthened their voice in the text.

- Did they use boosters and hedges?
- What kinds of reporting verbs did they use? Why?
- Did they use quotes or paraphrases?
- Did they foreground or background other sources?
- Did they use first person or third person? Why?

Exercise 5

Look at one of your class assignments/ essays and evaluate the strength of your voice. Discuss how you could have strengthened your voice in the text.

- Did you use boosters and hedges?
- What kinds of reporting verbs did you use? Why?
- Did you use quotes or paraphrases?
- Did you foreground or background other sources?
- Did you use first person or third person in your writing? Why?
REFERENCES


How To book An Appointment to see a Health Sciences Writing Consultant

You need to go to the writing centre online booking system:

1. Go to: www.uct.mywconline.com
2. Register an account in order to use the system. There is a “click here to register.” Link
3. You will be asked to create a new account. Fill in as many of the fields as possible.
4. On the Log in page, there is a “choose a schedule” tab. Click on the drop down arrow in this tab and Select the “Health Sciences writing centre.”
5. Log in using the email address and password you provided when creating your account.

How to Make a Booking

Register or Login

6. Once you are logged on, hover over the yellow ‘HELP’ icon for instructions.
7. Pay attention to all instructions and requirements.
8. Make an appointment to see one of the consultants.