HOW TO LEARN LIKE A PRO!

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CONTENTS

LEARN LIKE A PRO! WELCOME TO EFFECTIVE LEARNING (EL115)--FOR STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTORS

TO THE STUDENT, PART 1: WELCOME!

When it comes to learning, many students don't give it much more thought than, well, they just need to pay attention, take good notes (if they can figure out how), and study hard enough to pass the tests, assuming they will likely have about as much trouble or success as they have always had. The smart people, it seems, along with those who are naturally organized, will always do better, and people not born with those advantages will just have to try to get by as best they can.

And *most* people have some kind of learning struggle in one area or another of school, on the job, or wherever else new material needs to be learned.

But here is some good news.

Thanks to education research and development in the last fifty years or so, there are now many more strategies, methods, and perspectives available to help us all succeed, to help us all "learn like a professional," despite past struggles. Fortunately, many advancements have been made in the study of how people learn, how our brains function, and even how we can use strategies we hadn't thought of before – for example, this online text – to become the most effective learners we can be.

That is the purpose of the lessons in this book.

Enjoy.

TO THE STUDENT, PART 2: ON THE LESSON DESIGN AND CONTENT

There are numerous skills and strategies involved in effective learning. Time management, goal setting, note-taking, reading critically, applying memory techniques, and employing good test-taking strategies are but a few.

This Open Education Resource (OER) is designed to assist you in your quest for success both inside and outside of academia because understanding how to engage effectively in any learning environment applies not only at school but also at work, home, and within the community.

The lessons are designed for educational institutions that include community colleges and alternative higher education settings where the learner demographic includes not only young, single people but also older people who may have entered higher education for the first time or who are returning after some years. It includes displaced or disabled workers who have to re-train for a different field of employment, ex-military people who are now accessing their educational benefits, and international students. It includes single moms and dads, people with part- and full- time jobs, and those actively seeking employment as the term ensues. In short, this course was designed keeping in mind all of the kinds of learners that we might serve, you, in your unique situation, among them.

In the lessons that follow, you will study excerpts from the experts on effective learning, thinking, and reading; experience a variety of presentation formats; and have plenty of opportunities to practice what you learn.

The course will include a **portfolio project as a take-home mid-term, and another portfolio project as a take-home final** in which you will have the opportunity to gather what works for you from the variety of effective learning strategies provided throughout the course . The take-home mid-term project will conclude Units 1-3, and the take-home final will conclude Units 4-6.

TO THE INSTRUCTOR,

Lane Community College's EL115 course is offered through our Academic Learning Skills Department. Although it is part of our developmental education offerings, the credits we assign are transferable to colleges and universities. This particular course is designed to meet face-to-face, twice per week, for 1.5 hours per class, or some other configuration of times and days to total approximately 30 hours of instruction. It meets for an eleven-week term, the last week reserved for finals or presentations depending upon the class. However, with the addition of optional assignments and activities listed at the end of each unit, there is enough material for a full semester, as well.

NOTE: Lane also features a visit to the college library as part of this course, when it can be scheduled, for an introductory site tour and a tour of online library resources.

The units can be easily adapted to other presentation formats as well as to online learning platforms. At Lane, it will net the successful student 3 credits on completion. The lesson plans are structured to reflect Lane's Core Learning Outcomes (CLOs):

- Think Critically
- Engage diverse values with civic and ethical awareness
- Create ideas and solutions
- Communicate effectively, and
- Apply learning

Each unit, which can cover up to two weeks, is organized with:

- an overview that includes unit topics, objectives, materials, terms, and a to-do list;
- the lessons presented in various formats;
- lesson exercises for in-class assignments and/or homework;
- optional activities/assignments/extra credit opportunities to meet the needs of both online and face-to face students;
- the rubrics for the take-home mid-term (after Units 1-3) and the take-home final (after Units 4-6)
- Back Matter that includes

  ◦ a Glossary of Terms, also featured in the lesson in which they appear.
  ◦ Graphic Organizers for reading comprehension and writing
  ◦ Outside of the text resources:

    ▪ a complete, linked list of Lane Instructor Dan Hodges' "Study Tips". Several of the tips and excerpts are referenced in the lessons.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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COURSE OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

OER GENERAL EL115 COURSE OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Upon successful course completion, the student will:	This outcome will be assessed by one or more of the following:
Develop time management and goal setting strategies	Written assignment Portfolio project Weekly time management Performance tests
Demonstrate a variety of textbook reading strategies	Portfolio project Class project Performance tests
Generate notes in a variety of formats from diverse sources	Written assignment Portfolio project Class project Performance tests
Locate and use basic resources in LCC Library	Performance tests Portfolio project
Apply various memory techniques	Performance tests Portfolio project Survey
Employ exam preparation and exam taking techniques	Performance tests Portfolio project Survey
Monitor progress in strengthening study skills and strategies	Journal Survey Performance tests

SPECIFIC CRITICAL THINKING/CRITICAL READING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will develop metacognitive awareness in order to identify and solve comprehension problems.

- Students will accurately identify and explain the hierarchy of critical thinking. (Bloom's Taxonomy)

- Students will demonstrate increased facility, range, and persistence as readers by utilizing such strategies as identifying and annotating for key ideas and supporting information, by building cognitive routines such as asking questions of the text, working in collaborative relationships with peers about the reading process and comprehension, and building their knowledge of reading as a discipline and an integral part of academic, career, and civic success.

- Students will explain how and why critical thinking/reading is necessary in academic and non-academic contexts.

- Students will demonstrate development as a CT and analyze and evaluate problems/strengths of individual critical thinking in general and specifically for college level reading comprehension.

- Students will demonstrate CT in coursework contexts such as reading graphics, complex rubrics, test/essay prompts, and by identifying traditional patterns in reading (cause/effect, comparison/contrast, definition, exemplification, etc.).

- Students will identify CT concepts presented in most textbooks: bias, fact/opinion, propaganda, logical fallacy, deductive/inductive reasoning, inference, connotation/denotation.

LICENSES AND ATTRIBUTIONS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Unit Overview

Topics, Objectives, Materials, Terms, To-Do List

Topics

This unit covers the following focus points:

- "Three Learning Styles" (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic or hands-on)
- The "Brain Dominance Theory" (right/left brain learning differences)
- "Gardener's Multiple Intelligences Theory" (which incorporates several other aspects of how we learn from and interact with our environments).

"Learning how to learn is life's most important skill." Tony Buzan

Objectives

After you have completed this unit you should be able to:

- Understand the classic learning styles, strategies, and preferences and know how to use them to help you learn.
- Understand the basics of annotation and how this skill can help you remember key information in written materials.
- Use several mnemonic devices to help you remember key information

Materials

- e-book, "How to Learn Like a pro!" (instructor may require some materials to be downloaded)
- 3-ring binder at least 1 ½ inches thick
- Notebook dividers, one for each week of the term
- Pens, pencils, paper
- Highlighters for annotation
- Course Syllabus: NOTE: this will be linked on the course MOODLE site. Consult instructor.

Terms (These terms also appear in the Glossary)

NOTE: **the definitions are adapted and/or abbreviated from the original.**
 Auditory**:** Of, or relating to hearing, or to the sense or organs of hearing.
 Annotation: Annotating text is a purposeful note taking system. It includes highlighting, underlining, circling, writing marginal notes, and other ways to draw the eye to key information or questions a reader might have.
 Cognitive: Relating to the part of mental functions that deals with logic; Intellectual.
 Kinesthetic Learning Style: A learning style in which learning takes place by the students carrying out physical activities, rather than listening to a lecture or watching demonstrations. People with a preference for kinesthetic learning are also commonly known as "do-ers".
 Modality: The way, or mode, in which something exists or is done.

To-Do List

- Complete the exercises, as assigned, in each lesson.

- In face-to-face classes, your instructor may include additional activities.

LESSON 1.1: THE THREE LEARNING STYLES

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By the time students enter higher education, most have a pretty good idea how they learn best, though they may not have thought about it specifically. Perhaps you do, too.

For example, is it easier for you to learn by reading the instructions or by studying charts and graphs (visual learning)? Do you do better by hearing someone explain something or by listening to a video presentation (auditory, also known as aural, learning)? Or, does it help you to actually "get your hands on" whatever the task is, whether writing a paper, fixing the sink, or organizing a softball game (kinesthetic learning)?

These three learning styles, as they are called, are some of the most common ways we comprehend information, whether learning in a classroom, a kitchen, or on the job. We will be covering two additional well-known learning theories, the "Brain Dominance Theory" and "Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences," as well. But for starters, complete the following exercise.

UNIT 1, EXERCISE 1.1

Take the Learning Style Inventory to capture your "best practices" when it comes to the basic three learning styles. This inventory and others you will take throughout the course will become part of your take-home mid-term and take-home final. When you complete the "Learning Styles Inventory":

1. Download the inventory.
2. Download the article What's Your Learning Style.
3. Based on your inventory results, annotate by highlighting, underling, circling, or some other annotation device, ideas about how to maximize your learning style and strengthen others from the lists of multiple styles and preferences. Annotate for at least FIVE helpful perspectives and/or strategies per each of the three learning styles. Save this in your notebook for help with your portfolio's written response for this unit. Your instructor may require you to hand it in for scoring.

LESSON 1.2: VISUAL LEARNING
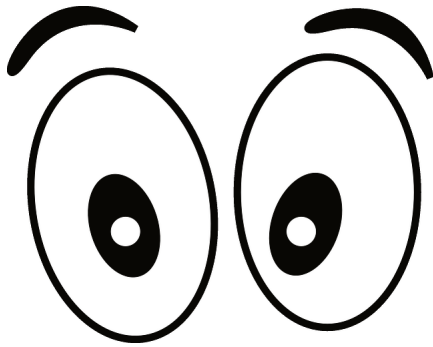
"Eyes" by Clker-Free-Vector-Images is in the Public Domain, CC0

Studies indicate that up to 80% of us use our sense of sight as our primary learning *style*, or modality. Unfortunately, a lot of information in classrooms, workshops, meetings, and so on, is delivered in a lecture format. Nevertheless, there are still visual strategies that can be used to aid the learner.

To see how one teacher expanded her classroom presentations to include more visual strategies (and her success with that), and to offer several more visual strategies that may be helpful for you, too, complete the following exercise.

We will discuss in class what you found, and you will use the information for a writing response assignment at the end of the unit.

UNIT 1, EXERCISE 2.1

- Download the article "Getting the Picture" Using Visual Learning Techniques to Foster Higher order Thinking Skills...(read more)" by Katherine Ha.

- Annotate the article: highlight, underline, or circle at least 5 visual learning activities Ha assigned her students.

LESSON 1.3: AUDITORY LEARNING

*"Ear" by
OpenClipart-Vectors
is in the Public
Domain, CC0*

Modality number two is learning by hearing, or auditory/aural learning. Studies show that the percentage of people who learn best by hearing is as low as 10%, so most of us need strategies for how to get the most out of straight lecture classes or workshop and meeting presentations.

For a reminder of how tricky this type of learning can be, complete the following exercise.

UNIT 1, EXERCISE 3.1

1. Write out instructions on how to create **a simple paper airplane***. NO FAIR COPYING ANYBODY ELSE'S INSTRUCTIONS, online or your uncle's. These must be YOUR original instructions that your instructor will be presenting to the class to see how classmates hear your directions and how you have organized the tasks. NO ILLUSTRATIONS, only words.

2. When your instructions are read by the instructor, you may not offer any prompts, explanations, apologies, or comments.

*If you have never have tried this before, here is an example:
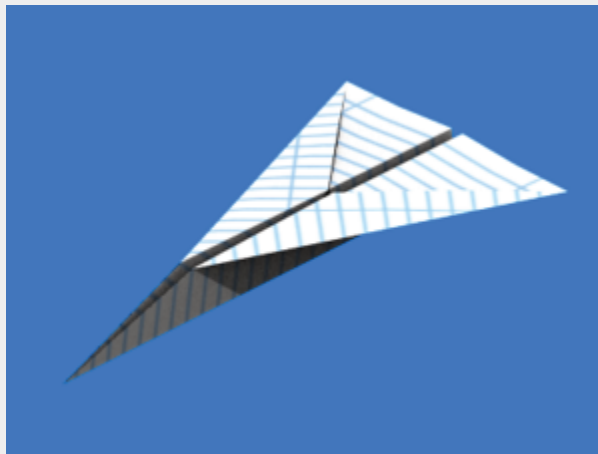
"Paper Airplane" by pfunked is licensed under CC BY 3.0

UNIT 1, EXERCISE 3.2

Read the article Auditory Learning and choose six strategies that you think might help you. You can either download the article to annotate, or list the strategies on a separate piece of paper.

LESSON 1.4: KINESTHETIC LEARNING

"Helping hands" by AlphaZeta is in the Public Domain, CC0

Kinesthetic or hands-on/tactile learners, surprisingly, comprise only about 25-50% of learners. But maybe I'm surprised because I am definitely a kinesthetic learner! It is my major mode. For kinesthetic learners, adding physical movement as a comprehension strategy is one of the best ways to learn. They do not do as well just listening to lectures or watching videos or sitting through power point presentations.

You have already gleaned much information on how to adapt a learning environment for this kind of learner from the previous readings and exercises in this unit. Now, take a look at one special environment designed primarily for hands-on learning, and complete the exercise below.

UNIT 1, EXERCISE 4.1

For a look at one way kinesthetic learning has been incorporated into an educational facility specifically for learning challenged students, take a look at a website advertising a facility called Academy at SOAR. There is a short video presentation, and several features to read and learn about this facility that serves a population that often struggles in more traditional settings.

As you watch and read, you will learn about several kinesthetically-designed learning activities including hiking, rock climbing, snorkeling, a Spanish-immersion program and more.

For each of FIVE of these activities, write down as many traditional classroom or "regular school" learning tasks as you can think of. This is a good activity for a team or study group, as well as for individual students.

EXAMPLE:

ACTIVITY: rock climbing

CLASSROOM LEARNING TASKS:

survival skills (detail these)

physical fitness (detail these)

safety skills (details)

Math…

communication…

Writing assignment…

Get the idea?

The results of your lists will be discussed in class.

UNIT 1, EXERCISE 4.2

PART A: Team activity.

1. Team up in groups of three at the most.
2. Your instructor will assign each team a "learning style" (visual, auditory, or kinesthetic).
3. Decide how you would teach a group of teens, in a high-risk group for not completing their high school education, the importance of graduating.
4. Use "your learning style" to decide how you would present the information.
5. Oh, and your community LOVES to fund education, so you have an UNLIMITED budget for field trips, production projects, etc. NOTE: you do not have to actually present the lesson, just describe it to share with the class, later on. For online learners, you can perhaps get together with a study group, or do this on your own, choosing any of the learning styles.

PART B: Independent activity–case study. Help Ben!

Ben, a first-time college student who has not attended school since he graduated high school ten years ago, is anxious about succeeding in college. He recently had to quit his very successful, though small, construction business after he hurt himself and could no longer do many of the tasks. Although he was disappointed, he sold his business and decided to invest his money in higher education to fulfill a dream he had as a youngster: becoming a history teacher. He loves to read as much as he loves building custom homes, so he looks at what happened to him as a chance to start a new chapter. That said, he's nervous.

He was never an "A" student in school, although he received several awards for his work in shop and art classes. He also did pretty well in history classes as long as he could use his creativity. He found it hard to sit still and he was easily distracted when the teachers lectured, but he was one of the first to comprehend the information on charts and graphs. His GPA was high enough, however, to get him into college.

He wonders if you would give him some strategies about how to help him get the most out of his classes, given what he has shared, here.

Instructions: write a letter to Ben with TEN advice points to help him in his classes. Include specific strategies related to what you believe are his strongest learning styles. But also keep in mind where he struggles, too, so you can offer him some help there, as well. He has to take the following classes his first term: math, writing, effective learning, physical education, and an elective which, as you might guess, is History of the Americas, 101. A letter of advice of about 250 words will suffice.

LESSON 1.5: THE BRAIN DOMINANCE THEORY

"Rainbow Brain" by Muffinator is in the Public Domain, CC0

The next learning theory reviewed in this series is somewhat controversial. It is called the "Brain Dominance Theory," or, technically, Lateralization of Brain Function. This theory suggests that certain approaches to thinking and learning differ according to the hemispheres, left and right, of the brain. Critics of this theory claim it is the result of pop psychology more than sound science. Indeed, common sense indicates that, of course, we utilize all parts of the brain continually–which is why I like the multi-colored graphic of the brain. It infers a kind of brain symmetry–if not of function, of form.

To utilize your own "both/and" brain power, first read the article linked above, annotating for, or taking notes on, information you want to remember and include, perhaps, in your mid-term portfolio project and for your responses to the exercises below.

UNIT 1, EXERCISE 5.1

1. Review the chart below that gives a brief summary of the so-called right/left brain kinds of activities, thinking, and preferences.

LEFT BRAIN	RIGHT BRAIN
Logical	Uses feeling/intuition
Detail oriented	Perceives the "big picture"
Facts are important	Imagination is important
Math and science interests	Philosophy, religion, art interests
Perceives patterns	Perceives spatial relationships
Reality based	Fantasy is a focus
Keen on analysis/strategies	Considers possibilities
Linear thinking	Thinks holistically

2. Based on the information gleaned in the article and in # 1, design two 8 1/2 by 11 inches posters, one for each side of the brain, illustrating the same information as is on the chart, but according to how you think each kind of thinker/learner might design them. For example, the poster for "right brain" thinking/learning might be much more colorful. The student might also think of some sort of paper structure (origami?) by which to illustrate the differences. Enjoy.

UNIT 1, EXERCISE 5.2

Based on the information in the article and the chart, above, compare how friends, "R.B." (Right Brain) and "L.B." (Left Brain) would respond to planning a weekend getaway to the fictitious "Wilderness Resort" located in the lush, Pacific Northwest of the U.S. Activities could include: planning, packing, traveling to and from, meals, indoor/ outdoor activities, and so on. Contrast R.B. and L.B. regarding at least **5** different activities. **EXAMPLE**: regarding **packing** for activities both indoor (heated pool, fully equipped exercise room, a few casino type gaming tables, dancing, etc.) and outdoor (hiking, boating, guided field trips through an old growth forest, etc.), RB takes a casual approach: whatever is clean and easy to pack. LB first checks weather forecasts and maybe the location of any poison ivy that might be growing in the forest.

An organization chart might help with this exercise:

ACTIVITY   R.B. RESPONSE   L.B. RESPONSE

UNIT 1, EXERCISE 5.3

1. Answer the following question (no more than about 150 words):

Though it is controversial, how do you think knowing about the Brain Dominance Theory can still help you in the learning process? As you are thinking about this subject, consider how you might enhance your current response to learning and completing assignments or tasks by trying out either new left-brain or right-brain approaches.

LESSON 1.6: HOWARD GARDNER'S MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES THEORY

The last learning theory previewed here is called Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory, of which there are currently nine so-called intelligences, listed as follows. (Note: number nine is pretty new on Professor Gardner's evolving list and is yet to be included in most representative graphics, such as the one below.)

1. musical-rhythmic and harmonic
2. visual-spatial
3. verbal-linguistic
4. logical-mathematical
5. bodily-kinesthetic
6. interpersonal
7. intrapersonal
8. naturalist
9. existential.
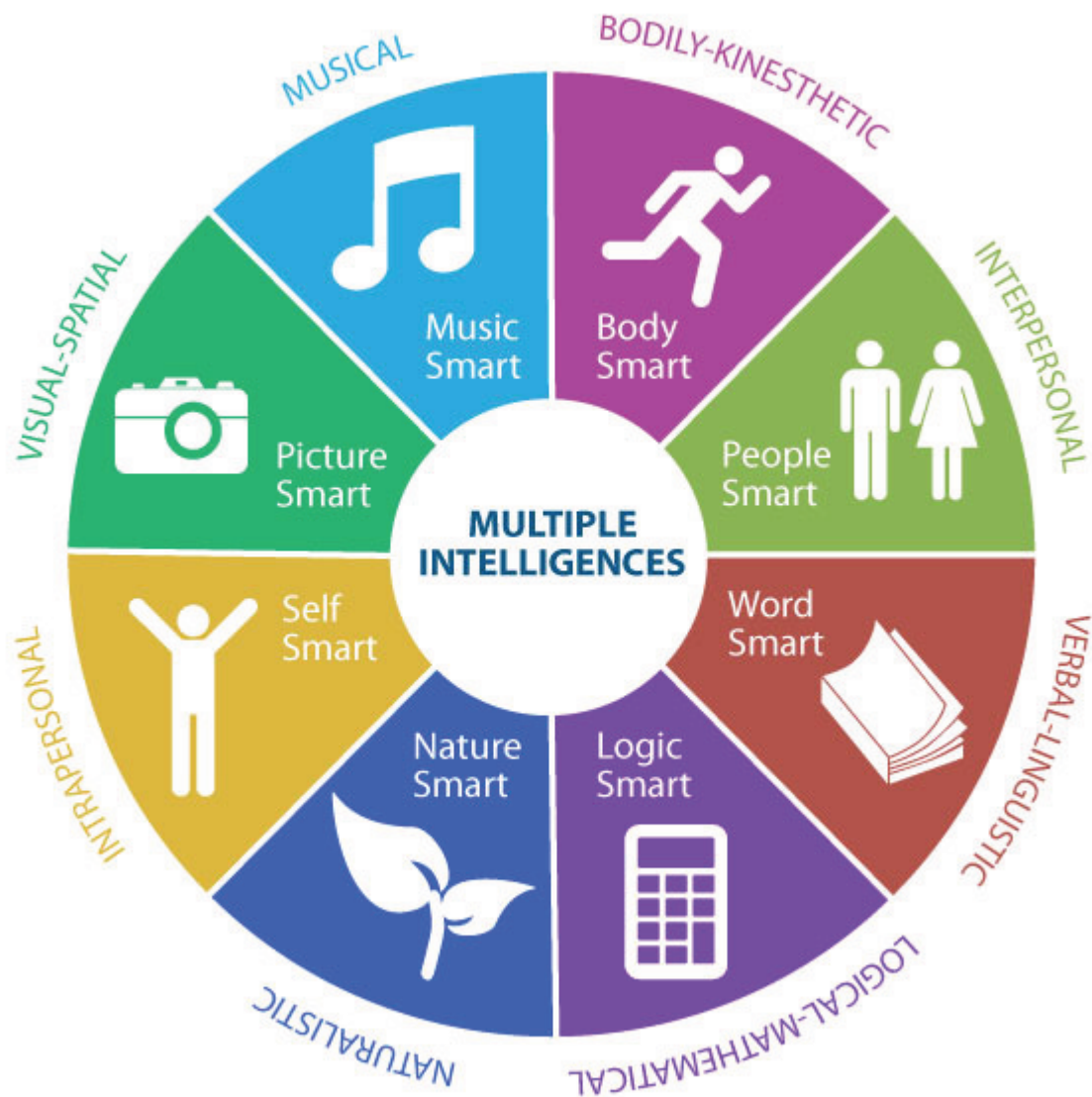
When I began teaching effective learning classes, there were still just the original eight intelligences. According to the article, Gardner may soon add even more, including "teaching-pedagogical intelligence… humor, cooking and sexual intelligence." In Gardner's view, human beings are indeed multi-talented and multi-intelligent.

To help you remember the various learning abilities cited in this theory that are available to us to comprehend and interact with the environments in which we live, study, and work, complete the exercises below.

UNIT 1, EXERCISE 6.1

1. Read the article linked above.
2. Create a list of these intelligences, but define them in your own words.
3. For each intelligence and definition, also create a picture as a mnemonic device. You may wish to create a three-column chart on which to organize the information, for example:

INTELLIGENCE   DEFINITION   PICTURE/SYMBOL

UNIT 1, EXERCISE 6.2

PART A

Individually, in a team, or in a study group, list as many "intelligences" you can discern that would be used to accomplish the following tasks:

1. Shopping for groceries:
2. Changing the oil in the car:
3. Planning a garden:
4. Acing a math test:
5. Writing a report on the human digestive system:
6. Running a 10k fundraising event:
7. Comforting a friend who just lost a loved one:
8. Organizing a softball game:
9. Collecting samples of music from Latin American countries:
10. Hosting a religious study:
11. Designing a brochure of information for new college students:
12. Performing a scene with your study group from a Shakespearean play:

PART B

Choose 5 of the nine intelligences, and design an activity for each one. Challenge: see if you can design just 1 activity that would incorporate all 5!

TO THE INSTRUCTOR: OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS/ACTIVITIES/EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNIT 1

ICE BREAKER

Since this is the first week of the course, an "ice breaker" for face-to-face classes helps students get to know each other better while also providing an opportunity to introduce two mnemonic devices: remembering by using association and organizing information by using a graphic (in this case, a three-column chart).

- Direct students to create a chart that has three columns. In the first column, they will write their classmates' names. Across from each name in the second a third columns, they will write a word then a picture or symbol for each classmate that will help them remember the names (a fishing pole for one who likes to fish, for example, a flower for a gardener, a hat for another who says he always wears hats). Explain that they will be filling it out for as many classmates as they can in whatever time is available for this activity.

- Demonstrate by filling out the first entry for yourself. A "word association" for me might be that I am tall, or that I am the instructor. I ask the students what kind of picture or symbol usually represents a teacher to them. Most often, it will be an apple.

- Give students an amount of time to get as many names down as they can. Afterwards, they can test themselves using this mnemonic creation by studying it however they want to, to help them remember names. Of course, they have also engaged in a good opportunity to find out who they will be learning and working with in a casual and enjoyable way–as has the instructor.

SYLLABUS TREASURE HUNT

Many students will simply tuck a course syllabus away in their notebook. It's a pretty dull document, after all, with information such as course standards, objectives, classroom rules and regulations, and the like. They might do little more than glance at it and transfer the instructor's email address and phone number to their cell phone.

However, there is often not only vital but also very useful information in a syllabus: grading information, holidays/school closure lists, where they might access disability accommodations, campus emergency numbers, how to lodge a grievance and many more useful items. One way to not only help them realize that a syllabus contains vital data but also to practice annotation skills is to assign a treasure hunt.

I usually tell the students to annotate (highlight, underline, circle, make marginal notes) for the following three items:

1. Information they especially want to remember (most annotate my contact info)
2. Information they have a question or concern about
3. Any additional information they would appreciate having on this handy resource

Here is a sample EL115 syllabus treasure hunt for a typical EL115 course syllabus at Lane.

SIMPLE NOTEBOOK ORGANIZATION PLAN

An additional activity for a face-to-face class is to assign the students a simple notebook organization task (for in-class or for homework). Of course, some students may already have a lovely organizational plan. Here is my suggestion:
From the topmost page when you open the notebook, insert:

- Your assignment/to-do list(s)

- Course syllabus

- Perhaps a list of classmates names/contact information: sample classmate contact form.

- Your text or other official materials (downloaded text, if it is to be downloaded, any additional packets that might be required)

- 12 notebook dividers (one for the handouts, hand backs, scored/graded assignments for each of the 10 weeks of the course; and two for students' choice. Some of my students prefer to keep all quiz/assessment type tasks in one place, for example. Some of them keep paper in another for note taking or other tasks.

CAMPUS-WIDE VIRTUAL, OR ONLINE, WEBSITE TREASURE HUNT

This can be created as an actual physical search around campus for student services, or a website hunt. For our students at Lane, here is a sample online hunt: Lane Community College Students Services, campus treasure hunt.

OPTIONAL EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES AND/OR GRADING ELEMENTS FOR UNIT 1

Grades for this course as taught are determined primarily by the rubrics for the rubric for-take-home mid-term and for the take-home final portfolio projects assigned at the end of Unit 3 and Unit 6, respectively. This instructor teaches this as a face-to-face class presented on a Course Management System (MOODLE, at Lane), and includes points for attendance, as well as some miscellaneous homework assignments, mostly lesson exericises. However, this OER can be used for online or hybrid classes as well.
Here are some suggestions for additional course components and grading elements:

- The Glossary of Terms in the back is good information for weekly quizzes, mid-term tests, and/or final exams.

- For exercise 5.2 (re: the Brain dominance Theory), students could act out their responses.

Topics, Objectives, Materials, Terms, To-Do List

Topics

This unit covers the following focus points:

- Procrastination (and how to avoid it)
- Self Efficacy and World View (as related to a successful academic experience)
- Distractions (and how to minimize them)
- Schedules and schedulers
- Study aids
- Study areas
- Study groups

"With organization comes empowerment." Lynda Peterson

Objectives

After you have completed this unit you should be able to:

- Understand more how your world view and sense of self-efficacy contribute to your time, tools, and environment management habits.

- Understand how to best manage your time with regards to the needs of your life (school, homework, home life, work, and "me time") and your optimum working times.

- Understand new ideas about how to manage distractions to add to what you may already employ.

- Understand how to manage procrastination tendencies with some tried-and-true strategies as well as a few new ones.

- Understand how to enhance your sense of self-efficacy.

- Understand how to create useful organizational materials to help you with a variety of educational tasks as well as in other areas of your life.

Materials

- e-book, "How to Learn Like a pro!" (instructor may require some materials to be downloaded)

- A package of 3×5 or 4×6 cards, plain, lined, and/or colored.

Terms (These terms also appear in the Glossary of Terms)

NOTE: **the definitions are adapted and/or abbreviated from the original.**

Expository: Explanatory. Expository writing includes argument/persuasive, cause/effect, comparison/contrast, definition, exemplification and process writing.

Locus of control: The extent to which individuals believe they can control events affecting them. a person's "locus" (Latin for "place" or "location") is conceptualized as either internal (the person believes they can control their life) or external (meaning they believe their decisions and life are controlled by environmental factors which they cannot influence, or by chance or fate).

Self-efficacy: One's belief in one's ability to achieve goals successfully.

Style manual: Any one of a number of manuals that explain the rubric for manuscript presentation. Elements include such things as spacing, heading, page numbering, and Word Cited/Bibliography organization. Modern Language Association (MLA) is very common for most undergraduate papers. Others include the American Psychological Association (APA) style, the Chicago Manual of Style, and the Associated Press Stylebook (AP).

World View: The fundamental cognitive orientation of an individual or society encompassing

the entirety of the individual or society's knowledge and point of view. How one views/perceives/interprets the world.

To-Do List

- Complete the exercises, as assigned, in each lesson.
- In face-to-face classes, your instructor may include optional additional activities.

LESSON 2.1: WORLD VIEW AND SELF EFFICACY

WORLD VIEW

Most textbook chapters on management tasks involved in effective learning start with the famous (and infamous) topic of procrastination. The term comes from Middle French and Latin and, of course, means putting something off until later.

It is hardly necessary to define this common problem at school–and everywhere else–in *any* language, however. We all know what it is. We all do it, and we've all suffered to some extent because of it (missed deadlines tend to make instructors–and bosses–crabby).

But here is a problem: some people procrastinate more than others. And NOT just because they are lazy, disorganized, unmotivated, or confused about what to do. Those might be the surface assumptions and sometimes true, but at other times, or perhaps beneath what appear to be the behaviors listed above, defeating habits like procrastination have to do with deeper issues, maybe beliefs and thought patterns such as:

- "What's the use if I get this done, or not?"
- "I do better under stress, so leaving things until the last minute actually helps me."
- "I'm just naturally disorganized."
- "I never manage to do anything on time. I've always been that way!"

This is why Unit 2 begins with "foundational issues," perspectives and beliefs about ourselves such as

our world view that operates at the bottom of our pile of motivations, and our sense of self-efficacy (or lack thereof) that generates thoughts that either work for or against us when it comes to successfully managing time, tools, and environments of learning. Lesson 2.2 deals with procrastination itself, often a by-product of a negative or unexamined world view and a low sense of self-efficacy, but with an emphasis on how to overcome it.

First, here is a look at world view, a concept some experts put at the foundational level of how we think and perceive the world. On top of our world view, so to speak, and as a result of it, are our beliefs. And on top of beliefs lay our conscious-level feelings and thoughts.
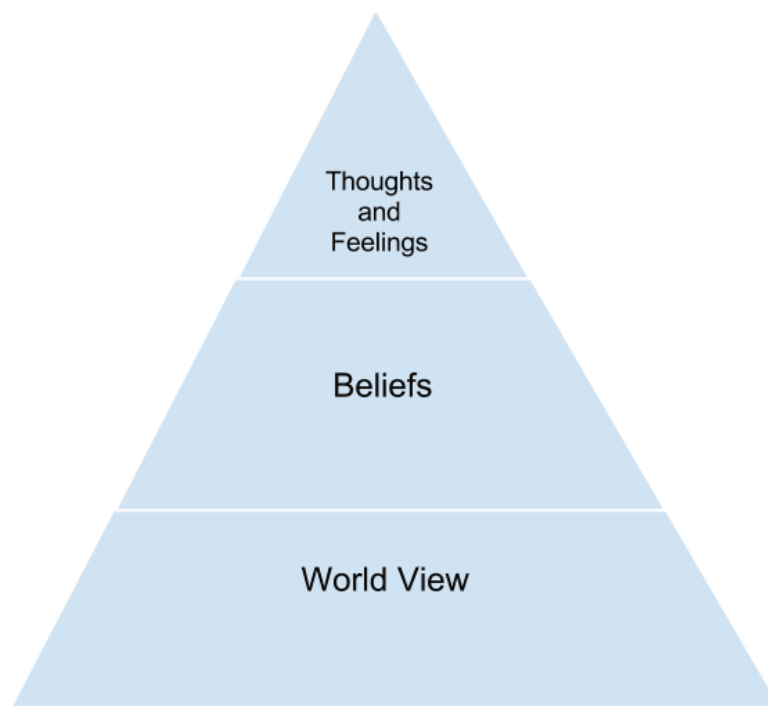
Our world view, as researcher F. Heylighen defines it, is "a framework that ties everything together, that allows us to understand society, the world, and our place in it, and that could help us to make the critical decisions which will shape our future." In his article What is a world view? Heylighen, citing the work of Belgian philosopher Leo Apostel, lists seven basic components of a person's world view:

1. A model of the world (how the world functions/how it is structured)
2. Explanation (of the model)
3. Futurology (where are we going?)
4. Values (good/evil)
5. Action (plans of action based on our values)
6. Knowledge (true and false)

7. Building Blocks (what fragments of others' world views helped us shape ours)

These components cover the fundamental questions about existence human beings find themselves mulling over in time, questions that ultimately guide beliefs, thoughts, and feelings.

Exercise 2.1 is based on Heylighen's article. Whereas this exercise is not a "personal inventory" per se, it has value in guiding the learner to discovering, perhaps, some foundational issues that can hinder a successful approach to overcoming non-productive actions and habits such as procrastination.

For example, if a person has a world view that is post modern, he/she views the world with a heavy dose of skepticism and distrust of ideologies, rationality, and absolute truth. Therefore, it might be easy to subscribe to a "What's the use?" thought and feeling when it comes to academic and work-world norms such as being on time and getting one's work done.

Note: it is not necessary, however, to know precisely which world view one has been influenced by to complete the exercise. Indeed, most people more or less absorb their world views from parents, institutions, and the culture in which they grew up. The value in knowing such information about oneself is in understanding how to deal with certain attitudes and beliefs that work against successful learning, and success in life in general. It is also valuable to know what has contributed to successful attitudes and beliefs so that these can be affirmed and reinforced for future success.

SELF EFFICACY

Self efficacy, or one's sense of being able to achieve goals, is an essential ingredient in a learner's ability to succeed. Thoughts and feelings on this topic, which stem from one's beliefs (remember the pyramid illustration) contribute to more, or less, success.

A key element of self efficacy is the concept of locus of control. As the definition indicates, the locus, or place, of control is usually either internal or external, but sometimes it is both.

Obviously if a person believes that he/she is in control of situations and outcomes (an internal locus) achieving goals is more likely. If a person believes he/she is controlled by external forces, achieving goals is less likely. But everyone experiences both internal and external forces for various reasons. For example, choosing to do the right thing on the job is based on the external control of workplace rules. Yet, one might apply for the job based on one's internal belief that he/she can succeed. And both internal and external loci of control are in operation when one chooses to do the right thing at any time based on one's beliefs about God.

UNIT 2, EXERCISE 2.1

1. Read the article by Heylighen, linked above, for a more detailed explanation of world view and the seven components he cites.
2. Briefly respond to your thoughts on each of the seven components. If you have not given much thought to some of them as of yet, take time to consider them now. Three to five sentences will likely be sufficient **for each component**, for a total of approximately 21-35 sentences. It would be helpful to number the components. This does not have to be completed as an essay.

For a more detailed explanation and the relationship of self efficacy to locus of control, complete exercise 2.2.

UNIT 2, EXERCISE 2.2

After reading the definition of this concept in the article cited above, answer the following questions:

1. List three attitudes and/or perspectives that a person with a primarily internal locus of control might have that will help him/her succeed in life, and why.
2. List three attitudes and/or perspectives that a person with a primarily external locus of control might have that might hinder his/her success, and why.
3. List three instances where both internal and external loci of control help a person, and why.

A chart might help you organize your response.

INTERNAL   EXTERNAL   BOTH

UNIT 2, EXERCISE 2.3

Write about FIVE ways the information in this lesson can help you to create and achieve more success in your life-long learning career, whether in a classroom or in any of your other learning arenas. While you are gathering your thoughts about this topic, consider learning situations at school, work, home, and in relationships. 200-300 words (about one page, typed, double-spaced).

LESSON 2.2: PROCRASTINATION

"Do it now" by Maklay62 is in the Public Domain,
CC0

Before entering into some solutions, common and creative, to help you solve what is arguably the number one detriment to effective learning at school, home, and/or on the job (aka procrastination), complete Exercise 2.1, below.

This personal inventory is a bit different from others you may have taken. It incorporates very little about the usual bad habit suspects when it comes to the "P" word and includes more on the other reasons for such a habit, as suggested in the previous lesson as well as one or two other procrastination-inducers which have cropped up in our now social-media-saturated lives. Perhaps there is, in fact, more to your challenges with procrastination than the assumptions about laziness, disorganization, etc. See what you think. More importantly, see what you can do about it.

As promised above, let's get started with some immediate solutions as well as some perspectives that might, in time, help you adjust your thoughts and feelings or perhaps a flagging sense of self efficacy and/or other reasons you might commit the "P" word.

UNIT 2, EXERCISE 2.1

For each item, circle one. Oh, and by the way, feel free to add any comments you wish. Sometimes quick-answer exercises like this just don't have enough of YOUR personal response options, but try not to overthink things. This is, after all, a simple snapshot of where your beliefs and feelings are at this moment in time.

1. I admit it. Just like everyone else, I feel that I am lazy when it comes to getting my assignments and/or work done.

- usually
- sometimes
- rarely
- never

2. I am disorganized when it comes to getting my assignments and/or work done.

- usually
- sometimes
- rarely
- never

3. I get confused about what I am supposed to do for the assignment or task.

- usually
- sometimes
- rarely
- never

4. I have a hard time saying "no" to others which puts me behind in my work/studies.

- most of the time
- sometimes
- rarely
- never

5. I have this sinking feeling that I will succumb to the usual reasons for procrastinating, no matter what they are.

- most of the time
- sometimes

- rarely
- never

6. I just don't think I have the organizational abilities to be able to stop at least some of my procrastinating.

- most of the time
- sometimes
- rarely
- never

7. When I was in high school it wasn't a problem studying for most tests the night before.

- most of the time
- sometimes
- rarely
- never

8. I work best under pressure, so I think that procrastinating is really good for me.

- most of the time
- sometimes
- rarely
- never

9. When what I have to study or accomplish is just not that important to me, I find it more tempting to procrastinate.

- most of the time
- sometimes
- rarely
- never

10. I have a hard time talking myself into maintaining a better attitude about *not* procrastinating.

- most of the time
- sometimes
- rarely
- never

11. I think I have more time to finish something than I usually do.

- most of the time
- sometimes
- rarely
- never

12. It annoys me that some instructors assign so much homework when I have a life outside of school, too! So, I believe that it can be their fault that I have to procrastinate on certain things.

- most of the time
- sometimes
- rarely
- never

13. I am very social and spending time with my friends sometimes gets in the way of doing my work.

- most of the time
- sometimes
- rarely
- never

14. I can't seem to stay away from social media.

- most of the time
- sometimes
- rarely
- never

15. Here is something (or perhaps more than one) not on this list that also causes me to procrastinate. (Possible issues might include a disability or some kind of learning challenge, homelessness or some other kind of living situation challenge, pregnancy, work hours and responsibilities, and/or personal life stress.)

_____

- most of the time
- sometimes
- rarely

- never

NOTE: This exercise is not graded on responses. The answer key to this personal inventory is to get right into helping the learner start solving some of these causes of procrastination.

UNIT 2, EXERCISE 2.2

We are fortunate at Lane to have a library of Study Tips written by Lane Instructor Dan Hodges and continually in use to enhance our Effective Learning classes. Below are two articles (study tips 10 and 15) he has written that will help you begin to glean some solutions to your procrastination challenges, whether they stem from your beliefs, feelings, and thoughts, or whether they stem from some of the more specific issues in the survey you just completed.

Instructions:

1. From your responses to exercise 2.1, select your top five challenges when it comes to procrastinating. Create a chart, such as this, but leave yourself ample space to fill in solutions you find:

CHALLENGE	SOLUTION
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

2. Keeping in mind your top 5 picks, as you read through the following articles, insert what information strikes you as being most helpful. The Tips are chock full of information, so allot yourself an hour or two to read them and annotate for ideas. That said, of course, don't stop there! You will likely pick up several more solutions you hadn't thought of before.

Also, note: future lessons on reading comprehension, organization of time and materials, etc., will also help you with solutions, so this can be an ongoing treasure hunt for you as you conquer one of a learner's worst enemies...you know...the "P" word...

Study Tip # 10–How to Create A Positive Attitude and Stop Procrastinating–this article is now linked on a PDF that includes all of the articles. You will have to scroll down.

Study Tip # 15–What Most Instructors Expect Their Students to Do–this article is also now on a PDF file that includes all of the articles.

UNIT 2, EXERCISE 2.3

There is a new phenomenon called "social media addiction". I'm sure I don't need to elaborate. I, myself, succumb from time to time. However, for more specifics, perspectives, and assistance in conquering this particular cause of procrastination, download the article and annotate it for information you think might help you. Write a short summary (5-7 sentences).

Social media addiction is a bigger problem than you think

LESSON 2.3: SCHEDULES AND SCHEDULING

"Clock" by geralt is in the Public Domain, CC0

Some people just seem to be born organized. The remaining 95% of the population* need help, especially when it come to organizing time!

It used to be that physical organizers, called schedulers or day-timers, came in pocket- or purse-sized folders, books, or multipurpose binder creations with cleverly designed nooks and crannies for everything from pens and pencils, to cell phones, to daily, weekly, and yearly schedules, address and phone number lists, and other handy components. Now, cell phones and other electronic gadgets advertise apps for such things, though some people still prefer hard copies.

For students, early in your school career such a management tool was not really necessary. Other people handed you a schedule, defined your routines, and that was that. Not so for college students, where changing term requirements and time demands that differ from class to class can present a variety of management challenges. Of course, add other life factors such as children, work, and/or caring for aging parents and, well, many people not only want, but NEED a strategy to stay organized.

But before we get into some specific management tools, complete the exercise, below, designed to help you determine what your best times of the day to accomplish academic activities are. Some people describe themselves as night people, others as morning people. Others, with busy lives, might say "I'm a 24/7 person!" But the more we know about ourselves in this regard, the more we will be able to adjust our schedule to be more effective.

*This is not a scientific percentage, just a hunch.

UNIT 2, EXERCISE 3.1

Read the list below of academic tasks meant to be completed **outside of class**. Beneath that list are time slots during an eighteen-hour day. If you are not restricted by work schedules or other obligations, from what you know about your best times of the day to accomplish certain things, when would you tend to be at your peak performance for each activity? (Later on, you will complete a schedule for all of your current school, work, meals, relaxation time, and home life obligations). Think about this matching exercise as a wish list.

Insert the numbers of as many of the activities listed on top that apply to your schedule this term in the appropriate time slots on the bottom. Not all may apply to your course of study. You may also be inclined to split the same activity into more than one time of day. Some activities may extend to two or more hours. When you are finished, complete the reflection activity below.

ACADEMIC TASKS

1. Memorizing
2. Organizing notes and materials
3. Copying or typing notes
4. Writing essays
5. Creative writing (stories, poetry, etc.)
6. Problem solving such as in math classes
7. Lab tasks (science, geology, horticulture, culinary, etc.)
8. Reading textbooks
9. Taking notes from textbooks or lectures
10. Physical activity (sports, workouts)
11. Planning a presentation: debate, speech, etc.
12. Sculpting, drawing
13. Taking pictures for a photography class
14. Practicing music
15. Rehearsing for dance classes/performances
16. Rehearsing for drama classes/performance
17. Rehearsing for a group presentation of another kind
18. Studying alone
19. Studying in a group
20. Completing computer-related tasks and assignments

TIME SLOTS

5:00-6:00 a.m._____

6:00-7:00 a.m._____

7:00-8:00 a.m._____

8:00-9:00 a.m._____

9:00-10:00 a.m._____

10:00-11:00 a.m._____

11:00-12:00 a.m._____

12:00-1:00 p.m._____

1:00-2:00 p.m._____

2:00-3:00 p.m._____

3:00-4:00 p.m._____

4:00-5:00 p.m._____

5:00-6:00 p.m._____

6:00-7:00 p.m._____

7:00-8:00 p.m._____

8:00-9:00 p.m._____

9:00-10:00 p.m._____

10:00-11:00 p.m._____

REFLECTION

Again, considering this a wish list of what you know to be the best times of day/night for you to be at your most alert for the types of tasks noted, write about **three ways** you might be able to change or incorporate your survey results into your current schedule, or next term's schedule. Write approximately 100-150 words, or about half a page, double-spaced.

A few things to think about as you reflect:

- What kind of changes in your current class and study schedule might be more effective for you this term?

- How might keeping in mind that most instructors advise scheduling anywhere from one to three hours *outside* of classwork for every hour *in* class influence any changes in your current schedule or your thoughts about future schedules?

UNIT 2, EXERCISE 3.2

Before you fill out your "real life" schedule, you know, the one that includes all of the other things you do and are responsible for, read the article How to Plan Your Time so that You Can Get Your Homework Done by Dan Hodges (study tip # 14, scroll down to page 36). Add 5 recommendations from his article to your reflection in Exercise 3.1 that you think might help you manage your time more efficiently.

UNIT 2, EXERCISE 3.3

Based on your responses to exercises 3.1 and 3.2, fill out a reasonable schedule for you for one week, all seven days. Incorporate what you learned about yourself in the previous exercises, that is, your best time of day for studying certain subjects, and how you might alter your current schedule to insert a few of the recommendations.

Instructions:

- Download the seven-day-schedule

- Print a couple of copies of the template just in case.

- Fill out a schedule that includes all of the classes, study times, and outside of school activities and obligations you have to accomplish in one week.

- Color code each activity for easier reference. For example, blue for class times, green for study blocks, red for work, purple for relaxation time ("buffer time," as it is also known), brown for home life activities.

- NOTE: for some people, a work schedule can change from week to week. Just choose the most typical week for you this term.

- When you are finished, write a short, 5-7 sentence reflection on how you believe your altered schedule can improve your time management skills. You might already have a pretty good schedule, but most students find at least a few changes they can make.

LESSON 2.4: GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS AND STUDY CARDS

STUDY CARDS

This lesson focuses on flash cards for studying any subject, and graphic organizers for various kinds of essays. We covered how to organize a notebook in the first lesson, Optional Assignments, # 3, which is another essential organizational tool.

First, let's take a look at study, or flash, cards. For the first activity, you will need a set of either 3×5 or 4×6 cards, colored, lined, or plain. Colored pencils or markers might also help you create more effective study cards.

GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS FOR PAPERS

The next tools management topic concerns graphic organizers for papers. Every class, not just writing classes, sooner or later includes some kind of essay, whether expository essays such as exemplification, cause and effect, process, comparison/contrast, or definition papers or other genres such as narrative, descriptive or argument. Most writing instructors will require that students to complete outlines or fill out graphic organizers to help organize their writing prior to actually

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UNIT 2, EXERCISE 4.1

1. Read the article How to Make Flash Cards.
2. Create a flash card for the 5 methods suggested. On one side, put the sub-heading (e.g., "Preparing to Make Flash Cards"), and on the other, condense the advice to bullet points or numbered points.
3. Copy your cards onto online "cards" according to the instructions in method 3 or method 4.

---

writing the essay. The kind of outline that may be required will depend upon the style manual used in the class. Here, however, are several common types of organizers:

Click on the thumbnail for a full-size view. Click here for a sample Graphic Organizer for Exemplification or Definition Papers

Click on the thumbnail for a full-size view. Click here for a sample Graphic Organizer for Narrative, Process, and Cause and Effect Papers

Click on the thumbnail for a full-size view. Click here for a sample Graphic Organizer for a Comparison and Contrast Paper

Click on the thumbnail for a full-size view. Click here for a sample Graphic Organizer for an Argument or Persuasive Paper

UNIT 2, EXERCISE 4.2

From the flash cards you created for exercise 4.1:

1. Fill in a graphic organizer for a short paper for each topic, below.
2. You do NOT need to write the papers.
3. The topics and thesis statements are given for you.
4. Download the matching graphic organizer, linked above, or create one like it, to go with each topic. Note: each topic goes with a different style of organizer. The first one is done as an example.

Topics:

- **Topic**: Examples of 3 of the study card methods. **Thesis statement:** There are several ways to create and use your study cards. ANSWER: for this paper, you would fill in an organizer for exemplification papers.

- **Topic**: Why I prefer using study cards to prepare for tests. **Thesis statement:** Although some people don't like them, I have found that study cards are very effective when studying for tests.

- **Topic**: Story of why I decided to use study cards to prepare for tests. **Thesis statement:** Although I was resisting the use of study cards, I finally learned why this is one of the most effective ways for me to do better on tests.

In other words, your finished products will be filled-in graphic organizers of the appropriate kind for each of the topics.

LESSON 2.5: STUDY AREAS AND STUDY GROUPS

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE, INDIVIDUAL STUDY SPACES

"Cluttered desk" by OpenClipart-Vectors is in the
Public Domain, CC0

Most students more or less take what they can get when it comes to study areas. Schools usually offer a variety of nooks and crannies for students to hunker down and get their assignments done. The school library is a good (and quiet) place. Many common areas elsewhere on campus have tables, chairs, couches, and lounges to accommodate learners. But most students end up doing the majority of their outside of class work at home.

Home environments may be limited in terms of providing all of the recommended aspects of a good study space, but many of the recommendations can be either implemented or adapted from what a student has on hand or what can be improvised no matter what environment he or she is living in. Elements conducive to a more effective study/homework experience include such things as good lighting, ample supplies, comfortable seating, adequate space, and personalizing the study area to add a touch of inspiration and motivation.

Before taking a look at some expert advice to help you with your particular study area challenges, if any, complete the exercise below.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE STUDY GROUPS

The list of tips linked in Exercise 5.2, below, is more for organizing the group itself, not just the location and equipment. Study groups, whether meeting in a dorm, the library (check your library to

see if there are rooms you can reserve for this purpose), a coffee shop, or somewhere else, usually find what is convenient. What this lesson concerns are the dynamics of the group itself. That is, how to ensure that a study group does not devolve into more of a socializing occasion. The tips offered here cover such topics as the steps to take, warnings, and things you will need.

UNIT 2, EXERCISE 5.1

PART A

Describe your current study area at home–the good, the bad, the ugly. Be thorough.

PART B

Read what the experts advise in the article How to Make a Study Space and list as many ways you think you can realistically improve, change, (or start over…) your study area. Remember, you might not have the advantage of a whole room, or even a corner of a room, but there are still some changes you can make to create a more effective study environment. Take notes from the article for each of the "Parts" of an effective study area featured, as well as the "Tips" at the end. Organize your list, titled "How I Could Improve My Study Area," like this:

Part 1:

Part 2:

Part 3:

Tips:

UNIT 2, EXERCISE 5.2

Read the article How to Form a Study Group and take notes on the following topics, titling your notes, "Effective Study Groups":

8 Steps:

Tips:

Warnings:

Things You Will Need:

NOTE: from your own experience with study groups, add anything else you have found to be effective.

UNIT 2, EXERCISE 5.3

PART A: Study Area–Help Tran

Create a plan for Tran, based on the recommendations, above, on how to organize a study are in her busy home where she lives with six members of her family.

Tran is a first year college student from Vietnam. She has been in the U.S. with her family for three years and recently passed the English Language Learner classes at the topmost level, so now she looks forward to pursuing her degree in Business Management.

She lives with six other family members, her mother, father, grandmother, and three younger siblings aged 14, 12, and 9. Their home is located right next door to the family restaurant. This makes it convenient for Tran and her parents to work their regular shifts and to fill in if one or the other is ill. Tran is also responsible at times to help her younger siblings with their homework and/or take them to school and other activities if her parents are busy. This usually occurs at peak times for customers in the restaurant. Her grandmother helps out when she can but arthritis flare-ups prevent her from working as much as she would like.

Tran does have a small bedroom to herself, but it also sometimes serves as a storage room for restaurant supplies, mostly paper goods, so it can get crowded.

She is anticipating setting up an effective homework/study area for what she knows will soon become more of an intensive course load.

PART B: Study Group–Help The Athletes

Jeb, Andrew and Nelson are first year students at the university on sports scholarships: Jeb for basketball, Andrew for tennis, and Nelson for track and field. They share an apartment near the college sports complex. They are all taking Math 95 this term and realize that forming a study group as their instructor encouraged everyone to do would really help them, too.

One of the problems in getting a group going is that they are all big fans of ESPN and each one favors a different sport, so the television tends to be on long–and loud.

They also enjoy trying out all the restaurants in this southern city which is famous for having the best barbecue joints in the nation. They have calculated that there are at least seven restaurants nearby they want to get to know.

And then there are those campus parties on Friday and Saturday nights…

Although the men are highly motivated to eventually finish their degrees in business, culinary arts, and economics, they could use some advice on how to form a useful study group–and how to stick with it, particularly before their sports programs kick into high gear.

TO THE INSTRUCTOR: OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS/ACTIVITIES/EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNIT 2

OPTIONAL EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES AND/OR GRADING ELEMENTS FOR UNIT 2

Here are some suggestions for additional course components and grading elements:

- The Glossary of Terms in the back is good information for weekly quizzes, mid-term tests, and/or final exams.

- See Exercise 2.2 for instructions on adding to the chart of procrastination challenges and how to solve them.

- Lesson 2.1 on World View and Self Efficacy includes a reference to a listing of the various kinds of world views. Optional assignments might include:

  - summarizing the kinds of world views

  - writing a comparison/contrast of world views

  - creating a chart of world views

  - writing an historical perspective

  - researching one specific world view

- See Exercise 2.3 on creating a schedule. Students might experiment with two or three different kinds of schedules rather than just filling out one. When the schedules are completed, this might be a good opportunity for a peer review activity where students review each others' schedules and review for elements such as:

  - enough relaxation or buffer times between obligations, study periods, etc.

  - enough study time for each subject.

  - having completed the rubric for the task: one full week, all tasks, color-coded.

- To expand the Wrap-Up Activity for the lesson on graphic organizers and study cards (4), students can

  - write one of the papers for which they have created graphic organizers.

- After completing Exercise 5.1 on recommendations for a personal study area, students can design their ideal study area on graph paper.

- After completing Exercise 5.1 students can create inspirational posters to personalize their study area.

- After completing Exercise 5.1 students can investigate the great variety of white noise for studying YouTube videos and report on them.

Unit Overview

Topics, Objectives, Materials, Terms, To-Do List

Topics

This unit covers the following focus points:

- The Reading Apprenticeship approach
- How to read textbooks and get to know the elements and resources they offer
- How to read graphics
- Comprehension by identifying writing patterns and context clues
- Close reading for literature
- Tips for reading math and science materials

Once you learn to read, you will be forever free. —Frederick Douglass

Objectives

After you have completed this unit you should be able to:

- Understand how to use Reading Apprenticeship annotation strategies
- Understand how to get the most out of your textbooks by learning how to skim, and how to find out all of the resources your textbooks offer
- How to read closely for literature classes and other classes where literature is included with the readings
- How to get the most out of your math and science materials and help with studying for tests in these subjects

NOTE: AFTER THIS UNIT THE TAKE-HOME MID-TERM PORTFOLIO PROJECT IS DUE.

Materials

- e-book, "How to Learn Like a pro!" (instructor may require some materials to be downloaded)

Terms (These terms also appear in the Glossary of Terms)

NOTE: **the definitions are adapted and/or abbreviated from the original.**

Close reading: The process of determining meaning in a text by examining all of the elements, e.g., author, title, plot (if fiction), characters, setting, symbols, and rhetorical devices.

Cognitive: the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses.

Fiction: Writing that is not factual; imaginative writing.

Legend: A key to the symbols and color codes on a map, chart, etc.

Metacognition: How we think about how we think.

Non-fiction: Factual writing (reports, journalism, etc.); not "made up".

Inference: Information not specifically stated in the text; what can be read "between the lines": what is suggested or implied based on the evidence in the text.

Idioms: Expression (metaphors) that compare one thing to another, e.g., "hungry as a bear."

Metaphor: A comparison without using the terms, "like" or "as," e.g., "Her smile is the sunshine."

Reading Comprehension: The level of understanding of a text.

Simile: A comparison using the terms "like," "as,"so," or "than," e.g., "Her smile is *like* the sunshine."

To-Do List

- Complete the exercises, as assigned, in each lesson.
- In face-to-face classes, your instructor may include optional additional activities.

LESSON 3.1: COMPREHENDING COLLEGE LEVEL READING BY USING THE READING APPRENTICESHIP APPROACH

"Books" by Hermann is in the Public Domain, CC0

Most students entering college have not yet dealt with the level of difficulty involved in reading–and comprehending–scholarly textbooks and articles. The challenge may even surprise some who have pretty good reading and comprehension skills so far. Other students for whom reading has mostly consisted of social media, texts, forum chat rooms, and emails, find they are intimidated by the sheer *amount* of reading there is in college classes. There are other challenges as well, having to do with a variety of issues. To begin this unit, complete the "Reading Sample for Annotation," below, to determine where your reading challenges might exist.

THE READING APPRENTICESHIP (RA) APPROACH TO COMPREHENSION

Now to some strategies to help you with some typical college-level comprehension challenges as well as some of your specific challenges identified in the previous exercise.

This lesson focuses on a method called Reading Apprenticeship. It is based on the premise that people who have become expert readers can assist learners by modeling what they have learned to do. As explained in the text, *Reading for understanding, How Reading Apprenticeship Improves Disciplinary Learning in Secondary and College Classrooms,* "One literacy educator describes the idea of the cognitive apprenticeship in reading by comparing the process of learning to read with that of learning to ride a bike. In both cases, a more proficient other is present to support the beginner, engaging the beginner in the activity and calling attention to often overlooked or hidden strategies."

This is a strategy that takes a metacognitive (how we think about how we think) approach to comprehension, utilizing various strategies readers may already know they know how to do, then adding even more. For example, most readers have learned to make predictions (think ahead to the next stage of a plot in a mystery, for example), ask questions concerning meanings ("I wonder

UNIT 3, EXERCISE 1.1

Below is an excerpt from Wikipedia on the subject of reading comprehension. As you read it, annotate for the relevant bulleted items, just below. You may not experience all of the listed items.

You can highlight, circle, underline, and/or write notes in the margins. You will have fifteen minutes to complete this exercise. Note that several of the terms in the excerpt are technical and most people would not normally know them. These would be examples of items to circle or highlight, not look up at this point.

P.S. I tried to find something relevant, but "dry," if you know what I mean (no offense to the wonderful author of this article).

The list of items to annotate for:

- words or terms you do not know or remember: you do not have to look them up now

- where you may have lost your concentration (put a note next to the section)

- where you had some confusion about meaning

- where you became distracted by environmental issues such as noises, lighting, etc.

- where you had to re-read for meaning

- where you became frustrated with the reading material

- where you felt restless

- where you felt bored

READING COMPREHENSION DEFINITION

Reading comprehension is defined as the level of understanding of a text/message. This understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written and how they trigger knowledge outside the text/message. Comprehension is a "creative, multifaceted process" dependent upon four language skills: phonology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics.Proficient reading depends on the ability to recognize words quickly and effortlessly. It is also determined by an individual's cognitive development, which is "the construction of thought processes". Some people learn through education or instruction and others through direct experiences.

There are specific traits that determine how successfully an individual will comprehend text, including prior knowledge about the subject, well-developed language, and the ability to make inferences. Having the skill to monitor comprehension is a factor: "Why is this important?" and "Do I need to read the entire text?" are examples. Lastly, is the ability to be self-correcting to solve comprehension problems as they arise.

Reading comprehension levels

Reading comprehension involves two levels of processing, shallow (low-level) processing and deep (high-level) processing. Deep processing involves semantic processing, which happens when we encode the meaning of a word and relate it to similar words. Shallow processing involves structural and phonemic recognition, the processing of sentence and word structure and their associated sounds. This theory was first identified by Fergus I. M. Craik and Robert S. Lockhart.

Brain region activation

Comprehension levels can now be observed through the use of a fMRI, functional magnetic resonance imaging. fMRIs' are used to determine the specific neural pathways of activation across two conditions, narrative-level comprehension

and sentence-level comprehension. Images showed that there was less brain region activation during sentence-level comprehension, suggesting a shared reliance with comprehension pathways. The scans also showed an enhanced temporal activation during narrative levels tests indicating this approach activates situation and spatial processing.

History

Initially most comprehension teaching was based on imparting selected techniques that when taken together would allow students to be strategic readers however in 40 years of testing these methods never seemed to win support in empirical research. One such strategy for improving reading comprehension is the technique called SQ3R: Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review that was introduced by Francis Pleasant Robinson in his 1946 book *Effective Study*.

Between 1969 and to about 2000 a number of "strategies" were devised for teaching students to employ self-guided methods for improving reading comprehension. In 1969 Anthony Manzo designed and found empirical support for the ReQuest, or Reciprocal Questioning Procedure, it was the first method to convert emerging theories of social and imitation learning into teaching methods through the use of a talk rotation between students and teacher called cognitive modeling.[*citation needed*]

Since the turn of the 21st century, comprehension lessons usually consist of students answering teachers' questions, writing responses to questions on their own, or both. The whole group version of this practice also often included "Round-robin reading", wherein teachers called on individual students to read a portion of the text. In the last quarter of the 20th century, evidence accumulated that the read-test methods were more successful assessing rather than teaching comprehension.[*citation needed*] Instead of using the prior read-test method, research studies have concluded that there are much more effective ways to teach comprehension. Much work has been done in the area of teaching novice readers a bank of "reading strategies," or tools to interpret and analyze text.[12]

Instruction in comprehension strategy use often involves the gradual release of responsibility, wherein teachers initially explain and model strategies. Over time, they give students more and more responsibility for using the strategies until they can use them independently. This technique is generally associated with the idea of self-regulation and reflects social cognitive theory, originally conceptualized by Albert Bandura.

Vocabulary

Reading comprehension and vocabulary are inextricably linked. The ability to decode or identify and pronounce words is self-evidently important, but knowing what the words mean has a major and direct effect on knowing what any specific passage means. Students with a smaller vocabulary than other students comprehend less of what they read and it has been suggested that the most impactful way to improve comprehension is to improve vocabulary.

Most words are learned gradually through a wide variety of environments: television, books, and conversations. Some words are more complex and difficult to learn, such as homonyms, words that have multiple meanings and those with figurative meanings, like idioms, similes, and metaphors.

Three tier vocabulary words

Several theories of vocabulary instruction exist, namely, one focused on intensive instruction of a few high value words, one focused on broad instruction of many useful words, and a third focused on strategies for learning new word etc…

Broad vocabulary approach

The method of focusing of broad instruction on many words was developed by Andrew Biemiller who argued that more words would benefit students more, even if the instruction was short and teacher-directed. He suggested that teachers teach a large number of words before reading a book to students, by merely giving short definitions, such as synonyms, and then pointing out the words and their meaning while reading the book to students.The method contrasts with the approach by emphasizing quantity versus quality. There is no evidence to suggest the primacy of either approach.

about…"), visualize a scene being described, associate the material being read to some other material, and, at the end, summarize the material (particularly if required to do so by an instructor or for a paper).

I like to call these our "hard drive" skills. Like a computer hard drive always humming in the background doing its thing behind the scenes, our metacognitive skills have already been assisting us as readers. We just don't usually talk about what we are doing, for example, "Well, by golly, now I'm predicting what Godzilla will do to the poor villagers in about two scenes from now," we just automatically predict, especially if we are familiar with characters and plot lines. For another example,

Morphemic instruction

The final vocabulary technique, strategies for learning new words, can be further subdivided into instruction on using context and instruction on using morphemes, or meaningful units within words to learn their meaning. Morphemic instruction has been shown to produce positive outcomes for students reading and vocabulary knowledge, but context has proved unreliable as a strategy and it is no longer considered a useful strategy to teach students. This conclusion does not disqualify the value in "learning" morphemic analysis – prefixes, suffixes and roots – but rather suggests that it be imparted incidentally and in context. Accordingly, there are methods designed to achieve this, such as Incidental Morpheme Analysis.

[…]

Reciprocal teaching

In the 1980s Annemarie Sullivan Palincsar and Ann L. Brown developed a technique called reciprocal teaching that taught students to predict, summarize, clarify, and ask questions for sections of a text. The use of strategies like summarizing after each paragraph have come to be seen as effective strategies for building students' comprehension. The idea is that students will develop stronger reading comprehension skills on their own if the teacher gives them explicit mental tools for unpacking text.

Instructional conversations

"Instructional conversations", or comprehension through discussion, create higher-level thinking opportunities for students by promoting critical and aesthetic thinking about the text. According to Vivian Thayer, class discussions help students to generate ideas and new questions. (Goldenberg, p. 317). Dr. Neil Postman has said, "All our knowledge results from questions, which is another way of saying that question-asking is our most important intellectual tool" (Response to Intervention). There are several types of questions that a teacher should focus on: remembering; testing understanding; application or solving; invite synthesis or creating; and evaluation and judging. Teachers should model these types of questions through "think-alouds" before, during, and after reading a text. When a student can relate a passage to an experience, another book, or other facts about the world, they are "making a connection." Making connections help students understand the author's purpose and fiction or non-fiction story.

Text factors

There are factors, that once discerned, make it easier for the reader to understand the written text. One is the genre, like folktales, historical fiction, biographies or poetry. Each genre has its own characteristics for text structure, that once understood help the reader comprehend it. A story is composed of a plot, characters, setting, point of view, and theme. Informational books provide real world knowledge for students and have unique features such as: headings, maps, vocabulary, and an index. Poems are written in different forms and the most commonly used are: rhymed verse, haikus, free verse, and narratives. Poetry uses devices such as: alliteration, repetition, rhyme, metaphors, and similes. "When children are familiar with genres, organizational patterns, and text features in books they're reading, they're better able to create those text factors in their own writing."

"I am now going to visualize this scene in graveyard when Hamlet comes across the deceased court jester's skull in Act V, Scene 1." We just *see* it in our mind's eye.

Just now, however, as a reminder, a review, and an affirmation of important comprehension skills you already possess, complete exercise 3.2, below.

UNIT 3, EXERCISE 1.2

Go back through the excerpt, above, on reading comprehension and THIS time, write marginal notes where you used any of the comprehension tools listed below:

- predicting

- asking questions of the material such as, "I wonder about," "Could this mean?"

- visualizing

- connecting this material to something else you have learned

- noting where you think you might need to read something over again for comprehension

- summarizing

LESSON 3.2: GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR TEXTBOOKS

READING TEXTBOOKS: FRONT AND BACK MATTER

"Books" by
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Before diving into every line of text in a textbook reading assignment, it is helpful–and saves time–to find out, first, what resources the entire book has to offer you. Then, as those chapter readings are assigned, it helps to first skim read them for the big picture meaning.

Exercise 2.1 will help you find all the resources in your textbook–and some textbooks have a lot more help in the front matter and back matter of the text than you may realize. I always think of one Effective Learning student who, when given this exercise to use on any textbook he had with him, picked his math book. He was at that time re-taking that math class because he had failed it the term before. As he did the exercise, he realized the back matter of the book included an answer key for half of the problems for every exercise. "Had I known this last term," he said, "I would have passed!" See if you, too, find something useful in your textbook that perhaps you didn't know was there, either.

Exercises 2.2 and 2.3 will then cover good strategies for skim reading specific chapters as well as a strategy for getting the most out of graphics included in textbooks.

SKIM READING TEXTBOOK CHAPTERS

Before doing a detailed reading of a textbook chapter, get the big picture by following these steps:

- Similar to reading the Table of Contents for the entire book, read the Introduction or Chapter Overview, whichever the textbook features, for the main ideas and how they are divided.

- Read the headings and sub-headings.

- Note the graphics (charts, tables, illustrations, etc.).

- Read the first one or two sentences in the paragraphs (the paragraph topic is sometimes covered in more than one sentence).

- Read the last sentence in each paragraph which might be a paragraph summary.

- Read the summary of the entire chapter, if given.

- Read any sentence with boldface or italicized words or word groups in it which are usually either key ideas or a technical terms.

UNIT 3, EXERCISE 2.1

Here is a list of several kinds of resources typically in the front of a textbook, known as "front matter," and a list of typical "back matter" resources. For one of your textbooks, put a check mark next to the front and back matter features it includes, then answer the two questions, below.

Textbook title_____

FRONT MATTER

___Table of Contents

___Preface

___Introduction

___To the Teacher

___To the Student

___Other (list, here): _____

BACK MATTER

___Glossary of Terms

___Index of subjects

___Answer Keys

___Additional Exercises

___Additional Readings

___Tables, graphs, charts

___Maps

___Other (list, here): _____

Answer the following questions:

1. Were there any surprises for you?
2. How can you use the front and back matter in your text to help you with your studies? (3 or 4 sentences)

- Stop when needed if you come across a complicated idea or topic and take a little more time to skim it until you understand it.

- Skim the study questions, too. They will help you focus on key points.

READING GRAPHICS

"Statistic" by JuralMin is in the Public Domain, CC0

Listed below are various types of data found on most graphics, whether a pie chart, bar graph, line chart, or other type.

The key to comprehending graphics and using them to get more meaning from a textbook chapter or an article, or to answer study questions, is to pay close attention to the typical elements of the graphic. Not every graphic includes all of the elements listed.

1. Title
2. Captions
3. Legend
4. Axis information (vertical information, or "Y" data, and horizontal information, or "X" data)
5. Publication date (important for the most current information)
6. Publisher (important for credibility)
7. Labels
8. Color (used to differentiate and compare data)
9. Size (also used to represent comparisons)
10. Spatial positions (helps for comparing and contrasting)
11. Patterns represented by the content, itself, and

UNIT 3, EXERCISE 2.2

Using the recommendations on how to skim through textbook chapters, do so with a textbook chapter of your choice. When you are finished, close the book and write about the following: write down as many of the main ideas of this chapter as you can remember by skim reading it. Try not to look back. When finished, check your work to make sure you have transcribed the information correctly.

12. Trends that appear more evident when viewing the visual representation of the data.

It is easy to overlook all of the information present in a graphic, so give yourself enough time to note all the elements and their meanings before answering questions about them. Exercise 3.3 offers some practice.

UNIT 3, EXERCISE 2.3

This exercise uses Thematic Maps of the United States Census Bureau.

1. Choose a Theme of the many listed that include, for example, Agricultural, Business, Income and Poverty, and Natural Disasters. There are many categories to choose from.
2. Click through to the actual graphic for the information on that theme. For example, click on Natural Disasters, then Hurricane Katrina Resource Maps, then to more options listed from there.
3. Write down the title of the thematic graphic you choose, and list all of the elements of the graphic from the list, above. Not all may be present on the specific type of graphic you choose.
4. Summarize three things you learned about the information presented in this graphic form.

LESSON 3.3: PATTERNS AND CONTEXT CLUES

PATTERNS
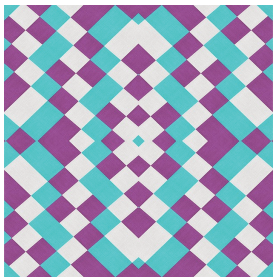
Knowing the pattern of an article, essay, or textbook chapter aids comprehension. For each kind of writing certain clue words, also called linking and transition words, are used. They signal the direction the writer is taking. For example, when writing an essay with a contrast pattern the clue words would include "in contrast," "although," "conversely," and "however". For another example, writing to emphasize a point is often presented with clue words such as "again," "as a matter of fact," and "for this reason." Below is a list of common clue words used for various patterns in writing. Note: a passage could include more than one pattern (Exercise 3.1 includes examples of this).

Exercise 3.1 is a treasure hunt for determining genre by recognizing clue words.

CONTEXT CLUES

Besides clues to help you determine the pattern or genre of a reading selection, there are clues to help you figure out the meaning of specific words that are unfamiliar to you. Here are the five most common:

1. **Definition/Explanation Clues**: sometimes the meaning of a word or phrase is given right after its use.
Example: Taxidermy, the art of preparing, stuffing, and mounting the skins of animals (especially vertebrates) for display or for other sources of study, is popular among museum curators.
2. **Restatement/Synonym Clues**: sometimes a word is presented in a simpler way.
Example: Stuffing dead animals has been a dream of Stedman Nimblebody, author of *Taxidermy*

Through the Ages, ever since his pet snake died when Steddie was six years old. He still misses Mr. Scaly Face.

Lists of Common Clue Words (Linking/Transition)

Clue Words to Show Addition

additionally, again, also, and, another, besides, finally, first, second (etc.), further, furthermore, incidentally, lastly, likewise, moreover, next, too, along with, as well as, equally important, in addition, what's more.

Clue Words to Show Time

about, after, afterward, at, before, currently, during, eventually, finally, first (etc.), following formerly, immediately, later, meanwhile, next, next week, previously soon, subsequently, then, thereafter, till, today (etc.), until, when, after a few hours, as soon as, in the future, soon after.

Clue Words to Show Location

above, across, adjacent, against, along, among, around, behind below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, by, down, inside, into, here, near, nearby, off, onto, outside, over, there, throughout, under, away from, at the side, in the back, in back of, in the background, in the distance, in the front, in the foreground, on top of, to the right (etc.).

Clue Words to Show Comparison

also, as , like, likewise, meanwhile, similarly, simultaneously, after all, at the same time, by and large, in comparison, in the same way, in the same manner, in the same way.

Clue Words to Show Contrast

although, but, conversely, however, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, otherwise, still, true, yet, or, and yet, even though, in contrast, on the contrary, on the other hand, while this is true.

Clue Words to Emphasize a Point

again, obviously, truly, undoubtedly, as a matter of fact, for this reason, in fact, to emphasize, to repeat.

Clue Words to Clarify

for instance, in other words, put another way, that is.

Clue Words to Give Examples

namely, specifically, as an illustration, for example, for instance, to demonstrate, to illustrate.

Clue Words to Introduce as a Result

accordingly, consequently, so, therefore, thus, as a result, due to this.

Clue Words to Show Cause and Effect

if…then, this led to, for this reason, caused, not only but also, which led to.

Clue Words to Introduce Conclusions

accordingly, consequently, finally hence, so, therefore, thus, as a result, in brief, in conclusion, in short, in summary, on the whole, to conclude.

NOTE: this is not an exhaustive list, of course, and as you have noticed, various words and expressions can work for more than one pattern of writing, so they illustrate just one strategy to help reading comprehension.

UNIT 3, EXERCISE 3.1

For each selection, determine which pattern of writing it is and list the clue word or words. There may be more than one pattern in each selection. The paragraphs are numbered for convenience.

"How to Overcome Writer's Block"

by Hamlin Snakebite

1. First, you might work on another piece of writing for a while, something completely different. For example, if you are writing an adventure, switch to writing a meat recipe or a report on the life cycle of the billy goat.

Pattern(s)_____

Clue word(s)_____

2. It is also good to keep in mind something my mother also used to say: "Weak muscles equal weak minds." Take a walk, ride a bike, or mud wrestle.

Pattern(s)_____

Clue word(s)_____

3. Lastly, instead of thinking typical writer's block thoughts, for example, "I will never EVER be able to write another word," or "I SHOULD have gone to taxidermy school," etc., replace them with more peaceful thoughts, or hum peaceful tunes, or read through Stedman Nimblebody's *Taxidermy Through the Ages*. After reading that book chances are you will soon nod off, thus easing your worried mind for a little while, anyway.

Pattern(s)_____

Clue word(s)_____

4. Draw pictures of the characters, setting, and scenes in your story. This might make them more real as well as giving you more ideas for what to do next. It might also cause new appreciation for writing because you might soon realize you stink at art, therefore you'll want to get back to your story as soon as possible.

Pattern(s)_____

Clue word(s)_____

5. Take two complete days off and do things you don't normally do. Watch cartoons and eat gummy bears, take pies to shut-ins, or enter a ping-pong tournament.

Pattern(s)_____

Clue word(s)_____

6. Listen to some music, but try to match the music with the kind of writing you are working on. For example, if it's a mystery, pick something dark and worrisome with lots of organ music and cymbal crashing. if you are working on a peaceful scene, listen to something like "Flora Featherly's Greatest Oboe Hits," or something with a lot of flutes. If it's a romance, find an orchestral piece loaded with violins written in the nineteenth century. But if you are a writing crime detective drama, plug into a few tunes from the Goth-rock band "Shrapnel," in particular anything on their latest CD, "Scream Bloody Murder". Not only will it put you in the mood for blood, guts and gore but also it will likely keep you up nights out of fear–thus giving you more time to write!

3. **Contrast/Antonym Clues**: sometimes the meaning of a word is clarified by presenting a word or phrase opposite of its meaning.

Example: Little Steddie wanted to visit the Taxidermy Museum but the rest of the family preferred a trip to the Zoo to see live animals.

4. **Inference/General Context Clues**: sometimes the meaning of a word or phrase is in the surrounding sentences, or must be inferred or implied by the general meaning of a selection.

Example: When Steddie finally got the chance to visit the Taxidermy Museum, he was very excited. He even found a stuffed snake that looked exactly like Mr. Scaly Face! "Just think," he exclaimed to his parents, "If Mr. Scaly Face was stuffed, I could still tease the cat and the dog with him!"

5. **Punctuation**: the correct use of punctuation helps a reader get the meaning of a term, phrase, or thought. Likewise, incorrectly placed or missing punctuation sometimes gives an entirely different and incorrect meaning across.

Example:

Missing punctuation: Is it time to eat Grandma?

Corrected: Is it time to eat, Grandma?

Pattern(s)_____

Clue word(s)_____

UNIT 3, EXERCISE 3.2

There are many examples online of punctuation errors in signs that change the meaning. Create a chart such as the one below for 5 of the signs that you really like.

WHAT THE SIGN SAYS   WHAT THE SIGN REALLY MEANS

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

LESSON 3.4: CLOSE READING FOR LITERATURE

CLOSE READING

"Books" by Wokandapix is in the Public Domain, CC0

In addition to using reading comprehension skills such as predicting, visualizing, "talking to the text," skimming a textbook before reading, and noting patterns and context clues as featured in lessons one, two, and three, another strategy called "close reading" is helpful. This is popular with literature professors; however, the skills involved in close reading are applicable to any complex reading assignment.

I usually begin my close reading instructions with a visual demonstration. Perhaps describing it here will help you, too.

Since this kind of comprehension starts with knowing nothing about the elements of a story, novel, poem, or essay, I stand with my arms spread wide.

I then discuss, briefly, each element of a work starting with the title as a place to begin comprehension, while slowly moving my arms toward one another, a few inches per element.

Titles, for starters, particularly of non-fiction works, usually tell you precisely what the main idea, or thesis, is. For example, a book about "The History of the Roman Empire" usually gives you just that–the history of the Roman Empire.

This is not usually true, however, for works of fiction, for which inference is the key to comprehension. For example, "Story of an Hour," by Kate Chopin, while it might seem to be something about time, also suggests it is about something other than a clock ticking away seconds and minutes, and indeed it is.

I next add the author, as this might aid comprehension. For example, most students are familiar with Stephen King, who writes in the horror genre. Knowing this element brings the arms in a bit

closer as the reader will know to anticipate (and predict) a horror story with a lot of plot twists and turns in some horrible ways. Prediction has begun.

Next, I briefly discuss how knowing about the remaining elements – plot, characters, and setting – help the reader close in on meaning enough to be able to discuss the theme or themes of the work with reasonable evidence to support one's conclusion.

This visual of the arms getting closer together can continue through a discussion of close reading of small passages, individual sentences, and even specific words. Each level of careful attention and thought helps a reader "read between the lines" when meaning is not overtly stated, when themes are inferred rather than explained outright.

Exercises 4.1 and 4.2 demonstrate how we already engage in this kind of thinking–for different purposes.

UNIT 3, EXERCISE 4.1

Idioms are good examples of inference, or "reading between the lines." They also employ the comparison skill called metaphor (comparing two things without using the terms "like" or "as").

Write out as many meanings for the list of idioms, below, as you can.

(Note: for international students: here is an additional reference list, if needed that includes meanings).

Some examples are:

Keep it under your hat.

Over the hill.

Barking up the wrong tree.

Paint the town red.

Lion's share.

Turned a deaf ear.

Up a creek without a paddle.

Eyes are bigger than your stomach.

Put your nose to the grindstone.

Keep your shoulder to the wheel.

Running on empty.

Too many irons in the fire.

Spitting image.

Born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

Wild goose chase.

Clear sailing.

Walking on cloud nine.

Captions and titles for pictures, art, and sculpture are also examples of the use of inference. At Lane, we have a number of sculptures on the grounds as well as a small art gallery of student work. Take a "mini field trip" around campus or if the weather is bad, access the list of art works at Lane. Choose three artworks to re-name, using inference.

UNIT 3, EXERCISE 4.3

Cartoons, especially editorial cartoons, also make good use of inference skills.

For the cartoon, below, answers the questions about each of its elements to get to the meaning. Cartoons, like other forms of art, include additional visual elements such as facial expressions, and setting. Many of us are able to comprehend cartoons within a few seconds just because we have so many inference skills already in our "hard drives," so to speak, but examining them now will be a good reminder of how to comprehend complex subject matter–by close examination of all of the elements.
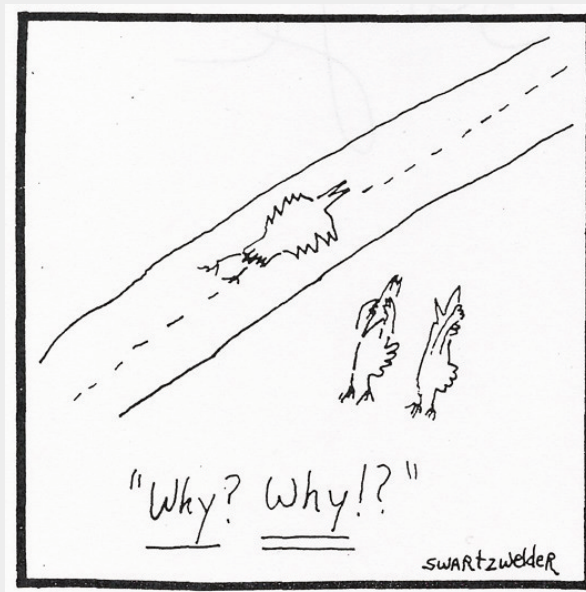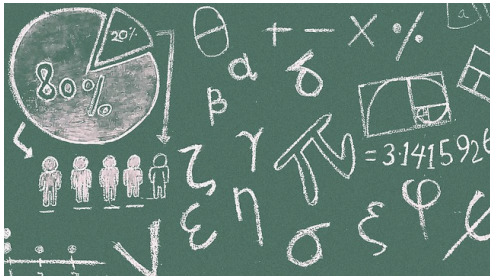

"John Swartzwelder cartoon" by rubber cat is licensed under
CC BY-ND 2.0

1. Setting:
2. Subject (what's going on):
3. Facial expression(s):
4. Quote:
5. Meaning of quote (inference):

LESSON 3.5: MATH AND SCIENCE--TIPS FOR BETTER COMPREHENSION AND FOR STUDYING

HOW TO STUDY MATH

"Math" by Pixapopz is in the Public Domain, CC0

Math is one of those subjects that many people struggle with in college. One reason for this is that many students haven't taken a math class for a few—or many—years and math is one subject that, as the old expression goes, "if you don't use it, you lose it." This isn't always the case, of course. Some people with more "logical/mathematical intelligence" (remember Gardner's Multiple Intelligences from Unit 1?) enjoy math and seem to easily transition to college level math courses, or at least may not have to take preparatory classes beforehand.

For everyone, however, no matter what the level of math or interest (or lack thereof), there are a number of steps that will help a student achieve greater success. The exercise below will help with this process.

UNIT 3, EXERCISE 5.1

1. Read the article How to Study Math. The article features **12 Steps** in the study process, **7 Tips** that include perspectives to ease common stressors along with a few memory helps and some encouragement, **4 Warnings** for further advice and encouragement, and a **list of things** you will need.
2. From all of the advice given in the article, make a list of your personal "Top Twenty Tips for Success in Math Classes".

HOW TO STUDY SCIENCE

In a previous lesson, we covered some basics when it comes to getting the most out of any textbook. However, science textbooks—and science itself—present a bit more of a challenge. In this subject, there are a lot of specialized words, symbols, and formulas to comprehend and memorize. The following exercise will help you discover your own methods and techniques.

UNIT 3, EXERCISE 5.2

1. In a search engine such as Google, type in the key words **"how to learn science words, symbols, and formulas."** Add "YouTube" if you prefer to learn from video presentations. Sample search results: "how to memorize the Periodic Table of Elements," "how to write word equations for chemical reactions," "word equations examples," and so on. Scroll through a few pages of these, narrowing your search by looking for subjects you are interested in such as medicine, psychology, biology, botany, anthropology, archaeology, etc.

2. From what you found, above, create a list of **five resources.** Include a very brief summary of the information presented in the resources, and how you think the resources can help you. It might help you organize your thoughts by making a chart such as this:

RESOURCE/SUBJECT/VERY BRIEF SUMMARY/ HOW YOU THINK THIS RESOURCE CAN HELP YOU

TO THE INSTRUCTOR: OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS/ACTIVITIES/EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNIT 3

OPTIONAL EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES AND/OR GRADING ELEMENTS FOR UNIT 3

Here are some suggestions for additional course components and grading elements:

- The Glossary of Terms in the back is good information for weekly quizzes, mid-term tests, and/or final exams.

- To supplement the "Close Reading" lesson, students can clip editorial cartoons from local newspapers and analyze them according the elements listed in exercise 4.3.

- For that same lesson, students can explore other artwork on campus and come up with titles and/or captions.

- The instructor may wish to take students on a "close reading" journey by using a poem she or he is familiar with. Here are three poems I have used, but there are limitless numbers of good poems for this exercise:

  ◦ Asphodel, That Greeny Flower and Other Love Poems by William Carlos Williams

  ◦ "Autobiography in Five Short Chapters," by Portia Nelson

  ◦ "Mushrooms," by Sylvia Plath

- For further help with reading/comprehending and/or studying for math and science, students can take notes on Study Tips 23, 24, and 25 listed on Lane's Study Tips site, as well as the articles How to Study Science and How to Study Math. NOTE: all of Hodges' Study Tips Articles are linked in the Outside the Text Resources… section.

RUBRIC FOR THE TAKE-HOME MID-TERM PORTFOLIO PROJECT DUE AFTER THE COMPLETION OF UNITS 1-3

Here are the requirements for the two Portfolio Projects. One will serve as the take-home mid-term that covers Units 1-3, and the other will serve as the take-home final that covers Units 4-6.

TASK #1

Write a letter to yourself in which you summarize the tips, strategies, and skills learned in each of the first three Units that you believe will help **you** the most in your educational career. The letter should be typed and double-spaced, approximately 3 pages in length (750-900 words), and cover the material from the lessons on:

- Three Learning Styles
- Brain Dominance Theory
- Multiple Intelligences Theory
- World View and Self Efficacy
- Procrastination
- Schedules and Scheduling
- Graphic Organizers and Study Cards
- Study Areas and Groups
- Comprehending College Level Reading
- Getting the Most out of Your Textbooks
- Pattern and Context Clues
- Close Reading for Literature
- Comprehending and Studying Math and Science

It will be scored on the basis of thoroughness and details.
 Possible 50 Points

TASK 2

This is the creative response task. Choose from among the options below. Your creation should feature tips, strategies, and skills you wrote about in Task #1. It will also be scored on thoroughness and details.

Possible 50 Points

- Choose **a different creative response** for each Portfolio Project. You can also make your own proposal for a creative response and get permission from the instructor. NOTE: for any option involving a presentation or performance, be sure to check with me regarding time allotments if this is a class setting.

- Some options are more creative than others; some require specific skills, for example, #s 3 and 7. Others are more "academic," for example, #19. Some require certain talents or hobby interests, for example, #s 5, 6, and 9.

The hope is that you have an opportunity to exercise your talents and skills a little more and have some fun while exploring a variety of different ways to apply your learning.

1. Write an infomercial of "Best All-Time Strategies for…(the subject of the Unit)" and present it to the class.
2. Create a brochure.
3. Create a power point presentation.
4. Create a poster.
5. Create a cartoon panel.
6. Write a story.
7. Invent a game.
8. Create a tool kit of some sort with objects or descriptions of objects that would go inside of it.
9. Write a song.
10. Design a lesson plan for the class based on the Unit (for this, a little more time will be scheduled, but no more than, say, 10-15 minutes).
11. Sculpt something that can illustrate key points from the Unit.
12. Prepare a photography exhibit to illustrate key points.
13. Collect quotes on the subject matter of this Unit and present them in some way (collage, power point…)
14. Create bookmarks for each of the tips, strategies, and/or skills you feature.
15. A short (3-5 minutes) YouTube presentation of helpful tips
16. Write a short essay (about 400-500 words, or 1 1/2 typed, double-spaced pages. Be sure to include a creative title) on any of the following topics:

    ◦ Highly Effective Habits of a Successful… (whatever the Unit theme is–learner, note-taker, time-manager, test-taker, etc.)

    ◦ How NOT to.. (whatever the Unit theme is: learn successfully, take notes, manage time, take tests, etc.)

    ◦ Advice on (whatever the Unit theme is) for Incoming Freshmen

    ◦ What I Wish I Had Known Before I Started College and Why (cite at least 10 Unit strategies).

17. Other… (make me an offer!)

Topics, Objectives, Materials, Terms, To-Do List

Topics

This unit covers the following focus points:

• Listening skills, verbal and nonverbal

• Active listening

• Note-taking formats and styles

• How to discern key information from lectures and textbooks for note-taking

• When TO take notes and when NOT to take notes

• How to deal with a fast talker

• How to use notes to review

Objectives

After you have completed this unit you should be able to:

Everything in writing begins with language. Language begins with listening. –Jeanette Winterson

- Understand how to take notes during lectures

- Understand how to take notes from textbooks and other materials

- Understand verbal, non-verbal, and print clues to help you take focused notes

- Understand and use Cornell-style notes

- Understand and use other note-taking formats

Materials

- Student made or downloaded Cornell note-taking forms

- e-book, "How to Learn Like a pro!" (instructor may require some materials to be downloaded)

Terms (These terms also appear in the Glossary of Terms)

NOTE: **the definitions are adapted and/or abbreviated from the original.**

Sidebar: Information placed adjacent to an article in a printed or Web publication, graphically separate but with contextual connect. Examples: brief biographies, lists of items, resources, etc.

To-Do List

- Complete the exercises, as assigned, in each lesson.

- In face-to-face classes, your instructor may include optional additional activities.

LESSON 4.1: NOTE-TAKING PART 1, LISTENING

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

*"Emoticons" by
OpenClipart-Vectors is in the
Public Domain, CC0*

When we think about listening we think about, well, hearing sounds via the ears. However, when it comes to listening in order to pick up key points for note-taking, it takes more than just hearing. In this case, it takes a "critical ear," that is, absorbing key points by noticing not only the words spoken, but also by noting tones, volume and even the body language that goes along. Additionally, being an active listener increases a note-taker's chances of getting the information needed. Exercise 1 illustrates common non-verbal communication.

ACTIVE LISTENING

In previous units, we covered ways that students can actively engage in the learning process in order to get the most out of their education. There are ways to actively listen as well, in order to get the most out of lectures and, more importantly, take all of the notes that might be required. The video in the next exercise covers several active listening strategies along with why we sometimes have difficulty listening.

UNIT 4, EXERCISE 1.1

PART A

List as many non-verbal, emotional cues as you can by studying the faces in the pictures below.

"Universal Emotions" by Icerko Lýdia is licensed under CC BY 3.0

PART B

The image below illustrates non-verbal body language. Describe a few poses or body movements one or more of your teachers now, or from the past, takes or has taken that communicates: pay closer attention. It might be from these examples, or something quite different. **For example**, an instructor might move close to the front row and fold his/her arms to indicate that what he or she will be saying is of a more serious nature. For another example, if he or she moves toward the white board to write something, it's probably key information.

"Men Silhouette" by geralt is in the Public Domain, CC0

UNIT 4, EXERCISE 1.2

PART A

Watch the 7minute TED talk 5 ways to listen better and answer the following questions:

1. What 3 types of listening does the speaker discuss?
2. How and why have we been "losing our ability to listen," as the speaker suggests? He cites 5 ways.
3. What are the 5 tools we can use to listen better?

PART B

Taking into consideration all of the activities in the exercises above, write a one-page (250-300 words) reflection on how you can use the information on non-verbal and listening skills to enhance both your ability to pay attention to lectures and to take better notes on them.

LESSON 4.2: NOTE-TAKING PART 2, KEY INFORMATION AND FORMATS

"Notes" by English106 is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Perhaps the most useful learning tools of all are notes taken from both lectures and course materials. By annotating for key information, then condensing it, students not only create personalized summaries but also aid their memory by using both visual and kinesthetic learning styles. Add auditory, too, if the notes are taken from a lecture or video.

Often, students are unsure about what constitutes "key information." Here is a list of items to highlight or annotate for in textbooks and a list of items to listen for in lectures.

KEY INFORMATION IN TEXTBOOKS

In addition to paying attention to all the items listed in Lesson 3.2, Getting the Most Out of Your Textbooks, the following elements of a textbook chapter are especially important in helping you discern key information:

- Introductions

- Summaries

- Study questions

- Topic sentences (as the speaker in the video on "Skim Reading," exercise 3.2, also in Lesson 3.2 notes: sometimes the reader has to read the first two or even three sentences of a paragraph or section to get the entire main topic).

- Anything that is bolded, or in some other way set off from the default print size and style. Sub-topic titles are good examples of this.

- "Side bars," which are boxes of related information. These might include statistics, brief biographies of authors or persons of note related to the chapter content, price points on brochures

for businesses, charts, graphs, photographs, and/or illustrations. They are typically a different color or in some other way set off for attention but not as the focal point of the text. Pay attention to the captions or legends that might accompany graphics. In this e-text, the exercises are set apart in side bars.

- Glossary terms that may be incorporated in the margins or otherwise set apart.

- Some textbooks include outlines of each chapter's main points in the introductory section.

KEY INFORMATION IN LECTURES

As the lecturer, live or video, presents the material, there are two types of key information cues to be aware of.

NONVERBAL CUES

As covered in the previous lesson on listening skills, a speaker will often have unique facial and body nonverbal cues that alert you to several things, as you learn to "read" your professor:

- Stances or movements that alert you to when he/she will shift to a different topic or subtopic.

- Other cues that alert you to when the information is of special significance (including verbal clues, below).

VERBAL CLUES

- Pay attention to when the speaker uses any of the transition clues used in reading comprehension, as listed in Lesson 3.3, context clues. Click on common clue words for a separate list.

- Many speakers also announce when they are adding information or changing topics in various other ways.

For tips on how to deal with fast talkers, when you should NOT take notes, what note-taking formats work well, and other advice, complete the exercise below.

UNIT 4, EXERCISE 2.1

1. Download and read Study Tip #9-Taking Useful Class Notes, by Dan Hodges, found on the PDF file with all of his articles. Scroll down to #9.
2. Number each of the 7 sections for easy reference.
3. As you read, annotate (highlight, circle, underline, write marginal notes, etc.) for items that **you** especially want to remember from each of the 7 topics.
4. Transfer the notes to a Cornell Note-Taking form. Hodges also includes instructions for creating your own form. Hodges features the Cornell format in section 4, "What Style of Note-Taking Works Well?"

Example:

KEY POINTS   DETAILS

section 1: Why take notes?   Good notes=better grades

(add the rest of the details)

UNIT 4, EXERCISE 2.2

There are, of course, as many ways to take notes as there are note-takers with creative minds! For this exercise, do an online search using the key words, "fun and creative ways to take notes YouTube." Preview as many as you like. Pick one (these are all fairly short), then take notes on it (!) in the creative way suggested. Be sure to cite the YouTube source (title and URL) in your notes.

TO THE INSTRUCTOR: OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS/ACTIVITIES/EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNIT 4

OPTIONAL EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES AND/OR GRADING ELEMENTS FOR UNIT 4

Here are some suggestions for additional course components and grading elements:

- The Glossary of Terms in the back is good information for weekly quizzes, mid-term tests, and/or final exams.

- Case study (students write letters of advice to the following student who struggles with note taking for several reasons. The letters should cover at least 10 of the key points of information in this unit:

  ◦ Maria struggles with note-taking for several reasons. In her culture, people are easier to "read" because they are much more emotive when they communicate. She finds many Americans somewhat bland in their lecture presentations and this makes it easy for her to fall asleep during lectures, especially when she may have had to stay up all night tending one of her sick children aged six months, 2 and 5. Because English is her second language, Maria also struggles to catch all the key points of a lecture when the professor talks fast! And lastly, Maria is never sure what information she should be taking notes on, and what is the best form of note-taking. Help!

Topics, Objectives, Materials, Terms, To-Do List

Topics

This unit covers the following focus points:

- A memory model
- Memory techniques, or mnemonics
- Memory as we age

Objectives

After you have completed this unit you should be able to:

> *Memorization has gotten a bad rap recently. Lots of students, and even some educators, say that being able to reason is more important than knowing facts; and besides, why bother committing things to memory when you've got Google? My response to this – after I've finished inwardly groaning – is that of course reasoning is important, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't know facts as well. It's not like you have to choose between one or the other. Besides, facts give you a foundation on which to reason about things.* Stephanie Weisman

- Understand how each part of the memory works (sensory, working, and long-term)

- Understand several mnemonic, or memory, techniques

- Understand memory and the older learner: what changes and what stays the same

Materials

- e-book, "How to Learn Like a pro!" (instructor may require some materials to be downloaded)

Terms (These terms also appear in the Glossary of Terms)

NOTE: **the definitions are adapted and/or abbreviated from the original.**

Acronym: A mnemonic device created by using the first letters of words to make a new word that will help you remember it. Example: **NASA** (**N**ational **A**eronautics and **S**pace **A**dministration).

Acrostic: A mnemonic device made by creating a sentence using the first letters of key words in the items to remember. Example: the order of operations in math problems can be remembered by the acrostic: "**P**lease **E**xcuse **M**y **D**ear **A**unt **S**ally," i.e., **P**arentheses, **E**xponents, **M**ultiply, **D**ivide, **A**dd, and **S**ubtract.

Mnemonics: Memory devices such as rhymes, acronyms and acrostics.

To-Do List

- Complete the exercises, as assigned, in each lesson.

- In face-to-face classes, your instructor may include optional additional activities.

LESSON 5.1: MEMORY MODEL AND TECHNIQUES

This lesson incorporates a view of the memory cycle from initial input to long-term storage, along with memory principles and techniques.

For starters, take a pre test to asses what memory techniques you already use.

AN INFORMATION PROCESSING MODEL

Once information has been encoded, we have to retain it. Our brains take the encoded information and place it in storage. Storage is the creation of a permanent record of information.

In order for a memory to go into storage (i.e., long-term memory), it has to pass through three distinct stages: Sensory Memory, Short-Term Memory, and finally Long-Term Memory. These stages were first proposed by Richard Atkinson and Richard Shiffrin (1968). Their model of human memory is based on the belief that we process memories in the same way that a computer processes information.
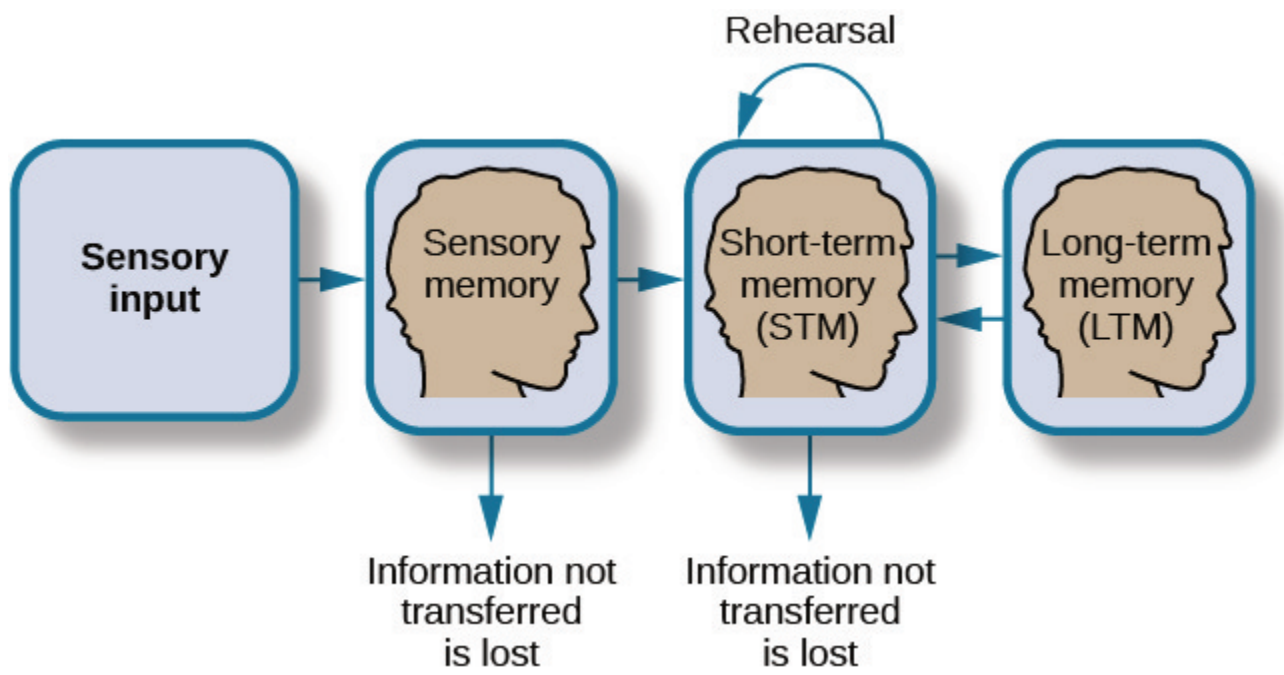
"Atkinson-Shiffrin model of memory" by OpenStax is licensed under CC BY 4.0

UNIT 5, EXERCISE 1.1

While reading through the article linked here, "Atkinson-Shiffrin model of memory" answer the following questions.

SENSORY INPUT

1. If you are just walking along somewhere and pass by the usual sights, sounds, smells, etc., about how long do you think you would remember what you just took in by your senses? (Note: nothing out of the ordinary happens.)

2. If you do nothing at all to help you remember what you just took in by your senses, about how many discrete units (pieces) of data (or input, i.e., sights, sounds, smells, etc.) would you be able to remember for the brief period of time?

WORKING MEMORY (ALSO KNOWN AS SHORT TERM MEMORY)

3. Now, If you immediately begin to try to remember the input for later (for example, you notice you just passed a shop you've been meaning to go to, or you smell something really good coming from a restaurant that reminds you of something you like), about how many items could you then remember?

4. How long could you keep them in your memory by just using one or two memory techniques, such as associating them with something (like a memory)?

LONG TERM MEMORY

5. About how many items can you keep in your "permanent" memory storage?

6. How long can you keep them there?

RELATED QUESTIONS

7. Why is "cramming" new information the night before a test not a good idea? Go beyond the information in the article to common sense issues.

UNIT 5, EXERCISE 1.2

"Nine Types of Mnemonics for Better Memory"

By Dennis Congos, University of Central Florida

1. Read 9 Types of Mnemonics for Better Memory and transfer the information on a Cornell-styled note taking form.

EXTRA CREDIT: On a separate piece of paper (or on the downloaded version of the article), complete the worksheet that follows the article, "Have a mnemonics party." DO ANY TEN of the items. (5 points).

LESSON 5.2: MEMORY AS WE AGE

Memory and Age–Good News!

Recent studies on the age range of college students reveals that more older learners are attending both universities and community colleges. For four-year programs, the average age is 25. For community college, it is 29. The age range has steadily increased from the year 2000. In many classes at Lane, it is quite common to have students in their forties, fifties, even sixties. There are, of course, myriad reasons for people entering or re-entering higher education that include the state of the economy, changed work and family situations, and veterans accessing their education entitlement after service. Many of my older students especially look forward to the topic of memory covered in Effective Learning. They cite the usual concerns around an aging brain. But there is good news! The article featured in exercise 1, linked below, covers what changes about the memory as we age, what kinds of memory age does affect and what kind stays the same, and 8 ways to help the memory.

UNIT 5, EXERCISE 2.1

1. Read the article "People Over 40: Learning and Memory," by Dan Hodges. It is **Study Tip #16, page 42**, on the PDF file with all of the rest of the Tips. You will need to scroll down.

2. Write a letter of help and encouragement based on Hodges' advice to Cathy who is 50 and just now entering community college after raising three children and one grandchild. In the letter, cover at least 10 suggestions for her. Cathy has always had a dream to pursue a Culinary Arts degree and open a healthy foods restaurant. She is concerned, however, about being able to memorize all of the material in her required courses. She is worried about her decreasing ability to remember names and faces right away, and the fact that it seems to take her longer to learn new things. She is quite confident of comprehending and passing classes related to her major because she has been a "foodie" as far back as she can remember. She has also won many awards for her cooking and baking at the county fair over the years. However, she hasn't had a math or writing class since high school, and those are her big concerns.

TO THE INSTRUCTOR: OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS/ACTIVITIES/EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNIT 5

OPTIONAL EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES AND/OR GRADING ELEMENTS FOR UNIT 5

Here are some suggestions for additional course components and grading elements:

- The Glossary of Terms in the back is good information for weekly quizzes, mid-term tests, and/or final exams.
- The instructor may wish to post test students with a list featuring another set of 36 words, post (memory) test Memory test Unit 5, similar to the pretest linked in Lesson 5.1. Have students compare scores and discuss what new memory concepts and techniques they used that they feel helped them to achieve a (hopefully) higher score.

Topics, Objectives, Materials, Terms, To-Do List

Topics

This unit covers the following focus points:

- Strategies for before the test
- Strategies for during the test
- Strategies for after the test
- Handling test anxiety
- Test items (objective questions, short answer questions, essay items, and "educated guessing/selecting" strategies)

I'm not telling you it is going to be easy — I'm telling you it's going to be worth it. Art Williams

NOTE: AFTER THIS UNIT THE TAKE-HOME FINAL PORTFOLIO PROJECT IS DUE.

Objectives

After you have completed this unit you should be able to:

• Understand strategies to help you before you take tests

• Understand strategies to help you during the test

• Understand strategies to help you after the test

• Understand several strategies to help you ease test-taking anxiety

• Understand the basic test items (objective, short answer, essay)

• Understand some common "educated guessing/selecting" strategies in the event you just cannot remember the answer to a given test item despite all of your good efforts at organizing your time, materials, and study blocks.

Materials

• e-book, "How to Learn Like a pro!" (instructor may require some materials to be downloaded)

Terms (These terms also appear in the Glossary of Terms)

Cramming*: The practice of believing that everything you can learn in order to pass a test can be read, studied, memorized, analyzed, adapted, organized, transcribed, and fully comprehended the night before the test while hoping that you will have the mental, physical, and/or emotional stamina and fortitude to pull it all off. And you hope you don't also get sick (or one of your kids gets sick, if you have kids) or have to go in to work (if you also work), or something like that, too, that very night. In short: DON'T DO IT*. That said, sometimes instructors might announce a "surprise quiz" for the very next day. In that case, here are a few good pointers on how TO cram.

   *This definition is based on my own expertise/resources/and *maybe* even a few bad memories…

To-Do List

- Complete the exercises, as assigned, in each lesson.

- In face-to-face classes, your instructor may include optional additional activities.

LESSON 6.1: PRE- MID- AND POST-TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

PRE-TEST STRATEGIES

Q: When should you start preparing for the first test? Circle…

1. The night before.
2. The week prior.
3. The first day of classes.

If you answered "3. The first day of classes," you are correct. If you circled all three, you are also correct. Preparing to pass tests is something that begins when learning begins and continues all the way through to the final exam.

Many students, however, don't start thinking about test taking, whether weekly exams, mid-terms, or finals, until the day before when they engage in an all-nighter, or cramming. From the previous unit on memory, you might recall that the brain can only process an average of 5-7 new pieces of information at a time. Additionally, unless memory devices are used to aid memory and to cement information into long term memory (or at least until the test is over tomorrow!) chances are slim that students who cram will effectively learn and remember the information.

Additionally, a lot of students are unaware of the many strategies available to help with the test-taking experience before, during, and after. For starters, take a look at what has helped you so far.

MID-TEST STRATEGIES

Here is a list of the most common—and useful—strategies to survive this ubiquitous college experience. Note: the important topic of test anxiety will be covered separately, in lesson 6.2.

UNIT 6, EXERCISE 1.1

Pre-Test Taking Strategies

PART A:

Put a check mark next to the pre-test strategies you already employ.

___ Organize your notebook and other class materials the first week of classes (sample notebook organization plan).

___ Maintain your organized materials throughout the term.

___ Take notes on key points from lectures and other materials (examples of note-taking formats).

___ Make sure you understand the information as you go along.

___ Access your instructor's help and the help of a study group, as needed.

___ Organize a study group, if desired (review of organizing study groups).

___ Create study tools such as flashcards, graphic organizers, etc. as study aids (review of study aids).

___ Complete all homework assignments on time.

___ Review likely test items several times beforehand.

___ Ask your instructor what items are likely to be covered on the test.

___ Ask your instructor if she or he can provide a study guide or practice test.

___ Ask your instructor if he/she gives partial credit for test items such as essays.

___ Maintain an active learner attitude.

___ Schedule extra study time in the days just prior to the test.

___ Gather all notes, handouts, and other materials needed before studying.

___ Review all notes, handouts, and other materials.

___ Organize your study area for maximum concentration and efficiency.

___ Create and use mnemonic devices to aid memory (review of mnemonic devices).

___ Put key terms, formulas, etc., on a single study sheet that can be quickly reviewed.

___ Schedule study times short enough (1-2 hours) so you do not get burned out.

___ Get plenty of sleep the night before.

___ Set a back-up alarm in case the first alarm doesn't sound or you sleep through it.

___ Have a good breakfast with complex carbs and protein to see you through.

___ Show up 5-10 minutes early to get completely settled before the test begins.

___ Use the restroom beforehand to minimize distractions.

PART B

- Scan the test, first, to get the big picture of how many test items there are, what types there are (multiple choice, matching, essay, etc.), and the point values of each item or group of items.

- Determine which way you want to approach the test:

  ◦ Some students start with the easy questions first, that is, the ones they immediately know the answers to, saving the difficult ones for later, knowing they can spend the remaining time on them.

  ◦ Some students begin with the biggest-point items first, to make sure they get the most points.

- Determine a schedule that takes into consideration how long you have to test, and the types of questions on the test. Essay questions, for example, will require more time than multiple choice, or matching questions.

- Keep your eye on the clock.

- If you can mark on the test, put a check mark next to items you are not sure of just yet.

  ◦ It is easy to go back and find them to answer later on.

  ◦ You might just find some help in some other test items covering similar information.

- Sit where you are most comfortable. That said, sitting near the front has a couple of advantages:

  ◦ You may be less distracted by other students.

  ◦ If a classmate comes up with a question for the instructor and there is an important clarification given, you will be better able to hear it and apply it, if needed.

- Wear ear plugs, if noise distracts you.

- You do NOT have to start with #1! It you are unsure of it, mark it to come back to later on.

By reviewing the pre-test strategies, above, you have likely discovered new ideas to add to what you already use. Make a list of them.

UNIT 6, EXERCISE 1.2

Read How to Create a Study Schedule to Prepare for Final Exams, which lists **10 steps, 4 tips, 2 warnings, and a list of things you will need**. Based on this advice, design a plan you know will work well for you when it comes to studying for any big test–final, mid-term, State Boards, etc.–incorporating at least 10 of the suggestions.

- Bring water…this helps calm the nerves, for one, and water is also needed for optimum brain function.

- If permitted, get up and stretch (or stretch in your chair) from time to time to relieve tension and assist the blood to the brain!

- Remember to employ strategies to reduce test-taking anxiety (covered in the next lesson)

- If despite all of your best efforts to prepare for a test you just cannot remember the answer to a given item for multiple choice, matching, and/or true/false questions, employ one or more of the following educated guessing (also known as "educated selection") techniques. By using these techniques, you have a *better* chance of selecting the correct answer.

  ◦ It is usually best to avoid selecting an extreme or all-inclusive answer (also known as 100% modifiers) such as "always," and "never". Choose, instead, words such as "usually," "sometimes," etc. (also known as in-between modifiers).

  ◦ Although there is some dispute about this, it is still safe to say that choosing "C" is often correct.

  ◦ If the answers are numbers, choose one of the middle numbers.

  ◦ If you have options such as "all of the above," or "both A and B," make sure each item is true before selecting those options.

  ◦ Choose the longest, or most inclusive, answer.

  ◦ Make sure to match the grammar of question and answer. For example, if the question indicates a plural answer, look for the plural answer.

  ◦ Regarding matching tests: count both sides to be matched. If there are more questions than answers, ask if you can use an answer more than once.

  ◦ Pay close attention to items that ask you to choose the "best" answer. This means one answer is better or more inclusive than a similar answer.

  ◦ Read all of the response options.

POST-TEST STRATEGIES

In addition to sighing that big sigh of relief, here are a few suggestions to help with future tests.

- If you don't understand why you did not get an item right, ask the instructor. This is especially useful for quizzes that contain information that may be incorporated into more inclusive exams such as mid-terms and finals.

- Analyze your results to help you in the future; for example,

  ◦ See if most of your incorrect answers were small things such as failing to include the last step in a math item, or neglecting to double-check for simple errors in a short-answer or essay item.

  ◦ See where in the test you made the most errors: beginning, middle, or end. This will help you pay closer attention to those sections in the future.

UNIT 6, EXERCISE 1.3

Write a letter of advice to Chen incorporating 10 test-taking tips and strategies you think will help him.

Chen believes he is good at organization, and he usually is–for about the first two weeks of classes. He then becomes overwhelmed with all of the handouts and materials and tends to start slipping in the organization department. When it comes to tests, he worries that his notes might not cover all of the right topics and that he will not be able to remember all of the key terms and points–especially for his math class. During tests, he sometimes gets stuck on an item and tends to spend too much time there. He also sometimes changes answers but finds out later that his original selection was correct. Chen is also easily distracted by other students and noises which makes it hard for him to concentrate sometimes, and, unfortunately, he does admit to occasionally "cramming" the night before.

LESSON 6.2: HANDLING TEST ANXIETY

Most people experience some form of anxiety when it comes to taking tests. Sweaty palms, heart palpitations, mental block, and other forms of normal test anxiety may surface before, during, even after taking tests (see the end of this lesson for a more complete list).

This entire class is, of course, designed to help alleviate test stress by offering numerous strategies and perspectives when it comes to general preparation for and participation in academia. However, there are some specific helps to subdue the stress as well. NOTE: the type of test anxiety or stress referenced here is not of a clinical nature requiring medical and/or counseling treatment.

To help you come up with your own, customized plan of test stress reduction, complete the following exercise. The articles cited cover such essentials as what might be influencing your worry about test taking, methods to help you feel safe during a test, and what to do in a major anxiety attack.

"How to Deal With Exam Anxiety" offers a more complete list of normal test taking anxiety symptoms:

Anxiety is not only an emotional state; it produces physical symptoms that you can identify if you know what to look for. If you experience any of the following symptoms when studying or thinking about a test, this would be a tell tale sign that you're feeling anxiety.

- Headaches.
- Dry mouth.
- Rapid heartbeat. Usually a heart rate above 100 beats per minute characterizes a rapid heartbeat.
- Sweating.
- Shortness of breath.
- Light-headedness.

- Extreme body temperature, either excessively hot or cold.
- Gastrointestinal discomfort. This can be characterized by nausea, diarrhea, bloating, and abdominal pain.

UNIT 6, EXERCISE 2.1

1. Read Study Tip #18, page 46 – HANDLING TEST ANXIETY (Part 1) and Study Tip #19, page 48 – HANDLING TEST ANXIETY (Part 2), by Dan Hodges. Scroll down to these two tips on the, click here: PDF file.

2. From Hodges' list of suggestions and perspectives, write about

   ◦ what influences you with regard to test anxiety,

   ◦ some methods Hodges' presents that you believe would benefit you,

   ◦ how you might alleviate a lack of safety around test taking that you might experience, and

   ◦ some ideas you would like to keep in mind should you ever experience more challenging anxiety attacks during tests, especially finals and/or State Board exams.

3. Write about 250-300 words or one page.

LESSON 6.3: UNDERSTANDING TEST ITEMS

TEST ITEMS

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There are several common kinds of test items. For objective tests, students answer multiple choice questions, matching items, and fill-in-the-blank items. The other kind of test items are short-answer responses and essays. The following are explanations and examples of these along with tips for educated guessing, if applicable–after all, sometimes even though we study hard, a bit of test anxiety might cause a sudden mental block!

MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST ITEMS

EXPLANATION:

These test items offer several answer choices. The test prompt (or question) is known as the "stem" for which you choose one or more of the answer options.
  Examples:
  1. A simile is

- a comparison without using "like"

- a comparison using the word "as"

- a comparison using either "like" or "as"

- none of the above

2. Memory devices include

- acronyms

- inference

- acrostics

- associations

- 1, 3, and 4

- all of the above

TIPS

Make sure that all the rules of grammar apply when you match the stem with the option. for example, in example item number 2, above, notice that them stem directs you to look for a plural answer because "devices" is plural. Number 5, then, is the correct answer (answers 1, 3, and 4 are all plural).

EDUCATED GUESSING

- Choose "3" or C, which is more often than not the correct answer (as in example item number 1, above).

- Choose the longest or most inclusive answer, also as in example item number 1, above.

- If the test item is for a math quiz, choose the in-between number, or one of the in-between numbers. example: 1) 432, 2) 77, 3) 12, 4)2,098. Your chances are better by choosing either 1 or 2.

MATCHING TEST ITEMS

EXPLANATION

This kind of test item features two columns, a numbered column and a lettered column. Students are asked to match the correct answer with the correct stem.

EXAMPLE

1. NASA   ___organization device
2. headache   ___acronym
3. graphic organizer   ___symptom of test anxiety

TIPS

Count the number of items in each column. If there are more on one side, ask if an answer can be used more than once.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK TEST ITEMS

EXPLANATION

These are items for which you must fill in a word or words.

EXAMPLE

Fill in the _____ questions are featured frequently on exams.

Fill-in-the-blank questions usually expect you to write one word per blank. If more than one word is expected, there will be more than one blank space or the blank will be long.

SHORT ANSWER TEST ITEMS

EXPLANATION

This type of test item usually involves a short answer of approximately 5-7 sentences. Typical short answer items will address only one topic and require only one "task" (see "essay test items," below, for a test item requiring more than one task).

EXAMPLE

Define the term "mnemonic."

TIPS

Since many short answer test items ask the student to define a term, here are several ways to expand a definition to achieve the 5-7 sentence desired response (depending upon the course and the teacher's requirements, that is):

- the dictionary definition

- an informal definition (in your own words, for example)

- give an example of how the term is used

- give the category in which the term is used, for example, what kind of essays belong in the "expository" genre (argument, explanation, cause and effect, etc.)

- the history (etymology) of the term

- include antonyms

- include synonyms

- tell what the term is not (some terms mean more than one distinct thing, for example, a "whatchamacallit is not only a slang term but also a candy bar.

ESSAY TEST ITEMS

EXPLANATION

This type of test is usually a multi-part prompt requiring several paragraphs or pages to answer. You can make use of writing formulas, for example how to write a basic, five-paragraph essay suitable for most classes. However, for writing classes the task will be expanded as per the type of writing class and the level of writing sophistication required.

EXAMPLE

Contrasted with short answer items where usually one task is required to fully answer them (such as a simple definition), there are typically several tasks required to fully answer an essay prompt. For

example in the following prompt below, I have underlined all of the tasks and decisions required to fully address the prompt:

Many people believe Mark Twain's book Huckleberry Finn *is racist and should not be included on high school reading lists. Others believe that Twain correctly portrayed race relations in the Southern part of the United States in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and, in fact, by telling the story he exposed the negative racial attitudes existing then. <u>Do you think the book should be kept on reading lists?</u> Explain <u>why or why not</u> <u>in relation to today's emphasis on "political correctness."</u>*

TIPS

• Review terms often used in essay exams before taking the exam:

  ◦ compare–show similarities between items

  ◦ contrast–show differences between items

  ◦ sometimes both comparing and contrasting is required

  ◦ define–give a concise meaning (see how to expand definitions, above)

  ◦ describe–recount, characterize, or relate information in narrative form

  ◦ discuss–examine, analyze, and present pros and cons regarding the topic. Detail is essential

  ◦ enumerate–incorporate (which might require listing or outlining) major points in order

  ◦ explain–clarify and interpret the material including explaining how and/or why. Detail is essential

• Do NOT merely summarize the plot of the work if this is an essay for an English class or a literature class.

UNIT 6, EXERCISE 3.1

List how many tasks need to be accomplished in order to fully respond to the essay prompt below, or another one your instructor will provide for you.

Select a novel or a play and, focusing on one symbol, write an essay analyzing how that symbol functions in the work and what it reveals about the themes of the work as a whole.

TO THE INSTRUCTOR: OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS/ACTIVITIES/EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNIT 6

OPTIONAL EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES AND/OR GRADING ELEMENTS FOR UNIT 6

Here are some suggestions for additional course components and grading elements:

- The Glossary of Terms in the back is good information for weekly quizzes, mid-term tests, and/or final exams.
- Watch the video "Best 10 Foods That Help In Enhancing Your Brain Power" and create a menu for any combination of meals the day before and/or day of the test. If you are a "foodie," come up with your own dishes. If not, do a search for ideas by using an Internet search engine to type in the main ingredients (two or more) and add which meal: breakfast, lunch, snack, dinner.

RUBRIC FOR THE TAKE-HOME FINAL PORTFOLIO PROJECT DUE AFTER COMPLETION OF UNITS 4-6

Here are the requirements for the two Portfolio Projects. One will serve as the take-home mid-term that covers Units 1-3, and the other will serve as the take-home final that covers Units 4-6.

TASK #1

Write a letter to yourself in which you summarize the tips, strategies, and skills learned in each of the second three Units that you believe will help **you** the most in your educational career. The letter should be typed and double-spaced, approximately 2 pages in length (550-600 words), and cover the material from the lessons on:

- Listening
- Note-taking
- Memory (models and mnemonics)
- Memory as we age
- Test-taking: pre test
- Test-taking: mid test
- Teat-taking: post test
- Handling test anxiety
- Understanding test items (objective tests, short answer items, and essays)

It will be scored on the basis of thoroughness and details.
Possible 50 Points

TASK 2

This is the creative response task. Choose from among the options below. Your creation should feature tips, strategies, and skills you featured in Task #1. It will also be scored on thoroughness and details.
Possible 50 Points

- Choose **a different creative response** for each Portfolio Project. You can also make your own proposal for a creative response and get permission from the instructor. NOTE: for any option

involving a presentation or performance, be sure to check with me regarding time allotments if this is a class setting.

- Some options are more creative than others; some require specific skills, for example, #s 3 and 7. Others are more "academic," for example, #19. Some require certain talents or hobby interests, for example, #s 5, 6, and 9.

The hope is that you have an opportunity to exercise your talents and skills a little more and have some fun while exploring a variety of different ways to apply your learning.

1. Write an infomercial of "Best All-Time Strategies for…(the subject of the Unit) and "perform" or present it for the class.
2. Create a brochure.
3. Create a power point presentation.
4. Create a poster.
5. Create a cartoon panel.
6. Write a story.
7. Invent a game.
8. Create a tool kit of some sort with objects or descriptions of objects that would go inside of it.
9. Write a song.
10. Design a lesson plan for the class based on the Unit (for this, a little more time will be scheduled, but no more than, say, 10-15 minutes).
11. Sculpt something that can illustrate key points from the Unit.
12. Prepare a photography exhibit to illustrate key points.
13. Collect quotes on the subject matter of this Unit and present them in some way (collage, power point…)
14. Create bookmarks for each of the tips, strategies, and/or skills you feature.
15. A short (3-5 minutes) YouTube presentation of helpful tips
16. Write a short essay (about 400-500 words, or 1 1/2 typed, double-spaced pages. Be sure to include a creative title) on any of the following topics:

    ◦ Highly Effective Habits of a Successful… (whatever the Unit theme is–learner, note-taker, time-manager, test-taker, etc.)

    ◦ How NOT to.. (whatever the Unit theme is: learn successfully, take notes, manage time, take tests, etc.)

    ◦ Advice on (whatever the Unit theme is) for Incoming Freshmen

    ◦ What I Wish I Had Known Before I Started College and Why (cite at least 10 Unit strategies).

17. Other… (make me an offer!)

Graphic Organizer for Exemplification or Definition Papers for Lesson 2.4

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER FOR AN EXEMLIFICATION OR DEFINITION PAPER

Note: this form is also suitable for a definition paper by using only one column and adding more supporting detail ovals if more than three definition expansion methods are used.

Topic_____

Thesis Statement_____

_____

Subtopic 1	Subtopic 2	Subtopic 3

Supporting detail 1	Supporting detail 1	Supporting detail 1
Supporting detail 1	Supporting detail 2	Supporting detail 2
Supporting detail 3	Supporting detail 3	Supporting detail 3
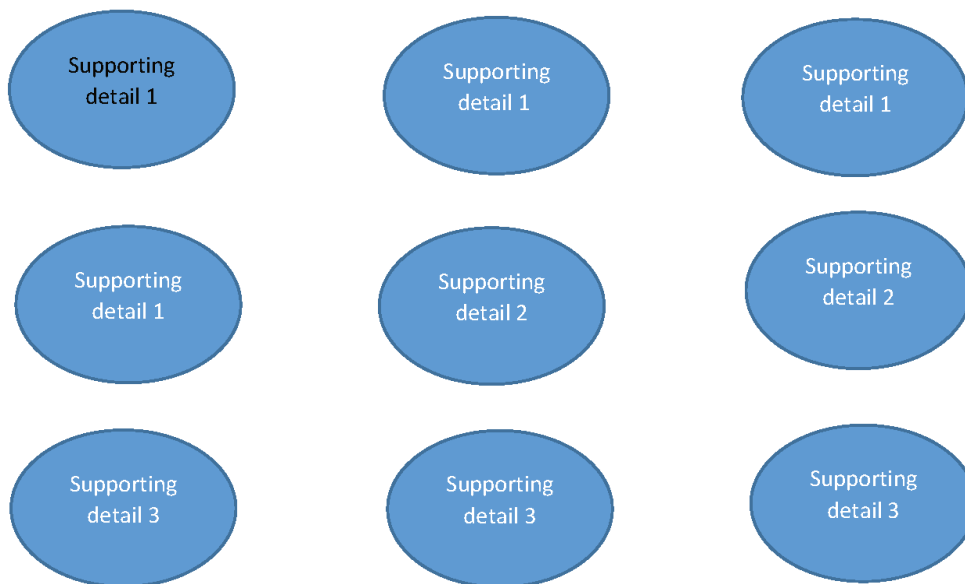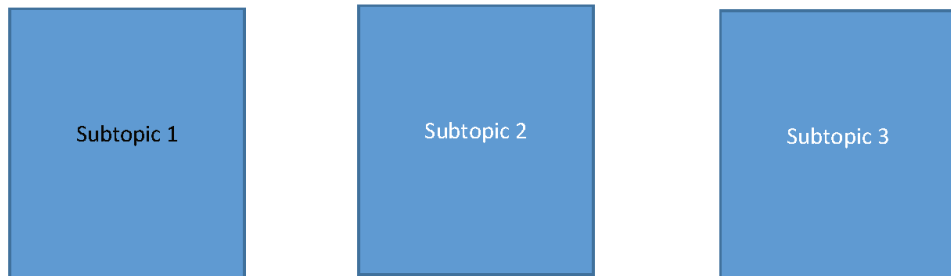
Click on the thumbnail for a full-size view.

For Lesson 2.2 Graphic Organizer for Narrative, Process, and Cause and Effect Papers

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER FOR PROCESS, CAUSE/EFFECT, AND NARRATIVE PAPERS

Topic_____

Thesis Statement_____

_____

For a Narrative:

1. Starting on the left-hand side, begin with the first major detail and add the remaining details (whether four or many more, simply add squares) in chronological order.

For Two Kinds of Cause and Effect Papers:

1. Starting on the left-hand side, square one is the CAUSE and the remaining squares represent the EFFECTS.

2. If the paper is organized the opposite way, the first square represents the EFFECT and the remaining squares represent the CAUSES.

3. If the cause/effect paper is a chain reaction, follow instructions #1 and organize the subsequent effects in chronological order.

Click on the thumbnail for a full-size view.

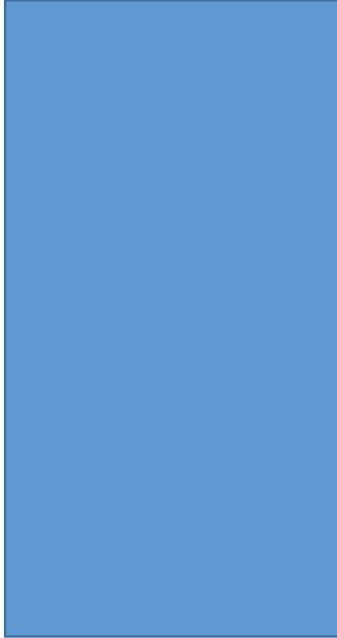## 2.3 Graphic Organizer for a Comparison and Contrast Paper

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER FOR A COMPARISON/CONTRAST PAPER

Topic_____

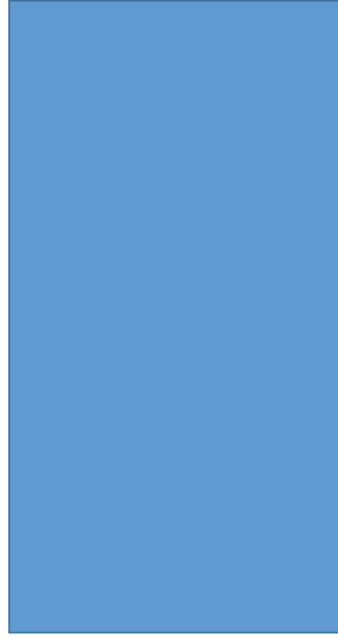Thesis Statement_____

_____

| TOPIC A: UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS | WHAT BOTH A&B SHARE | TOPIC B: UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS |

Click on the thumbnail for a full-size view.

2.4 Graphic Organizer for an Argument or Persuasive Paper
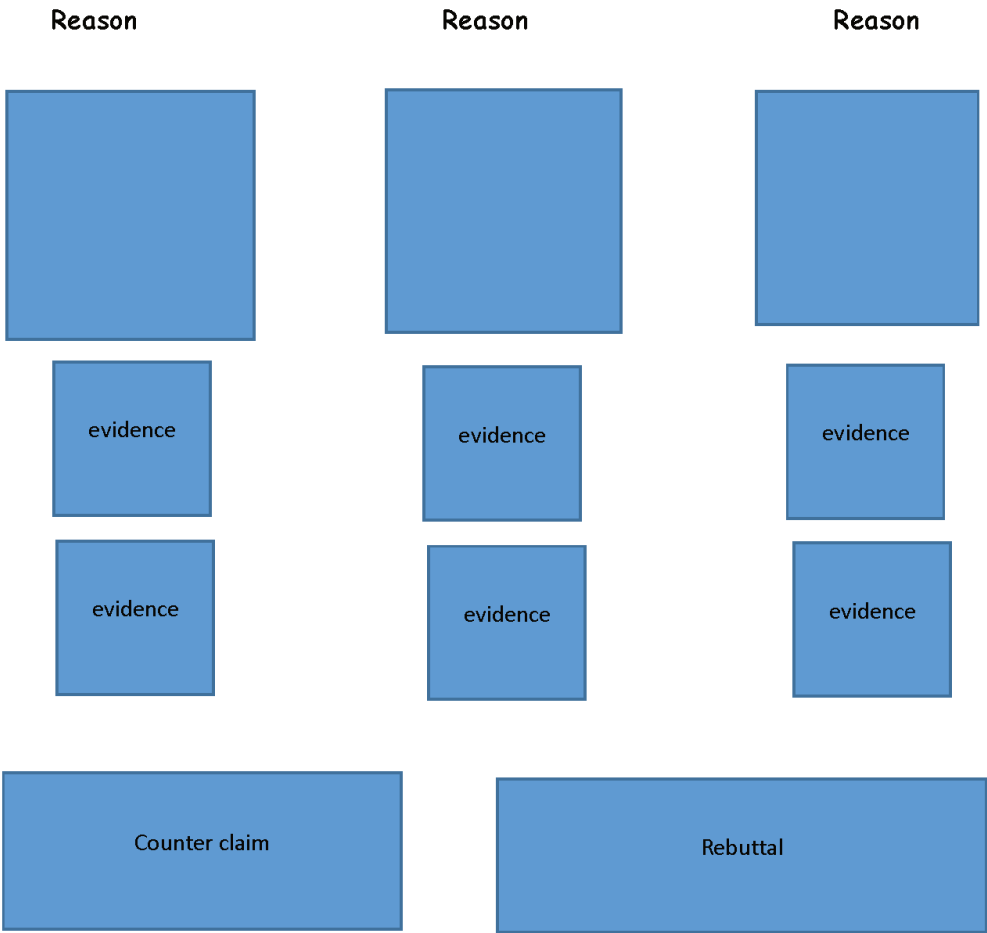
Graphic Organizer for an Argument or Persuasive Paper

Topic_____

Claim_____

Thesis Statement_____

_____

_____

Reason	Reason	Reason

evidence | evidence | evidence

evidence | evidence | evidence

Counter claim

Rebuttal

Click on the thumbnail for a full-size view.

OUTSIDE OF THE TEXT RESOURCES: COMPLETE LANE STUDY TIPS ARTICLES LIST AND LINK TO PDF FILE

Lane Community college list of Study Tips, by Dan Hodges. This PDF file, linked HERE, features 27 articles on numerous aspects of effective learning and study skills. Several of the articles are featured in various lessons.

NOTE: The following is just a list of the articles that appear on the PDF linked above, and the page numbers to scroll down to once you link to the file.

1. Study Tip #1 – Some basic study methods, page 1
2. Study Tip #2 – Reading to Understand, page 4
3. Study Tip #3 – Using Mental Frameworks to Learn More, page 7
4. Study Tip #4 – Basic Memorizing By Thinking, page 9
5. Study Tip #5 – Basic Memorizing–Three "Look-Away" Methods, page 13
6. Study Tip #6 – Memory Tricks, page 16
7. Study Tip #7 – Teaching Yourself Cognitive Skills, page 19
8. Study Tip #8 – Teaching yourself physical skills: the "Mist-Stars" method, page 21
9. Study Tip #9 – Taking useful class notes, page 24
10. Study Tip #10 – How to create a positive attitude and stop procrastinating, page 26
11. Study Tip #11 – Motivating someone to keep trying, page 29
12. Study Tip #12 – How to ask questions that help your teacher teach better, page 31
13. Study Tip #13 – How to take objective tests to get the highest score possible, page 34
14. Study Tip #14 – How to plan your time so that you can get your homework done, page 36
15. Study Tip #15 – What most instructors expect their students to do, page 39
16. Study Tip #16 – People over 40: Learning and memory, 42
17. Study Tip #17 – Raising your intelligence, page 44
18. Study Tip #18 – Handling Test Anxiety (Part 1), page 46
19. Study Tip #19 – Handling Test Anxiety (Part 2), page 48
20. Study Tip #20 – The Science Behind the Study Tips, page 50
21. Study Tip #21 – Resources and Obstacles to Learning, page 53
22. Study Tip #22 – Speed and Timing Tricks to Improve Learning, page 55
23. Study Tip #23 – SCIENCE: READING A TEXT CHAPTER FOR THE FIRST TIME, page 58
24. Study Tip #24 – SCIENCE: STUDYING A TEXT CHAPTER, page 61