



Study Guide

2020-2021



St. Nicholas Montessori College Ireland (SNMCI)



Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
1 SECTION ONE: WHAT KIND OF LEARNER ARE YOU?	5
2 SECTION TWO: ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION	10
3 SECTION THREE: STUDY SKILLS.....	13
4 SECTION FOUR: ACTIVE READING	16
5 SECTION FIVE: ESSAY WRITING AS ACTIVE LEARNING	19
6 SECTION SIX: READING ACADEMIC ARTICLES	24
7 SECTION SEVEN: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: HOW TO AVOID PLAGIARISM	30
8 SECTION EIGHT: REFERENCING	34
9 SECTION NINE: PRESENTATION OF ASSIGNMENTS.....	36
10 SECTION TEN: PRESENTATION SKILLS	38
11 SECTION ELEVEN: REFLECTION.....	42



Introduction

Embarking on a programme of study at third level can be a daunting experience, and students may find themselves facing both educational and personal challenges. Studying is a skill and students must practice and develop good study habits in order to be successful. Very often the study habits and practices developed and used in secondary school do not work for students in college. Good study habits include many different skills: time management, self-discipline, concentration, organisation and effort. Desire to succeed is also important.

The needs of adult learners returning to education and those of secondary school leavers are often very similar.

This guide seeks to address the academic concerns common to all students of SNMCI.

It offers practical advice on day-to-day strategies for successful learning at degree level.

It covers topics such as, managing learning at third level, academic procrastination, study- skills, essay writing, presentation skills and reflective writing.

It links with the SNMCI APA Referencing Guidelines

The overall purpose of this guide is to help students to take an *active* role in their own learning.



Section One





1 Section One: What Kind of Learner are You?

Learning Style Questionnaire

The questionnaire reproduced here is by O'Brien (1985).

Read each sentence carefully and consider if it applies to you.

In the box in front of each statement, indicate how often the sentence applies to you, according to the chart below. Please respond to all questions.

1	2	3
Never applies to me.	Sometimes applies to me.	Often applies to me.

SECTION ONE:

	I enjoy doodling and even my notes have lots of pictures and arrows in them.
	I remember something better if I write it down.
	I get lost or am late if someone tells me how to get to a new place, and I don't write down the directions.
	When trying to remember someone's telephone number or something new like that, it helps me to get a picture of it in my mind.
	If I am taking a test, I can "see" the textbook page and where the answer is located.
	It helps me to look at the person while listening; it keeps me focused.
	Using flashcards helps me to retain material for tests.
	It's hard for me to understand what a person is saying when there are people talking or music playing.
	It's hard for me to understand a joke when someone tells me.
	It is better for me to get work done in a quiet place.
	Total

SECTION TWO:

	My written work doesn't look neat to me. My papers have crossed-out words and erasures.
	It helps to use my finger as a pointer when reading to keep my place.
	Papers with very small print, blotchy dittos or poor copies are tough on me.
	I understand how to do something if someone tells me, rather than having to read the same thing to myself.



	I remember things that I hear, rather than things that I see or read.
	Writing is tiring. I press down too hard with my pen or pencil.
	My eyes get tired fast, even though the eye doctor says that my eyes are ok.
	When I read, I mix up words that look alike, such as “them” and “then,” “bad” and “dad.”
	It’s hard for me to read other people’s handwriting.
	If I had the choice to learn new information through a lecture or textbook, I would choose to hear it rather than read it.
	Total

SECTION THREE:

	I don’t like to read directions; I’d rather just start doing.
	I learn best when I am shown how to do something, and I have the opportunity to do it.
	Studying at a desk is not for me.
	I tend to solve problems through a more trial-and-error approach, rather than from a step-by-step method.
	Before I follow directions, it helps me to see someone else do it first.
	I find myself needing frequent breaks while studying.
	I am not skilled in giving verbal explanations or directions.
	I do not become easily lost, even in strange surroundings.
	I think better when I have the freedom to move around.
	When I can’t think of a specific word, I’ll use my hands a lot and call something a “what-cha-ma-call-it” or a “thing-a-ma-jig.”
	Total

SCORING:

Now, add up the scores for each of the three sections and record below. The maximum score in any section is 30 and the minimum score is 10. Note the preference next to each section.

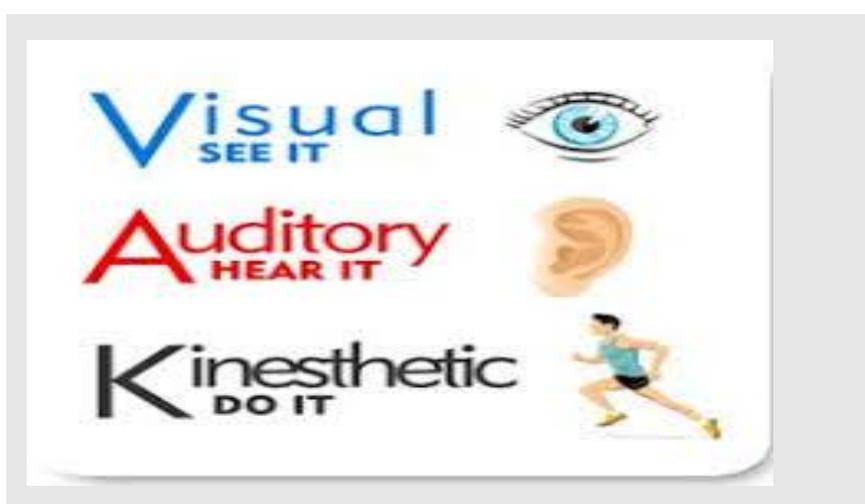
Section One score:		Visual
Section Two score:		Auditory
Section Three score:		Kinesthetic



EVALUATING THE LEARNING STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE

- The SECTION with the highest score indicates your preferred learning channel.
- The higher the score, the stronger the preference.
- If you have relatively high scores in two or more sections, you probably have more than one strength.
- If the scores in the sections are roughly equal, you probably do not have a preferred learning channel; you are a multi-sensory learner.

The following tables summarize the observable characteristics indicative of the three learning styles. It also offers some study tips for each style.



VISUAL LEARNERS

Learning Style	Learn by seeing or watching demonstrations	Tips
Spelling	Recognise words by sight; rely on configurations of words.	- Jot down
Reading	Like description; sometimes stop reading to stare into space and imagine scene; intense concentration.	key points
Handwriting	Tend to be a good, particularly when young; spacing and size are good; appearance is important.	- Sit near the
Memory	Remember faces, but forgets names; writes things down; takes notes.	front
Imagery	Vivid imagination; thinks in pictures; visualizes in detail.	- Create
Distractibility	Unaware of sounds; distracted by movement.	visual
Problem Solving	Deliberate; plans in advance; organizes thoughts by writing them; lists problems.	reminders
Response to periods of inactivity	Stare or doodle; finds something.	- Use mind
Response to new situations	Look around or examine structure.	maps
		- Make lists
		- Highlight



AUDITORY LEARNERS

Learning Style	Learn through verbal instructions from self or others.	Tips
Spelling	Use a phonics approach has auditory word attack skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask questions - Read out loud - Repeat facts - Avoid noisy places - Put information into rhythmic patterns - Participate In class discussion
Reading	Enjoy dialogue and plays; avoid lengthy descriptions; unaware of illustrations; moves lips or sub-vocalizes.	
Handwriting	Have more difficulty learning in initial stages; tends to write lightly.	
Memory	Remember names, but forget faces; remembers by auditory repetition.	
Imagery	Sub-vocalize; imagines things in sounds; details are less important.	
Distractibility	Easily distracted by sounds.	
Problem Solving	Talk problems out; tries solutions verbally or sub-vocally; talks self through problems.	
Response to periods of inactivity	Hum, talks to self, or talks to others.	
Response to new situations	Talk about situations; discusses pros and cons of what to do.	

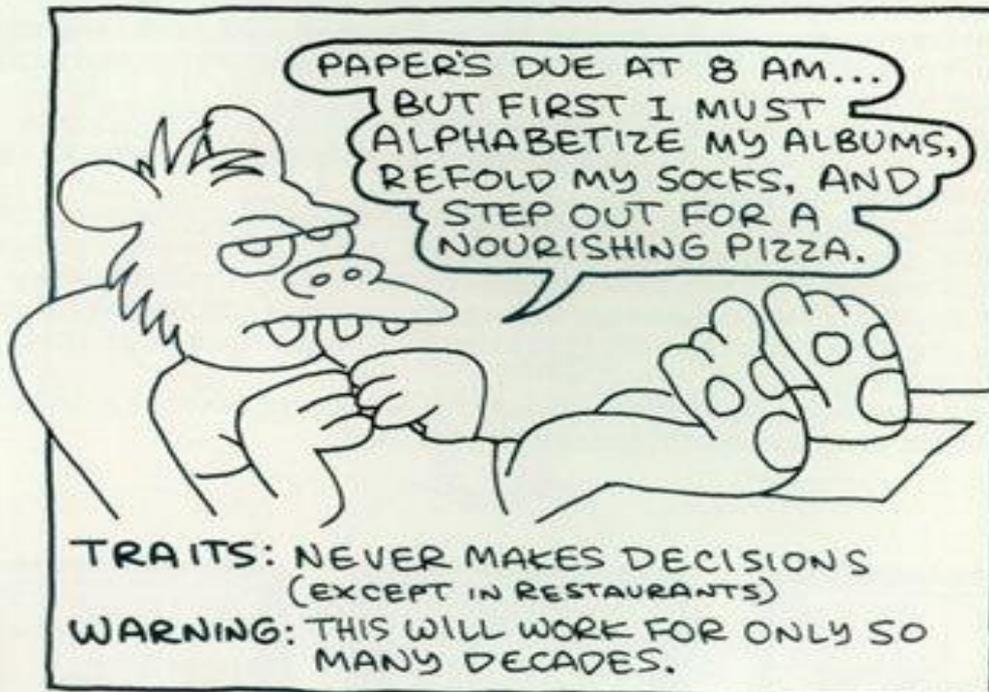
If you are a KINESTHETIC (hands-on) Learner

Learning Style	Learn by doing and direct involvement.	Tips
Spelling	Often is a poor speller; writes words to determine if they "feel" right.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage in hands-on activities - Demonstrate - Practice techniques - Study in a comfortable position - Visualise movements - Write things down as you study - Use technology - Move around if memorising
Reading	Prefer stories where action occurs early; fidgets while reading; not an avid reader.	
Handwriting	Good initially, but deteriorates when space becomes smaller; pushes harder on writing instrument.	
Memory	Remember best what was done, but not what was seen or talked about.	
Imagery	Imagery not important; images that do occur are accompanied by movement.	
Distractibility	Not attentive to visual or auditory presentation so may seem distracted.	
Problem Solving	Attack problem physically; impulsive; often selects solution involving greatest activity.	
Response to periods of inactivity	Fidget or finds reasons to move.	
Response to new situations	Try things out; touches, feels or manipulates.	



Section Two

THE PROCRASTINATOR





2 Section Two: Academic Procrastination

What is Academic Procrastination?

Procrastination involves knowing that one is supposed to perform an activity (such as reading a material for a class), and perhaps even wanting to do so, yet failing to motivate oneself to perform the activity within the desired or expected timeframe.

Procrastination typically involves delaying the start of a task until one experiences distress about not having performed the activity earlier. (Senecal, Koestner & Vallerand, 1995, p.607).

Acting against one's own best interests

Academic procrastinators (a) always, or nearly always, put off academic tasks and (b) always, or nearly always, experience problematic anxiety associated with procrastination.

(Rothblum, Solomon & Murakami, 1986).

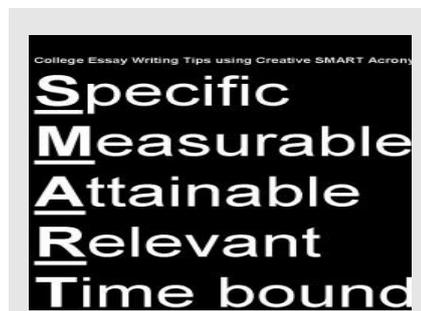
Reasons for Academic Procrastination

- Lack of interest
- Perfectionism: having extremely high standards which are almost unreachable
- Evaluation anxiety: concern over other's response to your work
- Ambiguity: uncertainty of what is expected to complete task
- Fear of failure and self-doubt
- Fear of success: (e.g. if you succeed, concern over having to maintain same level of performance; concern over jealousy from others.)
- Anxiety over expectations that others have of you (e.g. high pressure to succeed; expectations that you will fail)
- All-or-nothing thinking (e.g. seeing one setback as total failure)
- Task seems overwhelming or unmanageable
- You are actually overextended; trying to manage too much

Get Started:-

Prepare mentally:

- Think 'when this is done' not 'if'
- Visualise the consequences of delay
- Think positively: difference between optimists and pessimists
- Optimists can't lose and pessimists can't win (Zimbardo, Weber & Johnson 2000).
- Acknowledge your strengths and skills
- Recall previous successes





- Keep an accurate perspective
- Focus on your own needs and expectations rather than those of others.
- Examine your standards. Are they realistic? Are they set so high that they are causing you distress?
- Adjust your expectations and set realistic goals.

Watch for mental self –seductions:

- “I’ll do it tomorrow”
- “What’s the harm of a half-hour of TV now? I’ve still got time”
- “I deserve some time for myself”
- “I can’t do it.”

Setting GOALS should come from your values and wishes rather than from other people telling you, “you should....”

Reaching goals involves changes in

Rebuff diversions:

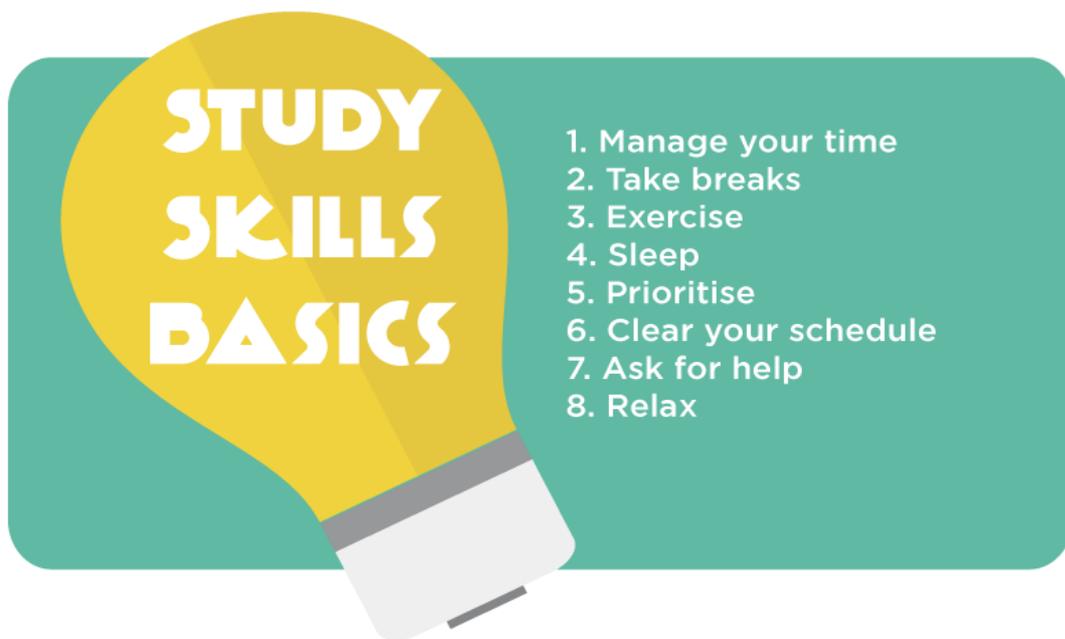
- “I really don’t have that much time left.”
- “Other things are sure to come up later.”
- “If I get this done, I’ll be better able to enjoy my time.”
- “Once I get started, it won’t be that bad.”

Set goals:

- Goals can increase the likelihood of realising your hopes for the future.
- They help provide direction and motivation and increase commitment and persistence.
- By setting goals you may feel less overwhelmed by what you are trying to accomplish because they break tasks into realistic steps.
- Goals also help you to prioritise and organise your efforts towards desired changes.
- What do you hope for, or wish could be different this semester?
- Picture yourself accomplishing your goal; what would you be doing differently that would be helping you succeed?
- What are some of your strengths, abilities or current behaviours that could help you realise your goal?
- What are the positive steps you have to take to increase the likelihood of meeting your goals?
- What are some things that you would need to change because they get in the way of achieving your goals?



Section Three





3 Section Three: Study Skills

Good study habits

- Decide what to study (reasonable task) and how long or how many (chapters, pages, ideas, etc.).
- Use behavioural suggestions, e.g., lay the book/notes you have to read out in plain view.
- Have special places to study. Take into consideration lighting, possible distractions, temperature, and availability of materials.
- Prioritise work and set, and stick to deadlines.
- Divide the task.
- Break large tasks into smaller ones.
- Do difficult tasks first.
- Study for 50 minutes, and then take a 10 minute break. Stretch, relax, have a snack, rehydrate.
- If you get bogged down, change location, take a break, switch subjects or switch tasks.

“I don’t know where to begin”

- **Take control.**
Make a list of all the things you have to do. Break your workload down into manageable chunks.
- **Prioritise!** Schedule your time realistically.
- **Don't skip** classes near an exam -- you may miss a review session.
- **Use that hour in between classes** to review notes.
- **Begin studying early**, with an hour or two per day, and slowly build as exams approach.



“I’ve got so much to study and so little time!!”

- **Preview.** Survey your module syllabus, reading material, and notes.
- **Identify** the most important areas of study, and areas still not understood.
- **Chunk or Group information:** Break down the information into smaller chunks, e.g. a 10 digit mobile number 0862015763. Ten separate numbers (chunks) become 4 separate chunks 086 201 57 63
- **Use Mnemonics:** a pattern of letters, or associations which assists in remembering something: formula or rhyme to assist memory. For example ‘Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain’ (colours of the rainbow, Red, Orange Yellow, Green , Blue, Indigo and Violet)

“This stuff is such hard going. I can’t even stay awake reading it!!”

- **Attack!** Get actively involved with the text as you read.
- **Ask questions**, “What is important to remember about this section
- **Take notes** or underline key concepts.





- **Discuss** the material with others in your class. Study together.
- **Stay on the offensive** especially with material that you don't find interesting, rather than reading passively and missing important points.

“I read it. I understand it. But I just can't get it to sink in!!”



- **Elaborate.** We remember best, the things that are most meaningful to us. As you are reading, try to elaborate upon new information with your own examples.
- **Integrate** what you're studying with what you already know. You will be able to remember new material better, if you can link it to something that's already meaningful to you.

“I think I understand it!”

- Don't guess! Test yourself
- Make up questions about key sections in notes or reading.
- Keep in mind what the lecturer/tutor has stressed.
- Examine the relationships between concepts and sections.
- Change a note heading **into a question** or a **series of questions**. For example, in Montessori Theory, instead of “Prepared Environment” write “What is the Prepared Environment?” “Who prepares it?” “Using what criteria?”

“There's too much to remember!”

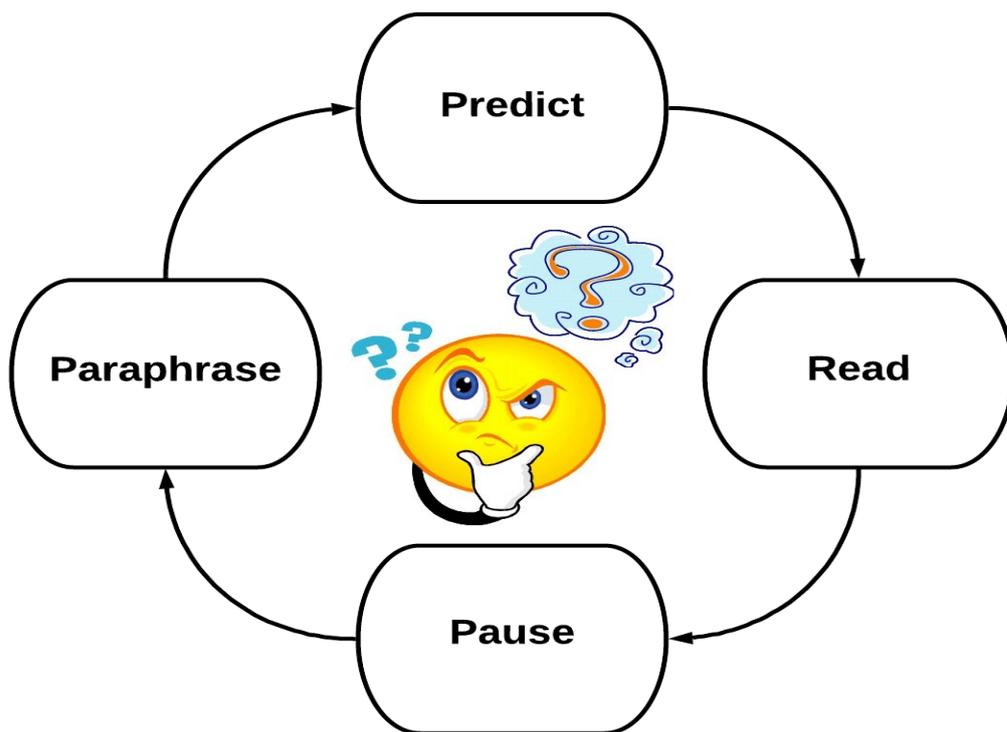
- Organisation is key here. It is easier to recall information if it is presented in an organised way
- Integrate knowledge
- Cultivate intelligent note taking skills

“But I like to study...In bed, in front of the TV, with music on, with noise in the background!”

- If you are writing an essay or putting together a project, all of the above are distractions. They open up opportunities to do other things except what you should be doing
- If you are studying for an exam answer this question....Under what conditions are exams held?



Section Four





4 Section Four: Active Reading

There are basically two types of reading. The first is **Aesthetic Reading**, where the readers 'live the experience'; their expectation is to lose themselves in the written word. The second is **Efferent Reading**, where the readers read, to be instructed, to absorb information.

Most third level courses involve a significant amount of study reading and as a student, you engage in **Efferent Reading** and to be useful, it must also be a kind of **Active Reading**.

The PQRR technique, devised by Robinson (1961) is widely acknowledged as one of the more successful approaches to developing advanced reading skills (see Moran, 1997: 60).

1. Previewing

- Before reading a chapter survey it briefly for a few minutes.
- Look upon this like a movie trailer; it will give you a taste of what is to come.
- It starts you thinking and making connections so that you can go on to read intelligently.
- Look at the headings of sections or paragraphs.
- Scan any pictures, diagrams, charts, graphs or tables.
- Look for SIGNPOST words which suggest important points along the way.
- Skim through the summary at the end of the chapter if there is one.
- If you are reading an article and it has an abstract, start there.

2. Questioning

- Questioning = Active learning. It suggests engagement with the information. You are not just a passive reader.
- Jot down some question to be answered.
- What is the main theme, idea or learning point of this chapter?
- What evidence, arguments or examples are cited in support of the central idea.
- How can I connect this knowledge to what I already know?

3. Reading

- Keep questioning as you read; think while you read.
- Have a pen and notebook and jot down notes; remember you are looking for answers.
- Look for the 'topic sentence' in each paragraph, i.e. the sentence which summarises the most important point in the paragraph.
- Slow down if you come across something you don't quite understand; go back or go ahead and back again until it becomes clear.
- Jot down unfamiliar words and terms and look them up.

4. Reviewing

- This is the final stage of an active reading process.
- Here is where you check your understanding.
- Have you answered any of your initial questions?



- Work with another person and ask each other questions on what you have just read.
- Look at other books, articles, writings on the same topic and compare.
- This is the beginning of critical evaluation

Template for Active Reading:

Stage 1. Preview the Chapter

Skim through the pages of a chapter/article. See if you can answer the following
What does the chapter/article cover?
Can you turn the main topic into a question?
What trigger words or ideas come to mind, (e.g. names of theorists). Note down a few lines here

Stage 2. Question: Formulate 2-3 specific questions

List them here.

Step 3. Read with your questions in mind

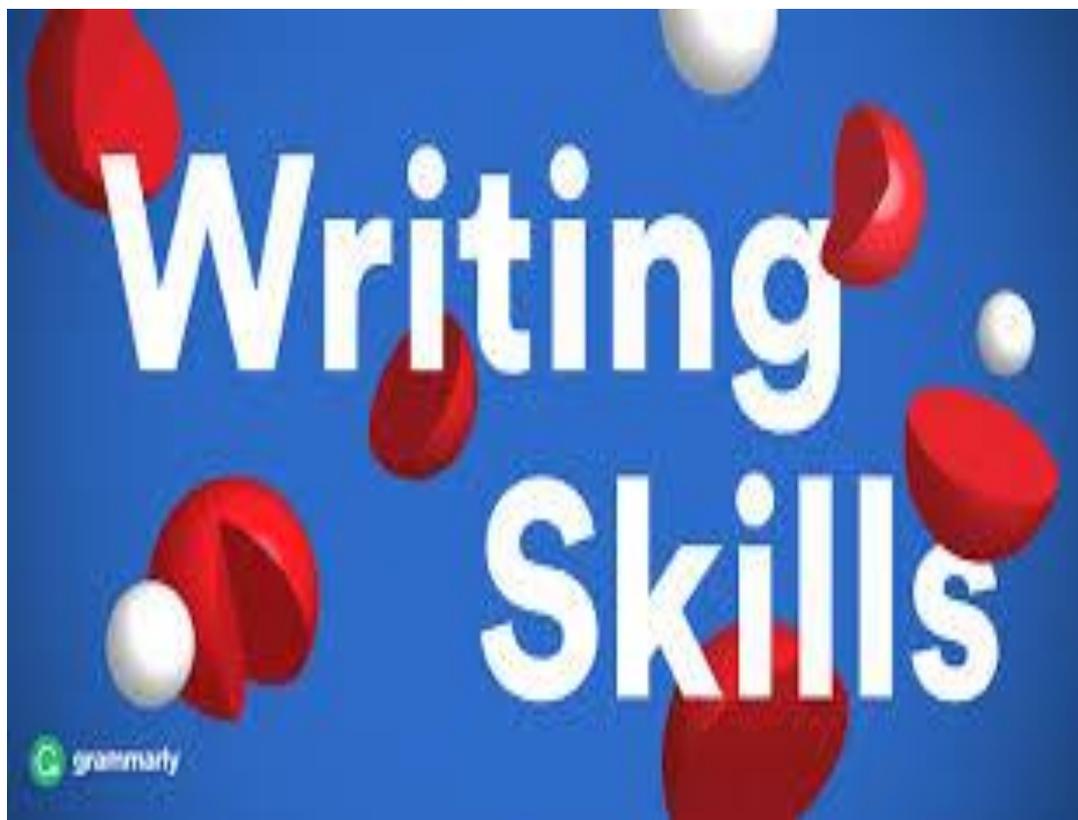
Pause every now and again and ask “what have I learned so far?”
Summarise relevant information here

Step 4. Review your summary

Ask
What have I learned?
How does it relate to what I already know?



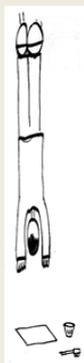
Section Five





5 Section Five: Essay Writing as Active Learning

What type of writer are you?



The diver

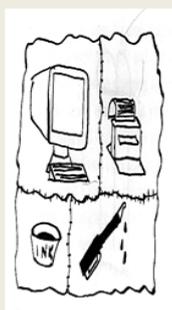
The **diver** leaps straight in and starts the writing process early on. The diver starts anywhere to see what emerges, before working towards a plan.

The grand planner



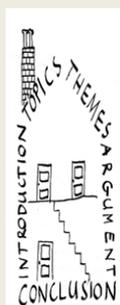
The **planner** person reads and makes notes, and leaves writing a plan or beginning writing until they have an almost complete picture of the essay ready in their head

The patchwork writer



The **patchwork** writer works on sections (perhaps using headings) quite early in the process

The architect



The **architect** has a sense of the structure (perhaps before the content) and could produce a complex plan or spider diagram early in the process

Title/Topic of Essay

- What am I being asked to do?
- Read title and look for (underline) key words
- Key words suggest content and structure

You may be asked to.....

- **Analyse:** Identify the main points and significant features. Examine critically and/or in great detail.
- **Compare and Contrast:** Show the similarities and differences between two (or more) things.
- **Describe:** Give the main characteristics or features of something, or give a detailed account of it
- **Discuss:** Explain and give arguments for and against an issue; consider the implications of. Provide evidence to support your points. Often used in connection with a quotation or statement that can be disputed.
- **Summarise:** Draw out the main points only

Analyse the assignment

- Write down in your own words what you think the assignment is asking you to do
- What do you already know about the subject matter?
- What background information do you need to help you complete the assignment?
- How are you going to choose your reading material?

Think

- Initial ideas
- Brainstorm
 - Mind maps
 - Lists
 - Drawings
 - Discussion/Audio
 - Post-it notes
- Initial plan!
- Preliminary reading





Source Information

- Before you begin to write you need to read.
- You need an informed overview of the topic.



Consider

- What facts do I need?
- Who are the experts in this field?
- Are there books, articles, journals that provide relevant and current information on this subject?
- If I source information on-line, how reliable is it?

Takes notes while you read

- Hint! Use index cards; one fact or idea per card
- Hint! On each card write the source of the idea, e.g. book, article, journal, website.
- N.B. If you use the fact or idea, you will need this information for your referencing.
- Discussed in a later slide

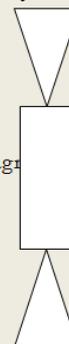
Organise

- Organise your information into an outline
- Is all of your information relevant?
- Is it all to the point?
- Eliminate information that is going off on a tangent

- Write down the main topic ideas
- Under the main ideas list a few ideas, opinions or statements to support main idea /argument/point
- Avoid repetition
- The outline is used to create your essay's paragraphs

Format of Essay

- Introduction
- Body, (consisting of paragraphs)
- Conclusion



Introduction

- Should capture reader's attention and give an idea of the essay's focus
- Move from general to specific
- General statement to specific intent of the essay

Body

- Number of paragraphs in which you develop each of your points in detail
- One main point/idea per paragraph
- Build paragraph with discussion, support, examples
- Relate back to the essay title frequently
- Have a key sentence that sums up main point of the paragraph

Conclusion

- Rounds up what has gone before
- No new ideas here that have not been discussed in body of essay
- Review of, not restatement of main points
- Should mirror what was outlined in the introduction and relate clearly to the objectives set out at the beginning



Transition words

- To ensure a free flow of ideas from paragraph to paragraph consider **transition words**
- Links between paragraphs – pick up point from the end of a paragraph at the start of next one.
- Also **Furthermore**
- **Consequently**
- **As a result of**
- **Therefore**
- **However**
- **Even though**
- **Alternatively**
- **Nevertheless**
- **In addition to**

The Writing Process

Before you write, you need to think about the steps involved in writing.

1. **Research**
2. **Draft**
3. **Edit/Revise**
4. **Proofread**
5. **Submit**

Features of Academic Writing

- More careful and considered than everyday writing
- More complicated than everyday speech



Formal Writing Rules

- Do not use the first or second person (I, my, we, us).
- Do not use contractions (can't, won't, doesn't).
- Avoid saying "In my opinion..."
- Avoid repetition.
- Be specific. Do not use words such as "things" or "many examples". Do not be vague.
- Use plural to avoid complications of sexist language, e.g. Researchers should check their work.
- Avoid strong opinions
- Use complete sentences

- Academic writing style develops through imitation. The more you read the better you will become at writing in an academic, rather than a descriptive style

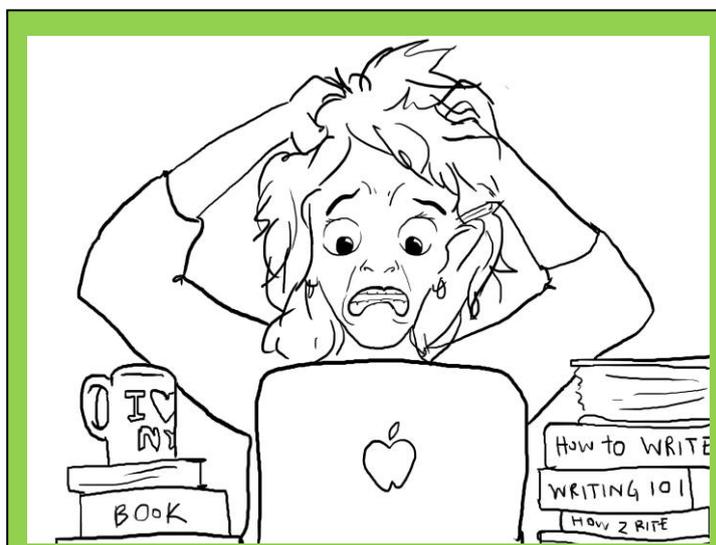
- Consider your readers
- In general avoid personal opinion
- The exception to this is if you are required to write a reflective style essay or one which specifically asks for your experiences

Writing tips

- Write a sentence for each paragraph you want to write – you can then move them about easily to form thread of argument
- Read what you have written aloud to see if it sounds right
- Find best environment for you – when and where do you work best?
- Take a break before trying to do your final check
- Use a writing checklist

Suggestions

- Get someone to proof read your essay
- Check spelling and grammar
- Use plain English/ Short clear sentences.
- Eliminate jargon and slang words
- Keep within word count
- Reference correctly
- Keep a copy for yourself





General Essay Guidelines:-

- Write in a simple, clear, precise style using full sentences
- Unless you are asked in the assignment title for personal experience, write impersonally, without using the word “I”. Consider... “This essay will..” etc
- Watch tenses!! Be consistent. .
- Clichés, slang, informal or colloquial speech and are generally not acceptable within the scope of assignments set by SNMCI. Take for example the two sentences below:

B.F. Skinner experimentally investigated the effects of punishment and concluded that, while effective as a means of controlling behaviour, punishment may bring about negative consequences such as a generalised state of fear.

A guy called Skinner studied stuff about punishment and figured out that it can work sometimes but then went on about the down side being that it may make the person afraid.

- Accuracy is essential. ...*Recent research* is vague, consider *research since 2008...* “*Some researchers have shown...*” is better stated as “*Smith and Jones (2011) have shown...*”
- Ensure that the subject of a sentence is either singular or plural. It cannot be both, as in ‘A person [singular] can choose themselves [plural] whether or not they [plural] send her [singular] children to fee-paying schools.’ The sentence above could be rewritten as “People can choose themselves whether or not they send their children to fee-paying schools’.
- Acronyms are acceptable if one has previously indicated the full meaning of the acronym. Thus, to use DCYA, one must have initially used Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA)
- Proof read your work for spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.
- Use paragraphs to sort your essay into sections. Generally a new point requires a new paragraph.
- Paragraphs should be neither too long (check to see if you have more than one point) or too short (one or two sentences).
- Draft and re-draft. You may need to add or delete material as well as re-order material.
- Leave time for this process as it will improve the quality of your finished product.



Section Six





6 Section Six: Reading Academic Articles

To access articles on the SNMCI moodle page:

1. Log on to moodle
2. Go to Library and Journal Information
3. Click on EBSCOHOST Research data bases
4. Username: nicholas
5. Password: college

Different types of writing follow different conventions. Academic writing has its own language, style, voice and structure. Knowing that these conventions of organisation and presentation exist, is the first step in reading and understanding academic articles

Academic Journals:-

Academic journals are periodicals in which researchers publish articles on their work. Most often these articles discuss recent research. Journals also publish theoretical discussions and articles that critically review already published work. Academic journals are typically **peer-reviewed** journals.

Academic Articles;-

People write academic articles **to share their ideas with their peers**, usually within their own academic discipline (e.g, sociology, literature, psychology). Articles fall under the realms of:

Research reports: presentation of an original study or studies

Literature review articles: discuss existing research about a problem and suggests paths for future studies

Theoretical articles: discuss existing theories and often proposes new theories or a new perspective on theories

Most articles want to contribute, or claim to contribute something new or original to existing scholarship on their chosen subject.

The ability to read and ‘get what you want’ from academic articles is a good one to have as you progress through your studies. It is a good skill to have for research purposes.

Tip: Make a point of reading at least one well written, peer reviewed academic article per week. This will hone your ability to critique and evaluate sources. The more you read and consider academic articles, the more you will improve your own writing ability.



Choosing an article:-

Different purposes for reading articles require attention to different areas of the article.

Overview of topic: Focus on the introduction and conclusion.

Research ideas: Read the introduction and conclusion, looking for further research suggestions in conclusion, then critically read the methods section.

General knowledge: Carefully read the whole article making sure you understand it all.

Assignment: Think about the goal of the assignment. Critically read what you might use to achieve that goal.

When looking through journals, databases, etc. that show you dozens (or hundred) of articles, you need to narrow down your list to read.

Read the title: titles typically reveal the main theory being investigated in the article

Read the abstract: the abstract will give you more information about the context of the theory to see if it relates to your topic

Article Sections:

ABSTRACT: This is the summary of the journal article. Almost all journal articles have an abstract. The abstract appears as a short paragraph at the start of the article, to set apart from the rest of the article. The abstract tells you the point of the article. Always read the abstract to make sure the article is suited to your needs. .

INTRODUCTION/LITERATURE REVIEW: The writer's introduction is the first section of the paper. It generally introduces the topic, the thesis, and tells readers why the research is important. Look for the thesis; what's the author trying to prove or show? How do they intend to contribute to their field?

Literature Review: A literature review looks at past research on the author's thesis. The literature review demonstrates to other researchers that the author is thoroughly acquainted with their topic. It is not always marked as a separate section from the introduction.

Tip: If you're still searching for sources for your essay/paper, a literature review can point you to other sources you can use.

METHOD: In research articles this is where you will see how the author obtained their information/data. In this section, the author details how they will try to support (or disprove) their thesis.



DATA: All the data the author collected from their research is located in this section. This is often incorporated in the results section.

RESULTS: The author explains the results of the data. What is the one major finding? Did you see patterns or trends in the data that the author did not mention? Were there problems that were not addressed?

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION:

This is the author's summary of the journal article. The author will also explain whether his or her thesis is correct, the implications, and what other research can be done. This section is vital. If you use this article as a source, you better know the general outcome of the author's research. It is a good idea to read this section after you read the abstract, then again after reading the rest of the article. Was it proven wrong? Right? Inconclusive? Do you agree with the conclusions drawn from the data? Are these conclusions over-generalized or appropriately careful? Are there other factors that could have influenced, or accounted for, the results? What further experiments would you think of to continue the research or to answer remaining questions?

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

The bibliography is the list of sources the author has used. If you're in need of more sources, take a glance through the titles of this section. You may find articles you can use in your essay or paper.

What you are looking for:

Academic articles cannot be read effectively in the same way as other written work. The contents of an academic article cannot be grasped by a single reading. You have to engage with it several times, but in different ways.

- Step 1: Skim the whole article
- Step 2: Determine your purpose for reading the article
- Step 3: Read specific sections critically to fulfill your purpose

Skimming:-

Note 'chunks' of text, e.g. paragraphs and sections. .

Paragraphs: You can usually obtain a good understanding of what an author is saying by reading *only* the first sentence of paragraphs. You may have to force yourself to stop reading after the first sentence, but if the section is relevant to your purpose you will come back to it.



Sections: In research journals, the articles are broken down into sections, most often abstract, literature review, methods, results, and discussion. There are two sections that usually are particularly useful in understanding the article, the **Introduction** and the **Conclusion**. An author will generally **end** the section with a paragraph that makes important points. So, read fully the first and last paragraph of the **Introduction** and the **Conclusion** sections.

Figures and tables: As you skim read through the article, you will have noticed that the text may be interrupted by diagrams or figures. These are usually intended to display an idea in a way that is easier to see and grasp than is possible with text. While skimming, look over any tables you encounter to see what kind of information they are displaying. If the information is relevant to your purpose, you can look at it more closely later.

Reading critically: -

Think of reading an article as hearing someone else's perspective on a specific topic and treat critical reading as a skill to develop personal & academic responses.

- Remain open minded to the fact that your previously held ideas may be wrong.
- Do not make the mistake of thinking that authors are always right.
- Keep in mind the influence both the author's biases in writing the article as well as your own in reading the article
- Be willing to look up vocabulary and concepts in the article that you are unfamiliar with.
- Take notes of the text's main points
- Talk to others about what you have read
- Relate this article to others by identifying similar or contrasting themes
- Explain what the text means to a non-specialist

General Questions to ask:

- Who is writing the article?
- What are author's qualifications?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What sources were used?
- When was the article written?
- Where was it published?
- What are the limits if the study?

A more specific view: -

- What is the author's main point or thesis
- What facts were offered in support?
- What sources were used?
- What evidence was offered?
- Was it Empirical?
- Was it Common knowledge?
- Was it Anecdotal?



- Was the argument one sided?
- Was evidence presented for all sides?
- What information may not have been included?

Language used:-

Watch for what the author is saying and how it is said. Look for author's switch from his own words to those of his sources

e.g. as Einstein (1942) suggests, 'it is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge'

or

e.g. evidence suggests that the most important period of life is not the 'age of university studies', but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six (Montessori, 1940, p.1)

Take note of language that is speculation rather than evidence, e.g. *"It is probable"*; *"It is likely that"*; *"It should be obvious"*; *"This undoubtedly means"*

Overall:-

- Can consider it in light of similar articles; perhaps articles in the same discipline or journal.
- Quality of the article? Did it meet academic standards of writing, presentation, organisation, source referencing etc?
- Was anything left unfinished? Were questions raised and then left unanswered?
- Did it make sense?
- Implications of the article



Section Seven





7 Section Seven: Academic Integrity: How to Avoid Plagiarism

What is Plagiarism?

- Using other people's ideas and words without clearly acknowledging the source of that information
- Work written by someone else, friend or family and presented as your own
- Work copied from internet, book, journal, with little or no change to the text
- **Paraphrased**, but not acknowledged.= Plagiarism
- **Insufficiently paraphrased**, even if source is given. = Plagiarism
- **No reference page**, or reference page does not list all original and secondary sources.= Plagiarism

Plagiarism, taking the words or ideas of others and including them in your work, without acknowledgement, is viewed as a form of academic dishonesty.

According to SNMCI QA, plagiarism is a MAJOR offence for which a student may be referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

The College's full policy and procedures, on Academic Integrity is available on the QA Tab on Moodle website.

See QA 7.8: Academic Integrity Policy on QA Tab on MY SMSI

See GQA 7.8 Academic Integrity Guidelines on QA Tab on MY SMSI

See Student Handbook for Section on Academic Integrity

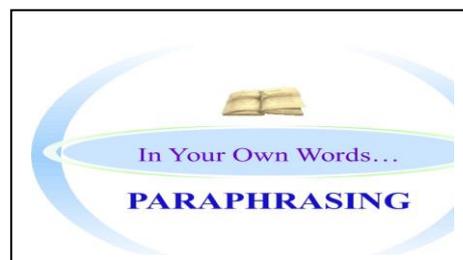
Note to Students:

- **It is your responsibility NOT TO ENGAGE IN PLAGIARISM and to make yourself aware of the correct referencing system in the college. A defense of "I didn't know" or "I didn't mean to mean to.." is not acceptable. It is the action and not the intention that constitutes plagiarism.**



Paraphrasing:-

Paraphrasing is using your own words to express someone else's ideas whilst still preserving the main ideas of the original source.



How to Paraphrase

1. Read the text a number of times until you understand its meaning
2. Underline 'subject-specific' words that you will keep. These words are known as the 'jargon of the subject.'
3. Circle words that can be exchanged for synonyms
4. Change whole sentences by re-ordering and/or combining two or more sentences.
5. Use your own sentence structure
6. Compare your writing to the original.
7. Reference within the text

Note: It is not sufficient to simply...

- Change a couple of words
- Delete a couple of words or phrases
- Rearrange the order of the words



Important!!!:

When you paraphrase, you **MUST** still give credit to the original author. (Author, date)

Examples

1.	New York is referred to as “the city that never sleeps.” At nights, people can be assured that something is going on, no matter what the time.
	Correct Paraphrase In New York, there is something to do at all hours of the night.
	This is a good example of paraphrasing because it gets to the point of what is being said using very few of the original words.
2.	Brooklyn is the most populous of New York City's five boroughs, with approximately 2.5 million residents, and the second-largest in area.
	Incorrect Paraphrase Brooklyn is the most populous borough in New York City, with about 2.5 million residents, and is the second biggest area.
	This is a bad example of paraphrasing because it substitutes a few words with synonyms but the structure and word order remains the same as the original.



3.	'Hemmingway's work contains a lot of symbolism. In <i>The Old Man and The Sea</i> , the protagonist is struggling to capture a large marlin. His struggle against the marlin symbolizes a struggle against defeat. Hemmingway's use of symbolism truly affects the way the reader reads and interprets his work' (Jones, 1990, pg.4).
	Correct Paraphrase Jones (1990) suggests that when reading Hemmingway's work, it is important to recognize how symbolism affects interpretation. Hemmingway's use of symbolism, he says, affects the reader's understanding of the work.
	This example, even though it is not a direct quote, acknowledges the source of the idea i.e. Jones 1990.
4.	Differentiation as an instructional approach promotes a balance between a student's style and a student's ability. Differentiated instruction provides the student with options for processing and internalizing the content, and for constructing new learning in order to progress academically (Thompson, 2009, pg. 10).
	Insufficient Paraphrase Differentiation is a <u>way to encourage equality</u> between the <u>approach and talent of the student</u> (Thompson, 2009). <u>This type of instruction gives</u> students different <u>ways</u> to deal with and <u>grasp information</u> , and for <u>establishing</u> new learning <u>to move</u> on in <u>education</u> (Thompson, 2009).
	Even though this is cited correctly and gives credit to Thompson, the underlined words are simply synonyms of words used in the original text. You can also see how the sentence structure is the same for both the original and the paraphrase.
	Better Paraphrase Teachers use differentiated instruction to help students learn, allowing the teacher to adapt lessons to the way each student learns and each student's skill (Thompson, 2009).



Section Eight



BASICS OF APA REFERENCING

- **APA In-text Citation**
It is used in body of the Assignment
- **Reference List**
List of References that consist:
- Author Name
- Publication
- Title and more



8 Section Eight: Referencing

The referencing system required by SNMCI is based on the APA System. The system is based on two requirements

- **Citing:** The first is to reference in the main body of the text when you refer to another person's work, either with a direct quote or by paraphrasing.
- **Referencing:** The second is to compile a list of references at the end of your work (essay, presentation notes, teaching file, reflection, dissertation etc.)

Why Reference?

- To show that you have read and researched widely in preparation for your essay/assignment.
- To avoid plagiarism, by acknowledging other authors' work
- To supply sufficient information to guide readers to the source of your information.

When to Reference

- When you use a direct quotation
- When you paraphrase someone else's words/ ideas
- When you use statistics or other pieces of information from a source you have read

Reference List or Bibliography ?

- A reference list contains only sources cited in the main text of your work.
- A bibliography is list of all sources and background material consulted, whether or not you have cited the source in your text. It is in the same format as the reference list.

See College Guidelines: Separate Document



Section Nine





9 Section Nine: Presentation of Assignments

Assignments should have a title page (a template for the title page will be available on your Year/Programme, Stage Moodle Home Page) and should include the following information:

Student's Number:

Programme (Award):

Venue: (Dublin/Cork)

Module:

Title of Assignment:

Word Count:

Number of Pages Submission Date:

Date Due:

Date Submitted:

Plagiarism Disclaimer:



ST. NICHOLAS
MONTESSORI

St. Nicholas Montessori College Ireland

Student Number	
Programme	
Venue:	
Module	
Assignment Title:	
Word Count:	
Number of Pages:	
Date Due:	Date Submitted:

Plagiarism disclaimer:

I understand that plagiarism is a serious offence and have read and understood the college policy on plagiarism. I also understand the penalties that shall be incurred if I have not identified and properly attributed sources which have been used, referred to, or have in any way influenced the preparation of this assignment, or if I have knowingly allowed others to plagiarise my work in this way.

I hereby certify that this assignment is my own work based on my personal study and/or research, and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation. I also certify that the assignment has not previously been submitted for assessment and that I have not copied in part or whole or otherwise plagiarised the work of anyone else, including other students.

Date:

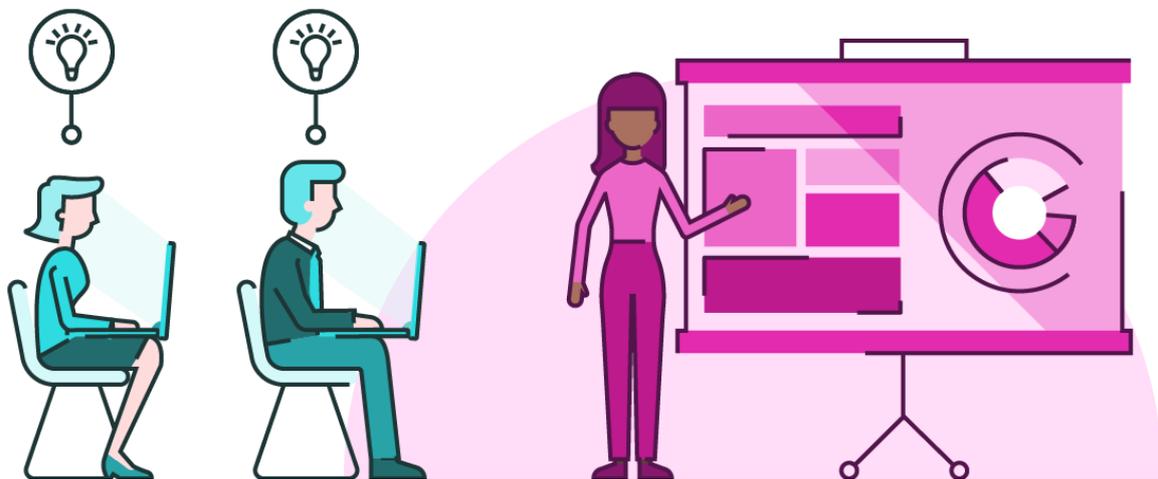
Student No:

Paper submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the award of...

Programme Title will appear here. (QQI level will appear here e.g. 7/8)



Section Ten





10 Section Ten: Presentation Skills

There are many times in life when we may be called upon to speak. These times range from informal and chatty, to detailed and formal. As a student you may be called upon to deliver presentations, either individually or as part of a group. A certain amount of ‘stage fright’ is normal.

The following tips may help ...

- Be prepared
- Plan
- Rehearse. Keeping to a time limit is important.
- Be interested in your topic
- Brainstorm/ Mind Map the Why, What, Who, How, When and Where
- A well organised presentation means the information is, easier to understand, easier to remember, has more of an impact and increases your credibility
- Uses short, easy to follow, sentences
- Present information in a clear, logical way



Think of your presentation in the same way as an essay, with an introduction, main body and a conclusion.

Say what you are going to say.....

Say it.....

Say what you said.....

Introduction:-

- Controversial statement
- Quotation or Statistic
- Visual with impact
- Rhetorical question
- Anecdote or personal experience
- Humour (difficult and

Main Body:-

- For a ten minute presentation/ three or four main points.
- Logical flow/ Linking language
- Division between points; visual or pause/silence or intonation

Conclusion:-

- Need to finish on a strong note/ don't just trail off
- Leave audience with final thought
- Restate /summarise



Delivery:

- **Use your voice:** Project without shouting. Sound interested to make it interesting to the audience. Stress what needs to be emphasised. A pause here and there can be effective to make a point.
- **Slow down:** We tend to go too fast when nervous
- **Posture and body language:** An audience will listen to someone who stands up and doesn't slouch. Try not to shift from foot to foot or put your hands in your pockets.
- **Gestures:** Gestures can help if they are natural. Unanimated speakers are boring but don't distract people with too many gestures or too much movement.
- **Facial expression and eye contact:** Smile at the start and occasionally thereafter. Look at your audience but don't stare at one person in particular.
- **ICT:** If you are using PowerPoint or other presentation technology this should be an AID to your presentation and should not dominate.
- Have a unity of design
- Use text sparingly. Don't overload the slides
- Don't just read what is on the slide. Talk around it.
- Avoid too many fancy transitions or loud animations, sound effects etc.

Remember

- Everyone gets nervous
- Even though the attention is on you, focus on the subject
- Concentrate on getting your message across
- Relax
- Realise that you cannot give the perfect presentation/speech.
- Your mistakes are more noticeable to you
- A little anxiety is good

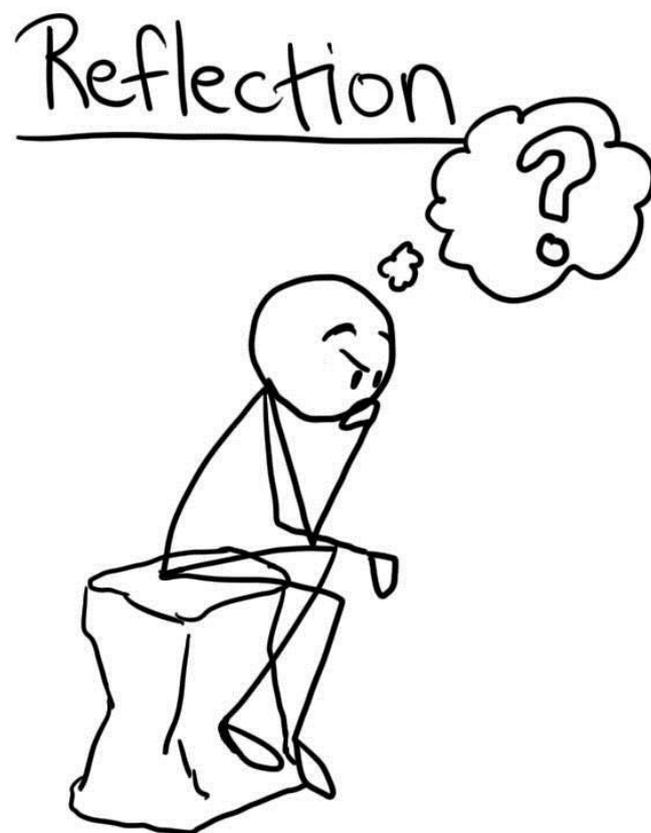
See below some of the criteria that lecturers will use to assess presentations.



Organization	Audience cannot understand presentation because there is no sequence of information.	Audience has difficulty following presentation because student jumps around.	Presents information in logical sequence which audience can follow.	Presents information in logical, interesting sequence which audience can follow
Subject knowledge	Does not have grasp of information	Is uncomfortable with information	Is at ease with information	Demonstrates full knowledge (more than required)
Questions from assessors	Cannot answer questions about subject	Is able to answer only rudimentary questions	Answers all questions, but fails to elaborate	Answers all questions with explanations and elaboration.
Layout, graphics (for poster or electronic/PP presentations)	Uses superfluous graphics or no graphics	Occasionally uses graphics that rarely support text and presentation	Graphics relate to text and presentation	Graphics explain and reinforce screen text and presentation.
Correctness of grammar, spelling etc	Presentation has four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.
Presentation style e.g. eye contact, speaks out, addresses audience	Reads all of report with no eye contact.	Occasionally uses eye contact, but still reads most of report.	Maintains eye contact most of the time but frequently returns to notes	Maintains eye contact with audience, seldom returning to notes.
Delivery	Mumbles, incorrectly pronounces terms, and speaks too quietly for students in the back of class to hear.	Voice is low. Student incorrectly pronounces terms. Audience members have difficulty hearing presentation.	Voice is clear. Student pronounces most words correctly. Most audience members can hear presentation	Uses a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms so that all audience members can hear presentation.



Section Eleven





11 Section Eleven: Reflection

Reflective writing is a requirement on many of the modules you will study. Reflection is a purposeful activity. It drives learning and change.

Being reflective involves being.

- Open to different ideas and seeing things from different angles
- Curious and asking questions
- Patient if the issues you encounter don't have a 'simple' answer
- Honest with yourself, your uncertainties, what you got 'wrong', what others got 'wrong'
- Rigorous and acting on the insights you gain.



The aim of the following is to model some basic ideas about reflective writing. We are not suggesting that this is the only way to approach it!

In short reflective writing involves **THREE** main steps....

Step One: (Description)

At this first step you are looking back at something, often an event, i.e. something that happened, but you could also be thinking about an idea or topic from class. .

This is the **SHORTEST** part of your written reflection.

At this step it is difficult to suggest specific vocabulary for any descriptive elements of your reflective writing, because the range of possible events, ideas or objects on which you might be required to reflect, is so great.

If you are reflecting on a 'critical incident' in placement for example, describe the event in clear objective language. At this point avoid any subjective comment or interpretation.

Step Two: (Interpretation)

This is possibly the most important part of your reflective writing. This is where you pinpoint the most important/interesting/useful/relevant part of the event.

At this point you are asking...

How can it be explained e.g. with theory?

How is it similar to and different from other events/topics/ideas?





Here is some language to consider when at the **Interpretation Step and the Outcome Step**

INTERPRETATION

For me the most	meaningful significant important relevant useful	aspect(s) element(s) experiences(s) issue(s) idea(s)	was/were
		learning...	arose from happened... resulted from...
Previously At the time At first Initially Subsequently Later	I	thought/did not think... felt/did not feel... knew/did not know... noticed/did not notice... questioned/did not question.. realised/did not realise...	
Alternatively Equally	this	might be... is perhaps... could be... is probably...	because of... due to... explained by... related to...
	This	is similar to...	because...
	Like Unlike	this	reveals... demonstrates...

Step Three: (Outcome)

At this step you are considering....

What have I learned from this?

What does this mean for my future practice?

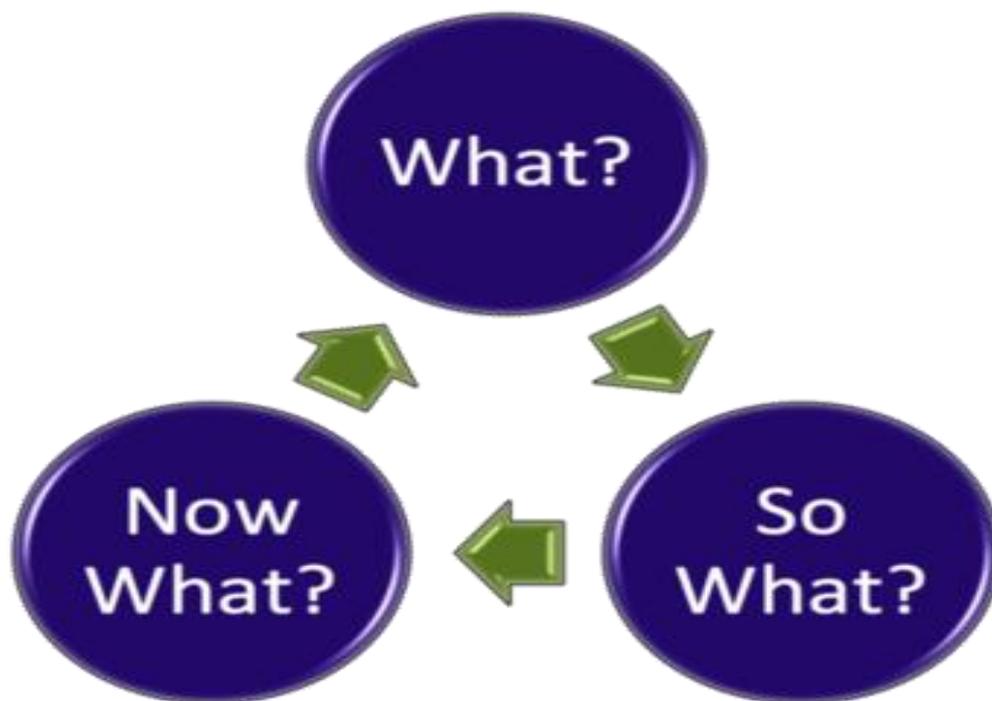
Here is some language to consider when at the **Outcome Step**





OUTCOME

Having	read experienced applied discussed analysed learned	I now	feel... think... realise... wonder... question... know...
		Additionally Furthermore Most importantly	I have learned that...
I have	significantly slightly	developed improved	my skills in ... my understanding of... my knowledge of... my ability to...
However, I have not	sufficiently	developed improved	my skills in ... my understanding of... my knowledge of... my ability to...
This means that...		This makes me feel...	
This knowledge This understanding This skill	is could be will be	essential important useful	to me as a student because... to me as a teacher/practitioner because...
	Because I	did not... have not yet... am not yet certain.. am not yet confident about... do not yet know... do not yet understand...	I will now need to



Rolfe et al's Reflective Framework (2001)

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