Learner Guide

Module 1: Introduction to Learning ECD
(Second language)

SAQA ID 119467: Use language and communication in occupational learning programmes; NQF Level 3, 5 Credits
SAQA ID 119472: Accommodate audience and context needs in oral/signed communication; NQF Level 3, 5 Credits
SAQA ID 119457: Interpret and use information from texts; NQF Level 3, 5 Credits
SAQA ID 119465: Write/present/sign texts for a range of communicative contexts; NQF Level 3, 5 Credits

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Programme Overview

Welcome to this learning programme that will lead you to greater understanding of:

- using language and communication in occupational learning programmes
- accommodating audience and context needs in oral/signed communication
- interpreting and using information from texts
- writing/presenting/signing texts for a range of communicative contexts

As you work your way through the learning programme you will gain competence against the following Unit Standards:

Programme	Introduction to Learning ECD *(Second language)*
Unit Standards	SAQA ID 119467: Use language and communication in occupational learning programmes; NQF Level 3, 5 Credits
	SAQA ID 119472: Accommodate audience and context needs in oral/signed communication; NQF Level 3, 5 Credits
	SAQA ID 119457: Interpret and use information from texts; NQF Level 3, 5 Credits
	SAQA ID 119465: Write/present/sign texts for a range of communicative contexts; NQF Level 3, 5 Credits

This learning programme is **intended for** all persons who need to:

- use language and communication in occupational learning programmes. The purpose of this unit standard is to facilitate learning and to ensure that learners can cope with learning in the context of learnerships, skills programmes, and other learning programmes. Many adult learners in the FET band have not been in a learning situation for a long time, and need learning and study strategies and skills to help them to progress successfully. Learners who are competent at this level will be able to deal with learning materials, to access and use useful resources, to seek clarification and help when necessary, and apply a range of learning strategies. They do this with an understanding of the features and processes of the workplace and occupations to which their learning programme refer

- accommodate audience and context needs in oral/signed communication. Learners at this level are aware of their audiences and purposes for communication. They adapt their style and language register to the requirements of different situations. They are able to listen and speak/sign confidently in both formal and familiar settings. They can articulate their purposes and reasons for the adoption of a particular register and style in any situation. They can usually identify the assumptions and inferences implicit in what people say/sign and how they say/sign it

- interpret and use information from texts. Learners at this level read and view a range of texts. People credited with this unit standard are able to read and view a variety of text types with understanding and to justify their views and responses by reference to detailed evidence from texts. They are also able to evaluate the effectiveness of different texts for different audiences and purposes by using a set of criteria for analysis

- write/present/sign texts for a range of communicative contexts. Learners at this level write/present/sign texts with complex subject matter and a need for various levels of formality in language and construction. They select text type, subject matter and language to suit specific audiences, purposes and contexts. Writers/signers can use linguistic structures and features to influence readers/their audience. They draft, redraft and edit own writing/signing to meet the demands of a range of text-types. They use language appropriate to the socio-cultural, learning or workplace/technical environment as required. They explore presentation techniques as an alternative to writing/signing own texts.

Programme entry level requirements

The credit calculation is based on the assumption that you as the learner are already competent in terms of the full range of language knowledge and communication skills that is laid down in the Revised National Curriculum Statements and unit standards up to NQF level 2.

The credit calculation is based on the assumption that learners are already competent in terms of the following outcomes or areas of learning when starting to learn towards this unit standard:

- the NQF Level 2 unit standard, entitled Maintain and adapt oral/signed communication
- the NQF Level 2 unit standard, entitled Access and use information from texts
- the NQF Level 2 unit standard, entitled Write/present/sign for a defined context

Programme outcomes

This learning programme is outcomes-based, which means we take the responsibility of learning away from the facilitator and place it in your hands.

Your learning will begin in the workshop where you will identify the skills and knowledge you need in order to meet the specific outcomes and assessment criteria that are contained in the unit standards.

In this learning programme, we will be covering the following **learning outcomes, which have been taken from the unit standards**:

Learning Unit 1: Learning resources, occupational learning materials and context	Learning Unit 2: Learning strategies
- Identify relevant learning resources. - Use learning resources effectively through appropriate selection of information and acknowledgement of sources. - Organise occupational learning materials for efficient use. - Understand and use layout and presentation of learning materials effectively. - Identify sector and organisation type. - Describe and discuss features of the occupational environment. - Describe and discuss ways in which these features affect learning processes and/or application of learning. - Engage with technical language/ terminology and seek clarification if needed.	- Summarise and use information for learning purposes. - Select and apply specific techniques appropriately. - Use a range of reading and/or viewing strategies to understand the literal meaning of specific texts. - Use strategies for extracting implicit messages in texts. - Respond to selected texts in a manner appropriate to the context. - Listen to/view spoken/signed input for detail, interpret and analyse it for a given context. - Identify and respond to manipulative use of language.

Learning Unit 3: Doing basic research	Learning Unit 4: Writing texts for a range of communicative contexts
- Identify and define appropriate or relevant topic and scope. - Plan and sequence research steps appropriately. - Apply research techniques. - Evaluate information for relevance. - Classify, categorise and sort information. - Analyse research findings and present them in the appropriate format.	- Write/sign for a specified audience and purpose. - Use language structures and features to produce coherent and cohesive texts for a wide range of contexts. - Draft own writing/signing and edit to improve clarity and correctness.

Learning Unit 5: Functioning and interacting in a team	Learning Unit 6: Doing presentations
- Take up responsibilities in the team and apply group work conventions in learning situations. - Ensure that team work results in meaningful product or outcomes. - Ensure that active participation takes place in group learning situations. - Make contributions to group work that are appropriate to the task and nature of the group, and promote effective communication and teamwork. - Participate in interviews, formal meetings, discussions, debates or negotiations to successfully establish a relationship appropriate to the context, and provide a non-threatening opportunity for participants to share information. - Practise conflict management and negotiating techniques in a defined context.	- Use key words/signs, pace and pause, stress, volume and intonation or sign size, pace, rhythm and non-manual features (NMFs) in appropriate ways to reinforce the message. - Use body language in a manner that is appropriate to context and topic, and reinforces main ideas and points of view. - Plan formal communications in writing/signing and plans are detailed, complete, and realistic with respect to time allocation and content. - Use visual aids that are appropriate to topic and context, and enhance the presentation and the transfer of information and understanding. - Use techniques to maintain continuity and interaction.

During the workshop you will complete a number of class activities that will form part of your formative assessment. When you do this, you will have the opportunity to practise and explore your new skills in a safe environment. You should take the opportunity to gather as much information as you can to use during your workplace learning and self-study.

After the workshop you will have to complete a number of summative assessment tasks through self-study in your workplace. In some cases you may have to do research and complete the tasks in your own time.

Assessment

PLEASE NOTE that it is your responsibility, as the learner, to prove that you are competent (that means, that you have acquired all the necessary skills and that you can successfully do all the necessary tasks). You therefore need to plan your time and make sure that you keep your Portfolio of Evidence up to date and hand it in timeously.

A Portfolio of Evidence is a collection of documents of work that you must produce to prove your competence. You will compile your portfolio from activities, tools and checklists that are associated with the unit standard that is being assessed and are relevant to that unit standard.

You will be given the following documents to help you to create a portfolio of evidence:

- **Learner Guide**: The Learner Guide is designed to serve as a guide for the time of your learning programme and is the main source document to transfer learning. It contains information (the necessary knowledge and skills) and application aids that will help you to develop the knowledge and skills that are stipulated in the specific outcomes and the assessment criteria. The Learner Guide also indicates the formative assessment class activities that you need to complete as part of your Portfolio of Evidence.
- **Learner Workbook**: The Learner Workbook contains all the class activities that you will complete to show your formative learning. These will be assessed as part of your Portfolio of Evidence as formative assessment. You will hand in the Learner Workbook as part of your Portfolio of Evidence.
- **Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide**: The Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide provides details about the assessment, such as the assessment preparation, plan and specific summative assessment activities that you need to complete in the workplace.

Both formative and summative assessment is used as part of this outcomes-based learning programme:

- **Formative Assessment**: In order to earn credits for this Unit Standard you will need to prove to an assessor that you are competent. The Class Activities throughout your Learner Workbook are designed not only to help you learn new skills, but also to prove that you

have mastered competence. You will need to develop a Portfolio of Evidence to hand in to an assessor so that you can be assessed against the outcomes of this Unit Standard. Where you come across a Class Activity icon, you must complete the Formative Assessment activity in the Learner Workbook. You will find detailed guidelines on how to develop your Portfolio of Evidence in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide for the particular learning programme that you are working with.

- **Summative Assessment**: The NQF's objective is to create independent and self-sufficient learners. This means that you will also need to do independent research and assignments that contain items such as Knowledge Questions, Practical Activity (that you will have to complete in the workplace), Summative Project and Logbook.

  The assessment process is discussed in detail in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide. When you are ready, you will inform your mentor that you are ready for assessment. He or she will then sign off the necessary sections in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide and you will be able to submit your Portfolio of Evidence for assessment. The summative assessment activities have been placed in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide for your convenience. If any part of your assessment is conducted using observation, role plays or verbal assessment, you must place a signed copy of the checklists (after your mentor or line manager have completed them) in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide, as indicated.

The Training Provider will assess your portfolio. If you are successful, you will receive the credit value of this learning programme. The entire assessment process is explained in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide. Please make sure that you read this guide as soon as possible as it explains the assessment process in detail and clarifies your rights and responsibilities to ensure that the assessment is fair, valid and reliable.

If you are not successful, you will receive all the guidance you need to resubmit your Portfolio of Evidence within a specific time period, as per the requirements of the Training Provider.

Learning map (delivery structure)

Assessment	←Formative Assessment➔ 30%		←Summative Assessment➔70%	
Learning activities for 200 hours of notional learning	Contact Learning Theory input Formative assessment (workbook activities): group activities, simulations	Prescribed reading, support, coaching	Learning and application at the workplace	Summative assessment in PoE: knowledge questions, practical workplace activity, summative project, logbook
	56 hours	**4 hours**	**108 hours**	**32 hours**
	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇
Portfolio of Evidence	←Compilation of Portfolio of Evidence➔			
Complementary workplace practices	Coaching and Mentoring; Performance Management			

Learner support

Please remember that as the programme is outcomes-based. This means the following:

- You are responsible for your own learning – make sure you manage your study, practical work, workplace learning and portfolio time responsibly.

- Learning activities are learner-driven – make sure you use the Learner Guide, Learner Workbook and Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide in the correct manner, and that you know and understand the Portfolio requirements.

- The facilitator is there to assist you during the contact, practical and workplace time of this programme – make sure that you have his/her contact details.

Dear Learner

Please note the following:

- The content of this course is organised according to the learning outcomes in the relevant Unit Standards. This means that certain content may overlap or be duplicated in and among Modules and Learning Units. You should see this is a useful opportunity to revise that particular information.

Learning Unit 1
Learning resources, occupational learning materials and context

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to access and use available learning resources, manage occupational learning materials, and reflect on how the characteristics of the workplace and occupational context affect learning, by successfully completing the following:

- Identify relevant learning resources.

- Use learning resources effectively through appropriate selection of information and acknowledgement of sources.

- Organise occupational learning materials for efficient use.

- Understand and use layout and presentation of learning materials effectively.

- Identify sector and organisation type.

- Describe and discuss features of the occupational environment.

- Describe and discuss ways in which these features affect learning processes and/or application of learning.

- Engage with technical language/terminology and seek clarification if needed.

Learning resources, occupational learning materials and context

The focus in this unit is on learning resources, and this unit will look in particular at what these are and how to select them as effectively as possible to help learning.

1.1 Access and use available learning resources

First, we should understand what we mean by 'learning'. Learning happens when we gain any new knowledge, skill, attitude or value that changes how we think or do things, or even how we feel about a subject. When we have learned something, we have better skills available to do that something, we have more knowledge about it, we have a different attitude towards it, and perhaps our values have changed in some way.

A learning resource contains information for learning. When we use any resource to get information, it becomes a *learning resource*.

1.1.1 Identify relevant learning resources

The learning resource that you will probably know the best is the textbook that you had at school. This contained information on a particular subject that you had to learn.

We will look at a wide range of learning resources in this unit[1]. But let us first look at where we can go to find many of these learning resources.

The best place to look for resources is a resource centre. This is usually a library in which you will find a variety of learning resources, mainly books. However, more and more libraries nowadays also include computer-based or electronic resources.

Resource centres or libraries have a number of specialised units. There is a Lending Unit with shelves of books separated into fiction books on the one hand – sorted by author's surname (A to Z), and non-fiction books on the other hand – first sorted by subject, using a numbering system (the Dewey decimal classification), then by the author's surname.

There is also a Periodicals Unit where magazines and journals are classified and stored for use. The Reference Unit keeps books for readers to use at the library.

Many libraries now have an Information Technology Unit, where electronic resources are available.

Let's now look at some of the resources you will find there.

In the Reference Unit you may find dictionaries, encyclopaedias and other reference works. The dictionary is a source of information about words and their meanings. Dictionaries can also be cross-language (for example, English-Afrikaans or English-IsiXhosa).

A Thesaurus is a dictionary-like reference book that lists words and their synonyms, and is a useful tool for writing. Encyclopaedias contain information about a large number of topics (listed A-Z). They usually extend over a number of volumes.

The Periodicals Unit stores journals and magazines. A magazine is a periodical that is published for information and entertainment. It contains short articles on a variety of topics that are aimed at a specific target readership as its focus (e.g. teenage girls, car enthusiasts, bodybuilders). A journal is also a type of periodical that contains articles, but these are published for specialised academic readers.

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[1] Sourced by Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance from AgriSeta learning material

Each of these resources is an example of a learning resource because it can be used to find information to assist learning. Even a newspaper or a magazine can become a learning resource if it is on purpose being used as a way to find information, that is, if it is being used for research.

All of the examples mentioned above are called *print resources*, because they are printed on paper.

Over the last twenty years or so, however, the development of the microchip and its use in electronics and computers has led to massive changes in the kinds of resources we can use for learning. This technology lets us store and obtain access to information on a scale that has never been possible before.

Information can be stored electronically and retrieved for use in a number of ways.

What is the internet? It is a network of electronic communication. Anyone can have access to it as long as they have a computer (with a modem) that is linked to a service provider. Through this technology, an internet user can get access to countless websites, with all the information that these websites contain. There is more information on the internet than in any other storage system in the world. For this reason, it is potentially a very important learning resource. But it has limitations, as we shall see.

Note that e-mail is a system of electronic communication. Although information can be transmitted (sent) using e-mail (e.g. as attachments) this is not really an information storage system.

Memory sticks, CDs and DVDs are all discs that contain electronic data. The main difference between them is how much data they can store. The memory stick can store the least. In fact, it is used mainly to transfer documents from one computer to another, but it cannot hold much information compared with the other types of disc. It is therefore a transfer system rather than a storage system, and so it is not much use as a learning resource. CDs and DVDs have a much higher capacity, and so you will find such large amounts of information stored on them that truly turn them into a learning resource. So far, we have looked at two kinds of learning resources: print resources or literature and electronic resources such as the internet. But if we say that a learning resource includes any source where we can find information that we can use for learning, then there is one source of information we have not yet considered. In a way this is the simplest and oldest resource of all – other people. We all know people who know more than we do.

In fact, if you think about it, everyone knows more about something (even if it is their own life history) than anyone else. For this reason, we should never forget the value of finding out information from other people.

1.2 Manage occupational learning materials

The focus here is on how to manage occupational learning materials well. In this section we will look in particular at organising materials and understanding the ways that these materials are laid out and presented, so that we can use them as effectively as possible to help occupational learning.

1.2.1 Organise occupational learning materials for efficient use

We have already looked at a number of learning resources and learning materials and have used them in different ways. We looked at books and the internet in particular. We will now extend the range of learning materials and look more closely at what they are and how we can organise them, to make the best use of these learning materials[2].

We have talked about the difference between print material and electronic material.

When we study early childhood development (ECD), the print material we use will probably include textbooks, handouts, charts, maps, plans and diagrams. To organise these effectively, we need to arrange them in an orderly way and store them safely.

Loose sheets such as handouts and notes should be dated and put into a file that has been prepared with units or dividers that match the units of our programme. Any notes and handouts should be inserted into the relevant unit of the file in the order in which they were received, or in an order that suits the way they will be used.

Textbooks should be covered and the owner's name should be written in them. If you do any markings in a textbook (e.g. underlining) this should be done in pencil. Then, if the textbook is sold, the markings can be removed by rubbing them out.

You should also deal with electronic learning resources in an orderly way. When we use the internet, we need to manage all the material we download and print out. For any printout from a website, the address prints out automatically at the top of the page. We should then file these printouts in our filing system for future reference, and to make it easier for us to follow up if we want to return to that website at some future date.

Videos are learning resources that also need to be carefully labelled and stored.

We will look at how to best care for videos, and we will also look in some detail at how we can organise ourselves when we use videos. This will give us a better idea of how videos can be used as an occupational learning resource.

Most of us are familiar with videos as a way of watching fiction film (movies). Here, however, we will concentrate on using non-fiction or documentary videos that deal with early childhood development topics.

Where do we find such specialised documentary videos? They are available from libraries in the same way that books are.

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[2] Sourced by Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance from AgriSeta learning material

They are classified by the same categories and Dewey decimal classification numbers that we used for books in the resource centre, namely:

- Child Development 305.231
- Infants 305.232
- Children three to five 305.233
- Children six to eleven 305.234

Your local library or resource centre should have a catalogue of available videos, or you can go online to Webpals.wcape.gov.sa to check their catalogue for documentaries (in English and Afrikaans).

If your local library or resource centre does not have your choice of video available, you can make a request through them for a loan from the Western Cape Provincial Library Service and they will order it from their central library in Cape Town.

To watch the video you will need a television set (TV). TV itself is another resource. Relevant documentary or educational programmes are shown from time to time; for example, the popular Takalani Sesame on SABC 2.

1.2.2 Understand and use layout and presentation of learning materials

To make effective use of any resource, we need to know how it is set out, and therefore how we can locate the material most useful to our research.

Books that are designed as learning resources are organised so that they assist learning. They have standard features to help us find the information we need. We will now look at the most important of these features.

Contents page

The contents page is found near the front of the book, just after the title page. The contents page lists the chapters of the book, and the chapter titles give us an overview of the main focuses of the book.

Sometimes there is extra material in addition to the chapter headings: some contents pages give more information in the form of the sub-headings for each chapter.

If a book deals with a topic that is important for our field of study, it is very useful to make a photocopy of the contents pages (there is usually more than one page of contents) and keep that copy filed as a record of what is available. You can then look at it at any time when you need the information.

Index

The index is at the back of the book. It is a detailed list of all the items that the book deals with, together with the page/s on which those items can be found.

Sometimes the page numbers will be printed in **bold** print. This may mean that these are the pages where the item is the main topic, or it may mean that these are the pages on which you will find illustrations. To find out what specific system a particular book uses, go to the top (i.e. first page) of the index and there will be a note explaining how the numbering system works.

The index is a very useful tool in research.

When we choose a book to use when we do research, the first thing we look at is the title, which gives us a gene useful to us in our research. If we decide that the book will be of use, we then go to the index to find the details of the topic that we need.

Glossary
Many reference books also have a glossary at the back of the book. This is an alphabetical list of the specialised or technical terms used in that book. This word-list is often very useful; it is like a mini-dictionary and it is sometimes worth photocopying these glossary pages too, to build up your own reference bank.

Electronic texts
Electronic texts e.g. CDs, DVDs and web pages on the internet are laid out in a different way. The information is laid out in fields such as boxes or columns. When we read the text, instead of turning the page as we would in a book, we scroll down the screen. In a book, if we want to go to any unit dealing with a specific topic, we find it by using the contents page or the index, and then physically turning to that page. In an electronic text, the material is organised to make it easy to get to the information.

There are menus, boxes and icons (little symbols) on which we can click to locate the given topic. In this way we can navigate the document and make cross-references.

1.3 Reflect on how characteristics of the workplace and occupational context affect learning

We now look in some detail at the range of possible occupational environments you could find yourself in and how each of these environments affects the type of learning that will take place. You may already have experience of the workplace or may up to now simply have been a student. It is important, however, that you understand that learning does not just take place in learning institutions such as Technical Colleges, FET colleges or universities. Learning also occurs in an occupational context (that is, at work).

1.3.1 Identify the sector and organisation type

What do we mean when we talk about the occupational environment? Our environment refers to our surroundings. It can be defined as our social and physical conditions; in other words, the conditions that surround people and affect the way they live.

We spend most of our adult life in some type of occupation. This environment, in which we work, is our **occupational environment.** Most adults, depending on their education level, will work from their early twenties until they retire at sixty or sixty five. Obviously in economically depressed areas with few educational facilities, people might start work at a much younger age and be forced to continue working until they are too old or sick to do so.

Also in some parts of the world, unemployment is a major problem, and so not all adults can find work. The figure for unemployment in South Africa varies according to the source but can be estimated at between 20 to 40 per cent.

Depending on what type of work we end up doing, our individual workplace environments can differ enormously.

1.3.2 Describe and discuss features of the occupational environment

There are many different occupations. Let us spend some time looking at the focus or category of some of these occupations[3].

One important category of occupation is that of **services** or service delivery. This refers to the range of services that is supplied by different people. The service industry - broadly speaking - refers to that group of industries involved in providing **services**, as opposed to **primary** industries (such as agriculture and mining) and **secondary** industries (manufacturing and production). Service industries are generally known as **tertiary industries**. The term "services" covers a huge range of economic activities, including retailing, banking, insurance, catering, medicine, law, accountancy, cleaning, teaching, television production, the civil service, sport, transport, and many more activities.

It is possible to break down the service industry into smaller components such as financial or educational services. Each of these has a different occupational focus.

Over the past century the service sector has grown tremendously in the developed world. The service sector is now the most important sector in the advanced economies, and forms about two thirds of the total economy in countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States.

Another very significant arena of occupational focus is that relating to the manufacturing field. **Manufacturing** refers to any process in which materials or items are brought together and work is performed on them to make a saleable product. The work is done to convert (change) the separate components into an object that has more value. The manufacturer sells it and pays the wages of the workforce and other costs relating to the manufacturing process. The money that is left after paying the cost of manufacture, distribution of the product, and the sale of the product may be distributed as profit to shareholders in the company or else it may be invested in research and development of new products.

The efficiency with which raw materials or components can be brought together affects the amount of profit the manufacturer can make when the product is sold.

The following important points should be taken into account when manufacturing a product: matching the market size (how many people will want to buy the product) with the materials and methods, or processes, by which the product may be made; and making the best possible use of the factory, machines, and workers.
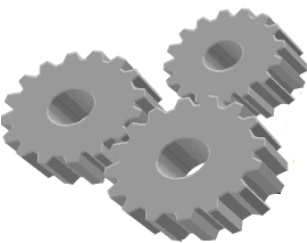
Modern methods of manufacturing involve computers, which may be used to control the machines that make and assemble components. Using computer-controlled machines to cut or form a product is called computer numerical control (CNC) machining. Computers may also be used to control the movement of materials, components, and finished products around the factory and the distribution of the products to their points of sale. Organising the movement of products or parts from one location to another is known as logistics. Computers can also be used to design a product.

The **mining** industry employs many people in South Africa, a country which is rich in minerals. In addition there is the field of **agriculture**. As we mentioned earlier, mining and agriculture are called **primary industries**.

We now move on to look at different types of organisations that exist in the world of work.

Government is one of the largest employers in South Africa. Because government employees are paid by money raised from taxes that are collected from the public, they are known as public servants. In other words, they are in service of the public.

Parastatals

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[3] Sourced by Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance from AgriSeta learning material

Parastatals can be defined as state-owned companies. The best known examples are Transnet of which SAA is a subsidiary, and Eskom. Telkom was a parastatal until 2003 when it was privatised. That means that shares in the company were issued and sold to the general public.

Heavy industries
Heavy industries can be described as those industries that produce basic materials, such as steel.

Medium industries
Medium industries produce items such as cars.

Light industries
Light industries produce goods such as computer parts.

Let us now look at a few differences between **large organisations** and **small businesses**. Some examples of large organisations are Old Mutual, all the major banks, Anglo American, De Beers Mining and so on. Large organisations are often a mix of bureaucratic rules and fairly progressive thinking. There are many advantages to working for a big organisation. The benefits are usually very good and there is a sense of stability.

Small businesses, on the other hand, are enterprises which are started by one or two people who usually put up their own capital. An example of a small business could be a business which makes ornaments out of the bark of a certain tree and employs four people. The rewards for working in a small business are that one could experience greater challenges and feel more directly involved in the process. Some of the disadvantages are that one could be insecure, have an irregular income and not be assured of benefits.

By the time you start your career you will have had a broad range of learning. If you have been to college, you will have learnt about the theory of early childhood development and the practical aspects of developing young children. You will have experienced transmission teaching whereby information is passed on to you by a lecturer or by means of notes. You will also have experienced more interactive learning methods in which you undertook small research projects, went on field trips, collected and analysed data, worked in groups, accessed information on the internet, presented your findings and so on. You will also have done some courses such as this one which deal with broad general topics like communication and numeracy. Altogether you will possess a wide range of skills and learning strategies. How will you apply these in your occupational environment? Will you stop learning once you leave college?

The answer to the second question is a definite and resounding "no". No matter how thorough your basic training has been there will always be aspects to your work that require you to learn new things.

We can group the types of application of learning that you will need in the workplace.

Firstly, there is **technological** knowledge. Many of your courses will have provided you with much of the knowledge that is necessary. You may, however, end up working in an occupation that requires very specific technological expertise (knowledge) and you may have to learn this as well as apply what you already know.

Secondly, in any work environment you will require **communication** skills. Even if you end up being a researcher who does not interact with clients or employees in any way, you would still have to communicate with colleagues and communicate your findings in public arenas. Hopefully the work you do in this module will sharpen your communication skills so that you can communicate with a wide range of people and use appropriate communication strategies in the workplace.

One aspect of communication that has not been dealt with is **multilingualism.** In our country there is often a need to be able to communicate effectively in more than one language. It would be extremely valuable to you as a future employee to become as proficient (skilled) as possible in all of these languages. Most people appreciate it when others at least try to speak their language and multilingualism ensures that you are able to communicate effectively with a far broader range of people in your occupational environment.

1.4 Engage with technical language/terminology

In any field of study, there is a vocabulary of terminology that is specific to that field. Part of learning about a subject is learning this new language. It is important to understand the meaning of these new words because you are then learning the concepts or ideas that they refer to. This understanding develops while we use the terms in their context, and successful learning of a subject is linked to learning the language of that subject in a meaningful way.

In our studies we will therefore come across many new words. How do we help ourselves to make the best use of this?

Firstly, we need to recognise that it is a new word. So if we hear a term being used, or if we have read a word we do not understand, we need to make a note of that word. We will probably have an idea of its meaning from the context, but how do we make sure that we have the right idea? If possible, we can ask then and there.

Otherwise we go to a resource (print or electronic dictionary) and look it up. Many technical terms are not found in an ordinary dictionary, but there are dictionaries or glossaries of terms that are specialised for a particular field of study.

Finally, we should keep our own glossary of terms, and add to it as we acquire new terms. This is especially helpful if we are learning in a language that is not our mother tongue.

Class Activity 1: Learning resources, occupational learning materials and context

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

Learning Unit 2
Learning strategies

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to use learning strategies, by successfully completing the following:

- Summarise and use information for learning purposes.

- Select and apply specific techniques appropriately.

- Use a range of reading and/or viewing strategies to understand the literal meaning of specific texts.

- Use strategies for extracting implicit messages in texts.

- Respond to selected texts in a manner appropriate to the context.

- Listen to/view spoken/signed input for detail, interpret and analyse it for a given context.

- Identify and respond to manipulative use of language.

Learning strategies

In Unit 1 we looked at learning resources, what they are, where to find them and how to select them. In Unit 2 we will be looking at how we can use such resources for learning. We will look in some detail at the strategies that we can use to help us learn more effectively. We will consider the strategies of summarising, questioning, reading actively, listening actively and learning by communicating with others. We will work in groups and individually, learning to select and apply a number of techniques. Finally we will examine how effectively we are able to apply these strategies and techniques in practice.

2.1 Summarise and use information for learning purposes

Summarising is one of the most important skills that we can use for learning. It makes us read the text with understanding, and therefore helps us to learn what we are reading. We will therefore look closely at some techniques for summarising information that is presented in a written text.

Consider the following description of how a plant grows[4]:

THE GROWTH OF A SEED

A flowering plant starts life as a seed. The seed itself contains everything needed for the growth of a future plant. Protected inside is the embryo of the future plant: a tiny plumule which already shows the form of tiny leaves, and a radicle which holds the future root in its potent cells. Surrounding this delicate structure is a ready-made food supply, the endosperm that contains a precise balance of nutrients – carbohydrates, oils, minerals and vitamins – to suit the needs of the particular species of plant. Finally, wrapping the whole seed is a testa, a custom-made coat that helps to shield the seed from chemical, bacterial or mechanical injury.
The seed stays like this, alive but unchanging, waiting to grow. Depending on the type of plant, it can lie dormant for years. But growth or germination will be triggered at some point. Usually, it is a change in season that sparks growth. Most plants are caught in an annual cycle, and the arrival of rain, or warmth, or longer daylight hours, or a combination of these factors, will trigger the growing process.

But for some plants the seed waits for a different trigger. Some proteas of the Western Cape will germinate only after fire. Coconuts stay dormant as they float across the sea but as soon as they land on a beach they germinate.
Once germination has started, each structure in the seed plays its part. The first sign of change is the emergence of the radicle; it bursts through the testa and lengthens until it has clearly formed a small root, capable of drawing in water for the plant. The plumule begins to grow, and soon small leaves are evident as they grow upwards on a tiny stem. Of course this growth does not come from nowhere: it relies on the food supply or endosperm. This may be contained in the cotyledon. If there is one of these the seed is a monocotyledonous plant such as the grasses, onion or lilies. Two cotyledons tell us that it is a dicotyledonous plant, like the bean or the sunflower. The cotyledons act as early leaves, providing food to help the growing plant to become established.

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[4] Sourced by Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance from AgriSeta learning material

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A summary is based on the main ideas in a passage. Remember for a summary you need to:

- look for main ideas
- identify the key sentence in each paragraph – this should 'cover' or include all other points
- not confuse main ideas with examples
- omit (leave out) detailed descriptions or extensions

To look for the main ideas, take the following steps:

- Look at the title: this will give you the theme of the passage, in this case "The Growth of the Seed". This immediately makes you aware of two aspects: seeds and growth.

- Then, because of the way writing is structured, we usually find a main idea in each paragraph. How many paragraphs do we have here? Three. We will therefore base our summary on three main ideas. Because the paragraphs follow on from one another, these ideas must also link to one another.

- Starting with the first paragraph, let us identify the key sentence. What aspect of 'the growth of the seed' is being described? The paragraph is describing the parts of a seed, but what is the common idea that links these descriptions? We can answer this question by looking more closely at the description of each part. First it would be helpful to underline the words that name each part, e.g. embryo, plumule, radicle, endosperm, nutrients, carbohydrates, oils, minerals, vitamins, testa. Which of these are key words? Which are less critical? Rereading the paragraph, we may decide that the words nutrients, carbohydrates, oils, minerals, vitamins, are not critical because they are extending the idea of (that is, giving more detail about) the endosperm. So we are left with the keywords. embryo, plumule, radicle, endosperm, testa. Each of these items has its own description:

  - protected inside is the embryo of the future plant
  - a tiny plumule which already shows the form of tiny leaves
  - a radicle which holds the future root in its potent cells
  - a ready-made food supply, the endosperm
  - a testa, a custom-made coat

So each has its own description, but back to our question: what is the common thing that is said about all of them? Is there a key sentence, i.e. a sentence that covers all of these points? If we take such an overview, we will see that the second sentence, *"The seed itself contains everything needed for the growth of a future plant"*, contains this binding idea. Everything that is said about each part of the seed adds to that key point.
With that as the key sentence, and our list of key words, we can start a point-form summary, or you can plan your summary using a mind map.

Now look at the second paragraph. What aspect of "the growth of the seed" is being described here? Which sentence "covers" the meaning of the other sentences i.e. what is our key sentence?

Note that the paragraph describes the start of germination, i.e. the "triggers" that start the growth process. But none of these examples can be the key sentence, as a number of different examples of these triggers are given – introduced by the words usually, most, some. In this case, we cannot say there is one trigger that works for all plants. The statement that applies to all others is: "but growth will be triggered at some point". That is the one sentence that covers all the others. Once

you have made that key generalisation, you can give the three different kinds of trigger that it covers – seasonal factors (of which three examples – rain, warmth, day-light – are given), fire, beach.

Now try the third paragraph for yourself, looking first for the main idea, then the key sentence, then the key details. Write down your own answers before looking at the ones that have been given:

Main Idea	Key Sentence	Key Words
Possible Answers		
Each part grows	Once germination has started, each structure in the seed plays its part.	Radicle, root; plumule, leaves; endosperm, food; cotyledons, leaves

The mind map that follows shows one way of recording the key points for your summary, or you may want to simply list the key points. The important thing is that your points must make sense to you.
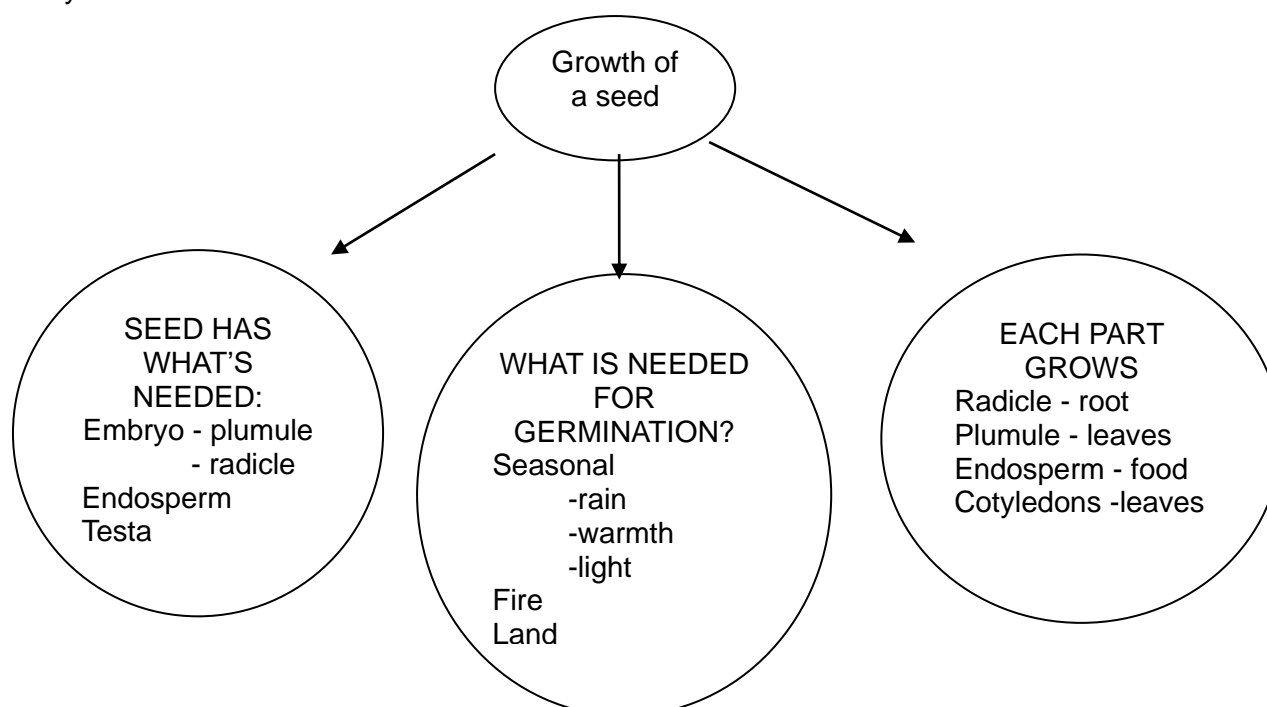
If you are going to turn your point-form summary back into sentences, you should use your own words. Of course the key words will stay the same if they are special terminology (as many of the words in this passage are). But if you use these words in your own sentences, you will really be helping yourself to learn.

2.2 Select and apply specific techniques appropriately

In this section we will look at some of the techniques that we use for effective learning.

If you understand the technique and its terminology, you will be able to use it effectively when the need arises to do so.

2.2.1 Use learning resources effectively

This is a summary of some of the techniques[5] that we use for effective learning. You should make sure that you understand each term so that when you are asked to use the technique, or when an opportunity comes up, you can use it effectively.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a process that encourages creative thinking; where a group of people gets together just to make suggestions about a topic. Suggestions are recorded (usually by writing them down) and the only "rules" are firstly that there are no 'no' ideas (that is, no ideas may be rejected at first), and secondly that there is no discussion about any suggestion. All ideas are therefore recorded. Brainstorming encourages "right-brain thinking" i.e. the creative sides of our brains are encouraged to think freely, by associating one idea with another and not censoring ourselves or each other.

Group analysis

Group analysis takes place after a brainstorming session, when the group looks again the brainstorming suggestions that have been recorded and starts to analyse these ideas. Now we return to left-brain thinking, where we discuss ideas more critically, choose the most suitable ideas and sort them into a logical plan to suit the task.

A mind-map

A mind-map is a scheme or plan which takes selected information in point-form and arranges it on a page, in a way that shows how the points are related to each other.
You have used mind maps a number of times, including in the previous unit of this unit. It is a technique that suits the way some people think (so-called visual learners), and for them it can be a great help in learning or planning. If you like working with mind maps, you are probably a visual learner (someone who learns best in pictures).

Note taking

Note taking is a technique that can be used in any situation in which we are getting information by reading, listening or watching. It uses skills that are very similar to summarising, because to take notes, we need to be selecting key points all the time. We cannot write down everything we are reading or listening to or seeing. To take good notes you need to concentrate and understand enough to take in the information and make decisions about what is important enough to write down, and what not. If it is a formal lecture you can probably take more orderly notes (in point form), as the topic is being given to you in an organised way. If you are making notes out in the field, it is often best to write down just the key words, in case you miss something while you are busy writing.

Memorising
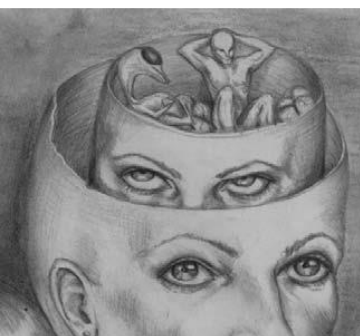
Memorising is not the same as learning. To memorise something (to "learn it by heart") may not necessarily involve understanding it. There are times, however, that we need to be able to memorise something. One way of helping our brains to do this is to use a mnemonic (said "nemonic"). This is a word or sentence which spells out the letters (or the first letters in the names) that we are trying to remember. For example, anyone who has learned music before may know that the progression of notes up the scale is EGBDF. But it is more likely that they will know the sentence "Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge", which is much easier to remember than the letters.

[5] Sourced by Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance from AgriSeta learning material

Another example is the 'name' Roy G. Biv, which does not make sense unless you know that it spells the colours of the rainbow in their correct order.

Key words

Key words are the most important words in a particular context. They carry the main ideas. As we saw in the previous activity, identifying key words in a passage is an important step of summarising the passage. The process of identifying key words helps us to understand the meaning of the passage.

Underlining

Underlining is a technique that can help us to focus on a passage, but it is not as effective to help us to learn as some of the other techniques, for example key words or summarising. But it can be a way of starting to understand a text. Remember, though, that we should only use underlining when we are working with our own notes or photocopied material. **Never** mark a library book, by underlining or in any other way. It is public property and other people will need to use it after you.

Skimming

Skimming is the technique of running our eyes over a text very quickly in order to get the general idea of the content. In doing so, our eyes pick up some words across the text, so that we get some idea of what the text is about. Skimming gives us an idea of the scope of the content (i.e. what information the text contains in general) but not much idea of the detail. It is more useful for selecting a text than as a learning strategy, because it is a quick way of checking to see if the text is going to be useful to our needs.

Scanning

Scanning is another reading technique. When you scan a text you also read it very quickly but this time you are looking for something specific, and so you are allowing the eye to pass quickly over the page while looking for a particular item. For example, when we look up a name in a telephone directory, we 'tell' our eyes to look for a particular name and we automatically ignore all the other names. Try looking at this page but look only for the **bold** print. Do you notice how your eyes basically ignore the other print? Now try taking the first letter of your name, and scan a few pages to spot that letter (as a capital letter). Are you able to spot that letter among all the others?

Peer assessment

Peer assessment is assessment from a classmate. This can be an effective learning strategy because it can be very helpful to have another person of equal standing to reflect back to us what we have done. Peer assessment should help us to re-view our work, i.e. to see it again from a new perspective. For this to happen, the peer who is assessing the work should be sympathetic but honest. Peers doing peer assessment should use clear criteria that everyone has agreed upon in advance.

Self-assessment

Self-assessment is a demanding task, as it requires the same honesty as peer assessment, but this time it is applied to oneself. Clear criteria should also be used during self-assessment. To be able to assess our own work, we should be able to be objective about it, i.e. to look at the work in a neutral way, without any self-interest in mind.

Regardless of how hard we have worked on a task, we must learn to be honest with ourselves: give credit where it is due and see where we could improve. The real value of self-assessment is not in the grades we give ourselves, but in learning to monitor our own learning processes.

1.3 Use a range of reading strategies to understand the literal meaning of specific texts

You can use various reading strategies in order to understand any text. Knowing what these reading strategies are will help you to analyse and understand their meaning.

- **Previewing: Learning about a text before really reading it**

This enables you to get a sense of what the text is about and how it is organised without actually reading and assimilating the information. It is almost the same as skimming; you briefly look at the headings or other introductory material to get an overview of the content and organisation of the text.

- **Contextualising: Placing a text in its historical, biographical, and cultural contexts**

While you read you will always have your own ideas and experience that you use to help you to better understand the text. Sometimes the information that you read has historical value and has been written in a radically different time and place. To read critically, you need to contextualise the information (place it in the context in which it was written, and to recognise the differences between your own modern values and attitudes and those at the time the text was written.

This therefore leads to another strategy, namely **examining your personal responses**.

When you read you should be in touch with your own responses, and notice where your own personal attitudes, beliefs, or status are being questioned and challenged. Make a brief note in the margin about what you feel or about what in the text created the challenge. Be aware of your patterns as you read.

As we have discussed, it is important to keep an open mind. The text does not have to be the absolute truth. Testing the logic of a text as well as its credibility (reliability) and emotional impact is an important part of in reading strategies.

Be critical, an argument has two essential parts: a claim (that what is said) and support (evidence). In order for an argument to be acceptable, the support must be relevant to the claim and the statements must be consistent with one another. By comparing and contrasting related readings you will also become aware of a bigger picture.

- **Language features and conventions can be managed for learning purposes**

Language has certain features and conventions, which can be managed for learning purposes. There are a number of skills, features and conventions or standards that will facilitate learning. In the following section, we will look at how to recognise these features and conventions and utilise them for effective learning[6].

2.3.1 Identify unfamiliar words

What do we do when we come across a word we do not understand? Let's look at some techniques you can use to help you figure out the exact (literal) meaning of certain unfamiliar words in a piece of writing or part of a talk.

We are not always aware of how much information comes to us through hearing it, or reading. To make the best use of all this information, we need to actively listen and take care to read rather than just accepting what we have heard or read.

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[6] Sourced by Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance from AgriSeta learning material

Listening well means staying focused on what is being said. You must listen for:

- **detail:** where the information is stated directly in the text
- **interpretation**: where the idea is there but not stated directly
- **analysis**: where you add your own ideas based on what you have heard

If a word is unfamiliar to us there are certain strategies or techniques we can use to help us make an intelligent guess at what the meaning of the word is. In order to do this we need to know a little bit about how sentences are structured.

Syntax

The word syntax can be defined as the organisation of words in sentences the ordering of and relationship between the words and other structural elements in phrases and sentences.

Look at the difference between these two sentences:-

- Drinking water from the streams is very dangerous as the run-off from mines and commercial farms has poisoned a lot of rivers.

- Commercial farms and mines run-off drinking water from very dangerous streams, which have poisoned a lot of rivers.

The order in which we have placed the words, the syntax, has made all the difference in meaning between the two sentences.

Now look at this sentence:

- Themba was playing a pleasant tune on the mbiro when his mother called him.

We may not know what the word "mbiro" means but from where it is in the sentence we can guess that it is an object of some sort. It is a musical instrument which may be described as a 'thumb piano' and is of sub-Saharan origin. We can thus see how syntax gives us some clue as to the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

Word attack

Another useful strategy for trying to understand what an unfamiliar word means is word-attack skills.

Word-attack skills refer to looking at the unfamiliar word in its context, and trying to see what you can work out from the context and the syntax and any other clues, such as capital letters, to help you understand the word.

An example could be the word 'malnutrition. If we had never heard the word before and heard the following sentence "The statistics shows that there are cases of malnutrition in most of the ECD centres" we could do a word attack on "malnutrition" by thinking of its parts. We are familiar with "mal" as the last three letters of abnormal. We also know the word "nutrition" as referring to food/feeding, so we could guess that 'malnutrition' is something, which could be seen as abnormal eating or feeding.

Context

Context can be defined as the text surrounding a word or passage; the words, phrases, or passages that come before and after a particular word or passage in a speech or piece of writing. The context helps to explain the word's full meaning.

When we looked at the word "malnutrition", the context in which it was used also helped us guess its meaning. We picked up clues from the fact that it was connected to ECD and concerned with feeding.

Unfamiliar words

Sometimes we borrow words from another language. Borrowed words are foreign words and we can usually only use the context and syntax in our word-attack to try and work out what they mean, as the parts of the word will not be familiar to us.

Look at the syntax, and context in which the word that is in bold is used. Use your word attack skills to try and work out what it means if you are unfamiliar with the word. Then look at the solutions.

- "**Escargot** is my favourite dish," said Francois.
- My hunger was satisfied with the ostrich biltong which was so **lekker**.
- I would rather watch **flamenco** than classical ballet.
- Will you be having the **legumes** and chips with your steak?
- That **gogo** must be over 80 years old.
- These **samoosas** are delicious.
- We survived poverty through sharing and **ubuntu**.

We can see from the context and syntax that escargot refers to a food item. It is in fact French for snails.

We can see from the context and syntax that biltong is a food. This is derived from Afrikaans and is dried raw meat. "Lekker" is Afrikaans for delicious.

We can see from the context and syntax that flamenco refers to a type of performance. It is a Spanish word describing a particular style of dancing.

We can see from the context that legumes are a type of food to be eaten with steak.

Legumes in French mean vegetables.

We can see from the context and syntax that gogo refers to an old person. It means granny in Zulu.

We can see that samoosas refer to a food item. It is an Urdu (Indian) word for a spicy delicacy that is triangular.

We can see that poverty was alleviated through ubuntu. Ubuntu is a Xhosa word for family/friends helping each other in all circumstances.

See what other examples of borrowed words you can think of. We have many from Afrikaans and from Malaysia.

Complex terms

A complex term is a word made up of more than one word in order to combine two ideas together. Complex is the opposite of simple; it means having many parts: made up of many interrelated parts.

We probably all know what marine means and we know what biology means. Marine Biology is the specific complex term used to refer to the study of life forms that are related to the sea and coast.

Acronyms

An **acronym** can be defined as a word formed from initials; or parts of several words, for example "NATO", from the initial letters of "North Atlantic Treaty Organisation".

The context will usually help us understand what the acronym might be referring to, whether it is an organisation or a group of people. Sometimes we use acronyms without knowing what the individual letters stand for. For example we talk about SMS-ing somebody. Did you know that SMS stands for Short Message Service? Did you know that e-mail stands for electronic mail? Do you know what AIDS stands for?

Here are some acronyms with their less familiar full names.

ECD	Early Childhood Development
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
SO	Specific Outcomes
AC	Assessment Criteria
NCS	National Curriculum Statements

The next time you see an acronym try to work out from the context what the letters might stand for. Remember it is another unfamiliar word on which to practise your word-attack skills.

Neologism

A **neologism** can be defined as a new word or meaning, or a recently coined word or phrase.
An example is the word "hoover". This was the name of a popular make of vacuum cleaner in the 1950's that then started to be used as a word in its own right, meaning "to clean with a vacuum cleaner" as in "I will hoover the room with the Electrolux".

Colloquialisms and slang

A colloquialism is an informal expression; an informal word or phrase that is more usual in conversation than in formal speech or writing, e.g. "I am beat" meaning I am tired; "I am now finished and klaar" meaning "I am tired" Or "I want to give up".

Slang is also an informal manner of speech. Slang can be defined in two ways, firstly as very casual speech or writing when words, or expressions, are casual, or playful replacements for standard ones; slang words or phrases are often short-lived, and are usually considered unsuitable for formal contexts.

Secondly it can be defined as language of an exclusive group; a form of language used by a particular group of people, often deliberately created and used to exclude people outside the group, e.g. "hang ten" is a phrase that comes from surfers' slang.

We all use colloquialisms and slang in our ordinary day-to-day speech and also in e-mails or other forms of written communication to our friends and family. In the formal settings however we should guard against using them to our superiors and to our colleagues. In the professional world it is more acceptable to use more formal standard ways of expressing ourselves, whether in writing or in oral communication.

As always we need to be aware of our audience (listeners).

Look at these examples of slang and colloquialisms that are in bold font. If you are not familiar with them, look at the syntax and context, and use your word-attack skills to try to figure out what they mean. Then look at the explanations below:

1. Charlize is an **ace** actress.

2. Thabo asked where the **action** was in Mbekweni.

3. Tomorrow our boss is bringing in the **big guns**.

4. If Marlena doesn't go on diet soon she will end up a **blimp**.

5. Ismail never touches any **booze**.

6. If the weather is nice tomorrow Senta is going to go and **catch some rays**.

7. I did an **all-nighter** to get my work finished on time.

Explanations:
a) very impressive
b) most interesting place
c) important people
d) very fat person
e) alcohol
f) suntan
g) stayed up late

Think carefully about whether you use too much slang or too many colloquialisms in your formal communications.

Jargon

Jargon can be defined as specialist language; it is language that is used by a particular group, profession, or culture, especially when the words and phrases are not understood or used by other people, e.g. farmers' jargon, or medical jargon.

Jargon is not a good way of communicating with the general public. Often the words used are so specialised that unless we are familiar with the field it is very difficult for a person off the street to work out what is meant by something. If we are with people who are in the same profession or a group of friends who share the same hobby, it is perfectly acceptable to use jargon.

Read this extract that is aimed at people in the computer field (the jargon is in bold)

"Many people use **MWEB** as their **ISP**. When doing a search on the net you may just want to browse. If the page is written in Java or in **HTML** then you can scroll up and down. You can also download on to a floppy or a stiffy. A frustrating thing that happens is when the **URL** cannot be located, even though you have done a good search with keywords, or the server is down".

How much did you understand? If you are very computer literate you may have understood a great deal bit. If you know little about computers or the Internet this talk would not have meant very much to you.

This is an example of jargon. Can you think of ways that could help you understand this better? You could ask someone who is an expert or you could find a good reference book to explain these terms.

Remember; do not get intimidated by jargon. If someone like a doctor or a salesperson uses jargon that you do not understand you should always ask for a clear explanation.

Now think of a field in which you know quite a bit, such as facilitation techniques.

Do you ever use jargon that would not be understood by people outside this field?

How do you think it makes your listener (audience) feel?

Dialects

A **dialect** can be defined as a regional variety of language, with differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. For example in the United Kingdom there are many different dialects such as Scottish, Irish, Welsh, Cockney, etc.

South African English as used by first-language English speakers can be seen as a single dialect, and the main differences can be found in accent. It is not very different from standard (British) English although a number of different dialects have been identified that are spoken by non-first-language speakers. These include a number of varieties of 'township' English and the Cape Flats dialect (although this last dialect is a mixture of English and Afrikaans).

Here is an example of Standard English "translated" into Scottish dialect.

"We are having a great time and are learning to communicate better in South African English."

"We ur havin' a braw time an' ur learnin' tae communicate better in Sooth African sassenach".

Here is an example of Standard English "translated" into an Ali G dialect:

"Hallo everybody! What are you up to on this fine day?"

"Alo everyone! Wot iz yous up to on dis wicked day?"

Could you have used your word-attack skills to work out what "braw", "sassenach", and "wicked" mean in this context?

2.3.2 Test different options for the meanings of ambiguous words
Ambiguous words are words that have more than one meaning.

A word, phrase, sentence, or other communication is called **ambiguous** if it can be reasonably interpreted in more than one way. The simplest case is a single word with more than one meaning. Let us look at the word "bank", for example, which can mean "financial institution" or the "edge of a river". Sometimes this is not a serious problem because a word that is ambiguous when used by itself is often clear in the particular context in which it is used. Someone who says "I deposited R100 in the bank" is unlikely to mean that she buried the money beside a river!

Look at these sentences. They will not make sense in terms of the word in bold (which has more than one meaning) unless we know the context.

1. Sophie picked up the bat. (small animal/sport's equipment)
2. Henry went to the bank. (financial institution/edge of the river)
3. We will not finish at this rate. (speed or pace/amount you get paid)
4. Mandla is obviously absent today. (not present/inattentive)
5. Imelda brought the acid. (type of drug/chemical solution)
6. We are going to sit under the planes. (type of tree/aeroplane)

You should be able to see from these examples how important context is when you decide on the correct meaning.

2.3.3 Separate main ideas from supporting evidence and paraphrase/summarise it

Paraphrase is to rephrase and simplify; to restate something using other words, especially in order to make it simpler or shorter, e.g. "he was suffering from an acute case of influenza and thus absented himself from his place of learning", could be much more simply put as "he had bad flu and so didn't come to college".

Summarise is to make a summary; to make or give a shortened version of something that has been said or written, stating its main points, e.g. "The farm could have been over a million acres, it looked as if it could stretch to outer space" can be summarised as "the farm was very big".

In order to paraphrase (and summarise) we need to be able to separate the main ideas from the supporting evidence that is used as examples or additional material.

Look at the examples of fairly long complicated sentences that are given here and see if you can separate the main idea from the supporting evidence in each case.

Write down what you think the main idea of each sentence is.

- Dr Tshabala, who is a kind and honourable man and who has received much recognition for his excellent service to the community, is currently working at the university.

- AIDS is a terrible illness which strikes at the immune system of rich and poor alike and has caused the death of millions worldwide in a horrible and tragic manner.

- All the players in the orchestra and by this I mean even the most insignificant clasher of cymbals, need to focus their total and undivided attention on the conductor at all times, indeed, for every second of the performance.

- The successful Early Childhood Institute, which has been conducting classes since the year 2000 and is situated in the Boland with more than a thousand students registered at the moment, is investigating merging with other educational institutions.

2.3.4 Recognise and explain the purpose of visual and/or graphic representations in texts

Graphic representations are a form of non-verbal communication.

Graphic communication

Graphic communication tells us information at a glance and is often a more effective way to communicate than words. Devices such as pictures, drawings, photographs, aerial photographs, mind maps, maps, schema, bar graphs, pie charts, illustrations, cartoons and diagrams are examples of graphic communication.

Illustration

An **illustration** is a general term that refers to the picture that complements a text. An illustration can be a drawing, a photograph, or a diagram that accompanies and complements a printed, spoken, or electronic text.

Photographs

We are all familiar with **photographs**. It is said that the camera cannot lie but of course we can always choose what we include in a photograph – so photographs do not necessarily always tell the whole truth. They do, however, always provide a permanent record of visible objects. Sometimes photos can be too realistic and will not be included with text, e.g. a close-up photo of a child who has been mutilated (disfigured) in a hand-grenade attack. Can you think of any other examples where a photo would be too realistic?

Aerial photography

Aerial photography refers to a particular type of photo that is taken from an aeroplane. It can be used to show the layout of a neighbourhood (similar to a map) or to estimate the number of people living in a particular area. It could also be used to show the particular features of a piece of land, in relation to the surrounding areas. Think of the view you get from an aeroplane when you are coming in to land and try to think how this perspective could be used to illustrate a text.

Pictures

We are also familiar with **pictures,** which can be described as something that is drawn or painted; a shape or set of shapes and lines that have been drawn, painted or printed on paper, canvas or some other flat surface, especially shapes that represent a recognisable form or object.

Drawings

A **drawing** is an outline picture; that is, a picture of something made with a pencil, pen or crayon, and that usually consist of lines. Shading is sometimes used, but generally drawings are without colour.

Advertisers might choose to use drawings rather than coloured pictures to save money. In certain contexts a coloured picture may be too distracting, such as in certain text books or reference books. A simple drawing might then be chosen. Next time you see a drawing ask yourself whether a more detailed coloured picture would improve the message, or rather draw attention away from the real purpose of the illustration.

Look at the following examples of marketing campaigns and decide whether you think the producers would use a photograph or a picture as an illustration to promote their ideas:

1. a brochure advertising a really impressive hotel with stunning views of the sea

2. an advert trying to sell a farm that has been neglected but shows potential

3. a pamphlet promoting a range of carefully crafted African beaded jewellery

4. an illustration for promotional material showing a range of different fruits that are being sold at cost price because they are slightly damaged

5. an illustration for a children's book showing happy puppies all playing together

6. an illustration for an advert to sell a tractor

7. an advert for a sea cruise portraying the large, impressive but neglected ship

8. an illustration for a brochure promoting a range of practical courses that can be attended by a smiling, enthusiastic bunch of students

9. an illustration for an advertising campaign showing contented old people in a particular old-age home

Graphs

The bar graph

A **bar graph** is a graphic representation where vertical or horizontal bars or columns represent some information. The length of the bar tells us the size of the illustrated item. If the numbers in the bar graphs are representing percentages, these must add up to 100%. Bar graphs are sometimes called bar charts or bar diagrams.

When drawing a bar graph remember the following:

- Bars should be of equal width.
- There should be spaces of equal width between the bars.
- Bars can be vertical or horizontal.
- The bars are usually of different colours to show the difference between the various sets of information.
- Label each bar showing the exact value of each bar.
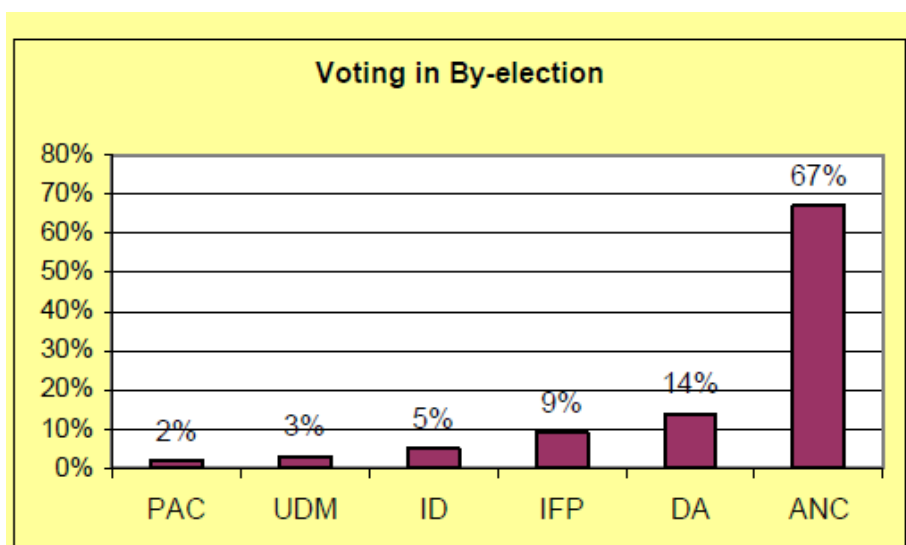
Each column or bar represents the number of votes that was received by a political party in the last local by-election. The bars are numbered 1–6 from left to right. Number 1 represents the PAC; number 2 represents the UDM; number three represents the ID; number 4 represents the IFP; number 5 represents the DA and number 6 represents the ANC.

Now see if you can answer these questions based on this example.

- Which party received the most votes?
- Which party received the least votes?
- Which party received the second highest number of votes?
- Which party received the second lowest number of votes?
- Which party received the third highest number of votes?
- Which party received the third lowest number of votes?

The pie chart

A **pie chart** is a graphic representation of data in the form of a circle or pie, which is divided into wedges. The total of the pie represents 100%. Pie charts are relatively easy to understand and are popular ways of graphically representing numerical data to the public.

Tips for reading pie graphs:
Read the title of the pie graph if there is one. It explains what the pie graph is about.
Look at the different colours or shadings. This tells you how many parts or sections there are that make up the whole.
Notice the size of each section. Find the biggest and smallest sections.
Look for any numbers that give you information about how big or small each section is.

First Language Distribution
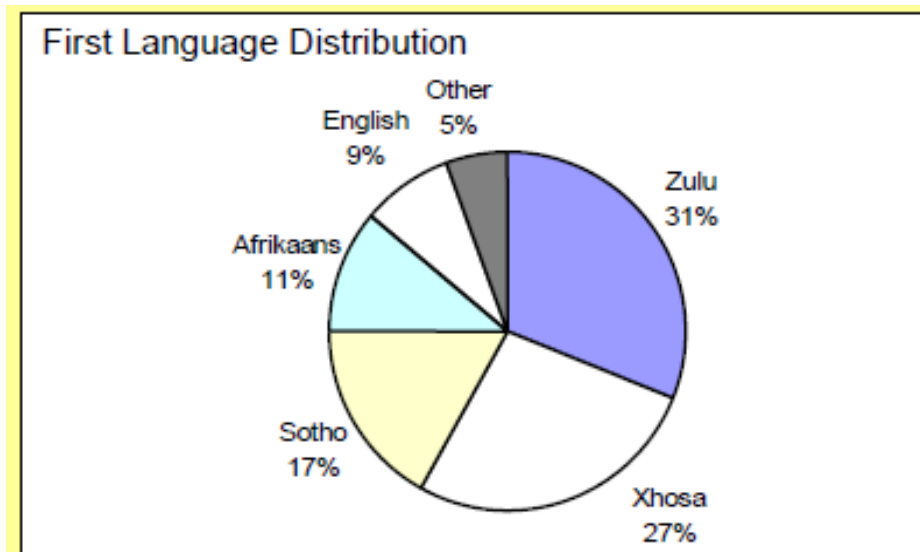
Above is a pie chart representing first language distribution in Johannesburg. (Please note: it is not an actual reflection – it is a made-up example.)
The languages represented are English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Sotho, Xhosa and Other ("other" is a combination of all other languages).

Look at the pie chart carefully and see if you can answer these questions:
- What first language is the most common?
- What first language is the least common?
- What first language is the second most common?
- What language is the second least common?
- Into which category would Hindi fall?
- What type of article would this pie chart illustrate? Think of reasons for your answer.

Diagram

A **diagram** and a **schema** can be defined as a simple explanatory drawing that shows the basic shape, layout, or workings of something in order to explain it.

Examples of a diagram are:

- a diagram showing the cross-section of a flower

- a diagram showing the manner in which a piece of machinery should be put together

- a schema of the layout of the ECD centre

- a schema of the layout of the ECD centre's garden

All the parts of diagrams and schema should be clearly labelled. Diagrams are often included with products we buy, for example a video machine will come with a booklet that has diagrams showing us what each piece represents and how it should be used. Textbooks on subjects such as Life Sciences as well as medical books will often be illustrated with diagrams.

Look at these examples and decide what the most appropriate form of graphic representation for each would be:

- a leaflet on how to assemble a Weber braai

- a graphic representation to a group of language experts that shows the number of English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, and Zulu speakers living in Khayelitsha

- a graphic representation that shows the percentages of people infected by HIV in four provinces for a talk at the community centre

- a section in a textbook that deals with the reproductive system of the plan.

Maps

A **map** can be defined as a geographical diagram; it is a visual representation that can show all or part of the Earth's surface with many of its geographical features, urban areas, roads, and other details. For example, "We carefully studied the map of Africa to see exactly where Zanzibar is when we won tickets to go there."

It can also be defined as a drawing that shows a route or location; a diagrammatical drawing of something such as a route or area made to show the location (position) of a place or how to get there. For example, "I asked her for a map showing where her house was as I had never been to Bellville before."

Cartoons

A **cartoon** is a sequence of drawings that tell a short story. They are often humorous and, published in a newspaper or magazine. Examples of cartoons are the comic strips that appear in the newspaper, or cartoon versions of written texts such as "The Tale of Two Cities".

It can also refer to a satirical drawing or a humorous drawing that is published in a newspaper or magazine and comments on a current event or theme. For examples, look at the 'Letters Page" in all daily newspapers for a cartoon on some current event.

Cartoons are used to lighten the mood of a text or to make a serious point in a humorous way. They can convey a message in a powerful way. They are often used in campaigns aimed at the youth, e.g. a campaign launched in June 2004 to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, made use of cartoons, in the form of talking condoms.

2.3.5 Explain how features of visual texts impact on meaning

One very important feature of any visual text is the use of pictures in context of the text being read. Magazines and newspapers would not be half as popular if there were no visuals. Let us have a look at what impact they have on what you are reading.

Print media is an entire industry and therefore the use of images is of great importance. Visuals promote understanding of the text and also attract interest. This is also relevant to the advertising industry.

You may know that when placing an advert you will pay more to place it on the left-hand page in the beginning of a newspaper or magazine and on the right-hand side in the second half of these printed media. This is because your eyes automatically go to the left of the page!

Photographers follow very specific principles that guide the manner in which they take photographs. We will now briefly discuss these principles.

Focus the viewer's attention

A technique that photographers use to make sure that the attention is focused on the subject is to effectively position the subject in the frame in such a way that it draws the viewer's eye exactly to where you want it. This is achieved in many creative, artistic and figurative ways. Size, colour, shape and how the object contrasts with the rest images within the photograph (foreground, middle ground and background). For example, the subject image may be in colour and the rest of the photograph in black and white.

Balance, layout, arrangement

The layout of photographs manipulates how the viewer sees the image. When the photographer composes (put together) an image there needs to be a balance in the colour, object placement and the lighting within the frame's rectangle. Balance in a photograph means that it is pleasing to the eye. This can be achieved by being creative with where and how the camera is actually placed, so that the composition has a unique perspective, or view of the world. For example, lying on the rocks to take a photo of a lighthouse or taking a photo at animal or pet level, will give the photo a more interesting composition and perspective than if the camera were held at full height while looking down at the pet object. Like many art concepts, perspective and composition may be based on instinct, or it can be developed through practise and study.

Use contrast

Contrast in lighting is another manner in which you can increase an effect; it means that there is the difference between the lightest light and the darkest dark in a photograph. Manipulating this component creates depth and adds to the three-dimensional quality of a photograph.

Framing

This is when you use a frame within the restricted area of your camera lens, such as taking a photo through a window onto a subject. The trick in this case is to make sure that the frame has clear shape and lines, and is in sharp focus. The viewer's attention will immediately be taken to exactly the subject matter of the composition.

Background and foreground

Photographs can have a blurry foreground or background. This can enhance the composition of photos by more clearly separating the main subject from everything else around it. This is achieved by manipulating the depth of field, which is controlled by the lens' aperture, focal length and object's distance from the lens. This technique helps to create more interesting images.

Differences in perspective

This is the manner in which the photographer views the objects in the camera frame depending on where he or she places the camera. For example, the same subject will have different perspectives when photographed at eye level, from above or from ground level. By varying the perspective the viewer is influenced in what they see.

Now that we have discussed how imagery can affect text, how can you use the actual text to manipulate a reader's viewpoint? Here are a few examples:

- THIS IS CONSIDERED TO BE SHOUTING IN SMS TEXT OR IS USED TO EMPHASISE A HEADING. Text in capital letters can be used in a headline to make it stand out – a headline is a heading at the top of an article or page in a newspaper or magazine.

- Using **Bold** can also draw attention to emphasis of a point or as a heading in order to let it stand out.

- Italics can create a *subtle* use to emphasise as if you are dropping your tone when speaking or to introduce a *gentle emphasis* on text. Colour also can help with the visual representation of text. Titles and captions below photographs or visuals tell you a bit more about the picture as well as assisting in reading the text accompanying.

2.4 Use strategies for extracting implicit messages in texts

In this section will look in particular at how to use a range of strategies to identify implicit (unspoken and subtle) messages in texts. These include:

- source of text

- author's attitude

- promotion of line of thought.

2.4.1 Identify the source of text and discuss it in terms of reliability and possible bias

We deal with a variety of texts in our everyday lives. We read adverts, listen to news broadcasts that have been written by someone, receive e-mails, read lecture notes, notices, marketing material, magazines, newspapers and books.

Reliability

Reliability means the extent to which the text is likely to be accurate; the extent to which text may be trusted to be accurate, correct or to provide a correct result, e.g.

"I don't think the report that aliens have landed is very reliable."

One way to check reliability is to look at the source. If we heard on the 7 o'clock news that aliens had landed we might be seriously concerned. We assume that news reports are fairly reliable. We also assume that newspaper reports are fairly reliable, so again if we read in the *Cape Times* that aliens had landed we would take it fairly seriously. If, however, we read this in a sensationalist magazine we should have serious doubts about it.

Sensationalism

Sensationalism refers to the use of shocking material; the practice of emphasising the most horrifying, shocking, and emotive aspects of anything under discussion or investigation, especially by the media.

Some magazines specialise in sensationalism. They publish stories which are difficult to back up or prove, and they focus on that part of our personalities that enjoys being shocked. Such magazines may be fun to read but their claims should not be taken too seriously. We need objective and reliable evidence to back up wild claims.

Objective

When a statement is objective, it means that it is free of bias or prejudice that is caused by personal feelings. It means that statements are based on facts rather than on thoughts or opinions, e.g. it is an objective fact that drug use among teenagers is increasing in Cape Town.

Sometimes an implicit or implied message is transmitted through a biased source.

Bias

Bias can be defined as an unfair preference for or dislike of something, e.g. "The teacher is biased against black learners – she always picks on those learners unfairly"; "The report on the gay club was biased against homosexuals – it gave a very negative impression of them."

2.4.2 Explore attitudes, beliefs and intentions in order to determine the point of view expressed

Attitude
Attitude can be described as a personal view of something; an opinion or general feeling about something, e.g. "Many people in South Africa have a positive attitude to change"; "Rapists have a very negative attitude to women".

Belief
Belief can be described as the acceptance of the truth of something; acceptance by the mind that something is true or real, and is often based on an emotional or spiritual sense of certainty, e.g. "She has a strongly held belief in an afterlife".

It can also mean to have trust or confidence that somebody or something is good or will be effective, e.g. "He has a great belief in democracy".
Finally belief refers to an opinion that is a firm and considered one, e.g. "I have a firm belief in the superiority of women".

What an author believes and what his/her attitude to something is will have an influence on the message he/she is putting across. The attitudes and beliefs of the author may be directly stated or put across in an indirect, implied, more subtle manner. An example to illustrate this is: when someone states "I do not like women" they are directly stating their attitude; if they were to say "Women are a very difficult bunch" they would be indirectly expressing a negative attitude to women; the message would be implied.

Intentions
Intentions can be described as the aim or objective of something; something that somebody plans to do or achieve, e.g. "The students learnt about educational practices so that they would become good practitioners". Authors can have a huge variety of aims or intentions, e.g. they may wish to entertain, to educate, to convince readers of a political point of view, to persuade people to believe in a cause, to convince readers to purchase something, to express their own point of view publicly and so on.

We can usually work out what the author's intention in writing something was, but sometimes their point of view may be hidden or implicit because the stated intention is not the only one. For example in the apartheid era, the stated intention of history textbooks was to educate learners on national and international history. However, by conveying history from a certain perspective, learners were educated to reinforce their position within apartheid society, rather than to question the injustices of apartheid.

2.4.3 Explore techniques and explain them in terms of purpose and audience

An important term here, is the **register** of language use. **Register** in this context means language of a type that is used in particular social situations or when communicating with a particular set of people, e.g. "When speaking to her boss, Meranisa used a formal register." When you are using slang you are using an informal register.

We use different registers depending on whom we are communicating with and what the purpose of our communication is. Friendly e-mails, notes or letters are usually written using an informal register, if our purpose is to communicate with someone we know well.

Office memos, business letters, faxes (for official business) and business e-mails will be written using a formal register.

We all have the ability to use either a formal or informal register and we swap between the two depending on who our audience is. This is called **code-switching.** Watch how your style changes depending on who you are writing to. A lecturer or a business associate would be very surprised to receive a letter that started with "Howzit?" and ended with "Lots of love"!

Look at these examples and decide which is written using a formal register and which is written in an informal register.

1. We should all assemble at 8.30 a.m. in the Main Hall for the fire drill.

2. Let's go out and party tonight guys!

3. I wish to inform you that your article on genetic modification has arrived at the Library.

4. Kindly re-instate your debit order for R235 per month.

5. All students in residence must read, agree to and sign the rules in the admissions book.

6. I am really taking serious strain trying to finish all my work today.

7. My mom and I are so excited about our fantastic trip to Knysna.

8. When completing an order form for educational toys, please ensure it is done in duplicate.

9. I haven't written for ages because I've been killing myself studying for the exams.

In a text that is relatively simple and aimed at a general public, where the author wishes to make sure that his/her purpose is clearly communicated, shorter sentences will be used. Shorter sentences are generally easier to follow than very long complicated ones.

Look at these two texts and decide which one would be aimed at an audience consisting of computer experts and which one would be aimed at people who were not yet computer literate. Give reasons for your choices.

- First turn on the computer. You do this by pressing the button on the tower. Your computer is then on. Next look at the keyboard. You will see the familiar typewriter's keyboard. There will however be some additions. These additions are called Function keys. You will notice other differences as well. There is a section to the right of the keyboard. You will see numbers and words on these keys. We will learn what each one means.

- Your Internet Service Provider should ensure an excellent connection to the Web at all times otherwise your browsing and searching or scrolling up and down the pages will be to no effect. As you all know, the uniform resource location of your web page will reflect either hypertext mark-up-language or Java script which is closely linked to the former, both in design and function and both of which originate with the beginnings of icon based word-processing.

Note:
Both the sentence length and the content tell us about the purpose and the audience.

Punctuation

Punctuation is critical to the reader as it helps us for example to know when to pause, when to stop and when people are speaking. A poorly punctuated piece of writing is usually very difficult to understand.

If an author was composing an advert that contained dialogue it would be critical both for his/her audience and the purpose of the advert to make sure that the punctuation was correct. For example, look at the difference in meaning between: "Ms Viljoen said I am too slow when I move", and, Ms Viljoen said: "I am too slow when I move!"

Choice of words

The choice of words depends a great deal on who the intended readers are and what the purpose or intention of the author is. If we want to ensure that our communication is understood by any reader we would obviously choose simple, clearly understood words. If we knew we were writing to a person, or people, who were totally familiar with the topic, we could use words they would understand.

The general public do not always understand technical jargon or slang.

Another technique is to vary how much figurative language they use.

Figurative language

Figurative language refers to language that is not literal. Literal is the actual meaning of the word, so figurative language means using language that contains a non-literal meaning. For example, she will use her teeth to remove your head; the sense in which it is used is figurative here, meaning "she will get very angry if you tell her that".

Humour

Humour is a way that authors use to entertain, relax or amuse the reader. I Humour would be out of place in a very formal text. Advertisers often make use of humour; certain companies such as Vodacom and Kulula have very humorous advertisements.

Irony

Irony can be defined as a type of humorous technique that is based on using words to suggest the opposite of their literal meaning, e.g. "That is great news!" as a response when hearing your working hours are to be extended.

Sarcasm

Sarcasm is cutting language: remarks that mean the opposite of what they seem to say and are intended to mock or ridicule, or make fun of something or someone.

Sarcasm and irony are effective ways of communicating for friends or in informal settings. It is generally inappropriate to use sarcasm or irony when you address people in a formal context, or people who are senior to you.

Look at these examples of sarcasm:

- In Hollywood a marriage is a success if it outlasts milk. -- Rita Rudner
- I love being married. It's so great to find that one special person you want to annoy for the rest of your life. -- Rita Rudner
- Politics is perhaps the only profession for which no preparation is thought necessary. -- Robert Louis Stevenson
- Politics is the skilled use of blunt objects. -- Lester Pearson
- Every time I look at you I get a fierce desire to be lonesome. -- Oscar Levant

Satire

Satire can be described as the use of wit – especially irony, sarcasm, and ridicule – to attack people's evils and stupidity. For example, a play in which politicians are represented as greedy children is a satire, as it was making fun of politicians.

In South Africa Pieter-Dirk Uys is the best known satirist. His creations of Evita Bezuidenhout and others were done in order to poke fun at the Nationalist government. During the apartheid era, his plays were sometimes banned. Some politicians, however, found his satires amusing.

Example:

Choose which is the literal meaning and which the figurative for each of these pairs of sentences.

1. The chameleon turns green when walking on a leaf.

2. When Cindy saw Buyiswa's new hairstyle she went green.

3. If Lunga drops it, the goat will eat his hat.

4. If you finish Comrades I will eat my hat.

5. There were millions of people at Ayesha's party - she is so popular!

6. Millions of people live below the bread line in the Third World.

7. The weather is so hot today it is boiling outside.

8. You can hear when the water in the kettle is boiling.

9. You can never believe politicians – their words are made of straw.

10. The new basket I bought is made from straw.

11. Ask Simpiwe to monitor the plants – he has such green fingers.

12. Busieka put his hands in the paint and when he took them out he had green fingers.

13. The workers were given the boot without any compensation.

14. Sharon was given the boot which she thought she had lost.

2.4.4 Identify promotion of, or support for, a particular line of thought/cause

Let us now move on to look at how a particular line of thought or a cause is promoted and supported. We can do this by **selecting or omitting** (leaving out) certain materials.

Selection or omission of materials

In the apartheid era history textbooks often left out critical information relating to the role that black people played in creating our nation.

Let us look at another example. An author wants to promote the cause of allowing baboons in Pringle Bay to freely roam the neighbourhood. Imagine that he/she has four facts at his/her fingertips. These are:

1. It is the baboons' natural dwelling place.

2. The baboons are causing great destruction in the neighbourhood.

3. It is relatively simple to 'baboon-proof' your house.

4. The baboons have attacked two children and three dogs.

- Which two facts would he/she choose to include in a letter to the press promoting the cause of allowing the baboons free range of the neighbourhood?

- What would the implicit message in the letter be?

2.5 Respond to selected texts in a manner appropriate to the context

In order to respond to texts in a manner that is appropriate to the context we have to follow instructions and requests and examine how to use text-type, format and register on the correct level of formality.

Different texts have different contexts and we need to respond to these in different ways. We need to ensure that we respond appropriately.

This section will look at responding to selected texts in a manner that is appropriate to the context.

These include:

- instructions and requests
- text-type, format and register

2.5.1 Act upon instructions and requests

Requests

Let us look at text that consists of a **request**. Certain texts require us to respond in certain ways - for example, we are asked or requested to supply our personal details when we apply for a student loan or bursary.

There are times, however, when we will need more information in order to respond to a request. There are other times when we need to sort out the order of things that are being requested in order to be able to respond appropriately.

For example: If you were asked to help a developing farmer choose the most suitable crops for her area you would first need to establish a lot more information about where her farm was, how much land she had, what type of soil she had and other relevant points.

Requests are often, but not always, phrased as questions.

Instructions

Instructions may be defined in two ways: firstly as orders, e.g. "I was just following instructions when I forwarded that e-mail"; "acting on instructions that we received we went on to the next lesson". Secondly, they may refer to a list of things to do; printed information about how to do, make, assemble, use, or operate something, e.g. "the instructions are printed on the back of the packet".

Look at the following statements and decide whether they are instructions or requests:

1. Finish the work today or you will be fired.
2. Please go to Worcester then to Robertson.
3. You must fill in this form.
4. Will you help the grape grower choose his cultivars?
5. You need to first check the plug and the switch carefully, then use the power point.
6. Please fill in Section A followed by B, then C, then D.
7. Please could I have more information?
8. To determine the type of soil you are working with here is a very easy test: Take a spade full of the soil and moisten it with a bit of water. Work the soil until it no longer changes in feel. Now press the soil between your thumb and fingers, note the feel of the soil and now try to squish the soil into a long thin strip.

2.5.2 Use text-type, format and register on the appropriate level of formality

Text-type

Text-type refers to the font you choose to use when using the word processor. This text you are reading has been printed in Arial, font size 12.

Examples:

Here are some examples of text-type or font:

- Hi! My name is Avela and I live in Gugs.

- Please reply to this letter by return of post.

- Old texts looked like this.

- This is a more formal type of font.

- This is quite a complicated font and is not so easy to read.

- When would you use this font?

- Which one is your favourite font?

Format

Format refers to the structure of something; the way in which something is presented, organised, or arranged; specifically in this context it refers to the way a written communication is presented or structured.

Look at these two examples of business letters. Which one do you think has the more appropriate format? Give reasons for your answer.

A)

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:1em;">

<div align="right">
11 Firfireld Road
Athlone
Cape Town
7780
22 June 2013
</div>

Salesperson
Garden Goodies
P.O. Box 121
Cape Town

Re: My order for seedlings

Dear Mr Hendricks

I want to ask about my order for seedlings that I placed six weeks ago.
I have heard nothing yet from you. My address is given above and you can write to me there.

The order was for 6 daisy bushes, 12 Peace rose bushes and 14 Pinotage grape cultivars.

When can I expect a reply? You can phone me on 0217624989.

Thank you very much.

Regards
Annie Blackburn

</div>

B)

---

11 Firfireld Road
Athlone
Cape Town
7780
22 June 2013

Salesperson
Garden Goodies
P.O. Box 121
Cape Town
8000

Re: My order for seedlings

Dear Mr Hendricks
I want to ask about my order for seedlings that I placed six weeks ago. I have heard nothing from you yet. The order was for a variety of plants.

Just to remind you, the list of things required was:
• 6 Daisy bushes;
• 12 Peace roses;
• 14 Pinotage grape cultivars.

When can I expect a reply? My address is given above and you can write to me there. You can phone me on (021) 762 4989.

Regards
Annie Blackburn

Register (also see the section where we discussed it earlier)

Register in this context means the type of language that is used in particular social situations or when communicating with a particular set of people. For example, when speaking to her boss Meranisa used a formal register; when you are using slang you are using an informal register.

We use different registers depending on whom we are communicating with and what the purpose of our communication is. Friendly e-mails, notes or letters would tend to be written using an informal register, if our purpose was to communicate with someone we know well.

Office memos, business letters, faxes (for official business) and business e-mails would be written using a formal register.

We all have the ability to use either register and we swap between the two depending on who our audience is. This is referred to as code-switching. Watch how your style changes depending on who you are writing to. A lecturer or a business associate would be very surprised to receive a letter that started with "Howzit?" and ended with "Lots of love"!

Look at these examples and decide which is written using a formal register and which is written in an informal register.

1. We should all assemble at 8.30 a.m. in the Main Hall for the fire drill.

2. Let's go out and party tonight guys!

3. I wish to inform you that your article on genetic modification has arrived at the Library.

4. Kindly re-instate your debit order for R235 per month.

5. All students in residence must read, agree to and sign the rules in the admissions book.

6. I am really taking serious strain trying to finish all my work today.

7. My mom and I are so excited about our fantastic trip to Knysna.

8. When completing an order form for plants, please ensure it is done in duplicate.

9. I haven't written for ages because I've been killing myself studying for the exams.

2.5.3 Explore and explain how language structures and features may influence a reader

In this next section we will see how choice of words/signs, language usage, symbols, pictures and tone/sign size and pace shape or support a point of view.

Bias

Bias can shape or support a particular point of view. We have mentioned bias in an earlier section. Remember that we said bias is an unfair preference for or dislike of something. Bias is unfair, because it is not typical of how we should treat people. In South Africa we are lucky enough to have an extremely good Constitution that protects us all. Our Constitution does not permit us to discriminate against, or treat unfairly, any people on the basis of cultural or ethnic identity, gender, religion, age or sexual preference. This guarantees us all our basic human rights.

Look at the statements below that were made by someone about somebody else. See if you can match the bias with one of the speakers who are mentioned in the list below the examples.

1. "Of all the Nguni speakers, Xhosas are the most intelligent."
2. "All Moslems are fanatically against the Jewish people."
3. "Only people under the age of 25 are capable of learning anything new."
4. "All the American forces have been involved in torturing Iraqis."
5. "Only black people should be allowed to vote in the next election."
6. "All white people are greedy and power-mad."
7. "Women belong in the kitchen, not in the workplace."
8. "I will only let my own age-group join any club I run."
9. "Old people are just a burden on society, they contribute nothing."
10. "Gay people are really evil and should not be allowed into churches."

Possible speakers:

a. a person who is biased against homosexuals; a homophobic person
b. a person who is biased against women; a sexist person
c. a person who is biased against old people; an ageist person
d. a person who is biased against a certain culture; culturally biased
e. a person who discriminates against a particular group; treats them unfairly
f. a person who is biased against people on the basis of their race; racist person
g. a person who is showing bias towards their own peer group
h. a person who is against people of a certain religion; showing religious bias
i. a person who is showing bias by misrepresenting facts
j. a person who is biased towards a certain age group; an ageist person

Bias occurs frequently. We have to be careful that it does not influence us to make unfair judgements about people. Most of the research done in South Africa shows that we have more in common with each other than we think. Newspaper surveys show that people from all race groups, income groups and age groups, of both sexes and genders have similar fears about life in South

Africa. We all worry about crime, unemployment, the cost of living and corruption. Of course there will also be differences, but to be biased against people for any of the reasons shown in the example above is to cut yourself off from experiencing the rich diversity this country has to offer us all.

If an author has a particular point of view which is biased, what he/she writes will reflect this bias. The choice of words that the author uses may influence us. **Facts** are statements we can test whereas **opinions** are what someone thinks. Opinions may often be biased. If the author has a biased opinion about some group he/she will express his/her point of view by using biased language. Always be careful of statements about groups of people that contain the word "all" in them. It is seldom possible to make statements like "all black people are bad-tempered" or "all fat people are lazy" or "all young people use drugs" or "all Zulus are brave" without being guilty of bias. The behaviour within groups of people varies enormously and these kind of generalised statements are seldom accurate.

We must also guard against misrepresenting facts and showing bias in that way - because some members of a particular group behave in a certain way that does not mean that all members follow this behaviour. It is a misrepresentation to say, for example, that all British soccer fans are thugs.

How else can the written word influence the reader? What other language usage or choice of words do authors use to shape or support a point of view?

Humour can influence the reader in indirect ways. If we constantly read or hear jokes about how dumb blondes are or how stupid a particular race is, we can start to be influenced by this. There are many examples of humour that are based on negative messages about a particular group. Some examples are jokes about fat people, disabled people, old people, and so on. We have already mentioned earlier in this module how humour can be used in adverts to influence a reader. While humour can add a great deal to our enjoyment of things and can successfully be used to influence readers in positive ways, we should be aware that humour that is based on the supposed weakness or vulnerability of a particular group is usually being used to attempt to influence us in a negative way about that group.

See if you can find **examples** of humour that are based on an implied (subtle) negative message about a group.

Now we are going to move on to look at how the use of **omission** and **silences** can influence a reader. We have already looked at the example of the baboons that wreaked havoc earlier in the Lesson. Let us look again at how not including information about something can influence a reader.

Look at this list of facts available to an author who is going to write an article on "Banning of Smoking in Public Places to be considered."

1. Passive smoking is a danger to non-smokers.
2. The most toxic fumes are produced by factories, not smokers.
3. Smokers have rights as well.
4. Banning smoking on aeroplanes has led to increased incidents of air-rage.
5. Non-smokers need to be protected.
6. Banning smoking in the workplace has led to a decrease in productivity.
7. Banning smoking in public places is supported by 60% of the people surveyed in a recent poll.
8. There has been a decrease in litter in cities where smoking in public places is banned.

Which facts would?

- a writer who wished to support the ban, use?
- a writer who is against the ban, use?

Figurative expressions

Figurative expressions make written language more interesting. To say someone was a tiger in a fight or as strong as an ox, is to enliven the written word. Because figurative expressions grab our attention, they can be used as devices or strategies by authors to convince us of a point of view.

Consider the earlier example of the antismoking campaign. If the author had written a passage describing smokers in a highly figurative way, he/she could make their point even more strongly. An example might be "Huffing and puffing, the smokers clutch desperately on to their cancer-sticks, dragging at them for all they are worth. What a pitiful bunch! They pollute the perfect atmosphere with foul smelling yellow clouds of poison!" Would the reader of this passage be in any doubt as to what point of view was being put across? If you had no particular objection to smokers, would reading a passage like that influence you at all? In what way?

Repetition

Repetition is another example of a technique that an author can use to influence the reader and build support for a point of view. By stating the same facts or opinions over and over again in different ways, the author can push his/her point of view.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole can be defined as exaggeration; it is deliberate and obvious exaggeration that is used for effect, for example, "I could eat a million of these".

"There are miles of people waiting in the queue."

Hyperbole is an effective way for a writer to make his/her point of view clear and to try and influence the reader.

Typography

Typography refers to the layout of a page or pages. The visual impression that is created by a piece of text is important and can influence readers. If a page is well and neatly laid out the readers are more likely to take its contents seriously.

Magazines that appeal to a broad-based readership – popular magazines in other words– often use typography that is quite eye-catching. There will be lots of big headlines and accompanying pictures.

Magazines that appeal to a more serious readership such as specialist current affairs magazines will use a much less dramatic layout.

Go to a bookstore and look at the magazines that are for sale. In particular, look at a "You" magazine and an "Economist" magazine. Take note of the differences between them. Can you see how their typography differs? What other differences do you notice?

Can authors influence readers by their use of typography? A fast zippy layout that is eye catching and accompanied by many pictures is likely to signal to readers that they are about to be entertained. A more serious appearing, straight forward layout with not much variation in font and few accompanying visuals, would show a reader that what they were reading was a fairly seriously piece of writing.

Grammar

Grammar or correct language usage is another technique of which authors need to be aware if they are trying to build support for an argument. A well-written piece of text is likely to have a greater impact on readers than something which is full of errors.

Grammar and typography together form the **style** of the written word. Style refers both to appearance (how text looks) and to how a text reads. Different authors write in particular styles.

2.6 Listen to spoken input for detail, interpret and analyse it for a given context

We have been listening to spoken input for detail, interpreting it and analysing it throughout this programme. For example, in the class activities we could not have completed the activities without questioning each other in pairs, in groups of four and as a whole class.

Working with others in a group helps learning because of the following reasons:

- It exposes us to more ideas than our own. We saw the value of this in brainstorming.

- It can assist our creative thinking when a number of people share their ideas, which we also saw in brainstorming.

- It helps us to organise our own ideas when we speak about them, and this reinforces our learning.

- It gives us a chance to test out our own ideas, when our peers give us constructive criticism.

You can possibly think of other ways in which communicating with others helps us to learn more effectively.

Also remember the following points:

- Successful communication needs not only good speaking skills, but also good listening skills. When we listen to someone attentively (paying attention) and empathetically (thoughtfully and with understanding), we help that person to express their ideas more clearly, and we therefore help their learning process.

- The opposite is also true: if a listener interrupts the speaker constantly, or has a negative attitude, it can interfere with the speaker's thoughts, and therefore block their learning processes.

Some people work better on their own. We should respect this. However, we all need group interaction some of the time.

2.6.1 Ask relevant questions

As a learner, much of your work involves reading. Reading is something we do in many different contexts, and for different purposes.

We may sit down with a book or magazine and read for pleasure or relaxation. We may read for simple information such as when we read a bus timetable or a telephone directory.

Sometimes we read involuntarily, for instance when we see an advertisement on a billboard using a single word in huge writing. When we read a SMS from a friend we may be reading for fun.

Reading for learning, however, is different from all of these because we are then reading in a very directed, goal-oriented way. Success in reading to learn depends on our use of certain 'attack' skills when we approach the text. It is useful to be aware of the strategies that we can use to get information out of the text.

It is a good idea to first look at the format of a passage i.e. the way it is set out on the page (or screen). This will help you to navigate the text. Is there a title? Is it written in paragraphs? Is it a table? Are there subheadings?

All of these factors will allow you to approach the text in a more organised way, and therefore increase your ability to learn from it.

When we read the text for the purpose of learning, we should read for:

- detail i.e. extract information that is stated directly in the text

- interpretation i.e. extract the meaning where the idea is there but not stated directly

- analysis i.e. use the content to draw a conclusion or add your own idea; you have to sort out some information in the text to find an answer, or assess something in order to give an opinion

2.6.2 Respond to the ways others express themselves sensitively to differing socio-cultural contexts

We are now going to look at how the way we respond to the manner in which others express themselves is affected by and is sensitive to **different socio-cultural contexts.**

In South Africa we have a wide range of cultures. We are in the fortunate position that we have since 1994 been exposed to people from a range of different socio-cultural backgrounds both at work and in our social interactions. While this is generally a positive thing, which leads to an interesting diversity in our lives, it can also lead to misunderstanding if we are not aware of differences in cultural contexts.

Let us look more carefully at what we mean when we use the word "culture".

Culture refers to the system of values, beliefs, traditions and behaviour of a particular group. It also refers to the accepted social practices of a particular group of people which makes this group unique. In South Africa people often define themselves as belonging to a certain culture on the basis of language and ethnicity, as well as religious, geographical or political affiliation and relationships.

How is communication affected by cultural context? The socio-cultural context in which we operate influences how we express ourselves. In South Africa we often have to take part in intercultural communication. Intercultural communication is communication between groups of people from different cultures. When we are engaged in **intercultural communication** we must keep the following important points in mind:

- People from different cultural groups might have different world views.

- People from different cultural groups might use different communication styles – both verbal and non-verbal.

- When people from different cultural groups communicate there is often an element of anxiety that they may be misunderstood.

- When people from different cultural groups communicate it is essential that they communicate very carefully.

- When people from different cultural groups communicate the results are not always completely predictable.

Example:

- An elderly Xhosa man might object to being told how to plant grapes by a young English speaking man.

- In some African cultures it is considered impolite to make eye contact with a superior. This could be interpreted by a Westerner as a sign of shiftiness (sneakiness).

- A farm worker whose home language is Sotho may feel very anxious about having to express herself in English to the person taking down her personal details for UIF purposes.

- A young urban person may use the word "cool" to indicate that everything is alright; if the audience is from a rural cultural group they may not understand this use of the word and take it literally.

- You may believe that you have treated an older rural Tswana woman in a polite manner by being distant and formal; she may feel as if you have been abrupt and unfriendly.

Remember that our response to the ways that people from different groups express themselves is influenced by the socio-cultural context in which communication takes place. Here are some tips to ensure that you communicate successfully with your audience in an intercultural context:

- Avoid apathy (a don't care attitude): Be aware of and sensitive to socio-cultural differences between yourself and others.

- Do not make assumptions: Never assume that what you have heard about other cultures is true – check this out for yourself.

- Avoid stereotyping: Do not fall into the trap of making generalised negative statements about a certain socio-cultural group.

- Be flexible and open: Do not resist change and always be open to new possibilities - listen carefully to new ideas and be prepared to change your old attitudes to those from different socio-cultural groups.

- Be aware of and sensitive to different world views.

- Be aware of and sensitive to the fact that others may speak a different language.

- Be aware of differences in non-verbal communication from different socio-cultural groups.

- Get rid of your prejudices: Some of us have strong negative beliefs about certain cultures – this is a terrible barrier to effective communication.

- Always try to build trust: Effective communication is more likely in an atmosphere of trust.

2.6.3 Ensure that learning takes place through communicating with others

Communication is such an important topic and includes your communication with your peers and your learners. We can spend almost our entire day communicating. The 7 Cs listed below provide a checklist that you can use to make sure that your meetings, e-mails, conference calls, reports, and presentations are well constructed and clear – so your audience gets your message.

According to the 7 Cs, communication needs to be:

- **Clear** - When writing or speaking to someone, be clear about your objective or message with your colleagues or learners. Why are you communicating with this person, what is the purpose? If you're not sure, then your audience won't be sure either.

  Restrict the number of ideas in each sentence. Make sure that it is easy for your reader to understand your meaning. The reader should not feel confused about what message you are trying to get across.

- **Concise** - This means that you stick to the point and keep it brief. Use fewer words rather than more.

- **Concrete** - When your message is concrete, it means that the reader has a clear picture of what you are telling them. There is sufficient information and good focus. When your message is solid, the audience will have no doubt about your message.

- **Correct** - When your communication is correct, you have been sensitive to your target audience. This means that items such as spelling errors or incorrect information have been eliminated. The terms that you use should also be at the level of your audience's education and knowledge.

- **Coherent** - When your communication is coherent, it is logical. All points are connected and relevant to the main topic, and the tone and flow of the text is consistent.

- **Complete** - In a complete message, your message has been conveyed clearly and the audience such as other facilitators are clear with what to do or remember. There is clear instructions on what to do next, where to find more or what action should be taken.

- **Courteous** - Having good manners can never harm anyone; this means being friendly, open, and honest. There is no hidden agenda or passive-aggressive tones. You also have been culturally sensitive (i.e. courteous) to the audience.

2.7 Identify and respond to manipulative use of language

Sometimes we receive messages or pieces of information which are incomplete. How do we make sure that we notice the omission (leaving out) of necessary information and how do we address this? In order to avoid being manipulated and form our own independent opinions about certain events or products we need as detailed a picture of an issue as possible.

The print media can be biased and not always present a full picture. News clips of the television are sometimes shortened and could omit important news. Factual information may also be represented in a biased manner. Sensationalism is often part of what sells magazines, newspapers and increase the number of viewers of television shows.

Think of advertisements that encourage the use of their products. The truth is that no particular product could change your life in the way some advertisements may claim. A few years ago a young man took a deodorant company to court because it claimed that women would flock to him after using it. He won the case. Clever use of language is part and parcel of the media industry.

We need to be aware of what is **not** being said in the same way as we need to be aware of what **is** being said.

Sometimes information is deliberately omitted in order to present a certain point of view.

We may be given insufficient facts or information may be omitted which could lead us to form incorrect opinions. This is often the case in a factual type of report that seems to be objective. For example, if we hear of research that seems to prove something, we need to ask who did the research, on whom was the research done, where was it done, how does it compare with other research and so on. Only then can we make up our minds about the results.

What do we mean by "manipulate" and "manipulative"?

In the context of language use, to **manipulate** means to control or influence somebody or something in a clever or devious way. It can also mean to change or present something in a way that is false but personally advantageous. Some examples of where we find manipulative language are in news clips, political speeches, marketing material, and advertisements. Of course in our daily interaction with friends, our peers and family, we can also experience manipulation, and may even at times try to manipulate others.

Example:

- The farmer manipulated the residents into believing that he had not harmed the environment by using pesticides as he emphasised only the positive aspects of pest control.

- The producers of a solar energy device claimed that you would save thousands by using this instead of electricity but did not mention that the cost of the device was far beyond most people's budgets.

- The newspaper report manipulated the buyers to purchase advertised fruits by minimising discussion on the loss of nutrients caused by genetic modification of those foods.

- The manager of Canal Irrigation Services did not mention the disadvantage of the furrow method of irrigation where plants nearer the water source may receive more water than those further away, so that farmers were more likely to opt for this system of irrigation.

- The company initially denied liability for causing asbestosis, choosing to disregard the evidence of 7500 asbestosis victims in the Northern Cape where the asbestos plant was functioning, so that they could continue production.

2.7.1 Identify and distinguish facts and opinions

One of the topics that we will be covering a little later is research. If you are unsure about something that you are reading, take some time to research what is being said before accepting it as a fact.

Being able to distinguish between facts and opinions is an important part of understanding text.

What is the difference between a fact and an opinion? Dictionary.com puts it thus:

Fact:

- Something that actually exists; reality; truth: "Your fears have no basis in fact."

- Something known to exist or to have happened: "Space travel is now a fact."

- A truth known by actual experience or observation; something known to be true: "Scientists gather facts about plant growth."

- Something said to be true or supposed to have happened: "The facts given by the witness are highly questionable."

- Law. Often, an actual or alleged event or circumstance, as distinguished from its legal effect or consequence. Compare question of fact, question of law.

Opinion:

- A belief or judgment that rests on grounds insufficient to produce complete certainty.

- A personal view, attitude, or appraisal.

As you can see the two are grounded in very different worlds. Facts are supported by known factors, while opinions are more biased.

2.7.2 Note and address omission of necessary information

Once you have done the necessary research in order for you to ascertain if the information that you have read is either a fact or an opinion, you then have an informed opinion that has "filled in the gaps" of what is true or not.

Simply by doing this, you become more knowledgeable. Should you find yourself in a conversation within a work or private context you will be able to prove your opinion in an informed manner.

2.7.3 Explain the implications of how the choice of language structures and features affect audience interpretations

You should by now have a reasonably clear idea about how persuasive the English language can be and how speakers (and writers) can use language to manipulate their audience into doing or believing things. We are going to look at three features or elements of language that particularly affect the audience's interpretation of spoken texts.

Persuasive language features

The first feature is **tone**. Tone can be defined as a way of speaking; the way somebody says something as an indicator of what that person is feeling or thinking, e.g. "she spoke in a very sad tone about the death of her mother"; "she had a defiant tone in her voice when she argued with the vice-rector".

It can also refer to the general quality or character of something as an indicator of the attitude or view of the person who produced it, e.g. "the optimistic tone of the news report"; "the salesperson adopted a very sincere tone when talking about the vacuum cleaner."

Obviously the general tone of the speaker will have an effect on his or her audience.

An enthusiastic, optimistic speaker will be persuasive and could even be manipulative by making the audience feel happy and pleased about something when maybe they should be taking the issue more seriously, or asking more questions.

Similarly an incredibly pessimistic speaker who is full of doom and gloom will affect his or her audience and may even manipulate them into feeling nervous and anxious about something which is actually not all that frightening.

The next feature of language we need to consider is **style**.

Style can be defined as a way of doing something; a way of expressing something, especially a way of expressing a particular attitude; e.g. "She has a very confrontational style when she speaks to a large audience".

"He adopts a condescending (patronising) style when talking to his colleagues."

The style in which a speaker addresses his or her audience can also obviously have an effect on how the audience interprets what is being said. A persuasive style can be used to manipulate you, an exaggerated style can be used to stir up our emotions and stop us thinking clearly. A factual style could even bore us but it could, if it is used in a manipulative way, convince us to do something or buy something. Try to take note of what style of speech good effective public speakers use. Also if you have recently been persuaded to buy something or to believe in something, think what style the person who convinced you used.

Lastly in terms of language features that affect audience interpretation, we are going to look at **point of view**.

Point of view is someone's personal opinion on a subject, shaped by his or her own character and experience; e.g. "Because she is a staunch Roman Catholic, Noleen has the point of view that abortion is a sin". "It is my point of view that women should get paid more than men because I think they work harder."

A point of view can be negative or positive. Your point of view can be pro (for) something or anti (against) something. It is very hard to have a neutral point of view.

Political speakers often present their points of view as if they were facts when in reality they are simply opinions.

Advertisers also assume certain points of view are universally accepted whereas they are simply opinions. An example of this would be the way advertisers assume that we all have the point of view that to look younger than we are is a good thing. This is simply an opinion.

News reports can reflect a particular point of view. The way the facts are reported could be biased or slanted to reflect a particular point of view. Check this out for yourself the next time you listen to a news report.

Knowledge of formats, conventions, protocols and contexts

You have already seen that it is important to know which format to use in a particular context. In this section we are looking at what conventions and protocols in writing mean.

The term **convention** is used where there is a generally accepted usage or practice. The conventions of written English include such aspects as punctuation, the layout of a letter or a CV, the format of a book, etc.

In oral language, there are conventions for formal debates or sermons or speeches of welcome. The rules of a language are highly resistant to change over time, but conventions can and do change, both over time and from one audience to another.

Protocols are unwritten rules or guidelines that are peculiar to every culture or organisation, and are supposed to be observed by all parties when they do business, entertain, negotiate, are involved in politics, etc. One could almost call it the "manners" of a particular group and the writer or speaker should be sensitive to this.

2.7.4 Explore distortion of a contributor's position on a given issue
Let us now look at the idea of distortion of the spoken word.

Distortion in this context can be defined as misleading alteration; the altering (changing) of information in such a way that the audience is misinformed or misled.
e.g. "When she gave her talk on World War II she distorted the facts by leaving out the role played by black soldiers."; "When he spoke about Jan van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape he distorted the facts by neglecting to mention that there were already people living in the Cape."

We can see from these examples that one way of distorting a presentation is to **omit** (leave out) certain key facts; another way is to only **select** information that reflects a particular point of view.

> ***Class Activity 2: Learning strategies***
> Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

Learning Unit 3
Doing basic research

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to conduct basic research and analyse and present the findings, by successfully completing the following:

- Identify and define appropriate or relevant topic and scope.

- Plan and sequence research steps appropriately.

- Apply research techniques.

- Evaluate information for relevance.

- Classify, categorise and sort information.

- Analyse research findings and present them in the appropriate format.

Doing basic research

Basic research forms the backbone of any centre of higher learning as far as building of new knowledge and providing for the expansion of knowledge is concerned. It trains students' minds to search for innovative additional knowledge and obtain a better understanding of a subject.

The following points are relevant for any research paper or topic.

- Being analytical and critical: This means going deeper into the depth of the topic that you have chosen and questioning your own ideas.

- Being systematic: If you are not clear regarding the outline of the research, you will become lost. Follow your outline and be consistent.

- Being accurate: This means that you have to conduct a careful investigation. Even if you have your own conclusion, you should ensure that you have evidence to prove that your information is accurate.

- Having replicability (can this be repeated?): The research design and procedures should enable the researcher to arrive at valid and conclusive results.

- Being empirical: Base data on direct observation and general truth.

- Having original work: Do not copy someone else's ideas; produce you own work by using scientific process.

- Be hypothetical: Make an intelligent guess before presenting the conclusion.

3.1 Identify and define appropriate or relevant topic and scope

Research usually starts with a question. Formulating that question can be the most difficult part of the research process. But before you can find the right question to ask, you need some context or background about your topic.

The first step is to state your topic idea as a question or a sentence. Such as: "How do the progress of children from a rural area compare to children in urban areas?"

Before you commit to this or any specific topic for your research, you should use your library as a trustworthy general resource. The library subscribes to thousands of databases — collections of articles, images and data — in a wide range of subject disciplines that cover in-depth information that is often not available online for free.

The more specific you can be about what you are looking for, the more effective your search will be. To define your potential search terms, identify the main concepts or keywords in your question. In this case, they are "children", "rural children", "urban children".

Now perform the search. Review the search results to determine if your topic is:

- Too large? Are there too many search results? Maybe you can focus or narrow the topic more.

- Covered exhaustively elsewhere? Have many people researched this already? Ask your peers. They may be able to suggest a new perspective, or even recommend that you choose something else.

- Too exact, vague or too new? There might be too little supporting information or evidence for your topic. You also might not be clear enough, or need to broaden your topic.

You are now going to do a practical exercise by performing a research analysis in teams of four. The first step in the project, therefore, is to form a team of four. Each person in the team has a role to perform.

The roles are:

- Conductor: keep things running smoothly e.g. materials, participation.

- Chair: co-ordinates the activity.

- Scribe: keeps written records.

- Reporter: gives feedback when required.

Each person should support the others in their roles. For example, everyone helps the recorder to capture the group's ideas. (These roles are not fixed, and with the next project they will rotate.)

The next step is to decide what the topic for your research project is, and what the scope of the research is. Some possible topics for research are child development theories; influence of socio-economic factors on early childhood development; learning through playing; etc.

Your facilitator will help the class to list some research topics that are relevant to your occupational concerns as ECD learners.

To decide on the topic for your group research project, you need to think of a subject. However, you also need to keep in mind the scope or extent of your research. You can think of the topic as being the starting point of the research, and the scope as how far you are going to go with that research.

In your group, discuss subjects that you all find interesting. Use the following as a guide for your discussion:

- You need to have consensus on the choice of topic, as you will all have to work equally hard at it.

- The topic should be one in which you all have an interest.

- There should be a common understanding of what the topic is.

- The topic should be one for which you will have access to a range of suitable resources.

- You should all have some basic information on the topic as a starting point.

Once you have agreed on a topic, you will need to define the scope of your research. It is important to all have a similar idea of what you are going to do with the topic. One way of doing this is to have a research question. This will focus everyone in the group on a common approach.

To develop a research question, the group should brainstorm ideas around the topic. Remember the conditions for a brainstorm. If you have a variety of ideas on the table will open up different aspects of the topic, and you should then make a decision as to the best aspect for your group to research. This will lead you to a research question.

When you have a question planned, submit it to your facilitator for comment.

3.2 Plan and sequence research steps appropriately

The steps to carrying out good research are as follows:

- gathering relevant information

- evaluating the information

- processing the information – classifying, categorising, sorting

- analysing and presenting

As this is a group project, these steps should be carefully planned. So far, the work has been a group effort. Your group decided on a topic and developed the research question, but the group members should now take on certain tasks individually. The group should plan the following points:

- Who will take on responsibility for gathering and processing information from different sources? You may decide that each one will work with different resources, or some may work with the same kinds of resources.

- How many sources should each person find?

- Whichever way it is decided, there should be an agreed plan, as well as a timeframe. This plan should be recorded:

Plan of Action	Electronic resources	Print resources	Human resources
[name]	[no. of sources]	[no. of sources]	[no. of sources]
[name]	[no. of sources]	[no. of sources]	[no. of sources]
[name]	[no. of sources]	[no. of sources]	[no. of sources]

3.3 Apply research techniques

Gathering information gives the basis for providing an informed, reliable and valid answer to a given question. This information should:

- be from a range of sources

- be relevant to the research issue

- come from reliable sources

The most common research methods are: literature searches, talking with people, focus groups, personal interviews, telephone surveys, mail surveys, e-mail surveys and internet surveys.

Performing a literature search means that you have a look at text materials that are generally available. This may include relevant skills publications, newspapers, magazines, encyclopaedias, annual reports, on-line specific reliable information and any other published materials. It may take long to do this but it is a very inexpensive method of gathering information. Using the web is fast, while library literature searches can take much longer. Be aware though that not all information online is reliable. Go to well-known sites to gather information as well as university sites. Many universities now have open source information that is reliable.

Face to face interviews and even informal talking with people is a good way to get information during the initial stages of a research project. Personal interviews are a way to get in-depth and detailed information. During personal interviews one person interviews another person to obtain personal or detailed information. It can be used to gather information that is not publicly available, or that is too new to be found in the literature. Although this kind of information is often helpful, it is not always 100% valid because it is highly subjective, even biased and might not be representative of the population or ideals.

A focus group can be used as an introductory research technique to explore various people's ideas and attitudes. This is a more formal method; a group of 6 to 20 people are invited to meet in a conference-room-like setting with a trained moderator. The moderator usually leads the group's discussion and keeps the focus on the topics that you want to explore. This process can take a number of weeks. Focus groups can also be conducted amongst peers and in a less formal manner. However, it should always be methodical and systematic. Their disadvantage is that the sample is usually small and may not be representative of the population in general.

Telephone surveys. A prepared script that is essentially the same as a written questionnaire is used. This method can reach a much larger sample of the population. However, unlike a mail survey (below), the telephone survey gives the researcher the chance to examine people's opinions in some detail.

Another popular and more modern method is a **mail survey**. They are ideal for large sample sizes, or when the sample comes from a wide geographic area. However, because there is no interviewer, there is no possibility of interviewer bias. The main disadvantage is the inability to explore respondents to get more detailed information.

Internet surveys are also a practical option and there are many free websites that allow you to put your questions online and e-mail them to a set of the population. While it is clearly the most cost-effective and fastest method of distributing a survey, there is a danger of bias: the demographic profile of the internet user does not represent the general population, although this is changing. Before doing an e-mail or internet survey, the researcher should carefully consider the effect that this bias might have on the results.

In unit 1 we looked at a range of learning resources, including print, electronic and human. We evaluated them for reliability and found that the internet must be used with caution because there are no controls. We must therefore make sure that we use only information from a reliable website.

3.4 Evaluate information for relevance

We have said that the information that is gathered must be relevant to the topic and the question. Note the following points in this regard:

Skimming will be a useful skill to evaluate the relevance on websites, in other words, where choices must be made between the substantial amounts of information that are available.
Scanning will be helpful on internet sites to search for key ideas that are relevant to the topic.

A good acronym to use to evaluate information is:
- **R**eliability
- **O**bjectivity
- **A**ccuracy
- **R**elevance

As regards reliability, you should keep the following in mind:
- Are these knowledgeable and acknowledged authors?

Ask questions:
- Are the author's credentials, such as schooling, occupation and position stated?
- Is the author acknowledged and considered to be well-informed in this field?
- Does the author have any connections to well know institutions such as universities or organisations?
- Is the publisher of good reputation?
- Can you contact the author?
- Have autonomous experts evaluated the quality of the information before it was published?
- Is the English of an excellent nature?

Objectivity should keep the following in mind:
- Objective and balanced sources
- Absence of conflicts of interest

Ask questions:
- Is the reporting objective or biased?
- Is the information balanced or one-sided?
- Is the information balanced or in line with formerly known information? Does the information seem to be exaggerated?
- Is the information and extensive and does it cover all aspects of the topic?
- Is the author's intent to persuade, convince or market something? Does this affect the content in any particular direction?

Accuracy should keep the following in mind:

- Updated sources
- Extensive, detailed and precise information
- Documentation and support from other sources

Ask questions:

- When was this source published and last updated? This includes internet information.
- Is the information based on facts or opinions? This is of special importance when using the internet.
- Is the information sufficient and detailed?
- Are there references or a bibliography that shows the author's research on the subject?
- Does the author name sources for statistics or "facts" which are used? Check these as well!
- Can the information be validated by at least two other sources?

Relevance has the following to keep in mind:

- Is it relevant to your topic?

Ask questions:

- Which topic areas does this resource cover?
- Is this relevant the information needed for the topic?
- Can you find the same in a scientific publication meant for academics or others who are well-informed in this field?

3.5 Classify, categorise and sort information

Simply put, **categorising** means **sorting** your research information into groups that work methodically. The categories in your research topic will be very specific and help you impose order in your findings.

Classifying involves **sorting** your research material into known, fixed classes.

For example: Classifying is a key skill in reading and doing research because it gets people to focus on

- what interests them
- what information they need to collect in your research
- what meets their specific research purpose
- what they can ignore

Processing the information relies on the following skills:

- **Key-words** are used when classifying material, doing summaries, and in making presentations.
- **Underlining** can be used when using internet printouts.
- The information gathered and processed by individual members is now put together and discussed in relation to the research question. Information should be arranged in groups, e.g. statistics, diagrams, evidence for one point of view, evidence against that point of view, unexpected information that was found, etc.

3.6 Analyse research findings and present them in the appropriate format

Always start with your research goals or the question that you formulated at first. Once you are doing the analysis of your research findings (that you might have obtained from questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, etc.), you should always by reviewing your research goals, i.e., the reason/question that you decided to research.

This is when you need to be connecting all of your research findings together and indicate how they stem from the research questions. This is when you make certain that your results allow you to present acceptable answers to your questions and to engage with the questions. Also be open-minded and show why some elements of the answers are satisfactory and others are not as satisfactory.

Introduce a brief argument (introduction) about the consistency and link between your findings and the topic you chose.

It is important that you indicate how your research findings add to or exceed some of the research of others, so that more may carry out similar research activities. Also be sure how your findings dovetail with other research. At all times be humble and modest by not making unproven assertions.

This can all be done roughly at first in order to formulate your thought direction. This is often not a once-off document and you may find yourself rewriting it a few times!

Once this is done you need to put this into an acceptable format:

Title page - title of report, your name, organisation, date of submission, name of tutor

Acknowledgements - optional

Contents page - chapters, appendices, tables, figures, illustrations

Executive summary – a summary and outline of your main findings including context, purpose, objectives, methods, main results, conclusions and recommendations for whoever is reading the document.

Introduction – including background, organisational context and circumstances leading to the investigation, the terms of reference, aims and objectives.

Literature review – This is where you will refer to all the authors and other contributors to your particular topic. It includes the theories, concepts, issues and research reports that have moulded your research questions and the approach you have chosen. This is where you place your own work into context.

Research methodology – You need to show that you have used systematic data collection and research methods. Also include a clear presentation of the findings using charts, graphs, etcetera where appropriate.

Including your analysis and interpretation of findings – all-inclusive analysis and interpretation of findings in a holistic and integrated manner. Construct a logical, consistent argument based on the findings which analyses the information in the light of your research objectives and the literature that you reviewed.

Conclusions – Sum up your conclusions which can be drawn for your main points. Remember they must be based on evidence. Also indicate how firm the conclusion is. Conclusions links the analysis of your findings to your recommendations

Recommendations – This flows from your conclusions and ensures actions for the future. They should be realistic, timely and cost-effective and be supported by an action plan.

Evaluation/personal reflections – This is what your personal learning has been as a result of your research.

Bibliography/Webliography – Always list the sources used, reference them properly and fully to avoid plagiarism, whether intentional or not.

Now that you know how to do this, gather in your group and decide if the information should in fact be presented as shown above or as an oral presentation with posters.

Class Activity 3: Doing basic research

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

Learning Unit 4
Writing texts for a range of communicative contexts

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to write texts for a range of communicative contexts, by successfully completing the following:

- Write/sign for a specified audience and purpose.

- Use language structures and features to produce coherent and cohesive texts for a wide range of contexts.

- Draft own writing/signing and edit to improve clarity and correctness.

Writing texts for a range of communicative contexts

During the course of your studies you will learn to write creatively and to study a wide range of documents and books. You will explore different ways of writing texts and will have to be able to read and write about a wide range of philosophies, beliefs and principles. This will enable you to gradually grow and understand a large variety of forms of writing.

This section will look in particular at how to write for a specified audience and purpose. This includes:

- purpose, audience and context
- selection of appropriate text
- selection of appropriate language
- structuring writing

4.1 Write for a specified audience and purpose

Many people feel intimidated when they have to produce a piece of writing, and you may be one of them. We may feel quite comfortable speaking to people, but when we have to write, it feels quite different. It is mostly just that we are more used to **speaking** than to **writing**. But still, there are occasions in our lives when we have to produce something in written format. Some of us may even want to write.

So the first thing to keep in mind is that writing is essentially speech that has been written down. And just as when you speak, there is a **context** - you are saying something to someone - so when you write, you are writing to a reader or an **audience** and you are writing for a **purpose**. The advantage is that writing is a process that gives you the chance to "get it right" – you can think about why you are writing, what you are going to write and how best to say it. You can make thoughtful choices, try things out, correct or change what you have written and finally produce the best piece of writing that you can. This section will start you on the process of becoming an effective writer.

We will use the word text to refer to any piece of writing that is presented for consideration. This includes writing of any length (from a single letter or word to a book).

More generally, the term text may be used to refer to any product that can be read, decoded (this means understanding any other kind of text e.g. picture) or deconstructed (when something is analysed to understand how it works). Thus, although we will be working mainly with written texts, other examples of 'text' are oral (spoken) text, a movie, a painting, or a chocolate wrapper.

When writing there are various formats that are used in order to bring the message across to your specific audience. They are as follows:

- **Narrative** - To narrate is to tell a story; it tells a sequence of events (how things happened in a particular order). Narration is not necessarily factual and may be written from the perspective of a character in the text.

- **Discursive** - Discursive writing tries to give both sides of a topic or issue. The way it is written covers all aspects or points of view by going back and forth

- **Reflective** - This is more of a personal response to an experience, situations, events or new information. It is an internal process of digesting information and writing your reaction to it.

- **Argumentative** - To argue is to present your opinions in a one-sided manner. Argumentative texts are intended to persuade and convince the audience of your opinion. This term can be used to define the action of justifying an opinion or thesis (giving good

reasons for) through reasoning or arguments, with the aim of changing the views of another person or merely communicating our own ideas

- **Descriptive** - Description is a style of writing which can be useful for a variety of purposes in order to paint a picture with words. It aims to show rather than tell the reader what something/someone is like, and uses careful chosen words to describe something in detail in order to create a response or understanding. The term "in mind's eye" can be used as this is what it sets out to do – describe something for the reader to "see".

- **Expository** - Exposition is a type of oral or written communication that is used to explain, describe and give information. The person who is writing wants to fully explain something and assumes that the reader does not have knowledge or prior understanding of the topic that is being discussed.

- **Transactional** - This form of writing is more used in a work context. It includes business letters, e-mails, advertising and such. It thus has a specific function.

When you write text for any audience, it is important that you keep the various forms of text writing in mind. This will allow your text to have far more impact when focused on the target audience.

4.1.1 Use critical thinking skills as strategies for planning the writing

We are now going to look briefly at how to structure writing in order to convey a message clearly.

Consider the following. A medical aid organisation has posted a new membership card to each member, together with a sticky plastic covering. The following instructions for covering the card came in the letter:

Please use the attached plastic sticker to cover the card. Cut out the card along the dotted line. First you should make sure you sign it before you cut it and cover it with the plastic. This card is proof of your membership. If your signature is not sealed under the plastic cover, the card is not valid.

Are these instructions clear? If you follow them, will you end up with what you need?
Notice that the first instruction tells you to cover the card with the plastic sticker.
Then it tells you that you should first cut it. Then it instructs you to sign it. Near the end it explains what the card is for. Lastly it warns you of the importance of signing the card before covering it with plastic – but after you may already have invalidated it.
Of course, it is advisable to read instructions through completely before starting a task, but even so, the instructions should be presented in the exact order in which the steps of the task are to be done. If you followed these instructions as they were given, you would have stuck the plastic on before you had signed it – and the card would be invalid.

What genre of writing is this? This is expository writing as it is an explanation of how the process to assemble a membership card is performed.

Learning task

The following piece of writing expresses the writer's opinions on the lotto.

"So why do people throw money away week after week? They would know that their money would grow steadily. Instead, it seems that they would rather live with the probability of kissing it goodbye every week. The chances of winning the lotto are very slim. After all, if they put that same money in a bank account they could bet on one thing with certainty."

It is confusing to read because the sentences are disorganised. The writer has jotted down a series of thoughts, but has not planned properly.

Rearrange the sentences to make the meaning clearer for the reader. (You may need to make minor final adjustments to the wording, as in the above example, but you should not make major changes to the sentences.)

Can you identify the genre of the text?

Note: Any minor changes in wording are shown in italics.

The genre is given after the passage.

The chances of winning the lotto are very slim. So why do people throw money away week after week? After all, if they put the same money in a bank account, they could bet on one thing with certainty. They would know that their money would grow steadily. Instead, it seems that they would rather live with the probability of kissing it goodbye every week.

Genre – Argumentative

4.1.2 Ensure that the purpose for writing, the target audience and the context are clear
Selection of appropriate text

Consider the following e-mail:

Hi Mom
I am writing to tell you of my latest disaster. I am in bed with one hell of a sore ankle! Poor me - wish you were her to spoil me with nice food and a mug of coffee. I went and twisted the stupid thing while I was out collecting plant samples with my mates Ronnie and George and now I am in big trouble. I had two mega projects due today and with all the drama I have been unable to complete them so I have to write notes to the lecturers and tell them the whole sad story.
Anyway I guess it could be worse - remember when I broke my arm when I was just a silly little kid?
Love
Roberto
PS If you could send me some koeksisters to help heal the ankle that would be great!!

Now compare it with the following note to a lecturer:

<div align="right">
Harfield House Res
Leliefontein Street
Worcester
25 April 2005
</div>

Dear Ms Adams,
Please excuse me from lectures for the next two days. Please could I also have a two day extension on my project on Fynbos of the Overberg Region? I injured my ankle while doing yesterday's plant practical and have been unable to get to the resource centre.

I do have a doctor's certificate which I will give you when I return to lectures on the 2nd May.

Yours sincerely,
Roberto Jones

Both are written by the same person, in response to the same set of events, but what are the differences between these two pieces of writing?

There are differences in **style:** the e-mail is informal, chatty and colloquial (that means it uses everyday language).The letter on the other hand is formal, serious and distant.

There are differences in **form**: the e-mail has no address, and is not as carefully punctuated. The letter has an address, is well punctuated and ends with a formal salutation (greeting).

Now let us explain why these pieces of writing are so different.

Consider the **context, audience** and **purpose** of each text, and think about how these factors affect what is written and how it is expressed.

Context refers to the circumstances, or environment, in which a text is produced and/or read. This can refer to the time of writing (anything from time of day to historical period), the place (from physical space to geographical location), as well as to the social and/or cultural environment in which the text operates. The context can impact significantly on the way a text is produced or read, as we shall see.

Audience refers to the reader or 'consumer' of the text.

The term usually refers to an intended audience, i.e. the target reader for whom the writer produces the text. This may be a specific person or a wider audience, for example when something is written for publication.

Purpose: this is what motivates the production of the text.

Firstly, we will look at the context of each piece. A careful reading of the text can tell us quite a lot about the context in which it was produced.

The context for the example of the e-mail is a son writing to his mother. He is informing her that he had an accident. He is also writing from the point of view of a son missing the care he would get at home. The letter, however, is written in the context of a student asking to be excused from lectures and due dates.

Remember, when you produce a piece of writing, your reader may be picking up a range of cues (hints) regarding the context in which you are writing that piece. You should therefore be aware of the implications (intentional or otherwise) of what you write.

What about the audience and purpose? How do they affect what is written and how it is written?

The **audience** for the first piece – the e-mail – is his mother, clearly someone he knows intimately. So what he writes about is detail of his accident and how he is feeling, as well as his nostalgia for home. By analysing his writing we can detect an informality that reminds us of spoken language. Roberto's e-mail reads like a chat with his mum.

> **Your writing needs to suit your audience.**

What is his **purpose**? His purpose is to inform his mother of what has happened to him. Partly it is also to ask for sympathy and to make a request for a gift.

The **audience** of the second text is a lecturer. This person is able to excuse Roberto from lectures and give him an extension of his due date for one of his projects.

Thus we can see how the writer chooses a form of writing that is suited to the context, audience and purpose of the text.

4.1.3 Select the text-type, style, and register appropriate to audience, purpose and context

Selection of appropriate language

Using appropriate language is a critical factor in writing. You have done work on issues such as sexism, racism and ageism. You are aware that using language that is insensitive to these and other socio-cultural issues is inappropriate.

In the same way, using a particular form of writing or type of text is critical to the message that is being conveyed. Choosing an inappropriate form for a piece of writing may have an effect that is entirely unintended.

What happens if an inappropriate text type, style and register are used?

We can determine the effects of this if we try to write each of Roberto's texts in a different form. Let us see how each example might work (or not work!).

First, consider the piece written by Roberto to his mother. It happens that his mother used to be the owner of a small business. Consider how appropriate it would be for Roberto to write her a business letter in the form of an e-mail:

The Director
Ajax Supplies
P.O. Box 455
Cape Town
8000

Dear Ms Jones
INFORMATION REGARDING TEMPORARY DISABILITY

You are aware that I am currently studying plant production at Boland College. This necessitates undertaking practical field trips with fellow students. During one such field trip I unfortunately met with a small accident which resulted in some minor damage to my ankle. This in turn necessitates my being away from lectures and failing to hand in two projects.
This accident has also caused me to recall how in the past you displayed a sympathetic manner towards me under similar circumstances. Ideally I would appreciate such care at the present juncture.
I have also recently recalled a prior occasion on which I broke my arm some years ago.
Finally I wish to place an order for some koeksisters to be delivered as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely
(Mr.) R Jones

Roberto's e-mail to his mother is inappropriate in the following ways:

The **form** of greeting is formal (although as an e-mail it does not put in details of address).The **content** leaves out details that would be relevant to a mother.

The **style**: uses an over-formal register, vocabulary (present juncture, necessitates), syntax (You are aware…, finally I wish, this in turn…)

Clearly, this letter is totally inappropriate to the context, the audience (his mother as mother, not his mother as businesswoman) and the purpose (to share his feelings and make a very personal request, not to make a business proposal).
This is, of course, unlikely to happen. But let us consider Roberto's letter to the lecturer.

Let us suppose that the context were not as simple as we first assumed. What would happen if the relationship between Roberto and the lecturer had another side to it?

Let us now suppose that Roberto and the lecturer are members of the same church and know each other quite well as they have served on the church youth group committee together for two years. How could that affect the way Roberto writes his letter?

4.1.4 Select and use language appropriate to socio-cultural sensitivities

When you are writing for audiences that are different from your own culture, means that you are sensitive and aware of this. A culturally sensitive person would understand other countries' traditions and ways of life, or attempt to learn and apply new understandings. As a culturally sensitive author you attempt to be free from prejudices and preconceptions about other cultures.

This means that regardless of what you think or feel you need to put aside your own prejudice about a particular culture. Your research skills that you learned earlier will come in handy here, as you may research a bit more if you know that you are aiming your text at someone who could be different from you.

4.1.5 Ensure that writing is well-structured and conveys its message clearly

A well-structured piece of writing traditionally has an introduction, a body of paragraphs with topics and supporting information as well as a conclusion. Language must not be ambiguous (vague) and the audience and style must be kept in mind.

In the introduction, you should clearly state the subject you are going to deal with, the narrowed topic, as well as the viewpoint you are taking throughout the document. The introduction and conclusions do not always need to be labelled as such, but they need to be there.

When writing paragraphs you need to keep it to one relevant sub-topic. This must be clear at the beginning. Keep a clear relationship to the main topic of your document; if not, either the paragraph should be removed, or the main topic should be revised.

Use complete sentences – this is becoming very relevant in the age of text messaging (SMS). We are quickly losing the art of communicating by means of text. Except in extraordinary circumstances, sentences in the main text must be complete, i.e., they must have a subject and a verb, so that they express an entire thought, not just a fragment or the beginning of a thought.

Punctuation is part and parcel of conveying your idea across. Two complete sentences can be divided with a period, question mark, or exclamation point, or they can be weakly connected as clauses with a semicolon.

In more formal writing section titles are used. These introduce what information the audience is expected to gather from the text below it. The titles allow your audience to scan through your document quickly.

Everything important goes in your introduction and conclusion! These sections create the ideas at the beginning and your final thoughts at the end, so these sections should be able to stand alone with the core of your writing.

4.2 Use language structures and features to produce texts

In this section we will look at how to use language structures and features in ways that help us produce coherent and cohesive texts. We will look at various writing contexts as we do this. We will focus on sentence lengths, types and complexities.

We will then move on to look at how to use paragraphs. Finally, we will look at the overall structure of a piece of writing, and pay particular attention to the conclusion of a text.

In this unit there will be relatively little theory - you will, however, be asked to do a fair amount of writing on your own.

This unit will look in particular at how to use language structures and features to produce cohesive texts. This includes:

- coherent writing
- sentences: lengths, types and complexities
- paragraphs

4.2.1 Express meaning clearly through the use of a range of sentence structures, lengths and types

Sentences – lengths, types and complexities

As writers, there is a range of ways that we can structure our sentences. Let us look at short simple sentences.

Technically, a **simple** sentence is one which contains a single verb (or action word). Generally a simple sentence is relatively **short;** e.g. "Nelson Mandela is admired worldwide." "He still travels widely."

The term **compound** is used to describe two simple sentences that are joined by using a common joining word such as 'but' or 'and'; e.g. "Nelson Mandela is admired worldwide and he still travels widely." The word **complex**, which as we know means the opposite of simple, is used to describe **longer**, more complicated sentences; e.g. "Nelson Mandela, who is still admired worldwide, manages to find time in his busy schedule, to still travel widely."

4.2.2 Use paragraph conventions

Paragraphs

We are now going to move on to the use of **paragraphs**. You have already done a fair amount of work with paragraphs when you did the brainstorming exercise, but we now focus on the conventions of paragraph writing.

A **paragraph** is a section of writing that consists of one or more sentences; begins on a new line, and contains a distinct idea or the words of one speaker; e.g. "The essay on substance abuse contained eight distinct paragraphs." Paragraphs are used in order to obtain logical progression through a text. They can also be used to show cause and effect and contrast.

The examples you were given earlier on in the section, when we were dealing with sentences, showed texts which were divided up into paragraphs. Look back at these before you read through the next example.

Example:
Read through the following extract from a text on Communication Theory. As you read, be aware of where each new paragraph begins.

Perceptual barriers

Perception refers to how we understand or see situations and people as a result of our personal desires, views and values. Perceptual barriers refer to situations in which people struggle to communicate well as a result of these differences. So when we communicate with one another, we need to keep in mind that perception plays an important part in how the message will be received.

Different people can interpret the same message in different ways. In the work environment, all people do not share the same view and will have different perceptions about how things need to be done. These differences stem from a wide variety of factors, which influence the way we look at and experience life. Some of our perceptions may be sexist, racist or elitist.

For example, the junior assistant might have a very creative idea, which is radically different to what the company has been doing. The manager, who is used to the old way of running the

company, might not even pay attention to this idea if the assistant has little experience, is a woman, or has a different cultural background.

However, if they share their thoughts and ideas, they might come up with a practical solution, where they combine the idea with the manager's experience to be more effective in their company.

You need to be sensitive, understanding and tolerant when people differ from you. You need to realise that your way of thinking and doing is not necessarily the only way or the best way. You should practise good listening and negotiating skills when you deal with people who have different perceptions.

Can you see how each paragraph contains one single main idea?

- Paragraph 1 defines what is meant by perception.

- Paragraph 2 explains differences in perception.

- Paragraph 3 gives an example of how a barrier to perception might arise.

- Paragraph 4 gives a possible solution to such a barrier.

- Paragraph 5 gives a brief, general overview of how to avoid barriers to perception.

How can you ensure that when you write texts your paragraphs progress logically and promote coherence and cohesion? In the examples that follow we will look at ways in which to arrange paragraphs logically.

Let us do another example of how to logically sequence paragraphs.

We can also use paragraphs to compare ideas or points. Look at the following example:

Let us say you had been asked to write a brief text as a filler for the company magazine on something to do with contrast in nature.

- You decide to write an article on colours of leaves.

- You choose green and autumnal colours as your examples.

- You write a brief description of these.

- You then contrast each of the types you have chosen.

Your finished text might look something like this:

Colours are an important part of all of our lives. Imagine how dull it would be to live in a totally grey world, with only different shades to enliven our lives. Different colours are used to represent different moods. Colours abound in nature from the brilliant hues of various flowers to the more subtle shades of leaves of which we will look at two examples.

The first example is the most common leaf colour of green. Of course we all know that the green in leaves is caused by chlorophyll, which is used by the plant to manufacture carbohydrate sugars from water and carbon dioxide in the process known as photosynthesis. Not all leaves are green; many have additional pigments that produce colours other than green despite the presence of chlorophyll, and some may lack chlorophyll in all or part.

The brilliant autumn colours characteristic of the leaves of many plants result from the presence of accessory leaf pigments that normally assist the plant during photosynthesis by capturing specific wavelengths of sunlight. These pigments, called carotenoids, become visible when the leaf dies in the autumn.

Which is your favourite colour for a leaf? Is it the bright green we associate with summer and spring or the more muted yet still varied colours in autumn? Or does this depend on your mood? Do you sometimes just have days when everything simply seems grey?

Hopefully not! Go out there and enjoy our rainbow world!

Do you see how each paragraph is used for contrast?

4.3 Draft own writing and edit to improve clarity and correctness

In this section we will be looking, in some detail, at how you can use drafting and editing to improve your own writing. At all times you must remember that the purpose and audience are essential aspects to consider when it comes to your own writing.
What do we mean when we say you will learn to draft written texts?

A **draft** is a preliminary version of a piece of writing such as a speech, essay, or report. In other words it is the work we do before we actually complete a piece of text. To **edit** means to prepare a text by correcting errors and ensuring clarity and accuracy.

This section will look in particular at how to draft your own writing and edit to improve clarity and correctness. This includes:

- writing: purpose, context and audience
- grammar features
- consistency
- logic and unity
- editing out errors
- removing offensive language
- layout and presentation options

4.3.1 Ensure that writing produced is appropriate to audience, purpose and context

Ensure that the text you produce is appropriate to your audience, the purpose of the message and the context in which you are producing the text. As you have seen, a letter to your mom will differ clearly from a letter to your manager in terms of format, tone and register.

Improve the text through corrections on the original

Once you have composed the text, you need to edit it and make corrections to ensure that it achieves its purpose and creates the correct impression.

4.3.2 Redraft to achieve logical sequencing of ideas and overall unity

Now let us look at how we can achieve the logical sequencing of ideas and overall unity through redrafting.

What do we mean when we talk about a **"logical sequence"**? This refers to the way ideas follow one another in a way that makes sense to the reader. Sometimes you can have very good ideas about a topic but because these are not presented in a well thought out way, the meaning of what you are writing about, gets lost.
It is very important to make sure that your main points are arranged in a sensible and logical way. For example, if you were trying to explain to someone how to use a lamp, you would start by telling them to check whether or not it was plugged in because that is the logical place to start. It is the same principle you should follow when you write a longer text – the ideas must flow logically.

4.3.3 Check grammar, diction, sentence and paragraph structure

Now let us look at how sentence and paragraph structure should be checked for consistency.

Consistency means the ability to maintain a particular standard or repeat a particular task with as little difference as possible. In other words it means to maintain an even and equal standard.

Grammar

Knowing basic grammar terms such as verb, noun, adjective, adverb, phrase and clause is important in order to be able to analyse and improve your language presentation. English may have simpler rules than those of French, German, for instance, but questions could still arise regarding correctness and clarity of your sentences while writing. And because writing is a process that demands a considerable mental effort, most writers tend to accidentally misuse the grammar rules and make common mistakes.

You should be aware of potential problem areas when you apply the grammar rules of verb tenses: (e.g. did vs have done), subject-verb agreement (e.g. The results show vs The result shows), pronoun usage (e.g. he, his, him, himself), word order (e.g. subject-verb-object), sentence fragments and run-ons, sentence variety and the use of determiners (e.g. a, the, this, my), prepositions (e.g. in, on, at, during), gerunds (words ending in *ing*) and many more. Should "isn't" or "doesn't" be used? When is an s with apostrophe really necessary? All these are issues which good writing has to address in order to appear professional, well-spoken and knowledgeable.

Diction

Your choice of words or diction is also imperative for correctness, clearness, or effectiveness to bring your message across. The English language is rich with synonyms for common words and your language could be enlarged by being aware of them, the danger is of course that the simplicity of your message could be lost by you language being too flowery!

To quote: "*Your diction, the exact words you choose and the settings in which you use them, means a great deal to the success of your writing. While your language should be appropriate to the situation, that generally still leaves plenty of room for variety. Skilful writers mix general and particular, abstract and concrete, long and short, learned and commonplace, connotative and neutral words to administer a series of small but telling surprises. Readers stay interested because they don't know exactly what's coming next.*"

(Joe Glaser, Understanding Style: Practical Ways to Improve Your Writing. Oxford Univ. Press, 1999)

Sentence and paragraph structure

How does this apply to sentences and paragraphs? Think of length and tone of sentences. If the purpose of a piece of writing was to tell a story (narrative text) it would probably be appropriate to use quite long sentences. This would also be true in descriptive writing. If the sentences were **inconsistent** in length and tone they would become unclear.

4.3.4 Identify and adapt/remove inappropriate or potentially offensive language

We are now going to look at ensuring that you do not use inappropriate or offensive language when you are writing. It is important in any form of communication to use appropriate and inoffensive language. This is however, particularly true when you deal with people in positions of authority over you and in formal settings. Friends may forgive you if they feel insulted, but strangers or our seniors will rarely be so forgiving!

What do we mean by offensive language?

Offensive language is language which is upsetting, insulting, or irritating; it is language that causes anger, resentment, or moral outrage; e.g. "My parents find all the swearing on TV very offensive"; or "Aneesa finds people making fun of Islam very offensive".

In an earlier unit you looked at examples of racism, sexism, ageism, and other prejudices, biases and stereotypes. All language that reflects **a negative bias towards a group of people is offensive and inappropriate**. You must avoid using such language in your writing. We also mentioned in an earlier unit that extremely offensive language is classified as "hate speech" (even if it is written) and you can be prosecuted for using it.

How can we ensure that we do not use offensive language? One way is to think how we would feel if we read about our own cultural, sporting, family, or economic level being described in insulting terms. We would feel upset and possibly even angry!

Obfuscation refers to making something obscure or unclear, especially by making it unnecessarily complicated; e.g. "The directions on how to get to the party were obfuscated by so much detail, that we got lost."

Let us now look at how the excessive use of jargon can result in inappropriate writing. You have learnt about jargon in an earlier unit so we will just quickly refresh your memory here.

Jargon refers to specialist language that is used by a particular group, profession, or culture, especially when the words and phrases are not understood or used by other people; e.g. "The doctor used so much medical jargon that the patient did not understand what she was saying".

Jargon should rather not be used when writing something for the general public.

There is a great deal of difference between writing a text full of jargon for a skateboarding article and writing a report full of jargon for fellow students who know nothing about the sport.

Let us imagine you are a semi-professional juggler and magician in your spare time. You are asked to write an article for a magazine entitled "Magician's Tricks!" You are also asked to submit an article on your hobbies for the student magazine.

4.3.5 Experiment with different layouts and options for presentation appropriate to the nature and purpose of the task

Now let us look at how you can experiment with different layouts and options for presentation. These options need to be appropriate to the nature and purpose of the task.

With the development of word processing and computers we now have a wide range of formats available to us when we need to present written texts. You should feel free to experiment with various things such as fonts, font size, italics, the bold function and space bar.

Remember though to always keep the context, purpose and audience in mind.

EXAMPLE
Look at these examples of different layouts. Each one has an A and a B section.
Decide in each case which layout and presentation you think is the most appropriate.

Friendly e-mail:
A)

Hi everyone, this is just a quick e-mail to let you all know I am back from my fabulous holiday. Zanzibar is really the most fascinating place I have ever been to. The food was fantastic, so exotic, and the sea was this really deep turquoise colour. It was really outstanding. Bye for now, Kind regards Pieter.

B)
Hi everyone!

This is just a quick e-mail to let you all know I am back from my **fabulous** holiday.

Zanzibar is really the most fascinating place I have ever been to. The food was fantastic, (so exotic) and the sea was this **really** deep turquoise colour - it was really outstanding!!
Bye for now!

Kind regards
Pieter

A) Fax to a supplier from whom you have purchased seedlings:

Fax to: Mr Abrahams
Fax from: Zelda Dlamini
Date: 20th June 2005

Subject: Details

Please could you supply me with your bank details. I need these so that I can make a deposit into your account. What I need is detailed below:-

Name of Bank:-
Name of Branch:-
Branch code:-
Account name:-
Account number:-
Account type:-

[Savings/Current/Transmission/Credit Card]
Please fax these details to me as soon as possible at (028) 678 3469

Many thanks.

Zandi Dlamini
Boland College
Phone: (028) 678 3451

B) Fax to: Mr Abrahams

Fax from: Ms Dlamini
Date: 20th June 2005
Subject: Banking details
Please could you supply me with your Bank details. I need these so that I can make a
deposit into your account. What I need is detailed below:-
Name of Bank, Name of branch, Branch Code, Account Name, Account Number, and
Account Type (Savings, Current, Transmission, or Credit Card)
Please fax these details to me as soon as possible at (028) 678 3469.
Many thanks.
Zelda Dlamini

Boland College

Phone: 021 6783451

In the first example, B is probably the most appropriate. The e-mail is better set out and conveys greater enthusiasm by using exclamation marks and a casual font with the occasional word in bold for emphasis.

Do you agree? Think of reasons for your answer.

In the second example of the fax, A is the most appropriate choice in terms of presentation.

- It is clearly laid out.

- The font is appropriate for a formal written communication.

- The use of bold highlights important points.

- The use of brackets and spaces in the fax and phone numbers gives greater clarity.

- The font size would be easily visible if transmitted by fax.

On the other hand the example, B, would not be an ideal form of presentation for a fax:

- The font is quite difficult to read and would become even more unclear when transmitted by fax.

- The font is too "fussy" for a formal written communication.

- The information required is not clearly laid out.

- Phone and fax numbers would be difficult to read.

You must feel free to experiment but always bear the following questions in mind:

- What is the context of your presentation?

- Who is the intended audience?

- What is the purpose of your written communication?

- Does your presentation lead to greater clarity?

You may like to develop a particular presentation style for each of the following:

- e-mails to friends

- e-mails to peers

- e-mails or letters to lecturers

- business letters

- faxes to friends

- faxes for business purposes

- reports for academic purposes

- any other form of written presentations, such as essays, that you do regularly

Class Activity 4: Writing texts for a range of communicative contexts
Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

Learning Unit 5
Functioning and interacting in a team

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to function in a team and interact successfully in oral communication, by successfully completing the following:

- Take up responsibilities in the team and apply group work conventions in learning situations.

- Ensure that team work results in meaningful product or outcomes.

- Ensure that active participation takes place in group learning situations.

- Make contributions to group work that are appropriate to the task and nature of the group, and promote effective communication and teamwork.

- Participate in interviews, formal meetings, discussions, debates or negotiations to successfully establish a relationship appropriate to the context, and provide a non-threatening opportunity for participants to share information.

- Practise conflict management and negotiating techniques in a defined context.

Functioning and interacting in a team

In order for a team to be effective we should consider the interaction between people from diverse cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds.

Interaction and co-operation can be shown by team members':

- willingness to learn from each other
- recognising that everyone brings strengths to the group
- willingness to share ideas, power and expertise
- willingness to stay focused and staying on task

5.1 Function in a team

The main focus of this unit is on how to function in a team.

Much of this unit has been covered before when you were doing group-work in a range of contexts, so we will merely refer to the appropriate skills where relevant.

5.1.1 Take up responsibilities in the team and apply group work conventions

Effective group work requires all members of the group participate fully. Not everyone has the same personality, however, and some people in a group are more dominant and others are more modest.

Turn-taking and rotation of roles

To make sure that everyone does participate, group work should follow certain conventions. You will recall that in the Class Activities we made use of these conventions, when we gave each person in the group a role to perform, and we also said that each member should support the others in their roles, and that the roles would rotate in another project.

Conducting

This role includes the organisation of information sessions; training workshops; brainstorming and/or mind mapping activities. The activities included in this role may vary.

Chairing

Chairing the team's learning activities means that you will have to guide them. Make sure that they stay on track with the assignments, discussions and other activities. This role also means that you would take the role of Chairperson at all the meetings that are held.

Recording

If you are given the role of recording, you are responsible for recording the milestones or achievements of the team and/or the individuals within the team. You would also record attendance at the various meetings or functions that your team attends. Your function would also include the recording of all assignments completed and submitted, together with the uncompleted tasks and/or assignments.
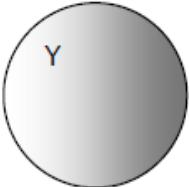
Reporting

One member of your team will be required to report back to Management on the progress, the activities and problems that the team may have faced.

5.1.2 Ensure that team work results in meaningful products or outcomes

Consensus is a form of decision making which tries to reach the most inclusive position possible. It is often contrasted with the system of voting in which people take a yes-or-no position. Reaching consensus means reaching a broad agreement in which everyone makes a slight compromise, but where there is enough common ground for everyone to be "satisfied enough" to go forward.

Consider the following situation: X needs to make a decision with Y[7]

DECISION A
DECISION B
DECISION C
In Decision A, we see that X and Y have come into contact in their negotiation, but they have ended up with nothing in common.
In Decision B, there is a small overlap where they share some common ground, but most of X and Y are not in agreement with each other.
In Decision C, there is still some part of each that is not in full agreement, but we can see that they have reached a point where they share a lot of common ground.
Which of these is a consensus decision?

Consensus has been emphasised throughout this module as it is a strategy for group work which allows us all to stay included in the group, agree to disagree on smaller issues, but to still co-operate on the basis of a broad agreement.

An example of consensus was when, in planning our project, we reached agreement on our planned timeframe for completing the project.

5.2 Interact/participate successfully with oral communication in group learning situations

Communication can be defined as "the exchange of thoughts, messages or information" (Encarta encyclopaedia, 2000).

Let us explore that definition a bit further. When we communicate, we give or exchange information by, for example, speaking (oral) or writing. To communicate may mean that we show or transmit a thought or feeling by writing, speech, or a gesture (non-verbal communication), so that this thought or feeling is clearly understood. It may also refer to people understanding each other.

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[7] Sourced by Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance from AgriSeta learning material

Promote effective communication and teamwork

We have worked in pairs and groups throughout this unit. As pointed out before, this encourages our creative thinking and our ability to learn. Sometimes participating in a group means that active listening takes place.

5.2.1 Make contributions to group work that are appropriate to the task and nature of the group

From the definitions given in the above example, we can see that **interaction** is a key concept in communication. When you communicate orally, you always do so with an **audience** - a person (or number of people) who hears what you are attempting (trying) to communicate. Notice that we have used the word attempting - not all communication is successful or effective. When people fail to communicate successfully or effectively, this leads to misunderstandings and misinterpretation.

Our aim should always be to communicate as clearly as we can. To do this we need to understand a number of different elements about communication.

Firstly, we need to understand that the person/people we are attempting to communicate with (our audience) is very important. Generally, even if we are quite shy, we have a number of friends or family members with whom we communicate in a relaxed and easy manner. These are small informal groups.

5.2.2 Participate in interviews

Now, let us look at groups that are found in the work or study place. Basically, groups have one or more of the following features:

- Groups consist of a number of people who define themselves as belonging to the particular group.
- Groups generally meet regularly or for a specific length of time.

The group consists of individuals who interact with one another (both verbally and non-verbally).

- Different members take on different roles in relation to one another.
- A group generally has a well-defined aim and a specific task to perform.
- There is generally a group leader.

A group has a **specific purpose** - the purpose might be to decide on a method for completing an assignment, to discuss a new hydration scheme in a particular area, or any other well-defined aim.

A group has an **agenda** - a reason for meeting and a list of items that need to be discussed in order to fulfil its purpose.

A group will have a **procedure** to follow and a set schedule – for example the group may decide to have a preliminary meeting to discuss possible dates for reseeding and then to have follow-up meetings to finalise the procedure to be followed when doing the reseeding.

When a group is **meeting**, it is important that developments in the group are monitored – someone needs to record what is happening in the process.

A group must maintain **focus** - people often get side-tracked in a group and wander off the topic that should be discussed. Generally the group leader needs to ensure that the group is reminded of why they are meeting and that the focus is maintained.

A group needs to **draw conclusions.** It is pointless if people are just having a general discussion if no conclusion is being drawn. For example, the group may conclude that certain time periods are unsuitable for reseeding and that they will first have to do some research on the topic, then meet to finalise a date.

In order for effective communication to take place in a group setting, constant **feedback** must be given to members of the group so that they know how they are performing and how the group is progressing.

All members of a group need to feel a **sense of ownership** in the group's final decisions for them to feel that they have done an effective job. If this does not happen, members of the group will feel bored and left out and they may not want to communicate.

1. **How do we ensure that the contribution you make to the group is appropriate to the specific task at hand?**

   In order to do this, you must keep in mind what the specific task is. When you are sure your contributions is related to the specific task, then go ahead and make your point clearly and concisely.

2. **How do we ensure that the contribution you make is appropriate to the nature of the group?**

   When you are going to make a contribution think of who your audience is. Is what you wish to say appropriate in terms of the nature of the group? If you feel that it is, then make your point clearly and concisely.

3. **Most importantly, how do we ensure that you promote effective communication, which in turn will promote effective teamwork**?

   Remember that your audience is critical. Always bear in mind that for communication to be effective, your audience needs to understand exactly what it is you are trying to say.

   Communication is effective when the message you wish to convey is the message your audience receives.

   If you are not sure whether your communication has been clearly understood, try asking a question. The answer will usually indicate whether your communication has been effective. Effective teamwork happens when members of the team communicate their ideas and feelings clearly and listen to one another in an attentive and respectful manner.

Interviews and interview techniques

We have looked at group situations in some detail. We will now look at effective communication in an **interview** situation.

An interview can be described as a specific type of interpersonal communication.

The word "inter" means "between". There are generally two people present at an interview - the interviewer, who is conducting the interview; and the interviewee, who is being interviewed. This person can also be called the "respondent". An interview is a process in which the interviewer obtains ideas, information and feelings from the interviewee for a very specific purpose.

Interviews take place in a wide variety of contexts. In the workplace, for example, you may conduct an interview with a prospective farm worker in order to assess his/her suitability for a position you wish to fill.

Certain key elements need to be in place to ensure that an interview is an effective form of oral communication.

An interview is an oral communication in which it is important that:

- a relationship that is appropriate to the context is successfully established
- a non-threatening opportunity for participants to share information is provided

What do we mean by this?

If it is important that the people you are interviewing know that what you are discussing will not be used against them, or spread around. For that you need to gain their trust. You could do this by informing the interviewees that what they tell you will remain confidential.

If it is important that the person you are interviewing gives clear and concise answers. You should then provide or create a context in which you maintain a clear focus on the issue at hand. You could do this by requesting the interviewee to be as precise as possible when answering the questions and to include only relevant information.

If you wish to communicate effectively with the interviewee in an interview situation it is very important that you create a non-threatening environment. Your tone of voice and manner should be friendly and encouraging and you should do your very best to put the interviewee at ease. When interviewees do not feel threatened or that they are not under attack they will be more willing to share information. Communication will then be more effective.

Now let us look at some key elements of an effective interview. For an effective interview you need to take the following steps:

- Draw up a plan of what information you wish to receive and how you are going to do this.

- Do some background research into the person you are interviewing; at the very least you need to know key facts like his/her name; age status; job position; etc.

- Sequence or order your questions in a logical manner. In order to do this you must be very clear about what information you wish to obtain (elicit) from the interviewee.

- Be prepared to be flexible - if an interviewee gives an unexpected answer or answers a question in such a way that your sequence is disrupted you must be flexible enough to accept the answer and still ensure that you maintain your focus. This means you must listen attentively and actively to all the responses.

- Organise the responses you have obtained in a clear and logical manner.

- Draw conclusions in a precise way. At the end of the interview you must know exactly what information or data you have elicited and what you can conclude on the basis of this data.

5.2.3 Participate in formal meetings

Thus far we have looked at two forms of oral communication, namely that which occurs in groups and that which occurs in the interview situation. We are now going to look at a third occasion during which oral communication plays a vital role, namely in meetings.

In almost all work environments one has to participate in meetings. The purpose of different meetings may vary, or you could be asked to attend regular set meetings on a weekly or monthly basis. As in all forms of oral communication, it is important that your participation in these meetings is effective. It is vital that everyone clearly understands the purpose and context of the meeting.

In order to participate in a formal meeting in an appropriate manner you must be familiar with some key concepts related to meeting procedures and organisation. Some of these are listed below.

Notice of the meeting: This is an oral or written communication that indicates the intention to hold a meeting; it will usually also stipulate the date, time and venue of the meeting.

Agenda: This is a prepared list of items that are to be discussed at a meeting; an agenda will usually contain apologies from members who are unable to attend; confirmation of minutes (the written record) from the previous meeting; matters arising from the minutes; a list of items to be discussed at the present meeting; any other business; conclusion.

Committee: This is a group of people who reports to a higher authority.

Committee members can be voted for or appointed.

> The Chairperson appointed Ms Mohammed, Mr. Parker, Ms. September and Mr. Plaatjies to form a committee to compare the efficiency of different planting methods for grapes.

Minutes: This is the official written record of who was present at the meeting and what was said by people at the meeting; it will also record decisions made for action to be taken.

> "After much discussion during which Ms Le Grange expressed her dissatisfaction with the present arrangements for staff transport, the meeting decided to purchase a dedicated mini-van that would operate after hours, transporting workers to their homes"

Point of order: This is a way of calling the attention of the Chairperson to the fact that you think an irregularity in procedure has taken place. The Chairperson is required to decide whether this is indeed so or not.

Chairperson: This is the person who runs (or presides over) the meeting. When addressing a point to the chairperson you are required to be formal and use the words "Madam Chair" or "Mr Chairman". The chairperson is in the leadership role during the meeting. He or she has to control the proceedings; he or she has to call for apologies; confirm the minutes of the previous meeting; make sure the agenda is followed; rule on points of order; exercise the casting vote in the case of a voting tie; sum up the decisions of the meeting; confirm the date of the next meeting and declare the meeting closed.

Suggestion for learners:
Think of a recent work meeting you have attended. How could the Chairperson have improved his/her chairing? Write up a few guidelines for "good chairing practice"'.

Motion: This is a proposal that is put to the meeting regarding an action or in order to show a certain attitude. Motions are proposed as positive statements.

> Example:
> Mr. Habib proposed the following motion: all plant order forms to be signed by the treasurer. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bezuidenhout. The meeting indicated by a show of hands that it was in favour and the motion was adopted.

These are some of the main components of a formal meeting. It is important that you understand all of these in order to participate effectively and appropriately in a formal meeting. Remember, this is another example of oral communication and you have to clearly understand the context for effective participation to take place. In this way you will ensure that you make a valuable contribution towards realising the objectives of the meeting.

5.2.4 Participate in discussions and debates

We are now going to move on to look at other forms of oral communication, namely **discussion**, **debate** and **negotiations**. Again in order to communicate effectively in these two arenas you will need to be aware of the context and the audience.

What do we mean when we say we are going to discuss or debate an issue?

To **discuss** means to consider a question in open and usually informal debate. To **debate** means to talk or argue about an issue; to talk about something at length and in detail, especially as part of a formal exchange of opinion. Debates can be an organised or public meeting with the aim of discussion: or an argument. The word comes from the Old French "debat", which is originally from Latin "battere" meaning to fight. Debates can be formal or informal.

Formal debates follow certain set procedures:

- The topic for debate is always stated in the positive, e.g. "Genetic modification of plants is unhealthy".

- There are then two opposing speakers (or teams of speakers), one that supports the motion and one that opposes it.

- Both speakers are given an opportunity to put forward their ideas and then questions from the floor (the audience) are allowed. After that each speaker (or one member of the team) is allowed to sum up.

- Then the debate is adjudicated (judged) by an impartial source.

- The adjudicator must decide which side presented the strongest arguments.

- Finally the proposed motion is either accepted or rejected.

It should be apparent to you that in order to convince someone of your side of the debate, effective communication is critical. Arguments must be presented in a clear and unambiguous manner; research into the topic for debate must be done and effective listening skills must be used when listening to questions from the floor.

5.2.5 Participate in negotiations

Another form of oral communication that often occurs in the workplace is **negotiation.**

To negotiate is to discuss terms of an agreement; to attempt to come to an agreement on something through discussion and compromise. Negotiation takes place between two parties, who are attempting to decide what each party can offer the other in exchange for something else that they would like to have.

Once again, context and audience are critical factors in this type of oral communication.

Negotiating techniques

There are certain key elements, which can determine whether or not negotiations are successful. For negotiations to be successful, the negotiator needs to do the following:

- Get as much background information about the issue and the other parties involved in the negotiating process as possible.

- Do an analysis of the needs of the other party in order to make sure you understand their point of view.

- Ask as many relevant questions as possible, to ensure you understand the facts relating to the issue and a clear grasp of the attitudes of the opposing party.

- Make positive statements about what you are prepared to do in order to encourage the other party to lower their demands.

- Listen as attentively and actively as possible to make sure you understand exactly what the other party is asking for;

- Pick up cues from non-verbal communication - remember that body language says a lot about how someone is feeling; observe closely to see whether the opposing party is being aggressive or tentative or firm in their approach.

- Stress common interests before highlighting differences.

- Be as flexible as possible.

- Make sure that minor differences have been sorted out before moving on to the bigger issues.

- Keep a cool head and be as rational and logical as you can; do not allow emotion to cloud the issue.

- Do not threaten the other party - always try to reach a compromise.

- Make sure that neither side loses face or feels hurt or humiliated by the negotiating process.

Once again we can see that effective communication will lead to a more positive outcome for all the parties who are represented in a negotiating process.

Conflict management

In occupational learning programmes, communication skills may be needed in order to deal with conflict. Conflict can take different forms. It can be a minor disagreement over a minor issue and quickly blows over. At the other extreme it can be a long-term, ongoing opposition between two people. The conflict is not necessarily noisy; it may not be expressed in words but in hostile deeds. Sometimes there is a build-up of anger to the point of violence. One thing that is always there is a fixed attitude; a situation of deadlock. Conflict management is the skill of shifting such an attitude from a deadlocked opposition to one where the people in conflict are dealing with their hostility.

People usually experience anger in a negative light and people who happen to be nearby are often keen to stop the conflict by trying to get the participants to stop being angry. Unfortunately this may make it worse. Another way of understanding conflict is to see the anger as the result of some other feeling, such as fear or frustration, and to manage the situation so that the person can express the feelings behind their anger. If both people can express such feelings, and can hear and understand the feelings of the other person, the situation will change. There may still be grounds for conflict, but what changes is how people deal with it.

Class Activity 5: Functioning and interacting in a team

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

Learning Unit 6
Doing presentations

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to use strategies that capture and retain the interest of an audience, by successfully completing the following:

- Use key words/signs, pace and pause, stress, volume and intonation or sign size, pace, rhythm and non-manual features (NMFs) in appropriate ways to reinforce the message.

- Use body language in a manner that is appropriate to context and topic, and reinforces main ideas and points of view.

- Plan formal communications in writing/signing and plans are detailed, complete, and realistic with respect to time allocation and content.

- Use visual aids that are appropriate to topic and context, and enhance the presentation and the transfer of information and understanding.

- Use techniques to maintain continuity and interaction.

Doing presentations

Different people learn in different ways. Research indicates that students may have preferences for the ways in which they receive information. Different preferences are the following:

- **Oral** is the most common way to exchange information in our society. Speech this arrives to the learner's ear and is therefore coded as aural (related to the ear). For students with an aural preference an attachment to the questionnaire provides a set of strategies for "learning by ear".

- **Reading and writing** are for other respondents who prefer to obtain information from printed words.

- The third group are not well served by modern methods of teaching in a university. They are the **visual learners** who like information to arrive in the form of graphs, charts, and flow diagrams. Sometimes they will draw maps of their learning sequences or create patterns of information. They are sensitive to different or changing spatial arrangements and can work easily with symbols.

- The last group is the group who like to experience **their learning by using all their senses**, including touch, hearing, smell, taste and sight. This group is regularly described in the literature as kinesthetics. They want concrete, multi-sensory experiences in their learning. They learn theory through its application during field trips, experiments, role plays, games and experiential learning.

Purpose of making presentations

The purpose of having students make oral and visual presentations to the entire class, in contrast to them submitting assignments only to the instructor, or only to one peer, is to demonstrate and evaluate the benefits of such presentations.[8] Arguments in favour of trying this method as a learning tool for writing and for verbal communication are:

1. Verbal presentation by individual students gives an opportunity to increase, improve and provide alternate methods of learning in the classroom besides lecture, visual presentations, visiting speakers, and peer review of assignments by one or two peers. (*Most instructors use one peer. When I hold peer group reviews, I use groups of 3-4 for more exposure.* Haber, 2008)

2. Each student will have the benefit of the entire class's feedback and expertise, not only that of the instructor or a small group of peers. Total class-instructor feedback is not available when assignments are submitted only to one peer. (*The single peer may lack skills needed to give feedback, though I, personally, assign an advanced to a less-advanced student for peer review.* Haber, 2008)

3. The presenter's peers and instructor will have the opportunity to ask the presenter questions regarding his report, helping the presenter to clarify unclear statements and the class to offer constructive suggestions.

4. By presenting an assignment in class, the student presenter can receive immediate feedback from all peers and the instructor, so that the presenter can make changes before submitting a final draft for grading.

5. Students can use and apply their training in critical thinking and on how to give constructive feedback. Students will learn to think for themselves, rather than having the instructor doing all their thinking for them. The instructor will moderate, fill in omissions or correct errors.

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[8] refer: http://www.etni.org.il/etnirag/issue9/gilda_haber.htm#purpose_presentations

6. Adult, experienced working students are often especially skilled in some areas and can provide added information to students giving oral reports.

7. Class members will participate more actively in discussion, see each other face-to-face instead of seeing other students from the back only, and will come to know other class members, bond and help each other.

8. Hearing others' reports will make the class more interesting than receiving feedback and a grade from the instructor alone.

9. The class will gain insight into (and perhaps provide) new areas of information. For instance, one student presented an assignment on bird collision with airplanes, another, on the papilloma virus in college women, and how to control it, another compared breast cancer in Caucasian and African men and women. These topics inform other students in content areas they may not know about, and or, can contribute to.

10. Students will more often complete the assignment when knowing they will be "on stage." Many students will enjoy public presentations and using the blackboard and projector. This activity will provide a change of pace, and certainly more physical activity needed in three-hour classes.

11. Students listening to themselves speak and presenting their work out loud can critique themselves while addressing a live audience, which promote impromptu revisions (unprepared, on the spot).

12. When students practise their oral presentations to a classroom they will gain excellent preparation and skills for future professional meeting/conference assignments in the workplace.

13. If students often do public verbal presentations to a non-threatening audience such as peers in a classroom, they will increase their skills and confidence in oral and written assignments.

14. Knowing that one will be giving a public presentation will probably mean that the student come prepared.

6.1 Plan formal communications

The process of planning communications differs depending on whether it is an oral or a written presentation. As you know, the written word can be sent via e-mails, letters, essays as well as class room work, whereas oral communication refers to sending and receiving messages using spoken, verbal words, such as in interpersonal interactions or speeches.

It is important to note that what is said or not said can be used against the sender if the message is unclear. Before speaking or writing anything, a person should consider the words used, their meaning and possible perception of others.

When you communicate in these forms, you must first determine the audience to decide on the nature of the communication; such as; writing to your friend vs a formal business letter. The structure of oral and written communication should be clear, concise and easy to understand. Keep the ages of your audience in mind as well; when you speak to children you would not use complex words or thoughts in your communication. Some information is also best said face to face – especially if it is really important.

Sometimes you need a second opinion when you write. You may give your written communication to a friend or co-worker to proofread and provide feedback. This will identify the strong and weak points so that you can adjust so it is more understandable. For oral communication you should practise on your own as well as in front of someone else – this can help you to improve.

Cultural sensitivity is also important here, and identifying possible barriers before communicating can help avoid misunderstandings.

Formal oral communications are always planned in the written form first. This helps to ensure that they are effective. You need not write out the entire oral presentation word for word but you do need to have a very detailed plan of what you are going to say written down. This means you should plan what you are going to say in your introduction, in the main body of your oral communication, and how you are going to conclude.

The introduction is always important as this is how you capture the audience's attention from the start. A dull, boring introduction will cause the audience to lose interest and their attention may start wandering.

You may want to briefly explain the purpose of your presentation and why you consider it important. You might want to use an amusing anecdote to put the audience at ease. You may want to use a startling example to grab everyone's attention.

Examples:

Which of these two examples do you think would be the most effective introduction?

- **Example 1:** Rape is a bad thing. It is growing in South Africa. People are faced with a life sentence if they are found guilty of rape.

- **Example 2:** Ladies and gentlemen, in the time it will take me to introduce this topic, another five women or children will have been raped. Think about that. This is the shocking nature of the enormous problem we all face in South Africa.

The plan for the **main body** of the presentation should be very detailed. You need to plan in terms of paragraphs. Each one should contain a separate important idea, or set of facts. You must ensure that there is a logical link between each of the ideas you wish to present.

Which of these two examples do you think shows the most logical and meaningful sequence of ideas to be covered in the main body of a presentation on modern music?

Example 1:

- rap music
- house music
- an overview of modern music
- the future direction of modern music
- well known rap stars
- some examples of modern music
- well-known house music DJs
- why youth respond to modern music

Example 2:

- an overview of modern music
- why youth respond to modern music
- some examples of modern music
- rap music

- well known rap stars

- house music

- well-known house music DJs

- the future direction of modern music

The **conclusion** to an oral presentation contains your closing comments. It is the last impression you will leave with your audience. You may want to briefly summarise what you have covered in the main body of your presentation or you may wish to pose questions for the audience to think about. Always try to end on a high note and to create a good lasting impression. Plan your concluding remarks carefully.

When planning an oral presentation you need to be prepared to practise aloud in order to check how long it takes to present.

You need to be very clear about what the **time** constraints for any oral presentation are and ensure that you stick to these. If an audience is expecting a 15 minute address on something and get either a four minute presentation or a 30 minute one they will feel dissatisfied and your communication will not have been effective.

You also need to make sure that the **content** of your oral presentation is relevant to the context in which you are presenting and to the needs of your audience. Let us say you have been asked to present a talk on "The issues surrounding genetic modification of plants". There is a great difference in how you would choose content for this presentation if it was for fellow learners or if it was for a meeting of gardeners who work in Stellenbosch residential area.

6.2 Use techniques to maintain continuity and interaction

We have looked at a range of techniques you can use in order to make your oral presentation as effective as possible. Now we need to move on to look at what happens in an actual presentation. How, while you are presenting, do you maintain **continuity** and **interaction**? Continuity refers to the flow of your presentation and interaction refers to what happens between you and members of the audience.

You should maintain continuity at all times and encourage interaction between you and your audience.

How do you respond to queries? **Responding to queries** in a positive way is essential. Members of the audience might ask you to tell them more about something you have said; they may want to know where to go for more information; may query some of your opinions, and so on. Always try to respond positively to a query. Thank the person for asking the question. Attempt to answer the question as clearly and as concisely as you can. If you are not sure of the answer do not pretend that you are - rather tell the questioner where he or she could find the answer or tell them you will get back to them with the correct answer.

If you are not sure that you have understood the question that has been put to you then **reword** it and check whether you have clearly understood what you are being asked. This helps to ensure clear effective oral communication.

You may also try and reword information that is quite complex so that all members of the audience can follow. An example of this might be: "HIV attacks the immune system. In other words it stops the body from being able to fight off disease effectively."

The way you time your speech or presentation is also important. If you have two main points to put across, you should allocate more or less equal time to both points. Think back to the

planned speech you gave. Were you aware of the timing issue? **Timing techniques** in your actual presentation are also critical. Never give the impression that you are rushing over a point or are not prepared to give enough time to audience queries. This will lead to ineffective audience interaction.

6.3 Use appropriate ways to reinforce the message

How can you use your voice most effectively to ensure that you deliver presentations in a successful way?

Our voices have an incredible range - we can vary our manner of speaking a great deal in order to ensure that our audience understand our message and is kept interested Let us now look at some key elements of our oral communication that relate to delivery.

Pace refers to the speed at which you speak; the degree of urgency or sharpness with which we deliver an oral communication.

We can vary the pace of delivery. We can have a rapid fire delivery (fast pace), an even, well-modulated mode of delivery (medium pace) or a very deliberate rate of delivery (slow pace). Sometimes we may feel it is appropriate to use a different pace for different parts of our delivery.

Pause refers to a small break in our delivery. A pause is the verbal equivalent of a comma or full stop. Pauses can be used to emphasise an important point, in this case we would be pausing for dramatic effect; a pause can show that we have reached the end of one point and are about to move on to the next; a pause could indicate a small break between each item in a list of things; a pause could give the audience time to absorb the previous point.

Stress is another element in oral communication. To stress a word or phrase is to emphasise it. It is the equivalent of using the **bold** function in word processing. We can stress the most important word in a phrase, or we can stress the most important phrase in a sentence. Sometimes we will also inform the audience that we "wish to stress" an important point.

Volume refers to the amount of sound we make. We may speak very quietly (low volume) or use a middle range volume (medium volume) or we may speak very loudly (high volume). We must always choose the appropriate volume for our audience. It is important that we can be heard at all times and it is generally inappropriate to shout at people. An intimate one-on-one context usually calls for a low volume. If however we are addressing a large audience we may need to increase the volume until we are speaking relatively loudly.

Intonation refers to the pitch of the voice: the rising (high) or falling (low) pitch of the voice when we say a word or syllable; or the rising and falling pattern of speech generally. Generally we need to vary our pitch or intonation in order not to sound boring and monotonous.

When we address an audience we always have a message to put across or convey. Whether we do this successfully or not will often depend, not only on the content of our message, but also on the delivery. The elements given above all refer to delivery.

It is pointless preparing an excellent speech which we then deliver in a monotonous and boring way at an inappropriate volume - the message will not get across successfully.
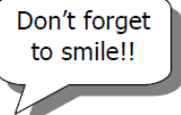
6.4 Use body language

We have looked at the way we use our voices to convey the appropriate message to our audience.

We now move on to the topic of body language - also sometimes referred to as nonverbal communication. Our gestures, facial expressions, mannerisms, and the way we hold ourselves convey a number of messages to our audience.

Facial expressions are a very clear indicator of a wide range of emotions. For example we can signal certain emotions by smiling to show happiness or pleasure, frowning to show anger or displeasure, raising our eyebrows to show disbelief or amazement, turning down the corners of our mouth to show disgust or disapproval, widening our eyes to show surprise.

[You can check how effectively you use these expressions by looking into a mirror and attempting to show as wide a range of emotions as possible.]

Don't forget to smile!!

We can of course control our facial expressions in order either to not show any emotion or to show an emotion we are not feeling.

How do we ensure that our facial expressions are appropriate to the context in which we are operating? We need to be sensitive to our context in order not to convey an inappropriate message through our facial expression. For example it would be extremely inappropriate to indicate great joy and happiness at a funeral. It would also be very inappropriate to convey through our facial expression that we found a worker's responses to our questions extremely amusing; it would be inappropriate for us to show pleasure if a colleague gets hurt. Always be aware of the context in which you are operating.

We also need to be aware of the topic which is being presented either by ourselves or someone else and ensure that our facial expressions are appropriate to this topic.

If we are presenting a talk on the effect of HIV/AIDS in rural areas it would be extremely inappropriate to convey amusement. If we were required to negotiate a settlement between two colleagues it would be inappropriate to show anger and aggression.

When we are communicating orally we can use our facial expressions to help us convey our message effectively. We can also use gestures and body posture (the way we hold our body) in ways that help us to ensure our body language is appropriate to the context in which we are operating and to the topic we are presenting. Appropriate facial expressions, gestures and body posture can also help us reinforce the main ideas and attitudes we wish to convey to our audience.

The definition of a gesture is a body movement made in order to express meaning or emotion, or to communicate an instruction. Gestures send visual signs to onlookers and also transmit information.

Some examples of gestures are: throwing our hands in the air; touching our hair or clothes; wagging a finger in the air; wringing our hands; giving a "V" for victory sign; making an obscene hand gesture; punching the air in triumph, shrugging our shoulders, signalling to the waitress to bring the bill, and so on.

Our gestures can sometimes be subconscious, that is, we are not aware of making them. You should become as aware as possible of all the unconscious gestures you make which could get in the way of effective communication. For example, you may fiddle with a pen, you may keep touching your hair or clothes, you may constantly smooth your eyebrows or your moustache or play with your jewellery. All these gestures, and others like them, can be very distracting to your audience and prevent your communication from being as effective as it could be. Ask friends or family or fellow students to assist you in becoming as aware as possible of unconscious gestures you make.

Effective public speakers on the other hand, will consciously and deliberately use gestures in order to emphasise their main points and to emphasise their attitude to issues.

Body posture or stance is the way we carry ourselves. Body posture often indicates what our attitude is to the interaction we are involved in and towards our audience. Body posture conveys information such as whether we are bored, attentive, relaxed or tense.

6.5 Use visual aids

A visual aid can be defined as a visible instructional or educational aid; something such as a model, chart, film or video, that is looked at as a complement (addition) to a lesson or presentation.

When you communicate orally with an audience by doing a presentation or a talk, it is often helpful to use visual aids, as these will enhance your presentation and make it more effective. You should always ensure that the aids you choose are appropriate to your topic and the context of your audience. You also need to ask yourself whether your choice of visual aids is really assisting the audience to understand what you are presenting.

Here are some examples of visual aids:

- flipcharts
- slide projectors
- videos and films
- overhead projector transparencies
- hand-outs
- whiteboards
- graphs
- posters
- photos
- PowerPoint presentations

When you use visual aids, you must keep certain key points in mind. Always remember:

- Ensure that the visual aids are clear and understandable.
- Prepare all your visual aids well in advance and know exactly where in the presentation you are going to use them.
- Make sure that all the equipment you will be using is in good working order and that you can use it competently.
- Ensure that the visual aids are suitable for the venue by checking that they are clearly visible from everywhere in the venue.
- Ask yourself whether these visual aids will make your oral communication more effective.

Class Activity 6: Doing presentations
Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

Reflection
Individually, complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

> ### *Facilitator Observation Checklist*
> The facilitator will provide you with feedback about your participation during the class activities in your Learner Workbook.

Summative Assessment

You are required to complete a number of summative assessment activities in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide. The Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide will guide you as to what you are required to do:

- Complete all the required administration documents and submit all the required documentation, such as a certified copy of your ID, a copy of your CV and relevant certificates of achievement:

    - Learner Personal Information Form

    - Pre-Assessment Preparation Sheet

    - Assessment Plan Document

    - Declaration Of Authenticity Form

    - Appeals Procedure Declaration Form

- Place your complete Learner Workbook (with the completed Class Activities) in the specified place in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide.

- Complete the Knowledge Questions under the guidance of your facilitator:

> ### *Knowledge Questions*
> Individually, complete this summative activity in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide.

- Complete the other summative assessment activities in your workplace:

> ### *Practical Activities*
> Individually, complete this summative activity in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide.

> ### *Summative Project*
> Individually, complete this summative activity in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide.

> ### *Logbook*
> Individually, complete this summative activity in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide.

Once you have completed all the summative activities in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide, complete the Assessment Activities Checklist to ensure that you have submitted all the required evidence for your portfolio, before submitting your portfolio for assessment.

References and Further Reading

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