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**COURSE: STUDY SKILLS IN MASS COMMUNICATION**

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## **STUDY SKILLS IN MASS COMMUNICATION**

### **Introduction**

Studying means to acquire knowledge it spans beyond reading. According to Ibrahim (2009), it is the most important learning activities for students. Ibrahim (2009) avers that "to study is to devote time and attention to the acquisition of knowledge and competence on an academic subject" (p. 10). (Adegbija 1998) adds that proper studying entails you putting in some strict measures and intentionality.

### **Why do we Study?**

Generally, people study for different reasons which can be classified into two as posited by the Open University Strategies Handbook (2007). It is also worthy to note that the reason behind studying resonates to the level at which studying is done.

These two goals are:

**Long-term goals:** This is acquisition of knowledge for futuristic things. Some of the reasons for studying under this category could be:

For the purpose for examinations

Acquisition of qualifications

Investigative Journalism

**Short-term goals:** This involves studying meant to serve an immediate purpose. These include Assignments

Discussions

Competitions.

## **DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO STUDY**

Block (1986) cited in Ibrahim (2009) mentioned some of these effective ways study can actually be effective.

These include:

**Motivation Approach:** It is suggested that fostering an interest in learning is crucial. This interest serves as a tool to combat challenges like boredom and stress during the learning process. This involves anticipating the upcoming content while reading, which aids in maintaining interest and focus.

**Material Selection:** The type of material a learner engages with significantly impacts knowledge acquisition. Effective learners should be adept at identifying and engaging with current, relevant materials rather than outdated or irrelevant ones.

**PQRST Method:** Robinson (1979) outlines the PQRST technique which comprises Previewing, Questioning, Reading, Summarizing, and Testing. Previewing involves scanning research materials to identify key topics and points. Questioning involves generating questions from these sub-topics to enhance understanding. Reading for inferences requires thorough reading to find answers to these questions. Summarizing entails condensing information through note-taking or diagrams. Testing involves assessing understanding by answering questions without referring back to the material.

**Outline Strategy:** This method involves organizing information in a hierarchical manner, creating a structured framework that makes it easier to recall and understand complex concepts. By breaking down topics into main ideas, subtopics, and supporting details, learners can visually see the relationships between different pieces of information. This structured approach not only aids in memorization but also promotes a deeper understanding of the material by highlighting key concepts and their connections.

**Summary Skill:** The summary skill is about distilling information into its essential elements, capturing the core ideas and key points of a larger body of content. This process requires critical thinking and analysis to identify the most important information while discarding less relevant details. Summarizing helps learners to focus on what truly matters, facilitating efficient memorization and retention of key concepts. It also promotes active engagement with the material as learners must process and interpret information to create concise summaries. Summarizing helps learners to focus on what truly matters, facilitating efficient memorization and retention of key concepts. It also promotes active engagement with the material as learners must process and interpret information to create concise summaries.

**Note-Making Strategy:** Taking effective notes involves creating organized and concise records of information presented in various learning contexts such as lectures, readings, or discussions. This strategy includes techniques like using bullet points, headings, and highlighting important details to structure notes in a clear and logical format. Well-crafted notes serve as a valuable resource for review, helping learners reinforce their understanding, remember key information, and make connections between different concepts. Additionally, the act of summarizing information while taking notes promotes active learning and enhances comprehension.

**Memorizing Strategy:** Memorization is a fundamental aspect of learning that involves encoding information into memory for later retrieval. It is also known as cramming. There are different aspects to memorizing. They include:

- **Repetition and Practice:** Repeatedly reviewing information strengthens neural connections, making it easier to recall later.
- **Chunking:** Chunking involves breaking down large amounts of information into smaller, manageable chunks or groups.
- **Association and Mnemonics:** Mnemonics, such as acronyms, visual imagery, or rhymes, provide memorable cues that facilitate retrieval. For instance, PQIRST is a mnemonic to remember Previewing, Questioning, Reading, Summarizing, and Testing.

## LEARNING STYLES

Learning styles according to Brown (2000) is the way in which information is perceived and processed by an individual (cited in Gilakjani 2012). As identified by Gilakjani (2012), there are three different ways of learning:

1. **Auditory Style:** Auditory learners learn best by listening to lectures or recorded tapes or reading out loud to themselves. Although reading out loud is usually regarded as a bad studying habit which does not aid the in the comprehension of text items, however, it is important to note that some learners find this method easy.
2. **Visual Style:** Visual learners learn through visual images and pictures. They can learn through non-verbal parameters such as cue notes, flash cards, diagrams and charts. They can easily remember what they have read through a mental picture.
3. **Kinaesthetic Style:** This is referred to as a 'hands on' approach. This type of learner engages in active discussions, writing ideas on paper for easy analysis, or read through materials while doing active work.

Note that people can combine different styles to bring out the best from learning. According to Cottrell (2013), the more we use our senses of sight, hearing and touch, and the more we use fine muscle movements in looking, speaking, writing, typing, drawing, or moving the body, the more opportunities we give the brain to take in information using our preferred sense (p. 4).

## FACTORS THAT AFFECT PROPER STUDYING

There are several factors which hinder the acquisition and use of effective study skills which thus prevents the acquisition of knowledge. Some of these factors as identified by Adegbija (1999) and Cottrell (2003) cited in Ibrahim (2009) include:

1. **Negative attitude to learning:** A student must have a positive attitude to the acquisition of knowledge. A negative attitude will prevent a student from generating the adequate skills that can help in studying.
2. **Time of Study:** There should be proper time management which can be achieved through the creation of a study time table. Time mismanagement can lead to failure.

3. **Study Venue:** A student needs to find a appropriate venue for studying. The venue should include a suitable venue (for the student, not necessarily a library) with adequate lightening and good reading table and chairs. The student must ensure that all reading materials are available at the venue in order to avoid running around which would lead to a waste of time. Also, wrong venues can lead to distractions.

4. **Lack of Rest and Inadequate Sleep:** It is important to have adequate rest or sleep. This would ensure an effective studying. There is usually no reason to read all through the night, to 'pull an all-nighter' as the students say. Once there is an effective study plan, there will not be any need to stay awake through the night when you are supposed to be sleeping.

5. **Mental Instability:** An effective study would not be achieved when a student is mentally unstable. The mind should be cleared of all distracting thoughts while studying.

## READING

Reading is the process of interpreting written symbols, such as letters and words, to derive meaning from them. It involves recognising words and understanding their meaning, ultimately comprehending the text. Reading is a fundamental skill that enables individuals to acquire information, learn new concepts, and communicate effectively. Comprehension is the goal of reading (Olajide, 2009; 2010). Every reading activity is mechanical, while comprehension is cognitively propelled (Olajide, 2018). Efficient study leads to effective comprehension, marked by your ability the basis of the information stored in your brain.

### Components of Reading

1. **Decoding:** The ability to recognize and process written words. This involves understanding the relationship between letters and sounds (phonics) and being able to read words correctly.
2. **Comprehension:** The ability to understand and interpret the meaning of the text. This includes grasping the main idea, identifying supporting details, and making inferences.
3. **Fluency:** The ability to read text smoothly and accurately. Fluent readers can read with appropriate speed, expression, and understanding.
4. **Vocabulary:** The body of words known and understood. A strong vocabulary enhances comprehension and the ability to read more complex texts.
5. **Critical Thinking:** The ability to analyze and evaluate the content of the text. This includes questioning the information, recognizing biases, and drawing conclusions.

### Types of Reading

**Skimming:** Quickly reading through text to get a general idea of the content. When you desire insight into a text regarding its focus and structure, you should engage in skimming, a rather fast tool for studying. It will avail to you general information about the concerns of the textbook. Skimming is good for reading the newspaper, where you pay attention only to the sections that interest you. Your overall intention in skimming is to cover as much ground as possible within limited time and for appreciable amount of information (Olajide, 2009).

**Scanning:** Looking through text to find specific information. This is a slow, steady approach in reading to learn. It is a goal-directed effort at locating specific information, identifying important details and

checking relevant other sources to ascertain meaning and confirm or refute claims. Scanning is intensive and fairly permissive. It allows you to make side marks on pages and underline significant expressions. Also, scanning is flexible, by which you are able to adjust your reading rates to suit the texture and tenor of the textbook being studied. Note that the way you read to extract information from the paragraph which has the topic sentence and supportive details is different from how you read tables, maps, graphs, and diagrams, pictures, and so forth.

### **Benefits of Reading**

1. **Knowledge Acquisition:** Reading provides information and insights into various subjects.
2. **Cognitive Development:** Enhances thinking skills, concentration, and memory.
3. **Language Skills:** Improves vocabulary, grammar, and writing abilities.
4. **Empathy and Perspective:** Exposure to different cultures, experiences, and viewpoints broadens understanding and empathy.
5. **Mental Stimulation:** Engages the brain, potentially delaying cognitive decline.

### **STUDY GROUPS**

By his nature, man is a gregarious animal, tending to go along with his peers. Studying can benefit well from this aspect of man's life. You could organize or join an existing study group. In doing so, you must be sure that members are focused, friendly and committed fellow students that could contribute to the advancement of group goals. Study group, if properly managed, will:

- Enable you to compare your notes with those of your colleagues, and fill any gaps you notice in yours.
- Stimulate you into further learning, as different members could reveal unique ways of studying.
- Enable you to obtain more information concerning topics of subjects and assignments.
- Improve your knowledge through the contributions from members in form of questions, clarifications and repetitions.

### **RULES FOR STUDY GROUP**

Do not let your study group be big, so as not to run into psycho-social problems.

Set rules to guide the operations of the group.

Appoint officials, such as the Leader, Secretary, Whip and Time Keeper.

- No member should be allowed to dominate the group.
- Topics for members to research on allocated to them objectively.
- Members should work to deadlines always.
- And no one should dress offensively or engage in any form of misconduct even outside of the group meetings. There must be discipline among members.
- You should behave in the group the way you conduct yourself in your personal study.
- Study sessions may be laced with Breaks, when members relax and gain additional energy for group work. However, such breaks must not lead to social disorders.

### **STUDY HABITS**

The term "study habit" describes the methodical and regular process of gathering knowledge from a variety of texts, including books, journals, notes, and social media. It emerges gradually and subconsciously as a result of consistently applying useful learning techniques. When it comes to higher education, this practice usually starts in secondary school and becomes problematic because of the harder coursework. Since no two people study or learn in the same way, it is crucial to develop a strong study habit suited to your particular learning style if you want to succeed. Establishing productive study habits requires an understanding of your individual interests.

## **Study Habits and the Senses**

Study habits are closely related to how you use your senses, which vary among people. Three key senses—hearing, sight, and touch—are essential for effective studying.

### **Sense of Hearing**

Hearing, or the auditory sense, is important for those who learn best through sounds. If you are an auditory learner, you will study more effectively by:

- Joining in class and group discussions
- Reading aloud to yourself
- Listening to someone read to you
- Using recorded learning materials

You can also record your lecture notes and textbooks to listen to them later.

### **Sense of Sight**

For visual learners, sight is the main way to absorb information. If you learn best through your eyes, you will benefit from:

- Visualizing the content of texts or lectures
- Watching videos or visual presentations related to your studies

This method helps you remember information better by allowing you to "see" it.

### **Sense of Touch**

If you learn best through movement and hands-on activities, your sense of touch is key. If you are a tactile learner, you will study most effectively by:

- Moving around while studying
- Using your hands to take notes and work with study materials
- Engaging in physical activities to organize learning facts

This approach helps reinforce learning by involving your sense of touch

## **Strategies for Improving Study Habits**

## Knowing Yourself

Understanding yourself is key to effective studying. This means knowing and managing your mood. Before you start studying, check if you are ready. Studying well requires focus and a clear mind. Don't study if you're upset, anxious, or in pain, as it will affect your learning. Find the best times and places for you to study effectively.

## Plan Your Time

Managing your time is important for good study habits. Here are some strategies:

- **Prepare Ahead:** Read about your course topics before classes.
- **Review and Correct:** Go over your lecture notes soon after taking them to fix mistakes and reinforce understanding.
- **Weekly Reviews:** Review your notes at the end of each week, compare them with others, and consult textbooks.
- **Exam Preparation:** Have longer review sessions when preparing for exams, and take breaks to stay fresh.
- **Optimal Study Times:** Identify when you are most alert and ready to study, whether it's during the day, at night, or another specific time.
- **Utilize Free Time:** Use extra time, like when traveling or waiting, to study.

## Remember Your Purpose of Study

Always connect your study activities to your goals. Don't just gather facts aimlessly; integrate new information with what you already know and see how it helps you achieve your goals. Your study should always be goal-oriented.

## Prepare Good Notes

Taking good notes is crucial:

- **Attentive Listening:** Pay close attention in class and quickly jot down main points using abbreviations.
- **Strengthen Notes:** Enhance your notes by referring to recommended sources and visiting the library regularly for a distraction-free study environment.
- **Use the Internet:** Use the Internet to supplement your notes with extra information.
- **Flash Cards:** Create flash cards for important notes and review them regularly, especially before exams, to help recall and reinforce understanding.

## Organize Your Study Environment

Make sure your study environment is ideal:

- **Comfortable Conditions:** Ensure the area is not too hot or cold, has good lighting, a comfortable table, and necessary books.
- **Minimize Distractions:** Keep your study area free from noise, unpleasant smells, and direct sunlight. Avoid places that are too comfortable or have loud music.

## **Know Your Best Study Position**

Different students have different preferred study positions:

- **Sitting:** Some prefer sitting for long periods.
- **Standing and Moving:** Others might switch between standing, sitting, leaning against a wall, or walking intermittently.
- **In Bed:** Some students study best in bed with their heads propped up on pillows.

By understanding your preferences, managing your time well, and creating an optimal study environment, you can improve your study habits and achieve better learning outcomes

## **Importance of Study Skills in Mass Communication**

### **1. Enhanced Learning and Retention**

Effective study techniques help mass communication students understand and retain complex theories like agenda-setting and media effects. Regular use of summarizing and concept mapping aids in this process. Additionally, using flashcards and regular reviews helps memorize industry-specific terms and jargon, essential in fields like advertising and public relations.

### **2. Improved Academic Performance**

Good study habits lead to better exam preparation, allowing students to cover a wide range of topics, from media law to digital journalism, through regular study sessions and practice exams. High-quality research and writing skills, such as proper citation methods and thorough research, are crucial for producing assignments like news articles, press releases, or media analysis papers, ensuring credibility and professionalism.

### **3. Time Management**

Managing multiple projects, such as a radio script, a video production, and a social media campaign, requires detailed scheduling to balance tasks effectively. Time management skills also help students meet tight editorial deadlines for article submissions, reflecting the fast-paced nature of newsrooms.

### **4. Research Proficiency**

Accessing credible sources is vital for journalists to verify facts and avoid misinformation, which is critical when writing investigative pieces. Conducting in-depth research using academic databases and interviews is essential for producing comprehensive content, such as feature stories on social issues.

### **5. Critical Thinking and Analysis**



Developing media literacy involves analyzing media content to understand underlying messages and biases, such as identifying bias in political news coverage. Strong problem-solving skills are necessary for public relations students to create crisis communication plans by analyzing past case studies and predicting potential outcomes.

## **6. Professional Preparedness**

Study skills prepare students for real-world scenarios, such as practicing interview techniques in class to gain confidence for professional journalism. They also help students quickly learn and adapt to new tools like social media analytics software or video editing platforms, crucial in the rapidly evolving media industry.

## **7. Effective Communication**

Clear and precise messaging is essential in mass communication, whether writing concise news headlines or crafting clear press releases. Effective communication skills are also crucial for presenting media campaign proposals to clients, requiring the ability to convey ideas clearly and persuasively.

## **8. Self-Discipline and Motivation**

Developing study habits instills self-discipline, necessary for consistently updating a media blog or practicing photography techniques. Setting specific goals, like becoming proficient in new editing software, helps maintain motivation and provides direction in the learning process.

## **9. Collaborative Skills**

Teamwork is essential for many mass communication projects, such as creating multimedia news packages or organizing events, requiring effective collaboration and communication within a group. Learning to handle conflicts ensures smooth teamwork, essential for roles in media production and PR teams.

## **10. Lifelong Learning**

The media industry constantly evolves, necessitating ongoing learning to stay competitive. For example, staying updated with the latest trends in digital marketing ensures continuous improvement. Adapting to new tools like data visualization software or augmented reality applications is crucial, and strong study skills enable quick adaptation to these technologies

## **STUDY QUESTIONS**

1. What is study?
2. Explain the types of study you know.
3. What are study habits?
4. Discuss the relationship between study types and study skills.
5. Explain the role of reading skills in effective study types and habits.

6. What are "skimming" and "Scanning"?
7. How relevant is the study group for successful learning at the university?
8. Give any five (5) advantages and five (5) disadvantages of study groups.
9. List the steps you will take in organizing a study group.
10. What are your goals for studying?
11. Identify three major effective study skills.
12. Discover your learning style through answering the following using the keys below
13. What is my attitude towards learning?
14. Do I enjoy studying?
15. Why do I/ do I not enjoy studying?
16. How can I make studying more fun and successful?
17. Mention four (4) factors that can hinder effective study.
18. What are the factors preventing you from studying effectively?
19. Create your own effective study strategies

### **RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS/MATERIALS**

Modern Media Management. Nigeria by **Aina S.**

Media management manual: A handbook for television and radio practitioners in countries – in – transition. USA: UNESCO by **Thomas, J.P**

Station Management and Operations.by **Onabanjo, O.**

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