



Cape Peninsula University of Technology

creating futures

STRATEGIC LITERACIES

STUDENT LEARNING UNIT

To achieve success, in higher education, students need to develop a comprehensive master plan of action to help them achieve their learning goals.

This requires that they keep focused, organise learning resources, attend lectures and tutorials, read their books and use technology optimally, and consult with lecturers and other relevant support structures. Most importantly, students should acquire strategic literacies that would enable them to function conscientiously within their disciplinary spaces, and to engage actively with knowledge and discourses underway in those learning spaces.

What is strategic literacies?

Strategic literacies denote a holistic development of one's ability to identify long-term learning objectives and interests and try to find means of achieving them. To students this means that they must be able to formulate appropriate strategies of success and purposeful responses to their learning challenges. Practically, strategic literacies are best characterised by the development of effective time management, effective study skills, application of Bloom's Taxonomy when learning and utilisation of Biggs and Collins' SOLO Taxonomy to model answers when responding to essay-type during tests and examination. When combined these strategic literacies lay a good foundation for the development of high order thinking and life-long learning.

How do I develop effective studying habits?

While managing your time is foundational to effective studying critical engagement with the text is a key contributor to academic success. The following pointers can help you in this regard:

- Ask questions ("what", "how", "why" and "who" questions);
- Define concepts and describe processes and events;
- Read for understanding and retention (use powerful techniques and methods);
- Apply the SQ3R Method (survey, question, read, recite and review);
- Use mind-map to simplify chapters of the book;
- Create a table with four columns (Col A = concept or issue; Col B = definition or description; Col C = functions, advantages and benefits; Col D = disadvantages, contradictions, shortcomings and controversies);
- Combine Col A and Col B to create your own glossary of terms; and
- Translate the glossary into your first language and internalise it.

How is effective time management achieved?

Time is powerful gift for everyone. We share it equally, but how we use our time differs from a person to person. For students, there is no academic success without effective management of time. Managing time is an acquired skill: one has to learn to enhance it in order to lead a productive life and balanced life. You can achieve that virtue by doing the following:

- Listing and analysing the activities that consume most of your time;
- Developing a time planner (daily programme that includes your study hours);
- Slotting your subjects into your daily study time timetable;
- Designing an assignment timetable, test timetable and the exam timetable;
- Allocating sufficient time prior to and during each activity – assignment, test and exam;
- Rewarding yourself when you have successfully completed a task; and
- Constantly reviewing how your activities change so as to adjust your time planner.

You can use the Eisenhower's decision matrix to determine value, urgency and importance of your activities.

The Eisenhower Decision Matrix



Effective studying enables students to become deep and critical readers rather than surface readers who are dependent on memorisation as a reading technique. The following critical reading strategies should be considered to promote deep learning:

STRATEGY	EXPLANATION
PREVIEWING	This strategy will help the reader get a general sense of what the text is about and how it is organised before reading it closely.
CONTEXTUALISING	Text must be placed in its historical and cultural context. This includes reading it from the point of view of one's own experience. A critical reader always juxtaposes his or her contemporary values and attitudes against those represented in the text.
ASKING QUESTIONS	Questions help the reader to engage with the text and understand its content better. As one reads he or she must ask questions in order to understand the new information presented. Each question should focus on a main idea. Paraphrasing the information is also very helpful.
CHECKING HOW YOUR BELIEFS AND VALUES ARE CHALLENGED BY THE TEXT	Text always challenges the reader's attitude, unconsciously held beliefs, or stance on a particular issue. Readers must mark with an X in the margin at each point where they feel personally challenged by the text.
SUMMARISING	Outlining reveals the basic structure of the text while summarising helps to capture the synopsis or the main argument in few words.
EVALUATING AN ARGUMENT	A critical reader does not just accept anything on face value. It examines the argument carefully by evaluating its logic, merit and credibility.
COMPARING AND CONTRASTING WHAT YOU READ WITH OTHER TEXTS	Since many authors have been concerned about the same issue or question, it is important to explore how their approaches and reactions.



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