1: Orientation to the Text

Introduction

Welcome to the Bunda College of Agriculture's (BCA) Communication Skills course! This textbook has been designed to support students who are studying Communication during the first semester of the first year. This textbook has been created by your lecturers here in Bunda. They have written new materials but have also used and adapted material from all around the English speaking world to suit the specific needs of this course.

This short orientation section of the textbook is designed to provide readers with a clear understanding of how the text has been arranged.

Chapters

This text has been designed to closely follow the lectures and activities of the Communication Course: The chapters are:

1. Orientation to the Text
2. Study Skills
3. How to use the Library
4. Listening Skills
5. Reading Skills
6. Writing Skills
7. Examination Skills

Course Objectives

The intention of the Communication Skills course and this textbook is to provide students new to tertiary education, with the prerequisite language skills required to excel in the higher education environment. To this end the course's objectives are:

All students at BCA on completion of the Communication Skills course should be able to:

- use study techniques to process, store and use the information and skills taught in their subjects;
- apply the various systems and processes used by the institutional library to search and retrieve information;
- listen actively and create accurate comprehensive and accurate notes;
- read books and resources and retain the information gleaned therein;
- express themselves clearly using the written word;
- perform well in examinations and tests.

The writers of this textbook from the Department of Language & Development Communication and the College Library have the same outcomes in mind and have selected and adapted materials to further these objectives.

Text Source & Structure

The materials contained within this text have been either written specially for the course or have been adapted from Open Education Resources (OER). These resources have been created at other eminent Universities and Colleges by language professionals and have also been copyrighted in such a way that they can be shared and adapted. The staff at this University have customised these resources to suit local needs. Part of the adaptation process was designing a number of tasks to support the foreign content. These tasks and activities have been designed to enhance your understanding of new concepts and also to provide an opportunity to practice your new language skills. The following icons have been used to identify specific types of activities:

Seminar Activity

This type of activity requires you to work in groups. Your lecturer and tutors will allocate you a group or alternatively you can form your own group of friends to practice the new skills.

Self Study Activity

This type of activity is to be done on your own during your own time. Self study is seen by the university as an important learning strategy so you will need to have the discipline to complete these activities if you want to continue in Higher Education.

Assessment Task

These tasks will be for marks or some type of grading. They are used as a component of the grading process. Make sure you complete and submit all assessment tasks. There is at least one assessment task per chapter.

Alternative Resource

Sometimes there are additional materials and activities outside this text. They might, for example, be on a CD-ROM or accessed from the Internet. Read carefully to find out where the alternative resource is. Use these activities for enrichment.

Copyright

In many instances the original material was shortened so that it would fit into this text. If you feel you would understand the chapter better by seeing it as it was before it was changed then

go back to the original. You can find the original resources by following the copyright links.

Glossary

Many of the chapters also have a glossary to help you understand specialised terminology or concepts special to language. Use the glossary to find a simple English definition of these special terms.

Participation Profile

This textbook and the Communication Skills course has been designed to provide essential English language proficiencies to new students studying all courses at Bunda College of Agriculture, University of Malawi. However, students at other African higher education institutions will find this textbook beneficial to their studies.

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Textbook Copyright Information

The following Open Education Resources (OER) were used and adapted in the construction of each chapter:

2: Study Skills

1. WikiHow, *How To Make Lecture Notes*, Available at: http://www.wikihow.com/Take-Lecture-Notes
    Copyright CC: BY-NC-SA

2. McKinlay, A et al (2000), *Multimedia Study Skills,* Douglas College. Available at http://douglas.bc.ca/services/learning-centre/multimedia-tutorials.html, Copyright CC:BY-SA 2.0
3. Wikipedia, *Goal*, Available at:
    http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goal_(management)
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4: Listening Skills

4. Rivers. D, *The Power of Creative Questioning*, New Conversations
    Available at
    http://www.newconversations.net/pdf/seven_challenges_chapter5.pdf
    Copyright CC: BY-SA
5. OpenLearn, *Reading and Note Taking – Preparation for Study,* Open University. Available at:
    http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/mod/resource/view.php?id=190358,
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6. Wikipedia, *Nonverbal Communication*, Available at
    http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communicaton
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    http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Listening_problems
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5: Reading Skills

8. OpenLearn, *The Experience of Reading*, Open University, Available at
    http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/mod/resource/view.php?id=200709&direct=1 Copyright CC: BY-NC-SA
9. Learn NC, *Active Reading*, Available at
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6: Writing Skills

17. OpenLearn, *What is Good Writing?,* Open University, Available at http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=2903
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