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Section 1: Introduction

This manual provides guidance about some key skills required for successful academic study. Some of these skills are ones that you would use in any challenging project, at work or in your personal life – for example, skills in goal-setting, prioritizing and time-management. Others are skills that are specific to academic study – for example, skills in writing academic assignments, referencing the sources of your ideas and writing answers to examination questions.

Overall, this manual is designed to support you in managing your learning so that you successfully achieve your personal and professional goals, with the minimum of stress and the maximum of enjoyment.

Using this manual

If you are new to AGSM MBA studies
The manual will help you prepare for study and it would be best to work through as much of it as you can before Week 1 of the session.

Section 2 provides some information about AGSM learning processes and Section 3 looks at some basic personal skills (e.g., time management) required for successful study. We suggest that you read these sections first. You might then move on to reading Sections 4, 5 and 6 on skills in reading, task analysis and academic writing.

If you have some experience of AGSM MBA study
The manual is also designed as a reference source that you can use throughout your AGSM studies. For example, you may wish from time to time to:

- remind yourself of AGSM MBA referencing requirements
- revisit the suggestions in the manual about how to prepare for exams
- refresh your memory about how to write a particular type of assessment, e.g., an Action Learning Review or a case study.
Other sources of guidance

Sources of information and advice

The Learning Centre, University of New South Wales
You will find many useful resources in the website of The Learning Centre UNSW:
http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au

Education Development Unit
The Australia School of Business’ Education Development Unit provides online, telephone or face-to-face support for students.

Contact:
Email: edu@unsw.edu.au
Phone: 02 9385 5584

Location:
Room G07 West Lobby Ground floor
The Australian School of Business Building
The unit has prepared many written resources to assist with academic study. These are available at:
http://www.asb.unsw.edu.au/learningandteaching/studentservices/Pages/default.aspx

Further reading
You may find the following texts helpful in developing your academic skills.


Section 2: AGSM MBA learning

In this section, we provide some information about some core learning processes that are used in AGSM MBA Programs. We begin with the action learning cycle.

The action learning cycle

A distinctive feature of learning in AGSM MBA Programs is the strong focus on the practical application of your learnings to your work.

You will be continually encouraged to use course concepts to:

- analyse and evaluate your own practice and performance as a manager and organisational practices and performance
- formulate and implement action plans to improve your own managerial practice and organisational practices.

We call this process the action learning cycle.

**Figure 1 Action Learning Cycle**

Source: Kolb 1984.
Actively applying your learnings in this way will:

- deepen your understanding of what you have learnt
- test concepts and theories against experience and ‘reality’
- further extend your learning, e.g., by discovering more about yourself, about the challenges you are dealing with, and about the effectiveness of particular methods and approaches.

**Using the action learning cycle in your studies**

You can also use the action learning cycle to progressively improve the study skills covered in this manual.

For example, as you read Section 3 on time management, you could reflect on the effectiveness of your current approach to managing time, then formulate and implement a plan for strengthening your time-management. Or, as you read the information in Section 5 on active reading, you could reflect on how far your current reading habits will help you study effectively, then devise and implement an improvement plan for your reading.

**Course materials**

Key resources for your learning are the course materials provided in your hard copy binders and on the course website. The course binders will usually contain a sequence of units on various topics and the text of each unit will include exercises that encourage you to continually apply course concepts to your work as a manager and to the organisation(s) within which you work.

The units in a course will often be supported by a reading, or several readings. You will find these on the course website.

Week by week, much of your study time will be spent reading and reflecting on the course materials prescribed for that week, and completing the activities and exercises in the relevant unit.
Classes and workshops

Many AGSM MBA Programs courses comprise a series of weekly face-to-face classes, with one or two half-day workshops.

Preparing for classes

To understand the function and purpose of a class, it is helpful to think of it as a debriefing session. That is to say, it is assumed that, by the time of the class, you have thoroughly read and digested the course materials prescribed for that class and are ready to:

- discuss course concepts and your learnings with your classmates
- share examples that illustrate the application of course concepts or seem to be counter-examples to a course concept or theory
- raise questions and issues for clarification and exploration
- apply course concepts in class activities and exercises.

Thus, central purposes of a class are to provide an opportunity to:

- share, explore, test and reinforce your learnings by discussing them with your classmates
- extend your understanding by hearing what your classmates have learnt from the course materials
- apply your learnings to ‘real-life’ management challenges and situations.

It is imperative, therefore, that you have:

- read the unit and the readings for that week
- completed the exercises in the unit
- a clear idea of the main points and ideas in the unit
- identified some learnings that are relevant to your work
- prepared some examples or questions for discussion

The value you obtain from a class will be directly related to the amount and quality of your preparation for the class.

Participating in class

One major factor influencing the learning outcomes in a class is the way in which class members interact and communicate with each other.
Research on team effectiveness throws a good deal of light on the patterns of class interaction that will be most helpful for achieving learning goals. For example, in research on 60 business teams, Marcial Losada and Emily Heaphy (2004) found that critical factors were the balance between:

- **advocacy** (trying to get your message across) and **inquiry** (using questions and active listening to find out what others think). If the balance tilted too far in the direction of advocacy, it impacted negatively on the team’s effectiveness.
- **critical** and **appreciative** communication. Again, if the balance tilted too far in the direction of critical communication, it had negative effects on the team.

Thus, you can make a constructive contribution to your class discussion by:

- showing an active interest in other’s views
- using active listening skills to respond to others in the class
- taking note of others’ ideas and being prepared to change your views in the light of a persuasive contribution by a classmate
- making appreciative responses to other’s contributions.

Your personality type will further influence the way you respond to the class. If you are very outgoing and vocal, you may like to consider practising active listening, ‘seeking first to understand, then to be understood’ (Covey 2004). On the other hand, if you have a habit of sitting back in group discussions, you might like to set yourself goals each week for more active participation.

**Dialogue and discussion**

Peter Senge (2006) makes a distinction between two processes that a group can use to exchange and explore views, ideas and experiences – processes he labels ‘discussion’ and ‘dialogue’.

Senge defines ‘discussion’ as a process in which the purpose is to ‘win’, in the sense of ‘having one’s views accepted by the group’ (2006, p. 240). The extreme version of this kind of process is a debate in which each side seeks to demolish the position of the other. In dialogue, on the other hand, individuals suspend their assumptions and their attachment to their opinions and focus on expanding and enriching a shared understanding of the topic or issue.
Note that Senge does not dismiss the value of discussion as a process. He writes that ‘both are important to a team capable of continual generative learning, but their power lies in their synergy, which is not likely to be present when the distinctions between them are not appreciated’ (ibid. p. 240).

Table 1 further unpacks the distinction between dialogue on the one hand and discussion and debate on the other.

**Table 1 Dialogue, discussion and debate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialogue</th>
<th>Discussion and debate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MINDSET</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assuming that many people have pieces of the answer or that there are a number of ‘right’ answers</td>
<td>Assuming there is one right answer and I have it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing all sides of an issue</td>
<td>Seeing two sides of an issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to suspend and test my assumptions</td>
<td>Invested in/committed to my assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to letting my assumptions go</td>
<td>Determined to be right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to play with and try out new ideas and possibilities</td>
<td>Resistant to entertaining alternative points of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOALS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding options and appreciating complexity</td>
<td>Seeking closure by deciding which view is to prevail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding common ground and working toward a common understanding</td>
<td>Attempting to show that the other side is wrong and that I am right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My view is enlarged and changed</td>
<td>My view is affirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A shared understanding which is greater than the sum of its parts and richer than any single participant’s contribution</td>
<td>Deciding what is right or seeking a compromise between alternative views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROCESS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive, inquiring</td>
<td>Exclusive, polarising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared collaborative and co-operative enquiry</td>
<td>Competitive and oppositional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on commonalities and connections</td>
<td>Focusing on differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building on others’ contributions</td>
<td>Using counterarguments to demolish others’ contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing my power and using the power of the group</td>
<td>Using my individual power and the power of my argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding and exploring new options and divergent views</td>
<td>Seeking a conclusion that ratifies my position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting my assumptions for examination and testing</td>
<td>Defending my assumptions as the truth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LISTENING AND RESPONDING TO OTHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening to understand, find meaning and common ground</th>
<th>Listening to find flaws and construct counter-arguments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Searching for strengths and value in others’ positions</td>
<td>Searching for flaws and weaknesses in others’ positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledging that others’ thinking can improve on my own</td>
<td>Defending myself and my views against others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Adapted from:

(2) www.globallearningnj.org/global_ata/a_comparison_of_dialogue_and_debate.htm

The table on this website was adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, which was based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR).

In AGSM MBA courses, you will often be encouraged to:

- articulate and critique the assumptions that influence the way you interpret and respond to situations
- use multiple perspectives for understanding resolving issues.

For these purposes, dialogue can often work better than discussion and debate. For other purposes, however, discussion and debate might be preferable. We encourage you to keep an eye on the group process in your class, to evaluate how effective it is for the learning goals of the class, and – if appropriate – to make facilitative interventions to steer the process in a more productive direction.

Your instructor

While your instructor is a content expert in relation to the course, the instructor’s role in classes is not to deliver a lecture. The instructor’s focus is more on designing and facilitating an effective learning process in the group, by:

- facilitating class discussion and dialogue
- orchestrating class activities and facilitating debriefs of the class’ learning from the activities
- presenting stimulus material (e.g., case-studies) to facilitate the application of course concepts to ‘real-life’ examples.

So the instructor’s role will more often be ‘guide on the side’ rather than ‘sage on the stage’ (King 1993).
Workshops

Workshops provide an opportunity for a more in-depth and experiential application of course concepts.

Where a course consists of weekly classes, workshops may be half a day in length. However, in ‘intensive’ courses, there are no weekly classes and face-to-face interaction takes place in two longer weekend workshops, which may run from the Friday evening to Sunday afternoon.

Online learning

The online component in AGSM MBA course varies from course to course. It will usually include:

- access to course materials and other resources to assist study (including this manual)
- the provision of administrative information and announcements
- a drop-box for submitting assessments.

The online component may also include:

- contact and networking with fellow students
- facilitated discussion and dialogue about key concepts, issues and case studies

Some courses – for example, in the Graduate Certificate in Change Management – are wholly online and instructor-facilitated online dialogues take the place of face-to-face classes and workshops.

What follows is some guidance and suggestions for students who are undertaking courses that require online interaction with other students and instructors.

Participation in online discussions and dialogues

The learning objectives in online discussions and dialogues are similar to those in face-to-face classes, i.e., to:

- share your learnings from working through the course materials and applying course concepts to your own experience
- learn from your fellow students and the instructor
- integrate theory and practice, applying course concepts to your own practice and to real-life examples
• clarify and critique your thinking about complex issues
• critique course concepts.

Challenges and opportunities
There are some distinctive challenges in online discussion and dialogue.

• Since there is no non-verbal communication, only what you read on the screen, you will need to be particularly sensitive about the way in which you put your ideas across and respond to others.

• Because you can contribute to the discussion/dialogue at a time of your own choosing, it can be easy to let your online obligations slide as a priority. One challenge is to develop the self-discipline and self-motivation to make sustained and timely contributions.

• If online discussion/dialogue is a new or relatively new learning experience, there can be some performance anxiety at the outset and sometimes an initial hesitancy to contribute. Our advice is to begin your online activities early and actively build your confidence.

Balancing the above challenges, there are some distinctive learning opportunities in online discussion and dialogue.

• You have time to carefully consider contributions by other participants and to reflect on your response to them, before posting it.

• You can contribute to the dialogue at any time and perhaps take advantage of relatively short windows of opportunity during the day to keep in touch with what is going on in the virtual classroom.

• Because the dialogue goes on for a number of days, it is possible to digest other's contributions, to change or expand your perspectives, and to achieve a deeper level of exploration and reflection than you might have achieved during a 90-minute face-to-face class.

Assessable online activities
In some AGSM MBA Programs courses, contributions to online activities are assessed. For example, in courses in the Graduate Certificate in Change Management, contributions to online dialogues can contribute to 30% of the overall grade for the course.

Online assessment requirements and grading criteria will be clearly outlined in the Course Overview and/or the course website. Make sure you are absolutely clear about the specific online requirements of your course and about your instructor’s expectations. If in doubt, ask!
Managing your online learning

The following are some suggestions for getting the most out of your online interactions with fellow students and the instructor.

- Establish a routine for participating in the online activities. For example, in a discussion/dialogue over a period of days, it is important to make a contribution at the beginning of the activity, in the middle and towards the end.

- Get into the habit of briefly ‘popping in’ to the virtual classroom when you have an opportunity, to see what is going on and perhaps to make a brief contribution.

- Try to keep contributions to dialogues/discussions short (we recommend no more that 200 words per entry). Short, focused entries, making just one or two salient points, are easy to read and maintain the momentum of the discussion.

- Confidentiality is an important issue. Remember that all information you post is available to others in your class. Open and direct comments about work experiences are encouraged (as they are in a face-to-face discussion) but you need to be alert to commercial realities and personal sensitivities.

- Respond quickly to others’ contributions. It can be off-putting to be out there alone!

- Create a positive feeling in the online classroom by – for example – commenting appreciatively about other’s contributions, using first names to directly address the person(s) to whom you are responding, being polite, using humour, etc.

- Operate on the assumption of ‘benign intent’, i.e., even if the style of someone’s contribution seems initially off-putting, assume that the contribution was made with benign intent.

- End each contribution in a way that invites others to contribute, e.g., with a question.
• The following is one useful template for a helpful posting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Acknowledgment</strong></th>
<th>The contribution(s) to which you are responding.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Add Value</strong></td>
<td>e.g., via:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– clarification</td>
<td>– providing an example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– suggesting an alternative perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Invite Further Responses</strong></td>
<td>e.g., via:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– an invitation</td>
<td>– a question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Online learning has a lot to offer and, once some adjustments are made, it is not difficult at all. In fact, as managers in a technically evolving world, it is a valuable learning experience in its own right. With just a little personal application, you will find the learning easy, enjoyable, and powerful.

The UNSW Library

The University library provides information resources and services to assist UNSW students complete their course requirements, whatever they are. The library collection is spread over three different locations, the main library on the Kensington campus, the Freehills Law library on the lower Kensington campus and the College of Fine Arts (COFA) library on the Paddington campus.

Resources include books, journals, audiovisual materials and an extensive range of electronic resources – e-books, e-journals and databases, many of which cannot be accessed via Google. These resources are available 24 hours a day from the Library homepage. If you need help with anything, go to http://info.library.unsw.edu.au and click on Need Help?
Section 3: Time management

Each course in AGSM MBA Programs requires approximately 10–12 hours of study a week, including class attendance. Fitting study into an already crowded life and managing study alongside substantial professional and personal commitments is a challenging juggling act for many students.

It is well worth carefully thinking through your strategy for making sufficient time for study and for using that time effectively and efficiently.

Planning for the session

One essential step is to adopt a project planning approach - to look ahead over the whole span of the course and to identify the week-by-week pattern of ‘demands’. Some of these will be regular demands – like reading the unit for the week and attending the weekly class. Others – like workshops, assessment deadlines, and exams – will be located in particular weeks of the session.

It is particularly important to look ahead and identify when assessments are due. You can then work back from the due date of an assessment and decide on the timing of the preparatory tasks – gathering material, drafting, redrafting, etc.

A project planning approach to your studies will also require looking at the pattern of commitments in your personal and professional life over the span of the course – for example, times when pressures at your work are likely to be particularly intense, times when you will need to be away on business, special family commitments, e.g., anniversaries, visits from family members, etc.

Looking ahead in this way will allow you to see whether there will be weeks in which it will be difficult to devote 10-12 hours to your studies, and to work out whether and how you could put in extra hours in other weeks to make up for the shortfall.

You will find a ‘session planner’ in Appendix 1. This is provided as an indication of the kind of sessional planning that we have in mind; however, you may know of other tools, or be able to design your own tool, which will provide a better basis for your session planning.
Exercise: Session planner

Using the session planner in Appendix 1, indicate:

- The times of any workshops
- The deadlines for assessments in the course (including exams)
- Any personal or professional commitments over the next 13 weeks that will require substantially more of your time than in a ‘routine week’.

Where you have indicated the deadline for a written assessment, use earlier cells in the same column to indicate when you think you would be doing the preparatory work for that assessment.

Finally, in the right hand column, indicate any weeks in which you are unlikely to find 10-12 hours for study, and the weeks in which you might be able to make up for any shortfalls.

Your study to-do list

Completing your session planner will help you clarify the tasks on your study to-do list for a particular week. For example, it might help you see that in Week 4, your tasks will include reading the unit and preparing for class, doing some preparation for an upcoming workshop, and starting some preliminary thinking about the requirements for the next assessment.

As you know, it always helpful to prioritise the tasks on your to-do list, and to break larger tasks into smaller more manageable chunks.

You are then in a position to work out where, in your weekly study schedule, each task will best fit.

Your weekly study schedule

Your weekly study schedule indicates the times of the week in which you will be studying. If you are experienced in AGSM MBA Programs studies, you may already have a study schedule that you know works well. If you are commencing studies in AGSM MBA Programs, you may be starting from scratch in developing a study schedule. It is well worth drafting a schedule right away, so that you can test its feasibility over the first few weeks of the course.
Appendix 1 includes a template for a weekly schedule, covering the seven days of the week and the hours from 6.00 a.m. to midnight.

To craft your study schedule, you might first write in the timing of the personal and professional activities around which your studies will need to be fitted. Then, your challenge will be to find 10-12 hours in the week for study.

**Finding the time for study**

Questions you might ask include the following:

- *Can I find time for study by giving up or curtailing some of my previous activities - for example, by cutting down on the hours spent on personal interests or social activities?*
  
  Note that we do not recommend that you find time for study by cutting down on your sleep, since research shows that a great many people are already suffering sleep deprivation.

- *Can I find time for study by using time that has previously not been used productively, e.g., time spent travelling or short gaps in a day's activities when I could complete some brief study tasks?*

- *Can I make time for study by multi-tasking, e.g., listening to the course while jogging?*

**Choosing the best times**

It will also be important to consider which are the times of the day, or the days in the week, when you will be able to get the most out of your study time. Questions you might ask include the following:

- *At what time of the day will I get the most out of an hour spent studying? When am I likely to be mentally freshest? When am I likely to have freedom from distractions?*

- *Will I work best in relatively short periods of study spread over a number of days in the week, or by a concentrated burst at the weekend?*

- *How could I schedule study periods so that they integrate with my other activities, e.g., work?*
A contingency plan

It is advisable to include in your schedule a contingency allowance of a couple of extra hours, towards the end of the week, which you could use to catch up if you are unable to keep to your schedule. This extra couple of hours would also be an incentive to keep to your schedule, since – if you keep to your schedule - they can be used for other rewarding activities.

Time for review

It will be important to use the action learning cycle to progressively improve and refine your schedule. So, set aside some time each week to reflect on how your study schedule is working and to devise ways of improving the schedule.

You might also find it helpful to keep a diary of study tasks completed during the week to assist in planning for the following week and also to acknowledge and appreciate what you have achieved during the week.

Exercise: Weekly planner

In the weekly planner in Appendix 1, focus on a typical or average week and indicate:

- the personal activities (including sleep!) and the professional activities you will be undertaking during the week
- the times when you will be studying.

Study conditions

My study environment

The quality of your study environment can also help you make the best use of scarce time – enabling you to focus your full attention on your studies and to work effectively and efficiently.

Ideally, your study space should be quiet, comfortable, well-lit and with sufficient room for your papers and course materials. Most of all, it needs to be somewhere where you can close the door, both literally and metaphorically. You should be able to close off distractions while you are working and then be able to close the door on your studies when you have finished.
It is worth making the creation of this environment a priority. Invest in a good light and a comfortable chair. If you do not already have a designated place, and space is an issue, you may even like to invest in a small purpose-built cupboard that would house your computer, provide a small desk area and have shelves for the learning materials.

**Personal fitness**

Another factor that will influence your ability to make good use of your time is how you manage yourself physically while you are studying. For example, when you get absorbed in your studies, it is easy to forget to drink enough water. Adequate hydration is essential for effective learning.

We also recommend frequent stretching exercises while you are at your study workstation - to relieve muscle tension and promote blood flow. The following are some routines that you might use.

**Figure 2 Ergonomic exercises**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neck stretch</strong></td>
<td>Turn your head slowly from side to side ten times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pectoral stretch</strong></td>
<td>Sit forward in your chair. Grip your hands together behind your back and squeeze your shoulder blades together. Slowly raise and straighten your arms. Repeat 10 times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trunk stretch</strong></td>
<td>Stretch arms above the head until straight ahead. Do not arch back. Lean toward the left then right 5–10 times.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Forearm stretch
Stretch your arm, palm facing away from you. With your other hand, pull your palm backwards until you feel the stretch over the front of your forearm. Hold the position for 15 seconds. Repeat with hand down.

Shoulder stretch
Roll the shoulders – raise them up, pull them back, then drop them and relax. Repeat in the opposite direction. Do five times each way.

Sources of assistance
Juggling study with work, family and unexpected crises can strain even the most effective time-manager. If you find yourself slipping too far behind, ask your Instructor for advice or approach Student Experience about sources of support.

Two sources of support are:

- The Learning Centre of the University of New South Wales
- The Education Development Unit of the Australian School of Business.

The Learning Centre, UNSW
The Learning Centre of the University of New South Wales is available to enrolled students to assist with any aspect of study. The Centre has a wide range of academic support services covering such matters as time management, managing study stress, studying effectively, examination preparation, seminar presentation and essay and assignment writing.

These services include online resources and individual consultations on any study-related concern. Details about the Centre’s services and ways of accessing them can be found at:

http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au
The Education Development Unit, ASB

The Unit’s learning advisors provide free and confidential learning support to undergraduate and postgraduate students at the Australian School of Business. The Unit’s services include:

- academic skills workshops
- learning consultations
- printed and online study skills resources, such as written and oral communication skills guides, referencing guides, report writing and exam preparation
- advice on developing effective study strategies.

Details about the Centre’s services and ways of accessing them can be found at:

http://www.asb.unsw.edu.au/learningandteaching/studentservices/Pages/default.aspx
Section 4: Reading and understanding

In this section of the manual, we look at the skills required to read and understand your course materials and the tasks/questions in assessments and exams. These skills complement and support the writing skills dealt with in sections 5 and 6, and the examination skills covered in Section 8.

Effective reading

Most of us know the feeling of reading through the first page of something and then becoming conscious that we haven’t yet engaged with its substance. This is because we read passively, waiting for the text to engage us. Sometimes it does, but adopting a strategy of reading actively will overcome this. In almost all reading, but particularly in academic reading, you are implicitly being asked to form an opinion or to assess the opinion of the writer. You can achieve this by consciously reading in order to answer a question that you have already formulated in your own mind.

The following strategies are designed to focus on your reading. They will reduce your inclination to be a passive reader and will enhance your ability to engage actively and minimise the time you have to spend reading.

Active critical reading and summarising are interrelated skills. If you combine the strategies, you will find that you have absorbed the materials in a most efficient way and have begun the preparation for the exams.

In your general reading, you can use the Test → Skim strategy and make a decision about whether to read the text in full. As you know that the course material has been selected for you and is required reading, it is essential that you go on to read the text in full and summarise it. Testing your ideas and skimming the key points are strategies to help you engage before you attempt the full reading.
Active reading strategies

TEST → SKIM → READ IN FULL and SUMMARISE

Test your own ideas

• Before reading, ask yourself how you view the issue, jot down some points. Don’t worry that you will begin with a bias – this exercise is to facilitate your conscious engagement with the text.

• On completion ask yourself:
  – How does my view fit with what the writer is saying?
  – Has this reading shifted my point of view?

(This exercise will ensure that your cognitive faculties are fully engaged, resulting in an efficient use of your time.)

• Identify and articulate the purpose of the text.

Skim for key points

Key points are often signposted in the text and if you recognise this signposting you will engage immediately with the ideas. You will find this exercise activates your thinking in the same way as the previous strategy.

Read and think actively about:

• the title
• the headings/subheadings
• the first paragraph
• the topic sentences (usually the first sentence of the paragraph)
• the final paragraph.

As you read the text in more detail:

• think about any other context in which you think the idea discussed might apply (it might be personal or professional, and relate to a person or a situation you have observed or been involved in); write a note in the margin
• mark/highlight any evidence which you find particularly compelling
• keep a dictionary beside you, you will be amazed at how often looking up a word about which you are unsure will immediately clarify an idea for you and imprint it on your memory
• make the wording your own with comments, highlighting and margin notes.
Summarising

The importance of the skill of summarising cannot be overstated. Because of the abundance of material in print today, there is a constant need to filter essential information in an efficient and productive way. Clearly this applies to all management situations as well as to your study. You may need to sift through information you receive. Developing the habit of keeping summary notes on such materials will allow you to access them again without having to re-read them. It will also ensure that you have retained more in your memory because of your active engagement with the material. Furthermore, this skill will help you present your ideas, findings or recommendations in summary form whether in a document, at a meeting or in a presentation.

Because it requires you to crystallise ideas, summarising is one of the higher order cognitive skills and many people do not find it all that easy. A very common mistake that people make is to underline or highlight great slabs of text. The objective is to select key words or phrases that jump out at you when you return to the text. Highlight, underline and mark the page judiciously. Be actively, cognitively selective. This is a discipline that, once adopted, will bring you enormous benefit. You will understand better, retain more and use your time more economically.

The strategies that follow have been used successfully by people in the past. You may like to choose one or a combination of these. You can use them for work materials and for the reference articles in your course materials. If you also use them for summarising each week’s unit of work, you will provide yourself with a thorough preparation of material for your exams.

Some strategies:

• Mark or highlight key words only; make them jump out at you when you return to them.

• Write a note in the margin in which you either
  – identify a situation to which it applies
  – express the idea in your own words.

• Reduce a long piece of text to about 10 summary points and fit them on to an A4 page. Then, either attach this page to the front of the material or put it into a folder which holds all your summaries.

• Further reduce these 10 points to three key points; put these onto a card that you can take anywhere with you.
• Represent the summary points in a form that visually suits you; some popular forms are:

- linear
- mindmap
- flow chart
- box chart
- circles

summary target

one A4 page

Question or task analysis

One of the most frequent comments from examiners and assignment markers is that students fail to answer the question asked. Analysing the question well is often the single most important strategy in constructing your answer.

The key words in the question will tell you what the question is about and how you are required to answer it. Put differently, the key words orient you to the topic and the relevant areas of the course or instruct you to complete some tasks.

Analysing a question requires you to select the key words and to re-group the key words into those that orient you to the topic and those that give you task instructions.

If you adopt the following strategy you will find that you will have an immediate structure for the content of your answer and a clear sense of what you have been asked to do in answering the question.

Strategy

• Select the key words by underlining or highlighting.
• Identify the orientation words (those words that orient you to the topic(s) and the relevant areas of the course).
• Identify the task instruction words. Sometimes you also need to:
  – crystallise groups of words into one instruction word, for example, ‘you should make a comparison’ becomes ‘compare’
  – recognise the instruction word when it is embedded in a question, for example, ‘What are the marketing advantages?’ becomes ‘Identify the marketing advantages’
  – place in parenthesis, instruction words that are implied (an example follows).
Example

In the following example you are given a question followed by a worked analysis of this question. In the analysis the key words have been underlined. They have then been re-grouped as orientation or instruction words.

Question

You have spent the past semester discussing the theories of market strategies and have experienced the value of applying these to case studies. The real benefit of this will come from applying these theories to your own organisation. Your project is to analyse the current market position of your firm. There are many things that you may like to consider but you must include an outline of the firm’s history and describe its chief competitors. What is its current strategy? Make sure that you include an evaluation of this in reference to the firm’s goals.

Question analysis

You have spent the past semester discussing the *theories of market strategies* and have experienced the value of applying these to case studies. The real benefit of this will come from applying these theories to your own organisation. Your project is to analyse the *current market position of your firm*. There are many things that you may like to consider but you must include an *outline of the firm’s history* and describe its chief competitors. What is its *current strategy*? Make sure that you include an *evaluation* of this in reference to the *firm’s goals*.

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<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
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<tr>
<td>theories of market strategies</td>
<td>applying these theories</td>
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<td>current market position of firm</td>
<td>analyse</td>
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<tr>
<td>firm’s history</td>
<td>outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>firm’s chief competitors</td>
<td>describe</td>
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<tr>
<td>current strategy</td>
<td>evaluate</td>
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<td>firm’s goals</td>
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Tip

Placing the orientation words before the instruction words will provide your essay with an organisational framework and ensure that your essay addresses each of the components of the question. Once you have done this, each section can be dealt with as indicated by the instruction words.

Exercise

Analyse the following questions by adopting the strategy outlined above. First, underline or highlight the key words, then list them as orientation or instruction words.

Question 1

What are the competitive advantages of your firm? Address the issues of the sustainability of its competitive advantage and the opportunities or threats facing this business. Your report should include a description of the major markets in which your firm competes and an outline of your customers’ expectations. In addition, all claims that are made in your report should be supported by relevant data.

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Here are three more practice questions. The questions include one that appears rather daunting. It has been deliberately chosen to show you that it can be ‘unpacked’ by applying the analysis technique.

You will find analyses of these questions in Appendix 2.
Question 2
You have been asked to use the ideas and concepts introduced in this course to analyse the strategic management of an organisation. You may focus on any aspect of the strategic management that you like but you need to justify why it has been chosen.

You should provide an analysis of the current situation, an identification of how this might be improved and recommendations to the general manager on how your suggestions could be implemented.

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Question 3
Bandura explains psycho social functioning in terms of triadic reciprocal determinism. In this causal model, behaviour, personal factors and environmental factors all operate as interacting determinants that influence each other bi-directionally. Relate Bandura's model to your experience of motivating and leading. Provide specific examples.

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Question 4

Give an example of how blocking and randomisation could be used to control the effect of confounding factors in the following situation.

A company wishes to institute a pilot-empowering program in one of its divisions. Some staff from each of three levels are to be selected to be part of the pilot program. The productivity of these staff is to be compared to a group of staff not involved in the pilot program.

Explain how the identification of interaction can be used to reduce the sensitivity of a controllable factor to an uncontrollable factor. Use an example of a process from your organisation to illustrate your answer.

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# Glossary of instruction words

The following words will typically be used in questions and assignments to instruct you in the task. You may find this glossary helps you clarify what each word is asking you to do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyse</td>
<td>examine the parts of the whole and determine their inter-relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess</td>
<td>estimate or judge the values or qualities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argue</td>
<td>make clear or prove a point of view by presenting evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>examine or demonstrate similarities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>examine or define differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticise</td>
<td>point out weak and strong points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define</td>
<td>give the precise meaning or state terms of reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>show the elements of or give an account of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>examine by giving reasons for and against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enumerate</td>
<td>write a series of numbered items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>show the worth of, consider the various arguments and reach a judgement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine</td>
<td>provide a detailed account or investigation of the elements, appraise, judge, criticise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>make intelligible by showing the details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify</td>
<td>select the main elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret</td>
<td>explain the meaning by including your own judgement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline</td>
<td>describe or list the essential parts or main features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prove</td>
<td>demonstrate by logical argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>survey or reconsider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>express or specify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarise</td>
<td>crystallise main ideas, present concisely all main points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 5: Writing skills

How can I develop my writing?

The single most important element in writing well is having control over the structure of what you have to say. One of the things most likely to impede this is the reaction of focusing entirely on the content of the answer. The result is an essay or assignment in which many of the important points are lost because they haven’t been structured well.

You can overcome this by applying the skills outlined below. Like all skills, they will be developed if you apply them repeatedly and a good way to start is by attempting the questions set out in the exercise. The value of this is that this is a situation in which you cannot be worried about the content in the same way as if it were a real assignment. You can focus entirely on the structure.

When you come to write an assignment or exam later, you might like to apply the rather clinical approach that this exercise is going to allow you. Pretend that the question is an example that you do not have to do, do not race to answer it but spend time planning the structure of your response. The marker will be able to identify your key points, follow your reasoning and identify your evidence.

So, before feeling daunted by the content you wish to include, before panicking: stop! distance yourself and calmly apply the structured approach to your writing as outlined below.

Structured writing

The basic component of all writing is the paragraph and the key to the structure of a paragraph is the topic sentence. The function of this sentence is to express your main ideas and is typically placed at the beginning of the paragraph. If it is placed at the beginning, it will signal your ideas and allow the reader to know the outline and direction of your argument by skimming the first sentence of every paragraph. In other words, the architecture of your response will be clearly identifiable. This should take you back to the techniques referred to in Effective reading. You should also be aware, however, that not every paragraph will contain a main idea. Some paragraphs will extend a point made in the previous one and in this case the topic sentence will be less significant.
How can you achieve this coherence?

• Write a topic sentence that outlines an idea or responds to a question.
• Further explain the idea.
• Provide the reasoning that supports the idea or point.
• Provide evidence that supports or illustrates the point (this may be examples in the text or may also include visual exhibits such as charts, tables, graphs, etc.).
• Link the evidence to the argument (see Connectives).
• Cite concepts introduced in the course materials and any other research undertaken (see Citation).

**Persuasive writing**

Embedded in the above information about the paragraph is the key element in persuasive writing and that is the evidence you provide. In all forms of argument or persuasion, it is the evidence that is given to substantiate the point that will convince your audience of your point of view. In academic writing, this will require you to undertake research, consult business reports and to provide data.
Writing an argument

- One point of view explained or argued
- Two or more points of view compared, contrasted or evaluated

Introduction

- Position or point of view
- Statement of issues

Body

- Arguments
  - points
  - evidence
- Arguments
  - for and against, or
  - outline of various viewpoints

Conclusion

- Reiteration of position
- Recommendation
Steps in preparing an essay

STEP 1

Analyse the question or task

What information is needed? (orientation)
What am I to do with this information? (instruction)

Explain? Evaluate? Analyse? Other?

STEP 2

Structure your ideas into a logical order

Look at the task again (orientation/instruction)
Any other order?

STEP 3: Write

Introduction
• use the wording of the question or task
• outline main ideas (“signpost them”)

Body
• series of points in paragraphs
• topic sentences indicating main points

Conclusion
• use the wording of the question or task
• restate key arguments

STEP 4

Proof read your text – check for

Errors
• spellcheck
• read aloud

Topic sentences

Connective phrasing

References

STEP 5

Construct a references list
Connectives

An effective way to link your ideas when you write is to use connective phrasing. These phrases do a number of things. They link one idea to another, or evidence to an idea. More importantly, they signal your reasoning, the evidence you provide, and the similarities and differences in the examples.

Very often we assume that the reader has made the connections that we have only implied in the text but just as often this has not in fact happened. Using connective phrasing ensures that the reader makes the same links that you have intended.

To add ideas   moreover, furthermore, in addition, as well as, besides
To show reasoning the first reason, because of this, for these reasons, consequently, thus, therefore, as a result
To provide examples one example is, for instance, for example, this can be seen
To incorporate evidence this is shown by, this is illustrated by, evidence of this is, this is supported by
To link similar ideas likewise, similarly
To link opposite ideas on the other hand, however, in contrast, whilst, whereas, despite, alternatively, on the contrary, nevertheless
To restate an idea in other words, to recap this
To conclude in conclusion, finally
Section 6: Written assignments

You may be required to write a variety of different types of assignments, including:

- short answers
- action learning reviews
- essays
- projects
- case analyses.

Understanding the purpose and structure of each type is essential for the successful completion of the assessment task. In this section, we provide some guidance about each type of assessment.

**Short answer**

The purpose of short answer questions is to test your knowledge and understanding. The key to answering short questions is being clear and economical in expressing your response. You can achieve this by:

- using the wording of the question to introduce your answer
- making a point for each of the marks allocated to the question
- using concise language.
Example

The following example is adapted from *Data Analysis and Statistical Modelling for Business*.

**Question (6 marks)**

Describe the benefits and the limitations of only using a quarterly survey of current customers to obtain feedback about the performance of an organisation.

**Response**

There are some benefits of using only a quarterly survey of current customers to obtain feedback. In the first instance it allows an organisation to track its performance over time. It also provides feedback on the various aspects of the organisation’s service. Further to this, it allows the organisation to identify priorities for its improvement planning.

There are, however, limitations of using the quarterly survey exclusively. For example, non-customers are excluded. There is also a long gap of three months during which there is no formal feedback from customers. Furthermore, these surveys provide overall assessments rather than assessments of a specific service encounter.

Exercise

In this exercise, you are asked not to focus on the content of your answer for the moment but instead focus on how you will structure it. In other words, do not worry at this stage about whether the actual points you make are correct.

Building on earlier activities, follow the four-step process:

analysis → topic sentence/key message → reasoning/evidence → connectives

Firstly analyse the question, then write the topic sentence by using the wording of the question. Write the evidence (the four points you will include) in note form. Finally, write this up into a short paragraph by expanding the points into complete sentences and using connective phrasing.

The following question is taken from a past *Data Analysis and Statistical Modelling for Business* exam paper.
Question (4 marks)
Describe the benefits and limitations of only using a flow chart to improve a process.

Response

Action learning review
In some of the courses that you take, you will be required to submit an action learning review. These are short exercises of varying word length, so please check the page count for each assessment. They require you to show that you have understood the course concepts, that you can apply them to analyse managerial practices and approaches, and that you can draw insights from this analysis about ways to improve managerial practices and approaches. The review is based on the action learning cycle and you may wish to return to Section 1 of this booklet in order to refresh your memory about the elements of the cycle.

In one type of action learning review, you analyse a recent situation in which you were in a managerial role and dealing with a challenging situation. Your aim in the review is to show:

• how course concepts help you understand what occurred
• how (analysis) and why (diagnosis) you were effective/ineffective in the situation
• what you could do differently in similar situations in the future.
This review would be structured as follows:

**Observation:**
A purely descriptive and very brief account of the situation, what you did and the outcome.

**Analysis:**
An analysis of the situation and of how and why you were effective/ineffective in the situation

**Improvement planning:**
An outline of a plan for dealing with this kind of situation more effectively in the future, with an outline of
- possible obstacles to the successful implementation of your plan and ways of dealing with them
- how you will monitor and evaluate your success in implementing your plan.

Because you are describing and analyzing your management practice and formulating a plan for being more effective in the future, you will be writing in the first person, using 'I'.
Example

Observation

A member of staff (John) is not following specific protocol to ensure the area supervisor inspects the condition of our clients’ kitchen equipment prior to negotiating to win back maintenance contracts, despite a number of requests from me and other staff complying.

John is a financially driven, high performer and he sees my request may hamper his chances of regaining contracts and subsequent bonuses, as the supervisor may not think the contract is feasible due to the condition of the equipment. If the area supervisor is not involved in the inspection it could cost the organisation thousands of dollars in unforeseen repairs.

Analysis

I wanted John to identify why the supervisor should be involved. A compliance strategy (MPO 2004) wouldn’t be sufficient as I can’t always watch and check up on him and this would adversely impact on our relationship. I needed a longer-term impact on his behaviour.

My rational influence strategy (MPO 2004) was ineffective. I explained the reasoning behind my request but because John didn’t respect my expertise power this form of influence had little impact. He was more focused on his bonus and believed in his ability to assess the conditions as he was a technician.

The powers John vests in me include Authority and Referent (MPO 2004). I have been using a rational influence strategy which best suits information and expertise powers, where John feels my equal.
Power Influence strategy Actions

Authority Pulling rank Threaten to withdraw rewards if supervisor not involved.

Consultation Discuss his needs once the contract is won and how he sees the best way to get the supervisor (who manages resources) to successful equipment operation and customer satisfaction.

Referent Personal appeal Explain importance to me of supervisor involvement and how this benefits both of us in the long-term.

To achieve identification I would be best using consultation and personal appeal. Pulling rank would at best achieve compliance, which would be my last resort.

Obstacles include correct analysis of power sources and whether the supervisor will show ownership following the successful recapture of the contract. Should he show no ownership when problems occur, John will be discouraged from seeing the need for further supervisor involvement. To overcome this I would use a liaison style of influence with the supervisor, involving the branch manager who has authority over them and could pull rank.

To measure success I can review supervisor involvement in recaptured contracts and their profitability after one year.
References:

Managing People and Organisations 2004, AGSM MBA Programs, Graduate Diploma in Management.

Note: This assignment is an actual submission with names and company details changed. The instructor’s feedback was as follows.

Instructor’s feedback

This is a clear analysis, good problem solving, and a thorough consideration of the situation. Your improvement plan clearly addresses the key issue of influencing John and shows how you can do this more effectively.

The Review cites the course for the three frameworks used in the Review. The authors of these frameworks should have been cited in brackets in the text, and publication details provided in the References list.

The observation section could more clearly state what it is you are observing. You have described what happened, but the main focus of the review is your inability to influence John. This is what you then go on to analyse. A clear statement of the content of the review will help the reader see where you are going, and help you focus your analysis. You have identified the consequence of not influencing John (your inability to influence John to get the area supervisor to inspect equipment could cost the company in high repair costs) which is good since this tells us it is an important issue and we can see what the aim of the improvement planning section is.

The way you use referent power here requires some comment on whether John holds you in high regard, rather than whether senior management hold you in high regard (first table). Since you are trying to influence him, rather than senior management, identify whether you have this kind of power over him.

In the improvement section you could say what personal obstacles you might face in using these different influencing strategies. Are consultation and personal appeal strategies you feel confident in using, and if not how can you improve your use of them?

Please note: This is an actual submission. Both the student’s and the instructor’s permission have been granted to reprint this. The names used in the entry have been changed.
Exercise

Following the structure outlined on page 37, write a 1000-word action learning review of a situation in which you were dealing with a challenging situation and there was room for improvement in the way that you dealt with it. In the improvement planning section of the review, outline a plan for dealing with similar future challenges more effectively.

On completion, ask someone who has not been connected with the event or experience you have described to read what you have written. Ask this person to give you feedback on the structure of what you have written. You might like to ask the following questions:

- Is the event or situation clearly described?
- Did you understand my analysis of how and why I was effective/ineffective?
- Is the improvement plan clearly articulated and does it address the improvement issues that I identified in the analysis?

Academic essay

One of the fundamental requirements of studying at postgraduate level is the ability to write an academic essay. Again and again you will be reminded not to submit an assignment in the form of a business report. This is because they are two forms of writing that are designed with different purposes and different audiences in mind. An academic essay requires you to develop an argument or thesis and to express your ideas with clarity and coherence: the flow of your argument, its structure and the way you substantiate your ideas with evidence are all central to the process. If you adopt the following methods you will find that you achieve clear and effective expression of your ideas.

As pointed out earlier, the single most important feature in effective writing is the structure of your ideas. Clear structure will be achieved by controlling the sequence in which you present your ideas with the main or important ideas coming first.

The overall structure of an essay may be determined by the components of the question or any other outline that you feel addresses the question thoroughly. Once you have outlined the major ideas that you wish to incorporate into the essay you should adopt the following framework.
Essay framework

The key to a successful essay is combining the elements outlined in the section on Writing skills into a framework that will address the question asked or the instructions given in the assignment. In particular, please return to the section on paragraphs if you need a reminder about how to structure the paragraph.

The framework of an essay is simple and familiar and comprises an introduction, body and conclusion.

Introduction

• Introduces your main argument.
• Provides a summary outline of the main ideas of the essay.

Body

• Develops the ideas through a series of paragraphs (each paragraph is likely to have a topic sentence, but where an idea is carried through two or three paragraphs, this will not necessarily be so).
• Provides evidence (examples, quotations, explanations).

Conclusion

• Summarises the key issues or main points of the argument.
• Avoids introducing any new material.

Project

A project is essentially an extended essay that asks you to apply your learning to a business situation. For the purposes of your study towards an AGSM MBA it is to be written in an academic style. Most importantly, it is not to be written as you would write a business report. The reader wants to be able to follow your argument in a fluent way and is relying on you to flesh out your ideas by explicitly making the links between theory and experience. Writing your ideas in bullet form often simply transfers the effort of communication from the writer to the reader, leaving room for misinterpretation.

In some courses, the project will be a substantial assignment and may have a research element as well as an action learning component.
Case analysis

Case studies are extensively used throughout your study. By simulating business situations, they provide you with the opportunity for analysis and problem solving using concepts and models developed in management research. Furthermore, they allow you to distance yourself from the situation, thus providing the focus and concentration that rigorous analysis requires.

The following guide has been developed by faculty teaching in the AGSM MBA Program as a standard way to analyse cases. You will find cases in various courses. Read through it now and be prepared to apply the procedures in the cases you read in your course of study.

Guide to analysing case studies

The case study approach to understanding and solving management problems has received widespread acclaim and adoption in Australia and overseas. The popularity of this approach is due, in part, to the fact that active involvement is central to the learning process.

Objectives of the case study method

Class discussions or presentations of cases, and formal case write-ups, have several objectives. The more important ones are:

- to present descriptions of actual business situations, principles and methods as they are employed in various contexts
- to reflect on concepts learnt in course curriculum and apply them to business situations
- to gain insights into the messy reality of management that text books often ignore.

Learning by case study can be a highly rewarding experience. The more involved you get in the case the more you will learn. Usually it is best to adopt the perspective of a manager within the organisation or institution, and to analyse the situation as if you were that person.
Method of analysis

There is no perfect way to analyse and present a case study, neither is there a perfect answer. However, there are certain procedures that, if followed, are more likely to result in a high quality analysis and a valuable learning experience. After you have gained some exposure to case analysis you may develop your own procedure and tailor it to the characteristics of the particular case at hand.

There are two common forms of case analysis: those that require you to solve a problem and make a recommendation; and more general analyses that ask you to extract concepts, apply frameworks and draw insights from events. Use this guide to analyse both forms.

Step 1: Preparation

• Read the case quickly to get an overview and a feel for the case. Try to read the case as far as possible in advance of the time you will actually begin to organise an analysis. It has been suggested that the subconscious contributes to the solution of one's problems. Perhaps this is because there are thousands of bits of information that bear on any given problem, and once the mind has been sensitised to the problem these bits begin to be collected, even unconsciously. A conversation, a periodical or a journal article, a news broadcast all contribute.

• Read the case again, this time more thoroughly and carefully. Make a note of the following:
  – key personalities, groups, organisations or institutions – describe their role, expertise and impact on the situation
  – your unit of analysis – are you concerned with a group, business unit, organisation, industry, country or combination of these?
  – missing data – information which will require you to make assumptions and for which judgment must be applied
  – questions for discussion.

• State the main problems or key issues clearly and concisely. Identify the objectives that are not being met in the current situation. Although questions may be posed at the end of the case, the key or central issue may not be. It must be recognised that in most cases there are several apparent problems. The case – like the real organisation – may also contain inconsistencies. It is your job to untangle, judge and prioritise these issues.
• Prepare a summary of the information given, to help you organise your thoughts. This will provide you with a visual picture of various facets of the situation. For example:
  – a chart showing key relationships
  – a time line of events
  – charts showing trends of variables that are important to the analysis
  – flow charts showing causes and consequences of particular events.

• Recall the course concepts which may be used to help provide insight into the case situation. These are your analysis tools.

• Put the issue in context. Consider the cause(s) of any problems. Identify the main constraints, opportunities and resources in the case. In some cases, where there is no apparent or immediate problem, the task is to account for performance by identifying the critical success factor(s) and the key issue for the future.

**Step 2: Conceptual analysis**

In this section we consider the two common forms of case study in turn: problem-solving cases and general event analyses. A. Problem-solving cases

• List alternative solutions. Alternatives are separate courses of action that may be taken – singly, not in combination. If one is chosen, others are rejected. In setting down alternatives, be guided by these suggestions:
  – Only feasible alternatives should be considered. For example, a company can buy out a competitor and in some cases this is feasible, but in other cases it is not. Often, to do nothing is a logical alternative, but when this is considered, be sure that it is a practical alternative.
  – Alternatives should have a sound basis which draws on concepts, frameworks and theories.
  – Check back to the problem statement to see that it matches your alternatives in scope and wording. Ask yourself the question: ‘Would this alternative solution solve the problem statement as I have written it?’ Also ask yourself whether your alternatives address the causes of the problem as you have identified them.

• Make an analysis of each alternative considering the advantages and disadvantages of each. Do this by applying concepts covered in the course. Consider the consequences of each situation. Are you creating more problems by following this solution? If your solution is based on assumptions be sure they are reasonable.
• Make and justify your recommendation based on this analysis. Be clear about the criteria you use in choosing among alternatives. The recommendation must be practical and clearly specify the path that should be followed. Decide what should be done, by whom, how, and in what time period.

• Note the costs or limitations of your recommendations, and any problems that might arise in implementing your solutions.

B. General event analyses

• Identify critical factors which explain events and/or performance. These should have a theoretical basis, that is, in identifying them you are drawing on concepts, frameworks and theories.

• It may be necessary to make assumptions when data are missing. If so, such assumptions must be reasonable.

• Consider the longer term implications and consequences of key events and strategies. What may be a source of success today could be the seeds of failure for tomorrow.

Step 3 – Presentation

Whether your presentation is oral or written, the following guidelines are recommended:

• State the basic and underlying problems to be solved or issues to be analysed. Summarise your recommendation or analysis.

• State only the background information which is essential. Do not use limited space to restate the case.

• List the assumptions you have made and explain your reasons for making them.

• Present the main body of the analysis, that is, either the solution alternatives and implementation strategies, or the insights derived from applying concepts. Briefly show the steps you have been through in arriving at this argument, justifying your decisions and referring to course materials. Tables, charts, diagrams, etc., should be included in the analysis, either at the point where you refer to this material or in an appendix.

• Present your conclusion which summarises the arguments made as above, the insights that you have gained and any implications for other organisations or future activities. Be sure that the link between your conclusion/solution and the problem/issue is clear.
• If appropriate include appendices with supporting evidence or illustrations of methods used. Material from sources outside the written case should be referenced. Appendices should only provide support for your argument, the main argument should be made in the text.

• If appropriate, that is, if the analysis is lengthy and detailed, include an executive summary.

Sources: This note has been prepared by Professor Grahame Dowling and Dr Rose Trevelyan. It draws on material presented in:
Section 7: Referencing

What is referencing?

Referencing is properly acknowledging the work of others and is an imperative in academic study. If you do not reference the sources of the information and ideas that you use in your writing, you are plagiarising, which is presenting the words or ideas of others as your own. (Plagiarism is dealt with in more detail later in this section.)

To reference the source of an idea that you use in an assignment, you need to:

• include a bracketed citation at an appropriate place in the text of the assessment
• present the details of the relevant publication in a references list at the end of your assignment.

In AGSM MBA Programs assignments, this information needs to presented in a way that follows the Harvard Referencing system, which is explained in more detail below.

One thing to note is that it is not acceptable to use text from other students or from internet 'paper-mill' sites in your assessments, even if the source is acknowledged and referencing conventions are scrupulously observed.

Citations

A citation appears in the body of your text and should be given whenever you quote or refer to the work of an author. You need to include three pieces of information:

• the name of the author or authors
• the year of publication
• the page number (if the information can be located on a particular page).
Citing publications that you have not read

Note that if you are referring to a publication cited in the course materials and you have not read that publication, you must cite it in one of the following two ways:

“To foster self-efficacy, it is important to use three complementary approaches (Bandura 1997, in ATC 2012, pp. 3–21).”

Or

“Bandura (1997, in ATC 2009, pp. 3–21) has argued that there are three ways to foster self-efficacy.”

In these citations, the name of the course Approaches to Change has been abbreviated to ‘ATC’.

How to present citations in your assignment

1. Placing

Put the relevant details at the end of the sentence before the concluding punctuation:

e.g., The idea was first developed in 2007 (Smith 2007).

or

Integrate the author’s surname into your sentence, followed by the year of publication in brackets:

e.g., Smith (2007) developed this idea.

e.g., Smith summed up the idea for leadership in the words, “Lead by example” (2007).

2. Citing authors

One author: e.g., (Smith 2007)

More than one author: e.g., (Smith & Jones 2007).

More than two authors: Use the surname of the first author and ‘et al.’ (Latin for ‘and others’), e.g., Smith et al. (2007).

Authors who share the same surname: Use their initials to indicate each person, e.g., Smith, J. (2006), Smith, S. (2007).

More than one work by the same author: Arrange the citations in chronological order, e.g., (Smith 2006, 2007).
An author who published more than one work in the same year: Attach an a, b, c, d etc. after the year, e.g., Smith (2007a 2007b).

More than one work: Separate the references either with a semi-colon or with the word ‘and’, e.g., (Jones 2006; Smith 2007) or Jones (2006) and Smith (2007).

An author who attributes it to some other source: Acknowledge both sources in your text, e.g., Jones wrote in 2006 that in his company ‘the most important aspect of job satisfaction is the employee–boss relationship’ (Jones 2006, p.1, quoted in Smith 2007).

Referring to the overall content of a work: Do not include page numbers, e.g., Smith (2007) studied the differences between managers and leaders.

3. Citing other sources

A journal: Include the volume number, e.g., (Smith 2007, March–April).

Newspapers: List the name of the newspaper, the date, year and page number and provide all these details in the intext citation, e.g., (Sydney Morning Herald, 7 March, 2007, p. 2).

There is no need for an entry in the reference list.

A privately obtained interview or other personal communication: Include the abbreviation ‘pers. comm.’ and provide all the details in the intext citation, e.g., (Smith, 2007, pers. comm., 20 Mar).

There is no need for an entry in the reference list.

CD-ROM: Include the full title and year of publication, e.g., (CD-ROM, Microsoft Encarta, 2007).

Internet: Use the author’s name and the date the page was created. If the page is not dated, use the date you accessed the site, e.g., (Smith, 14 March 2007).

AGSM MBA Programs course material: Use the course name, year of publication, and full page number (which indicates the unit), e.g., (ATC, 2012, pp. 6–20).

Note that it is permissible in intext citations to abbreviate the name of the course to initials.
References lists

What to include in your references list
The list of references is the list of all the books, journal articles and other sources that you have referred to in your assignment and that you have read.

*Note that publications referred to in the course materials that you have not read should not appear in your references list.*

So, for example, if you have drawn on the course’s account of Bandura’s ideas about self-efficacy in your assignment but have not read the publication in which these ideas appear, the Bandura publication should not be included in your references list. It is important to make clear that you are referencing the course author’s interpretation or summary of Bandura’s ideas about self-efficacy.

How to present a references list
References lists are placed at the end of the assignment and include full details, presented in the following order:

- author's surname and initials or given name
- year of publication
- title of publication
- title of series (if applicable)
- volume number or number of volumes (if applicable)
- edition (if applicable)
- editor, reviser, compiler or translator, if other than the author
- publisher
- place of publication
- page number or numbers (if applicable).

*Note: You are not required to write references lists at the end of your answers in the final exam.*
Books

1. Author

The title of the book must be either underlined or in italics. Which style you choose is up to you, but you must be consistent:


2. Collection of articles

When the book contains a number of articles by different authors but compiled by an editor(s), use the following layout:


3. Article from a book collection

When referring specifically to one article, the title of the article appears in quotations and the title of the book is either underlined or italicised.


Journals

When referencing articles from journals you need to record the information in the following order:

- author's name
- year of publication
- title of article (in quotation marks)
- title of journal or periodical (underlined or italicised)
- title of series (if applicable)
- place of publication (if applicable)
- volume number (if applicable)
- issue number or month (if applicable)
- page number or numbers

Internet resources

The information is presented in the following order:

- the author’s name (if there is one)
- the title of the material (underlined or italicised)
- the URL or Internet address (between pointed brackets < >)
- the date the material was created. If the page is undated, then use the date you accessed the page.

1. Usenet news articles

Take the <author’s name>, <e-mail address>, <course>, <message-id>, <newsgroup> and <date> elements from the message header. Enclose both <e-mail address> and <message-id> within angle brackets. Include the date you accessed it in parentheses.

  e.g., Barrett, Alan barrett@lucy.ee.und.ac.za MLA citation style for Internet documents? Article 3phppu$16k@lucy.ee.und.ac.za in Usenet newsgroup alt. usage.english, 19 May 1995.

2. World Wide Web

Write the author's name and the title of the article.

Use the URL to identify the source of the material (‘http://’ etc.).

If the document is dated internally, use that date for the citation. If not, use the date it was first accessed. Write ‘Accessed’ in parenthesis.

  e.g., Beckleheimer, Jeff ‘How do you cite URL’s in a bibliography?’ http://www.nrlssc.navy.mil/meta/bibliography.html, 1994


AGSM MBA Programs course materials

When referencing ideas in your course materials, you need to include the course name, year of publication and program title.

  e.g., Approaches to Change, 2012, AGSM MBA Programs, Graduate Certificate in Change Management.

Note that the item for the course in the References list does not mention a particular unit or units. The page numbers in the bracketed citations in the text of your assignment will indicate the units from which ideas are drawn.
Information and advice about the Harvard Referencing System can be found on the UNSW Learning Centre website at:
http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref.html

Plagiarism

If you present other people’s ideas as your own, it is called plagiarism. The word comes from the Greek *plagion*: kidnapping!

The following is a statement by the University of New South Wales about plagiarism (2013)

“Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. Plagiarism is a type of intellectual theft. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement. The University of New South Wales has adopted an educative approach to plagiarism and has developed a range of resources to support students.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- Direct duplication of the thoughts or work of another, including by copying work, or knowingly permitting it to be copied. This includes copying materials, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document (whether published or unpublished), composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, website, internet, other electronic resource, or another person’s assignment, or the student’s own assignment from a previous course, without appropriate acknowledgement;

- Quotation without the use of quotation marks;

- Paraphrasing another person’s work with very minor change keeping the meaning, form and/or progression of ideas of the original;

- Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the ‘secondary’ source from which knowledge of them has been obtained;

- Piecing together sections of the work of others into a new whole;

- Presenting an assessment item as independent work when it has been produced in whole or part in collaboration with other people, for example, another student or tutor;

- Claiming credit for a proportion of work contributed to a group assessment item that is greater than that actually contributed;

- Submitting your own assessment item that has already been submitted for academic credit at UNSW or elsewhere;
• Using another person’s ideas or words in an oral presentation without crediting the source.

The basic principles are that you should not attempt to pass off the work of another person as your own, and it should be possible for a reader to locate information and ideas you have used by going to the original source material. Acknowledgement should be sufficiently accurate to enable the source to be located quickly and easily.”

Source: https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/Plagiarism.html.

**Further information about plagiarism**

The Learning Centre website is the main repository of resources for staff and students on plagiarism and academic integrity. These resources are located at: http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/index.html.

The Learning Centre also provides substantial educational written materials, workshops, and tutorials to aid students, for example, in:

• correct referencing practices;
• paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing, and time management;
• appropriate use of, and attribution for, a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre.

Students are also reminded that one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting, and the proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.
Section 8: Exam strategies

How can I maximise my exam effectiveness?

Despite having taken your place in the business world, having proven yourself capable and confident in demanding situations, there is no single event which will more undermine that confidence and rock your self-esteem than preparing for and sitting exams! It is the nature of the beast.

How can we help? Firstly, information specific to the exams in each course is outlined in the Overview of the course materials. Typically the exams are three hours long. Each course will have its own format but you can expect to do both open-book and closed-book exams, and a variety of question styles such as short answer, case study, and essay.

Secondly, all the strategies already outlined for managing your AGSM MBA culminate in and apply to sitting exams. The following recaps this and introduces further advice. However familiar or obvious some of it may seem, it is well to consider it carefully and employ the skills and techniques in the lead-up to the exam and in the exam itself.

Preparing for exams

Conditions for study

- If you have already devised a time planner (see Time management), designate periods for study. Schedule periods of time when you are personally most alert and limit the period of study, one-hour slots of intense study will maximise your concentration.

- Set goals for each session and keep a diary of what you have accomplished. Achieving your goals as well as reflecting on the time you have spent and what you have covered will boost your confidence and reduce your panic.

- Your study conditions should still apply and you should have a quiet, comfortable, well-lit area to work in.

- Keep up your physical activity by doing the exercises at your desk (see Study conditions) and/or your preferred sports.
Revision techniques

- Research the content and format of the exam paper. This will often be outlined in your course materials. Check with your Instructor if you are unsure about any of it.

- You should already have good summaries but if you have skipped skills outlined earlier in this manual (see Summarising). It is unlikely that, at this time in the semester while you are still preparing the current week’s work, you will find the time to re-read earlier materials fully. Applying the effective reading strategies will help.

- A further summarising technique at this stage is to condense your summary notes to key words that will act as memory triggers for related ideas.

- Review all your notes at the end of the study session and try and recite them back to yourself.

- If you can find a sympathetic ear, explain what you have just learnt. This will help crystallise the ideas for you, implant them in your memory and alert you to any weak areas of your understanding.

- Use flash cards to write down definitions, main ideas and theories. Use these to memorise information. You can carry them with you and study them at convenient times.

- Identify what you do not understand and arrange to see your instructor. Doing this is one of the most effective ways to clarify and cement your learning. Either email or make an appointment with your instructor to discuss this. Avoid trying to catch him or her either before or after a class as both of you may be tired, distracted or in a rush.

- Practise writing essays in longhand within the time constraints of exam questions. It is probably a long time since you last wrote longhand for any period of time. You can employ all the essay skills in this process and you should particularly focus on the structure of what you want to write. Remember also that you will write less in longhand than you would on a computer in the same time limit. Planning is therefore essential. It will ensure that you include key information and that you structure your answer well.

- Form a study group. Arrange times with set limits so that you do not feel that time has slipped away. Set an agenda. Items might include topics to discuss; a designated number of questions for each member to bring; reviewing practice exams you may each have done and providing feedback; and bringing specific examples which apply to the course materials.
Before the exam

This will seem especially obvious but unnecessary panic will be avoided if you use this as a checklist before attending an exam.

- Make sure you know the date, time and place of the exam. Write these details in any diaries you keep.
- Have the materials that you require ready well in advance (pens, pencil, eraser, calculator, books if an open-book exam).
- Arrive with plenty of time to park, etc. and to make yourself comfortable in the room.
- Avoid conversations with other students about how little study you feel you have done and how panic-stricken you feel. You would never diminish your confidence in this way in a demanding negotiation at work!

In the exam

Plan the time you intend to spend on each section of the paper. Allocate the time according to mark value and type of question. Write down the actual time you will start and finish each section. Adhere to this as you progress through the exam.

Exam essay questions

The two most common comments from examiners who mark exam essays are that students fail to answer the question asked and that they write poorly structured responses. The material included in this manual on analysing questions and on essay writing should be adhered to in the exam.

There are further strategies that you can adopt that will also help. Once again, some of these will seem obvious but refreshing your memory before each exam will help you to concentrate once you are in there.

- Read the question carefully, make sure that you understand it and apply the analysing technique. If you think the question is ambiguous in its wording, make your interpretation of the meaning clear in your introduction.
- Before writing the essay itself:
  - note down all your ideas in point form
  - organise the sequence in which you will present them
– write an introduction in which you make reference to each of these ideas. Another approach is to write the introduction last, because the argument may develop in unexpected ways as you get into it.

– it is a good idea to use the wording of the question in the very first sentence of your introduction. This forces you to focus on the question and allows the examiner to see that you have but don’t waste too much time and words simply repeating the question.

• When writing the essay:

– write the body of paragraphs, picking up each of the ideas in the introduction and committing at least a paragraph to each one.

– make sure that the idea is the topic sentence of the paragraph and that the paragraph develops the idea with further explanation and evidence.

– write a conclusion that briefly refers to your main points.

• Try to leave five minutes at the end of the exam to proofread your essay for grammatical errors and spelling mistakes. Absolutely avoid trying to rewrite any words or phrases because you think they will sound better. The revised version is rarely much better than the original and the mess of crossing out impedes the examiner’s reading. It is often also the case that the new word changes something grammatically in the sentence, so the whole thing becomes confusing to read.

Note: Remember to use citations to authors and ideas in your essays but don’t write a full reference list at the end of the essay.

Multiple-choice questions

Although multiple-choice questions are not widely used for assessment at AGSM MBA Programs, you will find the following advice valuable if you do come across this form of questioning.

• When using a separate answer sheet, constantly check that you are answering in the properly numbered space.

• After you read the question, try to answer the question before reading the choices provided.

• Answer the easy questions first and try not to get stuck on hard questions because you will waste time.

• Read the wording of each question carefully. Consider all the options before choosing your answer and look for the most correct answer.
• Be alert for possible grammatical inconsistencies between question and potential answers. A choice is nearly always wrong if the question and answer do not make a grammatically correct sentence.

• Be alert to the nuances in the wording, for example:
  – most, all, some, no, none
  – always, usually, sometimes, never
  – great, much, either, no
  – more, equal, less
  – bad, good, is/is not.

• Note that qualifying words such as ‘all/none/always/never’ often make a statement false, whilst qualifying words such as ‘most/some/usually/seldom’ often make a statement true.

• Also be alert in true-false tests for multiple ideas and concepts within the question. All parts of the statement must be true or the entire statement is false.

• Accept the question at face value. Avoid reading anything into or out of the question.

• Generally resist changing your original answer. In most cases your intuition is correct. Only change your answer if you are really certain that your original is wrong.

• Be familiar with the concept of negative marking, and find out in advance if a penalty for wrong answers applies. If it does, do not guess any answers unless you think there is a very good chance that the guess is right.

Source: Adapted from The Learning Centre Study Resource Materials.
Section 9: Grading

How will I be graded?

What is the marker looking for?

Much of the answer to this question is contained in sections 4 to 8 of this manual. Developing the skills covered in these sections will help you perform your best throughout your course of study and will provide you with the basis to reach the highest skill level outlined below.

The marker is looking for evidence that you can apply all your cognitive skills to the materials taught. These skills are summarised and classified in the Bloom’s Taxonomy (1954).

Bloom’s Taxonomy

Bloom recognised that cognitive skills can be classified in a hierarchy. His Taxonomy can be represented visually as a pyramid, with the highest order skill at the top.

Figure 6 Bloom’s Taxonomy
The skills in the pyramid are defined as follows:

**Evaluation**

Evaluating or judging the logic and consistency of the arguments and ideas of others; judging the adequacy with which conclusions are supported by data and the value of those conclusions; judging the value of work in terms of an organisation’s internal criteria and/or other external standards of excellence (the skills of evaluation are what the marker applies to your work!).

**Synthesis**

Putting all the parts together to form a new whole, writing an essay in which you apply your knowledge and comprehension of the ideas in the course materials to your own workplace situation, analysing that situation in the context of the ideas and theories.

**Analysis**

Analysing ideas in course materials or in the workplace, recognising unsubstantiated assumptions or fallacies in reasoning, discriminating between fact and inference/opinion, evaluating data, analysing organisational structure.

**Application**

Applying principles and concepts in the materials to your own experience in the workplace.

**Comprehension**

Understanding, interpreting, estimating, justifying ideas in study materials.

**Knowledge**

Remembering learned material, knowing terms, facts, methods, procedures, basic concepts, and principles included in course materials.

Each level contains the skills of the level below it. One way to increase your chance of getting into a higher grade is to make sure you display skills in the higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy.

### Assessment and examination policy

The AGSM MBA Programs assessment and examination policies and procedures can be found at:

http://www.asb.unsw.edu.au/currentstudents/agsmmba/academicinformation/assessmentsandexaminations/Pages/default.aspx
References


Appendices

Appendix 1  Session and weekly planners.
Appendix 2  Question analysis solutions.
Appendix 1

Session and weekly planners.
### Session planner

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**Weekly planner**

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Appendix 2

Question analysis solutions.
Question analysis solutions

Here are the worked examples of question analysis. Remember that the words in parenthesis are instructions that are implied by the question. They provide a more immediate instruction to follow. In some examples, the order has been slightly altered from that of the original. This has been done to benefit the structure of the response.

Analysis of Question 2

You have been asked to use the ideas and concepts introduced in this course to analyse the strategic management of an organisation. You may focus on any aspect of the strategic management that you like but you need to justify why it has been chosen.

You should provide an analysis of the current situation, an identification of how this might be improved and recommendations to the General Manager on how your suggestions could be implemented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aspect of strategic management</td>
<td>choose and justify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>course ideas and concepts of strategic management</td>
<td>use/apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>current situation</td>
<td>analyse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improvements and recommendations</td>
<td>identify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementations</td>
<td>outline</td>
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</table>

Analysis of Question 3

Bandura explains psycho social functioning in terms of triadic reciprocal determinism. In this causal model, behaviour, cognitive and other personal factors and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence each other bi-directionally. Relate Social Cognitive Theory to your experience of motivating and leading. Provide specific examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>examples – your experience motivating and leading</td>
<td>provide/outline/describe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Cognitive Theory influence of: behavioural</td>
<td>relate/apply to examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive</td>
<td>consider</td>
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<tr>
<td>personal</td>
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<tr>
<td>environmental</td>
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Analysis of Question 4

Give an example of how blocking and randomisation could be used as a control for the effect of confounding factors in the following situation: A company wishes to institute a pilot empowering program in one of its divisions. Some staff from each of three levels are to be selected to be part of the pilot program. The productivity of these staff is to be compared to a group of staff not involved in the pilot program.

Explain how the identification of interaction can be used to reduce the sensitivity of a controllable factor to an uncontrollable factor. Use an example of a process from your organisation to illustrate your answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Situation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effect of confounding factors</td>
<td>(describe)</td>
<td>pilot empowerment program/productivity analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blocking and randomisation as control</td>
<td>(show) how/ give example</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>identification of interaction</td>
<td>explain how to use</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>→ reduction sensitivity of</td>
<td>provide</td>
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<tr>
<td>controllable to uncontrollable factor</td>
<td>personal process example</td>
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**Note**

In this example, you will see that a third category has been added — the situation to which the exercise is applied. This allows you to externalise it, because it is information that outlines the scene but contains no internal instruction for you.

You may have noticed also that the task of describing the effect of confounding factors has been included even though it was not explicitly directed. It is included and placed first because outlining or describing this effect is a clear way to introduce the analytical part of the question.