

HOW TO STUDY

FOR SUCCESS

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TABLE OF CONTENT

| | | |
|---------------|--|-----|
| Introduction | | 4 |
| CHAPTER ONE | The Brain | 6 |
| CHAPTER TWO | Studying and Reading | 15 |
| CHAPTER THREE | Studying in Different Conditions | 25 |
| CHAPTER FOUR | Writing Legibly | 32 |
| CHAPTER FIVE | Factors That Contribute to Academic Success | 39 |
| CHAPTER SIX | Factors That Contribute to Academic Failure | 74 |
| CHAPTER SEVEN | Examination Preparation Tips | 108 |

INTRODUCTION

For students to get the best out of the Use of Library and Study Skills course - a general studies course taught in

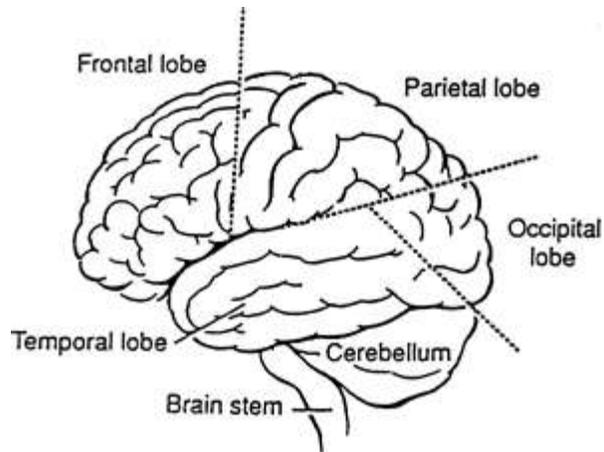
almost all universities - the knowledge of how to study should be injected into it. It is a well thought out idea that this topic should be included as part of this course. Therefore, an elaborate guideline or treatment on how to study, though not exhaustive, is done in this book to help students acquire the requisite knowledge to cope with the rigors of tertiary education.

This handbook looks at the differences between studying and reading. Many factors hinder students from grasping what they are taught, so we are going to look at such factors and proffer solutions on how to overcome them. Experience, they say, is the best teacher but this axiom should be modified to say that **teaching is the best teacher, because, we are learning from the mistakes and experiences of others.** We cannot fall into a pit and break our leg for us to have the experience that, if we fall into a pit we will break our leg. We learn from what happened to others. Experience is not the best teacher but it has its role to play in learning.

Certain skills are to be mastered for one to study effectively. Exposition to such skills prepares one for success in his studies and helps one to avoid trial and error syndrome. Follow us step by step on how to study for success. We will start by passing comments on the brain – the seat of wisdom.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BRAIN



Your

Amazing Brain: www.publichealthgreybruce.o..

Downloaded from yahoo images search:
http://images.search.yahoo.com/images/view;_ylt=A0PDoKzbbzdQFBgAjhuJzbf.

The brain is a singular organ of the body whose function affects all other parts. It is a physical organ like liver, muscle, bone but, it is very unique. It is a psychological organ as well. It is “responsible for our moods of despair and elation, our sense of well-being and our sense that something’s wrong, our perception of the outside world and our awareness of its meaning” (Kosslyn of Rosenberg, 2004).

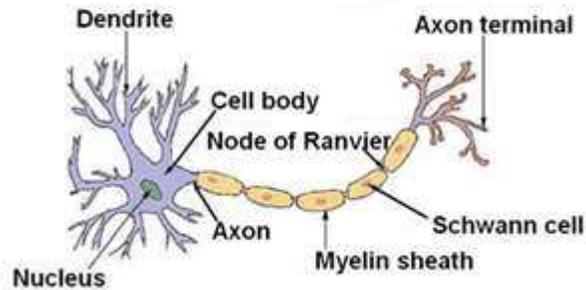
According to Barry D. Smith in his book *Psychology: Science & Understanding* (1998) the brain is an incredible three-pound mass that controls virtually every behaviour. This is done through its billions of neurons. The neurons are message carriers, they communicate with parts of the body. They are intricately connected and function collectively to control our behaviour. There are different types of neurons each with specific structure and set of functions.

The structure of a typical neuron as is presented in Scientia.wikispaces.com and curled from:

[http://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images;_ylt=AoVZL7wzuCJvcVLn8aQHvAubvZx4?fr=yfp-t-701-s&toggle=1&cop=mss&ei=UTF-8&p=axons%20dendrites,](http://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images;_ylt=AoVZL7wzuCJvcVLn8aQHvAubvZx4?fr=yfp-t-701-s&toggle=1&cop=mss&ei=UTF-8&p=axons%20dendrites)

is hereby shown:

Structure of a Typical Neuron



A neuron has three main structures namely **cell body or soma (head)** which contains the cell's nucleus which, among other functions, serves to integrate information arriving at the neuron; **dendrites** which receive information from other neurons and transfer to axon. Dendrites stand between soma and axon. The **axon** is a long filament which receives information from soma to dendrite zones of other neurons and transmits the impulses to organs and muscles for action. These neurons according to their functions could be sensory neurons, motor neurons, or interneuron.

Sensory neurons conduct impulses (messages) from receptors in the sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, skin,

tongue). Motor neurons are active output cells. Motor neurons activate the muscles of the body to react. Between the sensory and motor neurons are inter-neurons which serve as relay stations (middle man) between other inter-neurons.

Have we bothered you so long? Let's go straight to the brain. When we talk about brain we mean consciousness, we mean mind, and we mean memory. All the activities and interpretation of what transpired between neurons and the body (muscles) are done by the brain. Let us attempt to define brain.

Brain is that part of the central nervous system, in vertebrates, that is caged by the skull. According to *The Chambers Dictionary* the brain is "the seat of the intellect and of sensation". *Students Dictionary* (1998) published by Houghton Mifflin Company defined brain as "the portion of the central nervous system consisting of a large mass of gray nerve tissue enclosed in the skull of a vertebrate responsible for the interpretation of sensory impulses, the coordination and control of bodily activities and the

exercise of emotion and thought". These three vital functions of the brain make it a powerful and wonderful organ of the body needing protection. It means that any distortion of the brain makes the vertebrates behave unreasonably and the body functions discordantly. So the brain needs to be guided jealously. It needs to be protected from damage.

Protection of the brain from physical harm, injurious substances and spiritual manipulation should be encouraged. Every avenue to the brain should be guided. Some of the things we need to guide against are, but not limited to:

- (a) what you watch – TV programs, pornographic images, blue films, magical displays, devilish traditional festivals, miracle churches, etc.
- (b) What you eat – junk fatty foods, forbidden meat (pork, dog meat, duck, donkey, snake, any animal that does not chew the chord or have cloven feet).
- (c) What you drink – coffee, gin, be mindful of drinks that contain caffeine and alcohol.

(d) What you inhale – cigarette, heroine, marijuana, tobacco, etc. All these affect your brain adversely. Madness is as a result of injury to the brain. The line between sanity and insanity is very thin. It is as thin as you pronounce the “in” difference in sanity and insanity.

(e) Finally avoid physical harm to your head where the brain is housed. Common protection like wearing helmet, while riding motor-cycle or when on a building site, avoid throwing stones on each other, reckless driving, headlong collision, high noise zone, etc. By protecting our brain to keep it healthy we are enhancing our ability to study and retain information.

(f) Spiritual protection is needed. Not all religions are godly. Avoid spiritism. Avoid hypnotism. The Bible is the true book that sustains life. It is highly recommended for spiritual growth. Do not allow others to control your conscience. You are a human being not an animal. You are created by God; you did not evolve from apes.

WE ARE STEWARDS OF OUR HEALTH

Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit from God, you are not your own, you are bought with a price. Therefore,

glorify God in your body (I Corinthians 6:19-20, paraphrased). To summarize this chapter a citation of an article from *The Review and Herald, January 25, 1881* by Ellen G. White and that of L. James Gibson from *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide, Teachers' Edition*, first quarter's Sabbath School Lessons of 2013 titled "Origins" will be given. "Let none who profess godliness regard with indifference the health of the body, and flatter themselves that intemperance is no sin, and will not affect their spirituality. A close sympathy exists between the physical and the moral nature. The standard of virtue is elevated or degraded by the physical habits.... Any habit which does not promote healthful action in the human system degrades the higher and nobler faculties" (E. G. White, 1881).

Elaborating more on the importance of optimum health as one of the factors for brain work, L. James Gibson links it to how human beings were at creation, when they were pure from the hands of the Creator, and how sin marred God's image in man. He contradicts this human purity at creation with evolution which depicted man as inherently impure. "God's original Creation was 'good' even 'very

good'. Everything and everyone came forth from the hand of the Creator in a state of perfection. There was no sickness, no disease, no death. Contrary to the evolutionary model – in which disease, sickness and death are part of the very means of creation – these things came only *after* the Fall, *after* the entrance of sin. Thus, it is only against the background of creation story that we can better understand the biblical teaching about health and healing”.

“Our bodies are the vehicle for our brain, and it is through our brain that the Holy Spirit communicates with us”. If our bodies are the channel through which the Holy Spirit communicates with us, is the body not also the channel through which our teachers communicate to us? Remember the five senses, are they not the means through which we receive messages which the brain interprets? Gibson as a preacher continues “If we wish to have communion with God, we must take care of our bodies and brains. If we abuse our bodies, we destroy ourselves, both physically and spiritually”.

“Care of our health is a vital part of our relationship to God. Obviously, some aspects of our health are beyond our power. We all have defective genes [as a result of sin], we are all exposed to unknown chemicals or other damaging agents, and we are all at risk of physical injury that may damage our health. God knows all this. But to the extent that lies within our power, we are to do our best to maintain our bodies, made in the image of God”. This has been a worthwhile sermon to us. What we eat, what we drink, what we see, what we smell, and what we touch affect our brain and may impair our ability to read and understand.

CHAPTER TWO

STUDYING AND READING

Reading and studying may be mistakenly termed the same. There is a difference; though minor, it matters. Study involves reading; but reading is not studying. In some dictionaries “study” is part of the definition for reading. That does not mean that they are interchangeable. To read means “to look at and comprehend the meaning of written or printed words. It also means, loosely, to learn from written or printed matter. Learning is deeper than reading and may not involve reading. Before we compare and contrast reading and studying, let us try to see the meaning or definition of study or studying. The word ‘study’ is a noun while ‘studying’ is the verb. To study means (1) to make use of the mind to gain knowledge (2) the act or process of learning about something (3) careful examination (*Merriam Webster Dictionary*, 1997).

Let us compare and contrast the two words – reading and learning. Reading has to do with visualizing written words

or symbols to ascertain their meaning, to understand them. A reader does not necessarily need to comprehend or retain what he has understood from reading. Reading could be for pleasure. Most of the times, we read to get information on what is happening around us, just for knowledge sake. This is why we read newspapers and magazines. We read for relaxation and recreation. We do not have to task our brain to regurgitate what we read if it is not for the purpose of examination or study. Studying is a well planned reading whose aim is to capture and assimilate every necessary detail in a document. Studying involves reading with critical thinking and retention. It is not a casual reading neither is it for entertainment as in ordinary reading. Most of the times studying involves reading a given assignment in preparation for a test, in form of quiz or examination. Concentration given to studying is different from the one given to mere reading. We are not saying that you may not study magazine or newspaper. If you are reading any of them with the aim of passing an examination or writing a paper, then you are studying. Hopefully, you have known the differences between reading and studying.

To summarize, studying is deeper than reading. To study means to apply one's mind purposefully to the acquisition of knowledge or understanding. It means pursuit of knowledge by reading, by observation, by research, or by practice. It is an attentive scrutiny of an event or action. It involves the memory. It calls for reflection and ponder.

GENERAL STUDY GUIDE

Many factors influence our studies. Until we look at those factors one after the other we may be playing or whirling away our time in the name of studying. In this part of the discourse, we will concentrate on general study guide after which, we move into private studies, studies in the classroom, library, and into preparation for examination.

Time management is one of the most grossly abused of all the study tips. Students hardly create time for studies. Only class time table is recognized as time management to them. Until examination time, many students do not set time aside for studying. So the first step to your success or good grades in school is time management. After the times

taken for worships, food, classes, and sleep (if you really have time to sleep), the remaining time left for you each day should be apportioned to studies. Education should take preeminence before extra-curricular activities. Unfortunately some students remember to study after they have exhausted themselves in games and other extra-curricular activities. We should play to revitalize the brain no doubt, but have it in your time table; allot time to it.

Right **study environment** is vital to learning. Find a nice spot where you may always go for study for optimum learning. Where you study is as important as how you study. Your right environment for study may not be conducive for another student. **Atmosphere** for study is important for effective concentration and assimilation. When you study in a particular place every time you get used to the place, you adapt to the atmosphere of that environment and you discover that your study becomes productive; it yields a good dividend. **Avoid where you will have distractions** like noise, people playing games, vehicular or human movements; choose a quiet spot, fairly peaceful.

Though research has shown that certain types of music help to recall information, that information learned while listening to a particular song can be remembered by “playing the songs mentally in your head”, we advise that you trade softly on this. Same environment or atmosphere may not work for all students, so, know what suits you. If you can read with understanding and concentration while playing music, go ahead. Remember that what is good for the geese may not be good for the gander.

Do not study when you are tired. Studying is an active performance. Energy is used, both mental and physical. The eyes are engaged, the muscles are at work, the brain is where the action is happening, the neck is turning here and there, the waist and the buttocks are busy making contact with the seat, the mind is contemplating, the heart never stops beating, and the lungs are doing their own. Is studying not work? Can you go to farm when you are tired? Eating is work, how much more studying. **Rest is needed for active study.**

Do not study when you are stressed up. The best thing to do is to get a sound sleep. Trying to read when you have stress is adding salt to injury. Relax and play a while before you start your studies. One hour of study when you are calm is more productive than three hours when you are on stress. You will read one line three times before you could make meaning out of it. To have a good study you must be happy. Be in a happy mood.

To be alert avoid heavy food. Eat light meal and have juice with you. Stomach upset can lead to lack of concentration and unhappiness. Choose carefully the type of food to eat when you want to engage yourself with serious studies, especially, when you are preparing for an examination. Anything that will distract your attention is an enemy to your success. Avoid fried food to avoid coughing.

Sometimes to remember what has been learnt is difficult. We have heard students say, after examinations, that they tried to remember what they read but could not. Immediately the examination was over they remembered it.

These are some clues or tips to help you form a lasting impression on your memory:

1. Make use of Flash Cards. Flash cards are pieces of papers or cards cut to size where you write words, terms, formulae that are new or not easily understood. You carry the cards about and bring them out from time to time to rehearse. This method is very rewarding to those doing foreign languages like Greek, Hebrew, Latin, French, Chinese, etc. It is also good for those doing science courses where they come in contact with those jaw breaking scientific words, computer terms, and mathematical formulae. Flash Card is a good device in remembering.
2. Abbreviation is another technique in both note-taking and remembering. Those who do not know how to write abbreviations always forget what they had written. While writing abbreviations, use pronunciation to formulate the terms you use in your abbreviations. If you

forget all clues to that abbreviation quickly compare notes with your fellow students. Abbreviations help one also to think.

3. Another device that helps students to remember things learnt is use of acronyms. Acronyms and initials could have been the same but for the points called 'dots' or 'full stops'. World Health Organization written without dots – WHO – is an acronym while if it is written with dots – W.H.O. – it becomes initials. For the sake of remembrance, one can form acronyms with formulae. This could be very useful in mathematics. For instance, somebody may write ARELENWI which only him knows but to him it means: Area = Length x Width. He will be pronouncing ARELENWI and nobody knows what he is saying. ARE for Area, LEN for length, and WI for width. Those seemingly hard mathematical formulae could be made easy in this way. You can create an acronym for area of a rectangle, area of a cone, formula for sin, cosine, tangent, etc. Mnemonic is a word

meaning easy to remember, easy to read, easy to memorize, easy to write, and easy to say. We will give you two examples, one in Music and another in English Language. “Every Good Boy Does Fine”. This is an acronym used to help musicians remember the notes on a treble clef staff. The sentence is easy to say but it is more than a sentence. It reminds them of the notes on a treble clef staff. Likewise “A Quick Brown Fox Jumps Over a Lazy Dog”. This sentence is easier to cram than to read the letters of the English alphabet. In this memorable sentence hides the 26 letters of the alphabet. What an easy way to learn. For those subjects that are hard to you kill them with acronyms.

4. Word identification strategy or associations is another method to use in remembering. To utilize our mental powers maximally, we must look for ways to relate new information with known or old ideas or concepts that we are familiar with. When you listen to some music you sometimes say “this is the beating of so and

so music, so and so is imitating so and so". This is the power of association. When you are learning something that relates to what you knew, have a way of connecting them to help you remember the new one.

CHAPTER THREE

STUDYING IN DIFFERENT CONDITIONS

Here we want to look at how to study in a classroom environment – things to do; how to study in a library using your note or library books.

Studying in a classroom includes listening to lecture and other activities performed in the classroom. After securing a ‘better’ place in the classroom, which is very important, the next thing is to be attentive. When sitting in a class you have to position yourself in such a way that nothing blocks you from your teacher. So your height should play a role in determining where you sit. Eye contact and body gestures are important in learning. Our brain remembers things by visual imagery and by the use of the five senses. Positioning yourself well helps you to effectively make use of your whole sense organs thereby helping the brain to remember when we are recollecting. It is said that “anytime we experience a new event, our brains tie the sights,

smells, sounds and our own impressions together into a new relationship” (Life-hack.org). So do not deny your brain access to these links by sitting in a wrong place. Always strive not to sit at the back for noise always comes from there. They can distract your attention. This is IT age. Sit where you will see all projections.

Note taking is as important as listening in a class. Underscore new words and try as much as possible to memorize them and know their contextual meaning. Do not take note in long hand. Use abbreviations. Paraphrase the teacher’s sentences unless you are quoting verbatim, in this case it could be a definition of term. When you get home rewrite your note. By doing this you are studying and revising. Repetition makes a lasting impression. It is often said that repetition deepens impression. If you are reading a textbook it is advisable that you underline some important and emphasized words or sentences. If you have a marker, it is better. You can write on the margin of your textbook. No such things are allowed if the book is on loan especially if it is a library book. You are encouraged to

buy your own course textbooks so that library books will be supplementary.

If you really want to excel, to be a first class student, ask questions in class. Do not ask stupid questions; but it is better to ask stupid questions than to bury your ignorance. Seek to know what you did not understand in class, find somebody to clarify it for you. Make comments in class, contribute to the lesson. Do not be a passive listener, participate. Do your assignments and homework and quizzes. Do not miss classes.

Studying in a Library

A library is a study centre for different people – students, staff, faculty, and community. It is a place of reading, studying, socialization for professionals and amateurs. Unless one knows what he is looking for he may end up wasting his time in the library especially, if it is a large library. Different materials are stored in the library ranging from journals to magazines and newspapers, from fictions to novels, from textbooks to dictionaries, from

encyclopedias to yearbooks. There are also videos and audios, artifacts and the internet. A lot of distractions are there if one does not have a purpose. Your fellow students may be your distracters. Your distracters may be the psychedelic ladies who have lost their bearings in life.

Determine on what you are coming to do in the library. It could be to read newspapers and magazines for leisure. If you have come for serious reading here are tips for you.

It is assumed that you know the location of your reading material. Shelf guides can help you. If not ask the library workers. When you have selected a book to read, quickly go to the index to check if the subject or topic you want to read is actually there. By doing this you are saving time. Time is of essence. Turn to the chapter and start to read. Make sure you have your exercise book and pen to make notes. If the topic is too wide and the textbook treats it very well, borrow the book if it is loanable. If it is a book you need to read a good deal of and perhaps, you are reading it for the first time, take time to read the preface and the introduction. It is also necessary that you look at the table of content. The first and last sentences of a paragraph are

topical, endeavour to read them with understanding. Avoid all distractions and this could be achieved by looking for a suitable place, devoid of distractions, to sit.

The library can be a good place for revision also. By nature, the library should be a quiet place. A well ventilated, air-conditioned and quiet library will be a blessing to serious minded students.

Reading a Textbook or a Document for Study

Read your textbooks actively and slowly at the start. After going through the textbook (read everything if it is the textbook for the course, and especially if your teacher/lecturer asked you to read the entire book or a portion of it). Read again, highlighting the important points to lay emphasis on them. Now study the textbook. During time for examination you will do a browsing hurrying revision.

In the same pattern, study your class notes. Remember that attentive listening and note taking in class are essential parts of study. While reading your class note you will

discover that there are some abbreviations or acronyms you could not remember their meanings again. This is why you should read and correct your notes not long after the class. When such discoveries are made, compare your note with those of your class mates and make the corrections. Then read through your note. When this is done examination period becomes real revision time and not time for painstaking study.

When reading your personal textbook, start from the introduction. The introduction and preface of every book give a general idea of the focus of the book so, reading them is necessary for an initial broad view of the content and direction of the book. As you read, highlight or underline important points the book treats. It is also advisable that the margins of the book be used in brief note taking. The highlights, the marginal notes, and the underlined points make for easy revision during examinations because they are the summary of your reading. All these will be done in your personal books. If you are using a borrowed book or a library book you are not expected to deface them. The only thing you could do is

to use your exercise book to make notes or to photocopy the areas of interest. No tracings, cuttings, highlighting, underlining, tearing, writing or any form of alteration to the original print in a library book or a book that is not yours is acceptable.

Important notes to be taken when reading a book, including your personal book but most especially, a borrowed book, are new vocabularies and technical terms. Students are advised to have a jotter or an exercise book dedicated to this.

CHAPTER FOUR

WRITING LEGIBLY

Writing is an instrument of communication between individuals in different locations. It is different from spoken words because it can be presented as evidence in a court case. Most transactions, especially legal, are documented in writing. Writings in many languages are inscribed with the use of the alphabets. Many local languages, otherwise called vernacular, adapt the English alphabets as their letters of inscription. In some cases more than 26 letters of the alphabets are in use. Most of the inflections are as a result of diacritical marks on the existing English alphabets.

In any language one is writing on there is need to write legibly. Bad handwriting is very distasteful and annoying to teacher. Students may fail examinations as a result of bad writing. When a teacher cannot decipher a student's writing even if he wears a double concave lens how can the student pass? A teacher who may have over 100 scripts to mark

cannot waste his time figuring out what a student has written that he could not understand.

Writing was one of the 4Rs that the African colonial masters brought to Africa. They knew the importance of the 4Rs namely aRithmetic, Reading, wRiting, and Religion. Reading is very important followed by writing. These subjects were the first taught by the colonists. Africans' early writers tend to forget religion as one of the subjects taught by the colonial masters. Sometimes also they emphasize on religion playing down on the other three. Four of them were the instruments used by the colonists to achieve their aims. Writing was taught as a subject which showed its importance. Unfortunately much attention is not paid on writing these days in the primary schools. Oral English seems to have taken the place of writing. Teachers should go back to start building from the laid foundation. Bad handwriting is detrimental to students' performance.

What Makes Writing Important?

What Makes Writing So Important? Is the title of an article posted at Marquette University, USA's website modified in

2011. Curled from the web page bellow, and with an express permission, we reproduce the article verbatim. The website is:

<http://www.marquette.edu/wac/WhatMakesWritingSoImportant.shtml>. The bullet points are the reasons given why writing is so important based upon brochures from Brown University.

- Writing is the primary basis upon which your work, your learning, and your intellect will be judged—in college, in the workplace, and in the community.
- Writing expresses who you are as a person.
- Writing is portable and permanent. It makes your thinking visible.
- Writing helps you move easily among facts, inferences, and opinions without getting confused—and without confusing your reader.
- Writing promotes your ability to pose worthwhile questions.

- Writing fosters your ability to explain a complex position to readers, and to yourself.
- Writing helps others give you feedback.
- Writing helps you refine your ideas when you give others feedback.
- Writing requires that you anticipate your readers' needs. Your ability to do so demonstrates your intellectual flexibility and maturity.
- Writing ideas down preserves them so that you can reflect upon them later.
- Writing out your ideas permits you to evaluate the adequacy of your argument.
- Writing stimulates you to extend a line of thought beyond your first impressions or gut responses.
- Writing helps you understand how truth is established in a given discipline.
- Writing equips you with the communication and

thinking skills you need to participate effectively in democracy.

- Writing is an essential job skill.

With the above uses of writing there is no doubt that writing is very important in our daily dealings with people. We use writing to record events. We can correct ourselves after writing which is not so easy in speech; when a word has gone out you need to say another word to correct it. In writing you edit yourself before you send out the written work. We use writing to form language. We use writing to learn spelling. Writing is used to see how logical one is in argument. Writing is used to test ones persuasive ability. After writing you sit back to see how convincing what you have written is. Unless a recorded speech no other form of communication gives this allowance. Writing helps students to put down their thoughts. The uses of writing are very numerous. There is need to use this technique very well. Good handwriting for legibility is desirable.

Importance of Good Handwriting

Good handwriting comes as a result of practice and diligence. Good handwriting does not just come, it is learnt. This is why writing is one of the courses taught in the early school years from infant classes till the third or fourth year in primary school. Good handwriting; neat and readable; shows your personality. There are different ways to write but the concern here is legibility of the writing. The 'T's must be crossed and the 'I's must be dotted. One should be able to see, in your writing, the difference between an 'R' and an 'F' when they are written in small letters. Wherever you go a person with good handwriting is preferred. Have you wondered why some employers of labour require you to handwrite your application for employment? That shows how important good handwriting could be. Your writing could debar you from getting employment. Hear what saras.edu says about handwriting "Handwriting is important for taking notes and writing test essays. Both speed and legibility are essential for good grades, so it's in your best interest to learn to write neatly and in a way that doesn't fatigue your hand quickly". This quotation is curled

from <http://www.sarasedu.com/index.php?p=good-handwriting> titled *Importance of Handwriting*.

When students write roughly, where the teacher has to strain his eyes to decipher what the student has written, the teacher is disgusted and may in annoyance give a poor mark. So, students please if your writing is bad try to make a change. If the reason is that you write too fast minimize your speed. You can be fast when writing in class, if you can read your writing, but when you are writing for another person to read be careful. Write legibly!

CHAPTER FIVE

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Right Steps Ventures (08035761639) from Nigeria produced some nice fliers or billboards on what should be done by students to excel in their academic performance. These posters range from how reading helps one to achieve success to the ladder of success itself; they listed factors that lead to academic success and factors that lead to the opposite of academic success which is academic failure. In this chapter an elaborate explanation of the points would be made point by point. You are encouraged to get the posters to paste or hang in your homes or offices where you will be seeing and reading them every time.

Twenty-seven bullet points were made in one of the posters. The points will here be treated one by one.

➤ **BE PRAYERFUL**

Prayer is a key that unlocks heaven's treasures, said one religionist. Prayer has power beyond human

imagination and it is more powerful than any weapon of destruction. Not only does prayer dispel human forces it also subdues evil forces. Unseen forces by human eyes ready to destroy peoples thoughts and good imaginations and intentions are subdued by prayer. What is prayer? And what power is in prayer that it could do all these?

Ellen G. White, one of the greatest evangelists of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and a pioneer of the church defined prayer as “talking to God as to a friend”. You tell your friend all the secrets of your life because you trust him but God is more than a friend to a believer. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition* defined ‘Pray’ as (1) “to make a request in a humble manner” (2) “to address God or a god with adoration, confession, supplication, or thanksgiving”. The dictionary went on to define ‘Prayer’ as (a) “an address (as a petition) to God or a god in word or thought” (b) “an earnest request or wish”. Richard Allen Bodey, a Christian professor and minister, defined prayer

simply as “to communicate with God” because according to him prayer is not “just *talking* with God”.

God is the creator of human beings, the giver and sustainer of life. He who formed us knows what we need. So when we ask him for intelligence He gives us. When we talk to him about our inability to cope he listens. When we request for anything bugging us He supplies. Therefore, we should pray to God for success. He formed our brain and our memory and He knows how to make it absorb “education” so when we pray for ability to read and understand so as to succeed He answers us.

➤ **SET REALISTIC, ACHIEVABLE,
MANAGEABLE AND CHALLENGING
GOALS**

Do not bite more than you can chew. It is good to set a high goal because the more you set a high goal the more you work hard to achieve it but when the

goal is too high discouragement may set in. Hang your dress where your hand can reach. When a set goal has been achieved another one will be set and with happiness the ladder is climbed step by step until the last rung is reached. It is advisable that a reachable goal should be set and latter on adjusted higher until success is achieved.

Though goals set must be manageable and achievable, it must be challenging otherwise there will be stagnancy. A goal is challenging when it is rigorous. A challenging goal is one that is painstaking. A challenging goal requires more efforts from the goal setter. It needs hard work. Set a goal that requires efforts to reach. Do not set a lazy person's goal, a goal that is reached with little or no effort. Everything said and done, let your goal be achievable.

➤ **HAVE UNSHAKEN OR UNWAVERING DETERMINATION TO SUCCEED**

Never waver on anything you are doing. Even when it seems the task before you is insurmountable keep on holding on. Do not fail before attempting. Fear is a dangerous weapon that kills determination. Once you have set a goal to achieve in order to succeed, do not shake or have fear about achieving it. Be determined to succeed. No subject is too hard. Why is it that some people do well in those courses that you dread? It is simply because they are determined to pass. They are determined to succeed. Nothing puts them off. They are focused. Say in your mind that nothing will make me fail this course. Once this is said heaven noted it and success becomes yours.

➤ **MAKE DISCIPLINE, HARDWORK, AND COMMITMENT YOUR WATCHWORDS**

Discipline means control. Discipline means imposition of order in one's life. Discipline here does not mean course of study rather it means

controlling oneself in order to be focused in his choice of career. To succeed in education there must be a concerted effort to restrain self from distracting activities and commit self to hard work. To achieve this, any student who wants to succeed in life, whether it is in passing examinations or in any entrepreneurial activity, must be committed in that duty. Discipline which is self control, hardwork which is putting extra effort, commitment which is obligation and dedication to work must be the watchword of anybody who wants to succeed in any endeavour. Are you disciplined? Are you hardworking? Are you committed? If your answer is no to any of these questions then you need to redress. For success to come your way these factors must be met.

➤ **CHOOSE SUBJECT ACCORDING TO INTEREST AND ABILITY**

Parents should not choose subjects for their wards but they direct their wards on what they would like

them to do. Some parents have made their children perpetual students by choosing for them courses of their (parent's) choice. It is advisable to allow children to choose subjects or courses that they have craving for. Even if such courses are hard to them they put extra effort to pass because they love to do them.

Interest alone without the ability to cope with the rigors of such a course makes students over stay in school. This is also true of secondary school students and that is why they choose courses as they enter the Senior Secondary level. Some of them become arts students while others are science students. There is an inbuilt love and choice for students on particular subjects which are shown on their ability in class performance. Teachers and parents should know the talents of their students or wards or children and direct and encourage them towards those. The labour market these days determine the choice of career parents choose for their children. This is good because the parents have

foresight and can predict the future better than their children. Inasmuch as it is good to view the future to choose a marketable course for our children it also necessary that we carry them along. When the children are educated on the trend of events, they may develop interest to align with what their parents have in mind. Parents should not force any course on their children.

➤ **DEVELOP INTEREST IN CHOSEN SUBJECTS FOR A RESOUNDING SUCCESS**

The fact that one is doing a chosen subject does not make the subject very easy. Students have to be determined to pass otherwise they keep on changing subjects. Nothing is easy. What makes one subject easier than the other is interest and effort. For any student to do well, even in his chosen subject, his interest for that subject must be high. These days Third Class and Ordinary Pass are derided. Some universities do not even allow their undergraduates to leave school with any of such grades. Companies

and ministries do not even accept them. So, resounding success is necessary.

➤ **ENSURE REGULAR ATTENDANCE / PUNCTUALITY AT SCHOOL AND CLASSES**

Regular class attendance ensures consistent following of the course of study. It is said that regularity is the sole of business. Students should not miss classes because when this is done the day's lesson might be lost forever. Some wise students may ask their colleagues what was thought but the shy students may not ask. Students understand better from hearing from the teacher than from fellow students. Students understand better from their fellow students if it is on the explanation of any point that they did not understand while in class and not when they were absent.

Class attendance is one thing and its regularity is another. Unless on unavoidable and unforeseen circumstances students should be regular in class

attendance. In schools where continuous assessment is practiced and quizzes, assignments, attendance, and examinations form part of assessment, it is of utmost importance that students attend classes regularly so as not to miss out in certain grading points.

➤ **ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN CLASS**

Naturally some students are dull both in appearance and in intelligence. It is the duty of the teacher to wake such students up by making the class active and interesting. Lift the students from where they are to where you want them to be by rehearsing the previous lessons. As a teacher you should not afford to make the class boring.

Participation in class by the students is a sign that the students are following. Asking questions or smiling or even laughing in at the same time are ways to participate in a class. It pays for students to participate in class activities; coming out to work

out a mathematic problem in class, reading a portion of the class reader when appointed to do so, asking questions on areas of the lesson you did not understand, answering questions asked by fellow students which you know, or even doing some class extra-curricular activities like carrying the teacher's table and chair outside for an outdoor class. These activities help the students to be confident in the class and to be bold. These are a signs of success.

➤ **LISTEN ATTENTIVELY IN CLASS, AVOID THOUGHTS OF OTHER THINGS**

Some students' body may be in the class while their minds are elsewhere. Body, soul, and spirit must be present in the class you attend. Let thought of anything whether family affair or a committed error not detach your whole presence in the class. When you are in a class and you are thinking of things that happened to you, quite unrelated to the topic of the day, you will automatically be absent even though your physical body is being seen by the teacher and

your colleagues. When you are in any class forget every other thing and be focused and attentive with the activities in the class.

Listening is a major aspect of learning. Let nothing deprive you of listening to the teacher or to the questions asked by your fellow students or contributions made by them. It is by listening that we hear, by hearing we understand, by understanding we know, by knowing we become intelligent thereby succeeding in life or passing our examinations. Listen attentively in class let nothing separate you from the class.

➤ **DO YOUR HOMEWORK REGULARLY AND AT THE RIGHT TIME**

Laziness kills assignments! Good teachers give assignments to their students. Some of these assignments may be required to be done at home and they are used to grade the students. Make sure that these assignments are regularly done when

required. Make sure they are submitted at the right time. Marks may be lost by submitting your homework late.

Avoid others doing the homework for you. They may teach you how to do them but they should not do them for you. It is true that the homework may form part of your continuous assessment and therefore you need to get a good grade. This is true, but getting a good mark without anything in your head is disastrous. You may be accused of forging result. So, let your paper qualification equate with your brain performance.

➤ **PREPARE A WORKABLE AND REALISTIC TIMETABLE FOR USE AT HOME**

Timetable is an inevitable tool in the hands of students who want to excel. Diligence is required in the preparation of a timetable. Some considerations are to be made in order to produce a sound timetable. Such considerations are (a) Time

available (b) Time suitable for each course (c) Chance for those to help to teach you (d) Days the class holds (e) How hard the class is to you (f) How often the class holds (g) Chores at home (h) Play time (i) Time for siesta and sleep, etc.

Timetable helps students to be focused and prepare for classes ahead of time. It also helps them to rehearse what has been learnt and to correct some mistakes while taking notes during class.

➤ **AVOID PROCRASTINATION – THE THIEF OF TIME**

Procrastination is really a thief of time. Procrastination means postponement of an action that could have taken place at that time to another time. According to *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition* (2000), to procrastinate means “to put off intentionally and habitually”. This is an anomaly in the lifestyle of any serious student. Create time for study and stick to it. This is why time should be taken to plan your timetable because

once this is well done every other thing falls in line. To succeed in your education career avoid procrastination.

➤ **MANAGE YOUR TIME EFFECTIVELY,
AVOID TIME WASTERS**

Time management is one of the factors of production that managers grapple with. Time allotted for any activity should be used for what it is meant for. Time wasters are those attractions that were not budgeted for that cross our ways. They are as little as greetings. Any occasion or event that is not in your plan of study which you take out time to do is a time waster. Are there functions or activities be it wedding, sports, or even visitors that you did not plan for that is taking some of the time you could have used in studying? If yes, then try to avoid such because they may slow you down in your studies.

➤ **STUDY AND KNOW YOUR ATTENTION SPAN**

Every student should know his/her attention span. Know how much time you can endure sitting down at a place. Know how much time you can take in studying mathematics without irritation. The length of time you use in doing something before you are bored is your attention span. Try to know how long it takes you to study attentively without bore. This helps in planning your timetable. You interest in some subjects is higher than it is in others subjects. Inasmuch as it is necessary that you try to develop equal interest in all subjects, there is an inclination and love for some more than to others. Until it is time to choose some and leave the others, continue to have equal interest to every subject you are doing.

There are certain related subjects you need to do in order to pursue a career of your choice. For example, if you want to be a lawyer you must pass Religion, Literature, and History in addition to

English and Mathematics. In this case you have no choice but to embrace these subjects in order to achieve your desire to be a lawyer. If you want to be a doctor, you have to pass Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology or Health Science in Ordinary Level examinations. You cannot afford to hate any of them otherwise your hope of becoming a doctor is dashed.

➤ **CONCENTRATE FULLY WHEN STUDYING**

Concentration is a vital mood in studying. It means to give attention to whatever you are doing at that particular time; in this case it means paying rapt attention to your studies. Studies require a high focus. Do not allow your mind to wander. Let your thought be controlled and be pinned down on what you are studying. There should be no distraction. Turn off from any thing around you. When you concentrate fully on your studies you may not even here somebody calling you from two metres away. You are wrapped up with your studies.

➤ **READ WITH UNDERSTANDING, AVOID
MEMORIZATION**

Cramming is one of the worst ways to prepare for an examination. It is one of the reasons why intelligent students fail in examinations because if any word from a crammed work should be forgotten the student is devastated. So, the best way to study is to read with understanding. When you understand what you read you can write it using your own words. Teachers like students showing understanding of topics than reproduction of teacher's notes from their notebooks.

It is good to memorize few "hard to understand" words or formulae, but it is not encouraging for students to memorize their notes. Always read with understanding. Instead of memorizing, allot more time to learn the topic. It is always better to learn with understanding than to cram or to memorize.

➤ **READ TEXTBOOKS ADEQUATELY TO GATHER MORE POINTS**

Many schools prescribe textbooks for any course taken in the school. Many a time the students restrict themselves to such textbooks only. It pays to read from more than one source so as to gather different views of that subject. Authors write from different points of view and it is good to see issues from different perspectives as are presented from different authors. Students should not depend solely on one textbook prescribed by their teachers. Read other books on the topic for this will broaden your understanding of the subject and places you at a better position to do better than your colleagues who depended on the only recommended textbook. When you read wide examination becomes easy for you.

➤ **ADEQUATE PRACTISE WITH PAST QUESTION PAPERS**

Having an idea of the type of questions that could come in an examination helps students to be confident of their level of preparation. Past question papers help students to have an idea of what to expect in the examination. Solving questions set from past question papers guides the students and helps them to know how much they have read and how much they understood the subject. It also helps them to discover areas they need to cover and the areas they should lay emphasis on. Areas of examiners interest will be known by cross-checking types of questions asked year by year.

Past question papers for different subjects are available in the market. Most of them come with answers. For those needing solutions, those that are practical in nature, like Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and other sciences, the students solve the problems and check whether they got the

answers or not. Those they do not know they send to their teachers or those they feel are better than they are to help them solve them.

➤ **USE OF RECALL FORMULAE/MNEMONICS**

Mnemonic has to do with the memory or mind. According to Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott in *A Greek – English Lexicon* the “word *mnemonic* is derived from the Ancient Greek word *μνημονικός* (*mnēmonikos*), meaning "of memory" and is related to Mnemosyne ("remembrance"), the name of the goddess of memory in Greek mythology. Both of these words are derived from *μνήμη* (*mnēmē*), "remembrance, memory"” (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mnemonic). Mnemonic is any learning technique that aids information retention. Mnemonics is aimed at translating information into a form that the human brain can retain better than when it is in its original form.

Mnemonics are devices to help people remember. Therefore, they are memory aides. They may be learned ways of assimilating words or tactics in associating words so that they can easily be remembered. They could be placards that have instructions to help you remember formulae or sequence of events. They could be initials that are easily memorized where each of the letters stands for a word or an idea. It could be an acronym that reminds one of something. Mnemonics are necessary study aides. It makes learning easy and interesting, makes concepts easy to remember, easy to write and easy to cram. It is a good learning device.

➤ **ENGAGE IN STUDY/BRAIN STORMING GROUP**

Students understand easier and better when their fellow students teach them. Make it a habit to always gather in groups to discuss lessons taught you after class. Where you are shy to associate

yourself with a group (which is regrettable) find a class mate you feel is better than you and is your friend to revise the lesson you just finished. This may be in form of revision or question and answer time.

Students can actually ask themselves questions that may come in examination. It works like magic seeing in examination paper questions you asked yourselves being set by your teacher. Are you likely going to fail in such examination? Never!

➤ **MAXIMIZE THE BENEFITS OF SCHOOL LIBRARY**

A school library is a resource centre where materials for study are kept for students' and teachers' use. In schools that have libraries, they are of great benefit to both the students and the teachers. Teachers use materials in the library to prepare their lesson notes while students use the library to compliment their studies. No student can

buy all the books needed for studies so the school library supplements. No one textbook can cover everything one needs to know on a subject. Even if that happens students need to read from other textbooks to understand more. The more you know the better you stand during examination.

Unfortunately, many schools do not have libraries. This is the case in many African countries. How can students study in a library that does not exist? In Nigeria, it is a common parlance that if you want to hide something from a Nigerian put it inside a book. Have Nigerians sought for a way to curb this anomaly? One of the ways is to provide school libraries. When pupils are directed to the use of the library while young they will continue to use it even at old age. The library is a reading centre, it is a place for studies.

Teacher librarians are trained to give library orientation to library users. They manage the school libraries and train some students to serve those who

come to use the library. These teacher librarians have a working training in librarianship that suffice the volume of library work they render in schools, but it is advisable that well trained qualified librarians be in charge of school libraries. Professional librarians and not teacher librarians should be in charge of school libraries so as to give the school library the attention it deserves. Where school libraries exist, it is a plus for the students. It helps them to study better and do well in examinations.

➤ **REVISE SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE EXAMINATION**

Revision can never be too much unless you do not expect to make use of that course in future. But if the course may be useless to you, remember you are going to be tested on it during examination. If it is useless to you, why are you doing it in the first instance? If it is compulsory for you to do it, probably for its future importance, may be it a

requirement for your career pursuit, then you must pass it. Revision is important for success. Repetition deepens impression, in the same way revision deepens understanding.

➤ **RESIST DISTRACTIONS FROM
UNAMBITIOUS FRIENDS**

How do I know that my friends are un-ambitious? What is un-ambitious? “Un” is a prefix that means ‘ante’. *Ante* means against, which means “the opposite of”. Ambitious means “having a desire to achieve a particular goal”. Ambition is the desire to achieve a particular goal. So, un-ambitious means having no desire to achieve any goal. Will you like to associate with anybody who has no desire to achieve anything in life? If your answer is ‘No’ to that question then you need to disassociate yourself from un-ambitious students.

Un-ambitious students have no goal in life. They have no aim or purpose in life. They need serious

guidance and counseling. They while away their God given time. They distract ambitious students' attention. They feel that as they have no aim in life so it is with every other person. Stay away from them! They will ruin not only your career but also your life. If such people are your friend try to change them or you run away from them. For you to succeed avoid them.

➤ **BE YOURSELF, DO NOT BE COPY CATS**

Imitation is not a crime. Trying to be like others who are good is a good practice. Cheating to be like others is disastrous and ruins one's life. Everybody does not have the same ability, some are fast learners while others are slow learners. Study at your own pace. If you are a slow learner it means that you have to devote more time in studying than one who is a fast learner. Do not solely depend on copying others so that you do not become a copy-cat.

➤ **MAINTAIN A PERFECT HEALTH**

Good health is paramount to success. Bad health distracts and detaches one from responsibility. When one is sick, classes are missed and assignments not done. Missing classes means missing studies. One may take second hand notes from one who might have copied wrongly. It is necessary for one to be healthy. Good health brings relaxed mind and jovial attitude.

There are many things students should avoid in order to be healthy. Some of them are: (1) **Getting good sleep:** Health workers said that children should sleep between eight and ten hours every day. This means that you should go to bed between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. to wake between 5 a.m. and 6 a.m. Staying late in the night watching television debars one from getting enough sleep. (2) **Having exercise:** It is good to take off time to play with

your mates. This helps us to be healthy but we should not overplay. (3) **Drinking enough water:** Some people do not like to drink water forgetting that water made up between 60 and 70 percent of our body fluid according to health professionals. If we fail to drink water we will be dehydrated. Drink at least eight glasses of water every day. Remember that when you sweat or perspire or urinate we are removing water from our body therefore, we need to replace the lost water to be healthy. (4) **Good ventilation:** Ventilation has to do with air. We need fresh unpolluted air to live healthy. Do not stay in an overcrowded place where you will be inhaling air exhaled from others. Through this one may contact some air-borne diseases. Stay in the open most of the times. (5) **Avoid mosquito bites:** Malaria is a common illness in Africa and it is caused by mosquito bite. Inasmuch as it is possible stay away from mosquito. Where attacking them with insecticides is necessary do so. Mosquito nets are provided free in some rural areas by the government and some philanthropic organizations,

use them. Buy yours where there are no free ones. Do not stay in a dirty and bushy environment since mosquitoes breed in such environments. Make sure there are no stagnant waters around your compound and throw away all empty cans that can collect water because mosquitoes breed in water. (6) **Eat plenty fruits, vegetables and nuts:** Some students do not like to eat vegetables. Eat it because it will make you healthy. (7) **Eat balanced diet:** Vary what you eat. Eat different types of food. Foods contain carbohydrates, oil and fats, water and minerals, protein, etc. No single food item contains all these ingredients that the body needs to grow and be healthy. Therefore, make sure that you eat different food items to have the required quantity of each of these ingredients in your body. This is what is called balanced diet. (8) **Do not use forbidden drugs:** Alcohol is not good for your body, do not drink it. It damages our brain cells so when we read we do not understand. Do not smoke cigarettes; it kills your lungs and causes breath problems called emphysema. (9) **Drink your medicine as**

prescribed by the doctor: Drug abuse is using drugs that are not prescribed by a doctor. When you go to a medicine store and buy drugs without a doctor prescribing it for you, you are doing drug abuse. When you fail to drink your medicine as directed by the doctor, you are doing drug abuse. When you fail to finish your prescribed drug feeling that you have recovered, you are doing drug abuse. In case you fall sick use your medicine how the doctor said you should use it. This will help you to recover fast to continue your studies. Remember that classes are still going on even when you are not there. (10) **Don't over feed:** Some students eat too much especially when the food has been eaten for a long time or when the food is their favorite. The stomach has a limit, when you eat more than needed it reacts. Too much of anything is bad. There are many other things that we do or fail to do that cause bad health condition to us. To do well in school we must be in utmost health condition.

➤ **GIVE A DAILY ACCOUNT OF YOUR STAY
IN THE SCHOOL**

While in your school, what did you do? Can you recall how you spent your day in school? Where you active in class? Did you do what the teacher said you should do, that is, the assignment given in class? Where you attentive in class today? Did you answer well the questions asked by your teacher? Where you playing in class while teaching was going on? What did you do during break period? Did you do some exercise to refresh yourself? Where you idle during break? Where you hiding somewhere with some bad students? Do you have play mates? Did your teacher send you to odd place during school hour? Active participation in both class and extramural activities in school is important for school success. Involve yourself in good school activities.

➤ **SEE THE COUNSELOR WHEN CONFUSED**

Schools have counselors who guide students when they are confused. They see after both students' academic performance and their emotional behavior. The counselors advice students on the type of career they should choose after testing their Intelligence Quotient. Counselors have a way and instruments for testing that. Counselors are students' parents in school. Students always confide in them and they protect them from evil. The counselors teach the students the best way to study and to behave to be good citizens of their parents and of their country.

When a student is not doing well in class the teachers normally send him or her to the school counselor who probes to know what the cause of the problem is. A habitual late comer is also sent to the counselor who asks the student some questions to know why. If the cause of any students' problem is

from the student's home, the counselor sends for the parents to query them.

Who is a counselor? There are different names given to counselors according to their professional inclination. Those who take care of students are differently called "guidance counselor" or "educational counselor" but the choice now is to call them "school counselor" because they take care of every counseling activity in school. "A school counselor is a counselor and an educator who works in elementary, middle, and high schools to provide academic, career, college access, and personal/social competencies to K-12 students" (Wikipedia.org). In Nigeria, they take care of the pupils and the students in primary schools, secondary schools, and in universities. Are there counselors in Nigerian primary schools? They are seen in some secondary schools, mostly in private secondary schools, and in universities. Counselors are necessary and indispensable staff in every

educational institution. They are needed to guide the children in the way to go.

CHAPTER SIX

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ACADEMIC FAILURE

Right Steps Ventures listed 26 factors that contribute to students' academic failure in a poster with the title "Factors That Contribute to Academic Failure" as this chapter is titled. With expressed permission from the proprietor each of those points would be mildly expanded for students' better understanding. The bullet point poster presentation is good as a summary to remind the students the contributors of academic failure. With little explanation each of the points will be expanded.

1. LACK OF DESIRED GOAL

A goal is a target set by one to meet. Some people have more than one goal and this brings confusion if the goals are at variance. Some students do not have a particular choice of course to pursue. They go from one course to the other some of them having no composite

relationship. When confusion sets in, the best thing to do is to meet a counselor who will focus your attention in one area.

As a student who desire to succeed, you must have a focus. Know what you want and direct your energy to it. When you do not know where you are going you reach where you do not know. If, as a student, you do not have a choice of career ask your parents to tell you what to do. Your parents have been watching you since birth, they know your inclination.

2. NON-CHALANT ATTITUDE

Non-chalant means casual, indifferent. Put in a simpler and common language, non-chalant means “I don’t care”, “unconcern”, “easy-going”. When a student does not care about anything, about his studies, about taking note in class, about doing assignments, about studying, about going to school, about attending classes, etc. that student is heading to failure. He or she is going to be a

failure in good things of life. The person may end up being a miscreant.

If success is your desire, be serious with you school activities. If your attitude has been as expressed above please change. Change your behavior before your friends leave you because nobody wants to associate with failure or with people who are not serious in life.

3. EXCESSIVE NON-SCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES

A student is known by the way he carries himself. He stands out in behavior, dresses well, keeps himself neat, talks intelligently, reads newspapers and novels. When those who did not go to school in the villages see the students, without being told, they recognize them so. Parents expect their children who are students to, most of the times, associate with their fellow students. When students always play and mingle with non-students the parents wink at it. You behave like the person you always move with. This is the reason for the saying,

“Birds of the same feather flock together”. There is a tendency for like terms to attract each other. When one associates with an activity or with an individual your attraction towards that person becomes stronger and there is the likelihood that you behave like that person. When you engage yourself on academic activities your mind becomes tuned to scholarship. When you disassociate yourself from scholastic activities you become less and less inclined to studies and failure become eminent.

4. WRONG CHOICE OF SUBJECT

Knowing one’s capability is a ladder that leads to excellence. When one does not know his competence or potential the result will be failure. Students should know the subjects that they can easily pass with less effort and go for them. Do not choose to do a course or subject that is not compulsory for you to do simply because your friends are doing it. If you make a wrong choice you are bound to find it difficult.

5. LACK OF SELF-CONFIDENCE

Confidence is self-belief, self-assurance, the quality or state of being certain, a reliance on one's powers to achieve. When one lacks confidence in himself, there is problem. Believe yourself. Belief that you have the power to achieve whatever you have set out to do. This is the only state of mind that will make you succeed. When others say YOU CANNOT, say to yourself "I CAN!" Never lose confidence of yourself.

6. OVER-CONFIDENCE

Too much of anything of anything is bad. Even too much of a good thing makes the good thing bad. Do not be so confident that you fail to listen to others. Do not be so courageous that you neglect other people's advice. No man is an island. When nobody says what you hear, you are doomed to fail. Do not be over-confident.

7. POOR STUDY HABIT

Habit is a pattern of doing things. Regularity is the soul of business, and the opposite irregularity is the death of business. If I usually come to your store every 7 o'clock in the morning to buy breakfast food for my children who leave the house every 8.45a.m to go to school; and for two consecutive times I did not see you there at 7a.m. I will change and look for a customer who will be there when I need him. The same applies to your studies; if you have a regular time of study of a particular subject, your body system will be used to it and prepares itself for that time. When you are inconsistent, the body becomes worried and gets confused. It takes time to readjust.

8. PROCRASTINATION

Procrastination is a killer of timer! Do not shift what you should do now to another time. Have time for everything and stick to that time you have allotted for that thing. Do not unnecessarily change the time you

have scheduled for something else for another. Plan your time table well and respect it. Procrastination leads to failure.

9. PLAYFULNESS

Playfulness means full of play. Every time you are seen playing. There is time for everything. Time to play and time to study; Time to read and time to sleep; Time to study and time to be tested; Time to go to school and time to go to church; Time to school and time to work; Time to plant and time to harvest. Do not use your time for study for play. If you play every time then you will fail in other activities. You will fail in your examinations.

10. POOR MEMORY

All human beings are not equally endowed in all capacities, but God gave each person enough capability to succeed in life. Everybody will not be an engineer neither is everybody going to be teachers or lawyers or

doctors or pastors, or what have you. To each person God gave enough memory to carry him along life's highway.

There are two kinds of memory storage – long-term and short-term. Short-term memory provides a small storage space for daily tasks. Long-term memory is intended for storage of information over a long period of time. Though we sometimes forget certain things, long-term memory actually can store unlimited amount of information almost indefinitely. “Indeed, there is some debate as to whether we actually ever “forget” anything at all, or whether it just becomes increasingly difficult to access or retrieve certain items from memory”(www.diagnose-me.com; www.rightdiagnosis.com).

Retention or storage capability of the memory is affected by age, lack of sleep, stress and anxiety, alcohol, high fever, epilepsy, surgery can erase memory, stroke, and all kinds of drugs. It is important to note that if the mind is dull as a result of depression

or boredom short term memory becomes rusty from lack of use. The brain becomes dull due to lack of use. So, why not engage your brain to sharpen your memory? Try as much as possible to prevent the factors that lead to poor memory as listed here. Get sound sleep; avoid stressful activities, abstain from using alcohol and drugs; then failure will never be your lot.

11. POOR ATTENTION

Ability to be wrapped up in the lesson that is going on is a step towards understanding the topic. Attention means being focused on what is being taught. All the five senses must be at work for proper attention. When there are distractions attention is lost. When attention is lost or not totally given the student loses grasp of the topic. In every class, full attention should be given in order to understand the topic of the time.

Poor attention leads to disjointed understanding. When a puzzle is not well fitted it will never give

the desired shape. Poor attention is like doing three things at a time. Poor attention means divided attention. When attention that is supposed to be given to one object is given to three objects it means that each of the objects, in this case, the lesson, gets one-third of the whole. This is disjointed learning. This means that a piece of bread enough to feed one person is shared by three persons and none of them is satisfied. One-third of 100% is never a pass mark. Poor attention is the beginning of failure.

To avoid poor attention, the following should be taken into consideration:

- (a) Forget the past worries.
- (b) Never think that any subject is too hard to pass.
This erroneous thinking makes students lose interest in some subjects.
- (c) Never hate any teacher. Some students hate their teachers because those teachers do their assigned duties very well. For example, students hate assembly teachers because they will flog

them when they come for morning assembly late. They carry this hatred to classroom work.

- (d) Give equal attention to all subjects. Naturally there are some subjects that a student understands easier than the others, in this case allot more time to studying the one that seems hard for you to understand.
- (e) Do not hate any subject or the teacher teaching the subject. Hating a subject is the beginning of the failure of that subject.
- (f) Make friends with those who are doing well in those subjects that are hard to you. Do not be afraid to ask them to teach you. Form a study group with them.
- (g) Develop interest in the subject. Vow to be attentive in class when the subject is being taught.
- (h) Never assume that you know enough of that subject probably because you have read it somewhere. There are always different ways of solving the same problem.

- (i) No matter what happens, pay attention in class.
Poor or divided attention leads to failure.

12. POOR TIME MANAGEMENT

There is time for everything. Give the time due for studies to studies. There is time to study, time to play, time to sleep, time for examination, and time for holidays. Each time should be used for its purpose. The Creator of heaven and earth through His servant simply called “the Philosopher” in the book of Ecclesiastes, one of the books of the Bible, chapter three from verse one to eight, concerning time, has this to say:

Everything that happens in this world happens at the time God chooses. He sets the time for birth and the time for death, the time for planting and the time for pulling up, the time for killing and the time for healing, the time for tearing down and the time for building. He sets the time for sorrow and the time for joy, the time for mourning and the

time for dancing, the time for making love and the time for not making love, the time for kissing and the time for not kissing. He sets the time for finding and the time for loosing, the time for saving and the time for throwing away, the time for tearing and the time for mending, the time for silence and the time for talk. He sets the time for love and the time for hate, the time for war and the time for peace (Ecclesiastes 3: 1 – 8; *Good News Bible With Deuterocanonical Books/Apocrypha*)

13. POOR SELF CONCEPT

Concept is a conceived thought. Self concept is one's perception about himself or herself. It is one's impression of himself or herself. It is how you think you are. Some people esteem themselves low, they think that they cannot achieve anything in life. They do not regard themselves as equal or above someone else. This is what is called poor self

concept. God created everybody equal but with different gifts or special abilities. Everybody has the same brain and the same number of brain cells. Why should you esteem yourself low. Though sin has marred the image of God in us through the power of Satan over us, but God still have us as His children if we obey Him by keeping His commandments. Do not rate yourself low because this is the beginning of failure.

14. POOR INNER MOTIVATION

Enthusiasm is one of the greatest motivators in life. Motivation is a spur or a drive that pushes someone to act the way he does. Something gingers you to do what you do. Something forces you to behave the way you behave. That thing that makes you do what you do or behave the way you behave is your motivator. The force is inside you. It is inner voice telling you what to do and obedience to that force shows in your action.

When that inner motivator is poor; when it is not forceful enough it is termed to be weak or poor. So, when one has poor motivation for studies the person is bound to fail. To overcome this, students should develop interest in what they do. Have an aim in life and do everything within your reach to achieve that aim. Develop love for your hope and cut off every impediment that is against that hope.

15. HATRED FOR SCHOOL SUBJECTS

Until you can choose the subjects to do and the ones to drop, never hate any subjects. Some subjects work together to direct you to your career. If you hate of those forerunners you may not achieve your aim in life. Have equal interest for all subjects. Some students have missed their hoped career because of a subject they did not do in secondary school. Some have had to postpone their admission to go for a credit in O'level for a subject they did not want to do while in secondary school.

16. HATRED FOR SUBJECT TEACHERS

Hatred for subject teachers is a problem to students. It has led to subject failures and dropping of subjects until that particular subject is handled by another teacher. You cannot hate a teacher and love the subject he is teaching; I wish that it is possible but it is not. The solution is to resolve issues. What is the cause of the hatred? Is it because of the teacher's statutory assignment or his pomposity? Is it because of some advances he has made to you? Confide in your school counselor and let her know what is going on, perhaps, solution may come. Do not hate your teacher for any reason at all because you are cheating yourself. Try to resolve issues. Do not also die in silence thereby failing doubly: failing in the subject and also failing in health.

17. ABSENTEEISM

Absenteeism is the habit of being absent in school. It could also be that the person is in school but is

absent from a particular class because of some of the reasons we have deliberated upon. Attend your classes regularly so that you will not miss out in any quiz, test, dictation, class work, class participation, etc. A student misses a lot by being absent in a class. Class discussion is an important aspect of learning. Listening in class plays an important role in education. When a student is absent from class he misses all of those and the resultant effect is bad performance in examinations and the interpretation is failure. Why should you fail when you can be regular in class? In some schools, attendance has its own mark; why should you not get the maximum mark allotted to attendance?

Students may be absent from class due to some unforeseen circumstances, this is not a regular occurrence and the teachers know it. Teachers know how to handle it. Sickness can be a good reason for being absent from school. It is not a regular occurrence. Absenteeism is when a student fails to come to school for flimsy reasons and when it is

regularly done. Avoid this because it leads to failure and failure is not your portion.

18. TRUANCY

Truancy is the same as being absent. It is the same offence as absenteeism with a little difference. To get the real meaning of truancy, let us define its noun form “truant”. A truant is a vagabond, an idler. A vagabond is a wanderer; one going from place to place without a fixed home, without a purpose. A vagabond is one ‘leading an unsettled, irresponsible, or disreputable life’. One roaming about! Another definition of truant is “to idle away time especially while playing truant”. The adjective form of truant is ‘shirking responsibility’. To “shirk” means ‘to go stealthily, to evade the performance of an obligation’. Truancy, therefore, is an act or instance of playing truant (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th Edition). Truancy means roaming about aimlessly not caring to attend classes or to do assignment. A truant is a student who lavishes his

parents' money without minding the consequences. A truant student is a student who does not care for his future. Such students end up being street urchins and wayward. Do you want to be like that?

19. ROTE LEARNING

Rote learning is a memorization technique based on repetition. The idea is that one will be able to quickly recall the meaning of the material the more one repeats it. Some of the alternatives to rote learning include meaningful learning, associative learning, and active learning.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rote_learning

Rote learning is a bad method of learning. What is learnt does not last long. It is learning so as to be able to remember verbatim. This type of learning is dangerous because once a word is forgotten the sequence is totally lost and the student is at a fix. It is a bizarre condition during

examinations. Read with understanding, use your own words to explain concepts. Avoid, as far as possible, cram work. It is not a healthy way to study. Even those in drama try to associate words and not to cram because when you miss a word on stage you lose balance. Rote learning is dangerous.

20. INFLUENCE OF BAD FRIENDS

The worse thing that could happen to an intelligent person is to have bad friends. From the Dailymind.com

(<http://www.thedailymind.com/success/bad-company-are-your-friends-really-friends/>) comes this quote: “Are your friends really your friends? Are they supporting and enhancing your life or are they teaching you to think and behave in darker ways that you never thought you would? The company you keep is so important. They will change you in more ways than you know”.

Bad friends can bring your downfall. Education is the beginning of living and when you don't have it, it means you are dead. Bad friends can stop your education. Every good person should have a goal. Good friends will help you to achieve your goals. Bad friends lure you away from your goals. Bad friends engage you on gossip. Bad friends add no positive qualities in your life. Bad friends always stuff you with negative traits. They teach you bad things. They always want you to go to some odd places with them even using school hours. Bad friends deliberately give you bad advice. Bad friends take advantage of you. May be you are a kind person who always give what you have, bad friends will take that advantage to finish you. Bad friends will pressurize you to do what you hate to do. Most of the times, bad friends lead you to do evil. Bad friends do not keep your secrets secret.

Any friend who takes your attention away from your goal should be avoided. Know who to associate with and who to avoid. The future is more

precious than the present, therefore, plan your future now. Those friends who intend to spoil your future should be shunned. Be courageous enough to shun them. It is better not to have any friends than to have the ones that will ruin your life. Education first other things follow.

21. INDISCIPLINE

Indiscipline is lack of discipline. Discipline is a training that “corrects, molds or perfects the mental faculties or moral character”. Discipline could also be defined as “control gained by enforcing obedience or order”. In this case the best definition for discipline would be “orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behavior” (*Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary*, 10th edition). Indiscipline is disobedient to constituted authority. Indiscipline is negligence of rules and regulations guiding behavior. A student is said to be indiscipline when he flouts orders, when he does not do what the

teacher says he should do. When this happens, the student is heading to fail.

22. INADEQUATE PRACTICE

Practice makes perfect is an axiom that has been proven to be true. Actors practice their parts several times before they come out to entertain their audience. Musicians rehearse several times before going to the studio to record. Even teachers go through their lesson notes before going to stand in front of students to teach. To pass examinations with good grades, students must practice very well. Practice is not just reading or cramming as some students do. It is more than that.

To practice means to perform or to work at repeatedly so as to become proficient. It means continuing to do something until it forms part of your habit. Makes studies your habit. There are some subjects our teachers say if we leave them for one day they leave us for one week. They are saying

that we should practice such subjects every day. The science subjects must be practiced every day. So it is necessary that students should practice almost on daily basis such subjects as foreign languages – French, German, Greek, Latin, Arabic, Hebrew, English, Spanish, etc. Any language that is not your native language should be given time daily for its study otherwise you will not master it. Science courses such as Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Biochemistry, and engineering courses should be studied daily.

Once the word ‘practice’ is mentioned “practical” comes to mind. There should be a link between practice and practical. When students are practicing they should be seen doing something “practical”. There are lessons that involve drawings or carvings or moldings; such lessons should be practiced continuously until they are mastered. In Biology there are a lot of drawings and labeling, practice this often to know the names of the parts. In Chemistry, there are a lot of “chains” to draw and learn. In

Physics, Mathematics, Geography, Health Science and other sciences there lots of formulae and symbols to draw and learn. If you do not practice them you will not do well in them.

23. LACK OF TEXT BOOKS

Text books are assigned published materials used for a course of study in a school. They are prescribed reading materials by a teacher to his students for the course he is teaching. From the text books assignments may be given to the students. The assignments may be required to be done inside the text book. Marks are earned after marking the assigned lessons from the text book. Where continuous assessment is used in awarding a final grade to students a student who does not have a text book to do the assignments gets a very low grade and may eventually fail.

Text books are bought by parents or sponsors. Students depend on their parents or sponsors to buy

text books for them. The students' duty is to inform the parents/sponsors the prescribed text books for their courses. When the students have informed you of the needed text books for their courses please buy them for your ward. Parents/Sponsors please ensure that your child or ward makes use of the text book you bought for him/her. Buying the book is one thing and using it is another.

24. LAZINESS

Some students are lazy. They like to do nothing. They prefer to be idle than to work. Reading is a problem to them. Doing assignment in class or at home is a problem. Such students need to be helped because if they grow up with that attitude they may not feed themselves in future. The Bible says that an idle hand is the Devils workshop. Such an idle student may end up being a hoodlum.

One should analyze the constituents of laziness before actually ascribing it to anybody. What one

sees as laziness may be lack of interest or lack of motivation. To this I will like to quote elaborately from Konga.com (2013):

Finding what motivates that person and using that motivation to help that person accomplish goals is either considered manipulation or crafty leadership, depending on how this is used. Disgression(sic) needs to be used when trying to alter another persons' behavior, remember you cannot make decisions for other people. Encouragement can be given to help a lazy person, but ultimately everyone makes decisions about how to act on their own

Other causes of laziness are distraction, lack of direction, depression, and the list goes on. Finding and solving the underlying cause of laziness will cure laziness.

The above quote is from *What is the best way to approach someone about their laziness?* Curled from

<http://spymongoose.hubpages.com/hub/What-is-the-best-way-to-approach-someone-about-their-laziness>

Carefulness is required when ascribing laziness to someone. It is partly the duty of the teacher to find out why a student is lazy in a class. Have you found out the student's interest? Do you know if the student has a disability? May be you can send him to a counselor. Whatever is the case, laziness leads to failure. The earlier one discovers the interest of the student, and redirects him, the better.

25. LATENESS TO SCHOOL

Coming late to school is a habit that students should not imbibe because it will affect their future. When one, at an early age, cultivates the habit of going to school late it follows him throughout life. When he is employed he may continue with that habit which may cause him his job. It is better to prevent lateness in any gathering and more so in school.

If a student comes late to school he is punished. This means that his day has started being bad from the morning. He carries the effect throughout the day. He may miss the morning classes while cutting field as punishment or picking rubbish around the school premises. He may be asked to go and make ridges or beds in the school farm. He may be asked to kneel down for an hour. All these types of punishment take the student away from class participation. When one misses any class he has lost something. Cumulative losses lead to failure.

Parents may be the cause of their wards' lateness to school. Some students come from villages where they have to go to fetch water from a stream three to five kilometers away before going to school every morning. Some of them have to sweep a large compound in the morning before going to school. They may have one chore or the other to do in the morning before going to school. Students should do something before going to school, if it is necessary, but not the one that will encroach on their school

time. There are certain duties that parents should not allow their children to do in the morning if that will lead to their going to school late. When a student goes to school late his day has started being bad from the morning.

Some students stay in bed too long; they sleep like log of wood. Parents should make sure that their children go to bed early enough as to wake on time to prepare for school. Wake your wards up when they sleep too long. As a warning, do not give your children any assignment that will keep them late in the night. Do not deprive them of their sleep. Good market starts in the morning!

26. RELIANCE ON 'EXPO'

EXPO is a form of examination malpractice where students have access to examination questions before the examination takes place. This was captured in the principal of Federal Government

Girls' College, Yola, Mrs Zulaikatu Momodu's speech where she said that:

Our parents pay for miracle centres' registration, expo (having access to question papers before examinations) and all forms of things for their children. Because of this, you find that students don't want to read anymore for their exams, they wait for miracles to happen because the parents have paid dearly for these miracles.

Instead of parents to buy examination papers for their children they could prepare them for examination by constant monitoring of their studies and performances and by hiring coaches or lesson teachers during holidays to help them in their studies. (From: *Exam malpractice: Parents largely responsible* posted on February 8, 2013 on the website of Nigerian Tribune Newspaper. <http://www.tribune.com.ng/news2013/index.php/en/component/k2/item/4840-exam-malpractice->

%E2%80%98parents-largely-responsible%E2%80%99).

People are impatient and would not want to take time to do things properly. The result is trying to get everything you want by every possible means, good or bad, but most of the times through bad means. This was also the position of Eteri Idienumen in the article titled “Dangers Of Falsehood” curled from <http://nigerianobservernews.com/2112008/2112008/sundayobserver/features/features4.html>.

Examination malpractice comes as a result of laziness and distractions. Most of the causes, if not all the causes, of examination malpractice come from distractions. These are some of the distractions: (1) Watching Television, many students waste a lot of time watching TV programs. (2) Computer Games, this has so much distracted students that they may even miss their meals playing computer games. (3) Watching soccer or football especially during football competition seasons. (4) Hawking, some parents allow their

wards to be secondary bread winners of the family. The children are sent to hawk items ranging from foodstuffs to baby wears morning and evenings. When will they read? (5) Paying for miracle centres, when the students know that their parents will pay for them to sit for the examination in a centre where the invigilators will be paid for their children to copy to pass, will they take their studies serious? Parents contribute to half-baked school leavers seen all over. (6) No text books, when students have no text books to read either because of the students' negligence or because his parents did not buy the books for him, the student will not perform well in examinations. (7) Lobbying teachers, parents sometimes bribe teachers to give pass marks to their wards. When the students know that their parents will induce the teachers to pass them, how will they be serious with their studies? (8) Corrupt teachers, some teachers seduce students and compensate them with grades. So, students get grades they did not merit. All the other factors listed as factors contributing to academic failure lead to

EXPO. Some of them are from self which is broadly classified as laziness, for examples, lack of desired goal, non-challant attitude, lack of confidence, over confidence, poor study habit, procrastination, poor memory, poor attention, poor self concept, poor inner motivation, truancy, rote learning, indiscipline, inadequate practice. All the factors that contribute to academic failure are shared almost equally between LAZINESS and DISTRACTION.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EXAMINATION PREPARATION TIPS

Examinations are terrible stress causers. To do well in examinations you must study hard, in a proper manner, and conducive atmosphere. Here are some of the guidelines to help you prepare well for examinations.

1. Create a time table of how you will study, what course you will study and at what time. Follow the time table judiciously. Allot more time to the courses that are giving you hard time to deal with them thoroughly. This study schedule must be followed religiously.
2. Procrastination is a steal of time. It is a killer of progress and success. Do not create reasons for rescheduling. Your only reason should be sickness but we do not wish for it.
3. Make friends with the 'A' students - those who strive for good examination results. Students

know those who are intelligent and serious, associate with them if you desire to be like them. If you have not been moving with them before be vocal to tell them that you need their help in some courses. Intelligent people are not selfish, they help each other.

4. Listen attentively to teachers during revision, or when examination is approaching. They may subtly hint on examination questions. Some of them may graciously give reading concentration areas. Read them and read more. Limit your free period, your play time.
5. Make more use of your flash cards, acronyms, word association, and abbreviations now.
6. Avoid serious reading one hour to the examination time. You may discuss with your class-mates.
7. Remember only the bones, the flesh may be added as you think. When you remember the headings it will not be hard to explain it on the body of your essay.

8. Revise your homework, assignments and quizzes. If this is your final examination in the semester or quarter, revise your mid-semester examination also unless you were specifically told not to bother yourself on what you studied before mid-semester or midterm.
9. Although examination is not a good measure of intelligence but, take it seriously. Failure of it may mar your progress or delay your success.

Education is very easy if you are determined. Nobody is a failure. Everybody cannot be in the same profession, discover your talent and pursue it. Success is not limited.



The sticker on the last page on study skill tips from *Do Your Kids Know How to Study: Better Parenting Institute* is from www.betterparentinginstitut...curled from: <http://images.search.yahoo.com/images/view>; Go through this sticker several times for it to make a lasting impression not only in your memory but also in your study habit.

Study Skills

- Pay **attention** in class.
- Take **good** notes.
- Keep an **organized** notebook for each subject.
- Know the purpose of each assignment.
- Ask questions **in** class.
- **Review! Review! Review!**
It can help you retain 80% of the information.
- Plan a **definite** time and place for studying each day.
- Study for awhile and take short breaks.
- **Don't cram** for hours the night before a test.
Study a little bit each day.

• *Think Positive...Do your best!*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vincent Enyeribe Unegbu was born in Umuabazu Amuzu Mbaise in 1955 to the family of Late Lawrence Sunday Ikonne Unegbu and Mrs Cecilia Enyidiya Unegbu. His primary education was done in the then L. A. School, Amator today's Central School Amator, in Aboh Mbaise LGA of Imo State, Nigeria. He attended Ohaji High School, Mgbirichi and Enyiogugu Secondary School, Mbaise (1971-1976). He obtained Teacher's Grade 2 Certificate from TTC, Ihie in 1977 and taught in Central School Nriuku, Amuzu from 1977 to 1981 before he got admission for further studies.

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He is married to Olivia Ulunma, a counselor, with whom he has four Children: three boys and one girl.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The major aim for this book is to prepare students for the task of scholarship. *How to Study* is really teaching students “how to study” in order to relegate failure to the background. This book supports Babcock University’s slogan of “Failure is not an option”. How to study, when to study, where to study, how to take notes in class, factors that lead to academic failure and academic success, and how to prepare for examinations without failure are taught in this handbook. It is a little book that does wonders.

REFERENCE

‘A’ students, 126
4Rs, 37

Abbreviations, 24, 29, 34,
127
Absenteeism, 102, 103

academic failure, 85
Academic failure, 44, 84,
85, 123, 124, 131
Academic performance,
44, 81
acronym, 25
acronyms, 24
Acronyms, 24, 26, 34,
127
Acronyms and initials, 24
Alcohol, 78
Ambition, 73
asking questions, 56
Assessment, 54
assignments, 30
Assignments, 30, 54, 58,
75, 86, 112, 127
assignments and
homework, 30
Assimilate, 17
assimilation, 20
Assimilation, 20
Associating words, 68
Associations, 26
Atmosphere for study,
20
attention, 94
Attention, 22, 29, 38, 61,
63, 72, 74, 85, 94, 95,
96, 97, 108, 123
attentive, 33, 57
Attentive, 18, 28, 33, 57,
80, 96
Avoid mosquito bites,
77
Bad friends, 106, 107,
108
Bad handwriting, 37, 38
Bad health, 75
Bad performance, 103
balanced diet, 78
Balanced diet, 78
Be happy, 22
Belief, 89
Body gestures, 28
Boredom, 93
brain, 7
Brain, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12,
13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21,
28, 29, 47, 59, 68, 78,
93, 99
browsing, 33
Browsing, 33
Caffeine and alcohol, 11
career, 62
challenging goal, 48
Challenging goal, 48
Cheating, 75
choice, 89
Choice of career, 50, 52,
86
Choose subjects, 51
Cigarettes, 78
Class attendance, 53, 54
Class discussion, 102
communication, 38

Compare your note, 34
Comprehend, 16, 17
concentration, 21
Concentration, 17, 63
Confidence, 89
Conscience, 12
continuous assessment,
54, 58
Continuous assessment,
54, 58, 112
Copy-cat., 75
copying, 75
corrections, 34
Corrupt teachers, 123
counselors, 83
Counselors, 81
Cram work, 106
Cramming, 64
Defective genes, 14
dendrites, 8
Depression, 93, 114
Desire to succeed, 86
determined to succeed, 49
Determined to succeed,
49
Different gifts, 99
Diligence, 59
Dirty and bushy
environment, 77
Discipline, 50, 108
discuss, 69
distracters, 31
Distracters, 31
Distraction, 63, 114
Distractions, 20, 31, 32,
94, 120, 121
Drink water, 76, 77
Drug abuse, 79
Eat different food items,
78
Emotional behavior., 81
Encouragement, 114
Enemy to your success,
22
English alphabets, 36
Enthusiasm, 99
Equal interest, 62, 100
examination, 19
Examination, 16, 17, 18,
19, 22, 23, 33, 34, 64,
66, 70, 71, 73, 97, 118,
119, 120, 122, 126, 127
Examinations, 22, 34, 37,
50, 54, 57, 63, 64, 72,
92, 103, 106, 110, 118,
122, 125, 131
Examiners interest, 66
Explanation, 45, 54, 85
extra-curricular, 19
Extra-curricular activities,
19, 56
Eye contact, 28
Factors influence our
studies, 18
Faculties, 13, 108
failure, 44, 87

Flash Card, 23
Flash Cards, 23
Fliers or billboards, 44
foreign languages, 23
Foreign languages, 23,
110
goal, 47
Goal, 47, 48, 49, 73, 74,
85, 107, 108, 123
Goals, 48, 85, 107, 114
God, 46
Good handwriting, 38, 42
Good health, 75
Habit, 90
Habitual late comer, 82
hardwork, 50
Hating a subject, 96
Highlighting, 33, 35
Homework, 58, 127
I don't care, 86
Imitation, 75
Impatient, 119
**Importance of Good
Handwriting**, 42
Impressions, 29, 38
inconsistent, 90
index, 32
Index, 32, 43, 119
Indiscipline, 108
Inflections, 36
Information, 8, 12, 17,
20, 26, 68, 92
Inscription, 36
intelligence, 46
Intelligence, 46, 55, 127
intemperance, 13
Intemperance, 13
Interest and effort, 53
irregularity, 90
Jotter or an exercise
book, 35
knowledge, 18
Laziness, 58
Lazy
Laziness, 48, 113, 114,
115
Learning, 4, 5, 16, 20, 26,
28, 38, 57, 68, 69, 95,
102, 105, 106, 124
librarians, 72
Libraries, 70, 71, 72
library, 30
Library, 19, 27, 28, 30,
31, 32, 33, 35, 70, 71,
72
Listen attentively, 57, 126
listening, 33
Listening, 20, 28, 29, 33,
57
Llanguages, 36
Long hand, 29
Madness, 11
Malpractice
Examination, 118, 119,
120

Mathematical formulae, 23, 25
Memorization, 25, 29, 64, 65, 105
memory, 9
Memory, 9, 18, 23, 47, 67, 68, 92, 93, 123, 128
Miss classes, 30, 53
Missing classes, 76
missing studies, 76
Mnemonic, 25, 67
Monitoring, 119
Motivation, 99, 113, 114, 124
Negligence of rules, 109
neurons, 7
Neurons, 7, 8, 9
non-chalant, 86
Non-chalant, 86
Note taking, 29
Organ, 7, 10
Over feeding, 79
over-confident, 90
Over-confident., 90
Paper qualification, 59
paragraph, 32
Paragraph, 32
Paraphrase, 29
parents, 51, 52, 82, 86, 87, 104, 112, 117, 118, 119, 121
Parents, 51, 52, 87, 112, 116, 117, 119, 122
Participation, 55
Passive listener, 30
Past question papers, 66, 67
Photocopy, 35
Play mates, 80
Playfulness, 91
Playing music, 21
Pomposity, 101
Poor motivation, 100
Positioning, 28
Practice, 109
prayer, 46
Prayer, 45, 46
Preface, 32, 34
Preparation for, 17, 19
Prescribed drug, 79
Procrastination, 60, 91, 126
Punishment, 116
Question and answer time, 69
Reading, 3, 16, 33, 37, 113
Recommended textbook, 65
Record events, 38
Regularity, 90
Rehearse, 23, 59, 109
Relaxation, 17
Repetition, 29, 73
revision, 34

Revision, 32, 33, 34, 69,
73, 126
Scholastic activities, 88
School, 19, 42, 51, 53,
65, 70, 71, 72, 80, 81,
82, 83, 86, 87, 90, 91,
101, 102, 103, 107,
111, 115, 116, 117, 122
School counselors, 81,
82, 83
Self concept, 98
self-belief, 89
sense organs, 9
sensory impulses, 10
Set a high goal, 47
short term memory, 93
Sickness, 103
Solving questions, 66
speech, 38
Speech, 38, 118
Spiritual protection, 12
Stomach upset, 22
Stress, 22, 93, 125
Study environment, 20
studying, 4, 16, 17, 18,
19, 21, 29, 31, 61, 63,
75, 86, 96
Studying in a classroom,
28
subjects, 51
Subjects, 26, 37, 52, 53,
62, 67, 88, 95, 96, 100,
101, 110
success, 44
Success, 5, 19, 44, 47, 48,
49, 50, 53, 56, 73, 75,
81, 87, 106, 126, 128,
131
symbols, 17
Symbols, 17, 111
teacher, 33
Teacher, 4, 5, 28, 29, 33,
37, 43, 54, 55, 56, 57,
64, 70, 72, 80, 81, 95,
96, 101, 102, 109, 112,
115, 130
television, 76
Television, 76
textbooks, 33, 65
Textbooks, 30, 31, 33, 65,
71
Third Class, 53
Time for siesta, 59
Time management, 19,
60
time table, 19
Time table, 19, 20, 91,
125
Time to play, 76, 97
Time wasters, 61
Tired, 21
Truancy, 104
un-ambitious, 74
Un-ambitious, 74
Underline, 29, 34
Underlined points, 34

understanding, 18, 21
Unforeseen
 circumstances, 54, 103
Use of acronyms, 24
Vagabond, 104

Vegetables, 78
Ventilation, 77
Vocabularies, 35
Wayward, 105
Writing, 3, 36, 37, 38