



THE OPEN  
UNIVERSITY  
OF SRI LANKA

Centre for Educational Technology and Media ( CETME )  
OUSL Study Material in print

Unit I

# **BRIDGING THE GAP**

## Distance Writing



OUSL STUDY MATERIAL IN PRINT

**Unit I**

**BRIDGING THE GAP**  
*Distance Writing*



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## **Acknowledgements**

This guide for writers was prepared in response to many requests made by members of the academic staff of the OUSL. In the course of workshops conducted by the Department of Educational Technology on writing distance education study material, it was pointed out that a manual would be useful. It is based on widely accepted principles of effective writing in distance education. We have also drawn from our own experience in transforming and editing OUSL study material together with feedback from students.

The guide focuses attention on organizational and communicational aspects of developing student centred course material in print with the needs of specific target groups in mind. The original guide was developed in 1995 by the team members listed below:

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Senate approved guidelines on presentation of materials are specified in *OUSL Study Material in Print, Unit II, The House Style*.

**Department of Educational Technology**



# Unit I

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## **BRIDGING THE GAP**

### **Distance Writing**

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## Introduction

In distance education one of the most important tools of teaching is the written word. Despite the very significant advances made by other technologies of communication, print material still remains the central resource of most distance learning. Hence it must help the learner to learn actively and bridge the distance between the teacher and the learner.

One writes to communicate. The writer, of a textbook or of an article for a journal or newspaper also sets out to communicate. Why then should writing for distance education be different? The unique feature of writing for distance learners is that it must prompt active learning in learners and lead them to achieve the defined learning outcomes. That is why we sometimes call the print material the *tutorial in print*.

The printed word has to make up not only for the lecturer but also for the tutor. Unlike in the classroom of the conventional system, here there is no immediate feedback to guide the teacher. Therefore in order to ensure that successful learning takes place we try to make the written material as user-friendly as possible. To achieve this we look to learning theories for guidance in organizing the subject matter that has to be taught.

The material once developed and written down, assumes a ‘public’ and ‘permanent’ nature which the classroom lecture does not have. It is very costly in terms of time and money to change and revise too often. Therefore, careful planning is necessary to achieve our objective which is teaching from a distance.

The guide highlights some of the ways in which we might improve the quality of our texts. The latest revision of the guide was undertaken to ensure that it complements the guidance provided under the Department for International Development DfID project on the design and development of instructional materials. The views expressed on this subject are included in

Melton, R.F. (1997). *Objectives, Competences & Learning Outcomes: Developing instructional materials in open and distance learning*. London: Kogan Page.

and we would recommend that you study Part II of this book, and in particular Chapters 5, 6 and 9, at the same time that you read this guide.

## 1. The Study Session

At the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), a programme of study is made up of several courses. In each course we find several blocks of teaching materials. A block may consist of several units and each unit may contain a number of study sessions (Figure 1). A study session contains all the elements of instruction required for about two hours of study (assuming we are dealing with mature learners). The core element of the unit will be a book consisting of sessions (of between 2,500-3,000 words) which provides learners with all the guidance needed.

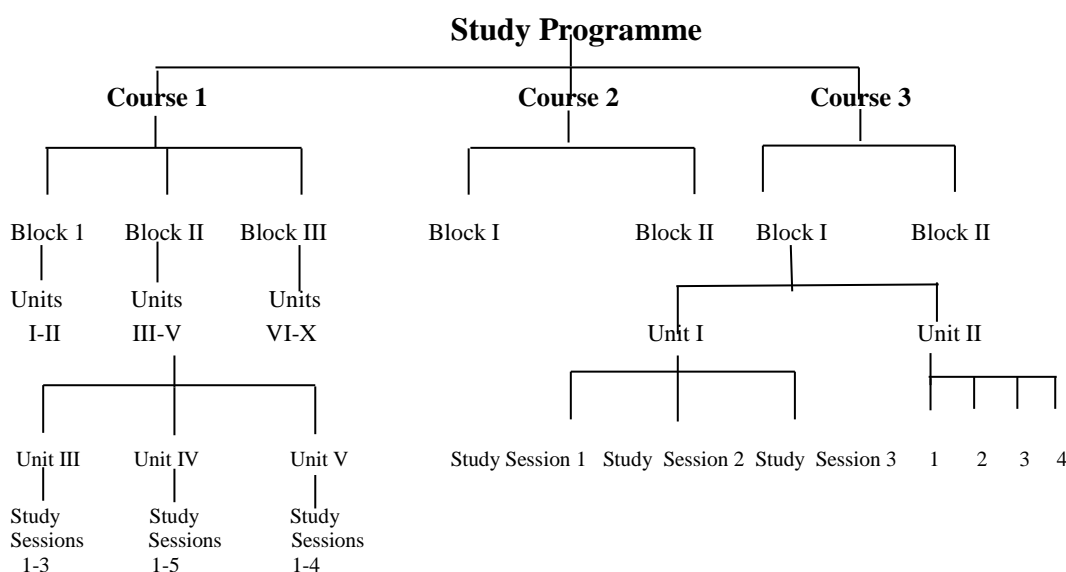


Figure 1: Hierarchical arrangement of components in a course

Print material in a distance learning institution can be developed according to different models – two of which are outlined below.

### Model 1

The first model consists of units (together with supplementary materials) developed by the faculty of the particular university and by academics who are assigned the task with guidance from the university. At OUSL this is the most widely used model.

### Model 2

The second model is prescribed existing material for which study guides are developed by the university. This is very common in study areas such as literature and history. This is a model that has hardly been used at the OUSL. In order to use this model, learners should be able to acquire the prescribed texts. Unavailability of suitable books and the excessive cost of imported books prevents this model being used extensively by the OUSL.

## 2. Getting Started

In his book Reg Melton (1997) describes a process for the development of courses which goes through five sequential stages (Figure 2). The idea is to move forward in stages from the general to the specific, obtaining feedback at each stage when it can be acted upon, and with each stage building in greater detail on the preceding one. The very first stage in the process described is to develop a broad outline for the course as a whole clarifying such issues as the nature of the target group, teachers and trainers and their needs. The second phase is to identify the aims and objectives/Learning outcomes of the proposed course followed by the development of a framework for the course as the third phase. During this phase, the way the course will be structured, the teaching strategies to be adopted, the way in which media will be used, together with information on who will be involved in producing the course and the nature and scheduling of the development process will be clarified. The fourth phase is to develop a study session based on the framework. Compilation of all the sessions into a single unit (unit of instruction) will be carried out in the final phase.

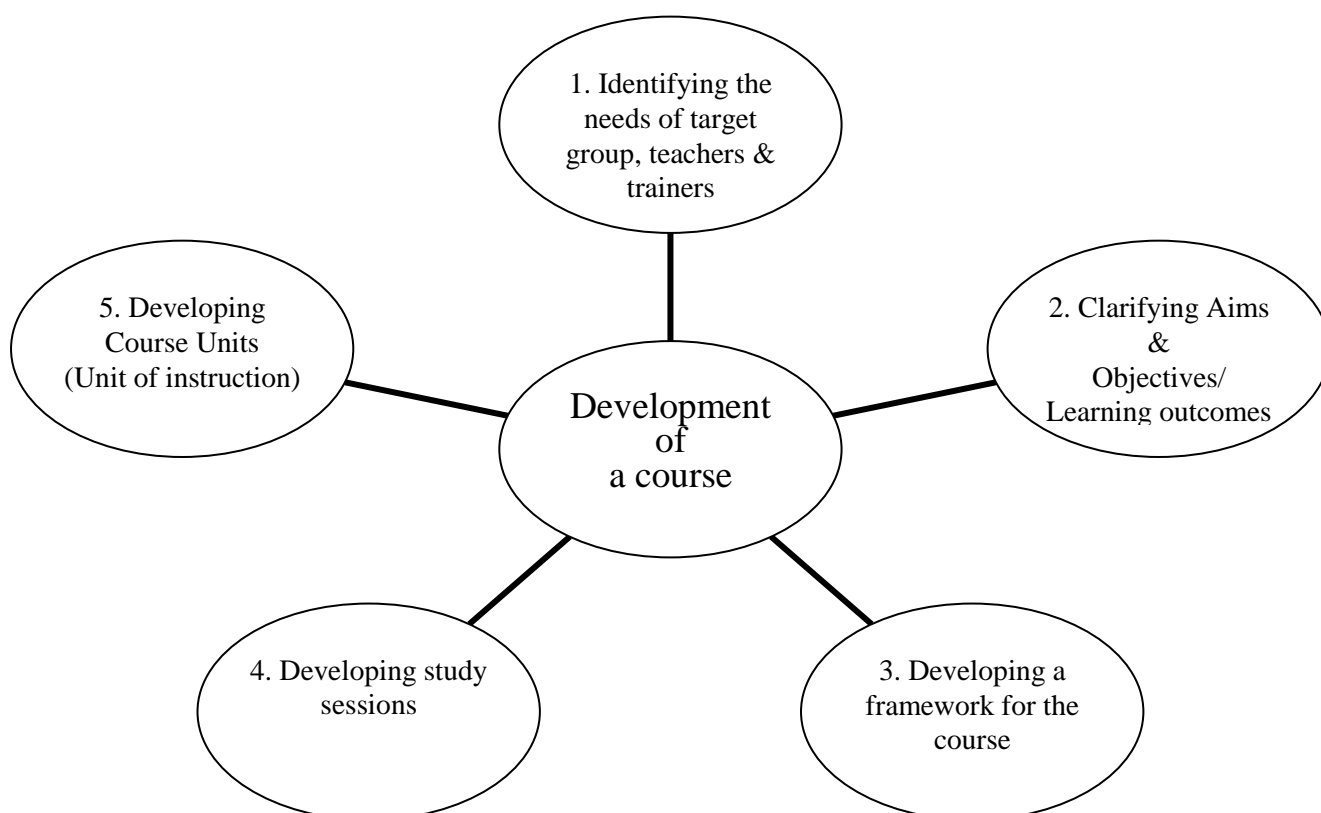


Figure 2: Development process of a course

Let's reflect of these various aspects in turn.

### 2.1 The target group

A good understanding of the target group helps the writer. In a distance education institution the target group of a programme of study is a highly diverse social mosaic. Even at postgraduate level, although qualifications of your learners may be similar, the post qualification experience may vary

widely. The writer should be well informed about the background of the learners. A profile of the learners on the course is very useful. Age, educational diversity, language proficiency variation and exposure to media are important and should be available to the course designers/writers.

Such information is hard to come by, if a learner database for different programmes of study is not maintained to identify learner profiles. However, an attempt must be made to identify the target group, or at least possible variations of it.

When learners are studying at a distance, we need to obtain information about them before they begin. If not, it will not inform and affect the teaching plan as much as it should.

## **2.2 Aims and objectives/learning outcomes of course**

The broad aims and objectives/learning outcomes for the course will emerge from the perceived needs of the target group and the extent to which the course team believes it can respond to those needs. Broad aims need to be clarified in more specific terms and these may be achieved through hierarchical forms of analysis (Melton, 1977).

Identifying the broad aims and objectives/learning outcomes for a course is the second step in the development process, and a logical next step is to indicate in broad terms how the course will be structured (in terms of units) to achieve these aims. Once this analysis is complete it should be expressed in the form of an 'advance organiser' which should be designed to introduce learners to the course as a whole. This will not only identify the broad aims of the course, but also their relevance and importance for the realisation of the stated aims of the course.

## **2.3 Framework for the course**

The development process described by Reg Melton (1997) is clearly designed to ensure the quality of the products by obtaining feedback from relevant experts at each stage in the development process at a point in time when it can be acted upon. Whatever process of development is to be adopted it needs to be clearly defined, each stage in the process needs to be identified and carefully scheduled. Authors need to be in agreement and they need to be aware of their roles and how they will be expected to respond at the various stages in the development process.

### ***2.3.1 Media, teaching strategies and learner support***

In distance teaching one of the main requirements is to give careful consideration as to how learners at a distance (often in remote areas) will be given all the support that they need to facilitate self-study. It is necessary to develop a framework considering all the aspects of teaching and learning.

- What types of media will be used (audio-visual as well as textual)?
- What types of delivery system will be available?
- Will learners have access to radios, televisions, tape recorders, video recorders and computers with the internet?
- Do they have reasonable study facilities?
- Will they have access to local tutors?

- How will they get the day to day support that they will inevitably need and which will be so crucial to their motivation and ultimate success?

It is unacceptable to assume that sending learners clearly written instructional materials will in itself be sufficient to promote learning. Learners need to be actively involved in the process through engaging in teaching-learning activities and projects, they need to be stimulated and motivated by perceiving the relevance and importance of what they are trying to achieve (through examples from their local environments, their homes, places of work, and the world in which they live), and they need continuous feedback and support from their tutors and peers. How this will be achieved needs to be spelt out clearly.

### **2.3.2 The development process**

Once a framework has been developed for a course, unit authors will be able to begin work on their individual units. However, it is important that they should prepare outlines for their units in very much the same way that outlines are developed for courses as whole. The idea is that these outlines should be discussed with other experts in the course team before they are developed in further detail.

As with course outlines, unit outlines should highlight perceived learner needs and the extent to which the unit will be expected to meet those needs. As such it will need to clarify its aims, and with the help of techniques such as hierarchical analysis should express these in more specific terms. The way, in which the units will be structured in terms of study sessions, will need to be indicated, highlighting the way in which each study session will contribute to the overall learning outcomes. Teaching strategies will need to be outlined, including details of the way in which advantage will be taken of different types of media. Attention will need to be drawn to any other specifics such as the development of special kits (for science and technology) for use in the home, study centres or regional centres. Again the course team will need to think about the course schedule to which they have committed themselves and what they will need to meet their commitments.

## **2.4 Development of a study session**

Derek Rowntree (1990, p.79-80), in his book 'Teaching through Self-Instruction', similarly recommends writers to produce a broad outline for their courses before launching into more detailed drafts, and it is interesting to note some of the things that he would consider in developing such an outline. These include:

- Proposed title
- Name of author
- Dates by which materials are to be made available  
e.g. comments and deadlines for colleagues, for developmental testing and for final production
- Names of any course team colleagues who have been specially enlisted to provide feedback
- Names of external readers/assessors
- Relationship of material to rest of course  
e.g. any prerequisite knowledge/skills/attitudes expected of learners; entry test needed?
- Aims and objectives
- Outline of content – main issue, concepts, processes, procedures etc. to be included
- Sequence – list of main teaching points in order, or a flow diagram

- Teaching media to be used  
e.g. textbook plus study guide, audio cassette, practical work
- Chief types of learner activity  
e.g. reading, problem-solving, workplace projects etc.
- Estimated learning time, including assessment
- Support system planned or suggested  
e.g. role of tutors, mentors, self-help groups, etc.
- Evaluation plans  
e.g. how materials (and support systems) might be tested and improved?

The above list shows the care with which a study session is developed, and the team work that goes into its development.

## **2.5 Development of a course unit**

Once all study sessions have been developed for a unit, Course Team Chair or the Course Team Manager will be able to compile all the study sessions into a single unit. Each unit needs an advance organiser (unit advance organiser) to introduce the related study sessions giving the purpose of each study session and the manner in which they are related to one another. The advance organiser for a unit should be presented giving an overall view of the unit and pitched at a higher level of generality than those developed for the related study sessions. As mentioned by Melton (1997), the process of developing advance organisers at different levels such as for a course, a unit and then a study session is in fact one of the progressive differentiation, and if carried out effectively should avoid repetitions in points being made in these three advance organisers (course, unit and session).

### 3. Preparing a Study Session

In the pages that follow you will find suggestions indicating some of the things you might do in preparing instructional materials. These include how you might use advance organisers in planning study session, the style of writing you might adopt, and how you might involve learners in the process of learning.

#### 3.1 Using advance organisers in planning study sessions

The aims and learning outcomes for a study session need to be identified and clarified in much the same way as they are in preparing an outline for the course or the unit as a whole, but of course the learning outcomes identified will be expressed in much more specific terms. Again careful thought will need to be given to how the related learning outcomes are to be achieved within the study session, and this will need to be expressed in the form of an advance organiser designed to introduce learners to the study session.

The advance organiser should identify the main topics and themes to be addressed, their relevance and importance and the relationships between them. It should also include advice on the broad aims to be achieved and details on such matters as study strategies, resource materials that will be needed, and the time that will need to be set aside for related study. As such the advance organiser should provide a framework for the study session.

#### 3.2 Writing

The language you use might be different from what you are used to either in the textbooks you have read or the journal articles you have written. To ensure that the learner comprehends, you have to write in very plain language.

This is particularly important because of the linguistic situation of your target group. Most OUSL learners choose the English medium (even when a choice is available) not because they have a very good command of the language, but because they think that the qualification they obtain will be more useful if they follow the course in English. Hence if you are writing in the English medium, it is well to remember that your learners may sometimes have very real difficulties with complex structures.

The language you use should be able to keep the reader's attention. This will be possible if your writing can:

Bridge the gap of distance by making up for the absence of the teacher.

To achieve this, the material proposed must be highly readable.

### 3.2.1 Making your texts reader-friendly

For making your texts readable, your tone is very important. You should try to avoid the tone of the preacher or the lecturer at the lectern. I hope you will agree with Rowntree (1990, p. 207) who says,

*‘Rather it should be that of an enthusiastic teacher enjoying a discussion of the subject with a responsive learner’*

In order to develop a readable style, you may need to:

- write conversationally
- write plainly.

### 3.2.2 The conversational style

Speak directly to the learner. Call your learner **you**. Speak of yourself as **I** as if you were in front of the learner. Western distance educationists say that using contractions (e.g. I’m I’ve) helps to maintain a conversational tone, if they are used in places where they would be used naturally in speech.

In Sri Lankan spoken English, particularly among the less fluent, contractions are not as common as among native speakers of English. Hence at any point if such usage is likely to baffle the reader, it is better to avoid it.

Call your learner **You**

**NEVER** call your learner **the reader**, or **the learner**.

Speak of yourself as **I**.

**NEVER** speak of yourself as **the author** or **the writer**.

Avoid this kind of sentence ...

*The reader is reminded at this point that algorithms were brought to his or her attention by the author in the preceding chapter (Rowntree, p. 207).*

Instead, why not

*You’ll remember I mentioned algorithms in the previous chapter (Rowntree, p. 208).*

Rhetorical questions can help the conversational style. A rhetorical question is one to which you do not expect an answer.

e.g. The charged particle activation analysis method is different from other methods. How does this difference arise?



### 3.2.3 Be precise not pedantic

In writing distance education material, we stress:

- simplicity
- lucidity and
- directness, as in all good writing.

A successful writer writes simply and **clearly** so that he or she communicates well. Some writers tend to feel that material which is simple and easy to read, lowers the quality and standard of a course. This definitely is not so. What would be at fault is not the simple language but the ready-made answers that could preclude thinking. Never forget that you are trying to make your learner think.

The writer should be creative and be aware of the potential of language as a teacher.

You must **avoid verbosity** because it kills motivation and causes confusion. Do not write to impress, but to provoke thinking. You may be writing in English, Sinhala or Tamil, but verbosity simply tires the reader.

If you can be serious without being solemn, that is the correct tone. The real challenge of writing for a distance learner is to express complex concepts in simple terms. Exploit as far as possible the human angle by relating material to real life experience. Here again, take care not to sound condescending. Jokes should not be included unless they positively help to convey a useful truth.

Write as if you were talking to a learner with whom you are not too well acquainted. In a text presented in Sinhala, this results in a substantial difference because in Sinhala, the spoken idiom is quite different from the written idiom. If you are going to write in the spoken idiom, it should be consistently sustained through the text and the course. Refined spoken idiom, like what a lecturer uses in the lecture room might be the most desirable medium. Here again you may have to make considered choices. How, for instance are you going to address your learner. Sinhala equivalents for 'you' are many and varied. Which would you choose? Is it the best?

## 3.3 Involve learners in the process of learning

It is very important to actively involve learners in the process of learning through activities and projects. The idea is to encourage learners to think deeply about the issues involved rather than simply digesting information in a superficial manner without questioning the principles involved or considering the issues in any depth.

Gagne (1960) identifies some of the aspects we need to take into account if we are to facilitate successful learning. These include:

- activating motivation
- informing the learner of broad aims (within format of advance organisers)
- directing attention
- stimulating recall
- providing guidance
- enhancing retention
- promoting transfer of learning
- eliciting performance

- specifying objectives in detail
- obtaining feedback on performance.

Within each study session, the writer should try to achieve all this as far as possible. Going from the *known to the unknown* is a widely accepted pedagogic practice.

Effective learning takes place when the learner has opportunity for:

- active participation
- immediate feedback
- reward from experience.

To enable successful learning, texts for distance learner must be properly organized and well structured. A summary of some of the aspects to be kept in mind in developing a study session are summarized in Figure 3.

**Title**

Use title to help learners identify with the topic to be addressed.

e.g. 'Getting started' or 'Developing materials for a study session'

**Introduction**

Use advance organiser not only to introduce learners to topic, but also to highlight the relevance and importance of issues.

**Content**

Bring subject to life with examples from real life. Include diagrams, illustrations, photographs, examples from real life together with case studies.

**Media**

Bring examples from industry, the place of work, the home, the local environment into the home.

**Activities and projects**

Involve learners in the process of learning through activities and projects (particularly ones related to their work, their local environment, and situations that they will see as highly relevant to their needs).

**Learning outcomes**

Identify the learning outcomes to be achieved.

**Assessment**

Develop Self Assessment Materials for learners to monitor their own progress and Assessment Materials (Continuous and End of Course Assessment) for use of tutors and examining bodies.

**Feedback and comments**

Provide learners with immediate feedback in text on self assessment materials and activities set.

Develop systems that will provide learners with feedback and support as and when it is needed. Support systems should reach out to learners wherever they may be located.

**Glossaries**

Compile a glossary of key terms for either the unit as a whole or for the course as a whole.

*Figure 3: Some issues to be addressed when developing a study session*

## 4. Aims, Learning Outcomes and Activities

It is useful to think of aims and objectives/ learning outcomes as early as possible when planning a course or an individual study session, and we will begin by clarifying the main differences between aims and objectives/learning outcomes. We will then go on to discuss the role of self-assessment questions in helping learners to determine whether they have achieved the stated learning outcomes and the importance of activities and projects in ensuring that learners are involved in a meaningful manner in the process of learning and the achievement of the specified learning outcomes.

### 4.1 Writing aims

Aims are a general and brief statement of what you hope learners will achieve. It is usually a broad statement of intent or a flavour statement giving some ideas of what is to come. It is not really possible to return to an aim and use it to test whether the learning has been successful. We need sharper tools for this purpose. Here are some examples of aims.

- to explain the concept and importance of energy
- to provide practice in carrying out surveys and experiments relating to energy studies
- to encourage a sense of concern about the depletion of fossil fuel reserves
- to explain the concept of democracy
- to foster an appreciation of the novels of Chinua Achebe
- to expose some modern myths about development.

The above aims are all statements of what the teacher hopes to do, but these could easily, and usefully, be transformed into broad statements of what learners should aim to achieve (and when included in texts for learners they should be expressed in this way). They are really quite broad and do not give much help about exactly what will be involved in achieving them.

### 4.2 Writing objectives and learning outcomes

The objectives and learning outcomes have in fact often used interchangeably. As stated in Melton (1997), in England, during the early 1990s, learning outcomes were used in very much the same way as competences to help to set national standards for education and training. In fact, Melton (1997) expressed *that behavioural and domain-referenced objectives could well be described as specific types of learning outcomes, suggesting that the term 'learning outcome' is simply an alternative name for 'objective'* (Melton, p. 29).

Thus, in general, objectives, learning outcomes and competences are written in a similar manner. However, in this book, we define 'objectives are statements of expected/intended outcomes of learning expressed **by a teacher** when planning instruction' and 'learning outcomes are statements of desired outcomes of learning which align with measurement where **learners** should achieve them at the end of the instruction and written in terms of **learners**'.

For instance, learning outcomes are sharper, more precise statements of what learners should be able to do or do better as a result of having worked through the unit or study session.

#### 4.2.1 Learning outcomes as measurable achievements

In writing learning outcomes, we are trying to state what successful learners should be able to do to show what they have learnt. Since these should be *measurable learning outcomes*, we avoid words and phrases such as;

- should know
- develop an interest in
- have an idea of
- understand.

Instead we use words like

- state
- explain
- define
- list
- give reasons
- summarise
- analyse, etc.

Having said this we can use words such as

- should have a knowledge of or
- should have an understanding of

so long as we then indicate how this will be assessed. Usually this is done by providing sample text items as illustrated in Reg Melton's (1997) book in his discussion of domain-referenced objectives (p. 5-8).

When stating specific concrete learning outcomes, make it a point not to include too many. Select only the most important. Otherwise the learner can be overwhelmed by the apparent enormity of the learning task ahead.

Learning outcomes may be classified under knowledge, skills or attitudes. It may also happen that while allowing the content of a study session to grow naturally, learning outcomes have to be revised.

Also try your best not to couch your learning outcomes in technical jargon which may still be new to the learner. Use a tint for emphasis. You can even resort to the mother tongue for purposes of clarity.

e.g. **Decree** ආඥාව

**Writ** e.g. කාලවරෝධ ආඥා පනත - Prescription ordinance

Although you may include broad statements of aims (in terms of what learners should achieve) at the beginning of a study session, detailed learning outcomes should be provided **at the end of each study session** and each unit to help learners determine whether they have achieved all that is expected of them. As such the learning outcomes serve as a checklist for learners.

It is customary to preface the list of learning outcomes with an encouraging phrase

Such as

*On completion of this study session you should be able to .....*

or

*By the end of this study session, you should have improved your  
ability to .....*

### 4.2.2 Learning outcomes as statements of intent

In general learning outcomes are expressed in terms of what learners should be able to do, as indicated in Figure 4.

<p>When you have completed this study session, you should be able to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify basis qualities required of a given machine tool</li><li>• classify machine tools according to different methods.</li></ul> <p>By the end of the study session, you should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• list the various forms of energy</li><li>• describe how one form of energy may convert into another</li></ul>
---

Figure 4: Example of learning outcomes expressed as statements of intent.

Here is an example of statements of learning outcomes which have been transformed into statements of intent (Figure 5).

<p><i>Original</i></p> <p>When you successfully complete this study session, you should be able to understand the following -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the national movement and its development</li><li>• the significance of the temperance movement</li></ul>
<p><i>Transformed format</i></p> <p>When you have completed this study session, you should be able to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• describe briefly how the national movement came into being and developed</li><li>• analyze the significance of the temperance movement and list the different organizations that it gave rise to .....</li></ul>

Figure 5: Example of transformation of learning outcomes to statements of intent.

### 4.2.3 Learning outcomes – a guide

The main idea behind writing learning outcome is for your learners to know exactly what you mean, each time they see a learning outcome. In the first place, ask the question, ‘*Whose learning outcomes should they be?*’ ‘*The answer is ‘the learners’* of course. The learning outcomes should be as meaningful and helpful as possible to each learner. We emphasize this point because so often we see learning outcomes that seem designed to help anyone but the learner.

Learning outcomes are designed to

- inform learners exactly what they are to do
- show learners what they can achieve
- tell learners what they have yet to master
- build their self confidence
- demonstrate the need to attempt self assessment questions and activities allow the end product of the package to be measured.

Writing learning outcomes not only helps the learner, but greatly assists the writer as well by

- preventing the writer from going off on a tangent
- setting the best possible framework for the lesson
- helping the writer to design and build in activities, SAQS, TMAs and other assessment criteria
- helping to get started, which is the hardest part of writing for open learning.

### **4.3 Self Assessment Questions**

Self assessment questions inserted at key points in a text can play a vital role in creating a dialogue with the learner.

In using such questions the aim is to produce the written equivalent of a one-to-one tutorial. Therefore, merely giving information is not sufficient. We must aim to draw responses from our learner. To do this, the writer must make sure that the learner is working with him/her. In the tutorial-in-print, the interaction between the tutor and learner has to be ensured. This is why questions, tasks and exercises are a vital part of a distance education lesson.

Therefore, the distance educator builds in questions throughout the text. How frequent they should be will be decided by the individual teacher and of course the quality of the content. Such questions should test the major learning outcomes and draw attention to them. They should allow the learner to think and learn by doing. They check whether the student has understood and is able to apply the ideas to new situations in a practical manner.

They should be followed by feedback so that the learners can monitor their own progress.

#### **4.3.1 Suggestions for generating questions**

Keep the learning outcomes of the session in mind and lead the learner to the expected learning outcome through a number of contributory exercises

- try to develop the questions in such a way that they will flush out any misconceptions
- recall your own experiences in learning that particular topic
- think of the questions and exercises used in the face-to-face situation and adapt them to suit the distance situation
- do not hand out generalizations; get the learner to arrive at the idea.

In developing questions you may ask your learners to

- tick boxes in a list
- answer multiple-choice questions
- underline phrases
- complete a table
- fill in blanks
- write a word/phrase in a box or margin
- write a longer response

- add to a graph, chart, map, etc.
- draw a graph, chart etc.
- make a tape recording
- others?

### 4.3.2 Don'ts

NEVER set vague pseudo-questions which will only make the learner skip them. For example, rather than say *think about*, it is better to say *tick any of the following similar to your thinking*.

NEVER set a question unless you are confident that it can be attempted.

NEVER set a question that is not relevant

I here, and I forget;

I see, and I remember;

I do, and I understand

## 4.4 Activities and projects

There are many ways of involving learners in the process of learning, and we have already seen how questions – ‘in text questions’ and ‘self assessment questions’ – may be used for this purpose. Such questions are often referred to rather loosely as activities, but we will use the term here to describe activities that are not only designed to involve learners in the process of learning, but which are intended to encourage learners to address issues from the world in which they live and work. The intent is to stimulate thinking and to help learners develop knowledge and skills that will help them in their lives and work.

One or two examples might best illustrate the nature of activities. For example, we might design an activity for learners learning about management that asks them to analyse the way in which they manage and asks them to find solutions to perceived problems. Likewise activities might be designed to help learners develop skills in observing, measuring, collecting and interpreting data, identifying problems, hypothesizing solutions and testing out the validity of proposed recommendations. Problem-solving forms of activity such as this may well be linked together into projects to address real problems in a search for possible solutions.

If you would like to learn more about activities and projects you might turn to some of the books on the subject, two of which are listed below.

Lockwood, F. (1992). *‘Activities in Self Instructional Texts’*. London: Kogan Page.

Hendry, J. (1994). *‘Teaching through Projects’*. London: Kogan Page.



## 5. Language

*I write as I walk, because I want to  
get somewhere. And I write as straight,  
as I can just as I walk, because that is  
the shortest way of getting there.*

*H.G. Wells*

Getting there is getting at your learning outcomes of assisting the learner to learn. So what is the secret of writing clearly and plainly? There is no simple solution, but in the paragraphs that follow we will highlight some of the things that will make your texts clearer and easier to digest.

### 5.1 Choice words

Try to avoid surplus words; they would only be a drag on the action. Here are a few examples of how simple words can replace a phrase:

at the present moment in time..... Now  
with a view to/in order to ..... to  
owing to the fact that ..... because  
on the grounds that ..... Because

Using simple familiar words does not mean using inappropriate words. Since English is our second language, we have to pay extra attention to choosing the correct words for a particular context.

Poor expression and ineffective choice of word could be excused in the lecture room because you can correct yourself. In distance education it will cause confusion and loss of faith in the learning process. It may also cause loss of face for the institution. Printed material enjoys a higher degree of permanence than its oral counterpart.

The distance education writer has to **wrestle with words** just as much as the poet does. The English language is rich and that very richness may sometimes make the task of choosing difficult. Exactitude is important. A carelessly chosen word can confuse meaning.

#### 5.1.1 Specialist vocabulary

Specialist vocabulary is not pompous, fashionable or snobbish vocabulary. Sometimes we use the word jargon loosely for that kind of snobbish writing and also for specialist vocabulary. Jargon of the latter type cannot be avoided. The new terms you have to teach will relate to new concepts. There are certain do's and don'ts to remember in using them.

- don't use technical terms unless it is essential
- explain it carefully when you first introduce it
- remind the reader of its meaning at appropriate points
- if an ordinary word takes on a specialist meaning, say so (such instances are common in engineering and economics)

- give a guide to pronunciation if necessary in the ethnic script (an audio tape will make it easier)
- emphasize the new word by typography.

### 5.1.2 Non-sexist language

Sexist language should not be used. It is easy to find substitutes for idioms such as *the man on the street and every man for himself*. Words like *layman*, *middleman* can be replaced by *laywoman* and *middleperson* but can look clumsy. Instead try

Layperson.....	The inexperienced, the non-professional
Middleman.....	intermediary

Care should also be taken to ensure that all materials that are illustrated/represent both sexes in a variety of roles and that stereotyping is avoided.

## 5.2 Sentence structures

Even well chosen words can lose their impact if they are in badly structured sentences.

- Make your sentences short and simple

The following is an example of a long sentence which according to Derek Rowntree (1990, p. 225) “*is too densely packed to allow easy comprehension*”

*The fact that the molecules in a liquid are closer together and thus the attractive forces between them are very much greater than the very minute forces between the molecules of a gas, is responsible for the greater resistance by a liquid to compression.*

Here is the same example rewritten using shorter sentences:

*The molecules in a liquid are closer together than they are in a gas. As a result, the attractive forces between the liquid molecules are much greater than the very minute forces between the gas molecules. Hence, liquids are more resistant to compression than gases.*

- Avoid complex sentences with a number of dependent clauses as far as possible.

Sentences such as the following with a number of clauses can be baffling.

*However, even in contracts of sale, it is up to a court to hold that an obligation which has not been stamped either by statute or previous decisions as a condition is an intermediate obligation, the effect of whose breach depends on whether it goes to the root of the contract.*

Law of Contract: Block 2 Level 4, LWU 2403.

Similarly, this sentence is equally confusing.

*If we are to carry forward the vision of science and technology in the service of mankind, and indeed of all nature, we may do well to study the predicament of Galileo, who had to choose between insufficient resources (time, money) in the comparatively free atmosphere of Venice and abundance of resources with no freedom; not only no freedom but the assistance of the expropriation of his results by the establishment.*

The OU Review of Engineering Technology Vol. 1.No. 1, Jan-Jun 1995

- try to prevent your sentences having more than 20 words. Try to balance your sentences properly in a paragraph without having many sentences of the same length.

### 5.2.1 Active voice and passive voice

It is the verb that carries the bulk of the message in a sentence. Therefore the verb must be accurate and direct. In a self study session we often say that the passive voice is not to be used unless it is essential for a particular purpose.

Instead of saying

*This method is extensively used.*

it is better to say

*We use this method extensively.*

Instead of saying –

A machine tool can *be described as* a power driven apparatus designed to perform *certain* metal removing *operation*.

why not say

A machine tool is a *power driven apparatus* ...

In giving a definition too, it is not necessary to adopt a distant tone by using a passive verb. The passive form indicates formality and distance, which we are trying to avoid.

### 5.2.2 Negatives

Many learners find negative constructions difficult to handle. A double negative for instance could be battling (e.g. ***not undesirable or not too unsatisfactory***) and is better to avoid. If necessary they have to be handled with care.

### 5.2.3 Relative clause

It is common practice today to prefer the contact clause to the relative clause but our learners sometimes take longer to comprehend it. Therefore when a descriptive clause has to be used, the straightforward relative clause is clearer than the contract clause, particularly where the target group has limited command of English as at the foundation level.

Contact clause: The wide variety of geometric conditions *defined in angular units* calls for different angle measuring methods and equipment.

Relative clause: The wide variety of geometric conditions *which are defined in angular units* calls for different angle measuring methods and equipment.

## 5.3 Paragraph structure

In writing for distance learners, we try to keep the paragraphs short. However, the length of a paragraph cannot be decided without paying heed to content. In a unified coherent paragraph, all the sentences must relate to the main idea and they must be linked clearly.

A well organized paragraph is one in which the order, or sequence of sentence is logical. It is important to vary the sentence length and balance your paragraph. If a number of very short sentences are lumped together, the paragraph would not read smoothly.

## 5.4 Spelling

In spelling, the general norm at the OUSL is British spelling. Follow the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* or a recent edition of the shorter *Oxford English Dictionary*. Accuracy is very important particularly because a spelling error can sometimes amount to an error of grammar. Careless proof reading (or no proof reading at all) can result in disaster as you will see in the paragraph given below. Spelling errors can be doubly confusing to learners whose command of English is weak, and therefore cannot spot them as errors.

The following excerpt exemplifies the confusion that careless proof reading can cause. Errors are highlighted.

*Formation of governments based on the political party system **stated** in Sri Lanka in 1948. Since their government often acted as if privileges were meant for the victorious **pay** and its members only, very often the government did not pay any head to the views of the opposition parties in the legislature.*

**Stated** should have been started.

**Pay** should have been party.

## 5.5 Capitalising

Avoid unnecessary capitalisation and be consistent throughout your manuscript. Try to observe the following:

Bachelor of Arts Foundation Course  
 an Open University course  
 BA degree  
 Computer-marked assignment (CMA)  
 Council  
 course team  
 Regional Centre  
 self-assessment question  
 tutor-marked assignment  
 Study Centre  
 this section,  
 this course  
 Volume IV.

## 5.6 Punctuation

Punctuation should be meaningful and correct. Careful punctuation promotes readability.

The short sentence makes punctuation easier. The purpose of punctuation is to help the reader.

- If you want the reader to pause only briefly, insert a comma
- The full stop (.) marks the longer pause at the end of the sentence.
- If you want two short sentences to be linked together, use a semicolon (;) the pause here is longer than that of a comma and shorter than of a full stop
- If you want to give particular emphasis to a word use italics. Authors sometimes emphasise words by using bold letters, but this has a rather intrusive/disruptive effect and detracts from the simplicity and clarity of headings, and is therefore not recommended
- Stars (\*) or bullets (•) can be used as punctuation marks to indicate a list of related items.

## 6. Transformation

Transformation of material for distance learners involves drawing out key ideas and re-expressing them in a way that the learner can easily understand. Whatever the subject may be, writers look up to relevant literature already published. Writers, in addition to their independent ideas, draw ideas relating to the topic under discussion from other authoritative sources. These sources may be books, journals and periodicals that have been published in any part of the world at any time in the past. When ideas are drawn from one or more sources, they need to be re-expressed so that the learner can easily understand.

The OUSL does not have a special category of people working as transformers, nor does it have specially designated instructional designers. A few academic members serve as language editors and they help authors to polish their texts and make sure that there is consistency, but the basic responsibility for transforming text into user friendly study material resides with the author. With the above factors in mind the comments that follow should provide you with some guidance on how you might set about transforming text and includes actual examples of transformations.

### 6.1 How to transform

We said that transformation involves drawing out key ideas, and re-expressing them. Re-expressing is done to ensure ease of understanding. Therefore, transformation is generally a simplifying process. Whatever the language may be, long complex sentences that are sometimes the hallmark of the old fashioned textbook, pose difficulties to the learner. Particularly when the medium is English, which is the second language of the learner, transformation has to be done with an acute awareness of the needs of the target group.

Unfortunately, some OUSL courses contain patches of poorly transformed material and thus consistency is lacking. Instead of drawing out key ideas and transforming them to suit the target group, paragraphs of erudite prose are placed side by side with those written by the writers themselves. Transformation demands time and skill and a student centred approach. A transformer is a skilled communicator who can liaise with any subject specialist. In some open learning institutions editors help the academics with transformation. The transformer has to interact with the academic and produce a draft which satisfies the latter.

At OUSL the writer plays the role of transformer as well. The ideal transformer draws out ideas, makes it one's own and expresses it to suit the learners. It is not very different from what a good lecturer would do, is it?

But then, you have to remember that your learner is unable to question you or tell you "I don't understand". Therefore, when you transform, you might have to change the content substantially while retaining the key concept. You may have to substitute familiar examples for foreign or alien ones. If an unfamiliar example has to be given, you will have to explain at length why it is given and its significance.

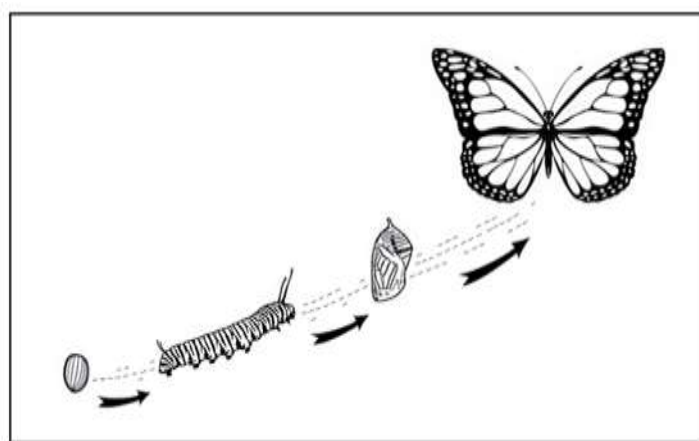
You should not lift whole paragraphs from others, even when they are learner-friendly, because we should not stoop to plagiarism. Remember our own warnings to others regarding copyright.

When you transform material, you might have to do some or all of the following:

- break down long paragraphs into short ones.
- break down long sentences into shorter ones.
- reduce the number of dependent clauses in a sentence.
- substitute simple words for difficult ones.
- include on the spot explanations of new technical terms
- convert formal distant sounding structures to less formal once where possible (such as passive voice to active voice)
- change third person expressions (he, the author) to the second and first persons (you, I/we) suitably
- avoid idiomatic or highly stylistic devices of the language which may be unfamiliar to your learners, particularly if your target group is at foundation level or level three.

## 6.2 Examples of transformed texts

To be effective the written text should undergo metamorphosis (Figure 6).



*Figure 6: Metamorphosis taking place*

The examples that follow (Figures 7 to 11) have been picked out from OUSL instructional material and the transformed versions are attempts of the editorial staff of the Centre for Educational Technology and Media (CETMe).

*Original text*

The three sectors of production are not equally dependent on each other. For instance, food is a basic necessity for man's existence, as such a good supply of this is essential before any form of large scale industrial production could start. We can therefore say that agricultural production either locally or from outside is an essential prerequisite for industrial production. Agricultural production, however is not so dependent on industry. Some basic implements are all that man needs to cultivate. The productivity measured in terms of harvest per agricultural worker could be increased with industrial machinery, but this is not essential. A home is a basic unit for family life formed by most societies found presently, and without its needs satisfied no production is possible. We may look at broad periods, the earliest were the hunter-gatherer societies, where men hunted and women gathered their needs from the surroundings. In these societies humans lived in tribal groups and 'production' was limited to the domestic sector. The second period starting from around 4000 B.C. were agricultural societies, where men grew their food, and life was centered around this activity. From the surplus created there was some industry, largely for religious and artistic purposes and to wage war, but this was limited and only to wage war, but this was limited and only a few people were involved in it.

From: Technology, Society and Environment Level 5, Block 1 MPU 3303, page 28

*Transformed text*

The three sectors of production are not equally dependent on each other. For example, food is a basic necessity for man's existence. Therefore availability of food is an essential prerequisite for industrial production. However, agricultural production is not so dependent on industry as man needs only some basic tools for cultivating.

The productivity measured in terms of harvest per agricultural worker could be increased with industrial machinery. But this is not always essential.

History may be divided into three broad periods based on how man lived. The earliest were the hunter-gatherer societies, where men hunted and women gathered their needs. In these societies humans lived in tribal groups and production was limited to the domestic sector. The second period starting from around 4000 B.C. had agricultural societies. In these societies men grew their food, and life was centred around this activity. The surplus created was diverted to religious and artistic purposes and to wage war. However, such activities were limited and the number of people involved were small. The third period started with the industrial revolution.

*Figure 7: Example of transformed text (1)*

This passage contains a lot of facts and information. But poor expression makes it difficult for the learner to grasp these facts. I have altered certain sentences to present the meaning more clearly. Shorter sentences are introduced to make the learner gather all the facts as quickly as possible. As the passage is too long, I have presented it in three paragraphs to make it more visually interesting to the learner.



*Original text*

## LESSON X

### REMEDIES FOR BREACH OF CONTRACT

Remedies for breach of contract can be considered in two situations.

- (1) Where the breach discharges the contract.
- (2) Where the breach does not discharge the contract.

#### Where the breach discharges the contract

Where a breach of contract is of such a nature that the injured party is justified in treating the contract as discharge, the injured party may take one of two courses. He may, despite the breach, hold the other party to the promise. In this situation while remaining obliged to carry out his obligations under the contract, the injured party can sue the defaulting party for damages for any loss incurred. If the injured party accepts the breach as discharging the contract he is relieved from further liability to perform his obligations. He can sue for recovery of damages or claim on a *quantum meruit* basis for the value of the work that he has already done.

From: Law of Contract, Level 4, Block 2, LWU 2403 Page 59.

*Figure 8: Example of text to be transformed (2)*

In the transformed version I have started with a brief introduction so that the learner will begin with a general idea of what the study session is all about. A bird's eye view helps prepare the learner on what to expect in the study session. This could be a motivating factor for the learner. Here, the introduction, just like the aims, is written from the standpoint of the writer.

Then a set of activities which are both concrete and measurable were framed for the learner. This will tell the learner what specific knowledge, skills and attitudes need to be acquired on completion of the session; what has to be mastered and what is yet to be mastered. This helps build the learner's self confidence.

Subsequently, in the study session proper, I have used the active voice instead of the passive, since it sounds more user-friendly and direct. Rather than

*Remedies of breach of contract can be considered .....*

I have started the study session thus:

*We can consider remedies for breach of contract in two situations.*

Situations 1 and 2 have been indented for emphasis and clarity and also for it to stand out from the main text. This indenting process has been further used for the same purpose.

*Transformed text*

## **Session 10**

### **Remedies for Breach of Contract**

#### **Introduction**

In this study session we will focus on the remedies for breach of contract. We will also consider the rights and duties of the injured party against the defaulting party. We shall look at how differences may occur due to various circumstances and situations. It will also deal with damage and loss of the injured party and mitigation of damages by the plaintiff.

#### **Learning outcomes**

When you have successfully completed this study session, you should be able to:

- analyse the course of action open to the injured party when
  - (a) the breach discharges the contract
  - (b) the breach does not discharge the contract
- explain clearly the recovery of damages under specific headings and also the limitations the injured party faces in claiming damages.
- distinguish between liquidated damages and penalty
- describe the decree of specific performance

We can consider remedies for breach of contract in two situations

- Where the breach discharges the contract
- Where the breach does not discharge the contract

#### **Where the breach discharges the contract**

If the injured party is justified in treating the contract as discharged he may act in one of the two following ways.

- Despite the breach he may hold the other party to the promise.

Here, he has to carry out his obligations under the contract; the injured party can sue the defaulting party for damages for any loss incurred.

- If the injured party accepts the breach as discharging the contract, he does not have to perform his obligation.

Here, he can sue for recovery of damages or claim on a *quantum merit* basis for the value of work he has already done.

*Figure 9: Example of transformed text (3)*

*Original Text*

රජයේ ඉඩම් අයුතු ලෙස ඈඳා ගැනීම සම්බන්ධයෙන්, ඉඩම් පිළිබඳව යටත් විජිත යුගයෙහි දී පනවන ලද පැරණිම ව්‍යවස්ථාවක් වූ 1840 රජයේ ඉඩම්වලට බලයෙන් ඇතුළුවීමේ ආඥාපනතේ ප්‍රතිපත්තිය මෑතකදී පනවන ලද 1979 අංක 7 දරන රජයේ ඉඩම් (සන්නිකය ආපසු ලබා ගැනීමේ) පනතින් පිළිබිඹු වන අතර, එම පනත රජයේ ඉඩම් බල රහිතව සන්නිකව සිටින හෝ ඒ ඉඩම්වල බල රහිතව පදිංචිව සිටින තැනැත්තන් නෙරපීම සඳහා විධිවිධාන සලස්වයි. රජය නිමිකම් ලබා සිටින ඉඩම් වශයෙන් හෝ රජය විසින් පැවරිය හැකි ඉඩම් වශයෙන් රජයේ ඉඩම්වලට අර්ථ දැක්මක් ද මෙම ව්‍යවස්ථාවේ අඩංගු වෙයි (1981 සංශෝධිත 18වන වගන්තිය). ඉඩම් ප්‍රතිසංස්කරණ කොමිෂන් සභාව වෙත ද රබර් පර්යේෂණ ආඥාපනත සහ 1978 නාගරික සංවර්ධන අධිකාරී පනත වැනි ව්‍යවස්ථා යටතේ පිහිටුවන ලද නිශ්චිතව දක්වා ඇති ඇතැම් වෙනත් සංස්ථා මණ්ඩල වෙත ද පවරා ඇති ඉඩම් මෙම අර්ථ දැක්වීමට ඇතුළත් වන්නේ ය (1981 සංශෝධිත 18 වන වගන්තිය (1981)).

From: ඉඩම් නීතිය LWV 3302, පිටුව 2 මට්ටම 5 xviiවන පාඨම

*Transformed text*

රජයේ ඉඩම් අයුතු ලෙස ඈඳා ගැනීම සම්බන්ධයෙන් පනවන ලද පැරණි නීති යටත් විජිත කාලයේ පැවැතිණි. මේවා අතුරෙන් එක් පැරණි ව්‍යවස්ථාවකට අනුව 1840 රජයේ ඉඩම්වලට බලයෙන් ඇතුළුවීමේ ආඥාපනතක් ද විය. මේ බව මෑතක දී පනවන ලද 1979 අංක 7 දරන රජයේ ඉඩම් (සන්නිකය ආපසු ලබා ගැනීමේ) පනතින් පිළිබිඹු වේ. මෙකී පනත රජයේ ඉඩම් බල රහිතව සන්නිකව සිටින හෝ ඒ ඉඩම්වල බල රහිතව පදිංචි වී සිටින තැනැත්තන් නෙරපීම සඳහා විධිවිධාන සලස්වන්නකි.

Figure 10: Example of transformed text (4)

*Original text*

உலகில் உள்ள வளர்ந்தோர்களில் பெருந்தொகையானோர் பெறமுடியாமற் போன கல்வியின் மாற்றுத்திட்டமாக வளர்ந்தோர் கல்வி அமைகிறது. மிகக் குறைந்த மாற்றுத்திட்டமாக பூரணமற்ற கல்வியைப் பெற்ற பலருக்கு அது ஆரம்பக் கல்வியாக அல்லது தொழில்சார்பான கல்வியாக அமைகிறது. ஊயர்தரப் பயிற்சி பெற்றுள்ளவர்கள் மேலும் கற்பதற்கு இதன் மூலம் வழி பிறக்கிறது.

From : Principles of Education (Tamil), Level 3 ESP1305, Lesson 3: Concepts of Education

*Transformed Text*

உலகில் உள்ள வளர்ந்தவர்களில் அதிகமானோர் கல்வி பெறும் சந்தர்ப்பத்தை இழந்தவர்களாவர். வளர்ந்தோர் கல்வி இவர்கள் திரும்பவும் கற்பதற்கு ஒரு சந்தர்ப்பத்தை வழங்குகிறது. பலருக்கு அது ஆரம்பக் கல்வியாக அல்லது தொழிற் கல்வியாக அமைகிறது. ஏற்கனவே கல்வி பெற்றோர் மேலும் கற்பதற்கு அது உதவுகிறது.

Figure 11: Example of transformed text (5)

In both the Sinhala and Tamil examples above, you will notice that the writers have tried to convey the same message in simple language.

## 7. Layout

An effective layout attracts and holds the attention of the reader. It must increase readability, be visually stimulating and motivate the reader. The following are some of the things you will need to think clearly about if you are to achieve this.

### 7.1 Headings

Headings can be very helpful to distance learners. Sub headings break down material into manageable portions. A glance through several headings on a page can alert the learner to the direction of the content.

Start the heading a little way down the page, then leave some more space before starting the text. Avoid placing a heading within a line or two from the bottom of the page. Instead, give it prominence by placing it at the top of the next page.

### 7.2 Numbers

The numbering system used for headings, sub headings, diagrams and charts must convey a logical order. In this book, note how session headings, sub headings and sub sub headings are arranged (up to level 3). The font size also indicates the order of importance. Numbering systems can add clarity to the content of instruction, but can all too readily create confusion.

In the paragraphs that follow you will find two examples of the use of numbering systems within tables of content. Both examples refer to the same study session. The first is a very detailed list of content which was subsequently modified. Examine the original table of contents (Figure 12) for a minute and then without looking back at it say how many key topics are covered within the study session. Now look at the transformed version of the table of contents (below) and again see if you can see at a quick glance how many key topics are addressed within the study session. The second example was designed to highlight in clear and simple terms the main content of the study session with the more detailed content being included in an index at the end of the related unit.

*Original Table of Contents*

**Contents**

About the course		iii
About the volume		viii
<b>Lesson 1</b>	<b>Microorganisms in soil</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Soil as an environment for microorganisms	1
1.2.1	Composition and structure of the Soil	2
1.2.2	Pore-space	3
1.2.3	Soil water and minerals	5
1.2.4	Soil air	5
1.2.5	Soil temperature	6
1.2.6	Soil pH	6
1.2.7	Organic matter	6
1.3	Kinds of microorganisms in soil	7
1.3.1	Bacteria	9
1.3.2	Fungi	10
1.3.3	Algae	13
1.3.4	Viruses	14
1.3.5	Protozoa	15
1.4	Factors influencing the abundance and distribution of microorganisms in soil	15

*Transformed Table of Contents*

**Session 1**

**Micro-organisms in soil**

**Contents**

Introduction, p 1
1.1 Soil as an environment for micro-organisms, p 1
1.2 Kinds of micro-organisms in soil, p 7
1.3 Factors influencing the abundance and Distribution of micro-organisms in soil, p 15
1.4 Methods by which soil micro-organisms Resist unfavourable environmental conditions, p 18
Summary, p 22
Learning outcomes, p 22
Review questions, p 23

*Figure 12: Example of a table of contents before and after transformation*

## 7.3 Visuals

A picture can be worth a thousand words. Use visuals to break up text. It helps to avoid monotony.

E.g. If you need to give figures or statistics in your document, present such information visually as pie charts, graphs or diagrams. Each visual representation must carry a caption and a figure number.

Visual components may include

- Diagrams
- Tables of data
- Graphs
- Sketches
- Photographs
- Cartoons
- Maps.

However, visuals should not be merely for the sake of having visual impact. Each visual component must serve a definite purpose. Use illustrations and activities whenever possible.

Position visuals correctly.

- avoid placing them where you have to turn over a page to read text that relates to them.
- avoid tables of data which continue from one page to another
- make sure illustrations do not get into the wrong page altogether, and with the wrong caption.

A good visual can save you time and energy and deliver the right message to your learners. Visuals are important strategy to help learners understand the content.

- When confronted with page after page of unbroken text, reading looks like hard work. Illustrations help to give the learner a break.
- The learner can glance at the illustration and get an overall meaning.
- Learners can understand things far quicker through visuals, which perhaps is why a picture, it is said, can be worth a thousand words.
- Visuals can add to the meaning of text.

You must decide the size of visuals. The best size for these depends on what you want to bring out. Never leave it to the printer to decide the size of your visuals. He will be more interested in fitting the various elements on the page than with the sense and structure of the material. It is also useful to state quite clearly where each visual should appear.

## 7.4 White space

The portion of a page not occupied by either illustration or copy is called white space. Properly used, white space can give a document an image of elegance and quality. It also helps the printed matter to stand out on the page. White space around and within the text makes it more readable. Thus text should not crowd a page. Your selected style sheet will give you adequate space for margins, space between passages and space around sub headings to improve readability (Figure 13).

## **Session 3**

### **The pressures of management**

#### **Contents**

Introduction  
3.1 Coping with the transition into management, p 30  
3.2 Managing your time, p 34  
3.3 Delegation, p 40  
3.4 Coping with pressure, p 44  
Summary, p 47  
Learning outcomes, p 47

#### **Introduction**

The focus in this part of the course has been on Managing Yourself and Your Job. We have already considered a variety of ways of looking at your job with the aim of providing you with new insights and new perspectives to help you see your work more systematically and analytically. We have also considered some of the factors which can influence your effectiveness as a manager, and we have determined your needs for improvement.

We are now going to highlight some of the problems that managers meet, and we will discuss some of the ways of coping with these problems.

One of the first problems encountered by a new manager is that of coping with the transition into management. The transition from 'being managed' to 'managing' can be a difficult one, and can be eased if those making it have some idea of what is expected of them and of the problems that they might encounter in making the transition. We will begin with a look at this process of transition. You will need to give careful thought to in managing your time. Most managers claim that there is simply not enough time to do everything that they would like to do, so it is important to plan how you can best make use of the time that you have available. You must also think carefully about what you should and should not do yourself. It is all too easy to take on tasks which others could do, leaving yourself with too little time for those tasks which only you can do. It is important to recognize when delegation is not only appropriate but essential.

Inevitably you will encounter pressures and stresses in your work. You will probably find that a certain amount of pressure can be quite stimulating. However, too much pressure can be debilitating, and you need to recognize when pressure is excessive, and find ways of relieving it. Coping with pressure is important, if you are to survive and be effective. These are all practical issues which concern most managers from time to time. The techniques needed to cope with the problems entailed are so fundamental to effective management and so all pervading that it makes sense to deal with them right at the start.

*Figure 13: Some acceptable layouts with white space*

For all the above reasons do not print study materials on poor quality paper, since the white space planned on a page will be contaminated by the images of print showing through the paper from the other side.



## 7.5 Tint

A tinted background may also be used for emphasis.

## 7.6 Font features

Bold fonts of varying size are typically used to indicate the relative importance of related headings.

Keywords in advance organisers identifying the structure of courses, blocks, units and study sessions should be in bold italics.

Keywords within the text may be highlighted by means of *italics* or by the placing of words to be highlighted (and usually indexed) in the adjacent outer margin of the text. The use of underlining or **bold** fonts is not recommended for this purpose. The use of **bold** fonts in particular reduces the effectiveness of headings and the clarity of the related textual structure.

## 7.7 Font size

An open learning system consists of learners belonging to all age groups over 18 years and it caters to a large group of elderly learners. Therefore a readable font size is important. This book has used Times New Roman 11 point as the font. In Figure 14 you will find examples of different font sizes.

This is Times New Roman 10. It could be difficult for some learners to read.

This is Times New Roman 11. It may be better for the body text of your book. You may need a larger font for your headings.

**This is Times New Roman 12 Bold. You may like to use it for headings.**

Figure 14: Example of fonts of different size

## 7.8 Quotations

Long quotations should be indented as in the following example:

*If the majority of the population do not accept the claim that the activities of terrorist groups are legitimate military ones, they are likely to see the group as engaging in wanton violence. One of the characters in Sean O'Casey's play 'The Shadow of a Gunman' described this attitude when talking of armed résistance to the British presence in Ireland.*

*It is the civilians that suffer; when there is an ambush they don't know where to run. Shot in the back to save Ireland. I'm a nationalist myself, right enough ... I believe in the freedom of Ireland, and that England has no right to be here, but I draw the line when I hear about the gunmen dying for the people, when it's the people that are dying for the gunmen!*

Giddens, Antony; Sociology ;( 1989) Polity Press, Cambridge. P

However, short quotations should be within quotation marks.

For example, in writing on the subject of unemployment, Giddens (1989) goes on to describe how an unemployed teacher feels about the subject in the following words. *'It's difficult when they strip away all the things that supposedly hold you together in terms of an identity. Your work, your money, whatever is power to you, whatever is responsibility, whatever means freedom and choice'.*

## 7.9 Bibliography and references

A bibliography or a list of reference is arranged in alphabetical order of authors' names (See OUSL Study Material in Print, Unit II, The House Style, for details)

## 7.10 Index

An index is typically found in textbooks but is less commonly found in course material. An index is given in alphabetical order of subjects with page numbers identifying the pages on which terms appear as indicated in the example that follows.

Activities, 13, 18, 21	Boxes, 20, 47
Aims, 4, 5, 7, 8, 13	Brahmawang, 53
Bibliography, 50	

Preparing an index does not involve much extra work because your selected style sheet will guide you in compiling it. (See OUSL Study Material in Print, Unit II, The House Style, for more information).

## 7.11 Sign-posting

Sign-posts or icons are visual symbols which help learners find their way through the material. The icons included below are approved by the senate for use in OUSL study material.

Additional icons may be developed when required in consultation with the Centre for Educational Technology and Media (CETMe).

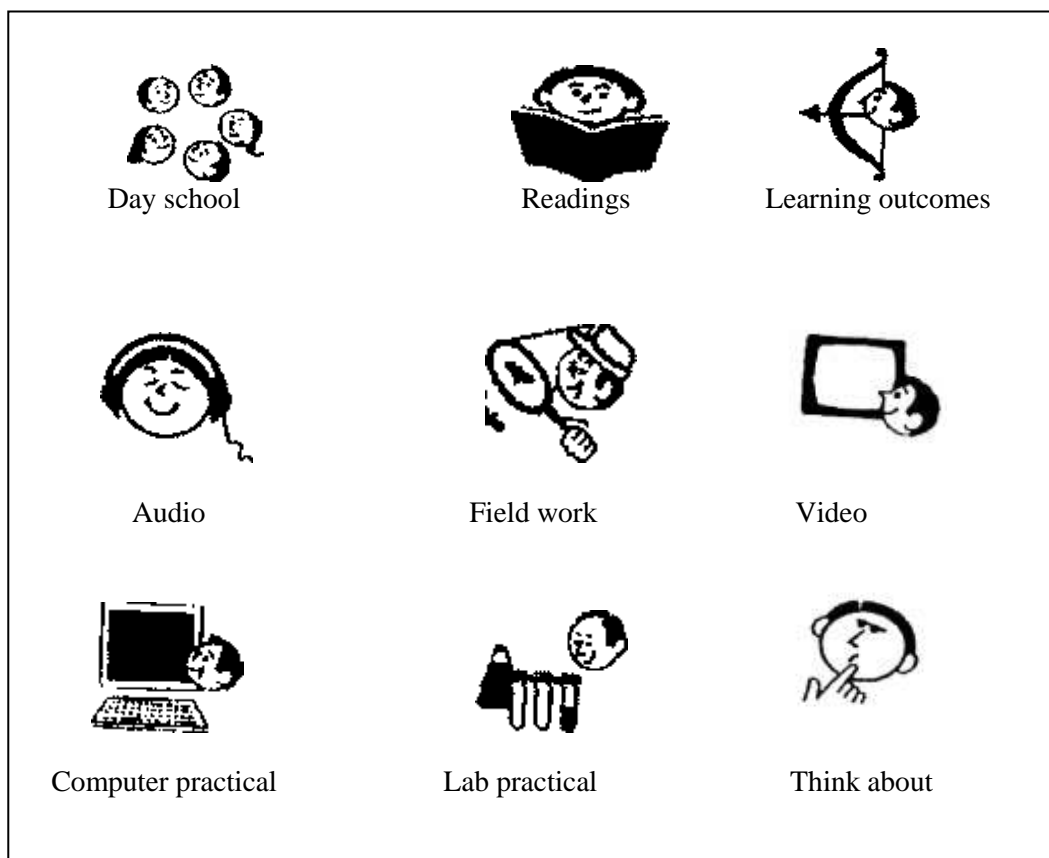


Figure 15: Examples of icons used in OUSL texts

Depending on the need, icons such as this can be developed to aid the learner.

### 7.12 Use of colour

A little colour can make an illustration stand out on a page in an eye-catching manner. In fact adding colour can greatly increase readability. However you may have to weigh the advantages of using colour against extra cost.

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