
UNIT 2 STUDY SKILLS: HOW TO STUDY BETTER

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

Studying, since time immemorial has been the process wherein the teacher 'spoon-fed' the students and they were dictated 'what' to learn and 'when' to learn. The 'how' to learn was never a part of the teaching process. The students did not venture outside the realms of the prescribed boundary of books and the administered course materials. Libraries did exist but the learners were not informed how to make the best use of the libraries. It is in this context that study skills acquire importance.

Study Skills are difficult to define. There is no specific definition for a study skill. The wide variations in the methods and habits of studying practiced by learners make it difficult to define and list specific studying skills. However, in layman's terms we may say 'study skills' are 'the different aptitudes that can be developed in order to improve a learner's capacity to learn'. It is a process of learning. Good use of study skills can lead to one becoming a proficient and effective learner.

Study skills are often divided into two types. One type is to know the sources from where to collate information that are necessary for inclusive learning. For example if you were asked to give a write up on the 'Role of youth in Indian politics', you must know where to find the information and how to incorporate the information acquired for your best learning. For this purpose, you should know which book to read if you are consulting the library, what section in the newspaper to look into if scrutinizing the newspaper, which website to check if browsing through the internet, which teacher to discuss it with etc.

The second type is to know the techniques to use to learn the materials once they are available. You should use specific skills and strategies to organize the materials and write on the information collated.

2.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this unit we attempt to highlight the various ways in which you can improve your learning. We shall try to incorporate Study Skills which aim to help you enhance your learning so as to retain the knowledge acquired. Other related topics like reading and learning styles, how to be an effective communicator as well as an attentive listener and how to write assignments effectively have also been included in this unit. Time management skills have also been briefly discussed.

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Define 'Study Skills';
- Understand the importance of study skills in learning;
- Adopt the best method suited to your learning style;
- Enhance your ability to learn more and become an effective learner;
- Incorporate the study skills for your distance learning;
- Be a good communicator; and
- Manage your study time.

2.2 NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF STUDY SKILLS

Effective study skills must be practiced. It is not enough simply to "think about" studying; you have to actually do it to improve it, and in the process use information from what you do to get better. Often question arises as to why is there a need to know study skills, the answer is simple – to help an individual reach the optimum level of understanding and knowledge through his/her own effort. So now we come to the point where we discuss the significance of teaching a study skill. Many a times, as a learner you have complains about not being able to study properly. For example, a lot of times, you, as a learner have said 'I don't remember what I have studied though I spent the whole day studying' or 'I study best when I am listening to music' etc. You may have heard or made statements of this kind. The fact of the matter is that difficulties while studying is very common with every individual, a problem for you may not be for the other or vice-versa. This problem of studying arises more so in the realm of higher education. This is because higher level of education requires more 'active studying' than studying at school where we are spoon fed with information by the school teachers. The higher the educational level the more active studying on the part of the individual learner is required. The learner is expected to develop his/her own study strategies or habits and study on his/her own. This independent studying becomes difficult if the learners have no idea about the study skills and therefore it is recommended that study skills be taught at the early level of education.

When a learner does not develop his/her study skills, chances are that it may lead to either poor study habits or wrong concepts pertaining to studying. Knowledge of study skills would help the learners spend lesser amount of time in studying and learning more. It is difficult to make an exhaustive inventory of skills to be taught. Nevertheless, we have attempted through this unit, to list a few essential skills that a learner should acquire to study independently and effectively. However, one must remember that there is no simple and concrete formula that will apply to all learners; it may differ from learner to learner. The following are discussions with a focus on study skills.

Check Your Progress 1

- Notes:** a) *Space is given below for your answer.*
b) *Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.*

Write down five reasons why you need to know about Study Skills?

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2.3 STUDY SKILLS: BUILDING GOOD HABITS

Just like not all fingers of a hand are same, no two people study the same way. For instance, the method of studying adopted by person X may not always work for person Y. However, there are some general techniques that may result in learning by both. For some, a particular subject may be interesting and that studying it is not work but pleasure whereas for others it may be an effort to study that particular subject. Everyone is different, and for some students, studying and being motivated to learn comes naturally. As a student your learning is dependent on your ability to study effectively and efficiently. As mentioned, study skills must be worked upon to improve it. Just lying around and thinking about it is not going to help you learn. In order to develop effective study skills you should keep the following in mind:

Preparing a schedule

Before you think about the process of studying, you must make a schedule. If you don't have a schedule or plan for studying, then you will not be able to deal with the time that you have in your hand and allocate timings for different subjects. It is most important that once you prepare the study schedule you stick to it and follow it. For example, prepare a study schedule day-wise, starting from Monday or week-wise whichever is convenient.

When to study?

The problem of when to study is vital. It is suggested that you study when you have no tension or anxiety about anything and you are relaxed and feel free to study.

Where to study?

Many of you may be faced with the problem of where to study. The answer to this question is simple: you can study anywhere! The place you choose to study should be suitable for your learning and be free from any kind of distraction.

In order to build an effective way to study it is also pertinent that you know the different strategies that you can use to improve your learning. The different strategies are: thinking skills, SQ3R method, note-taking skill, outlining text etc. We shall discuss them in detail.

Thinking Skills

Everybody has the ability to think. We may think about different things at the same time or may stick to only one aspect of thought. Everyone has thinking skills, but few use them effectively. Effective thinking skills cannot be studied like mathematical formulae, but must be built up over a period of time. One must develop his/her thinking skills gradually and use it for his/her learning purpose.

SQ3R

SQ3R stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review. This is a five step strategy appropriate for all subjects and for all classes. This will encourage learners to become independent in reading study materials. We shall discuss more in detail about SQ3R strategy in the section on reading skills.

Note-Taking

Note-taking will not be useful if one does not know how to take notes. It must be learned and refined. The most important thing to remember while note-taking is to make sure the writing is legible because if you cannot read your own writing after taking down the notes, it will be of no use to you.

Highlighting text

It has been described by many students that they are able to learn faster the text which has been highlighted. On the contrary underlined texts are not easily remembered. Hence, while reading a text, one should in the process keep on highlighting a text which is important.

2.4 EFFECTIVE LISTENING

Listening is very much an active process of selecting and interpreting information from auditory and visual clues (Richards 1983; Rubin 1995). In the distance education system listening is crucial for communication with regard to attending face-to-face tutorial, academic counselling, teleconferencing, listening to audio-programme, attending orientation programmes and so on.

Learning requires listening and listening well helps in communicating or expressing ourselves better. Learning effectively requires effectively listening which will in turn improve our communication skills. Most of you studying in the education system—conventional or distance education are not very good listeners. You allow yourselves to drift away from what is being taught. Most students make the mistake of thinking that hearing and listening is the same thing but the truth is

that they are entirely different. It is not difficult to improve our listening ability. The following are ways to improve the ability to listen:

Look out for meaning

During academic counselling or in a classroom teaching, when the academic counselor/teacher is teaching, pay attention not only to the words being spoken but to the thoughts and messages they convey. Try to identify the main idea and the context in which the words have been spoken. Listen attentively to the examples and description that follow the words.

Note-taking

If you just hear what your academic counselor/teacher is saying then you may note down points which will not make any sense later on. It is therefore, suggested that while the teaching takes place listen carefully and note down only the important points which you will be able to put together later on. For example, taking long notes is not going to be helpful because while trying to take notes of whatever the teacher is saying you will lose out on the other important points. Therefore, take notes of relevant points only.

Concentrate

It is quite normal for a student to wander away from the main topic that is being taught in class because he/she is unable to comprehend it. This happens because the student is allowing himself/herself to drift away from the class and not concentrate on the topic. The student hears what the teacher says but s/he does not process the information s/he hears due to lack of concentration. Effective listening requires that you concentrate and pay attention.

Be prepared

It is difficult to listen and concentrate when you are not prepared for a class. It is pertinent that you read the topic that has already been discussed in the class and come prepared for the same class the next day. This way it will be easier for you to concentrate in the class, participate actively in the class and better understand what is being taught.

Be interested

If you do not show any conscious effort of being interested in the teaching then you will not understand what the teacher is explaining. At this time you will just be hearing and not listening. As a consequence you tend to miss out on the significant content of the topic and details being addressed. As a student you should decide to be interested in the subject matter being addressed by the teacher. This will help you to listen more intently and effectively.

Focus on the speaker

You should look at the person who is delivering a lecture. You should be able to pick up non-verbal signs that the teacher sends out when s/he speaks. This way your ability to listen will improve and you may be able to avoid any kind of distraction.

Develop a rationale for your listening

List out your expectations from the class session and what you hope to learn during the class teaching. Listen for these things as your teacher talks. For example, be prepared for the class and when the teacher talks about certain issues which you are unsure of, take note of the same.

Don't be judgmental

Listen to what your teacher has to say; don't enter the class with a fixed opinion on the topic to be discussed. It is good to question as long as you remain open to the other viewpoints as well.

Check Your Progress 2

- Notes:** a) Space is given below for your answer.
b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Do you think, as a learner, effective listening skills will help you to learn more? Why?

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2.5 EFFECTIVE READING

The SQ3R method has been a proven way to sharpen study skills. SQ3R stands for the initial letters of the five steps that should be taken in studying a text. The five steps are:

1. Survey
2. Question
3. Read
4. Recite
5. Review

SQ3R is a study technique, which was discussed by Robinson in 1961. This technique was modified into a system called SQ4R by Thomas and Robinson, 1972 (Glyn and Muth, 1994). Later, it was further modified by other researchers as SQ5R, SQ5WR and so on. We shall discuss them in detail but first let us discuss SQ3R in the given order.

Survey – It refers to a quick glance through the chapter of the course work. For example, after receiving the study materials you tend to open the materials and give a glance to the contents. This is known as survey. You may see how the programme has been divided into courses, how many courses are there and how many blocks are there in each course etc. This survey helps you to know the structure of the programme that you have opted for. Also, a survey of the 'contents'

tells you what topics are being dealt with. A survey of the index will tell you what contents are present in the course materials, the units etc. It also helps you to save time by directing you straight to the relevant pages. When you survey a chapter or a book, it helps you to grasp the main ideas contained in the book or chapter.

Question – There is a purpose why you choose to read the particular content of the course material. You ask yourself certain questions regarding the content such as, 'Are the contents worth reading'? 'Will the contents be relevant to my field'? 'How much time will I take to complete this Unit'? The important things to learn are usually answers to questions. Questions that you ask yourself should lead you to the five Ws (what, why, when, who and where) of study content; it will also explain the 'how' of a particular subject. When you ask yourself questions regarding the content of the course material as you read or study, the answers that you draw from these questions will facilitate you to make sense of the material and remember it more easily because the process will give you an idea about the contents of the subject. Don't be afraid to write your questions in the margins of your course materials as these questions will further enhance your learning as you answer them when you read along.

Read – Reading requires an active participation: it is NOT just running your eyes over the contents of the book. You as a learner need to develop a critical mind so as to answer questions you have asked yourself in relation to the contents of the subject matter. Reading self-instructional materials is different from reading a book, magazine, newspaper etc. Self-instructional materials are written in an interactive style and so you should prepare yourself to interact with the teacher that has been in-built into the course material. You should not read fast but instead read slowly so as to grasp the main ideas contained in the material. Be sure to read everything, including tables, graphs and illustrations as they can at most times convey an idea more effectively than the written text. However, at the reading stage it is neither advisable to make notes nor underline words or phrases. At this stage one must just read to get the idea and after reading through the entire text start underlining or marking the important points.

Recite – Reading a text is not the final step in learning; instead, it is the first step. Units/chapters that have been read need to be retained. Retention of what has been read will help you to improve the learning vis-à-vis improvement in concentration, enable you to ask questions pertaining to the text and develop a critical thinking. After reading through the whole unit you must try to recite or mentally recollect the key information and concepts. This will help you to remember what you have read. Try and develop an overall concept of what you have read in your own words and thoughts. The best possible way is to connect what you have read to the things that you already have knowledge of.

Review – It is a quick repeat of the other four steps: namely, Survey, question, read and recite. It is a review of what you as a learner have achieved while reading the text. During review, you should also go over the notes that you have written to help clarify points that you didn't understand. The best time to review is when you have finished studying the whole block. Waiting until just before the examination to begin the review process is not helpful.

SQ4R Technique

SQ4R stands for the initial letters of the six steps that should be taken in studying a text. The six steps are:

1. Survey
2. Question
3. Read
4. Reflect
5. Recite
6. Review

This SQ4R technique modified by Thomas and Robinson in 1972 added **Reflect** as a new step along with all the other steps in SQ3R technique. Let us understand what Reflect means. In general, it is good to reflect upon certain things similarly, while learning one should also reflect on the study materials as it helps to develop more ideas about the content and the meaning of the text. Reflecting helps you to remember information that is contained in the text. You may start reflecting on the content of the text during the second phase of your reading the text. While reading try to find the relation between what you have read and what you already know. This will help you to retain what you have learnt as it is easier to remember information that is meaningful.

SQ5R Technique

SQ5R stands for the initial letters of the seven steps that should be taken in studying a text. The seven steps are:

1. Survey
2. Question
3. Read
4. Reflect
5. Record
6. Recite
7. Review

Let us understand what **Record** means. While reading there may be some sentences or paragraph or even certain words which are difficult to understand or you do not know the meaning of. To help clarify such doubts you should note down and make a record for further reference. You may also record certain key concepts by underlining them or taking notes.

SQW5R Technique

SQW5R stands for the initial letters of the eight steps that should be taken in studying a text. The steps are:

1. Survey
2. Question

3. Write
4. Read
5. Reflect
6. Record
7. Recite
8. Review

Here, the letter W stands for **Write**. When you survey the text which you are reading it is certain, there will be some questions you may ask yourself regarding the text. Initially you may not have the answer to the questions and so writing down the questions will be vital for reference later on. As you go on reading the text the questions may be answered. If you do not derive any answers from the text then you may consult your academic counselor with regard to the questions and doubts you have written down.

Check Your Progress 3

- Notes:** a) Space is given below for your answer.
b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Explain the SQ3R method in your own words.

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2.6 EFFECTIVE WRITING

As a distance learner, one of the important aspects of your learning is writing. Having good writing skills will enable you to communicate effectively with your teacher. Since, assignments and one-way counseling are some of the methods through which you communicate with your teacher; the ability to write well becomes an added advantage in the distance learning system. As mentioned, there is no sure shot method for developing the perfect writing because there is no perfect writing. Writings which are able to effectively communicate what we want to say to the receiver *are* perfect writing. Following are some suggested ways to improve writing:

1. **Identify target:** Before you actually write anything, first identify to whom the writing is directed to. If the writing, for example, is for a teacher and you are needed to provide answers to the questions then you will have to write accordingly.
2. **Decide Content:** Once you identify your target, you can begin writing. Before writing always assume that the reader does not know anything, this will help you to write briefly and also effectively.

3. **Create an outline:** This is mainly helpful if you're writing a longer document such as a report, presentation, or speech. Creating an outline of what you want to write assists you in identifying which steps to take in which order, and they help you break the task up into manageable pieces of information.
4. **Structure your content:** The writings should be as "reader friendly" as possible. Never forget to use headings, subheadings, bullet points, and numbering whenever possible to break up the text. If you break up your writing into headings, bullet points etc., it will make it an easy read irrespective of the heavy text.
5. **Avoid mistakes:** When we talk about mistakes in writing, it is commonly associated with grammatical mistakes. Making unwanted grammatical mistakes will make you look unprofessional and will further give the impression that you have not read anything. More so, grammatical mistakes in writing can give an entirely new meaning to what you want to convey through your writing. For example there is a difference between she/see, there/their and than/then etc.
6. **Proofread:** Always remember to read once again what you have written. This will result in finding out the mistakes in the text, if any. Do not rush through your text while proof reading as you may miss some mistakes. Proofread twice—once for grammatical and spelling mistakes and the second one for content. The best way to proofread your writing is to give it to someone who has no clue about what you are writing. This way you will avoid any bias that may creep in.

2.7 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

We have discussed about various ways by which you could improve your study skills. More so, we tried to list out few steps through which you can enhance your listening and reading skills. Remember, these skills will only be effective if you follow them. It is important for a learner to know that adapting to a good reading and listening pattern would simultaneously result in an effective communication skill of the self. The ability to communicate effectively is one of the most important skills you can have, whether you are clarifying your doubts to your teacher, discussing ideas to your boss, or simply sending an official email or leaving a message. The ability to communicate is the primary factor that distinguishes human beings from animals. And it is the ability to communicate well that distinguishes one individual from another. What you say and how you say, will talk a lot about yourself. Effective communication is all about conveying your messages to other people clearly and unmistakably. It is also about receiving information that others are sending to you, with as little distortion as possible and always remember practice makes a man perfect. Though there are no set rules that can be followed to achieve good communication skills, the following are a few suggested ways by which you can try to develop your communication skills:

1. **Listen attentively:** If you listen carefully to the things and issues that are happening around you, you will be able to communicate effectively with your audience. Whenever a person speaks always listen to what he/she is saying and do not think about what you

are going to say next when the other person stops talking. Truly effective communication goes both ways. While it might be difficult, try really listening to what your partner is saying. Just hear them and converse back what they are saying so they know you have heard.

2. **Develop reading habit:** Once you develop the habit of reading and applying thoughts to what you read, your communication skills will improve. Reading helps you to know what is happening around you and when you communicate the same you will be able to provide exact details as well as authentic examples of the same.
3. **Maintain eye contact:** Whenever you interact with a person or more never forget to maintain a good eye contact. This is vital as it keeps all those present involved in the conversation. It keeps them interested and on the alert, during the course of the conversation.
4. **Begin with short messages:** While communicating it is important to begin with short and precise message. If your message is too lengthy, disorganized, or contains errors, then the message will be misunderstood and misinterpreted. Offering too much information too fast tends to create problem for the receiver.
5. **Ask questions:** As a person conversing with another person, you should never be afraid to ask relevant questions. The more questions you ask the better clarity you have regarding the issue you are talking about. This will give you the confidence and the ability to speak more effectively to the issue discussed and putting your points across.
6. Speak clearly enough to be heard. Whenever you speak, speak in such a manner that you are heard. Use appropriate tone and volume depending on the number of people you are interacting with. Using proper tone helps ensure that your listeners hear exactly what you are saying, and reduces possibilities for misunderstanding.

2.8 IMPROVING VOCABULARY AND IDENTIFYING LEARNING STYLE

In education, it is evident that your teachers or the others will have certain assumptions about your learning and your knowledge about certain issues depending on the kind of words that you use to express yourself. Developing a good vocabulary will assist you further in your personal as well as professional field.

There are many ways through which you as a learner can improve your vocabulary. The first and most important step is to start reading regularly. Very often it is seen that as students we do not read our subject materials and leave it aside only for last minute review. This should not be so. One should read the text regularly to develop a good vocabulary about the subject material. One may also read related novels or other literature. However, just reading through the text will not improve your vocabulary; for this, you must figure out the

meaning of the difficult words that you may have come across. The easiest way is to look them up in a dictionary.

Secondly, while reflecting on a text you have been asked to relate the sentences or words to what you already know as it is easier to retain information that is personally meaningful to you. Similarly, in order to improve your vocabulary you should attach personal meaning to the words that you are learning. One of the easiest ways to make a word personally meaningful is by associating it with familiar things, people, or events.

The third method through which you may develop vocabulary is by repeating the words over and over again so as to memorize the words. Taking a note of the words separately will also help you in reading the words. But, just reading the words or memorizing them will not help in building your vocabulary. The words that you memorize have to be explored for the many meanings it may have and then used those in sentences accordingly.

Identifying learning styles

There are a number of different learning styles and learning preferences. There is neither a right mix nor is there fixed learning style for every individual. One style may be suitable for a person while the same style may not at all be suitable to others. Let us now discuss the different learning styles that one may use to derive more learning. The different learning styles are:

- Visual Learning Style
- Auditory Learning Style
- Tactile Learning Style

Visual Learning Style: Visual learners are those who are able to grasp more and understand the meaning of the content in the text when presented in a visual format, i.e. pictures, diagrams or videos. Visual learners learn best when the concept of a study material is presented to them in the form of a visual presentation. When studying visual learners create diagrams and use pictures to understand and remember concepts and ideas. For example, when a certain topic is presented with the help of illustrations, the learner learning is more comfortable.

Auditory Learning Style: Auditory learners learn best by participating in class discussion, listening to the lecture or participating in group learning process etc. Auditory Learners are able to learn, understand and retain information better when they hear it rather than see it. For example, when a teacher delivers lectures or a person listens to an audio tape on a particular subject, he/she is able to learn more.

Tactile Learning Style: Tactile Learners, also commonly referred to as Kinesthetic Learners, are hands-on learners. They learn best when they are able to physically participate directly in what they are required to learn or understand. For example, in a lab when a person does the experiment through touching and feeling he/she is able to learn more.

There are other learning styles which may also assist you in your study. They are: Logical Style, Social Style and Solitary Style.

Logical Style: There are some learners who are able to retain their learning by 'doing' and not by reading; they follow the logical learning

style. This is different from tactile learning style. For example: if you like to involve yourself in mathematical reasoning or use your brain to analyse certain problems then you probably belong to the logical learning style.

Social Style: A social learner is able to communicate well with others and his/her learning is enhanced through verbal or non-verbal communication with the others. Social learners are able to derive more learning in a group setting where discussion takes place and there is ample scope for debate on the particular topic. For example, a classroom setting where the teacher delivers a lecture and there is possibility of countering what is being taught.

Solitary Style: Learners who tend to learn more when they study alone are solitary learners. They cannot learn when they are in a group setting unlike the social style learners; instead, they prefer places that are quiet and free from any distractions. For example, if you are alone in a quiet room and working through possible solutions and analyzing the contents by yourself.

You might be wondering why is it important for you to identify and understand your learning style. Awareness of your learning style is vital to your study and retention of your knowledge acquired. When you are able to make out your learning style it will be favorable for you to assume that particular style for continuing with your learning as it will facilitate you in understanding and analyzing what has been studied and thereby helping you in retaining the subject matter and improving your knowledge. Also, identifying the learning style and preferences that best suit you is an important part of developing effective studying.

Check Your Progress 4

- Notes:** a) Space is given below for your answer.
b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Identify your learning style and elucidate on why the particular style suits you best.

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2.9 STUDY SKILLS AND DISTANCE TEACHING/LEARNING

Here in this section we shall see how study skills are essential for an open distance education system. Many a time, as a learner you might wonder will study skills help you in a system in which the teachers and the learners are at a distance for most of the teaching/learning process. The answer is yes! In fact, in such a system the study skills acquire more importance and it is but apt for the learners to develop their study skills so as to learn efficiently and more effectively what has been taught to him/her through the self learning materials.

**Learner Support:
Development of Skills**

Study strategies/methods play a vital role in distance education. As mentioned before, the learner, being away from the teacher, depends mainly upon his/her course materials which are self instructional and if he/she does not develop proper study skills, then he/she is certainly at a disadvantage. A distance learner also depends upon audio-visual materials. But how effectively he/she infers meaning out of the content primarily depends on how he/she has developed his/her study methods. It is also assumed that the distance learners are mostly adults. Hence, the belief is that they know how to study. But this is often not the correct situation. Many distance learners, for one reason or the other, drop out of courses and one of the main reasons so to cite, is the lack of effective study strategies.

The issue that arises now is how to help the distance learners develop study strategies? The answer lies within the text of the distance education course materials, which are self instructional in nature. The design of the materials helps the learners to develop skills for studying. The study materials have questions that are directed to the learners. The use of these questions that draws out higher level of understanding of the text/content is regarded as one of the important study strategies. In the distance teaching materials the questions that enable the learners to develop skills to critically analyse the text and also note down important points and at the same time derive ways to solve a problem and evaluate the text are either merged into the text and/or asked in the form of 'Check Your Progress' and assignments. For distance learners who are following the visual learning style, there are graphs, illustrations, diagrams, charts etc. in the learning materials. Such kinds of non-verbal aids are more useful in helping the learner grasp the meaning of the content of the text.

The distance learning materials also use conjunctive features such as, 'however', 'moreover', etc. to ensure easy reading and better understanding. These conjunctives help the learners understand easily where the writer contrasts or supports a statement or connects one sentence with a preceding sentence. The glossaries in the teaching materials prepare the learner for any problem that he/she may encounter while reading the text. It may also explain particular concepts which the learner may have doubts about while reading the texts. Glossaries that are at the end of the texts are known as 'reference' glossaries. They inform the learners the various books that have been referred while writing the text.

The distance learning materials have blocks which are divided into units which are further divided into sub-themes for the easy comprehension of the learner. It also contains a brief introduction in relation to what the learner will read and learn about while going through the text. The 'Introduction' also sums up what has been learnt in the previous unit while introducing the learner to the new unit. This helps in building a bridge between two units. Such efforts, in turn, help in creating rationality more effectively in regards to the subject content. The use of 'Let Us Sum Up' is self-explanatory. They are introduced within the text when a move is made from a particular topic to another. Sum-ups are also used at the end of each unit to help the learners put together what have already been read. Moreover, 'Sum-ups' facilitate the learners to grasp the main idea presented in the unit without reading through the whole unit. The most effective method of distance education materials is that it is writing in a narrative style. It makes the learner feel that they are constantly

interacting with the teacher. This style also helps the learners to read better and retain better what is in the text. Incorporating the features that have been discussed above help the distance learners to develop many important study skills but then, incorporating these features in the distance materials alone will not improve the study skills of the learners. It has to be practiced by the learners through serious and systematic efforts.

2.10 TIME MANAGEMENT

Personal time management skills are essential skills for learners especially in the distance education system. It is important because there is no teacher to guide you through the hours of study or no supervision over what you do. You are in control of the time you have at your hand and if you use the time effectively whether you are employed, a student in some other university, a home-maker or even a fresh student, if you do not use the time appropriately, you will never achieve your learning goals. People who use time management techniques go on and become achievers in all walks of life. Placed below are some time management techniques which may be useful for you:

- 1) **Set a goal:** To start managing time effectively, you need to set goals. Without goal setting, you tend to idle away your time on issues which may not be important at all. Setting goals in the initial stage will save an enormous amount of time, effort and frustration in the future.
- 2) **Prioritize:** Whenever you are undertaking new assignments be it studying, writing notes, preparing proposals always prioritize your work according to the most important. Never keep aside what is more important and do the less important ones. This will help to achieve your learning objectives.
- 3) **Have a plan:** Having a plan will enable you to know what to do to minimize the unwanted interruptions you may face during the day. It is accepted that as a distance learner you are performing a multiple role, hence to have a stable study time it is advisable that you have a plan so that your study time/hour does not get affected.
- 4) **Don't put off work:** Putting-off learning for a later day will only lead to more frustration as your work will pile up and that any task seems impossible. Once you delay learning for few hours or a day, it will continuously lead to less time for your other learning. Avoid delaying your work; stick to the plan that you have charted for yourself and only then you will achieve your learning goal.
- 5) **Prepare a time-table:** A good time-table will enable you to achieve your goals as per the priorities set up by you and facilitate learning according to your plan. Creating a good time-table includes being aware of the factors that affect the time you have for learning. An effective time-table includes scope for interruption, and unforeseen event that otherwise may cause disorder with your learning objectives. By creating such a time-table, that reflects your priorities as well as supports your personal life, you will be able to balance your learning goals as well as your personal life.

- 6) **Learn to say 'Yes' and 'No':** When we cannot say 'No' to other things which we will not be able to deliver, we create the expectation among others and in turn put the pressure on ourselves. Learn to make quick decisions and say 'Yes' or 'No' instead. This honesty will be appreciated and you will also not waste your time. This way, you can stick to your schedule and achieve your learning objectives.

2.11 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have tried to define study skills though it is not possible to conclusively define it. The unit has attempted to highlight the important study skills which a learner may incorporate while studying also, information has been given on the learning styles as well as ways to improve one's vocabulary while learning. The unit has also dealt with why study skills are important for an open distance education system and the roles of a distance learner in developing their study skills. Emphasis has also been laid on the time management skills for learners, especially distance learner so that they are able to coordinate their time for proper learning. Improving one's communication and listening skills have also been discussed for effective learning. A good learner follows strategies that suit him/her for learning, though there is no fixed thumb rule to be a good learner.

2.12 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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2.13 FEEDBACK TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

Check Your Progress 1

It is important for every learner to know about the study skills because these skills will (a) help a learner reach the optimum level of understanding and knowledge through his/her own effort, (b) motivate

the learner to develop independent style of learning, (c) no knowledge of the study skills will lead to either poor study habits or wrong concepts pertaining to studying, (d) knowledge of study skills will help the learner spend less time in studying and learn more, and (e) study skills will enable the learner to engage in active studying rather than rote learning.

Check Your Progress 2

Yes, as a learner effective listening skill will help me to learn more. This is possible as listening well help in communicating or expressing ourselves better. When we listen to the talks during class we are able to concentrate properly on the subject matter and the concentration makes it possible for us to take proper notes. When the teacher speaks and we listen, we are able to look out for meaning of the contents and this helps us to understand the subject matter more effectively. All these then, help us to be prepared for further exams.

Check Your Progress 3

The SQ3R method is related to the reading skill. The knowledge of the SQ3R method will introduce the learner to the subject and also assist in his/her learning process.

The SQ3R stands for:

Survey: This is the process whereby we glance through the curriculum and get an idea of the content in the course work after we receive the course materials.

Question: Here, the learner asks him/her-self once again, whether the course will be beneficial for him/her. When questions regarding the content of the course material are answered it will facilitate the learner to make sense of the material and remember it more easily because the process will give him an idea about the contents of the subject.

Read: While reading, the learner develops a critical mind thereby answering the questions that have been asked before. However, reading is not just going through the texts; it involves understanding of what has been read. In distance education, the teacher is inbuilt into the contents and hence, the materials have to be read slowly and carefully to impart better understanding.

Recite: Going through what has been read will enable the learner to develop a clear understanding of the texts. After reading through the required content, the learner should attempt to remember what has been already read; this will help him/her to develop an overall concept of the subject and lead to improvement in concentration.

Review: It is going through the entire process of survey, question, read, recite and review. This process helps the learner to clarify certain issues related to the text. The best time to review is after reading through the entire course and before the exams.

Check Your Progress 4

You may write the answer to this question as per your own learning style and suitability.