UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS

A 2-DAY TRAINING FOR PERSONAL ASSISTANTS FOR EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE

PROFESSIONAL WRITING SKILLS:
PLANNING, **STRUCTURING** AND **EDITING OF DOCUMENTS**

" ... **Let us make** **man** in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion..."

"...**We created** **man** **from sounding clay, from mud moulded into shape...**"

WHAT IS A DOCUMENT?

❖   A piece of written, printed, or electronic matter that provides information or

evidence or that serves as an official record.

Forms of Document

- Physical (printed)

- Virtual (electronic)
  - Format
    - ✓ Word
    - ✓ Excel
    - ✓ Jpeg
    - ✓ Access

Types of Documents

❖   Structured
  ✓ Tabular documents, lists, forms, or scientific charts,

❖   Semi structured
  ✓ Books and Newspaper article

❖   Unstructured
  ✓   Handwritten note

Documents are sometimes classified depending on the level of "sensitivity":
  ➢   Secret,
  ➢   Private,
  ➢   Public.

WHAT IS PLANNING?

WHAT IS PLANNING

- **Come let us make man in our own image**

Planning is the process of deciding in detail how to do something before you actually start to do it.

Collins COBUILD Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Copyright © HarperCollins Publishers

**Planning is the act of deciding how to do something**

Cambridge dictionary

Importance of Planning

Planning is the **fundamental** management function, which involves: **deciding beforehand**, *what* is to be done, *when* it is to be done, *how* it is to be done and *who* is going to do it

- It bridges the gap from where the organization is to where it wants to be.

- The planning function involves establishing goals and arranging them in logical order.
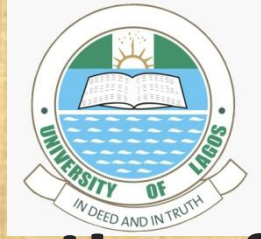
Scope, Purpose and Details of a Document

Planning a Document

- Determine your document's purpose.
- Plan your document's design to support this purpose.
- Identify your document's audience.
- Identify your audience's expectations.
- Decide what format your document will require (include layout, margins, line spacing, font styles, etc.).

Presentation of Document

Outlines and **maps** are two different ways of representing the structure and plan of your document.

1. **Outlines** use a hierarchical format, where you list the main points, subpoints, and details of your document in order of importance and relevance.

2. **Maps** use a graphical format, where you draw the main points, subpoints, and details of your document as nodes and connect them with lines or arrows to show the relationships and flow.

Both outlines and maps have advantages and disadvantages, depending on your preferences, goals

How to create an outline?

Creating an outline requires you to:

i. identify the purpose and audience of your document,

ii. brainstorm the main points, subpoints, and details, and

iii. organize your ideas into a logical order. You can use a numbering or lettering system to indicate the levels of hierarchy.

Once you have completed the outline, review and revise it to ensure it is clear, consistent, and complete. This will help you decide what information to include and how to present it.

How to create a map?

Creating a map involves several steps, beginning with:

i.   identifying the main topic or theme of your document.

ii. Brainstorm the main points, subpoints, and details of your document, and

iii. arrange them around the central node.

You can use shapes, colors, or sizes to differentiate the levels of hierarchy. Connect your ideas with lines or arrows to show relationships and flow. Finally, review and revise your map to ensure it is clear, coherent, and comprehensive.

How to choose between outlines and maps?

When it comes to deciding between outlines and maps to structure and plan your document, there is no definitive answer. It depends on personal preferences, goals, and the type of document.

Generally speaking, outlines are better for those who prefer linear and sequential thinking and writing, need to follow a specific format or style guide, or want to create a precise plan.

Maps are better for those who prefer creative and flexible thinking and writing, want to explore different connections and perspectives, or want to create a visual and holistic plan.

How to use outlines and maps effectively?

Outlines and maps are not static or final products, but rather dynamic and evolving tools that can help you structure and plan your document

To use them effectively,

i. Start early when you have an idea or assignment for your document. This will guide your research and writing process.

Ii. Additionally, be flexible to changes and adjustments as you discover new information, develop new insights, or encounter new challenges.

iii. However, remain consistent with one method unless you have a good reason to change. Finally, make sure your outline or map reflects your main points, subpoints, and details clearly and concisely.

- (of   Document structuring **involves deciding the order and grouping** sentences in a generated text.

*" It is the organization of a document into graphical constituents like **sections, paragraphs, sentences, bulleted lists, and figures**; it also covers some features within sentences, including quotation and emphasis".*

Importance of structure

Structure helps to make your ideas clear, guides the reader's comprehension and can strengthen your arguments

Elements of documents

The five main elements of document design are:
1. Text/typefaces,
2. visuals,
3. graphics,
4. color, and
5. white space

Laying out the elements is the first step in the right direction, but
if the elements themselves aren't visually pleasing, the whole

How do you structure a document?

❖ Use Standard Page Size and Margins

❖ Pick the Right Font. ...

❖ Organize Content for Readability. ...

❖ Add Section Breaks. ...

❖ Set Up Headers, Footers, and Page Numbering. ...

❖ Make Sure Line and Paragraph Formatting Is Consistent. ...

❖ Take Advantage of Styles for Consistency. ...

❖ Keep it Simple.

❖ The entire document must be legible & reproducible.

❖ The paper should be white, standard weight, and letter or legal-sized.

❖ The ink is black, blue, or red, except that signatures may be other colors.

Headings and Subheadings break your document into main sections and further divide these sections, creating a clear and navigable layout.

Visual Elements and Typography: Bullet points, numbered lists, tables, and careful font choices improve the organization of your content.

Essential Principles of Writing

Language usage - The tense you use will depend on whether the subject matter is still ongoing or an activity that is finished.

Writing Styles

There are four main types of writing:

1. Expository,
2. Descriptive,
3. Persuasive, and
4. Narrative.

Each of these writing styles is used for a specific purpose. A single text may however, include
more than one writing style.

This style explains a concept, imparting information from themselves to a wider audience. Expository focuses on accepted facts about a topic, including statistics or other evidence
.
Examples of Expository Writing
Textbooks
Recipes
News stories (not editorials or Op-Eds)
Business, technical, or scientific writing

Descriptive

Descriptive writing is often found in fiction, though it can make an appearance in nonfiction as well (for example, memoirs, first-hand accounts of events, or travel guides). When an author writes in a descriptive style, they are painting a picture in words of a person, place, or thing for their audience. The author might employ metaphor or other literary devices in order to describe the author's impressions via their five senses (what they hear, see, smell, taste, or touch). But the author is not trying to convince the audience of anything or explain the scene — merely describe things as they are.

Examples of Descriptive Writing
Poetry
Journal/diary writing
Descriptions of Nature
Fictional novels or plays

Persuasive

Persuasive writing is commonly used in academic papers. The writer tries to convince the audience of a position or belief. Persuasive writing contains opinions and biases, as well as justifications and reasons given as evidence of the correctness of their position. Argumentative essays are persuasive in style.

Examples of Persuasive Writing

Cover letters
Op-Eds and Editorial newspaper articles
Reviews of items
Letters of complaint
Advertisements
Letters of recommendation

Narrative
The author seeks to construct and communicate a story, complete with characters, conflict, and settings.

Examples of Narrative Writing
Oral histories
Novels/Novellas
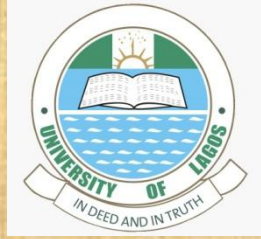*Poetry (especially epic sagas or poems)*
Short Stories
Anecdotes

All said and done you must always back up your documents i.e. you should be able to retrieve it when its intentionally or inavertently destryed or deleted

- You need to maintan a level of confidetiality of your documents.

"Diligence overcomes difficulties; sloth makes them." *- Benjamin Franklin*

Thank you.

1. You invigilated a class where a student brought in a mobile device, do prepare an outline of a report on the student's misconduct.

2. The University has called for nomination for Long Service award, give an outline to justify someone nominated by you.

3. Your are the Secretary of the Committee to digitize your department is about to digitize its mailing process, present a document on your recommendations