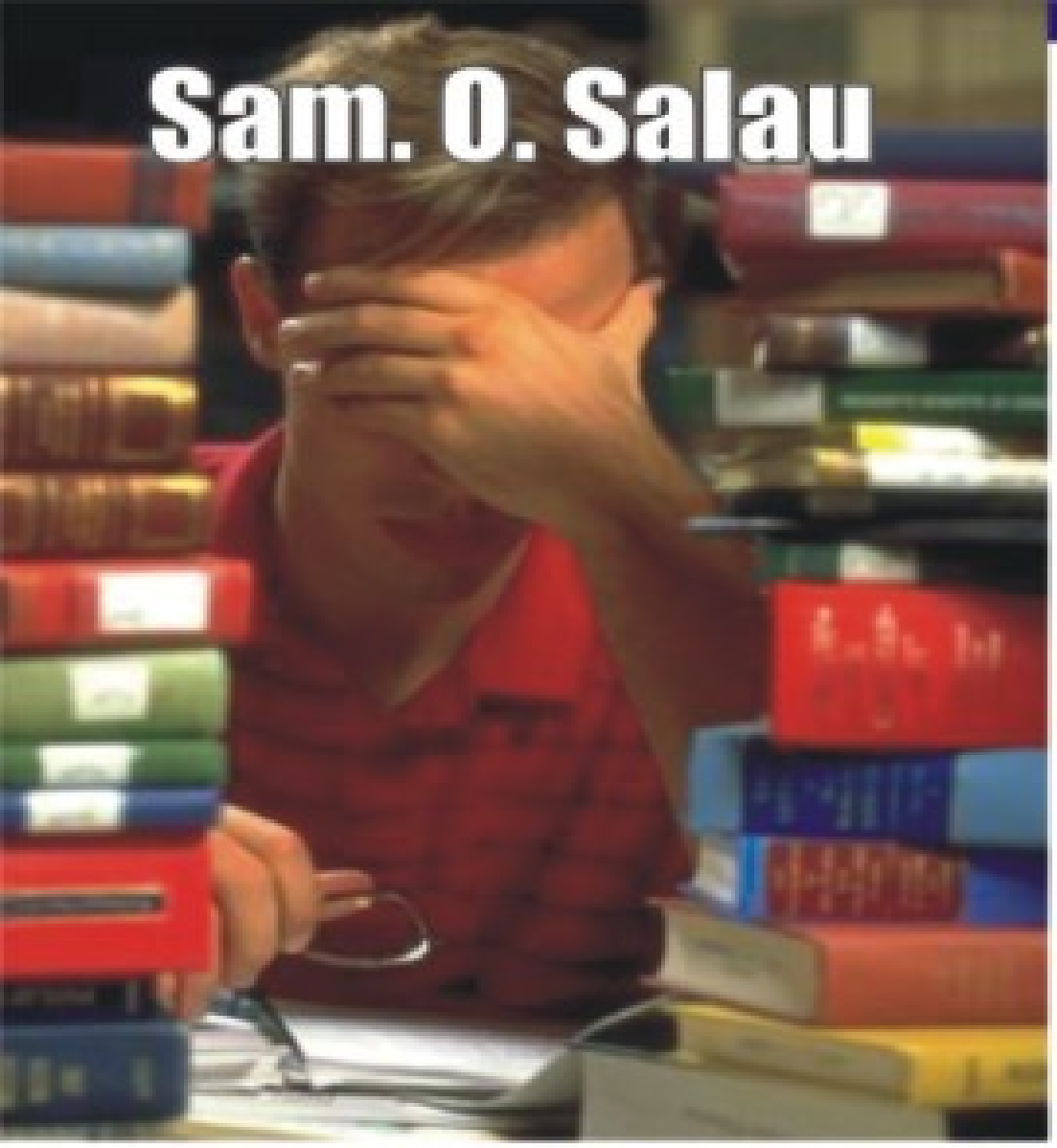
Sam. O. Salau

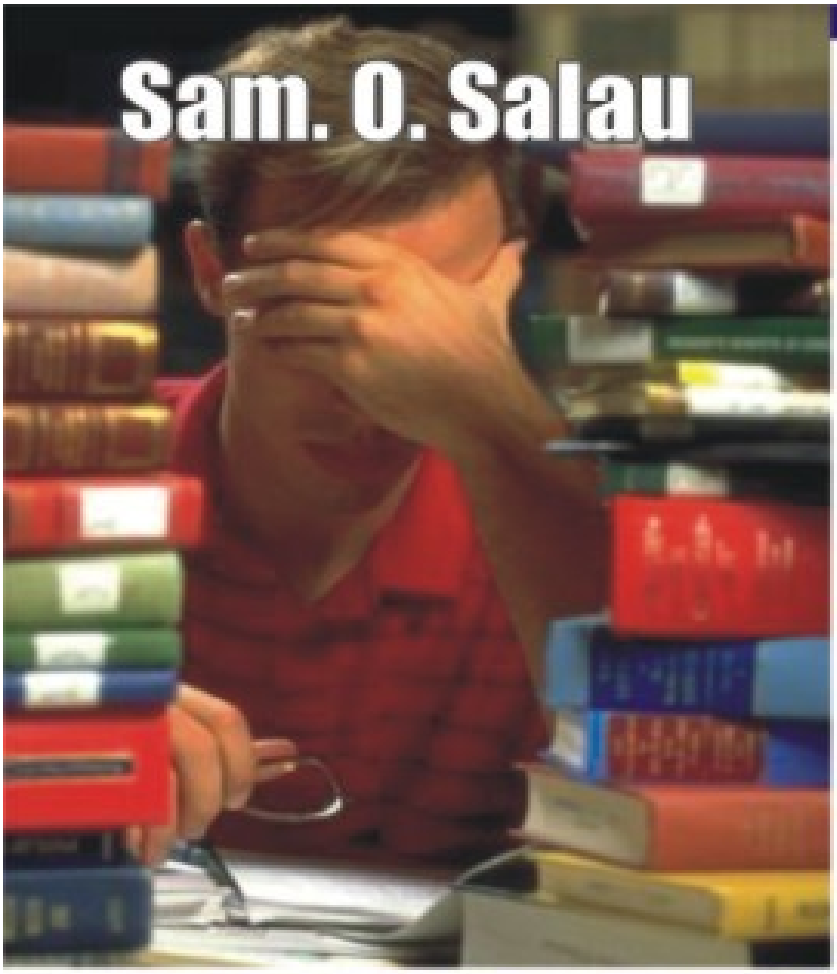


SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS

STUDENTS' SELF HELP BOOK SERIES (SSHBS - 001)

From The Best Selling Author of:

- **ACADEMICS & YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE** (SSHBS-002)
- **MAKE MONEY WHILE IN SCHOOL** (SSHBS-003)
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Dedication

This book is dedicated to-

My entire Primary and Secondary School Teachers, University Lecturers, Colleagues in Class, Friends, Co-workers in the Ministry and my siblings. Much of what this book is about, I learned from you.

Dad, whose unwavering faith in me is unparalleled and who would not spare an extra dime to get me knowledge.

Mum, who pampers me with ceaseless love and affection.

The Holy Father, who sent me to the world to influence the destinies of men through the use of creative ideas communicated through book.

The Holy Son, who has always been there for me anytime I called.

The Holy Spirit, my Ever-Constant Source of Inspiration.

Foreword

Some Christian sects, during confession, do say, we have left undone those things we ought to have done and have done those things we ought not to have done and therefore there is no health in us. If students realize these two sins of omission and commission early enough, they most probably would have avoided several instances of failure in Secondary Schools and Tertiary institutions.

SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS is an attempt to give details of the things students ought to do, but more often than not, fail to do, as well as others they do but ought not to have done. These two faults are the major determinants of students' success or failure in secondary schools and tertiary institutions.

Sam. O. Salau has gone through great pains and details to identify these problems and to find solutions to them. His language is simple and clear, his explanations cogent and to the point.

Some of the problems identified in this book are sometimes beyond the control of students. For instance, some bad books are recommended by teachers and lecturers. Furthermore, weeks after resumption, some schools have neither time table nor registration forms. In such cases, students, most especially new in-takes, do not know what to do.

However, “SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS” is a book that every student must buy and read. For unless you know what to do and what not to do, you cannot determine whether or not you have done them. Sam. O. Salau has identified most of such issues in this book.

The mere size of the book must endear it both to students and teachers. A full knowledge of the causes of failure by administrators in our institutions

will greatly help towards alleviation of official lapses that contribute to students' failures. Teachers and lecturers will also understand more lapses that may hinder the progress of youths under their tutelage.

There is no doubt that this book is a big contribution to examination success in this country. I wish to congratulate the author for a work well done and to whole-heartedly recommend the work as everybody's companion.

Professor Sophie B. Oluwole
Dean of Student Affairs,
University of Lagos
Lagos, Nigeria

Preface

Have you ever wondered why, after apparently satisfactory preparation for and performance in an examination, you still come out with poor or low grades? Do you find it difficult to settle down for serious study? Do you easily forget what you read? Do you belong to either the group of students who have a problem with when, where and how to read for utmost understanding or the other group that is confused about what to do during lecture periods in order to enhance concentration and aid memory? Do you find it hard to cope with the atmosphere of the examination hall? Do you find it difficult even to account for your incessant failure? Then you need not go far. You are holding in your hand the answer to every troubling question you have ever asked about your academics.

SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS is not just a theoretical book that teaches how to learn alone. It is a course on its own, complete with numerous exercises and activities at the end of each chapter. These will help you to understand what you have read more clearly and so aid you to put into practice what you learn. These activities should by no means be avoided. They are major parts of the book. No one learns to fly airplanes by reading about it alone, but by putting what is read into practice. So, practice the activities.

In order to experience the information contained in this book, it has to be read completely from the beginning to the end. Skipping back and forth should be avoided. It must be read at least once every year, preferably before school resumption dates. Put the accompanying steps into practice, incorporate the inspirational ideas into your daily routine and you will begin to witness amazing things happening to your life.

This is a pocket sized book. You can take it with you where ever you go and study it whenever you have five or ten minutes free. You do not have to

wait until you have time to study the whole book. Do what you can, where you can. For convenience, handy tear-off charts that contain the main points discussed under all the topics in this book are located at the end of each part for easy review.

This book will not achieve the purpose for which it was written if it is bought and kept in a book shelf. It also will not be of much benefit to any student if it is just read as a story book and thrown aside without the reader acting on the principles discussed and taking bold steps to read and understand, thereby achieving academic excellence having learnt the SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS.

Happy reading,

_____

Sam. O. Salau

Part One

CAUSES OF FAILURE

Failure is real. Nobody likes or desires it, but most people earn it. It is a bitter pill to swallow. A student who has not successfully passed all his subjects/courses with the needed requirements may be asked to repeat the class, given an extra session, bag a carry over, asked to withdraw from school or graduate with low/poor grades. Every student dreads failure because of these outcomes.

This book is on how to pass exams without tears, but it would not be worthwhile learning how to study for exams without first identifying what failure is, its causes and how to avoid it. A football player who is very good at dribbling goalkeepers and scoring goals but does not know when he is offside or what foul or free kick means, will end up achieving nothing.

In the first section of this book, some possible causes of failure, which are very common among students, will be discussed and suggestions given on how to avoid them. Do not be afraid to admit any truth found in the next few pages of this book. Do not shy away from them or pretend they do not affect your studies. Do not begin to think of people whom you know engage in them, condemning them and justifying yourself.

The human mind likes to shift blame on others; but this will not help you. Sit down and see how it affects you, then take necessary steps to make amendments. It is not enough identifying the causes of failure, but finding lasting solutions to them is more important. The causes of failure are discussed in this part.

Chapter One

PHYSICAL/MORAL CAUSES OF FAILURE

1:1 ABSENCE FROM LECTURES/PRACTICALS

One important reason many students fail, perhaps the most common of them all, is their absence from lectures. There are topics in some courses that are better understood when taught than read. Such topics pose problems to students who miss lectures or practical.

Some students deliberately miss lectures for no just reason, consoling themselves with the hope of reading through the notes copied by friends or reading on their own from textbooks. Some students miss laboratory practical because they do not see any reason they have to attend them. They consider it a waste of time. Some others avoid lectures because they think they already know what the lecturer is going to teach.

The students should know that if attending lectures and practical is time wasting, the school authorities would not have added them to the school curriculum. Attending lectures and practical is for the good of students, not for the benefit of the lecturers. Any student who wants to be successful must take it as a very cogent part of his stay on campus because it will decide, to a very large extent, how successful he/she will be as a student.

1:2 REFUSAL TO DO ASSIGNMENTS

Another major cause of failure is the refusal to do assignments. The essence of assignment is to get a better understanding of topics taught and to gain a wider scope of it. Teachers have limited time to teach all that students need to know during school hours, so they give assignments.

Practicing these assignments will open the students to technical problems which the teacher could not solve in class due to limited time. Students who take their time to study such assignments and succeed in solving them will have a clearer understanding of the topic. This gives them an edge over those who refused to do these assignments.

Most students' attitude to assignments is very discouraging. Very few students take time out to do them. Some, on the morning of the submission date, hurriedly copy from those who have already done theirs, while others completely neglect these, seeing them as unnecessary. Some students have the habit of submitting theirs after the designated time and date. These assignments are recorded as part of continuous assessments of students. Failure to do them or failure to submit them on time unconsciously contributes mostly to students' failure in school.

The marks allocated to these assignments may not be much, but students need to understand that these little marks, when summed up, will go a long way in determining their success. So, it is worth having. Like the saying, *"little drops of water make a mighty ocean"*, so also, little drops of these marks, a little here and a little there, contribute a lot to students' final result at the end of the semester.

1:3 HATRED FOR LECTURERS

Students generally dislike their lecturers for their strictness, harshness, nonchalance and dreadful disciplinary measures. Students fall in love easily with lecturers who are jovial, hospitable, accommodating and who can condone anything, including insults.

The unserious students, especially, would prefer that a good number of their lecturers be cooperative and shut their eyes to their lack of seriousness.

They would like their lecturers to pamper them, accommodate their laziness, absence from lectures, refusal to do assignments and unruly behavior in class, without raising an eyebrow. Such a lecturer who will spare the rod and spoil the child will be voted as the *'Best Lecturer of the Year'* by so many of the students.

On the contrary, a lecturer who refuses to condone nonsense is seen as wicked, harsh and too strict, thereby creating hatred in the minds of the students. When students hate a lecturer, if care is not taken, the course he teaches may be hated as well. This will invariably results in student's absence from his lectures or refusal to do assignments given by him. The consequences of these have been discussed above.

All students must come to the understanding that no matter how strict a lecturer is, the aim is to bring the best out of his students and not necessarily because he is wicked. He is not trying to make life unbearable for them. Until students know this, they may never come to terms with such lecturers and this may be detrimental to their progress in school.

The truth is that most of these lecturers also have children at home who are students and their conscience will not allow them to do anything that they will not want done to their children. They are not sadists.

1:4 HATRED FOR COURSES

Besides hatred for lecturers, another cause of students' failure is hatred for the course. There are lecturers who teach their courses well, yet, some students still fail them because of their preconceived idea about the Course or what they have heard about it. Some students have been made to believe from their childhood days that any subject/course that involves calculation is very difficult and is not easily understood, no matter how hard the student tries. Some students have carried this notion all their lives.

Some of such courses include: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and other Science related subjects. Some students got this wrong idea from older people when they were very young and the effect has remained long lasting

on them. No matter how well such people are taught, they may end up failing the courses because of this preconceived idea. They need a change of orientation.

If you have unconsciously fallen into this same error of believing that some courses are difficult and you have allowed this mole-hill size thought to develop over time into a big mountain, such that it has affected your performance in the past, the first thing to do is to erase such thoughts from your mind. They are baseless. This change of orientation will help change your reasoning and assessment concerning the course.

Once you see the course as one that can be easily understood in the same vein as others, your rate of assimilation will increase. Come to terms with yourself. You can excel in them. Rise up and face the challenge. Prepare adequately for the exams and before you know it, you may be awarded the prize for the *Best Student* in the same course.

1:5 PROCRASTINATION

One of the greatest enemies of progress is procrastination. It limits achievements and hinders progress. It is a friend to failure and has led many people down its path. When a student begins to procrastinate he begins to deteriorate.

Procrastination, simply put, means to postpone to some other time what can be done now. Many students have fine and well-planned personal timetables, but do not follow them because of procrastination.

Procrastination does not allow students to read their notebooks or textbooks. It discourages them from doing assignments or going to read in the library. It will always ask, *"Must you do it now? Why not do it some other time?"* If you listen to its voice you are dead. Students that have given procrastination the direction of their lives, have always lived to regret the action. Do not try it. If you do, you will end up the way they did.

Never postpone to some other time what you can do now. Learn not to delay. Delay is bad. Delay is risky. Delay is dangerous. Delay is disastrous. Delay is devastating. Delay is catastrophic. Delay is deadly.

1:6 USE OF UNSUITABLE TEXTBOOKS

It is good to read wide. Reading wide, on any topic, gives the student a wider scope and makes him better than his mates many times over. However, some students' quest for more knowledge get so much out of hand that they consume everything they see whether related or not related to the topic at hand. It is a generally accepted fact that no knowledge is lost, but not all knowledge is useful. Some are harmful to a man's system.

Having read more than the school syllabus or the course outline probably including some unnecessary and irrelevant details, the student in the examination hall may be tempted to go beyond the examiner's questions, explaining in details irrelevant points. This is not bad in itself but it will cost precious time that should have been spent answering other important questions and there may not be enough time to answer those other questions.

Some lecturers may even decide to subtract some of the students' marks because of this 'I too know' attitude. When studying for examinations, make sure that you read the recommended textbooks and study aids very well. Use other sources judiciously but with discernment. Know what to read and also know when and where to stop.

1:7 CARNAL COMPARISON

When two students are given the same piece of document to study, given the same period of time, in the same room and under the same condition, it is most likely they may not understand it the same way. This is due to the differences in their ability to recall, memorize and assimilate. Most students do not understand this. They compare themselves with friends and restructure their study timetable according to their friends' time table. They

play, sleep, read and go to school at the same time, but one ends up passing while the other may fail woefully when the results are released.

This has been a very common cause of failure and one that most students have neglected. The earlier you identify it as your problem, the quicker it will be for you to escape from its grips.

Know yourself and know what suits you best. Do not compare yourself illogically with others around you. You are a peculiar being. Have intimate friends, but understand the differences between your friends and you. Know what time of the day you assimilate at a higher rate and invest your all into such times, whether it is the same for your friends or not. Do not trade such periods for momentary pleasures with friends. If you do, you may have yourself to blame for your actions. So be careful. Each man will have to bear his own cross.

Your parents did not send you to school to keep friends, neither did they pay your school fees so that you can roam around the streets of your campus hand-in-hand with some sets of friends who know how to find their ways out of tight corners when exams are near. So, know your own peculiarities and appreciate them.

1:8 LAZINESS

Laziness is the father of procrastination. It is the advanced stage of procrastination as procrastination matures into laziness. A lazy student does not want to do anything other than to eat, play and sleep. He lives a rotational life of eat, sleep and play.

He does not write his notes, does not read his textbooks and handouts, does not go to the library, does not attend lectures and does not go for practical classes. He only sleeps after each meal and wakes up to eat again after playing for some time. He is at the verge of failure and is surely going to fail if he does not change.

Lazy people do not succeed; they do not have what it takes to. Do not be lazy; learn to do your work.

1:9 EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE

Some students, due to some of the reasons stated above and some mentioned in the next two chapters, refuse to devote time to study and the revision of what they have been taught. At the time of the examination, such students are empty, not knowing what to write and how to satisfy the Examiners. Gripped by the fear of failure, most of them resort to other things, which they think are shortcuts and can help them out of their predicament. This is done in different ways. Some of these are: -

(a) Entering into the examination hall with prohibited materials like textbooks, notebooks, handouts and key points.

(b) Discussing with fellow candidates in the exam hall, asking for answers to questions which they do not know.

(c) Exchanging answer sheets in the examination hall, with or without the Invigilator's consent.

(d) Smuggling into the examination hall small sheets of paper with likely answers to possible questions (torn off the pages of a textbook or hand-copied).

(e) Sneaking question papers out of the examination hall to students outside the hall who will in turn solve the questions and sneak the solutions back into the examination hall.

(f) Bribing lecturers, examiners or some corrupt and unscrupulous staff of the school for exposition of the question papers before the examination day.

(g) Bribing lecturers or some corrupt and unscrupulous staff of the school for favor to boost the marks scored or to increase the general performance

of some of the students after the examination, awarding them more marks and grades than they really deserved

All these are known as cheating and are referred to as examination malpractice. If a student is caught cheating in the examination hall, he faces the risk of having his/her answer sheets torn, marks being subtracted and total expulsion from the school. If it involves a staff of the school, he also faces the risk of losing his job for destroying the image of the school.

Activity One

(1) Why are you reading this book?
(2) Did you learn anything new in this chapter?
(3) Take a sheet of paper and write down all the physical/moral problems that contribute to your failure as discussed in this chapter. Be honest, do not deceive yourself.
(4) Write down all the ones that personally affect you.
(5) Draw a line under the last cause of failure and list the ones that are not discussed in this chapter which you know are really affecting your studies.
(6) Take another sheet of paper. Write a corrective measure for each problem written on the first list.
(7) Cross out the first list. Make a strong resolution within you not to engage in them again.
(8) Promise yourself to always abide by the second list.
(9) Paste the two lists where you will see them daily e.g. beside your bed, on the door of your wardrobe, on your study table or on the door of your room
(10) This makes it lively and interesting; play a game. Give this book to some of your friends to read. After

reading, tell them to watch to see if you will break any of the rules or if you will engage in any of the problems listed in the first sheet of paper. Each time you are caught, bail yourself out with some amount of money or a bottle of drink. If you catch any one of them, get some amount of money or a bottle of drink from them too. It makes you put your mind into it and reminds you anytime you are about to forget the resolution you have made.

Chapter Two

SOCIAL/ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSES OF FAILURE

2:1 LATE COMMENCEMENT OF STUDIES

It is a general conception among students that in the first few weeks of resumption into school, nothing of importance or nothing of great value is expected to be done. They see this period as a period of settling down. Some of them forget their academic behavioral attitudes and adapt to the new, more relaxed and holiday-like one cultivated during the break. They become unserious and do not attach any importance to their schoolwork until they are half way into the semester or towards the end of the semester when the examination timetable comes out. They then realize their foolishness, seeing they have misused the golden opportunities they could have used for studying.

To make up for this, some students engage in *'massive cramming'* sessions which is the same thing as committing to memory large chunks of study notes in no proper order, or reading late into the night with the help of drugs for a few weeks or days before the examination. This becomes a threat to their health as sickness invades them. The lucky ones may get over the sickness before the day of the examination, but the less fortunate ones remain on sickbeds throughout the examination period!

Every student must know that once school resumes, serious studies commence. The adverse effect of late commencement of study is too grievous to be ignored. So take care. Do not be the architect of your own failure.

2:2 UNPROFITABLE FRIENDSHIP

It is not all relationships that are beneficial and certainly not all are profitable. The friendship you keep determines the person you are. A common adage says *'show me your friends and I will tell you who you are'*. Your friends are your identity; they will either make or mar you, they will either increase you or decrease you. Watch out! Do not keep just any friend. If you must have a friend, make sure he is the serious type.

Make this a rule: The friends you choose must always be more intelligent and more serious than you are. If you become friendly with a dullard, you will soon learn to be one. If you befriend a student who misses lectures, he will teach you how to do the same. If you befriend a lazy man you soon become lazy. If you take sides with a book addict, he will soon win you to his side and if you befriend an intelligent student, probably the best in the class, you will soon know his secret and become the second-best in no time or even overtake him.

If you have been moving with unprofitable friends who discourage you from reading or disturb you each time they meet you studying, then you are treading the path of failure. Disengage from that friendship if they refuse to change. Any friend who does not encourage you to read, but will always tell you about parties and cinema shows does not want you to make progress. The earlier you quit such relationship, the better for you.

2:3 UNCULTURED FREEDOM

The first problem students encounter when they get to higher institutions of learning is the problem of handling the new levels of freedom given them by the school authority and the one given them by their parents at home, all due to their newly acquired status.

Those who, in their former schools, were used to daily morning assembly, class register, disciplinary actions like beating and serving various forms of punishment, whose movements were restricted and monitored by parents

suddenly discovers that they are now exposed to a degree of freedom which most of them never experienced prior to this time.

Some students mishandle this new level of freedom because of their immaturity. They engage in things that normally they would not have engaged in, had it not been for this newly found independence.

Some of them go partying almost every day, visiting friends around town, traveling long distances without their parents' knowledge and neglecting the purpose for which they have been sent to school. Their eyes are not always open to it on time until the close of the first session, when after failing, the school authority asks them to change departments or withdraw entirely from school.

2:4 MISMANAGEMENT OF TIME

Time is a universal factor. Every man has 24 hours in a day, 7 days in a week, 4 weeks in a month and 12 months in a year. No man enjoys extra favor from heaven when it comes to time; every man on earth has equal time and so equal opportunities to either succeed or fail. Some students have the habit of wasting time and precious moments on useless things. When you spend your time not doing serious work, you are wasting it. Don't waste your time. Invest it.

Fill every moment with what will last. How much of your time you invest determines how much you get out of it. Your time input determines your success output. To succeed as a student, you have to learn how well to manage your time. There is a time to play and a time to work. *'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.'* However, if you play at the time of work, you will soon become a world-renowned failure.

It is very easy to fail. Most students have failed because of mismanagement of time. They spend hours to gist about irrelevant things and they end up paying dearly for it.

A proper time management technique is discussed in Chapter 12 of this book.

2:5 MISPLACEMENT OF PRIORITIES

The main reason every student is in school is to learn and be successful academically. Every other thing is additional. The primary goal of every student should, therefore, be to face his or her studies squarely. All other goals are secondary. Most students do not recognize this. They tend to place priority on things besides their academics. They are more committed to and they give more allegiance to campus politics, socio-cultural clubs, sports, voluntary clubs, religious activities and secret cults.

Some students attend religious activities more often than they do lectures. Some who cannot afford to miss their clubs, meetings and outings do not care about class work, school practical, assignments and lectures. Some others are more interested in business than in school. Still, others are more dedicated to politics and sports.

These students may not fare as well as those who have the right mental attitude with a correct placement of priority. Involving yourself in too many activities may reduce your academic efficiency. Have the right focus: academics primarily, other things secondary. Until you see life in this sense, you keep retarding in your academics.

2:6 DISTRACTIONS OF SOCIAL LIFE

Life on campus always '*bubbles'* with interesting programs like film shows, entertainment, fashion parades, musical concerts, beauty contests, Christian religious programs, Islamic religious programs etc. Each religion tries to outdo the other by organizing interesting programs in order to gain the favor of students. Each denomination endeavors to attract a larger crowd than the others through the use of indoor and outdoor programs and by inviting popular ministers.

Each tribe organizes socio-cultural days in honor of their tribe to make their impact felt on the campus. Every other club, either voluntary or involuntary

wants, not only to be heard, but also to be seen. Sport competitions are everywhere, inter-campus competitions, inter-faculty competitions, inter-departmental competitions, inter-level competitions and inter-fellowship competitions. Although, all these are informative and educative programs in themselves, they tend to take people's minds off the main reason why they are in school.

So, you need to make up your mind not to be distracted by anything once you gain admission into the university. There are enough things to distract you, but you need to consciously make up your mind not to allow them. If need be, put measures in place that will serve as check and balance for you once you are about to cross the boundary you set for yourself.

It will not be out of place to put yourself under the tutorship of a senior student, one who is serious with his lectures, with a good standing in his academics and has a strong testimony concerning his integrity. Such student will always call your attention to moments of error and guide you aright each time you are about to slip off the edge of the cliff.

Of a truth, there are no seniors in higher institutions, but you can learn from those who have been there ahead of you and who have been able to sail through the thick and thin. Only a foolish man jumps into a dark room without asking those who have gone ahead of him what to experience in there. So, do not be one. Get a senior friend, learn all you can from him so that you can find your footing on time and can become all you want before your mates find their own footing.

Activity Two

(1) Why are you reading this book?
(2) Did you learn anything new in this chapter?
(3) Take a sheet of paper and write down all the social/environmental causes that contribute to your failure as discussed in this chapter. Be honest, do not deceive yourself.
(4) Write down all the ones that personally affect you.
(5) Draw a line under the last cause of failure and list the ones that are not discussed in this chapter which you know are really affecting your studies.
(6) Take another sheet of paper. Write a corrective measure for each problem written on the first list.
(7) Cross out the first list. Make a strong resolution within you not to engage in them again.
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(9) Paste the two lists where you will see them daily e.g. beside your bed, on the door of your wardrobe, on your study table or on the door of your room
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Chapter Three

MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL CAUSES OF FAILURE

3:1 LACK OF VISION

The first psychological cause of failure is lack of vision. Vision is a motivator. The vision of a man keeps him going during tough times. A man without a vision is a dead man. Some students do not have the right vision and this is the cause of their failure. They lack vision as to why they are in school.

Some students may have decided to go to a particular institution because all their friends are in that same higher institution and they do not want to be the odd one out. Some are in school because their parents want them to be literate since nobody in their family has ever graduated from college. All these reasons are not good enough for being in school.

The best reason for being in school is to study and graduate with good grades, so as to get a good job and have a nice placement in the society later in life. Any student with this vision at the back of his mind will aspire for the best grades. While others settle for lower grades, his vision will motivate him to go after high grades. Vision gives a man a well-defined goal. If you lack one, you cannot achieve success.

3:2 LACK OF INTEREST

Next to lack of vision is lack of interest. Interest matters a lot in all things. What a man is not interested in does not matter much to him. Some students

are studying courses that they are not interested in. Some only embrace the course they were given by the University Admission Board because they do not want to sit at home for another year, seeking admission. Others accepted the courses they were offered by the school with the hope of changing departments after the first session. They have since discovered that it is impossible. They are thus compelled to stay in the departments, which they have no personal interest or motivation in.

When a student is not interested in a course, no amount of time or energy invested will yield any profit. Lack of interest heralds lack of success. When interest is lost, success is gone. The absence of interest guarantees the absence of success because it is impossible to succeed without interest.

3:3 LACK OF CONCENTRATION

Some students are always present in class; they do not miss lectures, but they find it difficult to concentrate in class when lectures are going on. Some carry this same attitude to their personal study period. Rather than concentrate, they get distracted by thoughts of other things. Some of these students think of boyfriends, girlfriends, secret cult requirements and assignments, economic situation of the country, family problems, sports, politics, dates, comparison of suitors or other after-school activities.

These thoughts may not all be bad. Indeed, some may be good and reasonable, but failure to do the right thing at the right time and in the right way always leads to trouble. As they allow these thoughts to flow through their minds uncontrollably, they miss out on what the lecturer is teaching. This puts them on the same level as those who are absent from the lecture. They need to spend extra time reading over the topics to get an understanding of what they missed in class due to poor concentration.

The serious students take the pain to sacrifice the time and go over it after the lecturer's departure, but the unserious ones close the chapter until they come face to face with it on the examination day. This usually spells doom for them because there can be no escape route from the failure inherent in this unserious attitude to work.

3:4 LACK OF CURIOSITY/BOLDNESS

Some students lack the eagerness, curiosity and boldness to succeed. They are shy and withdrawn. They do not participate in or contribute to class activities. They neither ask questions when they do not understand during lectures nor answer questions when asked by the lecturers during lectures. They lack self-confidence. They are afraid of ridicules, jests and mockeries from other students. They are always calm and quiet in class and do not bother the lecturer whether they understand or not. They pretend to understand even when they don't.

These students abstain from meeting the lecturer after the lecture for clarification of confusing points because of their shyness. Again, for reasons of their ego, they do not want to meet their fellow classmates who understand better than they do and can help them. They enter the examination hall with the little bits they know but become terrified after reading the contents of the question paper, realizing they have not taken time to study and prepare for the examination.

A good student must be inquisitive, eager to learn and should ask questions whenever he or she does not understand a topic. That is the best way to learn.

3:5 LACK OF DISCIPLINE

Indiscipline is a major disease among students. Some students are born with silver spoons in their mouths. They have been pampered and spoilt by their parents. When such children gain admission to school they become more wayward. They take everything with levity and are hardly serious. Some wake up late every morning and do not bother to hurry over their toiletries and other morning activities. Thus, they go late to class and miss cogent parts of the lecture.

When they go to the class or library to read during their personal study time, they end up sleeping throughout the allotted time. Those who do not

sleep during the period, spend such time doing irrelevant things like chattering with friends, chatting on social medias, browsing irrelevant sites, reading magazines and newspaper, going on familiarization tour, i.e. greeting everybody they know around the reading room and meeting new friends. These they do until the whole time is spent and they pack their books retiring to their rooms without achieving anything worthwhile. Those who see them coming back from the library or reading room will think they have gone to read, but they have actually gone to play.

To succeed, students need to be disciplined, determined and committed. They must have focus and the right goal.

3:6 OVER CONFIDENCE

Higher institutions and colleges consist of students from different schools and different backgrounds. Most of them are the 'best of the best' in their former schools. Some of these students feel proud of the knowledge, wisdom, understanding, ability and strength which brought them to this higher level of academic status.

Being in a new environment now, they change their mode of talking, walking and dressing. They go about with shoulders raised high, heads tilted up and ‘bounce about” feeling on top of the world. They become so confident of their ability that they forget to buckle up and work harder to surpass the standard they have set. They rely on past glory and before they know what is happening, the first session is over, leaving them with unfavorable results.

It is very good to be confident in one's ability, but over-confidence is deceitful. It blindfolds you to your weakness and only emphasizes your good parts. It brings a man down from the exalted position and drags him into the mud. Over-confidence was what killed the legendary Goliath-the giant in the Bible story, in his combat with David - a small boy.

Activity Three

(1) Why are you reading this book?
(2) Did you learn anything new in this chapter?
(3) Take a sheet of paper and write down all the mental/psychological causes that contribute to your failure as discussed in this chapter. Be honest, do not deceive yourself.
(4) Write down all the ones that personally affect you.
(5) Draw a line under the last cause of failure and list the ones that are not discussed in this chapter which you know are really affecting your studies.
(6) Take another sheet of paper. Write a corrective measure for each problem written on the first list.
(7) Cross out the first list. Make a strong resolution within you not to engage in them again.
(8) Promise yourself to always abide by the second list.
(9) Paste the two lists where you will see them daily e.g. beside your bed, on the door of your wardrobe, on your study table or on the door of your room.
(10) This makes it lively and interesting; play a game. Give this book to some of your friends to read. After

reading, tell them to watch to see if you will break any of the rules or if you will engage in any of the problems listed in the first sheet of paper. Each time you are caught, bail yourself out with some amount of money or a bottle of drink. If you catch any one of them, get some amount of money or a bottle of drink from them too. It makes you put your mind into it and reminds you anytime you are about to forget the resolution you have made.

Part Two

CLASS ATTITUDES

This section explains in details what is expected of any student before entering into the classroom, laboratory or lecture theater to receive lectures.

It also advises on:
* What to do if the lecturer does not turn up on time,
* What to do during lectures to enhance concentration and increase assimilation,
* What to do after the lecture and
* How to take down notes from verbally communicated lectures

Chapter Four

PRE-LECTURE ACTIVITIES

4:1 REVISION

Good students go through their notes before coming to class. In order to be a very good student, you will need to do the revision of the last topics taught by the lecturer before entering the class for a new lecture. This refreshes the mind, making it easier for new information to be easily integrated.

The best students do not only revise the topics they have been taught, but they always read ahead of the class. They take their time to read the topic the lecturer will be teaching in class before they enter the classroom/lecture theater. This gives them an advantage over the other students who will be hearing the topic for the first time. It will not look strange to them, as it will to the others. They understand the points easily, better, faster and quicker.

If you also want to join the army of the few best students in your class, you need to develop the habit of refreshing your brain every time, before entering the class, by going through the last topic treated by the lecturer and reading at least the introduction to the next lesson he is likely to teach. This done, you will be able to keep abreast of the class and before you know it, your grades will change for the better.

4:2 COMPLETION OF ASSIGNMENTS

One of the major causes of failure among students as highlighted in Section 1.2 is the refusal to do assignments. It is a very bad habit for students not to do assignments at all or to copy them in the class from classmates.

The student must do his own assignment from home or from hostels before being taken to school. Do not go to school to copy assignments or to hurriedly solve problems. You only end up making mistakes. Doing them at home gives you a settled mind and a well-composed brain.

Besides, it gives you a better understanding of the topic than you had before solving the assignment. Secondly, the rigor you go through in providing solutions to the problems will also help you to retain the methods used in your mind so that it becomes part of you. This will make it easier for you to tackle similar problems when you encounter them in other places, even in the examination hall.

4:3 PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality, they say, *"is the soul of business"*. Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well. If you must attend lectures, do not go late to classes. Do not wait until the lecturer is half way into the lecture before entering the lecture hall. If you do, you might get more confused at the end of the class than you were when you first entered the class.

Always be in class before the lecturer's arrival. Let him start the lecture in your presence. Hear the first word he says. Do not miss the introduction to the lecture; it will go a long way to helping you understand what the lecture is all about. When you understand what the general idea of the lecture is about, it will save you lots of time and stress during personal study hours and it will safeguard you from reading unsuitable textbooks and irrelevant topics.

4:4 SITTING POSITION IN THE CLASS

It is generally believed in this part of the world that, only students who are not serious sit at the back rows in the classrooms and lecture theater. Taking

into consideration the kind of halls that are used for classrooms, the overpopulation of students in the halls, non-availability of good public address systems and lack of comfortable reading desks and chairs, one may agree that back seats, as generally believed, are not suitable for learning, but for some exceptional cases.

So, go to lecture halls on time so you can get a good seat in the front rows. Sit where you can see both the lecturer and the board clearly. Sitting in a good position in the classroom can ease tension and increase concentration and understanding. Sitting at the back will cost you more; you may not get a good seat; spoilt seats are always packed at the back of the classrooms. If the lecture hall is big, you may not see the board clearly especially if the lecturer's handwriting is not very legible.

Some people are not talented with high-pitched voices. If your lecturer is one of such, you may only be seeing his lips moving without hearing a word from him until he leaves the class.

Distraction makes you lose concentration. More often than not, there is a great deal of it at the back since the teacher may not be able to see things going on at the back clearly enough. To avoid all these, get to class in time and get a good seat in the front rows. These are the first requirements for successful academic pursuits.

4:5 LATE ARRIVAL OF LECTURER

It is some lecturer's custom not to come for lectures on time. Some come 10, 15, 20 minutes after the scheduled time. Some students take undue advantage of this period to make noise in the classroom, write rubbish on the lecture board and disturb others.

The best thing to do during this period is to get every needed material ready. Get settled; make sure every material you need for the lecture is around you. Write the course title, the name of the lecturer, the topic of the lecture as well as the date at the top of the page of your lecture notebook while awaiting the arrival of the lecturer.

If he delays longer in coming browse through the last topic he treated in class and read some things about the new topic he is coming to teach. This makes it easier to link what you have learnt to what you are going to learn. Having done this, integrating new facts becomes easier.

Activity Four

(1) Select ten names of those who sit in the forefront during lectures. Write the names down as list 1.
(2) Select ten names of those who sit at the back during lectures. Write the names down as list 2.
(3) Select ten names of those who are always in class before the lecturer's arrival. Write the names down as list 3.
(4) Select ten names of those whose habit is coming for lectures late every day. Write the names down as list 4.
(5) Select ten names of those who do not miss classes, do not play with assignments and who revise their notes before lectures daily. Write their names as list 5.
(6) Select ten others who run away from lectures, do not revise notes at home and who only copy assignments from friends. Write the names as list 6.
(7) Note the academic performance and the general behavioral pattern of each student on each of the lists.
(8) Compare those on the 1st, 3rd and 5th lists with those on the 2nd, 4th and the 6th lists.

(9) What do you observe? Tabulate or write down your observation.
(10) Choose which lists are good and which are bad.
(11) Identify which group you will want to belong to.
(12) Start to do what they do!

Chapter Five

LECTURE PERIOD & EFFICIENT LEARNING

People wonder why so many students sit in the same classroom, under the same lecturer, for the same lecture but some come out of the hall with a better understanding of the lecture than others.

This has discouraged so many students and has made them conclude that some students enjoy the grace of better understanding than others. That some have larger brains than others and that some employ the use of magical powers. This has led a lot of students into searching for supernatural powers and magical influences that will enhance their performances in school.

Science has made us realize that all men have equal sizes of brain. Therefore, some human brains are not larger than others and magical powers cannot be of any use in influencing one's memory. This chapter discusses a few points that will enhance efficient learning during lectures. They are explained below:

5:1 LISTEN ATTENTIVELY

Listening attentively enhances concentration; not just listening, but listening with rapt attention to grab the needed information.

Do not read when the lecturer is teaching. Do not discuss with friends in the class during lecture. Listen attentively in order to understand his points. Do

not assume you know what he is teaching or what he is going to say next. Hear him out in order to catch the main ideas of the lecture. Form the right habit of listening well. Be engrossed in what he is saying so much that you do not notice any movement around you.

Some students stay in class throughout the period of lecture, listening to the lecture, but hardly remember twenty percent (20%) of the key points taught immediately after the lecture. Learn to listen well. Listening to lectures is different from listening to music or radio. It is an active process. Listen attentively to your lecturer, hear his case, analyze his argument and record his points in your mind as he speaks and grasp the overall structure of his lecture.

5:2 RESIST DISTRACTIONS

Listening in class requires concentration. Both work pari-pasu. Attention is to be focused on the topic being taught with utmost concentration if there must be effective learning. The quieter the mind is, the easier it is for the mind to learn new points and to understand information. The student should make conscious effort to keep his attention from straying during lecture periods. The human mind only responds to one stimulus at a time. So, get rid of anything that may distract you and disturb your concentration.

Distractions may be internal or external. External distractions may come in the form of noise such as: people moving about, sounds of moving cars and buses.

Internal distractions may come as messages from the body such as: cold, hunger, thirst, worries, thoughts of other things, discomforts, sickness, fear and other emotional reactions. Rid yourself of the external reactions and clear your mind off the internal reactions. Note the time when you are going to attend to all the other things that may be bothering your mind and distracting your attention and attend to the immediate ones like hunger, thirst and cold. Then, your mind will be set to concentrate fully on your lectures.

5:3 CLASS PARTICIPATION

Active participation in the class during lecture periods keeps the lecture fresh in mind every time it is revised. Some students are very outspoken outside the classroom and (or) when the lecturer is out of the classroom. Such are mistaken for introverts - the silent types - during lecture. After the lecturer's departure from the hall, they will be all over the class. Such attitude is not good.

Learn to participate fully in class activities. Active class participation increases one's rate of understanding in class and helps one remember important points after the class. A great thinker who died many years ago said:
What I hear, I may soon forget
What I see, I always remember
What I participate in, I understand best

Do not rely on what you hear alone. Do not trust what you see on the board alone. Though you may remember it now, you will soon forget. However, what you participate in, you will always understand and always remember how it was done.

Class participation makes assimilation of studies easier and quicker. Answer questions thrown by the lecturer in the course of his teaching. If you do not understand the vital points, main ideas and important details or if you miss out on anything, ask the lecturer before he walks out of the lecture hall. Make sure you understand every illustration and example; it will be of great help when revising the lecture in your personal study time.

5:4 CONTRARY OPINION

The issue of having a contrary opinion is one that has debarred so many students from learning new theories recently promulgated in science. From time to time, you may have to face the difficulty of making a choice between what you know to be true and what your lecturer teaches to be true, if your opinion happens to contradict his.

If your lecturer says something that is against your belief and what you have held unto for years as being the fact or if he sees differently from your point of view, do not shut your ears or blank your mind out. The human mind is constituted in a way that it does not always want to throw away the fact it has believed to be true over the years, whether it is right or wrong. It tries to protect what it knows. This does not help students to learn.

In order to get the best out of the lecture, do not condemn the lecturer at the start of the lecture. Learn before reaching a conclusion or final judgment. Hear his case, understand his point of view, listen to his ideas, examine his evidence, assess his reasoning, check his proofs, then compare these with your own view.

Do justice to the two points of view without being biased and then decide which is logical. Your first impression may be the wrong one, you will do well to erase it from your mind and grasp the right one. And who knows, nobody is perfect; your lecturer's opinion may be the wrong one too!

In a case where you think your lecturer's opinion is the wrong one, it will not speak well of you to go around telling every student in the class that the lecturer is wrong. Doing this may cause them to begin to look down on the lecturer and some may even begin to nurse the thought that he is not efficient enough to handle the course.

This could lead to students making jests of him and mocking him in his absence. You cannot say, the news may get to his hearing and if he traces it down to you, you may not find it funny. Your name may enter his black book and you may need an extra effort to pass the course.

There are better ways to handle such issues. It makes more sense to meet the lecturer privately in his office one-on-one and let him see what you think about what he has just taught in class. In doing this, try to avoid being confrontational. Carefully and consciously choose your words so that your good intentions will not be misunderstood as pride.

If the lecturer sees that you have come to him with a humble spirit, he will hear you out and give you a better explanation on why he said what he earlier taught in class.

One of two things may happen then. He may succeed in convincing you that he is right. If you are really convinced, then you would have had more opportunity to know more than all the others in the class and you will be better of. Secondly, he may find out that he is on the wrong side.

If he finds out he is wrong, he can either admit it right on the spot or ask that you give him some time so that he can consult some higher authority. At this stage, it is safer to let the case rest. If he refuses to call you after this, do not worry. Your disposition must prevent him from thinking that you are proving to know too much. Do not report him to his fellow lecturers either. You may seek their opinion about the issue in question for more clarification.

If he now happens to ask the same question in the examination hall, since he has not come out to admit either openly in the class or privately to you that he is wrong, wisdom demands that you write what he taught you and what he thinks is right. Even if it is so obvious that he is wrong, since he will be the one to mark the answer script, it makes more sense to give to him what he wants.

It will be a different case if it were an external examination, where he will not be responsible for marking the script. In that case, you can confidently write the answer you have confirmed is right, irrespective of what the lecturer has taught you.

5:5 NOTE TAKING

This is the act of making, using and keeping notes. For review during your personal study period, it is advisable to put down brief readable notes from what the lecturer says. Pick out the main ideas, important details, vital points, technical terms and definitions. This makes reviewing what was heard in the class much easier and more effective. Notes should be in your

own words and written the way you will understand it, not necessarily in the lecturer's word, except for technical terms and precise statements which would better be put down verbatim.

Notes should not be written on rough scraps of paper picked up from the floor, backs of envelopes, cover of folders, on the palm, on past questions papers, table tops, cartons, boxes of goods, cover of textbooks or any paper that comes in handy or which could be found around.

These habits are bad and will not be of benefit to good students and those who want to be good students. Notes written in this form can easily be misplaced. Such notes, most of the time, are found wanting at the time they are needed most. Owners of these notes always regret that they kept such notes when examinations come. Notes should be written in notebooks, loose-leaf binders, higher educational notes or hard cover notes that would not be easily misplaced.

For more information about note taking, you can turn to Chapter Eleven (11) where the topic is fully dealt with.

Activity Five

(1) Practice listening attentively. To do this, after each lecture, try to recall and write down the main ideas, vital information and important definitions that the lecturer mentioned when he was in the class without looking into the notes you took down. Try this after each lecture until you are sure you are able to recall almost everything or at least eighty percent (80%) of what was said and taught during the lecture.

(2) Write down a list of factors that distract you or disturb your concentration during lectures.

(3) Are you being distracted now? Write down a list of factors that are distracting you now, whether external or internal.

(4) Write in front of each of these factors how to eliminate, control or take care of them.

(5) Get up and do what you have just written.

(6) Search through your bookcase, school bag and folder. Sort out all the notes you have written on scraps, rough sheets, cover of textbooks, past question papers etc. Transfer them (recopy) into proper notebooks.

Chapter Six

POST LECTURE ACTIVITIES

Rushing out of the lecture halls immediately after the lecturer's departure is a very common thing among students. Attending lectures, taking down notes, listening attentively and participating in the class are not all there is to learning effectively. To achieve excellence in academics, one must be ready to give it all it takes. One must be prepared to pay the price. There are other things that need to be done after the lecture in order to excel. They are discussed briefly below.

6:1 NOTE REVIEW

The first of the post lecture activities is note review. Note review means reading through the piece of information taken down by the student from what the lecturer taught during the course of his lecture. This should be done immediately after the lecture or some few hours after it, but not later than the day it was copied (when the lecture is still fresh in mind). Read through every one of your notes the same day they are taken down. This reduces the chance of forgetting the important details of the lecture.

Researchers have found out that most students quickly lose the capacity to recall. At the end of a one-hour lecture, most students find it difficult to recall the first half of the lecture and about two hours after the lecture, almost about half of the lecture would have been forgotten. The rate of forgetfulness may become slower after this.

Reviewing your notes immediately after the lecture will prevent massive loss of information received during the lecture. It also helps to fill in omitted details and it gives room for correction of errors that might have crept in while you were writing.

If you feel you missed out some points during the lecture, compare notes with a couple of hard working and serious students. If there is the need, feel free to cancel your lecture notes and rewrite them. You must properly edit your notes, crossing out some wrong information or inserting some omitted points.

Emphasize key points with the use of highlighter colors, bold lettering or by underlining. Take out time to also do your assignment while the lecture is still fresh. Do not wait for some other day to copy it from one of your friends.

6:2 LIBRARY USE

One problem that most students face is their inability to maximize the benefits of the library. Almost all higher institutions have libraries wherein are stored books that explicitly explain all the courses and topics taught in each of their departments. All these books are there, not for sale nor for decoration of the library shelves. They are all free for the use of students.

However, it is sad to know that majority of the students do not enjoy these privileges. The books just lie fallow there for weeks and at times for months without anybody at least opening them to see what they contain. The few students who make use of the library only go there to read their own handwritten notes, when they could have gotten better notes from textbooks in the library.

Make use of the library. Go in there and search for books that deal with your courses. You can either read the books there or borrow them for a period of time, could be days, weeks or months, as allowed by the library authorities. This way, you will have enough time to study them.

If you will need any of the books for references, you can make photocopies since most of the books may be very costly and you may not be able to afford them. Even when you can afford to buy the books, some of them may no longer be in print and so, it may be difficult to get them around your area.

6:3 GO FOR THE EXTRAS

Apart from the use of the library, you also need to go for extra facts. Do not rely solely on handouts or class notes, go for extra reading materials.

Make use of the textbooks you have. They are not bought for decoration of bookcases; they are bought to be read. Get two to three authorities on each topic. If you do not have, (since you may not be able to buy all the books needed) get from your friends. Articulate your points and organize them in a systematic way. Set questions for yourself on every topic. Read to test your ability.

You can also try your hands on past question papers that have related questions. All these will help you to understand the course better.

6:4 DISCUSSION GROUPS

Two good heads are better than one, they say. Another adage says: *Nobody is an island of knowledge.* Try to discuss what you have just learnt with someone. This is a very good way of checking your progress. A student who checks on his progress at intervals will learn faster than others. A student who does not do this may believe he knows when he does not really know.

Explain what you think you know to someone, you will enjoy it. He is likely to ask you some questions; answers them. You may be surprised to see that you do not know the answers to some of the questions you really think you can answer or that you have forgotten what you think you know.

Do not feel bad; you have just learnt one important thing, that is, you do not know what you think you know. You have discovered which topic you need to concentrate on through the discussion. If you do not understand it after reading it again, meet intelligent course mates or those who are better than you to exchange ideas and get more clarifications.

Make use of every opportunity you have to discuss your subject with your friends, relatives or neighbors. They may not necessarily be educated or be studying the same course as you, but you try to explain what you have learnt in a formal way to them in an informal set up and in plain language. In seeking for help, elite, course mates, literate and experts should in no way be avoided.

If it is a group discussion, the number of persons should be within four to six. To avoid disorderliness, indecency and confusion, each person should take turns to speak. Contrast in views should be addressed without noise, quarrel or argument. If you notice too much argument in your discussion group, the best thing to do is to leave it and form another one with a different set of people.

6:5 NOTE KEEPING

Preservation of notebooks is as important as taking down the notes. Of what use is a note taken down but not preserved till the time it is needed? It is a mere waste of effort.

Notes should be written in bound notebooks, loose-leaf binders, higher educational notes and hard cover notes or handy stapled files. They must be properly maintained, kept safe and cared for.

Notes should not be carried about with bare hands or squeezed into smaller bags. It shortens the life span of such notes. If they must be carried out, get a bag or make use of folders and files.

In addition, avoid bending your notes over when in use. Spread them flat on the table for convenience and to avoid damage.

Do not leave you notes lying on the table after studying. Ants and rats do eat papers. Water, oil or any other liquid may mistakenly spill on them too. Pack your books away from the table after every study session. Lock them up in a clean, dry cupboard or store them in the drawer of your locker, but not on the table. You may choose to arrange them on the bookshelf or bookcase.

Activity Six

(1) Review your notes immediately after the next lecture.

(2) How much of it did you understand? Is the lecturer's word still fresh in your mind?

(3) Is it of any benefit reviewing notes immediately after lecture?

(4) Get suitable textbooks and study aids on the topic from the library and digest their contents for better understanding.

(4) Discuss what you have learnt with one or two friends.

(5) Gather your scattered notebooks and textbooks and arrange them in proper places e.g. on the bookshelf/book case, in the table drawer in a safe cupboard or in your school bag.

Part Three

PERSONAL STUDY

Learning effectively neither ends in lecture rooms nor is it a few minutes review after the lecture.

It includes earmarking time out at home for personal study where nobody will be around to disturb you.

* What does a personal study room look like?

* What are the things found in such room?

* When is the best time to study each subject?

* How long should one spend on a subject?

* And how should studies be done to enhance assimilation and better understanding?

Answers to these questions and many more are provided in this part of the book.

Chapter Seven

THE STUDY ROOM

There are no hard-and-fast rules here. The choice of study room simply is personal. Some people are not easily distracted by movements and so can read in such public places as lecture rooms, libraries, under a tree or in the garden. Others, who cannot concentrate where there are distractions use their bedrooms for study. The desperate ones use private toilets once in a while! However, the best is to reserve a special room as a study room.

If you cannot devote a whole room to studies, then, try to keep a corner somewhere in your room where all your personal studies will be done. Let it serve as your study room or study corner.

Your studies should be done at the same place all the time. This has a great psychological effect on the human mind. Merely entering the room or sitting in the corner will induce, in your subconscious, an attitude of study. This helps you to settle down and get to serious work on time. This is the essence of a study room.

Whatever your study room is like, it must have the following:

7:1 VENTILATION

Ventilation is a free flow of fresh air in and out of your study room. The location of a good study room should allow for cross ventilation. It must be airy. It must not be too hot or too cold. If it is too hot or too cold, it will make you lose concentration on your studies. If the heat is much, you may

be tempted to stop your studies and if it is too stuffy, it may make you feel drowsy.

The room must be sufficiently ventilated to create room for the comfort needed for learning. Heat can be reduced by the installation of electrical appliances like fan (table fan, wall fan or ceiling fan). If the cold is too much, you may need to wear suits, jackets or sweaters.

These will help you concentrate fully on your study without any distraction till you have covered some appreciable number of topics before you withdraw from the room.

7:2 ILLUMINATION

You will also need a proper and adequate lighting system in the room. The light can come from a natural or an artificial source. It should however, not cast shadows on the table nor on the book you are studying for easy reading. It should come from an indirect source, bearing in mind that direct light shining on your eyes for a long period of time can cause poor eyesight as well as damage your eyeballs and prevent you from reading and seeing well.

The artificial sources of illumination could be an electric bulb, reading table lamp, fluorescent tube or the adjustable lamp. The adjustable lamp must not be too dim in order to avoid straining your eyes when reading.

Halogen lamps and other lamps that are more than 150 watts are too bright for studies and are not ideal for study rooms. If you must use them you must be far away from them. Getting nearer to them may even increase heat and distract you and at the same time, injure your lenses.

7:3 SOLITUDE

Study rooms should be located in quiet places. Personal study is always best when it is private. It is different from group discussions. Avoid studying with people; if possible, study alone. It is not ideal for two or more friends

who have some non-academic issues in common to study together in the same study room. If they are of the same sex, especially girls or if they are lovebirds, jokes, gossips, backbiting and immoral thoughts will be identified with their study periods. Studies are best done alone or at least in the absence of platonic and intimate friends.

When reading, it is not very easy to shut your friends out of your mind if they are physically present in your study room. Their absence will give you enough room to concentrate solely on your studies. Others around will not matter to you much, since they are not very familiar to you.

7:4 FREE OF DISTRACTIONS

The havoc caused by distraction to concentration has already been emphasized in Section 3:3 and in Section 5:2. Study rooms should be made free of internal and external distractions. Magazines, newspapers or novels lying around your study room may cut off your attention from your studies for hours if you attend to them. Television sets or radios waiting to be turned on may break your link with your books too.

If you are a lover of sports or football, your room should be far from where you will hear the noise of your friends playing football. The urge to be with them will be uncontrollable if you hear them. Keep yourself off all these distractions. It makes learning easier and faster during personal study period.

7:5 STUDY POSTURE

Lying on the rug, sitting on the bed, sitting on an armchair or on a very comfortable sofa to study is not advisable. The temptation to sleep is always too great to overcome. A good table and chair is ideal.

The table and chair should not be too small in order not to cause discomfort, thereby diverting attention often from study to the pain you are undergoing. The generally accepted size of the reading table is as follows: Height is 2

feet 6 inches, the length of the surface of the table is 3 feet 6 inches and the breath of the surface is 2 feet.

7:6 WALL POSTERS

The walls of the room of most students are decorated with posters of celebrities, football stars, choice musicians, popular artists and nude pictures of the opposite sex. If your bedroom is to be used as your study room, you must get rid of these posters. A quick glance at one or two of them may send you to the world of fantasies and will automatically put an end to your study sessions.

The wall of your reading room should be free of pictures and posters, either large or small, except for a display board on which to place charts, timetables, graphs, diagrams and maps which help to enhance better understanding of subjects being read.

Your reading table should not face the window for adequate concentration; it should face the wall. You will also need to keep the door of your study room constantly closed whenever you are in the room for study.

7:7 MATERIALS FOR STUDY

Try keeping all your study materials close to your reading table. Arrange everything you need for each study session beside you before starting the session. Make sure all is set before you start reading. It saves you the time and energy wasted in searching for pencils, biros and erasers.

Some of the things you will need for your studies are note books, files, pins, pencils, sharpeners, erasers, a set of mathematical instruments, drawing board, tee square, drawing instruments, French curves, highlighter colors, colored pencils, markers, table clock/alarm clock, rulers, tables (e.g. four figure tables, mathematical tables, steam tables e.t.c.), adding machines, scientific calculators, textbooks, dictionary, atlas, encyclopedia, thesaurus etc.

All these must be in the drawers of your reading table or provided there is space, in a bookcase, cupboard or bookshelf, right beside your reading table.

Avoid standing up during study sessions from your reading table to get needed materials for your study. It wastes a lot of time and also makes you lose interest in the study faster.

Activity Seven

(1) Do you have a reading room?
(2) What is the arrangement of your study room like?
(3) How efficient has your study room been?
(4) How many of the factors above are affecting your concentration in your study room? List them out on paper.
(5) Try to rearrange your study room, following the details in chapter 7.
(6) Leave it for a week, a month, a term, a semester or a whole session.
(7) What difference did you notice in your personal study period?
(8) Is this chapter of any advantage to you? List the advantages.

Chapter Eight

THE STUDY TIME

8:1 PERIOD OF STUDY

Questions such as *"How long should study periods be?"* or *"How much time should be spent on each topic, subject or course?"* have often bothered many students.

To get the quantity of hours you will need to spend on a course, you need to know how many hours you have for personal study in a day or a week. Divide your study time among all your subjects and make sure it covers all the subjects you want to treat.

It is not proper to divide the total number of hours available equally among the number of courses offered. The importance of each course should determine how much time is devoted to it. There is the need to allocate more time to difficult courses and more voluminous courses.

No study time should be less than forty-five (45) minutes. Study period of less than half an hour are of little use since it will take some time for the mind and the brain to warm up before responding favorably to studies.

Note also that excessive hours of study are not ideal. It only leads to inefficiency, bad health and diminishing returns on time spent. Science has shown that nobody can study for three hours at a stretch with maximum assimilation without a substantial break.

Again, nobody can be expected to work for more than eight (8) hours a day with maximum efficiency. For effective assimilation therefore, normal study time for a particular course should be between one hour and one hour forty-five minutes.

The rate of assimilation reduces after this, but it is easily regained by five to ten minutes' break. Go on short breaks after each period of study. You can take a short walk, go to a different room, get a cup of cold water or a drink, take a snack or talk to someone. This is enough to restore full efficiency. Return to your study room after the break.

The break should not be more than 5 to 10 minutes. Then you can resume your study, switching to a related course or another course entirely but not the same course. You can return to the course after one or two hours of studying other courses.

This method of study is more useful than mass study. It is not the number of hours spent in reading that matters, but what is achieved in the little period of time spent. If you are not able to cover what you think you should in a study period, do not stay on stubbornly and allow it to disrupt your carefully planned timetable.

Do not sacrifice any of your courses for another. All your courses are important. Leave the course if its time is up. There will always be another opportunity for it. Do not try to fall behind the time scheduled for it. This way, you will be able to maintain a splendid period of study and all your study sessions will be so interesting that you will not want to miss any of them.

8:2 WHEN TO STUDY

Students generally study at different times of the day: Some very early in the morning, some in broad day light, some in the evening and others in the dead of the night

Most students, however, just take their books to read at any time they feel like it, especially when they have some spare time at their disposal. Very few students have really taken time to study their rate of assimilation at each of these periods of the day in order to know when their degree of absorption is highest so that they can invest more into such times than at other periods, in other to have maximum efficiency.

It is advisable that all students do this. It will surprise many to find out that they invest more into periods when their rate of comprehension is very low. This is why most students need to read a paragraph over and over again before they can grasp the tiniest bit of what is being discussed therein. This is a waste of both time and human resources. It could have been avoided if they had taken time to really study the way their bodies function.

This should not take more than a week and it is best done at the beginning of the semester, when the workload in school is not heavy and you can afford to take a week out without feeling you are missing out on your study session. Just take your time to study different courses at different times of the day for a whole week and try to answer the following questions

(1) When do you have more time than other periods to spare for your study?
(2) When do you experience least distraction with maximum attention and concentration?
(3) What time of the day do you cover more topics?
(4) When is your rate of assimilation highest?

Answers provided to these questions will let you know the study time that suits you best. Yours may be different from that of your closest friend. Remember what we discussed in Section 1:7, (*if you have forgotten, you can flip back to it*). So do not let that cause you to change it.

This is not a rule; but so many of the students who have tried the process above have all come to agree in unison that the best time to study is the early hours of the morning when the brain is fresh, cool and has not been disturbed by the noisy activities of the day. This is the best time to tackle

dull, difficult and time demanding courses; that is, when attention and concentration are at their maximum.

Nevertheless, if, due to some circumstances beyond your control, you cannot get down to early morning studies, make the best use of any available time you have. Invest in them judiciously.

8:3 STARTING TO STUDY

The first few minutes of studies are warm-up periods. Then, the brain is not really ready to accept any new information. If you try to feed it at such times, you may find it a little bit difficult. You may have to read a sentence two or three times before you understand it. Such experience may be discouraging, especially during examination periods when you have so much to cover and have little or no time to waste.

The best thing to do at such time is to use the period to sort out your notes and revise the previous day's work. This reinforces the study of the previous day and consolidates the grounds covered.

This should not take more than five to ten minutes. Then your brain will be ready to receive any new information and your subconscious mind would have adapted to the environment especially if you do not have a permanent place of study.

8:4 ENDING A STUDY

It is not a good attitude to close your book once you read the last line on the last page of what you want to cover for that particular study session. Most students do this but it is not ideal. This is similar to opening the door to a treasure room filled with air-conditioning unit, packing all you need and then leaving without shutting the door. It may be disastrous.

Before you end any of your study sessions, take five minutes to revise what you have been able to cover during your study time. This helps to prepare you for the next subject on your personal study timetable.

Activity Eight

(1) Calculate the number of hours you use for personal study in a week. If it is below 15 hours, then you need to upgrade it. It should be at least within 20-30 hours weekly for full time students.
(2) Divide the number of hours among your courses; taking into consideration their importance, volume and credit load. Break it down to daily units.
(3) Make a timetable for your studies on each day of the week. See Section 12.3 on how to make a timetable.
(4) Try using the timetable for a month.
(5) Is there any improvement in your personal study period?

Chapter Nine

HOW TO STUDY

Study is not just reading, though reading is one of the processes of studying. If you lack the knowledge of the whole process and you engage only in reading all the time, you may not get the desired result, no matter how hard you try. There are various ways of studying but we are only going to explain the best amongst them all. It is generally accepted worldwide and has been tested and proven to be ninety five percent (95%) effective. There are five stages.

9:1 SURVEY

Flip through the pages of the chapter/book or the topic you want to study to get the general idea of the content and the scope of the materials. Skim through the pages to see pictures, graphs, tables, sub-topics and diagrams. If you are going to study a whole textbook, your survey should include the name of the author and his qualifications. Know if he is really qualified to write such a book.

You will also need to know the date of authorship of the book; modern science improves every day, a physics textbook written in 1890 cannot be compared to one written in 1999. Check the introduction or foreword to know why the book is written and who it is written for. Flip through the table of contents to discover the organization and the overall plan of the book and relative importance of each item in the table of contents.

Then, lastly, check for diagrams, tables, charts and graphs, reading one or two occasional sentences here and there. This should not take more than 10

to 15 minutes for a textbook and 5 minutes for a topic.

9:2 QUESTION

Before you embark on the actual reading of the book/topic, formulate questions based on the initial survey. Ask yourself questions like:

- *Why am I reading this book?*
- *What do I intend to gain from it?*
- *What do I lose if I do not read it?*
- *What points/topics am I particularly interested in?*
- *What am I supposed to know after reading through it?*

These and some others are questions you must ask yourself before going to the next step.

9:3 READ

This is the most commonly known process in studying. For better understanding of a topic or chapter, reading should be done at least twice at a fair speed before studying in details. Read for thoughts, ideas and phrases rather than for words. It is very important for relative reading.

Read, aiming at an appropriate level of comprehension and recall. Read to get specific answers to troubling questions. Read for new discoveries, not just rushing through the pages of the book to beat the time. Make a conscious and active search for new information. Get the main ideas of each paragraph; write down answers to truths and new discoveries found.

9:4 RECALL

This is recalling or reciting what you have read. This could be done at the end of each chapter. In the case of a lengthy or complex chapter, it could be done after each section or paragraph, depending on your ability to recall or recite what you have read.

Close your notebooks and textbooks and try remembering the main ideas, major points and important details of the portion you have read. Try to recall what was discussed under each point, the illustrations, examples and everything related to it.

Recite it aloud to yourself, then record it. This is the most vital part of study because it ensures that your efforts in studying are not wasted. This step is often omitted by the generality of students. It should be noted that whatever you can recall at this stage, you are sure to have mastered.

9:5 REVIEW

After recalling or reciting what you have learnt, take out time to check how much of it was correct. Open your notes and cross check if you are right. Note the points you failed to recall and the ones that were wrongly recalled. Read, digest and engrave them in your memory.

Review all the lectures/studies you did during the day at the end of the day. Review all the lectures/studies you did during the week at the end of the week. Review all the lectures/studies you have done during the month at the end of the month. At the end of the whole course, review everything you have learnt about the course.

Every subsequent revision of a topic which has been studied this way is always different, faster, easier and more interesting. If the topic involves calculations, attempt enough examples. Solve problems in handouts, textbooks and past question papers. Do not assume you can solve them, solve them! The more you solve, the better you understand.

Thoroughly reading through all the notes again before the final review for examination will yield better results. Studies done in this way reduce the rate of loss of information and give the ability to recall with 100% efficiency.

Your review sessions will be much more interesting if you test yourself. Try some questions, make use of active recall, either verbal recitation or written

one. This process of study is called the SQ3R method. The SQ3R simply stands for

S	*Survey*
Q	*Question*
R	*Read*
R	*Recall*
R	*Review*

Activity Nine

(1) What have you done to put this chapter into use?
(2) Go through the chapter and write down the list of things you have not been doing before during your study time.
(3) Resolve to begin to do them as from today.
(4) Is there any noticeable improvement in your studies after you started with the use of these methods?
(5) If there is/are, do not be too shy to write the author.

Part Four

BASIC LEARNING TECHNIQUES

This section deals with some important techniques that make learning interesting, enjoyable and profitable. If you have been finding your study sessions dull and boring, application of one or two of these techniques will resuscitate your study period. It will put more life into it and make you desire to continue studying anytime you sit down in your study room to study.

Chapter Ten

MEMORY IMPROVEMENT DEVICES

To be candid, one of the major difficulties that many students encounter is, remembering what they have learnt or read. They quickly lose the capacity to recall definitions, ideas and important events.

The belief handed down to us by our parents, through the ages, that memorizing many verses of the Bible or reciting a large number of poems offhand enhances and improves memory has been practiced by many but to no avail; it is rather mendacious. It is mere superstition. How then can one develop his memory?

The only way memory can be improved is through the use of Memory Improvement Devices (MID). Memory improvement Devices (MID) are systems that aid retention and recalling, development of the memory and make remembering easy.

Before we proceed, note that no device will help you memorize what you do not understand. Do not try to memorize what you do not understand until you have understood it. Trying the former will only be a waste of time and energy. At the end of the day, you will notice you have not studied anything.

You will find it easier to memorize a longer poem in English than a shorter one in French if you do not speak French. The reason is simple: memory depends on understanding. What you do not understand, you cannot

memorize. If you try to cram it, it will soon crumble or collapse and that is, when you need it most.

Let us have a look at some of these devices:

10:1 OVER-LEARNING

Active repetition of a thing makes one better at it. A basketball or football player becomes better by practicing every time. Actors and actresses come out well on stage after rehearsing over and over again. Apprentices also become masters by repeating the same task many times over and you can only be skillful in cooking over a period of time.

Over-learning means to learn again what you have learnt before or to read through what you have read again until it becomes part of you.

You can read the twenty-six alphabets of the English language A to Z without making mistakes because you have been learning it since you were young.

You can write your full names, surnames and other names inclusive, without looking at where you wrote them on this book or in your birth certificates and without watching the video clips of your naming ceremony.

This is because you have always heard the name since your first day on earth. You can give the description of your house to a stranger, stating the colors, shape, design and decorations without carrying the photograph of the house about because you have seen it over and over again. You have not for once made the mistake of entering someone else's room instead of your room. Have you?

That is exactly what over-learning does. When you hear a thing in the lecture room and you read it over and over again, it soon becomes familiar to you. If you see questions on it in the exam hall, you will not make the mistake of writing the wrong answers. You will be very sure of your

answers, as sure as you are of your name or your house or the color of your skin.

Experiments have shown that if you learn a thing until you just know it, you will forget faster than the one you continue to learn even after you have known it perfectly. So, whenever you are studying, do not stop when you have just learnt something new.

Continue revising it until the examination period. The more you learn, the more you understand and the more you understand, the better you memorize. The better you memorize, then the bolder you are to face the Examiners.

10:2 ASSOCIATION

When you associate the new information you receive at a lecture or the characteristics of a concept with examples around you, which are familiar, simple and easy to remember, it makes it easy for you to recall them. It also makes your study interesting, enjoyable and adventurous

After each lecture, always try to build an association between the materials you have learnt and the materials or objects in the outside world that are real and practical in life. It helps remembering things learnt or read. Failure to apply this constant association after each study period will deaden or mortify the knowledge gained and it will be of no benefit or advantage to you.

A good student must not limit himself to the lecture room, study room, note books and text books alone, but should seek an application of the knowledge he has gained through informal or *'outside-lecture-hall'* practical.

A student of Biology or related courses should go out to look for specimens to study. An Agricultural Science student should go to the farm to look for plants, relate their botanical name to any of their characteristics and identify their diseases and how to cure them. Geography students should study

population distributions, rivers, mountains and rocks in their immediate environment. History students should look at cultures and traditions and think of their origins and ancestors.

Every student must try to form a mental picture of what he has been taught. It is a good way of improving the memory, applying what you learn to nature and your environment.

10:3 RELATIONSHIP

This is the idea of linking the new materials you are learning with previous knowledge and relating things learnt with things already known. The more you can identify ways by which new materials are similar or related to that which is already known, the quicker it is to learn and the easier it will be to retain.

Studying a course in isolation makes it difficult. Link the topic with any of the topics you have learnt and see where they relate. Link the course with any other and find the similarities, the line of interception and the contrast. Relate it with what you learnt in your O' level.

When you have identified the similarities and contrast, then you can add the new information to it.

It becomes easier for you to add –

$$1 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 4$$

together if you still remember how to add –

$$1 + 1 = 2$$

together. An advanced knowledge of how to open a bracket –

$$a\,(a) = a\,2$$

will make it easier to understand how to open -

$$a\ (\ a + b\ ) = a\ 2 + a\ b$$

which in turn will make it easier to integrate the facts needed to open -

$$a\ (\ a + b\ )\ (\ c + d\ ) = (\ a\ 2 + a\ b\ )\ (\ a\ c + a\ d\ )$$

The knowledge of Newton's equations of motion will help solve many physics problems. Connecting new information learnt to things already known gives it a solid foundation on which to stand and weaves it together to make a web of information.

Always remember this, whenever you are studying: relate what you are learning with what you are already familiar with, look for analogies between the topic and other things and then apply the knowledge to practical day-to-day situations.

10:4 USE OF FORMULAE

Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and other Science-related subjects sometimes have some long statements that are always needed almost every time the subjects are being studied. Some of these statements of facts are simple and others are complicated and difficult to learn by heart.

The use of formulae will make learning these statements of fact easily understandable. For example this statement *"The total area of a rectangle is the multiplication of the length of a side of the rectangle by the breadth of a side of the rectangle"* can be compressed to -

$$A = L\ x\ B$$

Where A is the area, L is the length and B is the breath. Another simple example is this *"Water is formed when two atoms of Hydrogen combine with a single atom of Oxygen"* can be written as -

$2H_2 + O_2$ ---------- $2H_2O$

Newton's second law of motion states, *"The rate of change of momentum of a body is directly proportional to the force applied"*. This simply put as a formulae is -

$$F \propto \frac{M v - M u}{T}$$

It can be further broken to a simpler form -

$$F = M a$$

Formulae are highly condensed methods of conveying information for easy memorizing, remembering, reciting and recalling. If you find a law, rule or statement of fact that is too difficult to commit to memory, try to convert it to formulae. It makes it simple, attractive and portable. Imagine how this would have been written without the use of formulae-

$$X = - b \pm \frac{b^2 - 4 a c}{2a}$$

It is called "*Almighty Formulae*".

10:5 USE OF RHYTHM

The use of rhythm is the best way to memorize connected facts. It is also useful and of best advantage when fact and materials are to be learnt by heart. This is the method used by most nursery and primary school pupils in learning the multiplication table and poems. When next you have a problem with learning any important detail of your course by heart organize them into a rhythm or a short song.

60 Seconds make 1 Minute
60 Minutes make I Hour

24 Hours make 1 Day
7 Days make 1 Week
4 Weeks make 1 month
12 Months make 1 year
365 Days make 1 year
366 Days make 1 Leap year

and this ... ...

Thirty days have September,
April, June and November,
All the rest have thirty-one
Except February alone

Rhythm pattern makes a dull course interesting. You can keep singing the rhythms not only during your review time but also during your relaxation time, when going in a bus or car, when strolling down the road, when using the toilet, when preparing your food and in your dream when sleeping!

10:6 MNEMONIC

This is a very artificial system of training the memory. It is a trick that is used in remembering facts, which are not connected to each other.

It is easier to remember facts that are related to one another or which have a set pattern, in that, remembering one helps in remembering the others. Unconnected facts are not like this. Each of the fact is isolated and independent of the other. For example, look at the following sets of numbers:

5, 25, 125, 652, 3155,……(i)
2, 5, 11, 14, 17, 20,……(ii)
3, 8, 12, 15, 31, 64, 89, 90, 120,……(iii)

You will discover that it is quick to understand and easy to memorize the first two sets of numbers once you can uncover their set pattern. The first

set of numbers are the first five multiples of five, the second are the first seven multiples of three, one being subtracted from each. In the third set, there is no connection of one with the others.

This is where Mnemonics comes in. Mnemonic is trying to build association between irrelevant and unconnected facts. It can be done in a number of a ways. Some of such ways are:

(a) By using only the first letter or the first two letters of every word of the unconnected facts to form a single word e.g. BODMAS.

Brackets - B
Of - O
Division - D
Multiplication - M
Addition - A
Subtract - S

These six facts have been compressed into one through the use of Mnemonics. Any time you want to recall the arrangement of the six facts, all you need to do is recall BODMAS, putting in mind that each letter stands for a word.

This is not only applicable to BODMAS, but to every topic in every course. Another good example is that of the characteristics of living things which can be summarized as MR. NIGER D.

Movement - M
Respiration - R
Nutrition - N
Irritability - I
Growth - G
Excretion - E
Reproduction - R
Death - D

You can form one if any of your courses is giving you the same problem. Use the first letter or the first two letters of each word to form a new word. The word formed does not have to be found in the dictionary or to be accepted by your English teachers. It is solely for your usage. If you do not like the word formed, you can pick any other letter or letters from the word to represent the first letter.

(b) The second way is by making use of the first letter of each word to form another word which, when combined together, will make a meaningful statement e.g.

Mercury - M - My
Venus - V - Very
Earth - E - Eyes
Mars - M - May
Jupiter - J - Just
Saturn - S - See
Uranus - U - USA's
Neptune - N - New
Pluto - P - Products

Planets in space are arranged according to a set order. Merely remembering the simple statement “My very eyes may just see USA's new products” will remind one of not only the names of the planets through their first letters but also the order in which they are arranged in space.

Another example is that of the Periodic Table which consist of a number of different elements. The first twenty elements are -

H - Hydrogen = He
He - Helium = Has
Li - Lithium = Large
Be - Beryllium = Brain
B - Boron = But
C - Carbon = Can
N - Nitrogen = Not

O - Oxygen = Offer
F - Fluorine = Full
Ne - Neon = Nine
Na - Sodium = Names
Mg - Magnesium = Many
Al - Aluminum = African
Si - Silicon = Schools
P - Phosphorus = Play
S - Sulphur = Soccer
Cl- - Chlorine = Come
Ar - Argon = And
K - Potassium = Keep
Ca - Calcium = Cards

H He
Li Be B C N O F Ne
Na Mg Al Si P S Cl Ar
K Ca

"He has large brain but cannot offer full nine names. Many African Schools play soccer. Come and keep cards".

It is easier to commit these three short sentences to memory than remembering the names of twenty elements whose names are not related to one another. These three sentences remind one of the names of the elements, their groups and their period in the Periodic Table, thereby making learning faster, studying interesting and remembering easier.

These six techniques over-learning, association, relationship, use of formulae, use of rhythm and Mnemonics are the best memory improvement devices. They have been tested and have been proven to be of utmost benefit to all students from kindergarten class to the highest level of education all over the world.

Activity Ten

(1) What methods do you use in enhancing your memory?
(2) How efficient is the method?
(3) Has it ever failed you? How many times?
(4) Have you tried any of the six Memory Improvement Devices discussed in this chapter?
(5) If you have not, try it for a change during your personal study sessions today.
(6) Do you find it more efficient than the one you are used to? If yes, introduce it to all of your friends in your school and elsewhere.
(7) If you know of any other device that can improve the memory that is not discussed by the author, include it in your own copy of this book.
(8) You will do a great deal of favor to other students all over the world if you can write a letter to the publisher, discussing such a device for inclusion in subsequent publications of the book.

Chapter Eleven

NOTE TAKING

Note taking is the act of writing down the main ideas, important details, technical terms, major definitions and new information given during lectures, seminars, workshops, studies and training sessions.

The human memory is limited. It absorbs a vast amount of different pieces of information, facts and knowledge on daily basis. These pieces of information are so vast that the human memory cannot recall them all effectively. Therefore, it needs a gadget to help remind it of some or all of these facts and information. This is where the help of a notebook comes in.

Notes can be defined as summaries of main ideas with supporting facts and figures from a lecture. They are extracts of all the vital points of a seminar.

11:1 IMPORTANCE OF NOTE TAKING

It is a common saying that *"the faintest pen is sharper than the brightest brain"*. Note taking during lectures, seminars and workshops using a small pencil is better than listening with full concentration and attention without putting down anything.

It is important that you always take your writing materials with you anytime you go for lectures. Take with you at least a small jotter and a pen. What you are going to put down in the jotter with that small pen can remain for as long as you live. It can even outlive you if it does not get burnt. This is the essence of note keeping. Some of the reasons note taking is encouraged are:

-

(a) Notes aid memory. It has been established earlier that the human mind forgets things easily. After the end of an hour lecture, most students would have forgotten what the Lecturer said in the first half of the lecture. A note well taken will enhance the remembrance of such.

(b) Notes help to compress what the textbook covers in about twenty to thirty pages to about three to four pages, saving you a lot of time during revision. Authors make use of various examples, diagrams, tables, charts and pictures to drive their points home. They also give problems to be solved at the end of the chapters. This makes most textbooks voluminous. Since you will not need to include all the information in the textbook in your notes, it makes it portable and easy to carry about.

(c) Note taking increases concentration during lecture hours. The human mind when not pointedly fixed on a thought, strays away easily. You would have noticed that once in a while or more often than not, as the case may be, that your mind drifts from what the lecturer is saying to the thoughts of other things. Since note taking requires full attention, it helps to keep the mind busy, away from any irrelevant thoughts that may want to distract you. It keeps the mind fixed on what the lecturer has said, what he is going to say next and what he is saying presently. These enable you to concentrate the more during lecture periods.

(d) Note taking enhances understanding. Note taking involves putting down your lecturer's ideas in your own words. If you do not understand his points, you will not be able to put them down in your own language. The conversion of the lecturer's idea into your own word shows that you understand what he is teaching. Your failure to put these points down in your own language shows you do not understand them yet.

(e) Note taking makes reviewing what was learnt in the class easier to understand and it is much more effective in learning.

11:2 CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD NOTES

(I) Good notes are brief and precise, straight and direct to the point. If notes are too long, it will be a strenuous job reading through them.

(II) Notes should be meaningful. Do not allow the brevity of your notes to render it meaningless. If it does, it becomes useless to you. Do not make the note so brief that you would not be able to reinstate missing processes. The items you include in your notes should be enough to reconstruct the whole material.

(III) Good notes are handy and portable. When notes are bulky, they become a problem and this may discourage one from taking them to the study room or for lectures whenever they are needed.

(IV) Notes must be clear and easy to understand. The main purpose of taking down notes is to read them for examinations. If notes are not clear enough or properly arranged in a logical sequence according to the topics and the sub headings, it becomes difficult to understand and it has failed in its purpose. All notes on the same topic should be kept together for easy accessibility and written clearly for quick understanding.

11:3 HOW TO TAKE NOTES DURING LECTURES

Taking notes during lectures is an art that must be developed by practice. It requires interest, concentration, attention and alertness of mind.

Whenever you are taking down notes during lectures, two things are being done at the same time. You are listening and writing; and you must concentrate on both. If you focus your attention more on what you are writing, you will lose concentration on the lecturer's next line of thought and you stand the chance of missing some vital points.

If you also focus more on what he is saying, you may be carried away by his eloquence so much that when you recover from it to start to write, you would have forgotten some major points from the first part of the lecture. Therefore, you need to know the best time to listen and also know the best time to take down notes during lectures.

Make the best use of periods when the lecturer pauses, repeats what he has said, emphasizes what he is saying, paraphrases or summaries his points to write in your notes; you will miss nothing new during this period.

Immediately he begins a new point, stop whatever you are writing to hear more from him. Break off before completing a note in order not to miss the initial word of the next point. Hold the former point in your memory for a while until you have another chance to write. Go back to where you broke off after the lecturer's new points and complete the first point before writing the second point.

Learn to switch your attention from writing to listening quickly. Write your notes in your own words, not compulsorily in the lecturer's language, except for important definitions and precise statements which are best written in the lecturer's words.

Do not write long sentences because of the constraints of time; write in short phrases. Repetitions and too many examples should be avoided. Only few interesting ones should be included.

Concentrate on the content word, especially nouns, verbs and adjectives. Watch for key word pointers. They are signboards that show the direction where the lecturer is pointing.

Some of them are:

POINTERS OF TIME AND RELATIONSHIP

Then……., Next……...,
While……... ...., When……..…,
After that……... ..., Usually……..…..,
Previously…… , Already……..…..,

POINTERS OF TRANSITION

Consequently……..., Because of this……,
Nevertheless……, Considering this fact……,

For this reason……., So therefore……,

POINTERS OF CONTRASTING IDEAS

Although……., Unlike others……,
Even if……., On the other hand……,
And yet……., However……,
Nevertheless……., Unless……,
But……, Contrary to popular belief….

POINTERS OF REPETITION OR EMPHASIS

In other words……... , Let me put it this way…..... .,
That is to say……..... ., For the sake of clarity… ... .,
This means…… ... , I would like to emphasize...,
To put this in another way..., Once again…… ,
As we have learnt……..., Take note of this fact……..,
As I have said before……., Don't forget that……..,
This is very important because……..,

POINTERS THAT LIST IDEAS CHRONOLOGICALLY

In the first place…… ., Firstly……,
Secondly……, Thirdly……..,
Fourthly……., Lastly……,
The next point is……...,

POINTERS SHOWING THE END OF A LECTURE

In conclusion……, As we have seen……,
In summary……..…., What I've been saying is ...,

Learn these keys-word pointers and master them. They help you listen more attentively and show you what and when to write, enabling you to take down notes more efficiently.

Activity Eleven

(1) Which do you enjoy more, note taking from lectures or note taking from books?
(2) Why do you think you prefer the latter?
(3) What are the difficulties you face when taking down notes?
(4) Did you find solutions to them in this chapter?
(5) Write down the solutions directly in front of the problems.
(6) Practicalize the solutions and see if it will solve your problems.
(7) Write to the publisher or author and tell him what you think about them.

Chapter Twelve

TIME PLANNING

Time is unique. It is one of the priceless resources given to man by God. It is God's free asset to all mankind and it is given in equal measure to everybody. However, it is limited. Its limited nature calls for proper planning and good organization of our busy schedules in order to get the best out of it.

The proper use of time matters. Only those who effectively manage their time succeed in life. In the business world, time is known to be money; hence the saying *"time is money",* but it is much more than that. Time is life.

Every passing second is a fraction of one's life under the sun. The seconds put together form the number of years one spends on earth. Wasting one's time then is wasting one's life.

Time is crucial. Other resources like wealth, health, fame and titles can be regained if lost, but not time. Once it is lost, it can never be regained for life. It waits for no one. A study on time management shows that: -

(1) The person who wastes fifteen (15) minutes out of every hour will waste twenty-five (25) years if he lives up to over a hundred years.

(2) The person who sleeps eight (8) hours a day and lives to be seventy-five (75) years has actually spent one third of his life (25 years) sleeping.

(3) If you spend forty-five (45) minutes in bathing and dressing up everyday for one hundred (100) years, you would have spent one thousand, one hundred and forty three (1,143) days (about 3 years) bathing. However, if you spend only five (5) minutes daily, you would have spent one hundred and twenty seven (127) days in a hundred years. What a difference?

This study shows that time is crucial and delicate. It cannot be stored, stretched or stopped. It waits for no one. Its proper use can lead to a life of fulfilled wishes but its abuse can be disastrous.

12:1 VALUE OF TIME PLANNING

(a) Time-tabling enables one to organize and to make the best use of time. It aids efficiency and shows how diligent one is as a student. A student who does not have an organized timetable may not know how much of his time is wasted on other irrelevant things and not on his studies.

(b) It helps to know the best time to study each course. Most times, students without a well-planned timetable are always indecisive about what course to study and at what time to study it. They spend more time deciding what to study than they do in the actual studying. Timetables save students from wasting such precious time in making a choice as to what courses to read and when to read them.

(c) At times when studying, most students find it difficult to concentrate fully because of the thought of some extracurricular activities that need to be attended to. This can be avoided by carefully planning the week's event ahead of time. Timetable helps you to concentrate on the subject under study, knowing fully well that the other things that need immediate attention have been taken care of on the timetable.

(d) Timetables enhance commitment by discouraging laziness thereby motivating students to read.

(e) It helps the user to cover all courses being offered, giving more time to the more important courses and less time to the less important ones. It

prevents some courses from suffering neglect due to hatred of the lecturer or course or to the volume of course outline and difficulty in understanding some topics. It helps allocate the right time of study to the right courses, preventing any from being neglected.

(f) Most times, more time than needed is spent on some household chores and other activities. Planning helps to make wise judicious sharing of our time among all the activities we are involved in and helps us to work more efficiently without wasting too much time.

12:2 WHAT TO KNOW WHEN PLANNING YOUR TIME

You must be honest with yourself when planning a timetable. Be careful about including activities you will not be able to perform. Your timetable must be one that you can cope with. It must not be too demanding and must be realistic. If your timetable is too demanding, it may discourage you from studying well and this is dangerous.

A careful display of well planned but neglected activities may deceive you into believing that everything has been taken care of, when, in fact, nothing is being done. Include only what you can do in your timetable. Do not try to impress anybody. Remember, self-deceit is self-defeat.

Everybody on earth is different. No two people are exactly alike. Even the most identical of twins are said to have some contrasts. This explains why you must plan your own timetable. Do not copy someone else's own. Take your time to plan for yourself how best to organize your time. Do not allow some other person do it for you. You are peculiar. You are different. Someone else's aim may not necessarily be the same as yours. Only the one you plan for yourself will take you to the peak of your success.

When planning your timetable, make it cover a considerable period of time. Planning a timetable for two to four days may be too short. Again, re-planning your time table every two days may be cumbersome.

Planning for three weeks or a month may be too long and you may get bored with it or you may have to restructure some omissions there before completing a cycle. Hence, planning for a week (7 days) is ideal, good and realistic. Being so specific makes it suitable for measuring.

There are four weeks in a month, thirteen in a term and at least sixteen in a semester. Plan your timetable for a week, covering from Monday to Sunday and you can use it for the rest of the school session, either a term or a semester.

On your personal timetable, try as much as possible to see that two difficult subjects do not follow each other. When they do, they make you lose interest in your study. This loss of interest and lack of motivation may make you stop your personal study before the planned period.

Make sure that after the study of every difficult or boring subject, the next on the personal study timetable should be interesting and easy to understand to make up for whatever interest might have been lost during the study of the difficult course.

Your study time should be spread evenly to cover almost all the days of the week. You will learn more by studying one hour a day for seven days of the week than you will in seven hours of study in a single day. Do not overload a day of the week with your studies; distribute them among all the other days.

Remember to include at least five to ten minutes break after every hour of study as we have discussed earlier. Carefully go through Section 8:1 again to see more of the things you will need to know when planning to organize your time.

12:3 MAKING A TIMETABLE

Man is full of activities. It is common place to find that our time is not always enough for our jobs and it often seems we may not be able to find sufficient time for everything we feel like doing. If God's secretariat were

on earth, application letters would have been written for the extension of the total number of hours in a day to forty-eight (48) hours.

The problem is not that the twenty-four (24) hours is not enough or that we do not have enough time. We really do. The problem is that we do not know how to manage our time aright. If we can properly organize our time, we will find more than enough time for all we plan to do. If God should increase the number of hours in a day to forty-eight (48) hours, it will still not be enough. If you cannot manage twenty-fours (24) well, then you certainly will not manage forty-eight (48) hours well.

Making a timetable helps to create enough time for all the activities we want to do.

There are a total of 168 hours in a week. Look at the table below and fill in how many hours you think you need per week for each of the activities stated therein.

ACTIVITIES	**HOURS**
MORNING DEVOTION /WARM UP/EXERCISE	
HOUSEHOLD CHORE Bathing/Washing/Ironing/Cleaning	
FOOD PREPARATION AND EATING	
SCHOOL HOURS PRACTICAL LECTURES	
LEISURE HOURS/RELAXATION	
PERSONAL STUDY HOURS	
SLEEPING HOURS/SIESTA PERIODS	
TRAVELING / TRANSPORTATION	
OTHER MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES	

The total number of hours you think you need should not be more than the total number of hours available in a week (168 hours). They stand a better chance of being well utilized if they are less than 168 hours.

The three extra spaces at the bottom of the table are for any activity you may want to

TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS (Must be less than 168 hours)	

include which has not already been included. If the total number of hours you think you need is less than 168 hours, then you can proceed to the next step of making your timetable but if not, reorganize your time schedule. You may find out that you have devoted more time than necessary to some of the activities.

After reallocating your time schedule, you will see that the total number of hours needed in a week is less than 168 hours. If it is exactly 168 hours, then you have a very busy life and you will need to cut down the number of hours spent on some of the activities you engage in.

A proper, blank timetable that covers all the hours in a week is drawn on the next page of this book. Copy and fill the table to see what your timetable will look like at the moment.

You now have a timetable that covers a whole week and which includes all the activities you can think of participating in, in a whole term or semester. When filling the timetable, be guided by Section 8:1, 8:2 and 12.2.

12:4 REVISION OF TIMETABLE

Try your current timetable for a week to see if it really suits you. You may find out that you have been too strict on yourself. If so, you will need to add some leisure time to make life comfortable and studying convenient for you.

If you find out that you still have excess time, allocate it to your personal study hours or to leisure, as may be appropriate. Try this new timetable for two or three days in order to get a stable, balanced and convenient timetable.

When you notice that you can work conveniently without taking up too many unnecessary leisure and without stressing yourself, then your timetable is best for you and can last for a term/semester.

Repeat the process every new term/semester to get a well-planned timetable for the new term or semester in order to get good results in each of the subjects/courses offered. It is your surest way to coming out in bright, flying colors.

Activity Twelve

(1) Make a suitable timetable that will guide you this term/semester.
(2) Paste it on your study table or on the wall of your study room.
(3) Write out another copy and paste it in your bedroom.
(4) Write out the third copy and paste it in either in your kitchen, toilet, bathroom or somewhere you will see it daily.
(5) Live by it until you have imbibed the habit and developed the most suitable attitude to studies.

Part Five

HANDLING EXAMS

So far, we have learnt a few practical things on the causes of academic failure, the nature of personal studies and of lecture room attitudes as well as the utilization of some learning techniques. These should be enough to make one sail through any ocean of examinations, since they deal basically with how best to read in order to understand better.

However, this book will be incomplete without the addition of this last topic on EXAMINATIONS. One or two more points discussed here will put you in the best position to demolish any mountain of examination before you.

Every game has its own rules, examinations inclusive. Whenever you adhere to the rules, you are sure of getting the right results. If not, you miss them. Our concern in this part is with the rules guiding examinations, the transaction in the examination halls, preparations for them and how best to achieve the desired laurels.

Chapter Thirteen

GETTING SET FOR THE EXAMINER

After all said and done, the floor is now set for the ball to roll. The term/semester is coming to an end and there are rumors of the release of the examination timetable. By now, you should have covered all the topics expected of you in each of the subjects you offer and must be fully prepared to face the examinations.

If you have not, you can still try to cover as much as possible in the next few weeks before the examination day. Once the examination timetable is released, the following guidelines will help you get set for the examination.

13:1 PREPARATIONS

In getting set for the examination, you must first equip yourself for the job ahead. Get the necessary information about the examination ahead of time. Information like date(s) of the examination, examination timetable, time for each paper, duration and nature of the examination (Essay, Multiple Choice, German Objective oral Examinations, Practical Examinations and Calculations) are very important and should not be neglected.

Armed with these facts, get past question papers and practice them under the normal examination conditions. Use only the necessary materials and the normal time you will be allowed in the examination hall. Do this two to three times. The outcome of this will reveal your preparedness for the examination.

If the examination is an external one and may likely not be organized by your school, the examination center may be an entirely strange place to you. If the examination center is not familiar to you, locate the place with the help of a friend or relative before the day of the examination. Invigilators do not take lateness into the examination hall lightly.

13:2 EXAMINATION EVE

Real preparation for the examination starts on the examination eve. You must be ready with everything you will need for the examination. These necessities include a sharpener, eraser, set of mathematical instruments, ruler, pencil, drawing instruments, a couple of pens, an extra biro and other materials approved for the examination. Ensure that the battery of your calculator is still functioning.

Do not wait to discover the battery is dead in the examination hall. Note that solar calculators are not reliable during rainy season. Put all materials in a handy pack in preparation for the main day; realizing in the examination hall that you are not with one or some of the major materials you need may be destabilizing. Worse still, your Invigilator may not permit walking about and/or borrowing. These usually can lead to failure.

It is a bad habit to study all night on the examination eve or to use drugs or stimulants in order to keep awake in order to read far into the night. It results in poor performance. Avoid studying late into the night on the examination eve. Go to bed early and get good sleep. Give your brain enough rest and you will wake up with a fresh and alert mind. This is better than studying all-night and waking up with a fact-packed, but sleepy, heavy and aching head.

13:3 EXAMINATION MORNING

Have a light and hot breakfast before leaving home for the examination center on the day of your examinations. A cold, heavy meal will make you feel drowsy and an empty stomach may reduce your efficiency.

Examination tension and phobia may cause you to throw up in the hall if your stomach is empty. So, have a hot meal.

Your clothes, as a candidate preparing for examination, should be decent and moderate. Clothing must neither be too loose for comfort or too tight for convenience. Any dressing that makes you feel uncomfortable or inconvenient is not advisable. The examination hall is not a fashion parade ground, therefore, wear something moderate.

You must ensure that you arrive at the examination hall on time before the examination starts. Go with the relevant materials which you gathered into a handy pack the previous night.

Get a seat where there is enough ventilation and illumination. Make sure your desk and chair are in good condition. It will waste some precious time trying to find another during the examination. If they are not in good condition, call the attention of the supervisor for a re-positioning or necessary adjustment before the examination starts.

Be relaxed in the examination hall. Do not discuss the subject to be done with friends on the morning of the examination to avoid depression consequent upon the thought of uncovered topics. Do not be nervous, since you have done all in your power to do. Even if you have not really prepared, do not worry. Worrying does no good since it is already too late to learn anything worthwhile or meaningful.

Depend on the ones you have studied. Do not rush to read anything on the morning of the examination; doing this can be disturbing. If you must read, do not learn any new facts or information, only revise.

Settle down on your seat and compose yourself well. Rid yourself of everything that may implicate you. Check your surrounding for rumpled papers, old notes, writing pads or anything that may cause any incrimination.

Activity Thirteen

(1) How many times have you failed your examination?
(2) Can you remember the level of your preparation then?
(3) What were the causes of your failure? Write them out.
(4) Take necessary precaution so that they do not affect your examinations again.

Chapter Fourteen

UNDERSTANDING THE EXAMINER

Many students have cultivated the habit of opening their question papers and writing as soon as the papers are given. This has been the cause of most students' failure. A common sentence in the cover page of almost all question papers reads- *"Do not open this booklet until you are told to do so!"*

When you are given the question papers and the answer sheets, do not start until you hear the bell ring or you are told to start by the supervisor. Some invigilators may penalize you for that. So, be careful. While waiting for the bell to ring, it is advisable that you do the following: -

14:1 THE QUESTION PAPER

Study the instructions on the cover page of the question paper and the answer sheet carefully before opening. Do not assume you know all the instructions. Do not rely on what you read in past question papers. Read them.

After that, write your name and your examination number in the appropriate places on the answer sheet. It will be a costly mistake if you fail to do this. If your answer sheet is pre-printed, make sure the details correspond and are correctly printed. If you have to shade, shade with the required pencil. Remember to cross check twice to be sure you have not shaded the wrong option.

Note also the numbers of the questions to answer, the marks allocated to various questions and the questions that carry more marks than others.

14:2 TIME ALLOCATION

Note the time allocated to various sections so as to know the weight of each question and how long you are to work on each of the sections. Know the total time allocated for the examination and budget your time.

The tendency, most times, is for students to spend more time on the questions they think they can answer well to the detriment of the others. Very often, they do not earn as much marks as they expected from these questions. If they even do, the total percentage of the question, compared to the overall mark, may be infinitesimal.

Allocate the right time to the right questions, whether or not you feel like it. Leave some minutes for the final review of your paper. Do not exceed the time limit for each question or each section.

14:3 THE QUESTION

As soon as the starting bell rings, skim through the pages of the question paper, scanning the instructions on each section. If you notice some faults in the materials given to you, if some pages of your question paper are missing or some parts are faded and faint, lodge a complaint with the supervisors or invigilator and get better materials.

In an examination, only a fixed amount of time is allocated, so, do not waste it. Start with the questions you find easy. This builds up your courage. Again, they are time-saving questions.

If you do not understand a question, leave it and try the next one. Go through the entire question paper; completing it as you are able, without using up too much time. Then go back and have another look at the time consuming questions or questions which puzzled you the first time.

Unconsciously, your brain would have done a bit of quiet review and you may now remember some or all of the answers you thought you had forgotten. The exercise you have done already, that is, going through a number of different questions, will stimulate your brain cells to greater efforts and you will then be able to work out more difficult problems with greater success.

Treat the compulsory questions first before others because they usually carry more marks. Attempt all questions that carry more marks, whether easy or not, before the ones that carry less. If the questions are optional, then they carry equal marks. Do the ones you understand better; the Examiner will not be impressed by your choice of the difficult one if you cannot answer it adequately.

Do not spend more than the time allocated for each question or section. Write points in the examination hall; do not tell too many stories.

Answer the question in such a way that the lecturer will understand what you are saying. Convince him that you know and that you are not just beating about the bush or guessing.

14:4 GENERAL TIPS

Write legibly. Good, clear and legible handwriting is the Examiner's delight. It makes the Examiner's work easy. He may, unintentionally, jump to the wrong conclusions, being unable to read what you have written. You must therefore write clearly. Illegible handwriting may frustrate and irritate the Examiner.

Write fast in order to beat the time, but be careful. Do a neat peace of work without any rough cancellations. Cancellations should be neat, with just two long strokes across the page, where the error cannot be erased.

Activity Fourteen

(1) Using the techniques you have learnt in note taking, summarize what you have learnt in this chapter.
(2) Are you in agreement with everything the Author has written or do you disagree with some?
(3) Which of them do you disagree with?
(4) Express your view clearly, stating your reason(s).
(5) Discuss it with two or more of your friends and weigh their opinions.
(6) Write to the Author about it. Correspondents are encouraged. Check the copyright page (Page VI) for the Author's contacts.

Chapter Fifteen

SATISFYING THE EXAMINER

As earlier discussed, every game has its own rules and failure to abide by the rules of each game may lead to disaster. The same thing applies to examinations.

Examinations come differently. There are the Oral examinations, Practical examinations, Essay questions, German Objectives, Multiple Choice questions, Calculations/Problems and the Aptitude Tests, either Verbal or Quantitative. Some of the most common ones are discussed briefly below.

15:1 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

This is commonly referred to as Objective (OBJ) Questions. In this type of examination, each question asked has about five possible alternative answers to choose from, but only one of the answers is correct. The other four wrong answers are intended to make candidates think well and to confuse candidates who did not prepare well enough for the examination.

If you hope to obtain good marks in this type of examination, thorough preparation is needed in order not to fall into the deceptive traps of the Examiners. The questions are arranged to confuse the candidates and the multiple answers are given to make matters worse. So, adequate preparation is needed.

To go about this type of examination, read the questions twice and go through the given alternatives a number of times before choosing your answers, but do not waste time on this. If you cannot think of a correct answer, do not guess. If you do, you are likely to be four times wrong than you are right.

The only reasonable condition under which you are permitted to guess is when, after carefully examining the five given answers, three are found to be irrelevant to the question asked and are obviously wrong, so that the choice lies between the remaining two options. You can then make an intelligent guess and select one of the two choices left.

Do not jump to the conclusion that the long or difficult answers are the correct ones. It does not work like that. The Examiners include them for a reason, to distract you.

Finally, if you are shading, shade moderately, make it clear and visible, but avoid punching your answer sheet. Do not shade more than one alternative. If you are changing your answers, erase completely the first choice. If more than one answer is marked, the answer will be invalid.

15:2 CALCULATIONS/PROBLEMS

This is very common in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and related courses. It basically involves working with number, adding, subtracting, dividing and multiplying sometimes through the use of formulae.

When you sit for this kind of examination, keep a close watch on your signs (positive and negative). Pay attention to units and remember to put them at the appropriate places, they fetch you extra marks. If you are not told a thing, do not assume it is so: work it out, stating clearly the steps. No assumptions.

Also, note that there is a difference between measuring in degrees and measuring in radians. Both are not the same: interchanging the two will

surely get you the wrong answer.

Differentiate significant figure from decimal places. Know which to apply and when. It can be confusing at times if you are not careful. Avoid the temptation of making approximations unless you are told to do so.

15:3 ESSAY TESTS

In essay tests, you are required to put down your thoughts or what you think you know in written form. Answer each question clearly and concisely as you can.

Essay tests are given to test the candidate's understanding of the topic under discussion, his ability to express himself in a manner in which others will understand and how well he can co-ordinate when writing. Therefore, when sitting for an essay test or examination, do not begin to write until you know what to write and how best to write it.

Clearly map out your points on a rough sheet or on the question paper and rearrange them with the important ones first. It will save you from forgetting some of the points.

Write out a skeletal outline of your answer on the answer sheet before discussing or developing them. It will save you time, give you a well-planned argument and earn you some marks if you are unable to finish during the time allocated.

Introduce your argument, define your terms well and then conclude your essay. Do not leave your answer hanging.

If the question is not familiar and you are at a loss as to what to write, leave it for some time and answer the others. If, after answering other questions, you are still at a loss as to what to write, do not leave your answer sheet

blank. Write something by all means. There is nothing to gain from submitting a blank sheet.

Depend on your common sense and write anything that seems to make enough sense and is relevant to the question. At least, it will fetch you some marks; even if it is only one, it is something. Attempt all the questions you are expected to answer, but do not write stupid, foolish or irrelevant things.

Understand what you are asked to do. Some candidates misunderstand the questions. Some of the most common questions that are often asked in essay tests and which are easily misrepresented by the students are listed below:

(1) ACCOUNT FOR: - Give an explanation of things required.
(2) ARGUE AGAINST: - Disagree in strong terms by giving reasons against and in opposition to those of others. Don't support the motion; disprove it.
(3) ARGUE FOR: Persuade by providing reasons strongly in defense of your opinion, clearly and in a proper order. Don't disprove; support the motion.
(4) ARGUE FOR OR AGAINST: - You are at liberty to choose either to argue for or against. Answering both is a futile effort and will only waste your time without compensation with extra mark for wasted time or wasted effort.
(5) ARGUE FOR AND AGAINST: - Unlike the number 4 above, liberty is given to both support and disprove the motion. Arguing only for or against will not give the required mark because it is incomplete. Playing the two sides is what is required
(6) BRIEFLY EXPLAIN (EXPLAIN BRIEFLY): - Give clear meaning of a thing in a shortened form in as few words as possible, but exactly expressing the intended meaning without omitting any fact.
(7) CALCULATE: - Find out by working (adding, dividing, subtracting, multiplying, differentiating and integrating) with known facts or figures.
(8) COMPARE: - Look for and show the points of likeness, relationship or the similar qualities of one thing and another.

(9) CONTRAST: - Examine and point out the noticeable differences and unlikeness between two or more facts, statements, persons or objects.
(10) COMPARE AND CONTRAST: - Do both numbers 8 and 9 above; do not stop after the completion of the first. Find similar qualities and differences between given facts, objects or persons in order to get the full mark.
(11) CONTRIBUTE: - Reason within yourself and put down your ideas. Supply ways to help in bringing about solution to a lingering problem.
(12) DESCRIBE: - To give a picture of an account, a scene or an event in words. To tell what something is like.
(13) DEFINE: - Give the meaning of a word or a terminology.
(14) DIFFERENTIATE: - Show the differences between two or more things or facts (Read Contrast - Number 9 above.)
(15) DRAW: - Produce a picture or a diagram with the aid of pencils or pen.
(16) DRAW AND LABEL, (MAKE A LABELED DIAGRAM): - Do not only draw, write the name of each part of what you have drawn in front of the part, with arrows pointing to the specific location of the parts.
(17) DISCUSS: - Write all that you know about a topic or a subject, you need not be brief because it is not required. Write as much as the time can allow you.
(18) DISTINGUISH: Set apart or differentiate from all the others (See Differentiate Number 14 and Contrast No 9)
(19) ENUMERATE: - To name one by one, making a list
(20) EVALUATE: - Calculate the value or the degree of a number of facts, figures or abilities.
(21) EXPLAIN: - Make known in detail; make clear.
(22) FIND: - Discover a fact that was not known, bring back a long lost data or provide an answer to a question by conscious effort.
(23) GIVE: - Show, produce or supply the information required.
(24) HIGHLIGHT: - Pick out or give your attention to an important part of a detail that stands out from the rest or a striking part of a picture, diagram or map.
(25) IDENTIFY: - Show or prove what a particular thing or who a particular person is.

(26) ILLUSTRATE WITH THE AID OF A DIAGRAM: - make your points clear with the use of pictures/diagrams.
(27) ILLUSTRATE WITH EXAMPLES: - Make your points clear with the use of related examples. You need not draw, except you have ample time.
(28) ITEMIZE: - Set out all the details one by one on a list.
(29) JUSTIFY: - Give a good reason to show it is right, true and blameless. Prove it is just
(30) LABEL: - The diagram is already given: name each part shown on it. (Read, Draw and Label - Number 16).
(31) LIST: - Write the required points one after the other in a particular order so that they can be easily read.
(32) LIST AND EXPLAIN: - Combine both numbers 31 and 21. After writing out the main points one after the other, give the meaning of each point and the reason for it.
(33) LOCATE: - Find and highlight or mark the position of a certain place on a map, diagram or picture.
(34) LOCATE AND NAME: - Find, highlight or mark the position of a given place on the map, diagram or picture and give the word(s) or title(s) by which the place is called or recognized by others.
(35) MENTION: - Put down a short remark about something in a few words or write the name of a thing.
(36) NAME: - Give only the word(s) or title(s) by which a thing is generally known, called or recognized.
(37) NARRATE: - Tell a story or describe an event that you witnessed.
(38) OUTLINE: - Give the main facts and general idea of a thing.
(39) OUTLINE A MAP: - Draw a line showing the shape of something on a map.
(40) PLOT: - Express or represent stated facts by means of diagrams (bar charts, pie charts, graphs, tables, pictures, etc.) or a map with lines or curves on a graph sheet or on the provided answer sheets.
(41) RELATE: - This may mean -

(i) To tell a story or narrate an experience,
(ii) Or to show a connection between something.

(42) SELECT: - Choose carefully out of the given group.
(43) SHOW: - To point, state, prove, explain or make clear.

(44) SKETCH: - Make a rough, not detailed drawing or a short description of a thing.
(45) STATE: - Write an expression.
(46) SUGGEST: - Express your idea about the issue in question.
(47) SUMMARIZE: - Give a short account, writing the main points only.
(48) TABULATE: - Arrange the facts, figures and information in the form of a table.

Do not spend more than the given time on any of the questions at the expense of the other. Stick to the time limit. If the time runs out on you, forget details; do not try to explain anymore. State your points, write main ideas, abbreviate, use phrases and be concise, direct, simple and straight to the point. Rush all untouched questions.

15:4 REVIEW

Stop answering questions when it is five minutes to the end of the paper or when the invigilator announces you should get ready to stop. Use the remaining time to review what you have written so far. Pick out silly mistakes like spelling mistakes and grammatical errors, which crept in due to the tension in the hall. Do not rush out of the hall; take time to go through your work.

Make sure the number you have written on your answer sheets correlates with the number of the question answered in the question paper. It is better to correct every mistake while still in the examination hall than remembering an uncorrected mistake after submission or departure from the examination hall.

15:5 POST EXAM

Immediately after submission, leave the hall, have a nice cold shower and rest.

Do not engage in discussing what you have written in the examination hall with friends or other candidates immediately after the examination; it will

hardly make you happy. That should be postponed till after the whole examination, since you may not need the corrections immediately.

Leave the hall, have a good rest and prepare for the next paper.

Activity Fifteen

(1) Using the techniques you have learnt in note taking, summarize what you have learnt in this chapter
(2) Are you in agreement with everything the Author has written or do you disagree with some?
(3) Which of them do you disagree with?
(4) Express your view clearly stating your reason(s)
(5) Discuss it with two or more of your friends and weigh their options.
(6) Write to the Author about it. Correspondence are welcome.

OTHER BOOKS BY SAME AUTHOR

SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS 112 pages (SSHBS – 001)

Have you ever wondered why, after apparently satisfactory preparation for and performance at an examination, you still come out with poor grades? Do you find it difficult to settle down for serious study? Do you easily forget what you read? Do you belong to either the group of students who have problems with when, where, and how to read for utmost understanding, or the other group that is confused about what to do during lecture periods in order to enhance concentration and aid memory? Do you find it hard to cope with the atmosphere of the examination hall? Do you find it difficult even to account for your incessant failure?

Then you need not go far. This book is all you need to answer every troubling question you have ever asked about your academics.

ACADEMICS & YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE 136 pages (SSHBS – 002)

Contrary to popular belief, spirituality is no excuse for mediocrity. Dedication and commitment to the things of God does not enhance academic failure, it promotes academic excellence. Success for a Christian Student is defined as spiritual buoyancy and academic progression. You must be able to affect lives on campus and at the same time maintain a splendid academic performance.

The problem of academic excellence that exasperates Christian Students is the cause of their deeper problem of abstinence from fellowship activities on campus. Academic success has become the major reason for most Christian Students' estrangement from God. Those who get it are not in faith while those in faith seem not near it, no matter how hard they tried.

It is pathetic to see students who are fervent in the Spirit and burning for the Lord fail in their academics. They make great impacts in the ministry but fail to extend the impact into their academics. They teach others about the rules, guidelines and secrets of success but they are not successful themselves. They are victims of academic failure. This is pitiable and should be given immediate attention since it has given so many people a wrong impression about the Christian Faith and student-hood.

This book will help you balance both your academics and your spiritual life, and also give you principles that will make you excel in both with ease.

MAKE MONEY WHILE IN SCHOOL (SSHBS – 003)

Only God can accurately estimate how much money flows around your campus on daily basis from one hand to the other in exchange of a needed good or service. At least, two of every ten students you meet on your campus have your money in their wallets! But unless you are doing something, none of it will flow towards your end.

If you are a student, have you ever thought about making money as a student while on campus? How possible is it to successfully combine your academics as a full time student, your spiritual life as a religious person, and still have time to make enough money to make ends meet while on campus and to build a great foundation for your financial life after leaving the four walls of your campus? But it is possible.

This book will open your eyes to the numerous wealth opportunities that abound all around you on your campus, and the potentials embedded on the inside of you to take advantage of these opportunities, to the advantage of your life. It is a book every student can not do without.

POWERFUL PRAYER POINTS & BIBLICAL PROMISES 4 STUDENTS (SSHBS – 004)

Words are not cheap. Words can kill. Words can heal. Words can start wars and end wars. Words can make a man smile and they can make him weep. Words can create and can destroy. Words are powerful, especially when used rightly in prayers.

Jesus said words could move mountains if rightly used. The Bible teaches that life and death are in your words. So your words matter a lot. Your confession matters. God wants you to speak the right set of words so that He can change your life. *"But if you have anything to say, go ahead. I want to hear it, for I am anxious to see you justified. (Job 33:32)*

The devil is also carefully waiting to catch the wrong set of words in your mouth so that he can put you in bondage. *"You are snared by the words of your lips, you are caught by the speech of your out" (Prov. 6:2)*

So you determine on whose side you fall by the kinds of words you speak. This is why you need to always confess positive things into your life with your own mouth when praying. This book is a collection of powerful words and prayer points with scriptural references that can change situation if confessed often. It will show you the power of prayers and positive confession.

HANDLING ACADEMIC FAILURE (SSHBS – 005)

A wise man takes his time to learn both the secrets of failure and success. He learns the secrets of failure to avoid failing and that of success to succeed. The essence of this book is not to build a monument around your failure, but to teach you how to get the best from your failure so that your life can bounce back and move forward despite the failure.

Failure is not very palatable; it has dire consequences. You may be asked to reseat the examination, repeat the class, bag a carry over, asked to withdraw from school, or graduate with very poor and unsatisfactory grades. This is why most students detest failure, but some still fail anyway. Therefore, every student needs to learn how to handle failure so as to get the best out of it.

If you have ever failed before, the last time you failed is the last time you will ever fail again; the truth you will learn from this book will guarantee that. However, if you have never failed before, this book will guarantee that you maintain the record

of a clean slate all your days as a student on campus. This is all you need to put academic failure in its right place, and keep achieving success all your days on campus.

BOOST YOUR G.P. (SSHBS – 006)

The G.P., Grade Point as it is called, has become the cruel taskmaster on every campus. Most students are groaning under its grip. No matter how hard they try, they seem not to have yet discovered what to do to give it a rise as it keeps taking a downward surge at the end of every semester. This has constituted academic problems to so many students and has translated into emotional problems to so many others. Some even thinks it is a spiritual one. The G.P. has become the determinant of the most brilliant students. It is what separates the successful students from the unsuccessful one. So many even believes, contrary to reality though, that it is the difference between the hardworking students and the lazy ones.

The earth is governed by rules called natural laws. These rules work irrespective of location, race, religion and colour. As there are natural laws that govern the earth generally, so also there are natural laws that govern academics too, which most times are either not known to students, or known but not taken too serious. This is the core of students' problem with G.P. It is either because of something they need to do which they consciously or unconsciously are not doing, or something they need not do which they constantly find themselves doing. This is the essence of this book, to teach both of these, and to keep your G. P. ever soaring.

A LETTER TO ALL STUDENT LEADERS 100 pages (SSHBS – 007)

This is not just another book on leadership. It is a compilation of the things I have learnt about student leadership which I wished I had learnt earlier while on campus as a student leader. The purpose of this book is to correct the anomalies in student leadership and encourage the birth of a new breed of leadership on our campuses. It is to bring clarity to the issue of campus leadership, forewarning every leader ahead of time about the challenges of leadership and forearming them with needed facts, thereby assuring all student leaders of success.

Therefore, if you are a leader on your campus, this book is meant for you. Regardless of the level at which you exercise your leadership, be it in your class, department, faculty, hostel, dormitory, student union government, fellowship, or even in your room! All campus leaders must read this! As long as you have a measure of influence somewhere, and on someone, no matter how minute or how big, and you desire to exercise your influence in a better way, this book is written with you at the back of my mind.

JAMBITE! What Every FRESHER Needs To Know (SSHBS-08)

Congratulations! Millions of secondary school graduates sit for JAMB (the qualifying examination into the university) every year, but only a minute percentage of them get admitted into all of the post secondary institutions in the country.

Since you are among the few lucky ones, you deserve to be congratulated. But beyond this congratulatory message, there are things you need to put in place to make sure you graduate from this campus in one piece, and with a very good degree. This is what you have in this book - essential materials that you need to make the best use of this golden opportunity before you.

SPREAD YOUR FAITH - (Taking Over Your Campus For The Lord) **100 pages (SSHBS – 009)**

Soul winning is every Christian's responsibility. It is even more than a mere responsibility; it is a great privilege. We have been given the cherished honor to be partakers in the glorious task of bringing people into the eternal family of God. There is never a more significant cause to give one's life to.

But many will not for once open their mouths to preach the gospel to fellow students. If every Christian leaves the job of evangelism to some Christians, we will be too surprised to see that no Christian would do what any Christian could have done, and the whole world will perish right under our noses.

This book discusses why we must do it, why we don't want to do it, how to go about it and what happens if we refuse to do it. It is a book for all Christians.

HANDLING CAMPUS CHALLENGES - (SSHBS – 010)

This is the most comprehensive and detailed compilation on the challenges that students experience often on campus. It covers every area of a student's life, to the minute detail. From socials, to religious, to academics, to relationship, to business, to health, to handling your emotions, handling difficult lecturers, handling troublesome roommates, and in fact, handling all handleable. It is indeed the student's companion.

LIVING A FIRST-CLASS LIFE WITH A THIRD-CLASS CERTIFICATE - (SSHBS – 011)

Know this for sure; nothing catches God unawares. Whatever happens, He knows about it. Sad as it may sound, God knew afore-hand that you may not fare better than you did, and He is prepared ahead of time to help you. He is not disappointed in you. God looks at things differently than man does. This is because man is easily impressed by the wrong things in life, neglecting the things that matters. Men may write you off, but God won't: It is not in His nature: Adam and eve failed God's exam in the Garden of Eden and could have easily been written off by God. However, the whole Bible is a record of God's plan and effort to reverse that failure; that is God. He looks beyond the present into the future.

Succeeding in school is not the same as succeeding in life; likewise, failing out of school does not necessarily mean you have failed in life. A pass mark in the first does not guarantee a pass mark in the other, and a failure in the first does not guarantee a

failure in the other. You may be passing out with a third-class result now, but this does not make you a third-class material. Every student is a first-class material, only that the field in which they excel differ. Those who excel in academic work are easily noticed and awarded first-class earlier than others. But this is not to say others cannot excel in other fields.

LOOK BEYOND SCHOOL: YOU WILL SOON BE A GRADUATE - (SSHBS – 012)
Starting college is a major transitional stage in one's life, but leaving college is a greater one. The day of convocation, which marks the end of this stage of your life coincidentally marks the beginning of another. It launches you forth into the larger world outside there; a world in which you have to find your own footing for yourself, a world which accommodates the survival of only the fittest. Such a world should not be entered unprepared for.

The convocation ceremony is a bridge between the artificial campus life and the real world. It is a link between the imaginary future students build for themselves while on campus, and the factual world outside there, where, irrespective of your desires, only what you deserve is all you get. You will soon be a graduate, and the whole world will rejoice with you for a job well done, whether you *pass out*, as it is commonly said, or you *fail out,* which nobody dares say! Everybody comes to rejoice with you, at least, for going through school successfully and not dropping out on the way. That makes you a graduate, and it is worth the celebration.

For you personally, if you must be sincere with yourself, the convocation day is always a day filled with both excitement and nervous apprehension. The convocation ceremony will soon be over. The music will soon fade. The dance will soon stop. Your guests will soon leave. The hall will soon be locked. And you will soon be left alone to do just one thing - decide what your fate will be! LOOK BEYOND SCHOOL: YOU WILL SOON BE A GRADUATE.

SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATES - (SSHBS – 013)
How fast time flies! It seems like only yesterday when you started your first kindergarten class. Now you are graduating from secondary school and will soon be off to the higher institution. Then in another four years or so, you are ready to face the labour market.

This book is a collection of what higher institution undergraduates wished someone had told them when they were graduating from secondary schools. You are indeed fortunate to come across this. If I had this in my days, I probably would have done a lot better in the higher institution. Read it and pass it on to others. It will guarantee every reader a more successful stay in the higher institution.

Most adults like to dictate to teenagers how to live their lives. The essence of this book is not to do this, but to honestly let you learn from the past mistakes of your predecessors. This will save you from most of the stupid things we did ourselves, which we now secretly wish we had not done, and help you to know the things we did not do, which would have been our major priority, had we known better.

DATING ON CAMPUS - (SSHBS – 014)
If you must date while on campus, then you must do it the right way so as not to regret later on in life. Your perspective of dating, your intentions for dating, your actions while dating, your inspirations in dating, and your expectations from dating must all be put in proper check so as not to have a terrible experience while dating.

In this book, Sam. O. Salau expounds in details all the rules that guide cordial relationship between members of the opposite sex, so as to make it mature into a marriage relationship that will last for life.

BOOST YOUR FAITH (Becoming A Better Believer On Your Campus)**- (SSHBS – 015)**
Growth is relevant to the spiritual as much as it is relevant to the physical. God desires growth from every living thing he has created. If God so much loves growth and progress that he gives every living thing the ability to grow, then he does not have a different agenda for his sons and daughter. The issue of spiritual growth is therefore one, which every Christian must understand, desire and acquire. It is very important that we grow as Christians. God is just as interested in our spiritual growth as he is in our salvation

All over the world, there are millions of good, faithful churchgoers, who though are saved, have not gone beyond the stage of salvation to the stage of maturity in the lord. Thousands of others who though profess to be Christian are not sure of their salvation and are uncertain of the level of their relationship with the lord. Even though some of these were brought up in Christian families and some have believed in him for years, this same problem still lurks in the corner of their heart.

The cause of this lack of assurance of salvation and inability to grow spiritually can be summed up in one word as the ignorance of the needed information. In this book, Sam. O. Salau discusses in details the five major keys needed for spiritual growth.