

*guidelines
and procedures
for using
a scribe in
written exams*

scribing

THE MANUAL



**UNLOCK
YOUR FUTURE**



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THE **key**

TO UNLOCKING YOUR
FUTURE POTENTIAL IS IN
YOUR HANDS.

“**whatever** YOU CAN DO

OR DREAM YOU CAN,

begin it.

BOLDNESS HAS GENIUS,
POWER AND MAGIC IN IT. ”

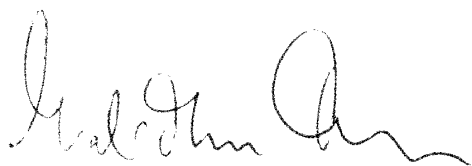
| G O E T H E



foreword

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Universities in Western Australian have a commitment to providing the maximum support wherever possible to students with disabilities, to enable them to benefit fully from their chosen course of study. Disability can take many forms, but a common difficulty experienced by many students is the process of transposing what they hear, read and think into a readable format, either for themselves for their own future reference or for examination purposes. The following manual has been designed to help staff and students who need to consider the use of a scribe for examinations to understand the inherent problems and how to go about resolving them. I commend this manual as a valuable addition to the range of resources now available to give students with disabilities an equal opportunity to achieve excellent results in their University work.



M. R. ORR
REGISTRAR
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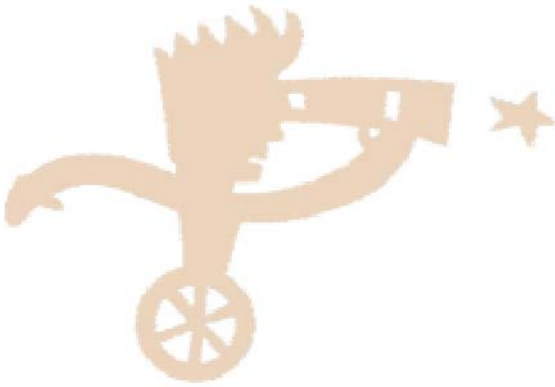
TO DISCOVER THE LIMITS OF THE POSSIBLE
IS TO GO BEYOND THEM, TO THE IMPOSSIBLE.

| ARTHUR C. CLARKE

introduction

1

The past few years have seen a great development in the range of supports provided to students with disabilities in educational settings. As these students successfully move into the senior years of high school and go on to tertiary studies, the need to maintain the continuity and quality of supports becomes crucial. Providing the option of using a scribe for exams to students with either temporary or permanent disabilities, is now becoming a common practice for education institutions. Scribing, however, is a complex business and the providers and users of the service need to consider a range of important issues for effective support to be provided. This guide is intended to assist individuals and institutions to use and develop high quality scribing services for exams and other written assessments. It covers a wide range of issues involved in using a scribe for written exams. It is an instruction booklet for students with disabilities, and medical conditions, on how to prepare for and complete written exams using a scribe. It also outlines some guidelines and procedures that may be of interest to study skills advisers, academic and administrative staff involved in organising special exam arrangements and selecting and training scribes.



introduction

The manual has a number of tips for alternative study strategies that students with writing management problems can adopt when studying for exams.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

This manual provides guidelines and procedures for anyone involved in the use of a scribe in written assessment and exam settings. It is directed in particular towards students and staff in tertiary institutions, but may have application in other contexts such as senior secondary schools. It is specifically for the use of:

- students who need to produce written material for exams or other assessments, and who, for whatever reason, need someone else to write for them.
- individuals who already act as scribes or intend to do so.
- staff who make arrangements for scribes.
- staff who are involved in arranging special exam conditions.

1.2 THE NEED FOR A SCRIBING MANUAL

There are several reasons for the development of guidelines that deal specifically with the area of scribing.

- It is important that there be an understanding of the problems that exist and their possible solutions.
- The situations where scribes are used are crucial, consequently there needs to be an awareness of procedures that can ensure fairness and uniform standards.
- Scribes are often needed at short notice. In these situations, arrangements should not be made in such a way as to disadvantage the student. This guide can help to ensure that students have the opportunity to perform as effectively as possible.
- As scribing is different from notetaking or transposing information, it requires specific skills and procedures to ensure a high level of performance. This guide focuses on these requirements.

what is a scribe?

②

2.1 DEFINITION. The word 'scribe' comes from the Latin *scriba*, an ancient term for a state official, clerk, or copier of official documents. In times when most people were illiterate, a scriba made copies of documents such as licenses, wills and important correspondence. The term 'amanuensis' is also often used in this context. Amanuensis comes from the Latin phrase *servus a manu* which meant a servant for handwriting. The word is still used today, mostly to refer to people who record the proceedings in

2.2 SCRIBING AND NOTETAKING

In assessment and exam settings, the process of scribing should not be regarded simply as notetaking. A specialist notetaker is someone who takes down lecture notes for another student who is unable to do so. The process of scribing, while sharing some common characteristics with notetaking, is essentially different in a number of ways.

In notetaking, the structure and plan of the lecture are already developed and need to be merely reproduced in the note-taking process as accurately as possible. With scribing, however, there is no pre-existing structure for the scribe or the student to follow. Both

student's understanding and knowledge to be expressed clearly and accurately. When this is done the scribe can then transfer the knowledge of the student onto paper. In notetaking, the notetaker is actively involved in analysing the presented information and structuring the notes. In contrast, it is not the scribe's function to structure, analyse or plan during the scribing process.

Another distinguishing feature of scribing is the added performance pressures that exams place on the student and the scribe. Scribing requires thoughts and ideas to be structured and organised during the exam. Scribing must allow these processes to occur so that students

who needs a scribe?

3

The circumstances where a scribe is needed are many and varied. Students with permanent disabilities and medical conditions, as well as those with recently acquired temporary disabilities, find a scribe a very appropriate support for completing written exams.

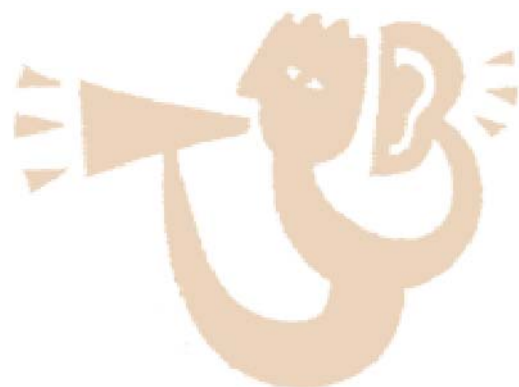
3.1 PERMANENT DISABILITIES AND CHRONIC MEDICAL CONDITIONS.

Students with permanent disabilities generally know well in advance that they will require some extra assistance during exams. There are many disabilities and chronic medical conditions which necessitate using a scribe. Many medical conditions result in reduced ability or total inability to write or use fine-motor skills. These include several conditions which overlap in symptomology and go by several different names, e.g. Occupational Overuse Syndrome, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Repetitive Strain Injury, Tendonitis, and Tenosynovitis.

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These conditions sometimes result in damage to nerve and even muscle tissue. difficulties with writing and affect the use of fingers, hands, and arms. Students suffering from such problems need scribes because

There are other chronic medical conditions which may also result in reduced ability to write. These include arthritic conditions,



write slowly or for short periods, they may not be able to cope with the demands of a two or three hour written exam, and consequently may need the services of a scribe.

Reduced ability or inability to write and use fine motor skills can also result from many types of permanent physical, sensory and motor-neurone disabilities, e.g. cerebral palsy, hemiplegia and quadriplegia, limb injury, brain injury, Parkinson's Disease, multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy. Students with learning disabilities have also used scribes for exams. These conditions affect the ability to write in a number of ways and different students develop preferences for particular types of supports in exams. The important point is that students with disabilities consider all their options and do not simply continue with previous exam arrangements because they are not aware or sure of supports, such as scribes, that might help them.

3.2 STUDENTS WITH TEMPORARY DISABILITIES AND INJURIES

Scribes are often used for students who injure themselves through sporting and other activities. The range of injuries here includes wrist sprains, shoulder dislocations, arm,

As the needs of students with permanent disabilities and those with temporary disabilities may differ, different procedures may need to be considered when making arrangements for scribes.

Students with permanent disabilities should be invited to make their needs known as soon as they begin their high school and/or university studies. Clearly this is not often possible for students with temporary injuries, but they should also notify their Disability Adviser, and other appropriate academic and administrative staff as soon as possible. Whereas students with long-term disabilities and medical conditions often have considerable experience of using a scribe, students with temporary disabilities may have only a very limited idea of how to sit exams in this manner.

Students with temporary impairments will need information and guidelines on how to use a scribe effectively. They may be extremely anxious about doing an exam in this very different way and may feel that they do not have control of the exam process and/or have not considered some of the central difficulties that scribing entails. These guidelines will enable such students to make



TO BE WHAT WE ARE,

AND TO BECOME WHAT WE ARE CAPABLE

OF BECOMING IS THE ONLY END IN LIFE.

| R.L. STEVENSON

when to use a scribe

4

Deciding to use a scribe for a written exam is not a simple issue. There are several options that may be suitable for students other than using a scribe. Other options include oral exams, use of a speech-activated word processor, extra reading and writing time or time for rest periods during the exam. All options need to be considered, as they all have their particular strengths and weaknesses. The important point is that each student's situation is different and requires an individual solution. The student should weigh the advantages and disadvantages of all options.

4.1 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF USING A SCRIBE

Deciding to use a scribe is always a question of balancing advantages and disadvantages. The final decision will, of course, depend on the particular circumstances of the student and the resources of the institution at which s/he is studying. However, there are a number of general points that apply in all cases and which need to be taken into account.

4.1.1 *Advantages of using a scribe*

- provides an option to students with disabilities and medical conditions to complete a written exam.
- relieves the student of the burden of writing during the actual exam.
- does not aggravate or further damage existing medical conditions or injuries.
- ensures legibility of the written paper.
- provides the opportunity to produce written information at approximately the same rate as other students, and therefore a comparable

when to use a scribe

same time as other students, and removes the need for deferred exams.

- does not entail problems involved in other arrangements that rely on technical solutions such as tape recorders and computers.
- is often the preferred method of doing written exams for many students with disabilities.
- can be used in a wide range of assessment situations other than for exams, e.g. laboratory and field reports or any situation where answers must be written on the spot.
- is adaptable to a wide range of disabilities and medical conditions.
- can be offered at minimal cost and can be set up as an on-going service.

4.1.2 Disadvantages of using a scribe

The disadvantages of using a scribe for written exam also need to be considered. It should be noted, however, that many of the disadvantages of using a scribe can be overcome if the student is adequately prepared and the scribe has received basic training. The disadvantages of using a scribe include the following:

- time is needed for selecting and training of the scribe, and payment is usually required.
- it removes immediate control of the writing process from the students and hence they are often hesitant to use this method.
- the process relies on the student's ability to

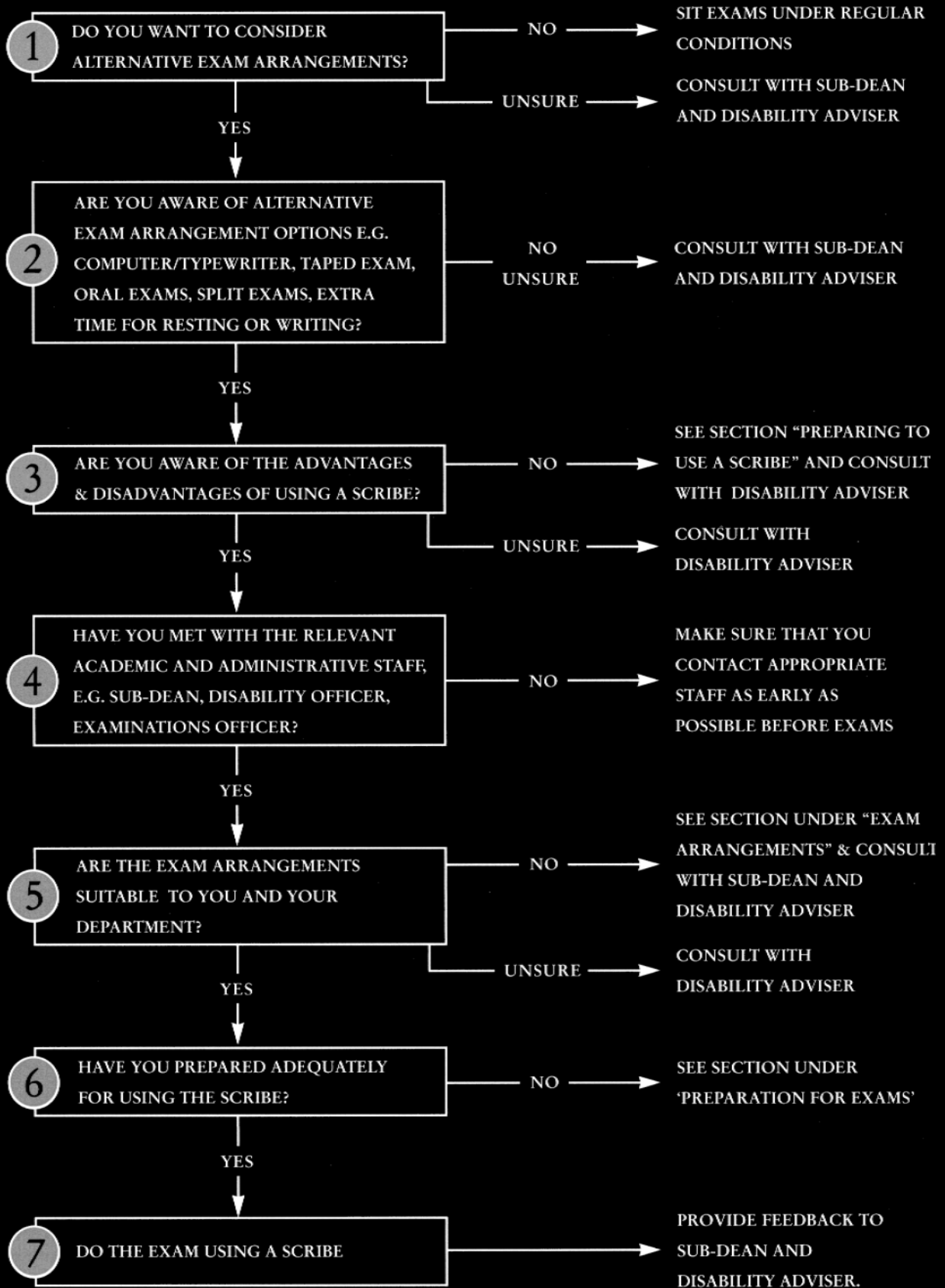
written form.

- it relies on the ability of the scribe to write down dictated information accurately, efficiently and legibly.
- scribing has a number of problems, e.g. structuring and keeping track of thoughts, the stop and start nature of dictation.
- unfamiliarity with the method may increase already high levels of anxiety in the exam.
- some of the difficulties concern the academic and administrative staff organisation and making adequate preparations for using a scribe. These are beyond the control of the student but are vital for ensuring that the scribing arrangements are fair and equitable for everyone involved.

4.2 DECISION STEPS

Some students will know that they definitely need to use a scribe. For others, those whose disability is not severe, the drawbacks of using a scribe will outweigh the advantages and again the choice will be clear. However, there are many students who are unsure of the benefits and/or disadvantages of this rather different and perhaps untried approach to doing exams. Figure 1 provides a simple outline of decision steps to be made in deciding whether a scribe is required. These steps will vary according to the actual procedures that may be in place at particular

when to use a scribe



what makes a good scribe?

5

Several factors should be taken into account when selecting a scribe. These include the skills identified by the selection criteria as well as procedures for selection. 5.1 SCRIBING SKILLS. Good scribes have a number of skills. The important abilities and skills that should be taken into account are: experience, writing speed,

Experience: The scribe should have some reasonable experience of the process of scribing before going into an exam. Personal experience of exams and conditions is important because scribes need to have a good idea of the environment in which they will work. They must also have experience and understanding of scribing itself and the demands that will be made of them during the exam. For these reasons the best scribes will be found among senior students and postgraduate students from a relevant department.

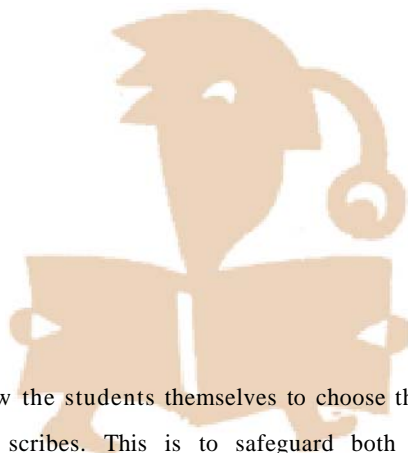
Writing speed: Scribes are required to write down information quickly for long periods of time. If the student has to continually stop and wait for the scribe, the flow of ideas and continuity of expression will suffer

and logical and this can suffer if scribes are slow in writing down what is communicated to them.

Legibility: Although writing speed is important, scribes must also be able to write clearly and neatly. As scribes are writing down spoken information, there is a temptation to sacrifice legibility in favour of getting everything down. While the content is of course the priority, clarity and legibility of the handwriting need to be maintained.

Accuracy: Accuracy of transcription is important. The scribe must not reword, restructure, fill out, or in any way augment what is dictated. Of course, accurate spelling is also important and is an essential skill for a good scribe.

Interpersonal skills: Scribes should have



student. The scribe must gain the confidence of the student quickly, otherwise the pressure of exams can mar the performance of both the student and the scribe.

Subject Familiarity: Each subject area has its special terms and a vocabulary that is particular to that area. If the scribe is unfamiliar with this terminology, there will be repeated stops for the spelling of particular words, clarification of phrases and terms, and difficulties with such things as descriptions of diagrams etc. Consequently, it is preferable that scribes have a reasonable knowledge of the subject area.

Ethical Standards for Scribes: Scribes should have a good understanding of the ethical dimension of the work. Because they have familiarity with the subject area and may have had some contact with the student outside of the scribing situation, scribes need to show considerable understanding of the need for confidentiality and maintenance of proper ethical standards.

5.2 SELECTING A SCRIBE

As it is advisable that scribes have a basic understanding of the topic in which they are scribing, it is preferable that the scribe be a senior student or post-graduate student of that department. This being the case, it is also recommended that departments carry a list of suitably qualified scribes. It is not advisable to

allow the students themselves to choose their own scribes. This is to safeguard both the student and the department and to maintain fairness and propriety.

As with all appointments, before enlisting the services of a scribe it is important to check ability, background and experience. References by students for whom the applicant has previously scribed should be provided where possible. Examples of written work should be obtained to check legibility and spelling. If the applicant is unknown to the selection panel it is advisable to run a short dictation test to assess speed, accuracy and other skills. The applicant's familiarity with different subjects should be ascertained so that they can be assigned appropriately. Finally, scribes need to have good interpersonal skills and be able to work calmly under pressure.

5.3 TRAINING FOR SCRIBES

Where no experienced scribe is available it is necessary to prepare someone to be a scribe. Once a suitable candidate has been chosen this preparation should be carried out by the Disability Adviser and/or Study Skills Adviser and address the key issues and skills discussed in the relevant sections of this manual. See Appendix 1 for an outline of a one-credit training program for scribes. It can be used as a basis for a more detailed workshop to meet the needs of particular organisations.



THINGS DO NOT CHANGE:

WE CHANGE.

| HENRY DAVID THOREAU

arranging, preparing and doing exams

6

Once it has been decided to use a scribe for an exam and a scribe has been selected, there are further issues that need to be considered. These are: 1. making preliminary administrative arrangements; 2. carrying out practice preparations before the exam; 3. following good scribing procedures during the exam.

6.1 PRELIMINARY ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS. **Ensuring** that preliminary administrative arrangements for using a scribe are in place is an important but often overlooked aspect of support. The following are issues that should be considered by staff when making procedural arrangements, as well as by the students themselves.

- It is usually the case that the institution or particular faculties make arrangements for providing a scribe if required. Procedures should be in place for selecting and training scribes for when this need arises.
- It is important that all stakeholders - students, scribes, Disability Advisers, Examinations Officers, course co-ordinators, faculty and department staff, and exam supervisors - are aware of the agreed arrangements. Generally speaking, whoever is responsible for organising the scribes should also take responsibility to ensure all parties know what is going on.
- Allocation for the payment of scribes needs to be considered by administrative staff.
- Students should present a documented case early to the relevant university staff, e.g. senior faculty staff, the Examinations Officer and the Disability Adviser. If it is possible, this should be done at the time of enrolment or as early in the academic year as possible. It

arranging, preparing and doing exams

is particularly important to do this well before the exam period so that adequate preparations can be made.

- It should be made clear to the students what type of documentation is required to support their request for special exams, e.g. medical evidence, Occupational Therapist's report.
- The question of extension of exam time may need to be discussed well before the exam. Extra time is often permitted due to the inherent difficulties of using a scribe.
- Procedures for selecting and training scribes need to be decided well in advance.
- Exams using scribes should always be held at a separate venue to the regular exam to ensure that other students are not distracted.
- If there is a poor relationship or discomfort between the student and the scribe, e.g. smoker - non-smoker, the matter should be brought to the attention of the relevant staff well before the exam period if possible.
- Someone who has had prolonged contact with the student, for example in the capacity of tutor or demonstrator, should not act as a scribe if it can be avoided.

6.2 EXAMINATION PREPARATIONS

Exams are the most critical situations for the academic life of a student. Exam performance is, at the best of times, determined not only by the level of knowledge and skills of the student but also by emotional and health factors, environmental considerations and other circumstances. It is important therefore

that the difficulties of using a scribe do not create more disadvantages. The following suggestions can mitigate the drawbacks of using a scribe.

- It is important that the student and scribe meet each other before the exam itself. To avoid any possibility of collusion or perception of collusion, and to ensure that propriety is maintained, these sessions should be supervised by the Disability Adviser, Academic Skills Adviser or some other appropriate member of staff .
- Students should practise examinations using the same time limits and other conditions that apply for the real exam. Even if no past papers are available, practice papers can be made up with similar numbers and types of questions to the actual exam paper, e.g. short answer or essay type answers.
- It is very important that students practise using a scribe and gain some confidence in their ability to control the process. Mock exams and past exam papers can be dictated to a fellow student or friend. There is no substitute for practise. Preparation and practise of the exam situation will help to reduce stress and the student's performance in the exam will benefit greatly.

6.3 ALTERNATIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

If the student cannot write in preparation for exams then other learning strategies need to be employed. Adopting other learning methods, such as taping summaries or group study are

arranging, preparing and doing exams

often more effective than relying solely on written summaries.

Reading many references related to one topic to get a more comprehensive view of the subject from a number of different perspectives can be more effective than spending lots of time writing notes. Reading summaries onto audiotape and listening to them during "dead time", e.g. on buses, driving, walking is also helpful. Students can practice using a "mental notebook" approach to notetaking and summarising rather than writing everything down. Some strategies in this mental notebook method of studying include mentally formulating answers to possible exam questions, reading a section then making a mental summary without using visual prompts, recalling key points after reading a chapter and reviewing material verbally.

Students should avoid thinking that learning occurs only by writing notes and revising by re-reading the notes. We memorise better by practising recall skills, i.e. remembering without using prompts such as summaries, than by simply practising recognition of material. For example, the student can read a chapter or article, then, without looking at the material, try to recall all the main points of the chapter. This process can be repeated until the student is satisfied with the information recalled.

- It may help to prepare a glossary of subject

terms and jargon that might present some difficulty for the scribe in spelling. Students could memorise this list and ask the scribe to reproduce it during the exam for them to refer to. Such a list can be particularly helpful if the scribe is not familiar with the precise subject in which they will be scribing and will lessen the number of times the scribe may have to interrupt the student to have a word spelt out or repeated. Lists of words should not be taken into the exam room.

- Other issues which might be discussed at preparatory sessions between the student and the scribe include: diagrams which need to be drawn in the exam, a method for directing the scribe how to draw should be discussed; whether it would be helpful for the scribe to write on every second line to enable corrections and additions to be made if necessary. Students can discuss with their scribes issues related to the high pressure of the exam itself. Students and scribes will be working closely during the exam and it is important that they gain each other's trust.

- Students should ensure that the scribe feels comfortable about seeking clarification, giving directions to slow down, or communicating requests to the student during the exam.

- Seating arrangements need to be considered before the exam. There must be room for both students and scribes and space must be available for the student in case they want to jot down a few notes.

arranging, preparing and doing exams

- Students might want to do some writing or drawing themselves during the exam. It may be necessary to inform the exam supervisors that this is permissible before the exam begins.
- Instructions other than straight dictation of exam responses may be given by students to their scribes during the exam itself. For example, the student may need to tell the scribe when to jot down notes, to come back to questions later, and so on. Supervisors should be made aware of this situation so that it is not something unexpected.
- Copies of the test paper should be made available to both student and scribe.
- Supervisory staff need to be informed that scribing will take place before the time of the exam so that no undue disruption occurs.
- Students are not wondering if their scribes will be punctual.
- Scribes should be required to present some form of identification to supervising staff before being allowed to scribe.
- If students intend to do some writing during the exam, they should inform the supervisor that this will be the case so there is no need for explanation during the exam time. Those students who can write a little may want to make some notes or sketch an outline during the reading or writing time. Just because students cannot write for hours does not mean they can't write at all during an exam.
- If scribes are right-handed, they should be seated on the right hand side of students and to the left if they are left-handed. They should sit quite close together so that the students can read over what the scribe is writing.

6.4 DURING THE EXAM

As already mentioned, in situations such as exams, scribing becomes a complex process of writing down and presenting on paper, information that exists only in a very imperfect form in someone else's head. The information must be recalled, structured, and presented in a coherent and accurate representation of a person's knowledge on a particular topic. The following points should be considered.

6.4.1 Before Starting the Examination

- Both the students and scribes should be at the exam venue at least ten minutes before the

6.4.2 During the Exam

- Students should maintain good dictation practices during the exam, e.g. punctuation, enunciation, paragraphing, and clarity of sentence structure (see section on "Good Dictation Practice").
- When students can't think of a particular word they should substitute another word or leave a space shown by for example (a dotted line). This will indicate where they will need to return if they have time at the end of the exam.

arranging, preparing and doing exams

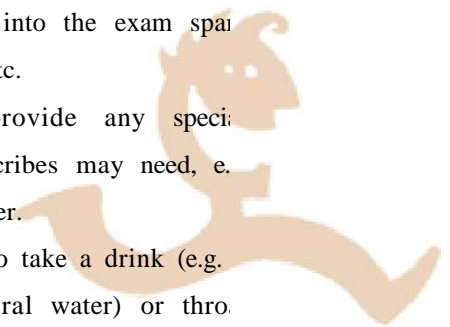
than rushing. Students may feel sometimes that points occur too quickly to be fully expressed. When this happens scribes can be asked to jot down notes. Each point can then be developed in turn. This "notetaking" procedure can be used throughout the exam.

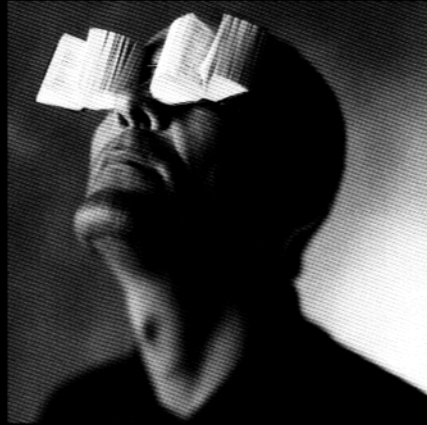
- Students should always develop a rough plan for answering questions that require more than just a paragraph or two. For short to medium length responses, perhaps just a few points will be needed in a plan. For an essay-type answer a more detailed plan will be required. In general, the longer the response the more planning notes will be needed.
- Once a plan for a long essay question has been mapped out, it can be used as a guide for the student in dictating and structuring an answer. The points in the plan may be incorporated as headings in the essay.
- Students should use a heading system that helps develop structure and clarity in long-essay answers (see relevant section on "Use of Headings" under "Good Dictation Practice").
- If students want text to be crossed out, they should let the scribe know how they want this to be done, e.g. (—————).
- Students should try to remain as relaxed as possible during the exam. It is also important that they maintain a positive attitude and remember that they are in complete control of the scribing process.

- Where long technical terms are used throughout the exam, abbreviations should initially be indicated and then used to refer to the particular term, e.g. socio-economic status = SES.

6.4.3 Final points to remember

- Each answer sheet should be headed "Written by Scribe" to ensure that the person marking the paper knows that it has been written by a scribe.
- Students should check back for spaces that have been left blank to be filled in at the end of the exam.
- The students should always read through the whole exam paper before finishing. Even if scribes are merely ticking boxes in, for example, a multiple choice exam, students need to check that they are in agreement with all responses. Students using scribes must remember that they are fully responsible for what is finally delivered to the examiners.
- Always thank scribes for their assistance. They may be needed again next semester.
- Scribes should take into the exam space pens, pencils, rubbers etc.
- Students should provide any special equipment that the scribes may need, e.g. calculator, compass, ruler.
- Students may need to take a drink (e.g. small bottle of mineral water) or throw lozenges into the exam. They will need to





SOME MEN SEE THINGS AND SAY WHY?

I DREAM THINGS THAT NEVER WERE AND SAY

'WHY NOT?'

| R.F. KENNEDY

good dictation practice

7

Dictation is the central aspect of scribing. Good dictation ensures that ideas are accurately transferred from thought into the written word. The main aspects to good dictation are clarity, fluency, punctuation and paragraphing. Headings can also be very helpful in creating structure. The following guidelines will assist in the development of an effective and speedy dictation style. Many of these points will be particularly applicable to essay-type exams or other written assignments and reports. Students should take note of the following suggestions to improve their style of dictation:

7.1 CLARITY IN ARTICULATION AND ENUNCIATION.

- Adopt a normal tone of voice, neither too loud nor too soft.
- Be aware of articulation: speaking slowly and distinctly assists the scribe to distinguish words and reduces interruptions.
- Enunciate more clearly than normal while maintaining fluency.
- If numbers need to be dictated, announce this to the scribe before the number sequence begins. Say "zero" for "0" and not "nought" or "oh". Pronounce all numbers in a slightly exaggerated manner to avoid any confusion, e.g. so that

good dictation practice

7.2 FLUENCY

- If stuck for a word don't panic, relax and concentrate on the idea being expressed.
- If the train of thought is lost scribes can read out what has already been written or the students can ask for the paper and read it themselves.
- Use short sentences wherever possible.
- Think before you speak, i.e. be sure of what you are wanting to say before you say it.

7.3 SPELLING

- Spell all words which you want correctly spelt, e.g. references, otherwise wait till the scribe seeks clarification. Arrange beforehand that the scribe indicate when s/he is unsure

- Most markers will not mark down for the occasional spelling error, but it pays to spell correctly, especially the key words.
- Check for spelling errors when you do your final reading.

7.4 PUNCTUATION

- Punctuation helps structure and give sense to the written word, so students should also learn to dictate punctuation.
- It is not necessary that students directly indicate all punctuations.

- The following expressions can be used to dictate punctuation.

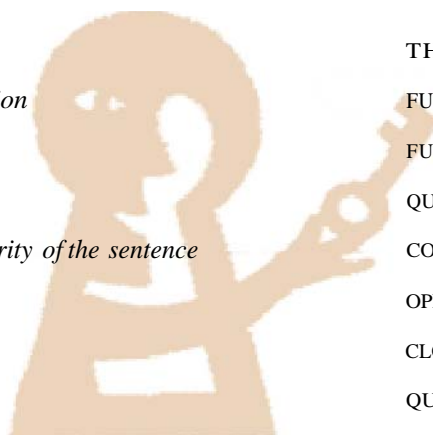
7.5 PARAGRAPHING

- Use the instruction: "FULL STOP PARAGRAPH"

.....

IF YOU WANT TO:

- end a sentence or use an abbreviation*
- end a paragraph*
- end a direct question*
- create a short pause to improve clarity of the sentence*
- open parentheses*
- close parentheses*
- start a quotation*
- end a quotation*



THENSAY:

- FULL STOP (.)
- FULL STOP PARAGRAPH (
- QUESTION MARK (?)
- COMMA (,)
- OPEN BRACKETS (
- CLOSE BRACKETS)
- QUOTE (")
- UNQUOTE (")

good dictation practice

IF YOU WANT TO:

start a new major section of your answer
indicate the beginning of a subsection

THENSAY:

NEW MAJOR HEADING
NEW SUB-HEADING

.....

- When beginning a new topic, it is important to start a new paragraph.
- Paragraphing and the use of headings is the main way of structuring ideas and will assist the reader/marker of the paper in following the argument.
- The following instructions will also help to structure your answers:

7.6 USE OF HEADINGS

- Use headings in responding to essay-type exam questions.
- Headings assist in keeping to the point.
- Decide on the numbering and style of

when various levels of headings are used (check this with the department's recommendations for writing exams).

- Some simple and commonly used types of headings systems are noted above.

These headings follow a stem/leaf pattern which allows an essay plan to be quickly developed but also permits further elaboration and detail to be included in your essay. For example, if the initial plan that is dictated to the scribe is in this stem-leaf format, the points can be used as headings in the essay itself (see Section 8). This provides an effective and efficient method of planning an

.....

A. MAJOR HEADING

- a) Subheading
- i) Minor Subheading
- b) Subheading

OR

1 MAJOR HEADING

- 1.1 Subheading
- 1.1.1 Minor Sub-heading
- 1.2 Subheading

examples for students

8

8.1 EXAMPLE PLAN FOR RESPONDING TO ESSAY-TYPE QUESTIONS

Some students are able to write out a plan themselves, then dictate the full answer to the scribe. Other students also use the scribe to write out their answer plans and notes. Whichever the method, it is crucial that students use a plan and structure their responses to essay questions. The following example gives students a step-by-

EXAMPLE EXAM QUESTION

"The development of models for conceptualising personality has been one of the major areas of endeavour during the history of 20th century psychology. Describe two models of personality and compare the implications of those theories for approaches to therapy."

Step 1. Read the question carefully 3 times and make note of time allocation.

Step 2. Analyse the question (this can be done mentally or noted by scribe),

- i) Subject matter: Personality,
- ii) Aspect of subject matter: Models of personality and approaches to therapy,
- iii) Restriction/expansion of subject matter:

Two 20th century models of personality, and their implications for therapy,

Step 3. Dictate the essay plan noting time allocations.

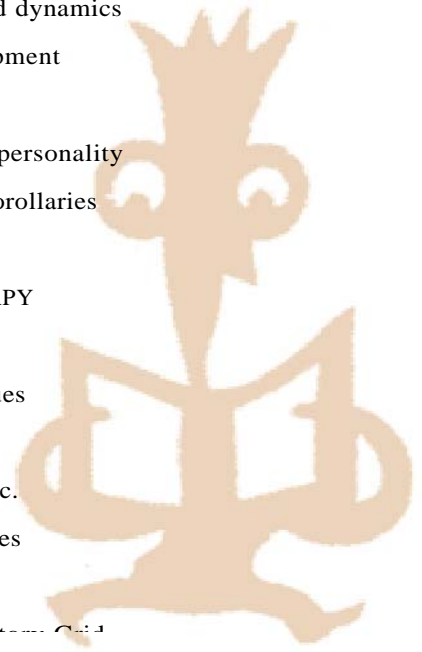
- This initial plan should contain the main discussion points from which the details of your answer will be developed.
- These main points can be the headings and subheadings for structuring the essay (see example following). Such a plan will help you in structuring your ideas and in keeping track of what issues you have covered.

Step 4. Use the plan as a guide, work through the headings elaborating on each section.

- If further notes are needed the student or the scribe can add these to the plan.
- It is recommended that a stem-leaf structure be used for the plan.
- If the student loses his or her train of

EXAMPLE PLAN FOR ESSAY-TYPE QUESTIONS

ORGANISING PRINCIPLES	ACTUAL PLAN <i>(note time allocation)</i>
<i>Major Heading -1.</i>	PERSONALITY THEORIES OF FREUD & KELLY
<i>Subheading</i>	1.1 Introduction
<i>Subheading</i>	1.2 Freudian theory
<i>Major Heading</i>	1.2.1 Id, Ego, Superego and dynamics
	1.2.2 Psychosexual development
<i>Subheading</i>	1.3 George Kelly
<i>Major Heading</i>	1.3.1 Phenomenology and personality
	1.3.2 Main postulate and corollaries
 <i>Major Heading -2.</i>	 IMPLICATIONS FOR THERAPY
<i>Subheading</i>	2.1 Introduction
<i>Subheading</i>	2.2 Therapeutic Techniques
<i>Major Heading</i>	2.2.1 Free association, etc
	2.2.2 Fixed-role therapy, etc.
<i>Subheading</i>	2.3 Assessment Techniques
<i>Major Heading</i>	2.3.1 Projective Tests
	2.3.2 The Constant Repetition Grid



-
- | | |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Step 5.</i> After working through the plan glance quickly through the completed answer before moving on to the next question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If points have not been included, they can be added immediately or the scribe can jot down some points for later discussion if there is time at the end of the exam. <p><i>Step 6.</i> Make a plan for each essay question in</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important that time allocation is given to each question in the exam. Time can be allocated for planning, for writing and for reviewing the paper as a whole. • Remember that using headings and subheadings is a simple and quick way of structuring essays. • Planning should be carried out for each |
|---|---|

examples for students

8.2 RESPONDING TO SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS AND MULTIPLE CHOICE

The need for structuring of responses is not as crucial for questions requiring short-answers as for essays. Some students may be able to give their short-answer responses without the need for any planning other than that which can be carried out mentally. However, other students may need a more concrete method of planning their answers. In this case a simpler version of the stem/leaf approach outlined for the essay-type responses can be used. Alternatively, a more straightforward approach of jotting down the essential points may suffice. Once again, the important thing is for the student to find out which method feels comfortable and this should be done well beforehand as the exam room is not the place to find out which methods are best.

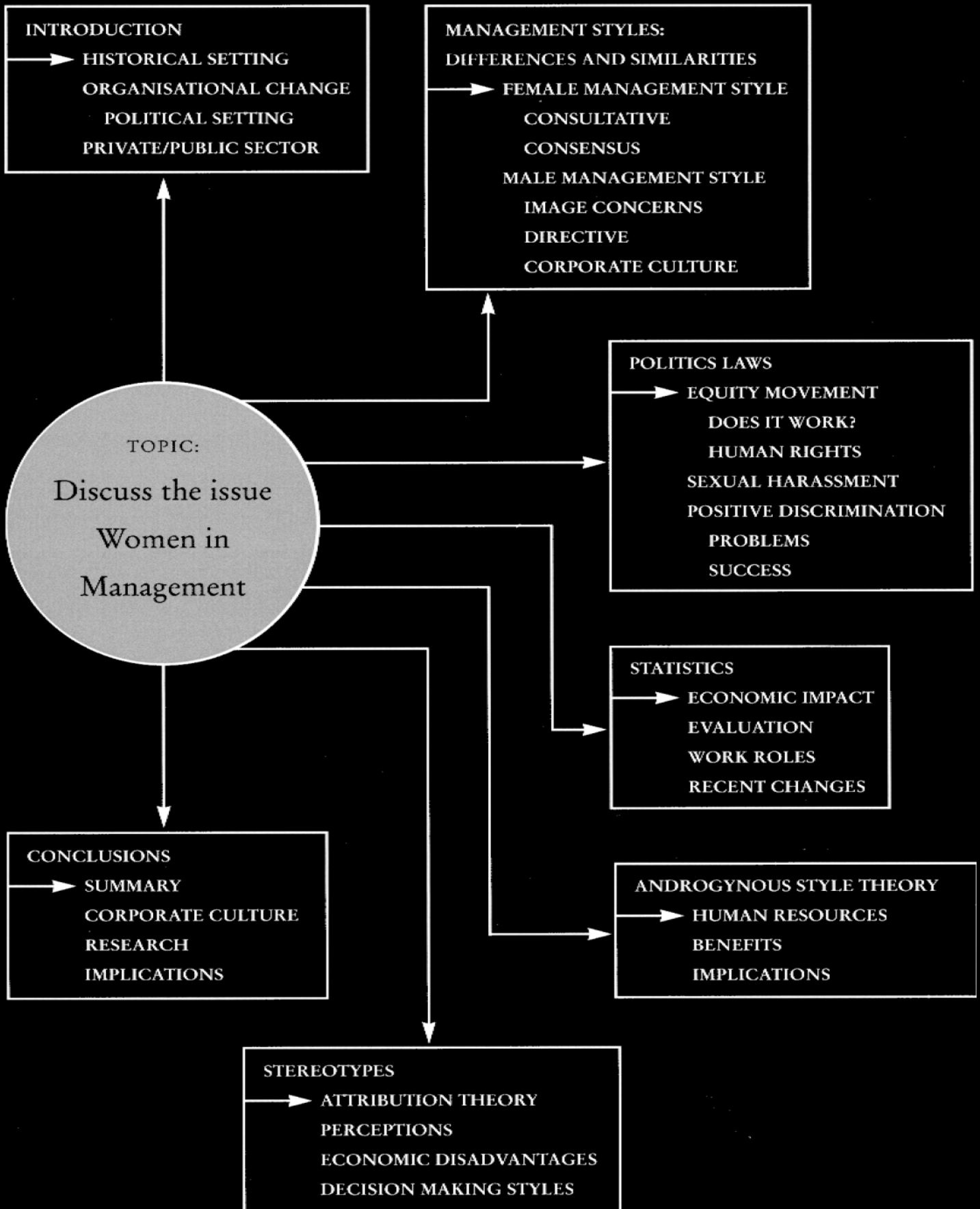
Some students will be able to answer multiple choice questions without the assistance of a scribe. Where an exam has a variety of questions, e.g. essay-type, short answer, and multiple choice, some students may be able to take over the simple marking of multiple choice answers and relegate more complex writing to their scribes. Other students will require their scribe to mark the responses for multiple choice as well. In these cases, the students must ensure that the scribes make the

desired response to the right question. It may not be adequate to merely glance over the paper at the end of the exam period. The student should take care to confirm that the scribe has made the stipulated response. One way of doing this is for students to check each response as it is made by their scribes. Again, it is the student's responsibility to ensure the scribe's response is the one they intended.

8.3 EXAMPLE MINDMAP FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Occasionally scribes may be used to assist students with learning disabilities. For these students, essay planning using the more linear/abstract method of structuring points may not be suitable, and a more holistic system of planning might be more in step with these students' particular planning methods. The development of mind maps is one such holistic approach to essay planning that can be used in this situation. If such a technique is to be used, it is essential that the scribe be aware of the individual terminology and be able to follow the directions of the student to develop a mind map. The following diagram shows an example of a mind map. It should be noted that this more visual/spatial method of representation also follows a stem/leaf format but merely does so in a more spatial and holistic way.

example mindmap



scribe training workshop

MORNING SESSION 9.00AM - 12.30PM

1. Introduction and outline of program

2. Background re students with disabilities at your institution

- numbers and types of disabilities.
- student experiences, invited student speakers.
- services and resources available.
- special exam conditions.
- types of supports available, student experiences with exams.

3. Sensitisation exercises

- Workshop participants engage in simulation of general problems related to disability and education, e.g. sensory impairments, or experience with using a wheelchair.
- Participants engage in simulation of disability in written assessment situation, unprepared use of scribe, restricted writing, writing with non-dominant hand.

4. Discussion of sensitisation experiences

- Physical reaction, emotional reaction, cognitive functioning.
- Relate to experiences of students.

5. Current situation

- What procedures are currently in place for special exams in general and the use of scribes in particular.
- How adequate are these procedures, ideas for possible improvements.

6. The Scribing Manual - Introduction

- Distribute manual and in small groups work through introductory sections on:
 - purpose of manual.
 - definitions.

- students who might use a scribe.
- steps in deciding when to use a scribe - advantages and disadvantages.
- plenary session to discuss group ideas and questions.

AFTERNOON SESSION 1.30PM - 4.00PM

1. Warm up. This should be designed to develop familiarity and trust between workshop participants and be energising and fun.

2. Basic Scribing Skills

- Work through sections "What makes a good scribe?"
- Pair up and practice dictation exercises.
- Group feedback on exercise.

3. Exam situations

- Work through sections in manual on preparing for exams and during exams.
- Work in pairs (one scribe, one student) and practise scribing answers to short answer exam questions (scribes to be matched according to academic background).
- Group feedback on problems encountered.
- Work in pairs on scribing answers to long essay questions. Again, scribes should be matched according to academic background.

Real students may be used throughout this session to ensure authenticity to the training as well as practice for students.

4. Debriefing and Close

- Small group discussion of participants' reactions to the workshop.
- Evaluation sheets filled in.
- Plenary feedback session.
- Close.

checklist page for students

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

- Meet with the Disability Adviser or other appropriate academic and administrative staff to discuss your situation as early as possible.
- Find out about alternative options that might be suitable for you in an exam.
- Be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of using a scribe.
- Find out about your institution's procedures for applying for special exam arrangements.
- Arrange for proof of disability if required.
- Complete any necessary paper work.
- Check if there is need to apply for each exam period, e.g. every semester?
- Contact other relevant staff if necessary, e.g. Examinations Officer, Course Co-ordinator .

EXAMINATION PREPARATIONS

- Meet with your Disability Adviser and scribe to discuss exam arrangements.
- Practise using a scribe at every opportunity in preparation for the exam situation.
- Find out which structuring method feels right to you.
- Practise exam questions using a scribe in

timed practise sessions.

- Read this document thoroughly and make use of relevant suggestions:
 - n good dictation practices,
 - n exam preparations,
 - n exam technique.
 - n alternative learning strategies that will assist in using a scribe.
- Confirm that the scribe knows where and when the exam will be held.

IN THE EXAM ROOM

- Make sure that the exam supervisor knows you will be using a scribe.
- Ensure that you have two copies of all booklets and exam papers.
- Prepare suitable seating arrangements.
- Provide the scribe with the list of special terms (if required and permitted).

REVIEW

- Discuss arrangements with the Disability Adviser, particularly if they were not satisfactory.
- Notification for special arrangements may need to be given for each exam period.

good luck!

This booklet was prepared on the basis of the current experience of study skills advisers who have worked with university students with disabilities. Disability Advisers would welcome suggestions and additional information from both staff and students who have experience of oral examinations. The Disability Advisers at the universities can be contacted on the following telephone numbers:

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