Academic Knowledge and Learning:
What does your lecturer think you know already?

Centre for Teaching and Learning
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Write down what you think these words mean:

Perspective _____

Theory _____

Critique _____

Forever discovering

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When is a marker likely to allocate higher marks for an assignment?

Good mood?   *Bad mood?*

(Townsend, Kek, & Tuck, 1989)

What is Academic Knowledge?

Informal knowledge	Academic/Scientific Knowledge
Knowledge that people use to make sense of their daily lives	Knowledge that scholars, experts or scientists create to understand the world, explain how things work, and suggest how they can be improved
So many people are being bullied at work in this country! And it's a really serious problem because it causes misery for victims and headaches for the organisation.	Workplace bullying is recognised as a major concern among researchers internationally (Salin, 2008) and has been identified as a widespread problem in New Zealand. In one study, O'Driscoll et al. (2011) surveyed over 1700 employees of 36 organisations in New Zealand. Nearly 18% of these employees reported being bullied at work. Workplace bullying is associated with negative consequences for the victim, including health and emotional problems (Aitkens, 2010) and also for the organisation, including decreased staff satisfaction, low morale and high staff turnover (Brownley, 2011).
The audience does not generally expect proof for claims made Belongs to everybody Information is often general rather than specific or detailed Language is informal or conversational	Proof/evidence is required when a claim is made Belongs to the researchers/organisations Information is specific, detailed, and expressed formally and objectively

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Generation of academic knowledge

Primary research
Researchers collect data, analyse it and reach conclusions

| Interviews |
| Observations |
| Experiments |

They **publish** their research in
- scholarly journals
- books

Example:

Branch, S., Ramsay, S., & Barker, M. (2007). Contributing factors to workplace bullying by staff – An interview study. *Journal of Management and Organisation*, *13*(3), 264-281.

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Generation of academic knowledge

- Research contributes to *theoretical knowledge* on a topic

Example:
Branch, S., Ramsay, S., & Barker, M. (2007). Contributing factors to workplace bullying by staff – An interview study. *Journal of Management and Organisation*, *13*(3), 264-281.

↓

Contributes to understanding of workplace bullying – some aspect(s) of *how* it occurs, *why* it occurs and what can be done about it

- Theory develops as new evidence emerges from research

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Relationship between theory and research

- Theory develops as new evidence emerges from research

Theory ⟹ **Research**

Research   **Theory**

Theory ⟸ **Research**

- Researchers <u>review</u> and build on previous knowledge to develop new knowledge in a field

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There are <u>multiple</u> theoretical perspectives in any topic area

Educational strategy	Organisational structure	Change management

Emotional development	Leadership	Internationalisation

Stress	Culture

- Similar perspectives and competing perspectives
- Each has its strengths and limitations

  Underlying any perspective is a definition...

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Definitions: The foundations of different perspectives

Categorisation: What is it?

Defining an <u>object</u>

An axe is a tool which is used for chopping wood.

Components/attributes/features

Categorisation: What is it?

An axe is a weapon which is used for killing people.

Components/attributes/features

__Academic definitions__ :
Name of concept + Categorisation + Components/Attributes/Features

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Why are definitions so important?

- They are the lens through which you view the concept
- They form the foundation for your discussion of topics in your assignments
- They form the foundation for theoretical models

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Compare these two understandings of aggression:

Aggression is a <u>natural</u> behaviour. It is triggered by threats from others in the environment	Aggression is a <u>learned</u> behaviour. It is learned by observing this behaviour rewarded in others in the environment .

They would require different approaches to finding solutions

Identify sources of threats in the environment and minimise them.	Identify situations in which aggressive behaviour is rewarded and minimise them.

What if we view aggression as a combination of individual and environmental factors?

Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory
(in Berk & Roberts, 2009, p. 28)

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A theoretical framework for aggression might explain:

- What is it? (Definition)
- How does it occur?
- When does it occur?
- Where does it occur?
- Why does it occur?

Can help practitioners like teachers to:
- Recognise the signs
- Predict when it's likely to occur
- Explain why it has occurred in a particular situation
↓
So that they will be better equipped to:
- Manage the situation when it *does* occur
- Prevent it from occurring in the future

Critical use of theory in academic study

As a postgraduate student you will be expected to:

- define the concepts you are discussing or researching
  - beginning of essays/reports/literature reviews
- acknowledge that there are different perspectives/views of the concepts you are discussing or researching
- compare these perspectives
- evaluate these perspectives in terms of specific contexts
  - strengths and limitations in terms of your research topic or your area of practice

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Working with theory and research in assignments

- Applying the theory and research on a topic to analyse organisations and situations

- Critiquing the theory and research available on the topic

We'll be using Hofstede's (1980) model of cultural variance as an example of what this means

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Working with academic definitions

Identifying the elements can help you understand and use definitions

Hofstede (1980) defined culture as follows: "Culture is the collective [1] [2] programming of the mind which [3] distinguishes one human group from another. Culture in this sense is a system of collectively held values" (p. 25).

1. **Name of concept** – followed by verb (is/can be defined as/ is defined as)
2. **Categorisation** – crucial element of definition
3. **Features** – components/characteristics

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Geert Hofstede's IBM study (1967-1973)

Definition of culture: "Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes one human group from another. Culture in this sense is a system of collectively held values" (1980, p. 25).

Examined how values in the workplace are influenced by culture

Different value systems
↓
Consequences in workplace

Published his research in a book: *Cultures consequences: International differences in work-related values* (1980)

Seminal text – very important or *key* text

Geert Hofstede's IBM study (1967-1973)

Aim: To identify universal dimensions of culture that differ among countries
Aspects of culture that can be measured relative to other cultures

Method: How did he do it?
Analysed data from a survey of middle managers in an international corporation (IBM) with sites in 66 countries

What did he find?
Identified four dimensions in original study (1980)
- individualism versus collectivism
- power distance
- femininity versus masculinity
- uncertainty avoidance

Added - long term vs short-term orientation (1991)
*Added* - indulgence versus restraint (2010)

Hofstede's model of national cultural differences

Six cultural dimensions:

Individualism versus collectivism

Power distance

Femininity versus masculinity

Uncertainty avoidance

Long term versus short-term orientation

Indulgence versus restraint

Hofstede's framework can be used to predict how and why people behave as they do (Robock & Simmonds, 1989).

New Zealand and South Africa
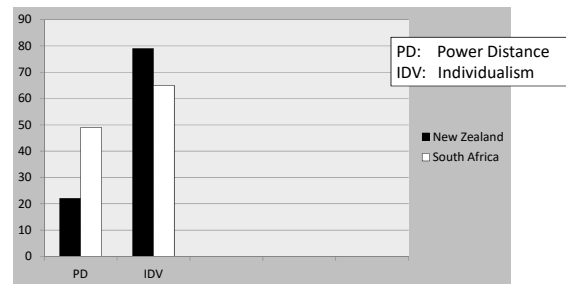
PD: Power Distance
IDV: Individualism

■ New Zealand
□ South Africa

Power Distance
The extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) expect and accept that power is distributed unequally

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Theoretical models are applicable to research in multiple contexts

Power Distance
The extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) expect and accept that power is distributed unequally

How could teachers/social workers/managers (business) use this information?

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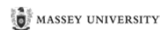
Researchers use and adapt theoretical models for research in different contexts

- Use of theoretical model *unchanged*
  - Test the model in a study
  - Use the model to explain something
- Use of *adapted form* of model
- Rejection of model or aspects of model
- Presentation of alternative model

What are you expected to do with theory and research in your assignments?

❑ Apply theory and research from your readings to analyse organisations and real life situations
  - to develop an argument on a specific issue
  - to analyse a case

Consider the following case…   **…in the light of Hofstede's theory**

Michael accepts an assignment to teach in a rural school in a developing country overseas. When he begins his first class he finds that the students are chatting to each other as he speaks and don't appear to be paying attention to him. After a while he's had enough. He calls out "Excuse me class!" and tells them that he finds their behaviour rude and unacceptable. The students stare at him in astonishment, clearly not understanding his objection. Michael later finds that during tests the students' eyes wander to the efforts of others. Local teachers in the school do not object to this behaviour which Michael considers to be cheating.

Individualism versus collectivism:
Individualistic cultures emphasise individual achievement and self-sufficiency. Collective cultures place more value on the co-operative effort of the group in reaching a goal and they emphasise group loyalty and harmony among group members.

How would Hofstede's dimension of individualism versus collectivism explain the difference in expectations shown in the case?

Applying the theory and research to analyse cases or situations

*Example:*   *Main idea – topic sentence*

<u>One possible explanation</u> for these different expectations regarding appropriate student behaviour is that Michael comes from an individualistic culture while the culture of his pupils and the local teachers is collective in nature. Hofstede (2001) characterises individualistic cultures as those that emphasise individual achievement and self-sufficiency while collective cultures value group loyalty, co-operation and harmony among group members. Brislin, Worthley and Macnab (2006) argue that when students from collectivist cultures talk to each other during the teaching process, they are fulfilling their obligation to share their knowledge with other members of the student group in a co-operative effort to understand the material being presented by the teacher. Likewise, sharing information during exams fits their cultural expectation of group co-operation in attaining goals and the maintenance of good relations amongst members of the group. In their survey of schools in… Beaton and Brajinsky (2003) found that co-operative effort was valued…

Where does my *own* opinion fit in?

- You will be viewing the familiar world through the lens of theory and research
- You need to demonstrate that your opinion on an issue is sound by referring to evidence
- Support your opinion by referring to theoretical concepts and evidence from research

What are you expected to do with theory and research in your assignments?

❑ Apply the theory and research to analyse organisations or situations
    - to develop an argument on a specific issue
    - to analyse a case
❑ Critique the theory and research on a topic
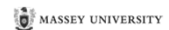   - critique is central to academic writing
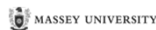
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Critiquing research

Involves examination of both usefulness and limitations

Examine the **research method:**

Example:
➢ Sample based on a single multinational organisation
➢ Subjects predominantly middle class males

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Critiquing research

Involves examination of both usefulness and limitations

Examine the researcher's **assumptions:**

Example:
➢ Does culture systematically cause consequences?
➢ Can culture be measured?
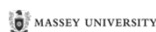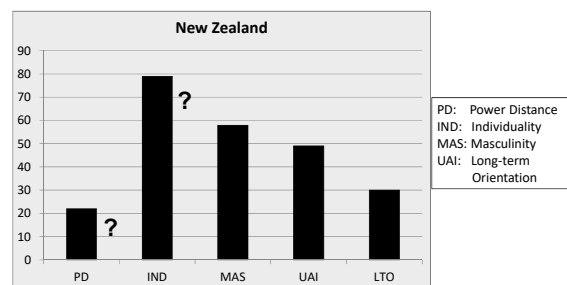➢ What about sub-cultures?
➢ Are cultures static?

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Table 1: *Hofstede's Five Cultural Dimensions*

PD:	Power Distance
IND:	Individuality
MAS:	Masculinity
UAI:	Long-term Orientation

Is this an accurate reflection of New Zealand society?

Comparing perspectives on a concept

Combination of cultures unique to individuals:

Straub et al. (2002) provide an alternative to categorisations of culture as systems of shared values or problem solving. In their review of the conceptualisation and measurement of culture, they suggest that "an individual's social identity represents that amalgamation of cultures across boundaries (national, organisational, professional, etc.) which fuse together to create one's overall culture. The combination is unique to each individual" (p. 18).

Review article: Critical overview

Straub, D., Loch, K., Evaristo, R., Karahanna, E., & Srite, M. (2002). Toward a theory-based measurement of culture. *Journal of Global Information Management*, *10*(1), 13-23.

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Critiquing Research: Relevance of theoretical models in today's world

- How has the world changed since the research was published?

- How do these changes affect the relevance of the model in research and practice today?

- What new research is available on the topic?

Critical analysis is central to academic knowledge and your assignments will reflect this

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❑ Sometimes a whole assignment is a critical analysis of a particular theoretical model(s) in a specific context

Example 1:   *Nursing practice/Human Resources Management*
How useful is Hofstede's model of cultural variance in the context of the New Zealand secondary school classroom today? Discuss with reference to your own teaching situation.

- Provide a *brief* description of the theoretical model
- The rest of the assignment must consist of critical analysis
    - what does the literature say about the model?
    - is the model relevant to the given context?
    - what are the strengths and limitations of this model in the context?
    - which other model might be more appropriate in the context?

❑ You may be asked to use current theory and research on a topic to critically analyse **policy** and **practice** in a specific field

Sample assignment:
With reference to current literature on the topic, critically analyse current policy and practice relating to the care of elderly hospice patients in New Zealand.

For example:
- What theoretical framework is at the foundation of the policy and practice? Eg. Definition of `well-being' in this situation
- Is this framework appropriate in New Zealand?
    - Eg. Consider the multi-cultural population
- What does the literature say about best practice and how does current practice in New Zealand measure up against this?
- What are the areas of agreement/disagreement in the literature? What are the *gaps* in the literature on this topic?

❑ Sometimes the whole assignment is a critique/critical analysis of a single scholarly article

Sample assignment:
Write a critique of the following journal article:

Pio, E. (2005). Standing in the foyer: Work experiences of Indian women migrants in New Zealand. *Equal Opportunities International*, *4*(1), 58-75.

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So…what do we know about theory and research?

- Theory changes as new evidence emerges from research
- There are multiple theoretical perspectives on a single topic
- Researchers use and adapt theoretical models for the context of their research
- Theory is always used *critically* in research
    - strengths and limitations are explained
    - other theoretical perspectives are acknowledged
- Critical analysis is central to what you will do as researchers in your assignments

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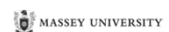
**Recommended books on academic writing
available from Massey's Library**

Pyrczack, F., & Bruce, R. (2005). *Writing empirical research reports (*5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Pyrczack Publishing. **(808.06615 Pyr)**

Swales, J.M., & Feak, C.B. (1994). *Academic writing for graduate students: A course for nonnative speakers of English.* Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press. **(808.042 Swa)**

Swales, J.M., & Feak, C.B. (2000). *English in today's research world: A writing guide.* Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press. **(808.042Swa)**

Swales, J.M., & Feak, C.B. (2004). *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills* (2nd ed.) Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press. **(808.0428 Swa)**

**Recommended books on academic writing
available from Massey's Library**

<u>**Specific to areas of study:**</u>

Burton, L.J. (2002). *An interactive approach to writing essays and research reports in psychology.* Sydney, Australia: John Wiley & Sons. **(808.06615 Bur)**

Cargill, M., & O'Connor, P. (2009). Writing scientific research articles: Strategy and steps. Oxford, England: Wiley-Blackwell. **(On short loan at library)**

Emerson, L. (Ed.) (2005). *Writing guidelines for business students.* (3rd ed.) Southbank, VC: Thomson Dunmore Press. **(808 0663 Wri)**

Emerson, L. (Ed.) (2007). *Writing guidelines for education students* (2nd ed.). Auckland, New Zealand: Thomson Learning. **(371.30281 Wri)**

Emerson, L. (Ed.). (2005) *Writing guidelines for social science students* (3rd ed.). Southbank, Australia: Thompson Dunmore Press. **(808.06665 Wri)**

Hampton, J., Emerson, L., & Mackay, B. (Eds.). (1999). *Writing guidelines for postgraduate science students.* Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press. **(808.0666 Ham)**

Massey's OWLL site

Academic writing: http://owll.massey.ac.nz/academic-writing.php

Academic writing e-book: http://owll.massey.ac.nz/academic-writing/academic-writing-e-book.php

Assignment planning calculator: http://owll.massey.ac.nz/academic-writing/assignment-planning-calculator.php

Computer skills: http://owll.massey.ac.nz/computer-skills.php

Postgraduate assignment types: http://owll.massey.ac.nz/postgraduate-study/postgraduate-assignment-types.php

Referencing: http://owll.massey.ac.nz/referencing.php

Sample assignments: http://owll.massey.ac.nz/sample-assignments.php

Stream and WebCT: http://owll.massey.ac.nz/stream.php

References

Burton, L.J. (2002). *An interactive approach to writing essays and research reports in psychology.* Sydney, NSW: John Wiley & Sons.

Bentley, T.A., Catley, B. , Cooper-Thomas, H., Gardner, D., O'Driscoll, M.P., Dale, A., & Trenbath, L. (2012). Perceptions of workplace bullying in the New Zealand travel industry: Prevalence and management strategies. *Tourism Management*, *33*, 351-360. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2011.04.004

Manchester University. (2006). *Academic phrasebank*. Retrieved from http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/index.htm

Pakenham, K.J. (2001). *Making connections: Academic reading techniques.* Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Salin, D. (2003). Ways of explaining workplace bullying: A review of enabling, motivating and precipitating structures and processes in the work environment. *Human Relations*, *56*(10)*,* 1213-1232.

Salin, D. (2008). The prevention of workplace bullying as a question of human resource management: Measures adopted and underlying organizational factors. *Scandanavian Journal of Management*, *24,* 221-231. doi: 10.1016/j.scaman.2008.04.004

Smollet, R., Proctor, M., & Plotnik, J. (2004). *Verbs for referring to sources.* Retrieved from University of Toronto website: http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/reporting.html

Straub, D., Loch, K., Evaristo, R., Karahanna, E., Srite, M. (2002). Toward a theory-based measurement of culture. *Journal of Global Information Management*, *10*(1), 13-23.

Swales, J.M., & Feak, C.B. (1994). *Academic writing for graduate students.* Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

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