

Introduction

Entering the university is entering a new culture.

In a new culture, you need to learn new ways of doing things and new ways of thinking, in order to fit in and be successful.

Likewise, success at university depends largely on how well you understand how it works. There are certain things that you are expected to do or not do.

In short, you need to know the underlying principles of your new culture, of academic life.

In this book, you will be introduced to one of the most important aspects of academic culture: communication. Whatever you do on campus — whether you are writing a laboratory report, discussing a group project with your classmates or asking your professor about your grade — you will always be engaged in some form of communication.

This book consists of ten chapters looking at some of the most important areas of communication on campus. These are:

- Writing an academic essay
- Developing an academic essay
- Finding appropriate words in an academic essay
- Reporting research findings
- Proofreading your essay or report
- Using other people's ideas
- Giving presentations
- Interacting with peers and tutors
- Interacting with friends
- Communicating through email

Notice how all the chapters are about *do-ing* something through language, particularly the English language. They refer to uses of English (and sometimes other languages) *in context*, for example, the language of report writing is different from the language of friendly interaction in that one is formal and the other is informal; communicating through email requires you to know who your reader(s) will be so that you can decide the appropriate tone and language of the email and, although you need good grammar

when you give a good presentation, a good presentation is not just about good grammar because you need effective non-verbal communication as well.

The list of topics above is not exhaustive. It is not meant to be so. There are many other communication practices on campus which have not been included. But one thing is sure: you will be constantly *communicating* in your new culture soon as you start pursuing academic excellence.

So how do you start reading this book?

Well, start with any chapter you like. If *Using other people's ideas* intrigues you, then read it first. If, during your first few days in one of the halls you have met many friends from different countries, perhaps you might want to read *Interacting with friends*. You decide. After all, communication practices do not occur in a linear way — you do not start life in the university with *Writing an academic essay* and finish it with *Communicating through email*!

Understand the underlying principles of communication on campus by reading the chapters in this book. Enjoy these chapters. But more importantly, learn from them, and embrace them as if you are, indeed, entering a new culture. This book will help you feel comfortable and accepted in that new culture.