

Vision International University

STUDENT HANDBOOK



Vision International University

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INTRODUCTION

You have before you an invitation to an enriching learning experience. This student handbook will tell you about how you can expect to grow spiritually and be better equipped to minister the Word of God with power.

Vision International University is a school for the busy person who will benefit from a learning system that provides flexibility of scheduling and that emphasizes practical application. Our goals are not only academic, but spiritual and practical, placing a major emphasis upon helping our students develop their God-given ministry potential.

The union of those factors creates an exciting environment in which you can anticipate real expansion in your grasp of scripture, in your relationship with other Christians, in the vigor of your faith, and in your service for Christ.

We welcome you among our students, and we pray that your expectations will be surpassed. May the Lord bring you to a new level of personal fulfillment and fruitful service, in the local church or the workplace.

If you are already one of our students, then we pray that you will find the will and the wisdom to complete well what you have begun, and so prove to be diligent in the Word of God.

BENEFITS

We have designed our courses to benefit people who share our spiritual identity and who are serious about obeying the biblical call to be a minister of Christ, whether in part-time or full-time service.

As a participant in the Vision program, the ministry of outstanding teachers will enrich you. You will share deeply in your community of faith, learning the power of faith and how to live by faith. The University commits itself to helping you to arouse the supernatural in your life through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. You will learn sound and balanced doctrine, how to handle biblical instruction wisely and well, and how to separate truth from error. The result should be growth in spiritual stature and in your ability to serve Christ successfully.

COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPHASIS

Community service is an essential component of Vision's ministry training emphasis. For that reason, the curriculum is designed to help you relate principles to the people and circumstances where you live, and to apply the practices that arise from the principles to making positive changes within your community. This illustrates one of the many ways in which distance education can benefit you and the world you live in.

CHURCH OF THE LOCALITY

What is a church of the locality? Is this the same as the local church? To best answer this important question, it is necessary to seek the wisdom of the master church builder, Paul the Apostle. When Paul wrote letters to the church, whether Corinth or Ephesus, he sent them to the city where the church was established, not to an individual church within the city. Each city had elders, generally raised up and commissioned for service by an apostle and/or prophet. The elders were responsible for the flock under their care. Buildings were hard to come by, so they generally met in homes or in rented facilities (School of Tyrannus). They were called upon to take leadership in the whole city, and were to be in mutual, loving submission to one another. Of course, Paul had problems with his leadership teams in the first century church; if that were not so he would have never had to send a letter! Though an ideal, it is the philosophy of Vision to assist the Body of Christ in the city to develop a unified purpose, to train leaders for the 21st century.

GOALS

The primary goal of the Institute can be expressed in one sentence. "To equip men and women to minister the Word of God with power."

Our mission is to create a teaching environment integrated with the local church that will maximize the impact of the Word of God upon the students, causing them to learn sound doctrine and responsible practice.

Our expectation is that our students will be deeply taught the fundamentals of the faith in a way that will transform their lives and characters, and truly prepare them to fulfill the call of God in their lives,

- Through local churches
- In part-time ministry
- In full-time ministry
- In the local church or
- In the workplace

We have a special motivation to equip men and women to go out and pioneer new churches, both in this country and overseas. What kind of churches? Churches that emphasize the Word of God, that exercise bold faith, that know the believer's authority and victory in Christ, that operate in the charismata, and demonstrate confidence in the triumph of the Kingdom of God.

To accomplish those aims, we have built our curriculum around four major learning streams.

BIBLE: To understand better and to handle more wisely the scripture (I Tim. 2:6-16; 6:3-5; II Tim. 2:15).

CHARACTER: Striving toward "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," reaching toward maturity in leadership and in Servanthood (Eph. 4:13-16).

MINISTRY: To enable each person to discover his or her calling in God, and to serve Christ and the church successfully (Eph. 4:11-12; Romans 12:1-7; I Cor. 12:4-31; Acts 1:8).

FAITH: Discovering the limitless power of faith and how to "move mountains" in the name of Jesus (Heb. 11:11-6; Mk. 11:22-24).

Each of those categories contains a number of other key themes, such as concepts of the local church, relationship to the world, basics of Christian life, various major doctrines, pastoral theology, urban missions, and leadership.

PURPOSE AND PROGRAMS OF VISION

Vision International University was founded for education and training on both a local and an international basis. From the beginning of the New Testament era, the Lord has used the local church and its pastoral leadership to teach and train its people for God's service. Vision is an instrument to be used by and for the local church to fulfill its calling. The University campus and the administrative offices are located in Ramona (San Diego), California.

PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

In this day of disappearing moral absolutes, it is imperative that all Christians be reminded that the Bible, as the revelation of God's truth, must determine not only our doctrinal beliefs, but also our lifestyle. In a changing world, the Christian has an unchanging standard, the Word of God. The VIU "Standards of Conduct" are based upon the

teachings and principles of Scripture, seeking to develop personal holiness and discipline exemplified in a lifestyle glorifying to God.

Vision International is a Bible based, Christ-centered institution dedicated to the educating and training of Christians for the work of the ministry. The following statement of purposes encompasses the scope of the vision of the Institute.

THE PURPOSES OF VISION INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

- Our purpose is that a graduate of VIU should be able to communicate the Word of God to others.
- Our purpose is that a graduate of VIU should be able to expound the Word of God in a systematic fashion, with his/her training in the analytical inductive methods of contemporary biblical scholarship.
- Our purpose is that a graduate of VIU should demonstrate genuine concern for missionary work around the world, with a special concern for the urban centers, as a missionary, volunteer, sponsor, or prayer partner.
- Our purpose is that a graduate of VIU should demonstrate Christian maturity with his/her commitment to Christ and His Church.
- Our purpose is that a graduate of VIU should be able to continue a daily regular study of the Word of God as an autonomous learner, which is characteristic of servants of God.
- Our purpose is that a graduate of VIU should be able to present a well-defined, biblically based, intellectually and rationally sound, compassionate apologetic of their faith.
- Our purpose is that a graduate of VIU should know how to acquire knowledge.
- Our purpose is that a graduate of VIU should know how to apply knowledge that has been acquired and exhibit wisdom and walk in it.
- Our purpose is that a graduate of VIU should have an awareness of personal values.
- Our purpose is that a graduate of VIU should have a high level of mastery in the skills of communication.
- Our purpose is that a graduate of VIU should be able to cooperate and collaborate with others in studying, analyzing, formulating, and implementing solutions to problems.
- Our purpose is that a graduate of VIU should have awareness, concern, and a sense of responsibility regarding contemporary events, issues, and problems.
- Our purpose is that a graduate of VIU should have a love, loyalty, and responsibility to/for the local church as God's primary method for societal transformation and its development.
- Our purpose is that a graduate of VIU will know the voice of the Lord for his/her generation and articulate God's plan with anointed power and conviction.

With this in mind, students who enroll in VIU are in agreement with the Philosophy and Code of Conduct.

BASIC BELIEFS

The inter-denominational, non-sectarian institutions of Vision International University offer ministry training and theological education to students from a wide variety of faith backgrounds. Vision International College began in Australia in 1974 as a Pentecostal-Charismatic institution without specific denominational affiliation. Vision now cooperates with many Christian denominations and ministerial fellowships to provide a primarily biblical education to both students preparing ministry and those who seek a stronger theological foundation for the ministerial context in which they find themselves. Vision welcomes students from any denominational background.

The curriculum of Vision attempts to maintain a non-dogmatic perspective, allowing students to study a wide variety of theological issues to formulate their own beliefs in an academic context. Vision maintains a strong emphasis on church planting, community service, and Christian character development.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive statement of faith, but rather a guide to the doctrinal boundaries within which Vision functions. Those who share our spiritual identity will be generally familiar with the following terms, and will be able to fill in what is lacking.

WE AFFIRM THE FOLLOWING:

That the Bible is the Word of God, given and preserved for all generations. We believe it is accurate in all that it affirms, and is the authoritative standard by which we determine beliefs and conduct.

- That God exists as three persons: The Father, Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, who offers saving grace to all, and the Holy Spirit who empowers men and women for service, and sanctifies them for God's purpose.
- That nothing can replace the importance of the local church, which is the body of Christ on earth, in the program of God.
- That entrance into the church is through the "new birth," which is brought about by genuine repentance of sin, confession of faith in Christ as Savior, and surrender to Him as Lord.
- That membership in the church is signified by joyful participation in its worship, fellowship, sacraments, witness, and by acceptance of its discipline.
- That the presence and use of the charismata is essential in the local church and in Christian ministry.
- That the victorious Christian life is built upon a proper understanding and exercise of the spiritual authority conveyed to the believer by the gift of righteousness.
- In the resurrection of the dead at Christ's return, in the certainty of God's judgment, and in the inescapable result of that judgment as foretold in the Scriptures for the just and the unjust.

OUR ROLE

Our role at Vision is to bring theological education and ministerial training to people who are unable or unwilling to attend a centralized higher education institution.

But, more profoundly, while we admire and endorse the efforts of traditional Bible colleges and seminaries, we are deeply committed to the concept of training people within the walls of their own local church, and to the provision of excellent teaching material and study options for Christians everywhere. We treat the entire local church

environment as part of our educational activity: its worship, its witness, its fellowship, its teaching; their ministries—are all reckoned to be part of the training process of equipping men and women to serve Christ.

- Our function is simply to add a theological and academic resource that few churches can viably provide, while leaving the practical training in ministry to local leaders.
- Underlying the way in which we present our materials, and the kinds of assessment we employ, there is an educational philosophy based upon the following principles:
 - Christian education must stand upon a strong theological foundation (note the injunctions and warnings about "sound doctrine" in 1 Timothy 1:10; 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:3; 2 Peter 2:1-3; Jeremiah 6:16; 1 Corinthians 3:10-13).
 - Students must be brought to *know* God, not just to learn *about* Him, and the curriculum must be consciously structured to achieve that excellent end.

The goal is not just to impart knowledge, but rather to teach principles of sound interpretation, showing people how to do their own research, and how to apply truth to life. A final goal is the ultimate activation of men and women into effective Christian service, in any environment to which he or she may be called to minister.

CHRISTIAN LIFE

Our view of Christian life is that it should be loving, joyful, affirmative and productive, and our curriculum reflects those positive concepts. We also accept that within the Kingdom of God there is room for rich diversity in custom and style, so we welcome students from different backgrounds. Learning to love one another and to appreciate each other's differences is a vital aspect of life at Vision.

SHORT-TERM - Why a short-term school?

We recognize that good stewardship of one's abilities and the call of God requires some people to attend a full-time formal institution; but for many people a full-time institute is not the best alternative for ministry preparation. For these, the equipping and education offered through VIU is most effective.

Facilitating learning in the evenings, or through weekend seminars, enables our students to continue in their regular employment while they study. This makes our learning experience available to many people for whom a full-time school would not be possible.

INDIGENOUS MISSION

Vision is thoroughly committed to indigenous missionary endeavors. Vision places a high level of respect on the local culture and customs of our partners around the world, allowing them to translate, contextualize, and adapt the curriculum to suit their own needs in their immediate ministry environment. Vision is not imperialistic in its education outreach; rather, it seeks to provide curriculum where there is a lack of curriculum, and education where there is a lack of education, allowing the people to benefit from our partnership in every possible way.

Vision does not seek to convert or indoctrinate; rather, Vision cooperates with many international partners. Vision's educational outreach does not seek to dogmatically evangelize the Christianity of other cultures to a westernized mindset or the doctrinal standard of a specific denomination. Rather, Vision provides the academic and vocational training tools to open new doors for educational exploration and leadership development in the immediate cultural context, language, and Christian tradition.

THE INTEGRATION OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND MINISTRY ACTIVATION

The two major themes turning heads in the missions community are leadership training and activation. A problem exists, however, in a lack of integration of these two major streams of mission. Church planting ministries are desperate for trained workers and leadership training ministries are looking for places for their graduates to minister. Through a strategic partnership between ITEN and the Global 12 Project¹ over 6,000 churches were established worldwide during 2005. Whether your field of service is the church, missions, or the workplace, Vision programs can prepare you for effective service.

CHURCH PLANTERS NEED TO BE TRAINED FOR:

- Assurance of a sound theological foundation for ministry
- An understanding of integrity and ethics needed for ministry
- Understanding of the call of God on their life for ministry
- Quality of leadership needed to plant sustaining churches in the nations
- Avoidance of frustration and burnout in ministry from lack of adequate training
- Impartation of the Vision of a worldwide ministry

Vision International Educational Network's focus on local church-based education positions itself to help bring integration between leadership training and church planting. The vision for church planting comes from hundreds of strong local churches that Vision partners with, and who have a compatible vision to plant churches. Through Vision, church planters can be trained in the local setting. By working together we can see leaders trained and churches planted around the world.

¹ It is not required to be a part of the Global 12 Project. We work with many church planting and extension ministries.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All Students must be committed to the absolute lordship of Christ, giving evidence of that by a continuing relationship with Him, and by a desire to reach greater maturity in Him in full obedience to His will.

We place no restriction on a student because of race, color or national origin.

- Students must be sufficiently proficient in the language of our curriculum to enable them to complete each course and to progress with success at a normal place.
- An application must be completed, and the non-refundable application fee paid.
- We require all students to be actively involved in a local church.
- All admissions are subject to approval by the Admissions Committee, whose decision is final.

REGISTRATION

Your application and registration fee must be in our office by the date specified for the beginning of the program in which you are enrolling. Late registrations can be accepted at the discretion of the registrar. After this fee is paid, you may enroll in any subject(s) without any further registration charge.

You may enroll in a class whenever a new subject begins. Our system of credit does not make it necessary for a student to enroll at a particular time, nor to maintain continuous enrollment. Our program is flexible, and thus able to meet the needs of the greatest number of people.

HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT

In the event of a limited residency course, students are responsible for their own housing. However, if the student is visiting our office we will do all that we can to help, although we cannot accept any responsibility. Any question concerning this should be directed to our office.

Vision International University is established to serve primarily adults who are already in the work force. The institution does not guarantee employment nor does it offer employment assistance.

PROGRESS

Distance students are required to make every effort to complete their work in a timely manner. The average course can be completed within 8 weeks if the student is diligent. There is no limit to the number of courses a distance student can complete in a year's time.

Student progress is monitored by the faculty and by the Student Services Department, with the aim of guiding, encouraging, and supporting students so that they will reach their goals. It is the desire of all VIU faculty and staff that students achieve a high level of learning and personal development as a result of their engagement with the University.

When students fail to maintain satisfactory progress, an attempt is made to help them solve the problem. Continued unsatisfactory participation will be sufficient grounds for dismissal from the Institute. Re-admission may be permitted if the student can show that the problem has been overcome.

WORSHIP

It is important for the student to be actively involved in prayer, praise, spiritual gifts, music, or in any other way that they can as a part of participatory worship. Worship in the local church is considered part of the educational experience of our students.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Vision recognizes that people have different styles through which they learn most readily. Thus, a variety of types of activities are used, depending on the course. Activities may take the form of essays, questions to be answered, multiple-choice tests, field work, and local church activities. The mixture makes learning more effective and more enjoyable.

Not all activities are graded. Some are offered to aid learning to help you evaluate how much you have learned. Others are required, and failure to complete satisfactorily any of those assignments may result in a forfeiture of all credits for that particular subject. Other assignments may be optional, or may affect only a stated percentage of the grade for a course.

GRADUATION

To qualify for graduation, a student must:

- Gain the required number of credit points for each award
- Complete all assignments with a passing grade
- Satisfactorily complete any field assignments that may be required by a course
- Pay all outstanding fees and penalties

TERMINATION

The Institute has the right to terminate a student's enrollment on the following grounds:

- Failing grades in more than 25% of assignments.
- Financial delinquency.
- Unsatisfactory level of participation and progress.
- Conduct that is inconsistent with the philosophy and goals of VIU.

Every effort will be made to resolve the problem before termination of a student's enrollment takes effect. A refund of fees may be applied (see "Refund" section)

TUITION

Tuition fees are established on an annual basis. See current fee schedule.

- Tuition fees include the provision of notes for some lectures and seminars, but do not include textbooks.

REFUND POLICY

Registration fees are not refundable. The tuition refund policy for all distance education courses is based on the start date of each course. The start date for a single course is determined by the date of the shipment of documents or for online students the date the class is opened and made available to them. Five days are added for delivery time for correspondence students only.

STUDENT'S RIGHT TO CANCEL

You have the right to cancel your agreement for a program of instruction, without any penalty or obligations, through attendance at the receipt of your first course or the seventh calendar day after enrollment, whichever is later. After the end of the cancellation period, you also have the right to stop school at any time; and you have the right to receive a pro rata refund if you have completed 60 percent or less of the scheduled days in the current payment period in your program through the last day of attendance.

Cancellation may occur when the student provides a written notice of cancellation at the following address: Vision International University, 1115 D Street, Ramona, CA 92065. This can be done by mail or by hand delivery. The written notice of cancellation, if sent by mail, is effective when deposited in the mail properly addressed with proper postage.

The written notice of cancellation need not take any particular form and, however expressed, it is effective if it shows that the student no longer wishes to be bound by the Enrollment Agreement.

If the Enrollment Agreement is cancelled the school will refund the student any money he/she paid, less a registration or administration fee not to exceed \$250.00, and less any deduction for equipment not returned in good condition, within 45 days after the notice of cancellation is received.

Further, Vision International University offers a distance education program where the instruction is not offered in real time. Vision International University shall transmit the first course and any materials to any student within seven days after this enrollment agreement is signed and the first payment is completed.

The student shall have the right to cancel the agreement and receive a full refund pursuant to items 1-5 above before the first course and materials are received. Cancellation is effective on the date written notice of cancellation is sent. The institution shall make the refund. If the institution sent the first course and materials before an effective cancellation notice was received, the institution shall make a refund within 45 days after the student's return of the materials.

Vision International University shall transmit all of the lessons and other materials to the student if the student: (A) has fully paid for the educational program; and (B) after having received the first lesson and initial materials, requests in writing that all of the material be sent.

If the institution transmits the balance of the material as the student requests, the institution shall remain obligated to provide the other educational services it agreed to provide, such as responses to student inquiries, student and faculty interaction, and evaluation and comment on lessons submitted by the student, but shall not be obligated to pay any refund after all of the lessons and material are transmitted.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

You may withdraw from the school at any time after the cancellation period (described above) and receive a pro rata refund if you have completed 60 percent or less of the scheduled days in the current payment period in your

program through the last day of attendance. The refund will be less a registration or administration fee not to exceed \$250.00, and less any deduction for equipment not returned in good condition, within 45 days of withdrawal. If the student has completed more than 60% of the period of attendance for which the student was charged, the tuition is considered earned and the student will receive no refund.

For the purpose of determining a refund under this section, a student shall be deemed to have withdrawn from a program of instruction when any of the following occurs:

1. The student notifies the institution of the student's withdrawal or as of the date of the student's withdrawal, whichever is later.
2. The institution terminates the student's enrollment for failure to maintain satisfactory progress; failure to abide by the rules and regulations of the institution; absences in excess of maximum set forth by the institution; and/or failure to meet financial obligations to the School.
3. The student has failed to attend class or complete coursework for 60 days.
4. The student fails to return from a leave of absence.

For the purpose of determining the amount of the refund, the date of the student's withdrawal shall be deemed the last date of recorded attendance. The amount owed equals the daily charge for the program (total institutional charge, minus non-refundable fees, divided by the number of days in the program), multiplied by the number of days scheduled to attend, prior to withdrawal. For the purpose of determining when the refund must be paid, the student shall be deemed to have withdrawn at the end of 60 days. If the student has completed more than 60% of the period of attendance for which the student was charged, the tuition is considered earned and the student will receive no refund.

For programs beyond the current "payment period," if you withdraw prior to the next payment period, all charges collected for the next period will be refunded. If any portion of the tuition was paid from the proceeds of a loan or third party, the refund shall be sent to the lender, third party or, if appropriate, to the state or federal agency that guaranteed or reinsured the loan. Any amount of the refund in excess of the unpaid balance of the loan shall be first used to repay any student financial aid programs from which the student received benefits, in proportion to the amount of the benefits received, and any remaining amount shall be paid to the student.

If the student has received federal student financial aid funds, the student is entitled to a refund of moneys not paid from federal student financial aid program funds.

The non-refundable application fee of \$50.00 is paid prior to enrollment and is not calculated in the above tuition refund schedule.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Recipients of scholarships who cancel their enrollment agreement will be refunded paid tuition; scholarship funds will not be refunded.

COURSE MATERIALS

Course materials will be mailed to the student every 8 weeks. If the student does not complete a course within the 8 week allotted time, they will receive an interim grade of I (Incomplete). The student will still be allowed to finish the work for each course, however the grade of "I" will stand until the finished work is submitted for grading. Once graded, the student's final grade will be recorded.

It is ultimately the student's responsibility to obtain course materials so that they may finish the work. Once the student has received the syllabus or class is made available to student online, they are considered enrolled in the course and have received complete course instruction enabling the student to finish the required work for grading.

PROBLEMS

If you come into personal or financial difficulty, or if a problem develops concerning some aspect of the program, you are encouraged to consult with someone at Vision immediately. Problems should not be allowed to grow until they become insurmountable. The faculty member or the Student Services office should be consulted as early as possible. All Vision faculty and staff are ready and eager to do everything possible to ensure that you succeed in your preparation for ministry.

DIFFERENCES

Students are not expected to agree with everything that will be taught by the various instructors. Students are, however, expected to treat the views of the authors with respect. If a disagreement arises about something that is being taught, the student should study as openly as possible, giving due attention to anything that the Holy Spirit may be saying.

The student should not expect the Holy Spirit to speak to everyone in the same way, nor lead them all in the same direction. The Holy Spirit has a multifaceted plan to suit the extraordinary diversity that exists in the church.

In assignments, you are to express your own views, but you will find it valuable for both your cognitive learning and your relational and spiritual development to understand alternate viewpoints, and be able to express that differing opinion, even if it conflicts with your personal beliefs. It is important for you to follow the instructions at all times in the preparation of assignments, which on occasion may require you to interact with views you disagree with. Such a challenge will strengthen you.

QUESTIONS

Students are encouraged to ask questions from the facilitator or mentor. Common courtesy dictates that a student should consider the level of authority and commitment of the instructor. Time does not allow for extended discussion of problem areas. The facilitators' response should be respected even if the response is in conflict with your personal stand.

GENERAL BEHAVIOR

While it is always true that Christians reflect their faith by the way they live, it is particularly true of Bible students. People rightly expect your conduct to be of a very high standard. Furthermore, how you behave affects the image of Christ and VIU. We are confident that you will strive always to bring honor to your school and to Christ by an example of mature godliness.

NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Vision International University admits students of any race, religion, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, or sex in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarships and loan programs. Vision does not discriminate in admission or access to or treatment or employment in its programs and activities in respect to those with impaired vision, hearing, or physical mobility.

APPENDIX A HOW TO SUCCEED IN INDEPENDENT STUDY

The emphasis at Vision International University is on the individual within a community. The heart of such an approach to education is the personal relationship between a student and the adviser/coordinator and mentor assigned to him or her. The mentor helps the student plan and coordinate a course of study. Besides providing instruction in their own fields of specialization, mentors advise students about the academic alternatives open to them, assist students in designing their academic programs, identify instructional resources, and evaluate the overall quality of each student's work. As you progress in your program at VIU, keep in contact with your mentor and work closely with them on your writing projects.

Independent Study is Unique

Independent study is planned and organized by the University. The learning system allows students to study at convenient times, places, and at a pace suited to student needs. While independent study offers great flexibility and freedom from fixed schedules, it also requires *commitment*, *maturity*, and *motivation* on the part of the student. The student should ask for an honest evaluation of something written early in their program. If weak areas are identified, the necessary steps to correct them can be implemented.

Individual Study Plans

Vision International University is committed to the idea that effective learning is based on purposes and needs that are important to the individual, that learning occurs in varied places, and that different people learn in different ways. Students are encouraged and expected to plan and design studies that help them clarify their purposes and acquire the competence, knowledge, and awareness necessary to pursue those purposes actively and independently. Students choose their courses according to their interests and in the context of general University expectations for academic study. Students may study traditional subjects in a traditional manner, or they may choose an innovative degree program and incorporate various non-traditional modes of study.

Issues Specific to Graduate Students

For those students enrolled in a graduate program it is wise to have a plan and to know your purpose for seeking the graduate degree of your choice. You should choose the program that is right for your needs. If you plan to do doctoral work, you should choose a Masters program which requires the writing of a thesis. If you are only interested in the Masters and not a doctorate, a thesis is not as important. Currently the Masters programs at VIU do not require a thesis, however a student may opt to write one. For more information about this important decision, contact VIU.

Some Problems of Independent Learning

Not all adult students will have the same kinds of problems. Some of the most common ones are listed here:

- Adult students may lack confidence in their ability to learn, especially if they have little contact with other students working on the same program.
- As a result they may be fearful of not doing well and feel they will lose face if their work is not perfect. This may cause delay in submitting work for comments and guidance.
- They are anxious about how to combine their studies with the demands of family, friends, neighbors, employers, and working colleagues. They may feel guilty about spending time shut up alone with books.
- They may, quite simply, feel too tired after a hard day's work to make the transition to mental effort.

- They may not possess adequate writing or study skills.

The Adult Student has Several Advantages

Adult students have more experience, more knowledge and, above all, more motivation than most non-adult students. While adult students may find that their memory is not as good as that of younger people, they are likely to be better at grasping and analyzing the underlying principles and relationships among the principles. This kind of understanding is far more valuable in higher education than mere knowledge of facts. Research on distance education is abundant now, and it clearly shows that adult students learning at a distance can do just as well as younger students who are working in a classroom.

Vision International University students enjoy advantages that are denied to other students who are doing undergraduate or graduate work by correspondence, as Vision International University is breaking new ground in program planning, in presentation, and in follow-up, with the needs of specific students in mind. Vision offers the following types of courses: traditional correspondence, video and audio based, on-line, and teacher taught and led seminars.

Vision International University students will seldom get a chance to feel forgotten or isolated. With the help of our student services, we provide encouragement, guidance about how to learn, and feedback about student progress.

Working Effectively

There are really no secrets to success for an adult student learning at a distance. Study is hard and demanding work. There are no tricks or short cuts that can make it easy. But what we must aim to do is ensure that your hard work does produce results—that is, *effective* and *rewarding* work. To be an effective student you will need the following:

1. Clear and realistic goals. Whether you are studying for career advancement, to broaden and illuminate your everyday life, or to equip yourself to cooperate more with others, you must identify both short-term goals and long-term goals that can give urgency to all your work (e.g. completing an assignment, attaining skills, starting on a new career).
2. Support from those close to you. You will no doubt have many roles besides that of student—spouse, parent, friend, employee, etc. When an adult first returns to study, it can be a difficult time for husband or wife and for the children. This needs to be faced beforehand, with a necessary re-allocation of duties and responsibilities being openly discussed and decided. If the others share your goals and progress, the going will be so much easier.
3. A business-like approach. Many successful students would argue that good organization rather than academic brilliance is the key to good progress in their studies. You will be less anxious about your work if you try to:
 - Plan what you want to achieve in the next day, week, and month.
 - Stick to your plans, or modify them only for good reasons.
 - Make the best possible use of available spare time.
 - Realize that you must sacrifice something in order to find time for the course.
 - Pray about your plans. “The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage” (Proverbs 16:3). Time spent planning and praying is very important.
4. A desire to learn. You will enjoy your studies more if you are able to:
 - Open your mind and senses to new, perhaps conflicting, ideas and experiences.

- Read and write about and discuss questions that may or may not have answers.
- Look for principles and the basic unifying ideas in a subject.
- Establish links between new subject matter and your own practical experience of the world.
- Learn to study for a purpose. Be diligent to show thyself approved unto God (II Timothy 2:15).
- Study for the purpose of renewing your mind toward God’s purpose and will for your life (Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:17f).

How to Read Better

A useful approach to studying is known as PQ4R, which stands for Preview, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite, Review (Thomas & Robinson, 1972). The process is as follows:

- *Preview* - introduce yourself to the material to obtain a general view of the course or assignment. This is done by using the skill called scanning. Scan the table of contents, the introduction, headings, emphasized sections, summaries, exercises, and final paragraphs.
- Think of *Questions* that are related to the purpose of your study and allow yourself to read with anticipation (e.g., “Why does the author divide up his material in this way?”)
- *Read* the material. Read at a pace that is appropriate for the type of material being read. Light reading material can be read at a fast pace. Heavy theological discussion should be read carefully and at a pace that allows comprehension. Remember you are reading for comprehension and recall. Do so while paying attention to details which support your purposes. Also, learn to read prayerfully. (This is not part of the PQ4R method but is certainly a good idea!)
- Stop at the end of each section to *Reflect* on what you read, and make notes regarding the main ideas and important details. Reflection is a very important step. It is during this time that you allow the ideas to “roam around” within your mind so that they connect with other ideas, facts, and life experiences. In so doing, you may have new ideas—a synthesis of material—which may help you grasp the inter-relatedness of all of God’s creation or may help you find a new solution for an old problem. The stage of Reflection is creative and is extremely valuable.
- After some reflection, go back to your questions and purposes. *Recite* these and attempt to connect them with your reflections in the previous step. This second attempt at making cognitive connections is a very important step, which will greatly facilitate long-term memory (recall). This is the step that seals the learning process and moves one from the memorization stage into learning, and thus the ability to recall at a later date is enhanced.
- *Review* what you have read (and test your notes for accuracy) by quickly reviewing the previous five steps.

During the Read Stage of PQ4R

- Look for the author’s framework of ideas—the plan upon which he/she constructed the material. This is often revealed by the headings which may also indicate a flow.
- Pick out the main ideas in each paragraph, which are often contained in the first or last sentence.
- Do not ignore the author’s diagrams and illustrations. They make things clear where the text may not.
- Think of your own examples. Look for applications in your own experience.
- Be critical. Do not take the author’s work on trust. Look for him/her to justify statements he/she makes. (If he/she doesn’t, and the point is an important one, check with another book or fellow student.)
- Work out what the results would be if theories other than the ones you are reading about were true.

- Do not be afraid to skip paragraphs and whole sections if you see that they are not relevant to your purpose. (There is no law that says that you must read every page of a book.)
- If, after reflecting for some time, you still find a section difficult to understand, take a break. Try to discuss the difficulty with other students, or find another author's treatment of the topic, and then come back and read it again, two or three times if necessary.

How to Make Useful Notes

It helps to make notes, as described earlier in this book. For the moment, consider the usefulness of note cards and notes.

- Note-taking will keep you active, and concentrating (so you learn and remember better).
- They provide a written record for review purposes.
- They protect you from the immense frustration that occurs when you recall a quotation or a source of information that fits precisely with what you have to say, but you cannot use it because you have not written it down.

APPENDIX B STUDY GUIDELINES

These guidelines will help you to get the best possible enjoyment and benefit out of studying your textbooks and doing the assignments –

(1) Give a high priority to the program until you have obtained the award you desire, which means (a) you should write the class times into your calendar and keep those times free from other commitments; and (b) you should be prepared to sacrifice other activities, entertainment, etc, for the duration of the course.

(2) Accept the discipline of reading right through your textbook within the month allowed, and of completing your exam before the next subject begins. If you fall behind in your studies you will find it difficult to catch up, and it may lead you to abandon the program. It is not those who **start** that please God, but those who **finish!**

(3) Begin each study period with a simple and brief prayer, yet one that recognizes that only the presence and illumination of the Holy Spirit can turn your study time into a supernatural event. Study with an expectation both that your mind will be instructed and that your life will be transformed by the Word of God. Expect to hear from God! If His voice is not mingled with what you read, then you read in vain.

(4) Set apart a period of time each week when you will be able to make study your top priority. Choose a time when you will have the fewest interruptions, away from other activities and family traffic. Try to keep to the same time each day or each week, so that you develop regular habits of study. Perhaps while you commute to work? For example, one of our students modified a briefcase into a kind of study desk, complete with a small lamp and writing platform, so that he could study while he was a passenger in a car. Bus-time and train-time can be used in the same way.

(5) Turn off the radio and television, so that you can have the quietness you will need to meditate on and to pray about the things you are reading. Find, if you can, a reasonably quiet and private spot. At the least, you should try to set up a corner somewhere that you can use consistently as a place of study. Developing a familiar environment, as free as possible from distractions, is a great help to concentration. Use a desk or table without clutter, and a comfortable chair. Avoid lounge chairs. The attitude of the body helps to determine the attitude of the mind. A lethargic body tends toward a slumbering mind.

(6) Let your family know that you are studying so that they will avoid interrupting you. If phone calls come, arrange for a message to be taken, or to return the call later.

HANDLING YOUR TEXTBOOK

(1) Scan through your textbook, to get a general sense of its contents and layout, and how its ideas are developed. Then choose the particular section you are planning to study and read through it quickly, without pausing to look up Bible references or to take notes (unless an important idea occurs to you).

(2) Next, read the same section again, carefully, looking up all the references, making your own notes, working on difficult points until you understand them, making your own outline of the section, and re-writing the key ideas in your own words.

(3) Make sure you understand what you are reading. If something is not clear, ask the Lord to give you understanding. If you come across unfamiliar words in your textbook, look them up in a dictionary. Read the Scripture verses mentioned in your textbook. Use a modern translation of the Bible. It is a good idea to have

several different translations on hand, all of which you should aim to read at least once from cover to cover.

(4) Close your book and meditate on what you have read. Try to recall the main ideas, and the sequence in which they were developed. Build the arguments again in your own mind. Join prayer with your meditation, for this is the time when the things you are studying can become a revelation of God in your spirit.

(5) Open the book again, and answer the questions on your exam paper that relate to the section you have just studied. Remember, the exams are all “open-book” – indeed, many questions cannot be answered unless you do refer to your textbook. So make full use of the book as you answer each question. You are not expected to work from memory alone.

(6) You can probably pass the exam without doing all the above. *But surely you have a higher goal than merely achieving a passing grade?* If your larger purpose is the glory of God and your personal enrichment, then don't forget that you will get out of your study only what you put into it.

(7) We have striven to achieve two things in the textbooks you will use: a high level of spiritual revelation; and (in most of them) a high literary quality. Therefore you may find it useful to have at hand a good English dictionary, along with a Bible Encyclopedia or Bible Dictionary.

(8) And of course you will have a program for reading your Bible right through, over and over again, for the rest of your life. **There is not much point in going to Bible School if the only book you don't read is the Bible!**

SAMUEL JOHNSON

In a letter to his friend James Boswell, dated December 8, 1763, the great lexicographer Samuel Johnson wrote – (There was once a young man who) hoped that he should appear to attain, amidst all the ease of carelessness, and all the tumult of diversion, that knowledge and those accomplishments which mortals of the common fabric obtain only by mute abstraction and solitary drudgery. He tried this scheme of life awhile, was made weary of it by his sense and his virtue; he then wished to return to his studies; and finding long habits of idleness and pleasure harder to be cured than he expected . . . resolved the common consequences of irregularity into an unalterable decree of destiny, and concluded that Nature had originally formed him incapable of rational employment.²

Let all such fancies, illusive and destructive, be banished henceforward from your thoughts forever. Resolve, and keep your resolution; choose, and pursue your choice. If you spend this day in study, you will find yourself still more able to study tomorrow; not that you are to expect that you shall at once obtain a complete victory. Depravity is not very easily overcome. Resolution will sometimes relax, and diligence will sometimes be interrupted; but let no accidental surprise or deviation, whether short or long, dispose you to despondency. Consider these failings as incident to all mankind. Begin again where you left off, and endeavor to avoid the seducements that prevailed over you before.

This, my dear Boswell, is advice which, perhaps, has been often given you, and given you without effect. But this advice, if you will not take from others, you must take from your own reflections, if you purpose to do the duties of the station to which the bounty of Providence has called you.”³

² Over the years I have myself met many like that young man, who blame God, or Providence, or Parents for their supposed inability to study hard and therefore hold themselves blameless for failing to advance in knowledge and maturity.

³ James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, Aetat. 54; Thursday, 8 December, 1763

APPENDIX C ON WRITING AN ESSAY

This document deals with writing a small essay of around two thousand words. For longer documents, see our guide, *On Writing a Thesis*, Appendix A.

PRESENTATION

Your essay should be typed, if possible, with the lines double-spaced. If this is not possible, then it must be written neatly in ink. Essays that are illegible or unreasonably difficult to read will be returned unmarked. Include a title page, containing your name, the title of the essay, and the date of its completion. Make sure that each page is correctly numbered, and staple or bind the sheets together.

RESEARCH

Even for a short essay you should try to do some research beyond your primary textbook, including the study of sources that give a contrary view. If you find it difficult to come up with a theme of your own for your essay, then read a book of at least 200 pages on the subject you are studying and write an overview of the book, with at least three quotes from it. Ask yourself these questions: *Do I agree with all that this book is saying? Do I disagree with some parts of it? Does it contain information that I did not find in my primary Vision textbook?* Then include the answers to these and other questions in your essay.

STRUCTURE

Your essay should have a clear beginning (an *introduction*), followed by the body of your argument, and then the conclusion. Copy the style of your *Vision* textbooks in the layout and use of headings in your essay. Your introduction should tell what the essay is going to be about, followed by at least two or three main headings in the main argument. This layout will help readers to know what you are trying to teach. Make sure to back up your statements with Scripture. The assessor will be looking for three things in particular:

- quotes from the book(s) you have read on the subject;
- supporting quotes from Scripture; and
- some original ideas of your own.

DOCUMENTATION

A bibliography (list) of the books, magazines, or other sources you have studied or used in writing your essay must be placed at its end. List all your sources of information. Each listing must contain the author's name, publisher, year of publication, page number, and any other relevant information. Also include particulars of any Bible version that you have quoted from. *Endnotes* or *footnotes* must also be used, to identify each particular quote (again, follow the style of your *VISION* textbooks).

ORIGINALITY

We do not expect your work to be entirely original. You are free to draw from other materials (with proper acknowledgment). However, you should include as much original thought or experience as you can. But remember that an essay is not a personal testimony, nor a biography. Use anecdotes about your own life, or about other people, sparingly.

STYLE

Write in a generally formal style, avoiding slang, or colloquial expressions; but don't be too impersonal, abstract, or indirect. Use active sentences as much as possible, not passive. For example, the paragraph just above could have been expressed *passively* thus: "It is not expected that your work will be entirely original." It reads livelier when it is cast *actively*: "We do not expect . . ." But sometimes a passive structure is less obtrusive, as in the first part of the previous two sentences.

METHOD

Follow this procedure. Some of these things may not be applicable to you now, but will be good to know as you progress to higher levels –

- Read all you can about your topic, taking notes as you read, and jot down an outline, or preliminary plan, of your essay.
- Gather primary ideas, based on your own experience and thought.
- Make sure that your notes contain full details of each book, source, or interview, etc, from which you have drawn material.
- If your essay contains quotes from, or passages that closely echo, other writings, make sure to note this in footnotes and/or endnotes (see your textbooks for examples of how this should be done).
- Organize your notes to match your outline (you may find it useful to put each group of notes on separate sheets of paper).
- Write a first draft of your essay.
- Put it aside for two or three days.
- Get someone else to review it for you.
- Revise and correct your first draft.
- If necessary, repeat the previous three steps, once, twice, or three times.
- Type out the final version.
- Type the number of words in your essay on the title page (unless you have a computer, don't count the words individually; but work out the average number of words on one page, then multiply that by the number of pages).
- Send the completed essay to the appropriate office (national, or regional).

APPENDIX D ON WRITING A THESIS

TOPIC

Before starting your essay or thesis a faculty member must approve the theme you have chosen. Please send us the title and a brief summary of what you propose to write (two or three pages). The topic would normally be:

- A biblical theme
- An exposition of some area of Christian doctrine related to some specific aspect of Christian service, ethics, life, or ministry
- The structure, work, worship, history, future, etc, of the church.

PRESENTATION

Your essay must be typed, double-spaced, on one side only of the paper. If you cannot type it yourself, arrange for someone else to do so. Include a title page containing:

- Your name
- The title of the essay
- The date of its completion.

Leave generous margins on all sides of your sheets, so that there is adequate room for comments to be made by the person who grades the paper. Make sure that each page is numbered, and staple or bind all the sheets together.

STRUCTURE

Your essay should be set up as follows –

- Title page, which should contain your name, address, the subject, and the date of completion.
- Table of contents, or outline, which should reflect as closely as possible the headings and subheadings used in the thesis
- Acknowledgements if appropriate (of your typist, illustrator, etc.)
- List of abbreviations (if any have been used)
- Body of the essay, broken up either into chapters, or sections, with appropriate headings and sub-headings
- Any appendices that may be needed
- A note on your methods of research

DOCUMENTATION

A complete bibliography should be provided, listing the sources that you drew from and/or researched (see below, under “Research”). An addendum in this document gives further information on how to set up footnotes, endnotes, and bibliographies.

FOOTNOTES

A system of footnotes or endnotes should be included (see Addendum, below). The reference in each note should be given in the normal manner: *book title, author’s name, publisher, place of publication, date, page number*. It is important that you clearly identify any part of the essay that does not strictly contain your own ideas or words. Direct quotes from another work must be set in quotation marks, with the source identified in a note. Passages that

substantially echo another's person's ideas or words should also be identified in a footnote or endnote. Plagiarism is not permissible within today's literary ethics.

ORIGINALITY

It is not expected that your work will be entirely original. You are free to draw from other materials (with proper acknowledgements). However, you should also introduce as much original research, thought, or experience, as you can. Credit will be given for the following: the *number* of books or sources researched; the manner in which you have *organized* your material; the degree to which you have successfully *analyzed* and *understood* your material; and the extent of your *creative* or *original* thought or presentation.

To gather materials you should use resources like the following:

- Published books
- Unpublished writings
- Interviews
- Journals and magazines
- Leaflets, brochures, etc.
- Government publications.
- Audio and/or video tapes, etc.
- Your local library
- Computer resources, such as CDs and the Internet (which, if you do not have your own computer, are available in most major public libraries).

STYLE

Write in a formal style, but avoid being too impersonal, abstract, or indirect. Give attention to correct spelling. Although the VIU program is not a course in grammar, you can lose marks if your essay indicates carelessness or laziness. After all, spelling help is no farther away than a dictionary. If you find writing difficult, use short and simple sentences. Don't try to be more clever than you are. Get a more literate friend to check your work and offer suggestions for correcting faulty grammar or wrong spelling.

In all essays the marker will be looking for some measure of original thought, and a good writing style. This is particularly true of essays or theses required for the higher awards. A Master's thesis would be expected to show a substantial measure of creative analysis, and a better-than-average understanding of the subject.

Even more is that true of a doctoral thesis, which would be expected to display superior handling of the subject, and a high level of originality.

QUOTES

The use of direct quotations can add interest to your writing. A short passage—no more than three or four lines—can be included as part of the paragraph you are writing. Make sure to put it inside quotation marks. However – A longer passage should be separated from your paragraph, indented (as this one is), and, if your equipment will allow it, using a smaller type-face. Since it would not be appropriate for another author's work to be graded or corrected, longer quotes can be typed in single-spacing. You will, of course, acknowledge the source of the quote, either in a footnote or an endnote. Note also that quotation marks are not necessary. The indentation and the smaller type-face are sufficient to show that the passage is a quote.

Poetry should be centered, and set out as follows. Do not use double spacing.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
Oh, no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
*If this be error and upon me prov'd,
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.*⁴

The same rules should be followed for scripture citations. Short passages can be included in your paragraph; longer passages should be kept separate and indented; biblical poetry should be laid out as poetry.

METHOD

Follow this procedure –

- Read all you can about your topic, taking notes as you read, and write an outline, or preliminary plan, of your essay.
- Gather primary materials (based on your own experience and thinking).
- Make sure that your notes contain a full record of each book, source, or interview, etc, from which you have drawn material.
- Organize your notes to match your outline (it is a good idea to put each group of notes on a separate sheet).
- Use headings and subheadings, making sure that they follow each other in a logical order, and assist in the development of your argument and the clarity of your presentation.
- Write a first draft of your essay; put the essay aside for two or three days; get someone else to review it for you
- Revise and correct the first draft.
- If necessary, repeat the last step, then type out the final draft, and type the number of words in your essay on the title page.⁵
- Send the completed essay to the College.

⁴ William Shakespeare, Sonnet.

⁵ Unless you have a computer that will give you an instant total, do not count the words individually. Work out the average number of words on one page, and multiply that by the number of pages.

APPENDIX E

FOOTNOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES

(A) FOOTNOTES

These comments apply both to *Footnotes* and *Endnotes* –

(1) A direct quotation from another work must always be marked either

- by quotation marks, if the quote is short, and part of one of your own paragraphs; or by
- putting it in a separate indented paragraph (without quote marks), unless it includes a piece of direct speech; and by
- noting the source of the quote in a footnote or endnote.

(2) A footnote may also be used to make an extra comment, or insert additional material that would be disruptive if it were placed in the body of the essay. You may indicate a footnote by a number, a letter, or some other mark.

(3) For a work that has not previously been quoted in your essay, use the style shown in the footnote below,⁶ and note the following –

- the author's name is given first (unless you have already given the full name in your text)
- followed by the name of the work (underlined)
- publishing details (including the date, if known); if required, the details (in quotation marks) of a chapter title, magazine article, etc; the page number
- and note the use of commas and semicolons.

(4) For a work that you have quoted before, use either *ibid.* or *op. cit.* –

- *Ibid.* (“the same”) is used when no other work has been quoted between this footnote and the one preceding it (even if several pages have intervened between the two quotations). Here is an example –⁷
- *Op. cit.* (“the work cited”) is used when one or more footnotes stand between the original quotation and the present one. The author's last name must be included unless you have mentioned it in the text. Here is an example –⁸

(B) BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Your essay/thesis must contain a bibliography listing all the sources to which you referred while you were preparing it. The bibliography should be the last item in your essay. Vision follows the requirements for writing set forth in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, as shown in the examples below. Much more information about this aspect of writing, and helpful guidance about the most efficient methods of academic writing, is found in *Research Writing Made Easy*, available from the Vision Bookstore.

Book

Chant, K. (2000). *Healing in the whole Bible*. Ramona, CA: Vision Pub.

Book with multiple authors

Williams, D. E. & Gangel, K. O. (1993). *Volunteers for today's church: How to recruit and retain workers*.

⁶Browne, J. (ed). (1987). Islamic Prayer. *Dictionary of World Religions*. London: Thompson & Thompson. p. 335.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

⁸ Anderson, *Op. cit.* p. 35.

Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

Article from an edited book

Work, T. (2006). Pentecostal and charismatic worship. In Wainwright, G. & Tucker, K. B. W. *The Oxford history of Christian worship*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. (pp. 574-585).

Article from a periodical

Emerson, M. (1996). Through tinted glasses: Religion, worldviews, and abortion attitudes. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 35 (1), 41-45.

APPENDIX F
ON PREPARING A WORD STUDY

- (1) Choose the word; e.g., *reconciliation*.
- (2) Use a word concordance to list the important occurrences in your Bible of *reconcile(d)*, *reconciling*, or *reconciliation*.
- (3) Use a topical concordance to list verses or passages which contain the idea of *reconciliation*.
- (4) Look up the meaning of the word in (a) an English dictionary; (b) Greek and/or Hebrew dictionaries; (c) Greek and/or Hebrew word books; (d) Bible dictionaries and/or encyclopedias. Write down these definitions and any other ideas or information that you find, or that come to your mind on the subject.
- (5) Summarize the information you have gathered under 4 or 5 different headings; e.g., *what is reconciliation; how are we reconciled; with whom are we reconciled; when are we reconciled; what are the results of reconciliation, both now and in the future; etc.*
- (6) Expand your summaries with your own comments, illustrations from scripture or life, and the like.
- (7) Write a final version of your study.

Note: Many study Bibles contain examples of word studies that you could use as a guide. Also the word studies in your lecture notes will show how to outline and present your study.