

Study Skills for Success in Comprehensive Open Distance e-Learning (CODEL): South African Context

Limited Resources & Infrastructure Challenges



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Define tomorrow.

Introduction

- Comprehensive Open Distance e-Learning (CODeL) requires high levels of independence and self-regulation
- Students must manage their own learning with limited face-to-face support
- Effective study skills are essential for academic success and reduced stress
- This workshop addresses both general study skills and contextual challenges faced by students who lives in areas that has limited resources

Purpose of the Workshop

- To support students in managing their studies within constrained learning environments.
- To promote independent and active learning practices.
- To provide practical strategies that are achievable in low-resource contexts.
- To empower students to succeed academically despite infrastructural and environmental challenges.



Workshop Outcomes

By the end of this workshop, students will be able to:

- Understand the demands of Comprehensive Open Distance e-Learning (CODEL) and the importance of independent learning
- Identify their learning styles and apply appropriate study methods
- Organise study materials, manage time effectively, and prioritise academic tasks
- Use active learning strategies and effective study techniques to improve understanding and retention
- Participate meaningfully in online group discussions
- Prepare for assessments while managing stress
- Apply practical strategies to overcome study challenges in low-resource areas

Understanding Learning Styles

- Students differ in abilities, preferences, and learning needs.
- No single study method works for everyone; flexibility is key.
- Awareness of personal learning styles can improve engagement, comprehension, and retention.
- In CODEL, understanding learning preferences helps students plan effective, independent study strategies.
- Adapting study methods to suit one's strengths supports motivation and long-term academic success.



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Types of Learning Styles

- **Visual:** Diagrams, charts, mind maps
- **Auditory:** Listening, discussions, explaining aloud
- **Read/Write:** Reading texts, note-taking, summaries
- **Kinaesthetic/Physical:** Hands-on practice, experiments
- Social – group work, collaboration
- Solitary – independent study, self-reflection
- Verbal / Musical – storytelling, rhythm, songs
- Logical / Mathematical – reasoning, patterns, problem-solving

Getting Organised in CODEL

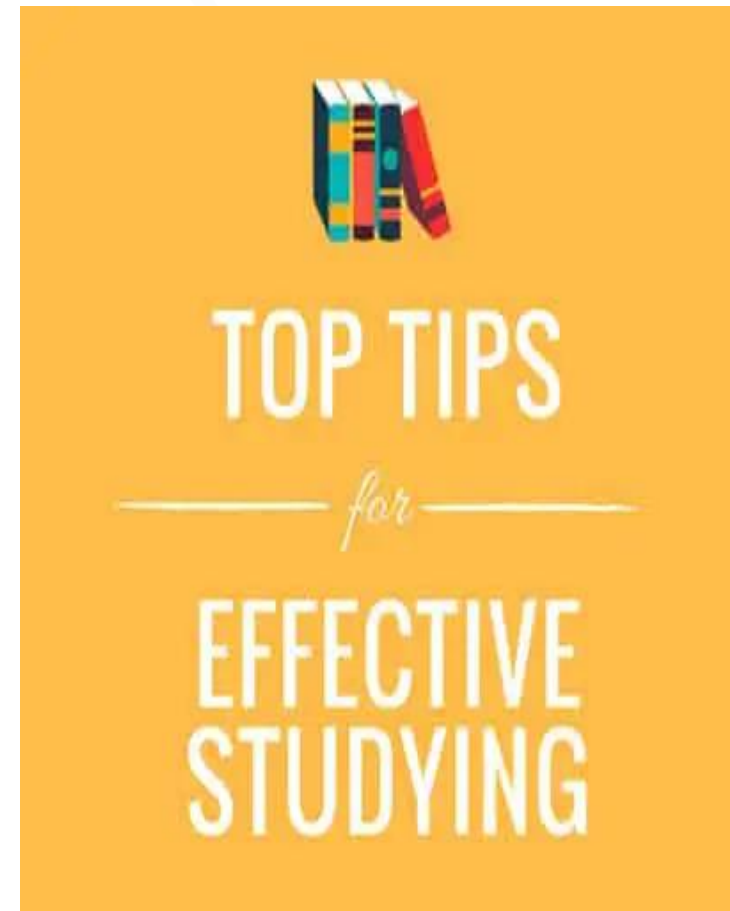


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- Organisation is critical for academic success in distance learning.
- Poor organisation can lead to missed deadlines, last-minute cramming, and increased stress.
- Effective organisation promotes consistency, self-regulated learning, and better academic performance.
- Planning ahead allows students to balance multiple modules and assessment requirements.
- Keeping study materials, notes, and resources well-structured saves time and reduces frustration.
- Using calendars, timetables, or digital planners helps track tasks, assignments, and revision schedules.
- Organisation supports goal-setting and progress monitoring, enhancing motivation and accountability.

Organisational Strategies

- Develop weekly and semester study timetables
- Plan around connectivity and electricity availability
- Keep digital and printed study materials organised
- Use the learning management system efficiently
- Break tasks into manageable steps



Prioritising Subjects and Tasks



- Not all modules require the same amount of time and effort.
- Effective prioritisation helps students focus on high-impact academic tasks.
- Proper planning reduces stress and improves time management.
- Poor prioritisation often leads to last-minute cramming and lower academic performance.

Effective Prioritisation Techniques

- Identify high-credit and academically challenging modules.
- Allocate more study time to difficult or high-risk subjects.
- Consider assessment deadlines and examination dates when planning.
- Schedule demanding subjects during peak concentration periods.
- Review easier subjects regularly to maintain understanding and performance.



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Common Study Mistakes in CODEL

- Procrastination and poor time management
- Passive reading without engagement
- Over-reliance on memorisation
- Studying with distractions
- Waiting for “perfect conditions” to study
- Not planning for disruptions



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Active Learning

- Active learning involves meaningful engagement with study material rather than passive reading.
- It is more effective than passive learning methods because it requires thinking, questioning, and applying information.
- Active learning improves understanding and promotes long-term retention of knowledge.
- It can be successfully applied in low-resource contexts through strategies such as summarising, self-questioning, and teaching others.



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Active Learning Strategies

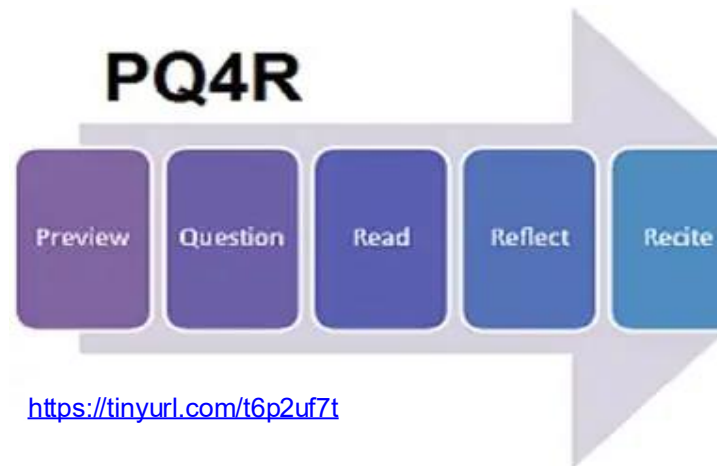


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- Asking questions while studying to deepen understanding and clarify difficult concepts.
- Summarising content in one's own words to improve comprehension and memory.
- Teaching concepts to others, which reinforces learning and reveals gaps in understanding.
- Practising past examination questions to apply knowledge and improve exam readiness.
- Creating hand-drawn diagrams and mind maps to visually organise and connect ideas.

Study Techniques for CODEL Students

- Structured techniques improve comprehension and memory
- Different techniques suit different subjects and learning styles
- Students should experiment and adapt methods



PQ4R Study Method

- **Preview:** Skim the material to gain an overall understanding of the content.
- **Question:** Turn headings and subheadings into questions to guide your reading.
- **Read:** Read actively to find answers to the questions you created.
- **Reflect:** Link new knowledge to prior learning and real-life examples.
- **Recite:** Summarise key ideas in your own words to reinforce understanding.
- **Review:** Revise the material regularly to strengthen long-term retention.

Learning Through Association

- Connecting new information to existing knowledge enhances understanding and recall.
- This approach helps learners make meaning of new concepts rather than memorising them in isolation.
- It is especially useful for theory-based modules.
- Learning can be strengthened by using real-life and local examples that relate to students' own experiences.
 - Auntie = Schizophrenic
 - Map of Italy = Boot

Learning Through Classification

- Organising information into categories helps simplify complex material.
- Classification makes it easier to understand, remember, and revise key ideas.
- It is especially useful for comparing theories, concepts, or processes.
- Common tools for classification include tables, charts, diagrams, and mind maps.

<u>Cars</u>		
Ferrari	Opel	Mercedes
Speed	Safety	Class
Expensive	Affordable	Pricey
Stylish	Practical	Status

Learning Using Acronyms

- Simplifies memorisation
- Useful for processes and definitions
- Example: **SMART goals**
 - Specific
 - Measurable
 - Achievable
 - Relevant
 - Time-bound
- Create pronounceable words:
 - **WHO** : *World Health Organisation*
 - **LOL**: *Laugh out loud*
 - **UNISA** : *University of South Africa*
 - **BRICS**: *Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa*
- Puts chunks of information together so that you don't have to remember large amounts of text
- Serves as a retrieval cue

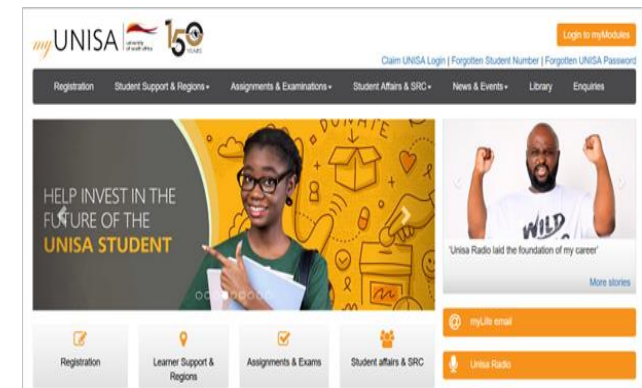
Using Online Group Discussions Strategically

- Participate in online discussions when connectivity allows.
- Prepare contributions offline to save data and ensure thoughtful input.
- Use peer groups for both academic and emotional support.
- Share coping strategies and study tips with fellow students.
- Engage respectfully and constructively in all academic interactions.

Microsoft 365



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Studying in a South African CODEL Context

- Many CODEL students live in rural or under-resourced communities where studying conditions may be challenging.
- Challenges may include:
 - Limited or unstable internet connectivity
 - Irregular access to electricity
 - Limited access to libraries
 - Lack of quiet study spaces at home
 - Delays in receiving study materials due to poor road infrastructure/ unclear addresses



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Skills Needed for CODEL Students in Under Resourced Areas



- Adaptability and flexibility in responding to changing circumstances.
- Strong self-discipline and effective time management skills.
- Resourcefulness in making use of available learning materials.
- Problem-solving skills to overcome academic and environmental challenges.
- Resilience and perseverance in the face of obstacles.

Managing Limited Internet Connectivity

- Download study materials when internet access is available to ensure offline availability.
- Prioritise offline study activities such as reading, summarising, and practising questions.
- Use low-data tools and platforms to minimise data usage.
- Prepare discussion posts and assignments offline before uploading them.
- Limit unnecessary online time to conserve data and focus on productive tasks.



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Coping with Limited Electricity

- Schedule study sessions around electricity availability to maximise productive time.
- Charge devices fully during periods when power is available.
- Use printed materials whenever possible to reduce dependence on electronic devices.
- Focus on essential academic tasks first during powered periods.
- Develop non-digital study strategies, such as handwritten notes and printed summaries.



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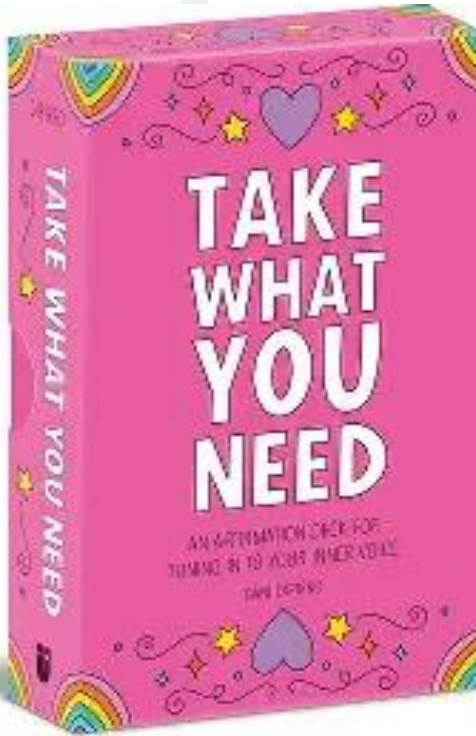
Studying Without Access to Libraries

- Make effective use of prescribed textbooks and official study guides.
- Share learning resources and notes with peers to broaden understanding.
- Use open educational resources (OERs) when available, such as free online textbooks and academic articles.
- Develop strong reading, summarising, and note-taking skills to better understand and retain information.
- Create personal revision notes and make use of the Unisa Online Library by requesting books and accessing online references for research and note-making.

Creating a Study Space in Challenging Home Environments

- Identify the quietest times of the day to study rather than relying on a permanent study space.
- Communicate study needs and schedules clearly to family members to reduce interruptions.
- Study in short, focused sessions to maintain concentration despite distractions.
- Use simple noise-reduction strategies, such as earplugs or listening to soft background music.
- Make use of safe community spaces, if available, such as community halls or study centres.

Key Takeaways



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- There are no right or wrong study methods
- Effective study skills must be flexible and adaptive
- Rural challenges require planning and resilience
- Active learning is possible in low-resource environments
- Consistency and self-discipline are critical

Conclusion

1. **Independence, Organisation & Motivation:** CODEL students take charge of their learning and stay structured.
2. **Study Skills are Essential:** Effective strategies are critical tools for academic success.
3. **Continuous Reflection & Adaptation:** Regularly review progress and adjust methods to improve results.
4. **Success is Achievable for All:** With the right strategies, every student can thrive in CODEL.

Contact us

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YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/unisacareers>

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To go to the online booking form and book an online session:

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