INTRO

Introduction to the Remote Learning Module

Welcome to your remote learning preparation module. The university understands that everything, including remote learning, can be a bit overwhelming now. We want to assure you that you are not alone and that you are not the only person to feel this way. Many students around the country have similar feelings. It is a very normal response. This module can help you to adjust to remote learning and to feel a little less overwhelmed.

To get the most out of this module, take your time to work through all the topics and activities. The four topics are:

1 **Adjusting and managing your feelings about remote learning**

2 **Changing your thinking about remote learning**

3 **Tips to get started with remote learning**

4 **Setting goals and developing a study plan**

Recommended

One topic per day

3 - 4 hours per topic

All the topics include an introduction, which provides a brief overview of the topic and what you must do to check your understanding or apply your learning.

Take a week to work through each of the four topics. It is best to work through **one topic per day** and to spend about **3 - 4 hours** per topic.

To prepare yourself to get the most out of this module, keep a notepad/book and pen/pencil with you so that you can write key things down while you work through a topic. If you prefer to type your notes, create a directory called "online learning" and then type up notes and save the file per topic (e.g., a file name could be "Topic 1 notes").

You are now ready to start Topic 1

1

ADJUSTING AND MANAGING YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT REMOTE LEARNING

Introduction

Welcome to the Preparatory Module which will assist in preparing you for learning remotely from home. The current lockdown and pandemic in our country causes much anxiety and stress. To be an effective learner one needs to know how to better control and manage these feelings to maximize the remote learning opportunity. This topic deals with this issue so that you can better create an emotional atmosphere that is able to make the most of learning from home. This topic provides information and strategies as how best to do this by focussing on:

1. How to **adjust academically, socially and personally** to the stressors and strains of the current situation;
2. Providing insights and guidance on **managing stress, fear and anxiety;**
3. Consideration of the **factors within your control;**
4. Understanding the **5 – step learning model** to assist in managing your learning;
5. As you work through the topic there are a number of **short activities** that will help you **apply** this material to your own circumstances.

On completion of this topic you should be better able to manage the emotional challenges of the current times and situation. The topics that follow will expand upon the practical aspects of adapting to remote learning.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted life as we knew it and has brought about changes in different spheres of our lives. Student life, in particular, has been greatly affected and this can be very overwhelming and anxiety-provoking. Students needed to leave the university and return home, and we are aware that not all students were able to do so. Furthermore, students needed to change their plans from being a full-time, productive student to being at home without a normal study routine. Students also had plans such as: joining societies, participating in vacation work or getting involved in leadership programmes but this also could not happen due to the pandemic. The academic goals of students vary. For some it might be completing their final year and graduating, for others passing their first year, while other students set goals to pass their modules with a certain percentage.

> **"THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE SENSE OF CHANGE IS TO PLUNGE INTO IT, MOVE WITH IT, AND JOIN THE DANCE."**
>
> Alan W. Watts

Unfortunately, sometimes concerns, worry, stress and anxiety can impact on one's ability to learn effectively and successfully. You might be concerned about your academic career, worried about whether you will finish in time or stressed about a situation or event.

This topic is divided into four sections, which will help you adjust and manage your fears and anxieties during the lockdown period and as you start to learn from home.

1. **Section one: Adjusting academically, socially and personally to learning remotely**
2. **Section two: Managing stress, fear and anxiety**
3. **Section three: Managing factors that are within my control**
4. **Section four: Managing my learning – the 5-step learning process**

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Indicates a TASK to complete.

1. Adjusting academically, socially and personally to learning remotely

How to adapt to a new and constantly changing environment

To adapt to a new environment, you need to **develop effective coping strategies** that will enable you to adjust to the new environment and the demands it brings (Baker and Siryk, 2015).

In the context of managing the Covid-19 pandemic, students are confronted with multiple adjustments. These relate to three of the adjustment dimensions that Baker and Siryk (2015) identify:

- **Academic changes/demands (academic adjustment)**

- **Social changes/demands (social adjustment)**

- **Your psychological/emotional state in this new environment (personal-emotional adjustment)**

It is therefore important to identify the specific demands/adjustments you are struggling to cope with. Here are some of the adjustments you might be confronted with:

Academic adjustment	Social adjustment	Personal-emotional adjustment
• Adjusting to remote learning and assessments • Less/different contact time with lecturers • Uncertainty around completion of the academic year • Implications of not completing the academic year • Challenges accessing resources • Physical separation from study buddies • Studying in a new environment • Studying in an environment in which circumstances make it difficult to study • Having to acquire new skills	• Change in living environment • Physical separation from family and friends • Physical separation from a partner • Returning home after enjoying your independence away from home • Increased exposure to stressful home circumstances	• Being anxious and fearful of your health • Being fearful and anxious of the health of loved ones • Anxiety associated with uncertainty • Frustration at a lack of control over the situation • Symptoms of depression and anxiety • Existing feelings of anxiety and depression may worsen

Table 1: Adjustment dimensions

Indicates a TASK to complete.

Psychological barriers to adjustment

It is normal to struggle with adjustment under these circumstances. An inability to adjust, for a prolonged period, can however be harmful to your wellness.

There could be barriers to your adjustment. Here are some psychological barriers to adjustment:

Negative attitude towards change
Comparing the current situation to the past
Inflexibility
Problem-oriented *(not exploring possible solutions)*
Catastrophizing *(focussing on worst case scenarios)*

Table 2: Psychological barriers to adjustment

> It is important to note that there are other barriers to adjustment, for example, having inadequate resources to adjust to a changing learning environment. The above highlights only psychological barriers.

Tips for managing your adjustment

- Attitude is key! Be open and flexible.
- Reflect on what you need/need to do to adjust to your changing environment. Then take action to address these.
- Be pro-active. Try to find solutions to your challenges.
- Knowledge is power! Identify gaps in your knowledge and take steps to get information.
- Access academic resources, if possible.
- Stay connected to people you love and care for, even if you cannot be with them physically.
- Access your support networks (friends, family, lecturers, counsellors, etc.) in whatever ways possible.
- Ask for help, when needed. You can still access support via electronic/online platforms.
- Set realistic goals (see Topic 4). Ideals might not be attainable.
- Focus on what you can control and accept what is beyond your control.

2. Managing stress, fear and anxiety

Stress is described as the relationship between an individual and their environment that is judged as being challenging or not having the adequate resources to cope or manage (Lazarus, 1996). Alternatively stress could be described as your body's response to a threat or demand, which can be real or imagined. Furthermore, stress has a psychological, emotional and physical aspect. See below for a list of the common stress reactions to COVID-19.

- Fear about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Worrying, anxiety, panic
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty focusing and concentrating
- Racing thoughts, overthinking
- Sadness, tearfulness, loss of interest in enjoyable activities
- Hypervigilance – constantly on edge
- Physical symptoms, such as increased heart rate, upset stomach, feeling tired, or other physical symptoms
- Feeling like you cannot do anything to help yourself or your loved ones – feeling helpless

- Fears that you could get the virus from anyone you engage with, apprehension about going to public spaces
- Withdrawal from others, feeling disconnected from others
- Anger at the situation and not knowing how to channel that anger so that it does not cause harm to yourself or others
- Frustration and irritability
- Restlessness or agitation
- Difficulty relaxing
- Increase use of substances such as tobacco, alcohol, drugs

Table 3: Common stress reactions to COVID-19

Sometimes the effects we experience in relation to stress, can be upsetting for us. People ask questions such as: "why can't I just relax, why can't I focus and concentrate …" So, our own reactions can cause more stress. It is important not to judge these reactions, but rather understand why they are happening, and find suitable healthy ways of dealing with them.

How does my fear response work?

Human beings have a built-in survival instinct known as the fight-or-flight response. This is a direct biological response to a threat and is set off by our fear alarm. But what happens to this fear alarm when we are in a pandemic like COVID-19? For many people this alarm is going off many more times than it usually does. Our fear can run wild, and our imagination can lead us to think about the worst case scenarios. Because of the uncertainty of the virus, fear 'fills in the gaps', so to speak.

What is the difference between Fear and Anxiety?

Our biological fear response is key to our survival, but anxiety is different. Anxiety is when our thinking brain takes over and starts anticipating all the possible threats. Let's use the example of a lion that is at your front door. Most people will respond with fear, right? Once the lion leaves or is taken to a safe place, the fear you experienced is expected to decrease and with time you will feel more relaxed. Correct? So, Fear says, **there is a lion at your door and so you need to protect yourself.**

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Anxiety, on the other hand is where the thinking brain says **what if** the lion is there today, or tomorrow, or the next day? So that means that a person feels anxious most of the time. The fear response system is not working as it should be and alerting the person to when there is **real danger**. Instead, they are constantly scared and anxious in anticipation of the lion coming back, which may never happen.

FEAR   **ANXIETY**

(lion at door)   (what if lion is at the door)

In your own words, describe the difference between fear and anxiety?

What can I do to reduce fear and anxiety?

Gain perspective regarding the pandemic: Obtain information and updates from reliable sources about the situation. But also limit how much you are reading, listening to, and watching the news. Constant exposure to this can increase your anxiety.

Correct health information: Educate yourself on the necessary health precautions so that you can feel more in control and know what you need to do to keep yourself, your family and others safe.

Control: Make sure you are able to feel in control of the information you are receiving. Fear can be contagious. With so many people talking about how fearful they are, this can lead one to think this is the only appropriate reaction to have and so we too respond with fear. Look at your own situation and list all the things you can control (for example, taking safety measures for your health, organising your academic work, engaging in positive activities).

Routine: Our brains learn best by doing activities. As a university student you are used to the routine of having to attend classes, tutorials, deliver on assignments, etc. Make sure that you allocate time to the various academic tasks. It will also give you purpose and be a good distractor from the anxiety. Routine is good for our planning and organisation of our time.

Being able to account for your time will also increase your confidence around how you are managing the situation. There are guidelines on how to manage your time and academic tasks in Topic 4.

Create a plan of action: This plan can include: how you are going to stay safe, tackle your university study programme, plan for your future. Having a plan will give you more control, something to look forward to and builds hope and a future perspective. You will notice that you will feel more energetic and this energy will propel you towards more positive thinking.

Connecting with others: Living in this time of social media makes it easier to connect with individuals and still maintain social distancing. Feelings of belonging and being part of a group helps us feel less isolated and more able to handle our anxiety. Connecting with others can give us a fresh perspective on an issue and reduce our anxiety.

Sleep hygiene: Set a reasonable sleep time pattern. If you are struggling to fall asleep at night because of overthinking, worrying, and panic, do relaxation exercises. You can find helpful meditation exercises on the Google App store such as Headspace and Smiling Mind.

Daily relaxation exercises: Creating a relaxed body-mind-system can lead to many benefits. Firstly, fear reduces, and this in turn can reduce irrational thinking. When we are calmer we can manage our emotions much better. That is to say we can identify what we are experiencing and feeling and rationally develop a plan as to how we need to respond.

Physical exercise: Our mind and body is connected. Not only do our brains respond with fear and anxiety but so do our bodies. Doing physical exercise will help reduce the tension in the body and so help the mind to also relax.

Get involved in uplifting activities: Do something with your hands, like planting, drawing, building. Start a hobby or continue with one. Learn a new language or skill. Reading a book that you have wanted to, but did not have the time to read previously. Finding an outlet for your creativity is another way to manage your anxiety and feel more positive.

Dealing with my distressing thoughts: In order to reduce our fear, we need to challenge our distressing thoughts because they increase our anxiety. Distressing thoughts could feel like they are the absolute truth, when what they are is our imagination creating the worst possible scenario and so we start believing these thoughts. What we need to remember is that our thoughts are just that, thoughts and that they are not reality. If you are experiencing many negative thoughts then speak to someone about these. Or reach out to a professional if the distressing thoughts become too much for you to handle on your own.

3. Managing factors that are within my control

What is within my control:	What is not within my control:
Staying home	The COVID-19 pandemic
Engaging in hygienic behaviour	The weather
Having a positive attitude	When the University will open
Managing my emotions i.e. fear, anxiety, depression	How lecturers will set assessments
Creating and maintaining a healthy routine	Providing a scope for a test/exam
Managing my studies	How others treat me
Reading emails from my lecturers	Not being able to attend class
Following the new learning instructions	
Asking for help	
Having a study timetable	
Levels of motivation	

Table 4: Examples of control factors

Your success is dependent on your belief that you have the internal resources to accomplish your goals and by adating to the new way of learning. Begin to shift your focus on the factors that are within your control and take action.

4. Managing my learning – the 5-step learning process

Research on learning and memory under stress shows that stress affects the ability to learn and remember. Furthermore, it affects how much is stored in memory, as well as the quality of the memories stored.

Dr Caroline Leaf in her book *Think, Learn, Succeed* (2018) offers the 5-Step Learning Process as a strategy to improve your memory, which will lead to improved learning. The 5 steps are:

Indicates a TASK to complete.
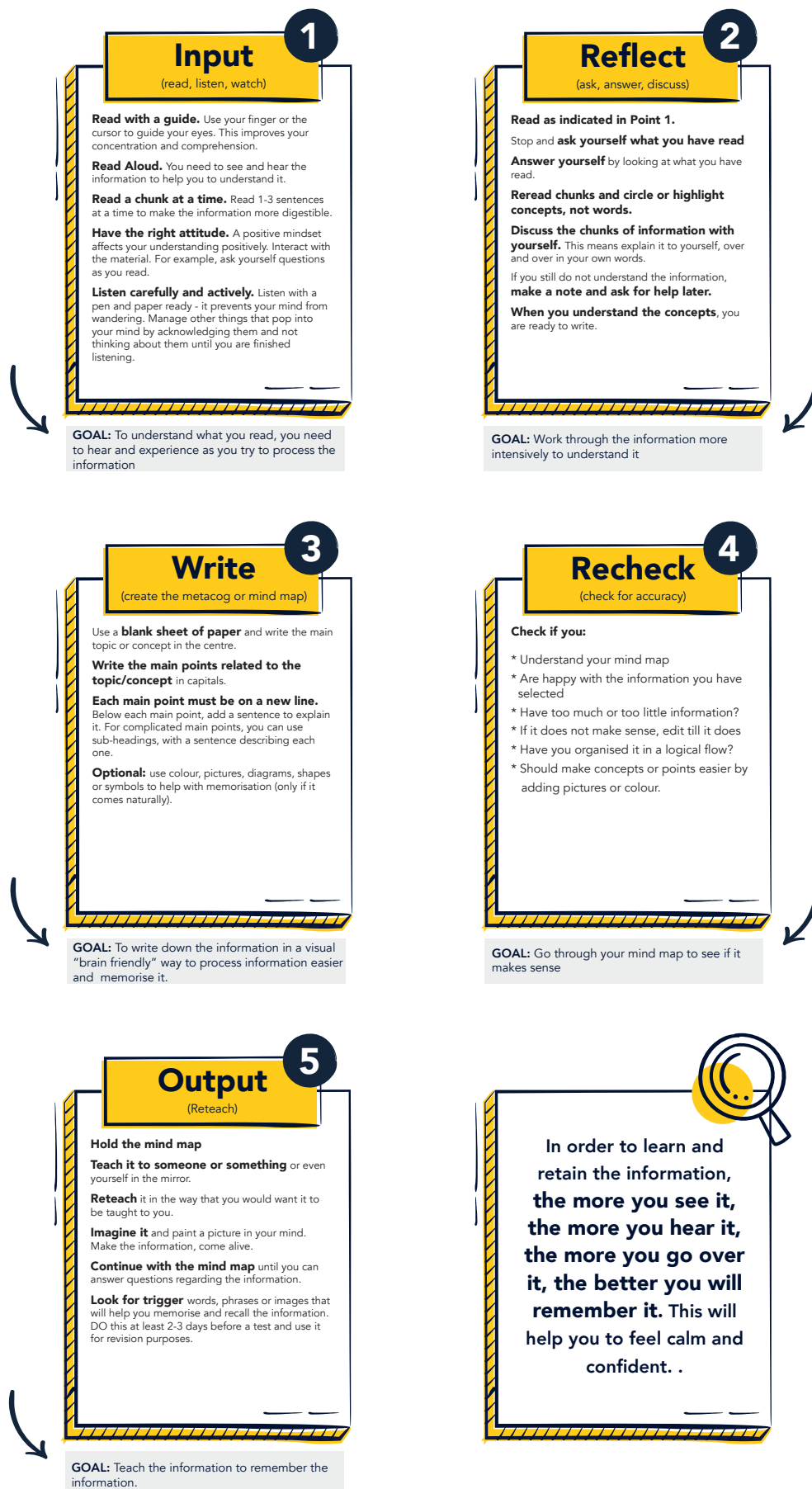
5-Step Learning Process

1. Input
(read, listen, watch)

Read with a guide. Use your finger or the cursor to guide your eyes. This improves your concentration and comprehension.

Read Aloud. You need to see and hear the information to help you to understand it.

Read a chunk at a time. Read 1-3 sentences at a time to make the information more digestible.

Have the right attitude. A positive mindset affects your understanding positively. Interact with the material. For example, ask yourself questions as you read.

Listen carefully and actively. Listen with a pen and paper ready - it prevents your mind from wandering. Manage other things that pop into your mind by acknowledging them and not thinking about them until you are finished listening.

GOAL: To understand what you read, you need to hear and experience as you try to process the information

2. Reflect
(ask, answer, discuss)

Read as indicated in Point 1.

Stop and **ask yourself what you have read**

Answer yourself by looking at what you have read.

Reread chunks and circle or highlight concepts, not words.

Discuss the chunks of information with yourself. This means explain it to yourself, over and over in your own words.

If you still do not understand the information, **make a note and ask for help later.**

When you understand the concepts, you are ready to write.

GOAL: Work through the information more intensively to understand it

3. Write
(create the metacog or mind map)

Use a **blank sheet of paper** and write the main topic or concept in the centre.

Write the main points related to the topic/concept in capitals.

Each main point must be on a new line. Below each main point, add a sentence to explain it. For complicated main points, you can use sub-headings, with a sentence describing each one.

Optional: use colour, pictures, diagrams, shapes or symbols to help with memorisation (only if it comes naturally).

GOAL: To write down the information in a visual "brain friendly" way to process information easier and memorise it.

4. Recheck
(check for accuracy)

Check if you:

* Understand your mind map
* Are happy with the information you have selected
* Have too much or too little information?
* If it does not make sense, edit till it does
* Have you organised it in a logical flow?
* Should make concepts or points easier by adding pictures or colour.

GOAL: Go through your mind map to see if it makes sense

5. Output
(Reteach)

Hold the mind map

Teach it to someone or something or even yourself in the mirror.

Reteach it in the way that you would want it to be taught to you.

Imagine it and paint a picture in your mind. Make the information, come alive.

Continue with the mind map until you can answer questions regarding the information.

Look for trigger words, phrases or images that will help you memorise and recall the information. DO this at least 2-3 days before a test and use it for revision purposes.

GOAL: Teach the information to remember the information.

In order to learn and retain the information, **the more you see it, the more you hear it, the more you go over it, the better you will remember it.** This will help you to feel calm and confident. .

Table 5: 5-Step Learning Process

Indicates a TASK to complete.

ACTIVITY: Make your own mind map of the 5-step Learning Process

QUESTIONS TO WORK THROUGH

Write down your thoughts to these questions

What is the most important thing that you have learned about adjusting and managing your feelings when learning from home?
What is the one new thing that you have discovered that can help you to manage your feelings about learning from home?
Apply the 5-step learning process described in section 4 to work through the information in section 2 (Managing stress, fear and anxiety)

References
Baker, R.W., & Siryk, B. 2015. *SACQ - Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire Manual* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Western Psychological Services.
Lazarus, R. S. (1996). *Psychological Stress and the Coping Process.* New York: McGraw-Hill
Leaf, C. (2018). *Think, Learn, Succeed. Understanding and Using your mind to thrive at School, the workplace, and life.* Baker Publishing Group.
Leaf, C. (2009). *The Switch on Your Brain 5-Step Learning Process* (DVD/Workbook) (Learn How to Learn) 2nd edition. Switch on Your Brain.

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Indicates a TASK to complete.

2

CHANGING YOUR THINKING ABOUT REMOTE LEARNING
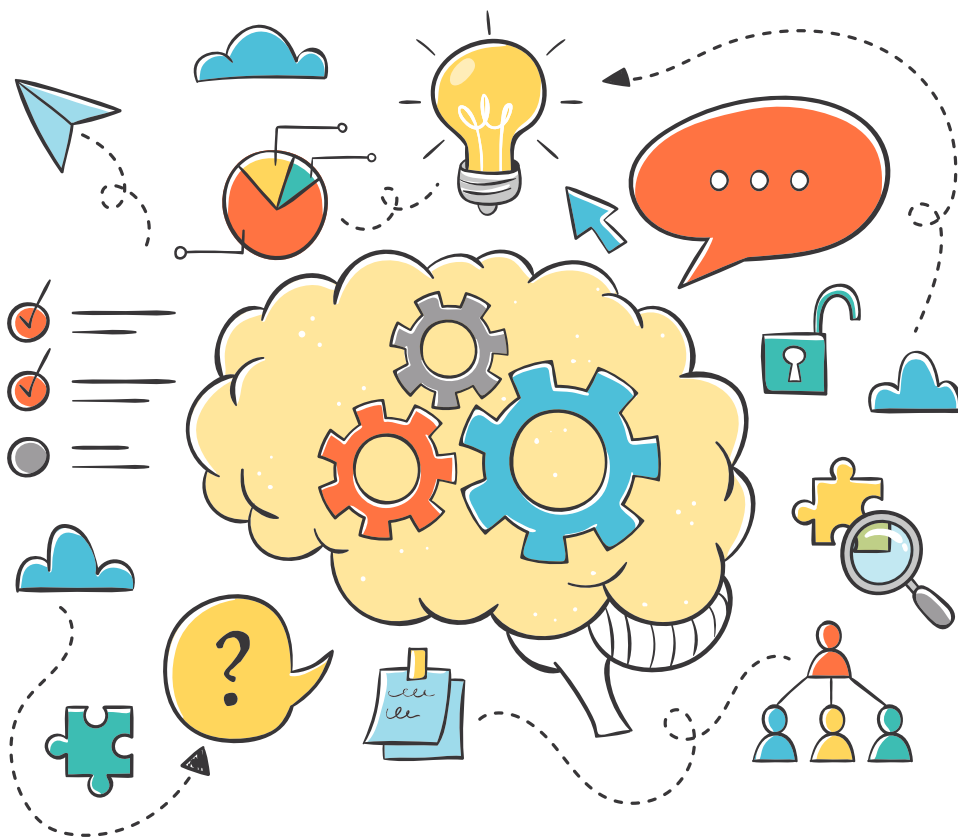
Introduction

Now that you know how to adjust and manage your feelings for remote learning (Topic 1), you need to work on your thinking and some of your habits.

This topic gives ideas about this by focussing on:

1. **Some of the myths of remote learning.**
2. **Developing remote learning habits.**
3. **How to become a self-directed learner, and strategies necessary for learning.**

If some of what you have just read makes no sense, then you are in for some exciting learning in this topic. Throughout you will notice that there are tasks or reflections for you to complete. They are there to help you process and self-assess whether you are ready to learn from home, so don't skip them or rush through them. The topics (3 and 4) that follow go into more detail on some of the strategies and tools that are briefly touched on here.

1. Myths about remote learning

In what ways do you think that learning from home is the same and different from being taught by a lecturer in a classroom? Complete the sentence at the top of each column in the table below. Include as many similarities and differences that you can think of.

Learning from home and being taught by a lecturer in class are **the same** because	Learning from home and being taught by a lecturer in class are **different** because ......
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

What did you find harder? Finding the similarities or the differences?

This exercise helped to pinpoint that there are differences between the learning that you are familiar with and the learning that happens when you are at home. When you are new to remote learning one of the things that can trip you up is the myths, or incorrect thoughts or views, which you might have about remote learning. Here are some of the common myths and reasons why they are myths:

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Indicates a TASK to complete.

Thinking that remote learning is easy and quick – Remote learning is as hard as, and maybe even harder than 'normal' learning. Students are often surprised about the amount of time it takes to work through the learning materials and resources in a week. It will take a lot of self-discipline, sustained focus, and time to be successful.

Thinking that there is no need to be active – You will be responsible for constructing your own knowledge and will have control over what, when and how you do this. This is a big responsibility, and you will need to implement many different strategies to be successful. You will only be successful by working consistently, completing ALL the module requirements and doing so on time.

Note taking is not needed - Taking notes promotes active thinking, helps you to understand what you are reading, and keeps you focused - whether you're learning from home or in the classroom. Tip: use the 5-step learning process discussed in Topic 1 to assist you with note-taking.

Believing you're all on your own – Students miss the face-to-face interaction with their lecturers and peers. Remember, other than your lecturer and/or tutors, there are many other students learning from home. Make connections with them.

A schedule is not needed – As you are not given a timetable, you have to develop a schedule or timetable for yourself. Without one, you will procrastinate and could then lose motivation. This can especially be a challenge if you have other commitments at home. You will need to establish boundaries and stick to your schedule.

Multi-tasking is OK while you study - Stay focused on one thing at a time. You'll absorb more information and complete learning and assessment activities quicker this way. Switch your phone off.

Do any of these myths apply to what you think about remote learning? Maybe you have a myth that was not mentioned? If so, spend some time thinking about why the thought or view that you have is untrue.

With some key myths about remote learning identified and debunked, what is next? You need to start developing some remote learning habits.

2. Developing remote learning habits

The classroom has changed (#4walls_have_fallen). Your classroom is now where you are and happens at the time that you choose. You cannot control having your own room@Varsity; ...yet you can be relentless and courageous in developing yourself as a person in this time of change.

This difficult moment in the history of our country and world provides you with a great opportunity to grow.

Indicates a TASK to complete.

Even though your environment and learning tools have changed, here's something to help you to be positive and choose **GROWTH**:

GOALS: **What do you want to achieve?** *Your goal is to complete the 2020 academic year successfully.*

REALITY: **What is happening now?** *Where your classroom is and how you learn has changed. This means that you will learn some new things.*

OPTIONS: **What could you do?** *Think about what you have control over that can help you to succeed. Do not to focus on what you do not have control over.*

WILL: **What will you do?** *Willpower is a powerful tool to have.*

TACTICS: **How and when will you do it?** *Develop a schedule and strategies to learn from home.*

HABITS: **How will you sustain your success?** *Following through is key to being part of the Mandela Uni community; we are world-changers; therefore we know how to be dynamic and first change our own world!*

What are some of the habits that you can draw on to help you to adapt to remote learning? Here are a few suggestions:

1. **Ask yourself questions.** There are three important questions that you can ask about your learning:
   - **WHY** do you need to change your ways of learning to be successful?
   - **WHAT** needs to change in your game plan?
   - **HOW** will you combine old with new learning strategies so that you can accomplish your goals?

2. **Whenever you are stuck or you start losing motivation**, ask yourself these three questions to get your learning back on track.

3. **Take a risk and get going** even when you are not 100% sure that you are doing the right thing. Remember you do not have to get it perfectly right the first time; but you must get going. Do not overthink things; you might just become stuck.

4. **Be prepared to learn from your mistakes**. If your plan does not work out, do not worry. Mistakes provide wonderful learning opportunities. You can adapt your plan and see if it then works better for you.

5. **Be adaptable**. If one solution does not work, try another one. Otherwise, you will feel stuck and become anxious. As you discovered in Topic 1, anxiety can affect your ability to learn.

6. **Be patient**. It takes time to learn how you can adapt to learning from home. The changes you need to make to how you learn are not easy. Your confidence will grow as you become more familiar with how learning from home works.

7. **Practice self-discipline and be motivated**. Research shows that these are the most important characteristics for remote learning success. Be disciplined in sticking to your study schedule and motivate yourself with positive self-talk to stay engaged in your studies.

8. **Learn to pace yourself**. We cannot create more time, but we can stretch what we can cover in a day, if we choose what is important. Developing and following a schedule is an important way to pace yourself. You will go into this in more detail in Topic 5.

1. **Read the above habits again.**

2. **Which one is the easiest for you? Why?**

3. **Which one is the most difficult for you? Why?**

4. **Which habit do you want to develop more? How are you going to work on it? Put a plan together, which must include dates, and how you will assess whether your plan has worked?**

One of the most important things that will help you to grow and adapt to remote learning is to be a self-directed learner. As this is so important, we will tackle it in the next section.

3. Becoming a self-directed learner

One of the aims of education is to develop lifelong learners. This means that we aim to equip our students with the necessary learning skills so that they continue to learn and develop in the workplace and in life.

However, this is quite difficult to do in traditional classroom lecturing contexts. Think about it. Your lecturer prepares a course outline that structures the work that you must cover and the things you must do on a weekly basis. Next, your lecturer presents the most important content and elaborates on it in the lecture. The lecturer also structures your out-of-class remote learning on Moodle by setting activities for you to work through and tells you what to prepare for the next lecture.

This means that students get very few opportunities in traditional teaching contexts to develop and take responsibility for their learning themselves. A good thing about remote learning is that while the lecturer develops all the remote activities and guides students how to navigate through them, the student has to take overall responsibility for their learning. The student has to develop the necessary learning habits to learn on their own. Students thus have a wonderful opportunity to prepare for their futures by developing critical skills needed in the workplace and life. As the futurist, Alvin Toffler says, "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn". If your motivation drops as you struggle to adjust to remote learning, remind yourself that you are making a major investment in your future by becoming a self-directed learner.

> **"THE ILLITERATE OF THE 21ST CENTURY WILL NOT BE THOSE WHO CANNOT READ AND WRITE, BUT THOSE WHO CANNOT LEARN, UNLEARN, AND RELEARN."**

Ambrose et al. (2010, p.192) argue that: "To become self-directed learners, students must learn to assess the demands of the task, evaluate their own knowledge and skills, plan their approach, monitor their progress, and adjust their strategies as needed".

Cycle of Self-directed Learning
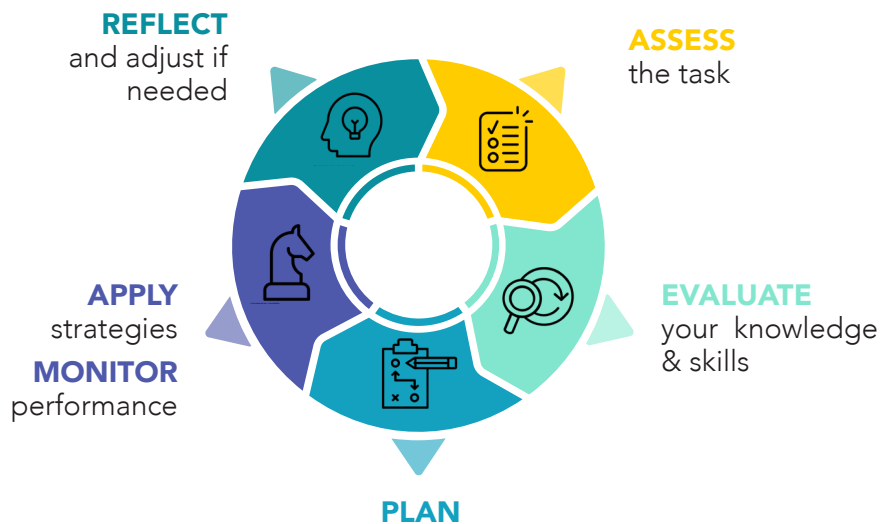
Adapted from Ambrose et al. (2010), p. 193

Some challenges that you might experience when applying the cycle of self-directed learning are:

1. **Assessing** what you are required to do with a task that you will find in your module is not always easy. You might sometimes wrongly assess what you need to do. If you are in doubt, **check out the accuracy of your assessment** with a friend, your tutor or a lecturer. By getting feedback whether your understanding is correct, you will learn how to improve your assessment of a task until this becomes a habit.

2. **Judging your knowledge and skills accurately is difficult**. Students have a tendency to over-estimate their abilities. The problem with this is that you might then under-estimate the time, resources and assistance you need to complete something. If there are quizzes in your textbook or provided by your lecturer that enable you to assess your knowledge and skills, the feedback that you get about your performance (strengths and weaknesses), can help you to start developing a more accurate assessment about what you know and can do, or not.

3. **Planning inappropriately** in that you spend too little time planning or make plans that do not match the required task. As you develop as a learner and get feedback on your plans, you will get more experienced at planning appropriately.

4. **Without monitoring** the implementation of the plan, students might continue to apply an ineffective strategy, which wastes their time and can lead to poor performance. Monitoring does not have to be difficult. Just ask yourself a few questions. What worked and why? What did not work and why? Is there another strategy I can use?

5. **Being unwilling to try new strategies** after students identify the weaknesses in their plan. When students are busy or when they are procrastinators, if the cost of time and effort to change to a new approach is too high, they will simply continue with a less effective approach or strategy. To not fall into this trap, remind yourself of the answers that you got to the simple monitoring questions that you used. From this, you identified what did not work and why, as well as, another strategy that you could try. This should motivate you to want to try a different strategy.

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Indicates a TASK to complete.

Now that you know the pitfalls, let's get practical and apply the cycle of self-directed learning.

TASK: Your task is to develop a plan to become a more self-directed learner.

ASSESS what is required.

EVALUATE what your strengths and weaknesses are when it comes to taking responsibility and being accountable for your own learning.

PLAN what you will do to develop as a self-directed learner.

When you **IMPLEMENT** the plan, how will you **MONITOR** and evaluate your development as a self-directed learner?

How will you **REFLECT** if your plan worked?

Here are a few hints to help you complete this task:

- On a piece of paper, draw the cycle of self-directed learning.
- Write the task in the middle.
- Next to each circle, indicate key points. The descriptions and questions in the box above will help you to work through each circle to write something down. The section on "challenges" will also give you some ideas. For example, next to "Evaluate strengths and weaknesses", you might write:
  » Strengths: Take self-responsibility to learn; very motivated.
  » Weaknesses: I procrastinate and then can't get all my learning done; I give up easily if I can't understand something.
- When you have worked through all the circles, reflect on what you have written. Ask yourself if this addresses the task. If you are not sure, work through each of the circles again to refine your plan.
- Implement, monitor and adjust your plan as you tackle remote learning. Remember, by becoming a self-directed learner you are not just becoming more effective as a learner, but you are also investing in your future.

Changing your thinking about online learning requires you to:

- Check that you don't have any views (myths) about remote learning that are not true.
- Develop good remote learning habits.
- Develop yourself as a self-directed learner who takes responsibility and is accountable for your own learning.

As it is not easy to change your thinking:

- Keep focusing on your goal of completing the 2020 academic year successfully.
- Set realistic expectations for yourself to develop new habits and strategies to take self-responsibility for your learning.
- Celebrate small wins and accomplishments along the way.

Reference:
Ambrose, S., Bridges, M.W., DiPietro, M, Lovett, M.C. & Norman, M.K. (2010). *How Learning Works: 7 Research-based Principles for Smart Teaching.* San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.

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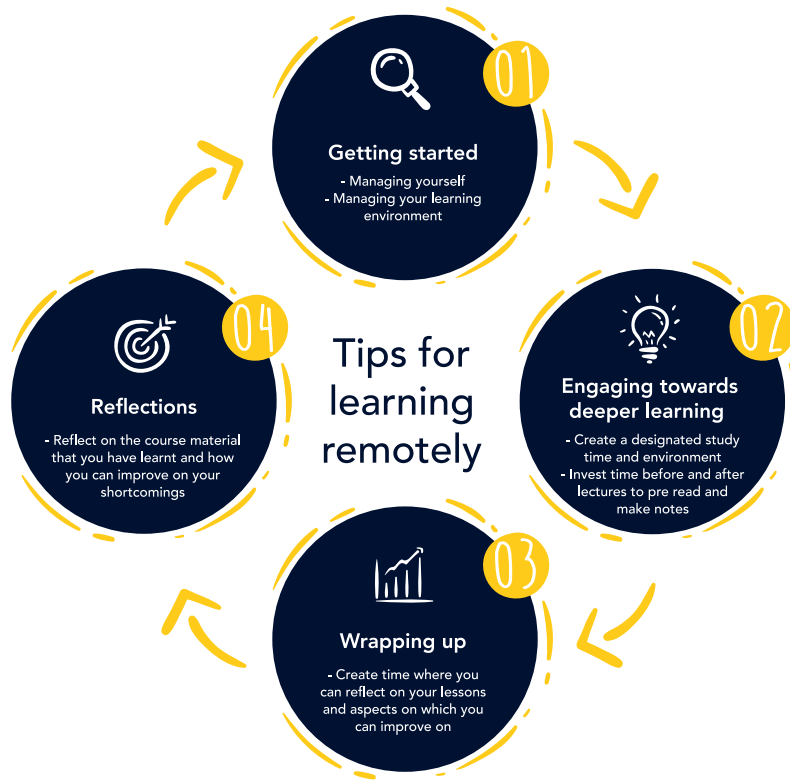
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3

TIPS TO GET STARTED WITH REMOTE LEARNING

Introduction

This topic builds on Topic 2 where the spotlight was on thinking about remote learning and developing good learning habits and strategies. Topic 3 focusses on:

Getting Started: Gearing up for your Remote Journey

Learning from home may be new and intimidating to you and you may be wondering where and how one would even start. Here are some practical tips that you can use to prepare for your journey.

Managing yourself

- **Reflect on your emotions daily** – As you discovered in Topic 1, it is valuable to take time to reflect and acknowledge how you are feeling, mentally and emotionally. Focus on positive aspects and things that are in your power to change. Make a to-do list of the things that you can change or implement to make you feel more comfortable and factor this into your daily/weekly planner. Seek and accept additional assistance in working through these emotions if necessary. Although you are working remotely, remember that you are not alone; the University has many resources available to assist you.

- **Create realistic long-term goals** and work on a step by step action plan to reach them. This will help you remain focused and feel in control of your situation. Remember to stick to your plan as closely as possible. You will be able to focus on how to set goals and plan in Topic 4.

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- **Stay motivated –** never forget your long-term goals and why you have set them. Accept that some days may be more productive than others, but reflect and improve. You may find that you need to adjust your own expectations of yourself under different circumstances. Find ways to reward yourself for challenging tasks and celebrate small wins (e.g., when you managed to stick to your schedule for the day).

- **Take time to familiarise yourself with the various support opportunities available to you.** Make sure that you have some knowledge of the services that they can provide. You can browse your student portal, which contains many other important self-help guides. The following might be useful to you:

    o disability.mandela.ac.za/
    o counselling.mandela.ac.za/
    o campushealth.mandela.ac.za/
    o library.mandela.ac.za/

- **Remember to find a balance between study time and time to chill** – it is important to factor "me time" into your planning. "Me time" is important to maintain balance, clear your mind and renew your energy levels. You also need to make time to meet your other responsibilities. When taking a break, have a change in scenery- even if it is to go to another room or outside.

Managing your Learning Environment

- It will be good if you can **find a space** that you can dedicate to studying as this will help you to focus your attention. You can also consider making your goals and scheduling plan visible in this space as a constant reminder of the "bigger picture". If it is not possible to have a dedicated space, look at available spaces in your home and negotiate with your family when you can use the space for studying. Switch off your cell phone and other means of social networking during your study times. Having these on will tempt and distract you.

- **Speak to friends, roommates and family about your course,** its requirements and the expectations placed on you. Help them understand your goals and schedules. This will help them to respect your goals and your study time.

- **Familiarize yourself with the expectations of each module** – by consulting your study guide. Be sure that you gain an understanding of what is required to complete the module; what are the requirements; what are the important task or submission dates; when are the tests? Use this information in your time management schedule.

- **Contact your lecturer** before the module starts if you have any uncertainties or questions about what is expected of you.

- **Prepare yourself to invest 4 to 5 hours** to work on the aspects of the module that you need to cover each week and any assignments that you are working on.

Diving In: Actively Engaging towards Deeper Learning

You have now taken time to prepare yourself and your environment for remote learning. You should have a clear idea of what is expected of you from each module and have initiated a relationship with your various lecturers. Let's look at implementation tips that will help you along the journey, as you start to work through the actual course content.

Prepare

It is crucial to prepare for each topic in advance – ensure that you know what the chapter or unit outcomes are. If your module has a prescribed textbook and a study guide, it will be good to have these available before you start. Otherwise, you will waste valuable time trying to find them when you want to start working through the content. Also, be sure to have a notepad and pen/pencil available for note-taking.

Engaging with the learning materials and resources

Do you remember the **5-step learning process** that you were introduced to in Topic 1? This is an excellent process to engage with your learning materials. Take some time now to re-read the 5-step learning process in Topic 1 and study the graphic of the process to remind yourself what it is about.

Then, as you work through the content and materials of a unit or topic in your module, have the graphic of the 5-step process with you to make it easier to follow this approach.

Here are a few tips to help you stay focused as you work through the various learning materials and resources:

- **Dedicate a block of time to work.** Ensure that you work through the learning materials or resources provided in one go. Remember that you should be making use of your learning space and remove any other temptations such as social media. Consider using headphones, as these may help you to focus and not be distracted by other sounds or people that may be in the area.

- **Resist the temptation to pause or stop** to do something else or to leave the room. Doing this will interfere with your own process of reading, hearing and processing the information. Pausing will slow you down, make you lose your thoughts and increases the potential for you to be distracted.

- **Follow the 5-step learning process** to engage with the learning materials and resources. This process will help you to be present in the moment and focus your attention on what is being said in a video of a lecture or what you are reading.

- **Use a dictionary** and do additional searches to make sense of any concepts that you don't grasp.

- **Take regular breaks.** You should read for periods of 20-30 minutes before taking a short break. This will help you to keep focused and take in as much information as possible.

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- **Participate.** If your lecturer invites you to be part of a chat session, do so. Do not be afraid to ask questions about the things that are still not clear to you. These discussions are often quite useful as they enable you to question and challenge the topics, which in turn contributes greatly to your understanding of concepts. Active discussions expose you to different ways of thinking and enables you to become more of a critical thinker.

After you have worked through all the learning materials for a topic

- **Make a short summary** of the key things that you think are important in your own words. If you have developed a mind map, this will help to develop a summary. This summary will help you solidify your learning and identify areas of concern. Consider the following questions as you develop your summary:

  » What is the main point of this topic or unit?
  » How does this connect to what I already know?
  » What did I find surprising? Why?
  » What did I find confusing? Why?
  » Are there any questions that I need to ask about this work?
  » Your study guide may also provide you with questions to reflect on after each chapter/unit – make sure to complete these exercises.

- Where you are **struggling to understand something**, the following steps can help you to understand confusing concepts:
  » Re-read your notes, the learning materials and the textbook.
  » Make contact with your peers.
  » Break the information down into smaller parts. Start with a small section, explaining your understanding to yourself, linking it to what you know. Add to this in your own words, moving through the work section by section.
  » Remember to check and research any new terminology.
  » Ask the lecturer.
  » Take time to update your notes and mind map to include any new information.

- **Schedule time to refine your study notes for the module** - you will need to make study notes that will include all the information that you will need to learn from for your tests and exams. Take this time to combine information from your textbook, reading materials, lecture notes and reflection notes together into one complete study note. Make sure you add to these notes after each topic or unit. This will ensure that you do not fall behind.

- **Review and refresh** - take time at the end of each week to go over the study notes that you have completed. By consistently reviewing your notes, you will be transferring the information from short-term memory to long-term memory. This will reduce the time required to study for a test or exam later as you are constantly refreshing your memory.

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Actively Engaging Towards Deeper Meaning

1 It is crucial to prepare for each topic in advance – ensure that you know what the chapter or unit or lecture outcomes are.

2 Be sure to have a notepad and pen/pencil available for note-taking. Alternatvely, you can set up a document on your computer.

3 Use the 5-step process from Topic 1 to engage with your learning materials.

4 Dedicate a block of time to work: Ensure that you watch the lecture or work through one of the learning materials.

5 Resist the temptation to pause or stop to do something else or to leave the room.

6 Use a dictionary and do additional searches to make sense of any concepts that you don't grasp.

7 Put theory into practice - try to find ways to apply the new information you have learnt as soon as possible.

8 Participate. If your lecturer invites you to be part of a chat session or an email discussion, do so.

9 Take regular breaks. You should read for periods of 20-30 minutes before taking a short break.

10 Keep on top of incoming information - check your email/ online accounts regularly for updates, module announcements or other communications.

Stay motivated – remember to continuously "check in" with yourself in terms of your physical, mental and emotional well-being.

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- **Put theory into practice** - try to find ways to apply the new information you have learnt as soon as possible, as this will help you understand and retain the key concepts as they become familiar, relevant and relatable. Try to relate the new information to what you already know. You can also put the information into practice by explaining to other students who may be confused.

- **Ask for help** - hesitating to ask for help as soon as possible will cause you to fall behind. This can lead to feelings of despair and can lower your confidence. When you ask questions, you enable the lecturer to assess the effectiveness and the shortcomings of the materials or task provided and to make adjustments where needed.

- **Stay motivated** – remember to keep focused on your goal of completing the 2020 academic year successfully. Also remember to continuously "check in" with yourself in terms of your physical, mental and emotional well-being.

Wrapping Up: Reflecting on your progress

Reflecting is a process that enables you to become aware of your own thinking patterns and being capable of explaining these to others. It allows you to assess your understanding of a topic; it's relevance and purpose and what needs to be done as a result. Reflecting empowers you to build onto your strengths and improve on your weaknesses.

It is important to spend time reflecting on everything you do; this will enable you to keep track of your progress towards reaching both your short-term goals and long-term goals.

- **Make time regularly for reflection** – remember the purpose is to be honest with yourself and determine whether any changes need to be made in order to attain your goals.

- **Reflect on and assess your strengths and weakness** in terms of mastering the work in the modules – make yourself aware of the aspects that you did particularly well in, but also of the aspects in which you did not do well. Analyse why you may not have done well and how you might need to change your learning strategy. For example, perhaps you did not prepare beforehand, you procrastinated and left it to the last minute, you did not dedicate enough time to the topic, you lost interest or motivation or you did not ask for help – there are many possibilities. Consider practical ways that you can improve on your learning strategy for the next section of work. Take time to adjust your study schedules and plans to accommodate these changes if necessary. Remember, as discussed in Topic 2, assessing your strengths and weaknesses and adapting strategies or implementing a different one are all part of your development towards becoming a self-directed learner.

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- **Consider whether you can work on the shortcomings by yourself.** If not, think about what resources, skills or assistance you may need to help you to overcome the challenges that you face. Contact relevant people and ask for their help. Some examples may be, Emthonjeni *(previously Student Counselling)*, Library Services, ICT helpdesk, Health Clinic, etc. If you are not sure, contact your Student Success Coach who will be able to assist and guide you:

    - LearningDevCoaching@mandela.ac.za

There are various types of questions that you could ask yourself when reflecting. Consider some of the following:

Backward looking:

- What challenges did I experience while working through this? How did I address these challenges?
- What resources did I use to work on this? Which resources were most useful?

Inward looking:

- How do I feel about the assignment that I submitted?
- What did I learn about myself?
- What does this experience tell me about myself and how I learn?
- How can I use better learning strategies moving forward?

Forward looking:

- What are some changes that I would like to make?
- What aspects can I improve on?
- Am I on the right path to reach my goal?

The checklist for remote learning

Here is a checklist of all the steps that you can take to navigate your way through your learning. You can use this list to remind yourself of the important points and to mark them off as you progress. Remember that your learning process is an active and continuous one, so you will continuously work your way through the list until you complete your academic year.

- ☐ I have read and understood the tips for remote learning.
- ☐ I have created a space where I can do my study work.
- ☐ I have identified short-term and long-term goals and am working towards them.
- ☐ I use the 5-step learning process to work through all the materials and resources for a module topic or unit.
- ☐ I make notes from the various learning material and resources.
- ☐ I make a summary after each topic or unit and then combine this into an overall study note for the module.
- ☐ I am reflecting on my work regularly.
- ☐ I am making changes to my work habits and learning strategies as I progress.

- ☐ I am submitting all assessments that are due for each module.
- ☐ I am regularly logging in to keep up to date with new module information.
- ☐ I am making connections with my lecturers and other students in my modules when possible.
- ☐ I am balancing my free and work time effectively.
- ☐ I am identifying when I need help and asking for it.
- ☐ I am taking the necessary next steps in each module to keep on track.
- ☐ I am aware of the academic resources and support from the University that are available to me.

Remember that your learning process is an active and continuous one, so you will continuously work your way through the list until you complete your academic year.

Indicates a TASK to complete.

Assessment Activity:

Consider everything that you have learnt while working through this topic. Use this information to write a critical reflection of your studies in 2020 thus far and start to develop a plan for your remote learning journey. Consider using the backward-looking, inward-looking and forward-looking reflection questions as a guide to structuring your reflections, thinking and planning.

Contact information

To provide avenues for you to connect with the university, we suggest that you use the following to contact us:

- Our contact centre can be contacted (preferably via SMS) on 0800 504 911 during office hours. Operators will either answer your questions or put you in touch with someone who can.

- Students are encouraged to contact lecturers directly via email or other contact details provided by the lecturer.

- Look for information on Mandela University's coronavirus webpage.

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4

SETTING GOALS AND DEVELOPING A STUDY SCHEDULE

Setting goals and developing a study schedule

Introduction

This topic too builds on Topics 1, 2, and 3 by expanding on some of the ideas raised there. In particular it focusses on:

5.1 A strategy to **set sound goals** to assist you in successfully completing your studies;

5.2 Tips and strategies to develop an **effective study schedule**;

5.3 Giving you the opportunity to **develop your own weekly study schedule**.

Goal Setting

Importance of setting goals
Goal setting helps you decide what important things you want to achieve in your life, which includes your academic life. It helps to motivate you and can build your self-confidence.

A goal is more specific than a dream. It is an outcome that you try to achieve through a detailed and realistic course of action. Once you have identified what your long-term goal is, you will be able to break it down into short-term goals which will assist you in achieving your long-term goal.

Long-term goal
A long-term goal is the plan you are making for your future. They will:
- help you see the bigger picture
- focus on the future
- direct your efforts
- need to be challenging
- need to be directed towards a specific target date

Short-term goals are:
Short-terms goals are smaller steps leading towards the long-term goal. They need to be:
- specific
- relevant and realistic
- time-bound

The process of setting and reviewing goals involves a series of questions that you should be asking yourself:

What do you want to achieve? Make sure your goals are well-defined: the clearer you are about what you want to achieve, the easier it will be to identify how to achieve it.

Who or what can help you to achieve your goals? List the actions necessary to achieve your goals, and who or what might help you in executing them.

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What could hinder your progress? Identify challenges that may interfere with achieving your goals and possible strategies for overcoming them.

When do you want to achieve your goal by?
Give yourself a deadline by which you would like to achieve your goals, this will enable you to review your progress.

How will you know that you have achieved your goal? Specify a concrete measure to assess your progress as to whether you have achieved your goal or how far you have progressed.

Steps when setting goals

The following critical steps may be followed during your goal setting process:

- **Analyse your strengths.** Goals that are made while focusing on your strengths will be easier and more enjoyable to attain.

- **Set small and realistic goals.** Setting small goals along the way to achieving your goal will help you stay focused and motivated.

- **Set SMART Goals -** Ensure that when setting goals that they are distinct, achievable and rewarding which will enable you to keep moving forward. The following criteria may be used to set any goals for yourself, namely;

  » **Specific** – A goal should be concrete and specific. **Example**: 'I will read two chapters of my textbook and make notes on them by the end of the week" or "I will complete maths problems x;y;z by Thursday."

  » **Measurable** – Monitor and evaluate so you know whether you are achieving your goal or not. If it is not going well, maybe you need to alter your goal or your action plan.

  » **Achievable** – Try to be realistic when setting your goals. **Example**: Deciding to read 3 articles in 2 hours is unrealistic if it takes 2 hours to read one. The goal is more achievable if you set aside three 2 hour sessions over 2 or 3 days to read the articles.

  » **Results-Focused** – Have very clear, distinct outcomes for meeting your goals, and hold yourself to them.

  » **Time-Bound** – Set a deadline for each goal or, for more complex tasks with multiple steps, establish deadlines for each major stage of the process. **Example**: By the end of Monday, I will have read and made notes on pages 3 to 15 of Chapter 1. By the end of Tuesday, … By the end of Wednesday, … etc. By the end of this week I will have read two chapters and have made thorough notes on them".

- **Monitor your progress.** Create a helpful spreadsheet and keep track of your academic average.

- **Self-reflection**. Take time to self-reflect throughout your academic experience. Reflecting on your past successes and challenges should help you to determine how best to move forward.

- **Seek help when needed.** Use all the resources available to you, including your lecturers and Academic Success Coach*. You can also create a WhatsApp group with some of your classmates.

*Contact LearningDevCoaching@mandela.ac.za to make an appointment with your Student Success Coach

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1 Develop Smart goals	6 Plot daily activities on weekly time schedule
2 Find a suitable learning space	7 Inform peers and family about your weekly time schedule
3 List important deadlines	8 Gather learning material
4 Prioritise your activities	9 Partner with classmates for accountability
5 Calculate learning time per module	10 Help is available: Ask your lecturer or Student Success Coach if you are not coping

Getting organised for remote learning

ACTIVITY

Making use of the information provided above write down 3 academic goals that you would like to achieve in the remainder of this year. These goals should be clearly set out with all the details in place to assist you in achieving them.

As you read through the material on goal setting, one of the themes that was repeatedly emphasised was the need to have a schedule which guides the planning and management of your time. In addition SMART goals require good time management and detailed planning. The section that follows addresses this through the development of a **Study Schedule**.

STUDY SCHEDULE

A study schedule has two components to it. The first is a **framework** of what needs to be covered to achieve your goals, the second is a **plan** or **schedule** to manage your time in order to achieve your goals. To develop the framework start by listing your modules, the learning and assessment expectations of the modules, and the time lines and deadlines that have been given for the modules.

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ACTIVITY

- Write down the list of modules that you are registered for this semester. Use your current study guide to make a note of what sections of work were completed before the lockdown, noting which sections you have mastered and which require further work to gain mastery.

- Make a note of the sections that still need to be completed. As your lecturers communicate with you note how these sections will be covered and what is expected of you. You will only be able to start this activity now by noting what the outstanding sections of each module are and you will need to keep updating and revising it over the next couple of weeks.

- This is the start of your framework which will inform your time schedule but also gives you an idea of how much effort is still required for the completed work and what the expectations are for the outstanding work.

Time management is an essential skill to have, and when used productively it allows you to plan, develop and achieve several academic and personal goals. For remote learning spaces, it is important that you organise your time and put in as much effort as you do for face-to-face learning using smarter and more efficient ways (see the section below titled **"Developing time slots for your study schedule"** for tips on how to be more efficient).

Developing timeslots for your study schedule for online learning

For face-to-face learning, you received an automated timetable from your Faculty Administrator; however, for learning from home you will need to develop your own time schedule. This requires discipline and a real understanding of how to use your time wisely throughout the day. The template below gives an example of how to schedule your time using a weekly study schedule planner. Such weekly study schedules should be set up at the beginning of each week and should be planned in such a way that they take into account **ALL** the demands on your time. They should be flexible and be reviewed during the course of the week to accommodate unexpected interferences.

As you will see in the example below time is allocated for:
- reading
- activities
- making notes
- doing assignments
- studying
- relaxation
- chores
- exercise
- meals
- sleep
- etc.

All of these are important activities and reasonable time must be allocated to each.

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Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
STUDY SCHEDULE: WEEKLY PLANNER			**DATE:**				
7:00	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast		
8:00	Reading for Psych101	Sos101 Reading	Reading for Psych101	Sos101 reading	Reading for Psych101		
9:00	Psych101 Notes & quizzes	Sos101 Notes & quizzes & 30 min Exercise	Psych101 Notes & application	Sos101 Notes & 30 min Exercise	Psych101 Notes & quizzes		
10:00	Study – review Psych101 Notes & difficult concepts	Study	Study – review Psych101 Notes & difficult concepts	Study – review Sos101 Notes & difficult concepts	Study		
11:00	Study	Study	Study	Study	Study		
12.30	Lunch and chores	Lunch and chores	Lunch and chores	Lunch and chores	Lunch and chores		
14:00	EngL101 reading	Reading for Phil101	EngL101 reading	Reading for Phil101	EngL101 reading	Free Day that can be used if there is a need. Extra time to study for a test / exam / working on an assignment.	Study
15:00	Study	Phil101 activities and assignment planning	Work on EngL101 assignment	Phil101 activities to apply learning	Study		Study
16:30	30 min Exercise & time to relax	free	30 min Exercise & time to relax	free	Review the week to see what subjects require more work		
17:00	Dinner and TV	Dinner and TV	Dinner and TV	Dinner and TV	Dinner and TV		
19:00	Study	Study – work on Phil101 assign-ment	Study	Study			Study
20:00	Study	Study	Study	Study			Study - Review this week's Psych101 notes
21:00	Reviewing the day and identifying areas where more work is needed		Reviewing assignment and the day				Plan and review schedule for next week
22:00							
23:00	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep		

*Remember to take regular short breaks of about 10 minutes after about 50 minutes of studying.

To develop your **time slots for your study schedule** you need to:

- Identify the times in your day that you are **most productive** and that are convenient for you to learn. Use those for your most difficult work.

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- Know the **estimated number of hours** you will be allocating for your learning. The rule of thumb would be to spend 5 hours per week per module. This would leave 5 to 10 additional hours per 40-hour week to work on assignments, revising for a test, consulting with fellow students, etc. This allocated time will include time for activities such as reading chapters in the textbook and learning materials; making notes, working on assignments; studying; and working through quizzes, tests or exams etc.

- **List** your learning activities for the week for each module and decide on which day(s) you will do the various activities. Remember to break up large projects into small pieces and take reasonable breaks in between activities.

- Include your daily **personal responsibilities** or activities such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, etc. when developing your time schedule.

- While you're making your list, **prioritise** your activities to know what you need to start immediately and what can wait. Review what you need to do, how much time it will take, and when it is due.

- Remember to include your assignment or project **due dates** in your time schedule and any test dates or exams coming up.

- Ensure that the people who you normally interact with such as family and friends are aware of your online learning time schedule and **learn to say "no"** to any social invitation/s during your scheduled learning time. The important people in your life will understand.

- Minimise distractions you might encounter in your learning **environment,** which may include social media, surfing the internet, etc. Try to find a space and time where you can be fully focused.

- Stick to your study plan. Make sure that you **stay on schedule** and do not fall behind with your work. Try to get into the habit of looking at your weekly schedule on a daily basis and adapting it as the need arises. Use an alarm on your phone to remind you when your study blocks begin and end. This will help you stick to your study schedule.

- If your study schedule includes **long, multi-hour study sessions**, be sure to take regular short 10-15 min breaks every so often to stretch, hydrate and rest your mind. This will keep your brain fresh and help prevent you from feeling overwhelmed.

- **Don't multi-task.** Focus on one assignment at a time and zero in on the specific task at hand, whether that's studying for an exam, reading a textbook, or emailing a lecturer. Arrange your tasks in order of importance, and pay attention to the three or four crucial tasks that require the most effort

- **Marking completed activities** off your weekly study schedule will encourage you to start with your next activity. You can reward yourself with things like watching your favourite television show for extra motivation during your breaks.

Dealing with procrastination

It can be tempting to procrastinate or take advantage of the flexibility that comes with learning at home. With no one holding you accountable to attend class, a greater responsibility is required of you for your own learning. You can work with a classmate to keep each other up to date with some of your planned activities. It is important that you consistently complete all the activities that you have assigned in your time schedule. Try not to multitask, focus on one activity and complete it before moving to the next one. Not completing one or two of the activities in your time schedule can be discouraging, however this should not derail you from your plan. Immediately try to adjust your time schedule including the activities you have missed.

ACTIVITY

Keeping in mind what has been discussed, and the example of a time schedule given above, use the blank template below (or a similar copy that you design on your computer or draw on a sheet of paper) to design a time schedule for the week ahead.

Remember to:

1. Include all the demands on your time in the schedule including time to relax.
2. Plan sufficient time to sleep.
3. Review your schedule and honestly evaluate its practicality.
4. Make adjustments to ensure that it supports your study goals.
5. Use this template each week to plan your activities during this period of remote learning and beyond.
6. It is fine to adjust the plan in the first few weeks as you try to figure out how much time is needed for each activity.

APPENDIX A

Study Schedule: Weekly Planner   **Date:**

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

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Indicates a TASK to complete.