

FROM THE COUNSELLOR'S DESK

- Hello there!
- As NTI distance learners, you are expected to set aside a study area at home and to designate a particular span of time each day as study time to overcome challenges of organizing your study period in a particular manner that will help you cover up before any examination.

1.0) Each NCE DLS student is expected to study for:

- a) Minimum of 2 hours a day per week, that is, **14 hours (2 hours x 7 days)**
 - b) 39 weeks of non-holiday periods, that is, **546 hours (14 hours x 39 weeks)**; and
 - c) 4 years of course duration, that is, **2,184 hours (546 hours x 4 years)**.
- i). A lesson unit is designed for an average of **1½ hours (one and half)**. Thus, a module is to be covered in **1½ hours for each of the 10 units going to a total of 15 study hours**. This is equivalent to **1 credit load** in the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) Minimum Standards.
- ii). Each student is expected to cover **2,184 hours for the minimum available time in 4 years**. This is equivalent to **145.6 course materials**, which is approximately, **146 modules**.

Above all, **130 modules covering 1,950 hours** had been designed for each NCE DLS student.

SINCE THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF HOURS AVAILABLE TO THE NCE DLS STUDENT IN THE 4 YEARS PERIOD IS 2,184 HOURS, THE REMAINING 234 HOURS WAS EMBEDDED TO ACCOMMODATE SLOW READERS AND IN-BUILT ASSIGNMENTS OF THE COURSE MATERIALS.

So, why don't you just make the best use of the time and all opportunities available to be successful? Remember, Opportunity Once Lost Can Never Be Regained... A Stitch In Time Also Saves Nine...

2.0) For the Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) Students, they are expected to cover 1, 240 hours for self-study:

- a) The total study hours for the **42 credit units are 1, 400 hours. Of this, 160 hours (i.e. 80 hours per semester)** will be used for tutorials during the intensive contact session.
 - b) Of the 15 months for the programme, contact sessions, examinations and practical teaching are packaged together as part of academic requirements.
- Here are the expectations that the operations and the academic programme administration of NTI Distance Learning System had laid down for your self study periods:

Each PGDE student is hereby expected to study for:

- i) Minimum of 2 hours a day per week, that is, **14 hours (2 hours x 7 days) which is equivalent to 56 hours in a month**.
- ii) **2 Hours per day (after 6.00pm daily)** during the 10 days of intensive contact. This gives **20 hours of self study**.
- iii) **The Total Study hours for the 40 credit units are 1,400 Hours.** Of this, **160 hours** (i.e. 80 Hours per semester) will be used for face-to-face tutorials during the intensive contact sessions.

iv) The remaining **12 Months are for self study. The 1240 hours for self study are derived as follows:**

a. Intensive Contact Session

- **64 Hours** are for self study during the intensive semester contact in April and July, that is, 32 hours x 2 semesters = **64 hours.**

b. Practical Teaching

- During the 6 weeks of practical teaching (i.e. 42 days), **the students are expected to put in 3 hours of self-study i.e. 3 hours x 42 days = 126 hours.**

c. Remaining 12 Months

- A and B above give 64 hours + 126 hours = 190 hours of self study.
- The PGDE students are expected to cover 1,240 hours of self study minus 190 hours = 1, 050 hours in the remaining 12 months.
- This implies a monthly study hour of **1, 050 hours ÷ 12 months = 87.50 hours** and a daily study hours of **87.50 hours ÷ 30 days = 2.90 hours per day** which is approximately **3 hours per day.**

In summary, the PGDE students are expected to put in a minimum of 3 hours of self-study per day throughout the duration of the programme.

Due to the short duration of the PGDE programme, the students are also expected to be disciplined enough to draw up study time-table and adhere strictly to this schedule for a successful completion of the programme.

3.0 HINTS ON HOW TO STUDY

3.1 What is expected to be studied? The tendency for most average students is to study for the purpose of examination to help expand their knowledge thereby accelerating their intellectual growth. In order to make studying effective, distance learners are advised to: Concentrate on the significance areas. Those chapters, passages, journals, articles, good textbook, titles and so on relevant to the subject and topic should be sought for; Give attention to the key ideas and the summary before giving in to the explanations and other embellishment; Select materials that correspond with the needs of the time and level of education from the varieties and details available on the topic.

3.2 Time scheduling for studying. Any time that had been scheduled for studying should be strictly adhered to since it forms a strong base for any effective study and should take into consideration the hours free for studying by making out adequate time for relaxation, games, social activities, sleep and other activities. The simplest method of making a schedule is to have a personal time table whereby difficult subjects or courses are scheduled for periods when one is not day-dreaming, at best in attention, energy and motivation to work. Having personal time table also helps in the distribution of accumulated work load, the achievement of equilibrium in all subjects studied without neglecting anyone and in derivation of personal satisfaction.

For distance learners therefore, the time-table or schedule should take into consideration the hours free for studying by marking out adequate time for relaxation, games, social activities, sleep (minimum of six to eight hours in a day) and other activities. The following procedure can thus be followed in planning personal time table:

- a) Allow a considerable stretch of gap between two study periods in subjects that have similarities in order to minimize interference or inhibition;
- b) Uphold the essence of break by making it a habit to have about five minutes break within an hour's study. Such short breaks help to revitalize energy, sustain level of attention and revive interest.
- c) The break could be in the form of walking around, eating some groundnuts or peanuts, talking with friends or a kind of relaxation, and;
Ensure to incorporate the time for sleep.

3.3 Goals setting. Goals setting keep someone in target and commit one to the work, time, pain and whatever else is part of the price of achieving success. Students need to set goals of priorities which are realistic and acceptable in their course of study and also work towards achieving them. Goals should be realistic to produce maximum performance benefits while unrealistic goals should be avoided since performance will drop off as a function of reduced motivation and effort. Distance learners should therefore note that when goals are used improperly, they can actually be dysfunctional and become a major source of stress.

3.4 Motivation: Motivation is very crucial before anything can be successful. The learner is crucial to his/her success because he/she can either make it or mar it. Motivation makes one to work hard; hence a lot assessment should be done in order to achieve goals. As Adult learners, nobody will force them to do their work because it is their decision to go in for distance learning. They are therefore advised to accept and live with their decisions, complete a task, accomplish their goals and not quit because completed tasks keep interest and motivation at a higher level.

3.5 Building good study habits: planning and organization are the two factors that accelerate the progress of learners' academic activities, hence, they should be taught to plan and organize their work in order to accomplish their goals. Teachers therefore need to help learners organize because even though they acquire some good study habits, they may still have some difficulties in studying. Many distance learners because of the unconventional nature of the teaching-learning mode tend to experience a lot of anxieties when examinations are drawing near. Keeping in mind that they want to be active learners and not passive ones can minimize their anxieties in many ways.

The following strategies can help distance learners build good study habits when preparing for examinations:

- a) Read/review notes regularly and do not wait until the night before an examination to study so as to be alert and to concentrate during the examination;
- b) Learn to handle all testing styles because examinations can be designed in whatever form;
- c) Highlight major topics, sub-topics and vocabulary terms with the goal of generating an outline of the notes;
- d) Attempt to memorize ideas in the note from beginning to the end;
- e) Make charts, diagrams, graphs, lists, practice drawing and label the structures drawn; Memorize some information, for example, vocabulary;
- f) Prepare a self-test to make study activities effective;
- g) Challenge yourself as severally as you can;
- h) Keep a collection of "exam questions" and answer them. Whatever results that one gets will determine going back to reinforce some of the things learnt or not;
- i) Try not to "cram" during every spare moment before an examination because it leads to panic and test anxiety;
- j) Read through the list of ideas or facts that had been jotted down a couple of times in the morning and/or just before taking the examination. This improves memory reinforcement and long-term memory of the material;

k) Be physically prepared and get a good night sleep, and;

l) Never miss an examination.

It is therefore necessary for distance learners to set aside a study area at home and to designate a particular span of time each day as study time to overcome challenges of study behaviours.

3.6 Other strategies which can help distance learners build good study habits and improve study include:

3.7 ADDITIONAL HINTS ON HOW TO STUDY:

- 1. Use a Task Diary.** By this, tasks or habits that take time away from studying, rushing to complete homework/assignment at the last moment or even starting late will be identified and more healthy homework habits will be developed.
- 2. Organize your study task.** Ability to organize a study task is a skill that is vital in the acquisition of knowledge through individual studies.
- 3. Create notes** that will provide a visually memorable impression of the organization of the material to be studied.
- 4. Develop Blocks of Study Time.** Some learners need more frequent breaks for a variety of reasons, for example, becoming restless whenever they are studying. Some may even require more frequent breaks when they are faced with more difficult materials.
- 5. Use the “CHUNKING” Approach.**
Chunk” the chapter section by section by reading one section at a time, telling yourself from memory what you have read in one section before reading another section.
- 6. Pieces of work too large to study at a time should be cut up into meaningful units and studied,** that is, group tiny items into reasonable unit before you study.
Lesson notes and textbooks can be studied in this way.
- 7. Do not try to read all from beginning to the end,** rather, “Review your notes within 24 hours”. Master each unit before going to the next.
- 8. Immediately after listening and taking notes during tutorials, read over your notes.** Make corrections where necessary, add clarifying notes on the lines left blank and note personal comments and questions in a separate page.
- 9. Underline organizing ideas and key terms with a coloured pencil, using a small ruler.**
- 10. Recite aloud from memory the idea you have reviewed.** Recite after reviewing each small unit of the note probably of four to seven items for each unit. At the end, recite the organizing ideas for the units together.
- 11. Read over some other authors** on the same subject, confer (discuss) it with your teacher or with peers and write down the clearest result of your present thoughts, reasoning and inquiries.
- 12. Make a Long Term Planner.** A great deal of time can be maximized by using a monthly chart to plan ahead. Long term planners will also serve as a reminder to constructively plan time for one self.
- 13. Make a schedule of your home study time-table,** believe in its efficacy in improving your study performance, then stick to it.
- 14. Distribute 60 percent of your study time evenly among your courses.** Then distribute the necessary 40 percent, taking into consideration the relative importance and difficulty of courses.
- 15. Do not miss class activities (tutorials)** for other activities during contact sessions even if you feel you can make up the missed lessons.
- 16. Each episode of your study period should be viewed as a challenge. Study as if you have examination the following day.**
- 17. As you study, make an outline of the salient points in the materials studied.**
- 18. If you must have a long study session, have short breaks between subjects.**
Each time you resume, work to maximum ability.

19. **Organize the study materials in such a way that all related materials are available, handy and together** (note books, textbooks, revision questions, etc.).
20. **After studying, apply what you have studied at the slightest test opportunity.** Create opportunities to recite what or apply what you have studied. Teach people what you have learnt so as to retain the ideas effectively.
21. **Always attempt revision question after reading a material.**
22. **Develop a positive attitude to examinations. You can introduce some humour to it.** Do not get upset at slightest hint of examinations.
23. **Practice Self Relaxation Therapy.** If your mind keeps jumping as you are about to write examinations or class tests, breathe in very deeply and breathe it out slowly. Do it several times and tell yourself there is nothing to be afraid of. As you practice this exercise, you will discover to your astonishment that fear will disappear and your mind is relaxed.
24. **After reading through examination questions and you discover that the questions are unfamiliar, do not panic, relax a while, then read the questions again** and start the questions where you have the closest approximation of the required answer.
25. **During examination, do not compare your work with the work of your neighbour.** You may get unnecessarily excited at the volume of work done by your neighbour .
26. **At anytime during examination, you discover that you have tension and are unable to concentrate on the examination, practice the Self-Relaxation Therapy.**
27. **If you discover that time is running out in the examination and you still have some questions to answer, do not panic. Just summarize your answer for each number** ensuring that all the relevant points are outlined.
28. **Those who study and prepare adequately for examination do not usually experience examination tensions and anxiety.**
29. **The best preparation for examination is to organize your work and study conscientiously from the first tutorial.**
30. **You must adopt one systematized study method** or a combination of the various study methods.
31. **When you know the subject (course) topic to be taught in the new weeks, read it up in advance** so that you can follow the lesson easily in class.
32. **Work and pass class assignments promptly.** Do not abandon your class assignments for any reason.
33. **Prepare your mind to accept new ideas as you begin to study.** You can do this by repressing unrelated thoughts to the materials studied.
34. **If you are unable to concentrate as you study, stop and analyze yourself to find out why.** Attend to the distracting factor if it cannot wait so that you can concentrate.
35. **Meet your teachers (tutors) for further explanation when you are unable to understand a particular topic.**
36. **Study and discuss subject matters in groups once in a while.**
37. **Be careful in your selection of a study venue.** Attempt to have your studies in one particular place that is quiet and well lit.
38. **Clear your reading table when you study.** Ensure that only materials related to your study are found on the table.
39. **Finally, you must pray for God's guidance and blessing in your academic struggle.** That, in fact should be the starting point!