

ASSIGNMENT

**OUMH1103
LEARNING SKILLS FOR OPEN DISTANCE LEARNERS
SEPTEMBER 2015 SEMESTER**

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

1. This assignment contains only **ONE (1)** question that is set in English.
2. Answer in **English**.
3. **Do not** copy the assignment question and instructions to your answer. The number of words should be shown at the end of your assignment. Only assignment answer developed within the approximate word limit will be assessed.
4. Your assignment should be prepared individually. You should not copy another person's assignment. You should also not plagiarise another person's work as your own.

EVALUATION

This assignment accounts for **100%** of the total marks for the course and shall be assessed based on **the Rubrics or Answer Scheme** attached.

You would be given feedback on the assignment before the Final Semester Examination commences.

PLAGIARISM: MARKS DEDUCTION

Warning: The submitted assignment will automatically undergo a similarity check. If plagiarism is detected, marks would be deducted as follows:

No.	Similarity Percentage	Marks Deduction
1.	0 – 30	0
2.	30.01 – 50	5
3.	50.01 – 70	10
4.	70.01 - 100	100

ASSIGNMENT QUESTION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this task is to assess your ability to:

- search for information;
- make notes from the reading material;
- acknowledge other author's work, and
- demonstrate logical arguments/discussions with supporting facts and evidences.

ACTIVITY 1 (20%)

As a working adult learner, you may faced various problems that may affect your studies.

In a 300-350 words, discuss what are the THREE problems faced by you? Provide constructive suggestions that may help you to cope these problems in order to give you the opportunity to excel in your studies.

ACTIVITY 2 (20%)

A major challenge for all open and distance learner students is how to organise *time* to the best advantage. Planning time allows you to spread your work over a semester and cope with study stress.

Describe in a 300-350 word essay how best you can manage your time effectively in your study.

ACTIVITY 3 (10%)

Share your experiences and describe how you make use of myVLE to help you in learning?

Note: Write a 150-200 word essay for the above activity.

ACTIVITY 4 (25%)

Read an article on Stress Management (refer to Attachment 1 of the assignment question). Prepare a mind map and annotation of the essay that you have read. Hand in the mind map and annotation, together with the essay.

ACTIVITY 5 (25%)

Internet benefits students in many ways. As open and distance learner, share your experiences on how the Internet can maximize your learning. Write a 300-400 words of your experience.

Stress Management

What is Stress?

Stress is common place in the lives of college students. Learning to deal with stress means learning to understand what stress is, identifying common sources, and then practicing some method of stress reduction on a regular basis.

Everyone has some method(s) for dealing with stress. Sometimes the methods we use for dealing with stress are productive: meditation, exercise, and listening to our favorite music would be examples. But sometimes the methods we choose are not so positive: alcohol abuse, smoking and overeating would be examples. Though these negative stress management tools tend to work in the short term, in the long term they will have other negative health effects. It is best to find stress management tools that will have beneficial, positive health effects in the long run and yet still effectively manage stress in the short term.

Coping with Stress

Working students have many sources of stress: university, jobs, relationships, family, money (the lack of it), etc. Perhaps there is no more important topic than how one can handle or cope with stress. This writing hopes to offer some practical advice on how to understand and manage one's stress.

Definition:-Stress refers to how the body responds to any number of physical or emotional stimuli (i.e., stressors).

The effects of this response are sometimes perceptible-such as an increased heart rate, respiratory rate, sweating, skin problems, or tense muscles. Other changes, though common, are not perceptible: increased blood pressure, metabolism, and changes in circulating fats. Continued exposure to stressors, especially of a negative type, will often lead to mental and physical symptoms such as anxiety, depression, heart palpitations, and muscular aches and pains. Eventually, if one cannot find a way to effectively regulate stress, various physical and mental disorders may develop which may be serious enough to cause disability and even death.

There are many kinds of stressors: burnt toast, crying kids, arguments with co-workers, exercise, loud sounds, productive work, viruses, bacteria, overexposure to the sun, and grief are all examples of stressors. While some of these stressors could be considered good, pleasant and/or beneficial, they nevertheless cause a similar generalized response in the body. For example, what does an argument with your boss have in common with jogging? Since they are both stressors, they will each cause increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, increased respiratory rate and muscle tension. Though your perception of these two stressors might be different, your body's reaction to them is pretty much the same. Therefore, it is important to note that stress is cumulative. It doesn't make any difference whether the stressor is good or bad.

Stress can also be beneficial:-

We can't always avoid stress, in fact, sometimes we don't want to. Often, it is controlled stress that gives us our competitive edge in performance related activities like athletics, giving a speech, or acting

For any performance-related activity, there is an optimal amount of stress. If you are involved in an oral interview for a job, you will benefit from a certain amount of stress. It is stress that provides you with focus and gives you your "competitive edge" that will help you think quickly and clearly and express your thought in ways that will benefit your interview process.

Sources of Stress

In order to combat stress in your life, you need to become aware of common sources of stress. While there are many sources of stress, the most important ones to you are the ones that you encounter frequently and that may serve as a source of distress with time.

a) Situational Stress

Situational stress is caused by situational stressors in your immediate environment. An example would be sitting in an airplane as it is taxiing the runway for takeoff. You may be sitting, clutching the arm rests and hoping that you won't need to use the emergency instructions that the stewardess has just explained to you.

Your work environment, while you are working, is considered a situational stress. You are running back and forth, dealing with customers, counting change, answering phones, etc. When your workplace is real busy, you may experience a high level of situational stress.

If your workplace is always busy, you may need some coping methods to help you function at high levels with the lowest possible negative reactions to the continual stress.

b) Body Stress

Body stress is stress that results in overt physical symptoms. Examples include abuse, such as consuming too much alcohol, abusing drugs, or exercising too much. On the other hand, some people neglect their bodies by not getting enough sleep or proper nutrition.

Many people view it as a simple hangover, but drinking too much alcohol is a stress to the body. It reduces the amount of REM or dream sleep that you experience and results in a series of problematic symptoms such as headache, fatigue and inability to concentrate. This is an example of body stress that is caused by abuse of alcohol. What is the solution to this kind of stressor. Not too much can be done about an aggressive hangover except to wait out the symptoms. The most serious problem facing you would be to ensure that this type of abuse does not become a regular feature of your life.

Often, body stress is related to other sources of stress. For example, the reason that one abuses alcohol may very well have to do with stresses at work or with relationships. So, the abuse of alcohol and resulting body stress is really tied to a deteriorating relationship.

c) **Mind Stress**

Mind stress is caused by negatively perceiving life events. Some people have a tendency to exaggerate problems or even invent problems that don't exist. We sometimes say that these people make "mountains out of molehills". Try to catch yourself being pessimistic, taking things personally or jumping to conclusions.

Mind stress is very common. You could be reading a book, listening to your teacher lecture or watching a movie, and suddenly you are no longer listening, but instead you are thinking about something that happened earlier that morning or something that will be happening later that day. To the extent that you are worrying or fretting over these details is an example of mind stress. People who frequently allow themselves to mentally worry or think negative thoughts are the most prone to the negative long-term effects of mind stress.

How to Deal With Stress

Now that you have learned how to identify sources of stress in your life, and also how to measure the amount of stress you are experiencing, we can now talk about specific ways that you can use to counter the common stressors in your life.

a) **Dealing with Situational Stress**

The following interventions can be used to deal with the stresses that resulted from your immediate surroundings.

- **Make changes in your surroundings**

If you have a headache because you've been reading in poor light, move to another room where the lighting is better. Changing your surroundings can mean turning on lights, turning off loud music or raising or lowering your computer chair. Make a careful survey of the places where you spend a good deal of your time, your study place at home or your workplace for example. Check your surroundings carefully for potential situational stressors.

- **Caringly and carefully Communicate**

You need to learn to communicate with those with whom you are having problems. Sometimes your situational stress is caused by people. This is a more complicated potential source of stress. Whenever there are problems, you owe it to yourself and to the other person to reach a mutually acceptable solution to the problem. This involves communication in a caring and careful way.

- **Learn how and when to say "NO"**

Sometimes your stress is caused by taking on too many responsibilities. Some people have a habit of always saying "yes" to requests for help from others. Pretty soon they not only have all their own problems and responsibilities to attend to-they have everyone else's too! You need to become more aware of your limits and learn when you have reached them. The next step is to practice saying "no". Remember, your first responsibility is to your own health. You are of little use to others if *you* are not

healthy.

- **Learn techniques for time management**

Situational stress often results from feeling like we don't have enough time to accomplish all we need to in a given day. In many cases it is not a lack of time that is the problem, but rather it is poor time management skills that lead us to this dilemma. Time management means different things to different people. For some, it will be something as simple as making lists of "things to do". For others, learning to use daily planners and organizers will help them to better manage their time.

- **Delegate responsibilities**

People with perfectionist tendencies have trouble delegating work. They have the attitude that, "If I want it done right, I have to do it myself". They fear that by letting someone else help them with a given task, that they are losing control and that something will probably go wrong. We need to learn that there is more than just, "my way" of doing things. Learning to delegate responsibilities when they become overwhelming, will help you build more trusting relationships and will relieve your burden of too many stressors.

b) Dealing with Body Stress

- **Practice relaxation training**

Dealing with body stress often simply means dealing with the *evident* symptoms that are seen in the body. For example, when you see rapid, shallow chest breathing, you can counter that with the practice of more relaxed breathing technique. Or when you notice tense muscles in various parts of the body, you can practice systematically relaxing the muscles by consciously loosening the muscles that seem to be tense.

c) Dealing with Mind Stress

The following interventions can be used when your stresses result from negative thinking or from a tendency to mentally create problems or unrealistic exaggerate problems.

- **Develop and take "Star Treks"**

A Star Trek is just another name for mental imagery, or visualization. Just as on TV when they "beam" people back and forth, you can mentally transport yourself to the most peaceful, relaxing place that you can think of. Imagine a beautiful beach scene or lying in an outdoor hot tub on a warm summer night. Whatever you imagine, be sure to pay attention to each detail. Take five or ten minutes out of your day for "Trekking".

- **Find health enhancing phrases and repeat them regularly**

Write little notes to yourself which say, "Smile more today" or, "Don't take things too seriously", or whatever else might reinforce a relaxed state of mind. Post these little notes in places where you are likely to see them often (bathroom mirror, refrigerator door, etc.). Or perhaps, enlist the help of a friend. You can write these little notes to each other and leave them in places where they are sure to be found.

- **Practice meditation and/or prayer**

In the West, the techniques of meditation are often extracted from their Eastern religious traditions and provide simple methods for focus and concentration. A by-product of this focus is stress reduction. Meditation techniques have been shown to be effective in reducing heart rate and blood pressure, two common indicators of stress. Prayer can be used by those who are comfortable in a religious context. Prayer also allows focus (on God or on specific words of wisdom) and, as a result, often leads to a reduction in stress levels.

ASSIGNMENT RUBRICS

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ACTIVITY 1 and 2 (20 + 20= 40%)

CATEGORY	WEIGHT	0	LOW 1	ABOVE AVERAGE 2	AVERAGE 3	EXCELLENT 4	TOTAL
INTRODUCTION	1	No introduction	There is no clear introduction to the main topic or structure of the paper.	The introduction states the main topic, but does not adequately preview the structure of the paper nor is it particularly inviting to the reader.	The introduction clearly states the main topic and previews the structure of the paper, but is not particularly inviting to the reader.	The introduction is inviting, states the main topic and previews the structure of the paper.	4
CONTENT	2	The main idea is not mentioned.	The main idea is not clear. There is a seemingly random collection of information.	The main idea is somewhat clear, but there is a need for more supporting information.	The main idea is clear but the supporting information is general.	There is one clear, well-focused topic. Main idea stands out and is supported by detailed information.	8
CONCLUSION	1	No conclusion.	There is no clear conclusion, the paper just ends.	The conclusion is recognizable, but does not tie up several loose ends.	The conclusion is recognisable and ties up almost all the loose ends.	The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader with a feeling that they understand what the writer is "getting at."	4

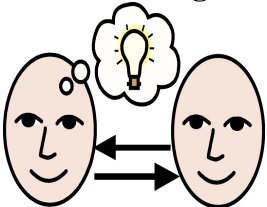
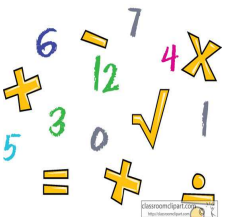
ORGANISATION	0.5		Many details are not in a logical or expected order. There is little sense that the writing is organised.	Some details are not in a logical or expected order, and this distracts the reader.	Details are placed in a logical order, but the way in which they are presented/ introduced sometimes makes the writing less interesting.	Details are placed in a logical order and the way they are presented effectively keeps the interest of the reader.	2
LANGUAGE/ GRAMMAR	0.5	The writer makes more than 5 errors in grammar or spelling that distracts the reader from the content.	The writer makes more than 4-5 errors in grammar or spelling that distracts the reader from the content.	The writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	The writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	The writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distracts the reader from the content.	2
TOTAL							20

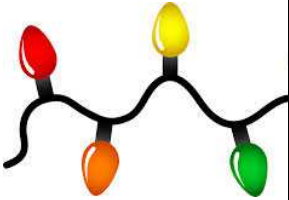

ASSIGNMENT RUBRICS

ACTIVITY 3 (10%)

NO	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	INDEX WEIGHT	POOR 0	AVERAGE 1	GOOD 2	EXCELLENT 3	MARKS (MAX)
		1	Sharing experience	2.5	No sharing experience provided	Demonstrates a minimal understanding (sharing experience) of myVLE and the focus used of myVLE	
2	Organization	0.5	The information appears to be disorganised.	Information is organised, but paragraphs are not well-constructed.	Information is organised with well-constructed paragraphs.	Information is very organised with well-constructed paragraphs. Well organised ideas that review the experiences.	1.5
NO	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	INDEX WEIGHT	POOR	EXCELLENT			
3	References	1	No reference(s) and citation(s) are given	Reference and citation are provided using correct APA style			1
TOTAL							10

ACTIVITY 4 (25%) Mind Mapping and Annotation

NO	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	INDEX	POOR	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	MARKS (MAX)
		WEIGHT	1	2	3	4	
	<p>MIND MAPPING</p> <p>Understanding</p> 	1.5	<p>Bare minimum of content covered</p> <p>No extension of ideas evident</p>	<p>Shows a basic level of coverage of key ideas only</p> <p>Attempts extension of a few ideas</p>	<p>Shows a solid grasp of most of the content</p> <p>Shows extensions of most key ideas</p>	<p>Shows a solid grasp of all the content covered</p> <p>Extensions of the key ideas show a deep understanding of the content</p>	6
	<p>Use of images/symbols</p> 	0.75	<p>The mind map includes a few images</p>	<p>A few categories are enhanced with simple symbols or diagrams</p>	<p>Some categories are enhanced with simple symbols or diagrams</p>	<p>Most categories are enhanced with simple symbols or diagrams</p>	3

<p>Use of colour</p> 	<p>0.75</p>	<p>Has failed to include colour in the mind map</p>	<p>Has used very little colour in the mind map and has not used colour to categorise throughout the mind map</p>	<p>Has included colour to demonstrate some connections and/or to categorise topics throughout the mind map</p>	<p>Has included colour to show all connections and/or to categorise topics throughout the mind map</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Neatness and Presentation</p> 	<p>0.75</p>	<p>The mind map was not neat enough to understand</p>	<p>The mind map was not neat enough to understand most concepts</p>	<p>The mind map was well presented and all the information is easy to understand</p>	<p>The mind map was well presented and all the information is easy to understand</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Annotation</p>	<p>2.5</p>	<p>Annotated text is not submitted on time</p>	<p>Text is not consistently marked throughout. Random passages appear to be marked; passages selected often have no real significance. Annotated passages may be very long or very short. Annotations include</p>	<p>Text is marked throughout. Longer passages (entire sentences/entire paragraphs) are the primary element annotated. Commentary and notations in margins appear less frequently or</p>	<p>Text is marked throughout. Words and phrases are marked, and commentary and notations appear in the margins that indicate a response to the words and phrases marked.</p>	<p>10</p>

				<p>little/no marginalia or marginalia that is characterised by plot level questions or simplistic summary. Annotations include little/no attempt to identify themes/purpose of text.</p> <p>Annotations include little/no recognition of unfamiliar vocabulary. Annotations do not reflect careful reading of the text; annotations do not reflect interaction between the reader and the text.</p>	<p>do not respond directly to the passage annotated. Marginalia may be primarily summary or paraphrased statement with some attempt at analysis. Annotations may not accurately identify purpose or themes of text.</p> <p>Reader may have identified unfamiliar vocabulary but did not attempt to define the words.</p>	<p>Marginalia (comments in the margin) reflect application of literary terms, questioning, summarising, and analysis.</p> <p>Annotations accurately identify purpose and themes of the work.</p> <p>Reader has identified unfamiliar vocabulary and attempted to define those words.</p>	
TOTAL							25

ACTIVITY 5 (25%)

CATEGORY	WEIGHT	0	LOW 1	ABOVE AVERAGE 2	AVERAGE 3	EXCELLENT 4	TOTAL
INTRODUCTION	1	No introduction	There is no clear introduction to the main topic or structure of the paper.	The introduction states the main topic, but does not adequately preview the structure of the paper nor is it particularly inviting to the reader.	The introduction clearly states the main topic and previews the structure of the paper, but is not particularly inviting to the reader.	The introduction is inviting, states the main topic and previews the structure of the paper.	4
CONTENT	3	The main idea is not mentioned.	The main idea is not clear. There is a seemingly random collection of information.	The main idea is somewhat clear, but there is a need for more supporting information.	The main idea is clear but the supporting information is general.	There is one clear, well-focused topic. Main idea stands out and is supported by detailed information.	12
CONCLUSION	1	No conclusion.	There is no clear conclusion, the paper just ends.	The conclusion is recognizable, but does not tie up several loose ends.	The conclusion is recognisable and ties up almost all the loose ends.	The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader with a feeling that they understand what the writer is "getting at."	4
ORGANISATION	0.75		Many details are not in a logical or expected order. There is little sense that the writing is organised.	Some details are not in a logical or expected order, and this distracts the reader.	Details are placed in a logical order, but the way in which they are presented/ introduced sometimes makes the writing less interesting.	Details are placed in a logical order and the way they are presented effectively keeps the interest of the reader.	3

LANGUAGE/ GRAMMAR	0.5	The writer makes more than 5 errors in grammar or spelling that distracts the reader from the content.	The writer makes more than 4-5 errors in grammar or spelling that distracts the reader from the content.	The writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	The writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	The writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distracts the reader from the content.	2
TOTAL							25