

# SUPERVISED STUDY: THE POWER OF PEERS IN SUPPORTING STUDENT TRANSITION

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The transition to university life presents many challenges for first-year students, including adapting to new academic demands, navigating social integration, and fostering a sense of belonging within the university community (Perander et al., 2021). Supervised Study, a peer-led initiative, addresses these challenges by creating a supportive, student-centred environment that leverages the power of peer interactions. Held during scheduled classes, it promotes active participation and reflection, aiming to enhance students' academic and personal development through collaborative learning and continuous self-assessment.

Unlike traditional classes where attendance cannot be formally graded, Supervised Study incentivizes participation by requiring students to engage in activities accessible only during the sessions. These activities are integral to the completion of their weekly contributions to an e-portfolio, a hurdle task required to pass the unit. The e-portfolio is structured to guide students in documenting and reflecting on their learning experiences. Students provide evidence of their competency by detailing the work they have undertaken during the semester. Suggestions for potential evidence sources are provided, assisting students in identifying appropriate artifacts that demonstrate their learning. Students are also required to reflect on their learning process, articulating the challenges faced and strategies employed to overcome them. This reflective practice encourages students to critically analyse how each learning outcome relates to their degree program and prospective career paths, thereby contextualizing their academic achievements within a broader professional framework (Chaffey et al., 2012).

An important feature of the Supervised Study program is the inclusion of disposition and confidence reflections at three strategic points during the semester. These reflections prompt students to assess their academic dispositions and self-confidence, facilitating goal setting and progress monitoring. By reflecting on their past learning experiences and confidence levels, students gain insights into their learning preferences and identify effective strategies, enhancing their ability to succeed in future academic endeavours (Álvarez-Huerta et al., 2022). Additionally, the peer-led nature of Supervised Study plays a crucial role in its effectiveness. Third and fourth-year students, who serve as mentors, lead discussions on assessment tasks and learning reflections. Their proximity in age and experience makes them relatable, bridging the gap between new students and faculty. This peer support system not only provides academic assistance but also fosters a sense of community and belonging among participants. The structured yet flexible framework of the e-portfolio, combined with ongoing reflective practices, equips students with the skills necessary for academic success and personal development.

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