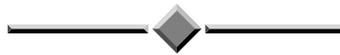




STUDY SKILLS: HOW TO BECOME AN ACTIVE LEARNER

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WHAT ARE STUDY SKILLS?

They are skills associated with acquiring, recording, organizing, synthesizing, remembering, and using information and ideas.

Study Skills are the **Key to Independent Learning** and they help students gain and use information effectively.

Study Skills can be divided into **three areas**:

1) **Personal Development Skills** - Personal discipline, management and organizational skills, self-monitoring and reinforcement, and a positive attitude toward studying

2) **Process Skills** - Technical methods of studying such as note taking, outlining, learning information from a text, and library reference skills.

3) **Expression Skills** - Retrieval skills, test-taking skills, and using oral and/or written expression to demonstrate meaning.

Ellis, 1985



STUDENTS WHO HAVE A LEARNING DIFFERENCE

Students with **Different Learning Styles** may have difficulty perceiving information presented visually or auditorily. Although their eyes and ears may have picked up visual and auditory information accurately, there may be a problem with how that information is processed once it is seen or heard. Depending on how much information is given at once, or the speed at which it is presented, there may be learning gaps.

Materials can be adapted to accommodate different learning styles.

LEARNING DIFFERENCE, NOT DISABILITY!!!



ORGANIZATION & TIME MANAGEMENT THE REFRIGERATOR METHOD: HOW TO SET UP YOUR NOTEBOOK

Too often, a student will receive an “F” because of a lost homework assignment. Somewhere the paper was misplaced or thrown away. **DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU!!** The key is to **ORGANIZE!!**

You will place **ALL** of your subject classroom notes, worksheets, study guides, and homework in **ONE** notebook. This notebook is the **REFRIGERATOR**. The papers you place in it are the “**FOOD**.” When you take a paper out of the “refrigerator,” you must put it back in when you are done using it, or that paper will **SPOIL!** You must also put that paper back in the right place in your refrigerator, or you will not be able to find it.

Just like food that becomes spoiled over time and needs to be thrown away, old papers need to be removed from the notebook. If they will be needed for a mid-term or final exam, they should be placed in a file under the subject and ready for review at a later time.

To save time when trying to find material in the notebook, **color** coding each subject will reduce confusion. You can match up a book cover, spiral notebook, and folder with the same color for a particular subject.

The top of your refrigerator will contain:

- **an assignment book (list daily & long-term)**
- **pencil / pen case**
- **class schedule**

The next section of your refrigerator will contain your:

- **subject areas by color**
- **blank paper or spiral notebooks for classroom notes**
- **file pockets to keep worksheets and current homework assignments**



ORGANIZATION & TIME MANAGEMENT: HOW TO SURVIVE HOMEWORK

- 1) **USE YOUR PLANNER TO WRITE DOWN ASSIGNMENTS AS YOUR TEACHERS ASSIGN THEM.** If you think you have missed writing down an assignment, check with one of your classmates or your teacher for clarification. If your school has an online web site, check your teachers' page daily. Don't forget to bring home the books you will need to use to complete your homework.
- 2) **KEEP YOUR LOCKER AREA ORGANIZED.** Try color-coding books and notebooks so they will be easier to locate. Also you can try to turn your locker into a "hotel room." Your book bag / backpack is your "suitcase." Keep it on the bottom of the locker, open. Every time you return to the locker "hotel room," drop the books and notebooks directly into the book bag, "luggage." When you leave school for the day, everything is already in your book bag. Just pick it up and leave.
- 3) Use a **REGULAR STUDY AREA.** This will become the place that you will get the majority of your work completed. When you enter this area, you will feel like getting down to business! **SIT UP AT A DESK OR TABLE!** You will fall asleep on a bed or a couch!! **HAVE GOOD LIGHTING,** the room should not be too dark. The light should not be too harsh, as that could cause a glare on pages as you read them. **AVOID NOISE!!** The research is in... **SILENCE IS BEST FOR LEARNING.**
- 4) **ORGANIZE YOUR BOOKS AND NOTES WHEN YOU FINISH STUDYING AND PACK THEM IN YOUR BOOKBAG,** then you will be ready the next morning to take everything you need for school.
- 5) Have a **REGULAR STUDY TIME.** Make sure that you schedule your homework first. Homework should not be done too late in the evening, or you will become too tired to concentrate!! Set reasonable time periods to complete work proficiently. If you rush to get everything done, most likely your work will be incomplete.
- 6) **STUDY EASY SUBJECTS FIRST** - get them out of the way quickly. It is motivating to "check them off" as you complete them. Next, tackle those subjects, which are more time consuming. If you find that you are too tired to

finish your work, stop and go to bed. Get up earlier the next day and continue when you are alert.

- 7) **AVOID MARATHON SESSIONS.** Don't wait until the last minute to study for a test or to write a paper!! Rushing leads to mistakes and lower grades!
PROVIDE SHORT BREAKS THROUGHOUT THE STUDY PERIOD. Let yourself have five minutes to rest and clear your head. But don't be greedy; too many breaks can ruin concentration!! If you don't trust yourself to stay focused, then sit near an **authority figure** (mother, father, grandparent etc.) that will act as a "prison guard" and make sure you are working.
- 8) **REVIEW EACH OF YOUR SUBJECTS SEVERAL TIMES EACH WEEK.** You want to learn material for a test over time, not crammed into one long night. Every evening, when you have completed your homework, spend some additional time to review class materials and to preview upcoming topics. Schedule time every weekend for additional review.
- 9) Try studying with a partner or in a study group. Share notes and test each other on important content. **BUT, DON'T FOOL AROUND, BE SERIOUS!!**

REMEMBER, COMPLETING HOMEWORK IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!!



READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

Students who study from textbooks often make statements like this:
"I read the chapter three times, but I still failed the test!"

How to Read and Outline Nonfiction Textbook Pages

Pretend that you are an editor, and that you have been told to condense an entire textbook into a few pages of notes. This is how a student can read, learn, memorize, and prepare for an upcoming test.

Remember, the night before the big test, it will be easier to study from a few pages of notes rather than read the entire textbook chapter over again!!!

Students need to learn how to “pull important information out” of a textbook. They must first learn how to **PREVIEW** materials to be read. Previewing enables students to **READ** with a **PURPOSE**, because they can **ANTICIPATE IDEAS** in the chapter. This helps to build curiosity and interest. Perhaps, the students can relate the text material to personal experience. Previewing helps the students to really know the book, to “see” it in their minds. There are many previewing strategies to choose from, including:

TELLS FACT OR FICTION

TELLS is an advance organizer. It serves to focus students prior to reading.

T - Study story or chapter section titles and subtitles.

E - Examine and skim pages to discover what the story or chapter is about.

L - Look for important charts, pictures, and graphs.

L - Look for important words (usually in boldface)

S - Think about the setting of the story.

After students have **PREVIEWED** the reading assignment, they are ready to begin the actual **READING PROCESS**.

MAKE READING INTERACTIVE! AVOID SKIMMING!

Only a few reading programs show students how to pinpoint the main idea and the supporting details from every paragraph. The reader is trained to find the **topic sentence (main idea)** in a paragraph. However, the topic sentence may not be easy to locate; it could be in the beginning, the middle, or the end of the paragraph. Sometimes, there is no complete topic sentence in the paragraph.

Therefore the student can begin looking for “**topic words.**” These are the main ideas in the paragraph. Usually, they come under four types of words:

- Names of famous people
- Places they lived
- Events that took place
- Terms which are unique to the subject.

Next, the student learns how to find the **important supporting facts** in the paragraph. This can be done by locating “**signal words.**” They are usually called transitional words. These words are usually found at the beginning of sentences, or are the words joining main and subordinate clauses in compound or complex sentences.

CREATE AN INTERACTIVE OUTLINE AS YOU READ

When students are reading textbooks in non-fiction subjects like science and social studies, they should photocopy those pages currently being read in class. Then, the student can **outline** the content as they are reading. They will **box in the topic sentence**. They can **circle each signal word**. They can **underline key facts**. This strategy enables students to be **ACTIVELY ENGAGED** in the reading activity. This type of outlining reduces the chance that students will skim the content on a page. Now, they are forced to really pay attention to the content. Students will be better able to **HIGHLIGHT** the **IMPORTANT SUPPORTING FACTS** they will need to remember for a test or paper assignment. When students begin using this strategy, they will most likely underline too much of the content. Over time, they will begin to realize which facts are the most important to remember.

Most pupils use highlighter pens for this task. However, they begin to highlight too much information. They will even use many different colors. While the book may look pretty, it does not reveal the most important points of the content. Instead, the **underlining should be done lightly in pencil**. This will allow the students to erase information they realize may not be important content.

If the textbook pages have large blank margins, the students may also want to write out simple charts or terms that could assist them as they reread the pages.

While the students continue reading and highlighting the text, they should begin to **CREATE AN INTERACTIVE OUTLINE** of the textbook pages. The outline can be written on **lined paper, typed onto a computer, or written on a series of index cards**. This type of outlining takes time to learn how to do properly. In the beginning, students will write the text material word for word. After a time, they will begin to list only the skeletal facts needed to review later on. They will use the paragraph **topic sentences, topic words, signal words, and key facts** to form the outline.

The student-made outline helps to make studying for a test easier and less frustrating. The students no longer have to re-read the entire text word by word. Instead, they may read their own edited version of the textbook. **Remember, the textbook should always be used in studying**. When students are using their own outline, **they should still have the textbook open next to them, in order to check for important graphics and chapter review questions**.

The students must remember to study the textbook via the outline everyday, including weekends and holidays. If they wait until the night before the text, there will not be enough time for the adequate review and memorization of content.

So, as you can see, the students are actually editing - condensing down the textbook into a more manageable study project.

THE READING COMPREHENSION PROCESS

LARGE



SMALLER



SMALLER



SMALLER



SMALLER



SMALLER



SMALLER



SMALLEST

1) **PREVIEW** textbook pages. Check pictures, graphs, and charts.

2) **READ / EDIT** textbook pages.

3) **WRITE** your **OUTLINE**.

4) **Re-READ** textbook.
Re-READ outline.

5) **EDIT** your outline.

6) Make up **INDEX CARDS** from your edits in your outline.

7) **REVIEW** your outline, index cards, and book.



STAYING ATTENTIVE IN CLASS NOTE-TAKING STRATEGIES

Note-taking is the act of recording information. It is a skill that every student will use throughout his or her life.

**Students will often say: "I can't keep up with the teacher!"
"I can't understand my own notes!"**

Why does this happen? Because note-taking is hard to do!

Note-Taking is the INTEGRATION OF

- **LISTENING**
- **INTERPRETING**
- **SEQUENCING**
- **RECORDING**

MEMORY IS NOT ENOUGH! YOU MUST BE AN ACTIVE LEARNER!

WHAT TO DO IN CLASS

1) COMPLETE OUTSIDE ASSIGNMENTS - Keep up with the reading. You will comprehend better with **PRIOR KNOWLEDGE** of the topics. Try to prepare questions you think the teacher may be interested in asking the class. This is **ACTIVE LEARNING. THE STUDENT IS INVOLVED!**

2) BRING THE MATERIALS you need: notebook, writing utensils, eraser, tape recorder, laptop computer etc.

3) SIT FRONT AND CENTER - AWAY FROM doors, windows, noisy heating vents, annoying students, **ANYTHING THAT COULD DISTRACT YOU!** Also, you can see the blackboard / whiteboard better when sitting up front.

4) KEEP EYE CONTACT WITH YOUR TEACHER - It is hard to fall asleep when you are right nearby the teacher. **PARTICIPATE!** Teachers are human beings too. They have feelings. They appreciate students who are interested in the material. Good student behavior can be very important at report card time!

5) GET TO KNOW YOUR TEACHER - Imagine that the lecture is a personal talk just to you. **PAY ATTENTION** to the teacher's body language. If he or she feels that something is important, they may become more excited. They may repeat the information and write it on the board.

WHATEVER THE TEACHER FINDS IMPORTANT, THE STUDENT SHOULD FIND IMPORTANT!

6) TRY TO BE AWARE OF THE CLASS ATTITUDE - Check to see if there are other students who find certain topics to be more important. Look to see when students are writing down notes as the teacher is speaking. A student will be more competitive if he or she is alert to their peers.

7) POSTPONE DEBATE - When you hear something that you disagree with, note it, and let it go. Don't allow your mind to wander. At the end of the class, ask the teacher your question, or ask it if there is a break in the teaching that allows for questions.

8) RELATE WHAT YOU LEARN IN CLASS TO YOUR TEXTBOOK. LOOK FOR AN OVERLAP OF CONTENT.

9) LISTEN FOR INTRODUCTORY, CONCLUDING, OR TRANSITIONAL WORDS during the lecture. They will let you know when the teacher is starting something new.

WRITING YOUR NOTES

1) USE THE CORNELL FORMAT - Use the margin or one third of your paper for topic headings and reference to corresponding textbook pages. Use the rest of the page for the lecture notes you take in class.

2) WRITE THE NOTES LIKE AN OUTLINE - It will be too difficult and take too long to write the lecture word for word. A tape recorder can be used, but it will mean listening to the entire lecture over again. The tape could become as frustrating as the actual lecture!

USE ABBREVIATIONS IF POSSIBLE! USE KEY WORDS from the textbook, handouts, and earlier lectures. This is **WHY** it is so important to **PRE-READ MATERIAL BEFORE CLASS!!**

MAKE UP YOUR OWN PICTURES AND DIAGRAMS ON THE LECTURE NOTES YOU WRITE ON THE PAGE CAN HELP YOU UNDERSTAND DIFFICULT CONCEPTS.

IF THE TEACHER IS EXCITED ABOUT SOMETHING OR SAYS “THIS IS IMPORTANT!” PICK OUT A SYMBOL TO REMIND YOURSELF:

! * #

IF YOU WANT TO REMIND YOURSELF THAT CERTAIN INFORMATION COMES FROM THE TEXTBOOK, WRITE A LETTER “T”

IF YOU ARE CONFUSED, OR YOUR MIND BEGINS TO WANDER AND YOU MISS NOTES, LEAVE SPACE ON THE PAGE AND GET THE NOTES LATER.

- REMEMBER: USE A PENCIL SO YOU CAN ERASE MISTAKES.
- USE A LAPTOP IF IT CAN HELP YOU PICK UP SPEED.
- DATE YOUR NOTES SO YOU CAN FIND THEM MORE EASILY IN YOUR NOTEBOOK.

REVIEW YOUR LECTURE NOTES

Review the lectures **THAT NIGHT!** Review them again **EVERY COUPLE OF DAYS!** If you wait too long, you may no longer understand the material. Also, when you review, you will hopefully realize if anything is missing or confusing. **REVIEWING HELPS YOU IMPROVE YOUR LECTURE NOTES.**

Go to a **STUDY PARTNER OR STUDY GROUP FROM WHICH YOU CAN GET NOTES IF YOU ARE SICK AND MISS CLASS.**

**** SUGGESTION**** To improve your note-taking skills, practice taking notes while you watch a television news program. Write the notes down during the program and edit them during the commercial. Then go back and re-watch the program. Decide if your notes adequately match the content.

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