Study Smart

Strategies for Success
Academic Success

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Learning is Misunderstood

• Assumptions
  • Should be fast and simple
  • Being good at something takes talent
  • A person can be good at multitasking when studying or in class
  • Fluency and familiarity are equivalent to mastery and long-term retention
  • Failure is bad
Learning is Misunderstood

• Instead:
  • There are illusions of knowing
  • Over-confidence: Self-awareness and self-regulation is often less than realized
  • Students might be aware of, but do not understand, how cognitive processes work together for information retention
Use Your Time Wisely

- Schedule time in your planner to study
  - 30-60 minutes each day per class
  - Longer periods of time a few nights before big exams
- Stick to that schedule
  - Turn off phone
  - Close personal websites
- Identify specific goals before that time
  - Review notes
  - Study vocab flashcards
Take Purposeful Notes

- Be conscious of your note-taking
- It’s easy to write things down without processing
- Make your notes complete so when you return to them you don’t have questions
- Don’t just rely on PowerPoint slides
- Avoid highlighting
- **TAKE NOTES IN YOUR OWN WORDS!**
  - Write down thoughts you have while reading or listening to lecture
  - Write down questions you have and listen for the answers or ask
Take advantage of your resources

• Instructors
  • Visit their office hours
  • Discuss the material with them
• Tutor Center & Writing Center
• Other students in your course may be able to help explain something in another way
Be Realistic

- Recognize optimal study times
- Don’t schedule 5 continuous hours of study time
- Review daily to avoid all-nighters
- Give yourself breaks during long periods
  - 5-10 minutes for every 20-30 minutes
Choose a Good Location

• Distraction-free
  • Close personal websites
  • Turn off your phone or leave it in another room
  • Turn off the TV, etc.

• Adequate space
  • Desk or table where you can spread out all necessary materials
Retrieval Practice and Forced Recall

• Practice remembering what you are trying to learn in multiple ways
• Pull the information from memory in your own words
• The more times you practice from memory, the longer you will retain the information
• Can take many forms
Prepare a Study Guide – Test Yourself

- Write questions based on lecture and your notes
- Write a question on one side of the page or flashcard and the answer on the other side
- Break complex topics into simple questions
- Cover the answer and try to answer from memory
- Quiz yourself a few times a week
Keep Your Notes/Flashcards with You

- Take advantage of free time
- Time between classes
- If class gets out early or is cancelled
- If you’re waiting for the doctor, an oil change, etc.
Group Study Sessions

- Each person identifies main points and create a study guide pre-meeting
- Discuss main points as a group and identify common points
- Compile one study guide
- Take turns quizzing each other – answer in your own words, **force recall**
- Explain topics to each other when one person doesn’t know the answer
Beware of familiarity

• Something might look familiar, so you stop practicing recall for the topic
• Familiarity is often mistaken for recall.
• Example of this when studying flashcards you look at the answer and tell yourself “Oh yeah, I knew that.”
• You definitely didn’t know it.
Spacing while studying

• This is why cramming doesn’t work
• Allows for consolidation
  • Happens during sleep
• Allows for forgetting – which is good, because you get to practice recall again!
Interleaving and difficulty

• Mixing up topics as a form of spacing
• Practicing different skills for a topic in shorter segments can help you discriminate problem solving techniques later
• All of these practices come together in a desirably difficult way
• When studying requires a considerable amount of effort, you will improve long-term performance
Reward Yourself

• Give yourself an appropriate award
• After you complete studying, watch a favorite show, take a bubble bath, play a game, etc.
• If you get an A on an exam, get your nails done, go to a movie, go to a sporting event etc.
• Retrieval Practice/Forced Recall
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pjrqc6UMDKM
• Effective Flashcards
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzCEJvTED0U