

# Study Skills/Notetaking

**Study skills are a crucial part to college life in the fact that they take place in preparation for a test, exam, quiz, etc. Think of it as an athlete training leading up to a big game. There are many different ways to study but here is an overview of some potential options and tips taken from different resources.**

## Awareness

- The biggest factor in studying is self-discipline. No matter how intelligent someone is, they will never succeed unless they commit to their work. No one ever excelled at a craft without putting in ample amount of effort.
- Awareness is key in knowing what works best for you. Tailor your study habits to what best suits your character. Remember however that if your characters enjoys loud parties and television constantly on, that doesn't always mean those are the necessarily best environments to study in.
  - o Know where you can study best (it doesn't always have to be the library but somewhere comfortable that you know you can get work done and not be interrupted constantly.
  - o Can you attribute your strengths to study better?
- Be aware of the things that distract you most and try to avoid them

## In Class

- There are three things to balance to occupy your time during class:
  1. Taking notes
  2. Reflecting and just thinking and attempting to understand the content
  3. Asking questions of peers and professors.

These things come with being attentive in class! Try to get eight hours of sleep a night or you may not be fully functioning at your greatest intellectual potential for the following day. Falling asleep/zoning out in class doesn't merit anything learned!

## The 10 Study Habits of Successful Students

1. Try not to do too much studying at one time.
  - The brain can only take so much. Overkill is not good. Take breaks as needed.
2. Plan specific times for studying (comes in with time management).
  - Do you what works best for you. If you're not a morning person, don't study in the morning. Find the times where you can be most productive and go off that.
3. Try to study the same times each day.
4. Set specific goals for their study times.
  - One could say, "I plan to read the first half of this chapter during this study time."
5. Start studying when planned.
6. Work on the assignment one finds most difficult first.
  - This will be good to get a difficult assignment out of the way.
7. Review notes before beginning an assignment.
8. Tell friends to not call/text during study times.
9. Call another student when there is a difficult assignment.
  - Nothing wrong with asking for help!
10. Review school work over the weekend.
  - It may not be fun, but well worth it to keep the brain fresh.

## Some other helpful tips

- Start out by studying the most general information. Big concepts must be understood first in order to under more specific concepts.

- Take short breaks frequently – if one studies straight three hours there is a good chance that the late times of studying won't be retained as well as the information from the beginning of the session.
- DON'T JUST READ THE MATERIAL – UNDERSTAND IT
  - o A lot easier said than done. So many people read what is required of them but don't really read it—they just look at it. Take more time as needed to read and understand the material, and break it up if it will take a long time.
- When studying in a group, only study with those who are serious about their education.
- Take advantage of testing yourself. A lot of textbooks have summary sections and review questions at the end of the chapters.
- Don't study later than you usually go to sleep, you may be tempted to sleep and not get done what you wanted to. Also, don't study in your bed at any time because the body relates a bed with sleep. One may become tired and/or sleepy.
- TEXTING IS NOT THE BEST IDEA DURING STUDYING. Something I do is reward myself every fifteen minutes or so which checking my texts. Other rewards can be used as well.

## Note taking

There are many different ways of taking notes, but here is one example: (Janina Jolley, 2011 personal communication)

1. When studying/reading find all the MAJOR CONCEPTS
  - a. Big headings in text books, etc.
2. Once the major concepts are found, find the sub concepts within them
  - a. Highlighted terms, little sections within the big sections, etc.
3. Find the specific information within the sub concepts and record them

### Other Tips on Note Taking

- Date/title each set of notes
- Don't crowd your notes – leave blanks to fill gaps if you think you missed anything or plan to write more later
- Too much is better than not enough
- Write notes in your own words when possible
- Record definitions and terms exactly as given
- When a professor uses PowerPoint and says the slideshow will be online, you don't need to copy down the whole presentation. Just the important things and things that the professor says that aren't on the PowerPoint. This way you can focus on what is being taught instead of scrambling to write things down.
- Pay attention to lists
- Underline or star points that are emphasized
- Use abbreviations and symbols to save time

### References

<http://www.testtakingtips.com/study/index.htm>

<http://www.how-to-study.com/study-skills/en/study-habits-of-successful-students.asp>

Study Skill handout you gave me. Section on Taking Notes

Personal Communication from a professor I had at Clarion University – Dr. Janina Jolley's way of taking notes