Effective study habits

Many students enroll in college classes without realizing the amount of study time that is expected. On average, students should expect to spend two to three hours outside of class for every hour spent in class. This means for every 3-unit class a student should expect to spend six to nine hours per week studying outside of class.

Students with learning disabilities and those whose knowledge of English is limited should expect to study longer. Students who work or have families should consider the time element when deciding how many courses to take.

A study schedule helps many students plan their time efficiently. Most students learn best if they study several subjects for short periods each day rather than studying one subject for several hours.

Distributing your learning across the week is the most successful method of learning and retention. During study time it is important to have a quiet, well-lighted place, free from distractions. The library is often a good place to study.

Efficient reading skills

Most college students would like to read more, in less time, and with increased understanding. Often students who seek a tutor really need a reading coach. Many tutors are themselves efficient readers, but they may not know how to explain reading techniques to other students.

The “SQ4R Method for Reading and Studying” developed in 1941 by Francis Robinson and “The Soprano Study Reading Technique” are two successful strategies for effective reading and note-taking.

In college reading, you are expected to understand the material and also to recall it, evaluate it and compare it with other material on the same subject. College reading is challenging. Most students find they are expected to do more reading than ever before and that most of the reading is difficult. These are 10 strategies that can make college reading more efficient:

- Describe the purpose for reading
- Make sure you have the necessary background
- Highlight the main points
- React to the message
- Learn the new vocabulary
- Write exam questions.
• Estimate the time needed for study
• Compare information with other information
• Apply this information to the world you know (make it meaningful)
• Review

**Efficient note-taking skills**

Effective note-taking begins with effective listening. Effective listening in the classroom is just as important as reading the textbook. Many Instructors present material in class that is not covered in the book. Also, most Instructors emphasize in class the important concepts that will appear on tests.

Effective listening begins before the class begins. An effective listener has the necessary books and materials before the first class. Effective listeners read outside assignments and complete homework before each class. They often come to class with reading notes, which they expand during the lecture.

Efficient note takers are prepared to hear and write down the main ideas of a lecture. They recognize the main ideas because they have been covered in the reading or because they are emphasized by the instructor.

Even the best note-takers occasionally have moments when they miss explanations or misunderstand concepts. Their notes may be incomplete or confusing. The first suggestion is to review your notes within 24 hours or lose 80% of the content. Another solution would be to meet immediately after class with a group of other students to compare notes and fill in missing parts.

**Productive study groups**

A study group can improve your memory because the group will always remember more than one person can. Most study groups meet immediately after class or later the same day to complete notes, ask questions, and discuss the lecture. Assignments and homework are also discussed and sometimes worked on together. Group members explain difficult concepts to each other until everyone understands. The person who does the explaining often benefits even more than the person who receives the information – just like in tutoring sessions!