

**Learning To Learn**

*Learning is a very personal matter. There isn’t one study/learning skill or strategy that works for every person in every situation. Therefore, learning to learn strategies are about learning what you know, learning what you don’t know, and knowing what to do about it****.*** *By building a large repertoire of strategies you will be able to select the best ones to complete your tasks.*

The study/learning strategies you “own” will

* enable you to take more responsibility for your own learning.
* allow you to spend your time effectively and stay on task.
* help you select the best approach(s) for each assignment/task.
* provide you with the knowledge and skills you need to begin, follow-through, and complete assignments.
* present you with access to a variety of content and reference materials.
* give you the confidence to know when and who to ask for help.

1. **Know Yourself**

**What works for you?** Begin by honestly determining your strengths and weaknesses in basic college skills—reading, writing, listening, and mathematics—and study/work habits such as organization, time management, concentration, and note taking.

**How do you learn the best!** Identify your learning style preferences. Many factors affect learning. Do you learn most effectively by reading, by watching, by listening, or by doing? You must also become familiar with your instructors’ teaching styles to help you adapt your learning style to the best advantage.

**Are you an “owl” or a “lark”?** In addition, consider when and where you are at your best for learning. For example, are you a morning person (a lark) or a night owl? Do you concentrate best in a bright room with noise or in a cozy, quiet corner? **If you’re not sure about your strengths and style, come to the Academic Success Center for an easy and fun way to find out!**

1. **Manage Your Time and Your Life**

**What are your goals?** The first step in learning to manage your time—controlling your own life— is to identify what your goals are and then to establish priorities to help you reach them. Analyze how you are using your time. If you aren’t spending time on what is most important, you must make the necessary adjustments or you won’t reach your goals. If school, learning, and good grades are a priority, then you must make and follow a schedule that gives a significant amount of time to class and study.

**For more specific ideas see the *Managing Your Time Effectively* Tip Sheet.**

**3. Improve Your Concentration**

**Do you use your time effectively?** As a good student you will not necessarily study more than a poor student, but you will definitely use your study time more effectively. Learn to keep your attention focused on the task at hand—concentrate. When you are in class or ready to study, give it your full attention. And remember, how well you learn something, not how fast you learn it, is the critical factor in remembering. You must “get” something before you can “forget” it. **For more specific ideas see the *Improving Your Memory* Tip Sheet.**

**4. Know What *Study* Means and How to Do It**

Learning takes more than just going to class and doing homework. It is a cycle built on the **PlanDoReview** reading and study strategy:

**Preview** **Class**  **Review**  **Study**

When you establish a learning cycle routine you will be able to learn more in less time with less stress.

**5. Develop a Thinker’s Vocabulary**

English is the richest language on earth. Each word is a symbol that represents an idea or object. Your ability to understand the meaning of the words others use and to select the right one(s) to communicate your ideas, information, and feelings is very important to effective learning. To develop a thinker’s vocabulary you must become sensitive to words, develop strategies for unlocking the meanings of new words, and a process for remembering the new words and their meanings. **For more specific ideas see the *Improving Vocabulary* Tip Sheet.**

**6. Be an Active Reader**

Did you ever fall asleep while playing tennis or watching your favorite television show? Probably not. How about when you are reading? Probably so. What makes the difference? If you are actively involved, physically and mentally, you stay interested and committed. When you become uninvolved, you rapidly lose interest and drift away. To learn from study-reading material, you must be an active, thinking participant in the process, not a passive bystander. Always preview the reading and make sure you have a specific purpose for each assignment. Read actively to fulfill your purpose and answer questions about the material. Keep involved by giving yourself frequent tests over what you’ve read. And, always review. **For more ideas, see the *An Effective Textbook Study Strategy* Tip Sheet.**

**7. Be an Active Writer**

Writing that accurately expresses your ideas demands not only writing skill but focused attention, critical thinking and active involvement. Only if you become actively involved in the writing process will you be able to communicate your ideas clearly. Your writing must have a purpose, a thesis, organized development of your idea with major and minor supporting details, and a logical conclusion. **For more specific ideas, see the *Process of Writing* Tip Sheet.**

**8. Build Listening and Note taking Skills**

Accurately listening to a lecture and deciding what is important are two skills that must be mastered before you worry about how to write the information in your notes. Again, being an active rather than a passive participant is the key to your success. Taking good notes demands that you prepare for class, be an active listener, distinguish major from minor points, use a note taking system, participate in class, and review often. **For more specific ideas see the *Taking Good Notes in Lectures* Tip Sheet.**

**9. Know How to Study For & Take Exams**

Exams are your way to show a professor how much you’ve learned. Preparing for exams give you a better understanding of the material, lower your anxiety, and improve your scores. Study and review the material over a period of time using the night before as a final review, not a cram session. Pace yourself during the exam and go over your graded exam with your professor. **For more specific ideas the *Preparing For and Taking Exams* Tip Sheet.**

**10. Set Your Own Goals**

Your professors can only set the stage for you to learn. You must create your own goals and achieve them through your own action. By assessing what you know and deciding what you want to achieve, you will expand your capabilities and become a successful learner.