**Study Skills**

**Study Skills are essential for student success in high school. All students and their families should use the website:** <http://www.studygs.net/> **as a valuable resource in achieving academic success. This website provides a wealth of information from class room participation to reading and writing skills and research in 31 different languages.**

**Memory and Learning – Techniques & Strategies**

**Memory** involves **retaining** and **recalling** knowledge or experiences.  Memory greatly influences learning.   
  
**The 3 components of memory:**   
 **1) Sensory memory -** holds information for about 20-30 seconds, then it is lost unless it is stored in short-term memory  
 **2) Working memory -** also called **“short-term memory,”** holds information temporarily, about 1 minute  
 **3) Long-term memory -** involves permanent storage of information.   
  
The memory system is made of brain tissue, so memory performance is directly affected by the state of your brain. Poor health, fatigue, malnourishment, and substance use and abuse can all lead to poor, impaired memory performance.

***The mental and physical condition of a student   
is the "single most important factor"  
in memory performance***

**Attention** is the most important aspect of memory. The ability to pay attention is vital to memory because it is the process by which information is **moved** from **sensory memory** to **short-term memory**. The greater the **attention**, the greater the amount of information brought into short-term memory, and **retained** and **recalled** from **long-term memory**.  
   
**Attention Tips:**  
The attention span of most people is **20 to 30 minutes**.  Therefore, peak memory sessions occur in 20-30 minute spurts.  
**Switching** from one activity to another every 20 to 30 minutes avoids boredom and daydreaming.  
  
Consider the following example. A student has set aside three hours to study for an exam one night. The student plans this study schedule. Notice that different activities are in the plan.  
6:00-6:30       Review Chapter 1   
6:30-7:00       Go through flash cards for vocabulary terms   
7:00-7:30       Review Chapter 2   
7:30-8:00       Reward: Watch (30 min.)TV show, make a (<30 min.) phone call, eat a high-protein snack   
8:00-8:30       Review lecture notes   
8:30-9:00       Hi-lite/review main concepts   
9:00-9:30       Review Chapter 3   
  
One must maintain attention through **rehearsal** in order for information to be stored in long-term memory. Rehearsal involves working or doing something with new information to help it be learned.  
  
Attention involves **linking** new information to existing knowledge in order to make it more meaningful. Information is thus transferred from short-term to long-term memory.  To be remembered, new information must be stored in long-term memory.    
  
Here is a chart on learning and memory:  
Time From              Amount  
First Learning  Remembered  
After 1 day             54%  
After 7 days     35%  
After 14 days    21%      
  
Going to **sleep** immediately after studying improves remembering. For example, study a list of vocabulary words while lying in bed, then put the list down on your bedside table, and turn out the light.  
 **Relaxation** enhances memory by reducing stress and distractability.  
  
Keep a **positive attitude**. Attitudes about the content or teacher can either impair or enhance remembering because attitudes affect motivation and attention.   
 **Confidence** + **positive self-talk** (for example, "I am good at this." "I can learn this." "I will learn this.") **will help attention & memory.**   
  
Social distractions and social pressures diminish attention and memory.  

**MEMORY STRATEGIES**

**Note-taking**Note-taking helps focus one's attention on the new information, links it to previous information,andacts as memory triggers for recall from long-term memory later.  Note-taking is vital to long-term memory.  
  
Long-term memory strategies rely on three critical skills in order to retain information:   
1) Rewording -- putting the  information in one's own words  
2) Organizing  
3) Reducing the amount of material to be remembered.   
  
Do as much of the readings as you possibly can before class.  Having an outline prepared before a lecture will help you follow a lecture and free you from writing.  
  
Make a notation for key words and phrases.  Leave space to fill in unclear areas.

**\*\*Review class notes as soon as possible after class.  
Remember – even a 24-hour delay diminishes  
memory storage by nearly one-half.\*\***

Taking notes in class:  
  
Strive to understand the big picture of the lecture. Don't waste time writing down details that can be found in the book and copied later. Instead, write brief notes about the subject being discussed.   
  
Avoid writing in full sentences.   
  
When in doubt about the importance of a piece of information, write it down. Check its significance later against the required readings or with the teacher.   
  
Write on your own notebook paper. There is not enough space to take notes on outlines or handouts provided by the teacher.   
  
Don't by stingy with notebook paper. Skip lines or leave empty spaces for adding information, clarifying information, or writing questions.   
  
Be cautious when loaning your notes to another student. Give him/her a xerox copy instead. Lost notes are irreplaceable.   
  
  
**One is more likely to remember information when more senses are used.**   
 **Use as many learning styles as you can to retain and recall information:**  
Recite new information out loud and relate it to previous knowledge  
  
Rewrite notes to reduce and restructure  
  
Reread key points in texts  
  
Rearrange your study materials frequently to remind yourself what needs to be reviewed  
  
Talk to others about the material  
  
Look at relevant pictures, illustrations, tables, and charts again  
  
Use mnemonic devices (memory strategies) such as songs, poems, etc. also, use of initials or sentences to remember groups of information: Examples -  
ROY G BIV --- The Rainbow colors – Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet  
HOMES --- The Great Lakes – Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior  
MVEMJSUNP --- The Planets – Mars, Venus, Earth, Mercury, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto  
  
**Color Coding**  
Color coding helps visual learners especially.  Can use hi-liters, different colors of index cards, pen ink, etc.

**Index Cards**Index Cards are a great way to condense and reduce the amount of material to be studied.  Use both sides.  
  
They’re great for quizzing yourself and others.  They’re portable and you can pull them out anywhere to study.  You can leave a pile anywhere you are in the house, or put them in your bag to travel with them.  Repetition is the best way to move information into long-term memory and have it available for recall.  
 **Preparation**Preparation should become a part of every student's daily routine.  
  
Repetition of new information should become a part of every student's daily routine.

**READING STRATEGIES** will promote the retaining and recalling of material.  
  
Note-taking while reading improves attention and concentration, which in turn positively impacts registration of information in memory.  Note-taking makes reading a more active process.  
          
**PQRST Technique**This technique increases personal involvement in the reading material, which enhances retention.  
**Preview** the assignment. Be certain of the assignment.  Scan headings and objectives.  
Ask **questions** as you preview.  Look over the questions at the end of the chapter.  
**Read** the chapter to absorb the material.  Take notes of key points to condense the amount of info.  
**Study** your notes and hi-lite.   
**Test** yourself.  
  
 **PQ3R Technique  
Preview  
Question  
Read  
Review   
Recite**