Academic Skills

Habit 3: Put First Things First
Put First Things First Academic Skills

- Intentional Time/Priority Management
- Active Reading
- Effective Note-Taking
- Practical Study Skills
- Test Taking Strategies
- This is Your Success
At it’s most basic.......
Active Reading in College

- Different Types
  - Articles
  - Textbooks
  - Studies
- Large Amounts
- Challenging topics, language, and style

- Treat the assignment seriously
- Organize assignments by size, importance, and date of completion
- Set a definite time and place to read
- Set a purpose for reading
- Set reading goals
Reading in Disciplines

- **Math**
  - Read instructions before attempting problems

- **Literature**
  - Details matter; may need to be read more than once

- **Languages**
  - The goal is to improve comprehension

- **Sciences**
  - Need time and focus for new, advanced content

- **Social Sciences**
  - Read early; look for key ideas: who, what, when, and where
Strategies for Reading Textbooks: P.Q.R³

- **P = Preview**
  - Gives you an idea of what you’ll cover during your study session
  - Look for central ideas, main topics, and chapter headings

- **Q = Question**
  - Take some time to think about what you’ll cover during your reading
  - Did the teacher provide learning objectives?

- **R³ = Read, Recite, and Review**
  - Read: assigned pages for comprehension. Take notes and mark as needed
  - Recite: stop periodically and summarize to yourself what you’ve learned
  - Review: once you’re done reading, take time to review the main concepts
Bottom Line

- You have to read
- You have to read for critical understanding
- Deface your books
- Skimming is better than not reading
- Every reading assignment is required
Active Listening in College

- Listen for critical meaning
- Adjust your note taking style to the lecture
- Tackle difficult to understand material first
- Concentrate and pay attention
- Be prepared
- *Choose to be interested* (Be Proactive)
  - ask questions and participate in discussion
Note Taking Basics

- Choose a style that works best for you
- Listen for main ideas
- Leave plenty of white space for notes
- Review notes soon after taking them

Information is Presented:
- Chronological
- Cause/effect
- Compare/contrast
- Most important/least important
Improving Your Note Taking

- Take clear and accurate notes
- Come to class prepared
- Compare your notes
- Minimize distraction
- Organize your notes
- Use abbreviations and symbols
- Write clearly
- Review your notes
- Write down questions
The Forgetting Curve

Knowledge Retention With Note Review After Class

Axis Title

- Reviewed
- Didn't Review

Same Day | One Day | Two Weeks | Nine Weeks
---|---|---|---
0 | 0 | 0 | 0
Cornell System for Note Taking

- **Step 1: Preparation**
  - Either purchase or draw Cornell outline
  - Use one side of the paper

- **Step 2: During the Lecture**
  - Take notes in the way that works best for you
  - Paragraph, bullets, mind-maps

- **Step 3: After the Lecture**
  - Organize notes (rewrite if necessary)
  - Use column on the left to add questions, connect ideas, and highlight concepts
**Cornell Note-taking Method - Lifehacker.com**

**Cues**
- Main ideas
- Questions that connect points
- Diagrams
- Prompts to help you study

*WHEN:*
- After class
- During review

**Notes**
- Record the lecture here, using
- Concise sentences
- Shorthand symbols
- Abbreviations
- Lists
- Skip lots of space between points

*WHEN:*
- During class

**Summary**
- *Top level main ideas*
- *For quick reference*

*WHEN:*
- After class
- During review

2.5 inches

6 inches

2"
Improving Your Memory

- Make the information meaningful
- Organize the information
  - General to specific
- Use pictures to improve memory
- Active studying
- Frequent reviewing
- Mnemonic devices
- Association
- Games
- Cheat Sheets—they can be legal!
Studying Effectively

- Create an INDIVIDUALIZED routine
  - Be creative as to when and how you study
  - Create a comfortable studying environment
- Evaluate your study preferences
- Create study rules and follow them
- Determine how much time you should spend studying
- Start studying now by reviewing notes
- Write down studying goals
- Avoid cramming
Using Study Groups

Framework

- How many?
- Who?
- Where?
- How long?
- When?

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skYis9qPgVE

Components

- Start with a small group
- Choose a leader
- Keep a list of contact information
- Schedule a time and place that is convenient and comfortable
- Assign each person a role
- Do “homework” before meeting.
- Stay on task
- Take frequent breaks
Benefits of Study Groups

- Improve your notes
- Sharing talents
- Support system
- Cover more material
- Solidify knowledge by teaching
- Makes learning fun
Resources at WKU

- Math tutoring
- Modern Languages Language Lab
- Writing Center
- TLC
- Professors
Coping with Test Anxiety

- Develop good study habits
- Be prepared
- Don’t cram
- Get adequate exercise
- Get plenty of sleep
- Get plenty to eat
- Stay positive
- Focus on the learning experience
- Stay relaxed
Taking the Test

- Arrive early
- Pay attention to instructions
- Scan the test before beginning
- READ the directions!
- Answer easiest questions first
- Pace yourself
Test Question Types

- Multiple choice
- Matching
- Fill-in-the-blank
- True/false
- Problem-solving
- Essay
Multiple Choice Questions

- Read the statements carefully, noting any words such as “not”
- Read the choices carefully
- Eliminate choices that are obviously wrong
- Eliminate choices with typographical errors
- Check your work
Matching Questions

- Read the instructions carefully and determine if there is only one match per term
- Read all terms and their descriptors carefully
- Match the ones you know first
- Check your work
Fill-in-the-Blank Questions

- Read the sentence carefully
- Consider terms and definitions that you have studied for the exam
- Be sure to spell terms correctly
True/false Questions

- Read the statement carefully
- Mark any qualifying words (e.g., frequently, sometimes, and never)
- Go with your gut instinct if you are not completely sure of the answer
Problem-solving Questions

- Read through the problem more than once
- Underline or circle important information that you will need to solve the problem
- Mark through irrelevant information
- Consider what operations or processes you will need to work through to solve the problem
- Check your work
Essay Questions

- Read through the directions carefully
- Note the required parts of the essay
- Determine purpose of the essay question (e.g., explain, compare, or argue)
- Jot down an outline before beginning
- Write in essay format (introduction, thesis, body paragraphs, and conclusion)
- Proofread writing before turning in exam
Words to Watch in Essay Questions

If it says.....
- Analyze
- Compare
- Contrast
- Criticize
- Define/Describe
- Discuss

It means....
- Explain
- Prove
- Relate
- State
- Summarize
- Trace
Test Types

- **Math and Science**
  - Recall terms, definitions, and formulas
  - Focus on processes

- **Fine Arts and Literature**
  - Identify major themes
  - Discuss the significance of a work

- **Open-book and Take-home**
  - Study before taking these kinds of tests
  - Use only approved material

- **Online**
  - Take note of the time limit
  - Use only approved material
Most of All

All the tips, strategies, and preparation can only help so much.

Know your material!!!
Time Management to Improve Academic Success

- **Step 1: Prepare a Term Calendar**
  - Assignments and projects with their mid-point deadlines and due dates
  - Tests with their dates
  - Important semester dates
  - Dates for activities

- **Step 2: Prepare a Weekly Schedule**
  - Classes, study sessions, work, activities
  - To-do list for the week

- **Step 3: Prepare a Daily Schedule**
  - Daily to-do list including any carry over from previous day
Keep Your Balance

Weekend in college

Expectation

Reality

study

(verb)

The act of texting, eating and watching TV with an open textbook nearby.
How do you study/learn/listen/remember/test?
V.A.R.K.

Everyone is a genius.

But if you judge a fish on its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid.

~ Albert Einstein
Begin with the End in Mind
Habits for Private Victories
Be Proactive
Begin with the End in Mind
Put First Things First