Make it Stick!

Studying Smarter, Not Harder
Enrichment Program
June 16th, 2014
Three Steps for Success

- Time Management
- Study Skills
- Test Taking Strategies
Step 1: Manage Your Time

* What NOT to do: The Five Stages of Grief

* Smarter Moves:
  * Get a Planner/Calendar
  * Record all tests, papers, and quizzes
  * Allow for enough study time.
    * In college, that’s 2 hours for every hour you are in class.
## Manage Your Time

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Crunching the Numbers

* 168 hrs/week
* - 12 hrs/week class
* 156 hrs
* - 56 hrs for sleeping (8hrs/night)
* 100 hrs
* - 24 hrs for studying (2hrs/class)
* 76 work, eat, rest, recreation
Other Strategies for Managing Time

* Use Odd Hours to study
* Borrow time, don’t steal it
* Schedule “down” time (other than when you sleep)
* Treat school like a job
* Schedule frequent, short study periods...
* … in the same place!
  * Creating the habit kicks your Brain into study mode, even When you don’t want to😊
Step 2: Study Smarter

People Misunderstand Learning

* Myths
  * Read and highlight, then re-read
  * Practice, Practice, Practice! (Cramming, rapid repetition)

* Practice Retrieving/Recalling information
* Space it out!
* Interweave subjects/problems
How your Brain Learns

* Sticky; elastic like plastic
The Good news: Our intellectual abilities are not fixed from birth, but are OURS to shape!

What we do shapes who we become and what we are capable Of.
How to Study Smarter: Deep Learning that Lasts!

- Retrieve/Recall information
- Space it out!
- Interweave subjects/problems

- Retrieve/Recall info
  - Flash cards
  - SQ3R
  - Self-quiz
  - Memory Cues
Space it out!

- A little forgetting in between practice sessions is a good thing—it leads to more effort in practice.
- Why sleep is important 😊

Beware of the Familiarity Trap: the feeling that you know something well enough to stop practicing.

- It’s weird, but the more effort required to recall/relearn something, but better you learn it—the better it becomes deep knowledge that lasts.
How to Study Smarter

* Interweave subjects/problems
  * In other words, vary your practice (repetition is boring, anyways!)
    * Shuffle your flashcards so you aren’t learning them in the same order every time.
  * Do different kinds of math problems; don’t just practice solving one problem until you get it, then move on.
Study Smarter: Embrace Difficulty

* Desirable Difficulty
  * When learning is easy, it is often soon forgotten.
  * When learning is effortful, it changes the brain, making new connections and increasing intellectual ability!
  * You learn better when you wrestle with problems before you are given the solution.
  * Mistakes and errors show you where you need more information to adjust so you “get it.” Practice quizzes and tests are great for this.
Test-Taking Skills

* Study Smarter by quizzing yourself after reading, using flash cards, using memory cues, spacing out the study time, vary your practice.
* Get plenty of rest, eat regular meals, exercise!
* If you have test anxiety, the above techniques will work, but also try:
  * Deep breathing. Close eyes and breathe deeply for 5-10 breaths.
  * Think positively—create your own positive “mantra,” like “Let’s do this” or “It’s all good” or “No worries.” Remember: you have the power to change your brain!
Test Taking Skills: Essay Tests

* Budget your time.
* Read the directions carefully, and underline key terms.
  * It helps to turn the question into a clear statement: that can be your introduction.
* Make an outline of what you want to say, then start writing.
* Re-read your essay to catch small mistakes and to make sure the writing is clear.
Test Taking Skills: Multiple Choice

- Read the question and generate your own answer
- Pick the answer that best matches your own
- If you don’t know the answer to a question right away, narrow down your options
- Skip questions you don’t know and comeback later. A later question might give a clue to its answer!
Test Taking Skills

* Fill-in-the-Blank Questions
  * If you don’t know it right away, generate a few possible answers
  * Pick the one you feel best fits the question

* True/False Questions
  * For a question to be true, every detail must be true
  * Extreme terms such as “always”, “never”, and “only” are usually false
  * Don’t second guess yourself when a sequence of questions is all true or all false
* Matching Questions

  * Review all terms and descriptions before answering
  * Match the ones you are most sure of
  * Use process of elimination to help finish
A Few More Tips

* Get to class early on test day
  * Go to the bathroom, get some water, breathe deeply.

* Skim over the whole test to get the big picture, budget time accordingly

* “Mind Dump” – On some tests it is helpful to write a few notes down of important concepts you don’t want to forget

* When you finish, don’t leave!
  * Use spare time to go back over the test to catch mistakes
Review

* What are some things you can do to manage your time?
* What kinds of study skills encourage deep learning?
* What can you do to prepare for a multiple choice test?
* What can you do if you have test anxiety?