

# STUDY SKILLS GUIDE

IMPROVE YOUR STUDY SKILLS AND TEST PERFORMANCE



COMPILED BY BILL OPALOCH  
REVISED BY JEANETTE JOHNSON

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This booklet has been developed to assist you in studying more successfully. It covers the topics listed in the Table of Contents (on the previous pages).

We suggest you do the Survey of Study Habits on the following page. This will give you an idea of your strengths and weaknesses, then read through the booklet. We are sure the ideas presented here will help you study more efficiently.

If you would like more detailed information on any of the topics covered in this booklet, please contact the Study Skills Advisor at the Academic Support Centre at 475-6618.

For additional copies of this handout, please visit the Academic Support Centre or access the Academic Support Centre website at: <http://www.confederationc.on.ca/academicsupportcentre/learningskills/LearningSkillsResources>

## SURVEY OF CURRENT STUDY SKILLS

The following questionnaire will help you survey your present study skills to highlight your strengths and weaknesses. You can turn to the relevant sections of the Study Skills Guide for help. If you would like to discuss some areas in greater detail make an appointment at the Academic Support Centre.

The list of statements outlined below concerns study habits and general scholastic attitudes. After each statement place an "X" in the column you feel expresses your behaviour.

	Generally this is true	Sometimes this happens	Never or Rarely
<b>Statement</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>No</b>
1. When I read or study I have a tendency to pick out unimportant points rather than important ones.			
2. It is difficult for me to concentrate because I am not interested.			
3. I have trouble understanding what I read.			
4. I like to read and I wish I had more time to devote to it.			
5. I often find I am too sleepy or too tired to study.			
6. I keep a dictionary near me when I study and I use it.			
7. I have a definite place in which to do my studying.			
8. I have an organized plan of studying.			
9. When I study I set a goal for the amount of material I want to study.			
10. My studies suffer because of the time I waste reading the newspaper, watching television, etc.			
11. During lectures I copy notes on earlier material, or other courses and I miss the important points of the lecture as a result.			

## Survey of Current Study Skills continued...

	Yes	Undecided	No
13. I try hard to get a good grade even though I may not like the subject.			
14. When I memorize material, I learn only what is absolutely necessary.			
15. I read over my lecture notes as soon after class as possible.			
16. I forget what I learn in class.			
17. When I read an assignment, I write down the main points to help me remember.			
18. I could do better in school if I didn't dislike some of my courses and the teachers.			
19. I worry about being lazy.			
20. I work on my assignments regularly and keep them up to date.			
21. Because I find it difficult to express myself in writing, I am slow in handing in written assignments.			
22. I am too careless.			
23. In studying for a test, I arrange facts in logical sequence, i.e., order of importance.			
24. I get so nervous during exams that I can't concentrate.			
25. Before I start to answer a question, I plan the answer carefully at first.			
26. I can't finish tests within the time allotted, although I work the entire period.			
27. When I check returned tests or written work, I find that careless errors lowered my grade.			
28. I dislike a particular teacher and I neglect the work in his class.			
29. The main reason I'm going to school is the prestige of having a college education.			
30. List some distractions which sometimes interfere with your study.	What can you do to remove them?		

## **MOTIVATION**

Motivation is very important if you are to succeed in college. 40 - 50% of the students who start college post secondary courses withdraw before they graduate. Most students who withdraw from college do not lack ability; they lack the motivation to succeed. Studies have shown that successful students differ from unsuccessful students in the following ways:

- 1) They have a clear education goal.
- 2) They are willing to subordinate other interests and activities so that they can fully utilize their college years for intellectual and vocational development.
- 3) They have the motivation or the will to succeed.
- 4) They have good study skills.

This booklet can help you with study skills, but the motivation you have to supply yourself. Do you have a clear educational goal? Do you know why you came to college?

You need to have a clear goal in mind or it is difficult to stay with your studies in the face of competing activities and pressures. If you are not sure why you came to college or if you feel you might be in the wrong course, discuss the situation with a counsellor. A counsellor can help you clarify your career goals.

## **MEMORY AND FORGETTING**

In college, students are constantly called upon to produce facts in response to questions, tests, exams, and projects. They are also required to remember material from seven or eight courses. This is often very confusing, and your worst enemy is forgetting. This section will give you some information on memory and forgetting as background for the other study skills sections.

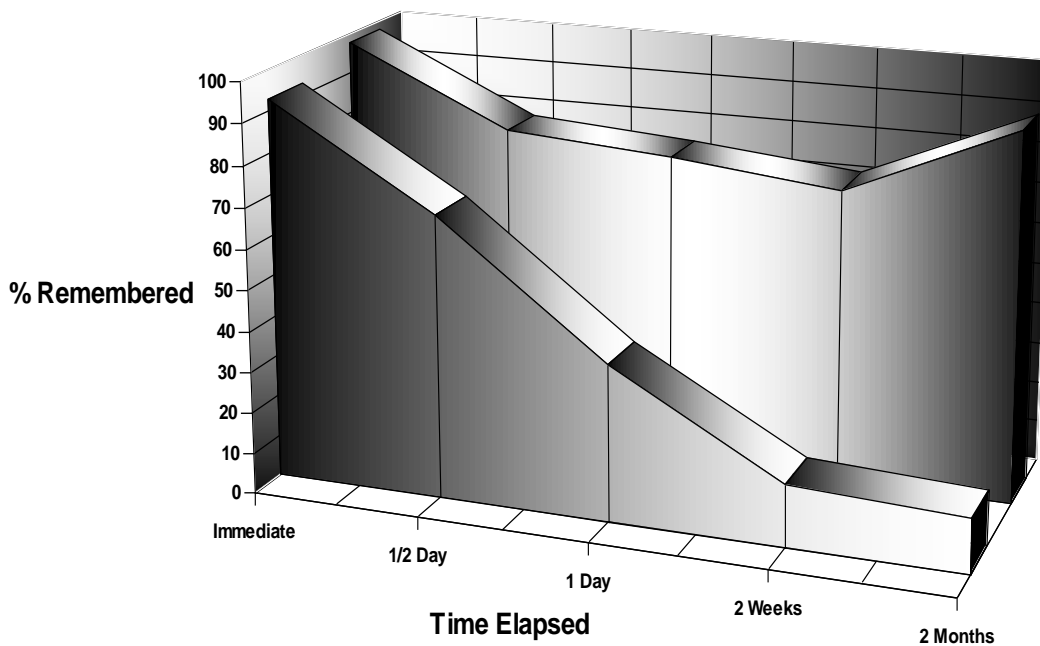
**Some Studies on Forgetting**

1) One study gave these results (Table 1) based on tests taken after a psychology lecture.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Test Interval</u>	<u>Amount Remembered</u>
1	Immediately after	62%
2	½ week	50%
3	1 week	37%
4	2 weeks	30%
5	8 weeks	23%

**TABLE 1:** Percentage Remembered After Psychology Lecture

2) A second study (Figure 1) showed these rates of forgetting college textbook material:





### **Some Studies on Forgetting continued**

You can see (Figure 1) that it is very difficult for most students to accurately remember what they learn. Studies show that most forgetting occurs the first day, and we forget at a lesser rate after that. Remembering a lecture is usually harder than remembering reading material, and remembering a discussion among several people is more difficult still. The more meaningful the material, the easier it is to remember. We forget material because of interference. As we learn new material, it interferes with remembering older material. This is called “retroactive interference.” Old material can also interfere with remembering new material-- a process called “proactive interference.”

## **SEVEN LEARNING PRINCIPLES THAT WILL HELP YOU REMEMBER**

Walter Pauk in “How to Study in College” discusses some principles that help combat the forgetting process.

### **I Motivated Interest**

It is very difficult to remember material that does not interest you. If you are to learn something thoroughly, you must have an interest in doing so. We have all heard of the man who can remember every baseball player’s batting average or the politician who never forgets a name. These examples illustrate what motivation can do. This principle works for you if you picked your course of study carefully and if you can see how different courses relate to the main subject matter you are studying.

### **II Selectivity**

You will not be able to remember everything. You must separate the wheat from the chaff. You must decide which facts and ideas are important and which to ignore. This ability improves with practice. If you follow the procedures outlined in Studying to Answer Questions (page 17), you will be able to cut the material that needs to be studied in to manageable proportions.

### **III Intention to Remember**

This is an overall positive attitude and motivation towards remembering which triggers other attitudes like paying attention, getting a fact right the first time, and striving to understand.

## **SEVEN LEARNING PRINCIPLES THAT WILL HELP YOU REMEMBER**

### **III Intention to Remember continued**

#### **A) Attention**

You can listen to a lecture or read a book but not learn. You must concentrate fully on the task if you are to learn effectively. Learn what your concentration span is: then, take breaks and resume studying when you can concentrate on your work.

#### **B) Getting it Right the First Time**

This is very important because you tend to remember material based on your first recitation of it. If it is wrong, what you remember will be wrong. When learning material, always check back with your notes to see that it is accurate.

#### **C) Comprehension**

You can remember material you understand much more readily than information which has no meaning. Try to put the author's ideas into your own words. Ask questions if you don't understand.

### **IV Basic Background**

All that we strive to understand rests on prior knowledge or experience. The better our background in an area, the easier it is to understand new material. When setting up your course of study, make sure you have an adequate background. Take introductory or preparatory courses first if you need to improve your background. For example, it is much easier to learn a subject like Developmental Psychology if you have first familiarized yourself with basic psychological terms in an Introductory Psychology course. If your English skills are poor, take CS101, Basic Communications, or Upgrading English before you take a full time program. If your Math skills are weak, take Math Upgrading.

### **V Meaningful Organization**

The forgetting curve in Figure 1 shows that we forget less if the material is meaningful to us. The best way to remember material is to organize it in a way that is meaningful.

**SEVEN LEARNING PRINCIPLES THAT WILL HELP YOU REMEMBER****V Meaningful Organization continued**

You should organize material under categories whenever possible. Walter Pauk points out this example. It is harder to remember this list:

hamburger	celery	butter
lettuce	eggs	pork chops
milk	steak	carrots

than this list:

<u>Meat</u>	<u>Vegetables</u>	<u>Dairy</u>
hamburger	lettuce	milk
steak	celery	eggs
pork chops	carrots	butter

The more associations we have between the facts we are trying to remember, the easier it is to remember them.

**VI Recitation**

Figure 1 (page 5) shows that material that has been recited or reviewed is much easier to remember. Recitation simply means to say aloud or to write down the ideas we are trying to remember. You cover your notes and recite in your own words the material. Then check your notes for accuracy. This procedure is very important if you want to transfer information from short-term memory to long-term memory.

## **SEVEN LEARNING PRINCIPLES THAT WILL HELP YOU REMEMBER**

Recitation helps you in the following ways:

- 1) Since you are programming yourself to recite after a section within a chapter, you are motivated to understand and you concentrate better.
- 2) You get immediate feedback as to the accuracy of your learning. You receive a reward for correct recitation and an incorrect recitation can be immediately reviewed.

### **VII Distributed Practice**

Distributed practice refers to the principle of using relatively short study periods broken up by rest intervals. This method is particularly useful with motor skills like typing. The length of the study period varies with different individuals and with the material being studied. Distributed practice can be more efficient than massed practice for the following reasons:

- 1) Physical and emotional fatigue are reduced.
- 2) Motivation and concentration are higher with short term blocks of time.
- 3) The brain processes of learning seem to continue working during the rest periods. You may have had the experience of being able to solve a problem in the morning when it seemed unsolvable the night before.

Massed practice, studying continuously for long periods of time, can be superior in work such as writing a paper where creativity and a flow of thought and associations are important.

## **THE STUDY SCHEDULE**

As a busy college student you will find that time is your most scarce resource.

Table (2) on the next page shows how a student's time is usually consumed.

**THE STUDY SCHEDULE continued**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Hours per Week</u>
Sleep (7-8 hrs/day)	56
Classes	30
Meals (7 x 3)	21
Showering and Dressing	4
Travel Time	5
Coffee Breaks	4
	120

**Table 2:** Student's Use of Time

This leaves you 48 hours every week for all the other activities in which you may wish to participate. These include dances, movies, visiting with family and friends, watching T.V., shopping, sports or hobbies, doing assignments, studying for tests, etc. So many interesting things compete for your time and attention that all too many students allow these activities to crowd out study time. A study schedule helps you keep your activities in perspective so you can be a successful student and still have time left for your friends and other activities.

**A good study schedule is the key to being a successful student**

**How To Set Up A Study Schedule**

Set up a schedule (as in Figure 2 on page 12) with places to fill in exam dates as well as when papers and projects are due. This helps you keep aware of where your study time is leading.

Next fill in other important commitments, concerts, shows, meetings, trips, sporting activities, part time jobs, etc.

## **How To Set Up A Study Schedule continued**

Now you can schedule your class times and study periods - a weekly schedule gives you a clear picture of what you are doing with your time and helps you to spot an hour or two to use for study.

### **Steps For Effective Scheduling**

Walter and Sievert in “Student Success” recommend these steps for effective scheduling:

1. Establish a reasonable schedule that you can live with and stick to it.
2. Budget time to prepare for each class and all exams.
3. Study course notes as soon as possible and as often as possible after each period rather than cramming.
4. Give difficult subjects preferred times with the fewest possible interruptions and disturbances.
5. Budget time for leisure activities and follow through with them.
6. Stick to your schedule and reward yourself for following through with it.

***\* Remember: do not study too much at once and schedule time for breaks!***

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7 - 8							
8 - 9							
9 - 10							
10 - 11							
11 - 12							
12 - 1							
1 - 2							
2 - 3							
3 - 4							
4 - 5							
5 - 6							
6 - 7							
7 - 8							
8 - 9							
9 - 10							
10 - 11							
11 - 12							

**Figure 2:** Study Schedule Grid

Walter Pauk in “How to Study in College” has pointed out the benefits of programming your time.

1. It provides you with a stimulus each week to get started.
2. It helps you stick to subjects which you dislike so you don't crowd them out with more interesting subjects or activities.
3. You are less likely to slacken as the semester progresses.
4. It promotes regular studying so that if you have to cram it will be more effective.
5. By studying regularly, you remove pressure and can enjoy studying.
6. It promotes regular review which is crucial to learning.
7. It allows you to be less confused about what you are doing or should be doing.
8. It monitors the study breaks so they don't become larger than the study periods.
9. It promotes a balance between study time and recreational time.

### **ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS**

To study effectively we recommend that you eliminate distractions.

#### **I Visual Distractions**

- 1) Too many posters, signs, photographs, etc., in your room may trigger daydreaming.
- 2) To minimize eye strain we recommend that you have a well-illuminated room. The main light should be to your side--if it is directly in front or behind; you get glare from glossy textbook pages. This tires your eyes more quickly than indirect lighting.

#### **II Auditory Distractions**

- 1) Any extra sounds in your study area provide distractions. A quiet place is best.
- 2) A steady background noise, for example, soft music playing quietly masks distracting noises.
- 3) New locations or territory can be distracting. It is a good idea to pick one place and stick to it. This shortens warm-up time and allows you to concentrate longer.



## **ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS continued**

### **III Internal Distractions**

#### **Indecision**

If you are constantly indecisive about what to study, whether to go for coffee, or whether to read a book, you will waste a lot of time as well as increase your anxieties. This problem can be overcome by setting up and following a study schedule.

#### **Day Dreaming**

This is another great time waster. People often day dream because they want to escape from hard or unpleasant work. Learn to concentrate on the subject matter at hand and reward yourself with breaks when you have accomplished what you set out to do.

#### **Personal Problems**

Nothing can sap your energies more than being bound up with a personal problem. Problems normally don't just go away but linger on and disturb your concentration. Talk the problem out with a counsellor or trusted friend. Deal with it while it is a small problem rather than letting it blow out of proportion.

#### **Bothered by a Course**

If you have a disagreement with an instructor or if you don't like something about the course, don't allow this to sour you on the course. This discontentment can turn into anxiety which will interfere with your progress. Talk the matter over with an instructor. There is a good chance that he or she will help.

### **BE AN ACTIVE LEARNER**

Research has shown that people learn material better if they are actively involved with it. Many students have been conditioned to be passive. They expect the material to just seep into their minds or they expect to be entertained by the teacher or the text book. If the instructor or the book is not exciting, they all too often become bored and lose interest. It is not your teacher's responsibility to make you learn. Only you the student can do the learning. The instructor should be thought of as one of your resources. Education is an investment; the more you put into it, the more pay off there will be later.

## **BE AN ACTIVE LEARNER continued**

The process of being an active student starts with the first lecture. Actively involve yourself in determining the requirements for each course. This will enable you to use your study schedule to the greatest effect. During the first lecture find out these facts:

- ◆ How will you be graded in the course?
- ◆ Which chapters in the textbook will be covered?
- ◆ When will exams be scheduled?
- ◆ What material will each exam cover?
- ◆ What type of questions will be on the exams? E.g., multiple choice, essay, true, false.
- ◆ What are the instructor's objectives for the course?

## **TAKING NOTES**

When taking notes follow these cues from the instructor:

- 1) When a teacher uses enumeration as a method of organization be sure to get these points into your notes. This signifies that these points are important to the instructor and you should know them. For example, if the instructor says, "There are four main reasons for the fall of Rome," make sure you have these four points in your notes.
- 2) When the instructor gives examples s/he is probably reinforcing an important point.
- 3) When an instructor uses words like "important", "significant", etc., don't miss these points.
- 4) Ask the instructor to more fully explain new terms on the board.
- 5) When you are not sure of a point be sure to ask questions.

## **THE CORNELL SYSTEM OF NOTE TAKING**

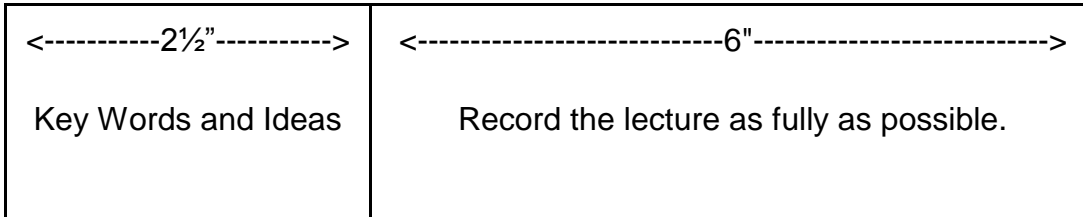
This system has been developed over the years at Cornell University and has been found to help students take better notes. These steps are recommended:

### **I Record**

- 1) Use a large loose leaf notebook. This helps you keep your notes together in one place and enables you to insert handouts and assignment sheets.
- 2) Take notes on one side only. This facilitates studying later.

**THE CORNELL SYSTEM OF NOTE TAKING continued**

- 3) Draw a vertical line about 2 ½" from the left edge of the paper. Classroom notes are recorded in the space to the right of the line. Later key words, phrases, ideas are written in the left recall column.



**Figure 3:** The Cornell System Format

- 4) When recording your notes, listen attentively and record as much of the lecture as possible. You want your notes to be complete and clear so that they will have meaning for you later.

## **II Reduce**

- 1) After the lecture read through your notes, fill in blank spaces, write over scribbles more legibly and emerge with an overview of the lecture.
- 2) In the left column write in words or phrases which represent the key ideas and facts on the right. By doing this, you are making the lecture your own by reflecting on the lectures main ideas and summarizing the key thought. In addition, you have organized and structured the lecture not only in your notebook but also in your mind. This will help you recall the material later.

## **III Recite**

Cover the right-hand column and use the key words to help you recall the main facts and ideas of the lecture. Recite these in your own words. Then uncover the notes to verify the accuracy of your recall.

## **IV Reflect**

Think about the material in this lecture. What are the main ideas and facts? How do they fit in with other lectures, with reading material, with other subjects?

## **V Review**

Do a quick review of your notes every week. This will help you recall the material for exams later.

## **STUDYING TO ANSWER QUESTIONS**

Walter & Sievert feel that the most efficient way to study is to generate questions on your material as though you were going to write a test. Their point is that if you want the right answer you have to ask the right questions. They say that when you are reading out of curiosity you can allow your mind to go in any direction but when you **STUDY** you should study as if you are practising to take a test. Whether you are reading or studying lecture notes, you should practise answering questions. If you don't study this way, you waste a lot of time.

They suggest that you put yourself in the instructor's place. What questions would s/he ask? Then generate questions from your notes, texts, and old exams. Think of questions before class, and see if the instructor or other students answer them in class. If they don't answer your questions, consult with the instructor after class. Walter & Sievert point out that asking good questions will help you in the following ways:

- 1) You will more readily focus on important material while listening or reading.
- 2) You will more likely be prepared for exam questions later.
- 3) You will be able to more easily discriminate important from nonimportant material.
- 4) Your instructor will notice you.
- 5) You will help your instructor clarify what s/he is trying to say.

Good questions start with phrases like:

- ◆ Give several examples of . . .
- ◆ What is significant about . . .
- ◆ List the important . . .
- ◆ Why does . . .

## **SQ4R METHOD OF READING TEXTBOOKS**

For efficient reading of textbooks the SQ4R method is recommended. This stands for:

**1. Survey**

**2. Question**

**3. Read**

**4. Record**

**5. Recite**

**6. Review**

## **SQ4R METHOD OF READING TEXTBOOKS continued**

Again Walter & Sievert point out that your primary goal is to ask and answer important questions as you read.

### **1. & 2. Survey and Question**

Remember that 80% of the words you read are redundant and simply link ideas and it is the ideas which are the questions you want answered. In surveying, your goal is to determine the important questions answered in the textbook chapter. First, go to the end of the chapter to see if there is a list of questions or a chapter summary. If there is, read it first. There you will find all the important points the author covers. If there is no chapter summary or list of questions, check the index to see what topics are covered.

You can also survey the contents by looking for titles, subtitles, illustrations, pictures, charts, etc. Reading the first and last sentence in the paragraphs can give you a lot of information.

While surveying you can easily turn titles into questions. For example, the heading “Theories of Emotion” can be turned into “What are three theories of emotion?” When you generate questions as you survey, you keep yourself alert to the important points in the chapter. Formulating questions as you survey gives you a summary of the chapter.

### **3. Read to Answer Questions**

Read as quickly as you can in order to answer questions you have generated while surveying the chapter.

Reading to answer questions helps you predict important questions before spending a lot of time reading. Thus, you learn to read selectively. When you come to material you know, you can skim over it. When you come to new material, read more slowly and pick up the details.

### **4. Record**

Try writing answers to the questions you formulated. Write just enough information to answer the questions.

### **5. Recite**

Now that you have read to answer questions from your survey and have developed new questions and answers that you hadn’t predicted, it is important to go one step further. Recite what you have just read. This procedure will prove to you that you have asked and answered the important questions from each chapter.

## **SQ4R METHOD OF READING TEXTBOOKS continued**

### **6. Review**

If you have followed the steps so far, you are in an excellent position to review the chapter any time. You will have a set of questions and answers representing the contents of each chapter. When preparing for an exam, quiz yourself on these questions until you can give accurate answers.

Following these steps will give you the feeling that you have mastered the material. You will enter the exam confidently. You will spend less time rereading chapters and involving yourself in a variety of superstitious activities that seldom help. You will have a good understanding of the chapter and be able to prove it on the test.

### **PREDICTING TEST QUESTIONS**

If you accept the value of studying to answer questions, you are well on the way to predicting the test questions you will be facing later in the term. There are a number of sources of test questions.

#### **Lecture Notes**

Earlier we discussed the Cornell System of taking notes in class (pages 15 - 16). Your lecturer will usually highlight important topics in his/her lectures so taking good lecture notes is an excellent way to become aware of test questions. You simply convert your main themes or topics into questions. Your aim should be to come out of the lecture with key questions and answers.

#### **Textbooks and Student Manuals**

Textbooks and student manuals can often contain a wealth of information. Many textbooks contain summary sections or a list of questions which are dealt with in the chapter. Many instructors take their questions right from textbooks or from the student manuals. Going over essay, multiple choice and true and false questions in student manuals is good practice for tests. These manuals are designed to help you save time. Use them.

#### **Discussion Groups and Friends**

By talking with fellow students or others who have been enrolled in the course in past semesters, you can get an excellent idea of the types of questions you should be able to answer.

When working in a study group you can compare your questions and answers to

## **PREDICTING TEST QUESTIONS – continued**

### **Discussion Groups and Friends continued**

those of others, to ensure that you haven't overlooked anything important. You can also divide up the workload and share answers. You can quiz each other on important points.

After compiling questions and answers you will have a good model for the next test. If you find it difficult with a group, try it with "one" other person.

Walter & Sievert (1976) point out that studying in a group or with another person helps you to:

1. Structure a situation in which other people will encourage you to involve yourself in the study activities we have recommended.
2. Ask and answer questions that you believe are important and are likely to be found on your next exam.
3. Share your questions and answers with others.
4. Find questions that you yourself hadn't predicted.
5. Refine your answers with additional information supplied by other students.
6. Put together practice tests.
7. Take practice tests under conditions which closely resemble those under which you will be tested.
8. Evaluate the results of the suggested procedure by comparing your practice tests with those given by the instructor.
9. Develop a most efficient and effective process of preparing for exams.

### **Instructors**

Of course your instructor is the best source of information on forthcoming questions. Many students are timid or fearful of interacting with their instructors. Your instructor will be glad to answer your questions and let you know what is important.

## **DOING WELL ON TESTS**

If you have followed the SQ4R Method (pages 17 -19) and the previous suggestions, you will have collected a good set of questions and answers that may appear on your tests. You should periodically review them to make sure you can still answer them. One idea is to collect questions on 3 X 5" index or recipe cards with the answers on the back.

## **DOING WELL ON TESTS - continued**

You can make up practice tests. Take these under conditions as close as possible to actual test conditions, i.e. similar time limits, types of questions and location. This prepares you for the test, helps you relax, and builds confidence. It avoids exam panic and last minute cramming.

These preparation strategies may be time consuming but usually result in more efficient studying, i.e. less time is wasted on irrelevant material.

### **General Rules for Taking Tests**

- 1) The importance of reading the instructions carefully cannot be overstressed. Many students come into the test sessions anxious and, therefore, miss key words in the questions. They may try to answer a question, not as it is stated, but as they would like it to be stated. Read the question carefully and give the instructor what he wants.
- 2) Determine how long you have to do the test; then read the whole test over before you start to answer the questions. If possible, divide your time so that you can answer all the questions.
- 3) If the easier questions give you as many marks as the harder ones, answer them first. This will help you relax, build your confidence and make it easier to tackle the rest of the test.
- 4) If you can't answer a question, place a mark beside it and move on to other questions. This procedure saves time and anxiety. You may get some associations which will help with the difficult questions as you progress through the test.

### **Answering Essay Questions**

Think about your essay question for a time and outline your answer. This gives you key ideas to hang the rest of your facts on. Outlining an answer also stimulates your memory so that other ideas which strike you can be jotted down. This procedure saves time in the long run. You will be more organized and more certain that all important facts have been included in your answer.

Read your questions carefully. For example, does the question ask you to **Compare** or **Contrast**? Does it ask you to **Define** or **Describe**? Does it ask you to



## **DOING WELL ON TESTS – continued**

**Illustrate** or to **List**? Be clear on the meanings of these words so you will be answering what the instructor asks. For a handout on task words in essay questions and their meanings, please visit the Learning Centre or on-line at

**<http://www.confederationc.on.ca/learningcentre/Handouts.asp>**.

As you write, use subheadings for longer answers. This helps you organize your answers and helps the reader. Use examples to support your main points.

Write legibly and try to leave time to polish your answers.

### **Answering Multiple Choice Questions**

When answering multiple choice questions, first see if there is a penalty for guessing. If there is no penalty, then answer all questions. When answering multiple choice questions, you can usually eliminate one or two obviously incorrect answers. Then you can choose your answer or guess from the remainder. Do the easy questions

### **Answering Multiple Choice Questions continued**

first and mark the more difficult questions and return to them later. Don't change an answer when rereading multiple choice questions unless you are absolutely sure your new answer is correct.

### **True and False Questions**

Don't waste a lot of time on true and false questions. If the answer is not immediately apparent, move on to the next question. Come back to the troublesome question later. Don't change answers unless you are absolutely sure your new answer is correct. With true and false questions, you must be careful to analyze qualifying words. For example in the statement "geniuses are usually queerer than people of average intelligence", usually is a key word. In the statement "much of human behaviour is instinctive", much is a key word. This statement means something quite different than if the word all were used.

If you use the above suggestions, read the questions carefully, plan your time well, determine the value of questions, and answer them effectively.

***GOOD LUCK IN YOUR STUDIES!***

**If you have any study skills questions or would like more detailed information on any of the topics covered in this booklet, please contact the Academic Support Centre at 475-6618.**

**REFERENCES**

Pauk, Walter. How to Study in College. Houghton Mufflin Co., 1974. Second edition.

Walter, Tim and Sievert, Al. Student Success. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976.