



Study more effectively.

Use this Student Success Guide to discover more effective study skills.

Developing good study skills and habits are essential to success in the academic world. Many of us might already feel that we have the best study habits and skills, but now and then those skills need a refresher. The purpose of this guide is to assist you in improving the skills that you already have and offer additional skills that might insure greater academic success.

Read each of the following statements and consider how they apply to you. The purpose of this quick check is to discover more about your study habits and attitudes.

- I spend too much time studying for what I am learning.
- I usually spend hours cramming the night before an exam.
- If I spend as much time on my social life as I want to, I don't have enough time left to study, or when I study enough I don't have time for a social life.
- I usually study with the radio or TV turned on.
- I can't sit and study for long periods of time without becoming tired or distracted.
- I don't review my course notes enough throughout the time I am taking my course.
- When I get to the end of a chapter, I can't remember what I've just read.
- I don't know how to pick out what is important in the text.
- I can't keep up with my reading assignments and then have to cram the day before a test.
- I study enough for my test, but when I take it my mind goes blank.
- I often study in a haphazard, disorganized way under the threat of a deadline.
- I often find myself getting lost in the details of reading and have trouble identifying the main ideas.
- When I have a deadline, I often feel overwhelmed and can't get started.
- I usually write my papers the night before they are due.
- I can't seem to organize my thoughts into a paper that makes any sense.

If two or more of the above apply to you, then you could probably use a refresher of your study skills. The following material is designed to offer assistance in many areas that students feel they need improvement from time management skills to more efficient reading of course material.

Ten Basic Rules to Improve Your Study Skills

1. Choose a quiet, well lit, and ventilated place to study in, and study in the same place all the time.
2. Use a table and chair to convey the message to yourself that you're working and not lounging.
3. Leave the snacks behind.
4. Schedule your study time when you are at your best and most alert.
5. Develop a study schedule and stick to it.
6. Study difficult subjects first.
7. Take 5-10 minute breaks periodically to stretch and relax to help keep you refreshed and focused.
8. Consider studying with someone else.
9. Keep a positive attitude.
10. Do not put off studying!



Saint Joseph's College of Maine Division of Graduate and Professional Studies

Motivation and Goal Setting

Problems with personal disorganization can cause you to lose motivation for your course work. Personal conflicts may also make it difficult to achieve personal goals. Students with these sorts of problems tend to be dissatisfied with their grades, feel overwhelmed when reading assignments, have difficulty managing their time, and are often unsure of how to study. Motivating yourself to study and setting realistic goals will help you to overcome these potential difficulties.

Ask any person who is successful in whatever they are doing what the key to their success is and very likely the answer will be goals. Setting goals is extremely important to motivation and success. So, you need to ask yourself these questions:

- What's motivating me?
- Why am I taking this course?
- Am I taking this course for a promotion?
- Am I taking this course to earn a degree that will lead to a better job?
- Am I taking this course purely for the sake of learning something new?

Interest is an important motivator for a student as well as the desire to learn. When these two elements are put together they lead to success, which leads to more interest and a greater desire to learn. But now you need to figure out how you can develop your internal motivation and get moving towards successful completion of your course work.

Practical Suggestions

1. Spend time studying so that your course work does not pile up and become overwhelming.
2. Do not start a project and then put it aside for too long; work on it a little each day to keep up your interest and to make sure that you do not get behind on that assignment.
3. Break large assignments into smaller tasks if possible.
4. Every time you sit down to study, set a reasonable goal and accomplish it.
5. Do not expect your initial efforts to be your final efforts; many assignments take several drafts before you reach a point where you are satisfied. Accept the fact that it will not be perfect the first time you attempt an assignment.
6. Reward yourself AFTER you have completed the study session by doing something you enjoy.
7. Relax to put yourself in a positive mood before you study.
8. Keep your study area and materials organized.
9. Generate a daily "to do" list of reasonable goals for studying.