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Some Recommendations on Study Techniques

(Based on personal observations and discussions with both successful and unsuccessful students.)



Attending class is essential!

(However, regularly attending class is not sufficient. Concentrating during class and effective study out of class is also necessary.)



Study throughout the semester along the way - after each class - not just before a test.



BE ACTIVE IN YOUR STUDYING!

Just reading your notes over and over again is not effective and just does not work well.



BE ACTIVE IN YOUR STUDYING!

Pretend you are making out the test - literally make up and write down possible questions and possible answers. The process is the important part here, not the final product. This will both help you to focus on important points in the notes and help you to understand and remember the material better.



BE ACTIVE IN YOUR STUDYING!

Try making and using flash cards to study definitions and principles. The process of making the cards and using them is the important part, not the product.



BE ACTIVE IN YOUR STUDYING!

Using as many of your senses as possible while you study is helpful: Read a section of your notes and then

- 1) write a summary of those notes from memory - then check yourself and do it again.
- 2) Summarize the material out-loud, even if (or especially when) no-one else is there.



BE ACTIVE IN YOUR STUDYING!

Study with others along the way - set up a regular study group. Talk about the subject material. I recommend that you do this along the way but not the night before the test.



Don't stay up late studying the night before the test. This backfires. You will not be rested and your brain will not work well during the test. Get a good night's sleep the night before the test. If you study effectively along the way you will be prepared and only need to review a little the night before the test. It is a gigantic mistake to wait until the night before the test for your most serious studying.



Study for every test as if you know it will be the hardest test you have ever taken - then it probably won't be as hard - since you have studied. If you think the material is not very hard - or not very interesting - and study accordingly - you will then think it was a hard test when you take it and not do as well as you could have.



Stay away from other students who are not serious about their studying.

Try different techniques. Find what works for you. The general principle here is to BE ACTIVE IN YOUR STUDYING! Find some new techniques that work better than your current techniques. One definition of insanity is trying the same thing over and over again and expecting different results (e.g., just reading the notes over and over again and expecting a better grade).