

Module #1

Study Skills

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Study Skills

As you cultivate the skills and abilities that will advance your career, it is very likely that you will find yourself needing to learn. It has been said that a successful worker is a lifelong learner. As a lifelong learner, you might enroll in classes to strengthen some of your skills. Or you might simply take a good hard look at some books, videos, or websites that have the information you need. The broad goal of this module is to help you get the most out of the time you invest in learning. Our hope is that you will:

- Figure out how you best learn and work with your own preferences.
- Take control of your habits and your environment to maximize your investments in learning.
- Build new skills to help you read and remember more efficiently.
- Face test situations with confidence.

Objectives

Here is what you'll be able to do when you have successfully completed this module:

1. Identify your learning style and learning preferences.
2. Assess your current study environment and learn how to create an effective study environment.
3. Analyze your current study habits and explore possible challenges to studying.
4. Explore several reading strategies to increase your reading speed and comprehension.
5. Practice different formats for taking notes from reading material and lectures.
6. Use strategies for effective test-taking in a variety of formats.

1. Your Learning Styles and Preferences

Focus Questions:

Do adults learn the same ways children do?
What are learning styles? What are my learning style preferences?
What is meant by "multiple intelligences"? Which of my intelligences are strongest?
Which study strategies will help me take advantage of my preferred styles and intelligences?

Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks? I have never played a musical instrument before, but at age 40, I decided to learn how to play the accordion. I have always been a fan of eastern European folk music; the accordion is featured in most of these old tunes. So, armed with a beautiful accordion that I picked up for a song at a yard sale, I found a wonderful teacher and began the hard task of learning. It is difficult to be a beginner, especially as an adult. It is very humbling to realize that I must start with the remedial task of learning simple scales before I can jump to more complicated music. But, I practice every day and even encouraged a close friend of mine to take lessons with me. That way, we can both laugh at our mistakes and practice together. This makes the learning process more pleasurable. I'm not ready to give any concerts yet; for now, my pets are my only audience. But it is a joy and a challenge to learn something new.

Learning as an Adult

If you grew up in the United States, as a child you were legally required to attend school. Chances are, your school experience was both good and bad. You probably learned a fair bit of the material that was presented, in spite of the many distractions we all faced as children. By the time you were 18 or so, you no longer had to attend school. No one could force you to study or learn any more.

But here you are now, as an adult. You have decided to invest in your own learning. As you have matured,

- you have come to take more responsibility for your own learning.
- you have increased life experiences to draw on for learning.
- your motivation for learning has become more task-centered.

This table further traces these shifts in your approach to learning:

	SCHOOL CHILDREN	ADULT LEARNERS
DIRECTION	Tend to look toward a teacher for direction. Tend to be more obligated, or subject to, external or extrinsic forces.	Tend to be self-directed. Are generally motivated to learn from within (intrinsically).
EXPERIENCE	Have limited life experience to draw on.	Have a rich reservoir of experience that can serve as a resource for learning.
MOTIVATION	May sometimes be motivated by pure curiosity to learn about a subject.	Are frequently affected by the need to know or be able to do something. Tend to have a life-, task-, or problem-centered orientation to learning as opposed to a subject-matter orientation.

At the most fundamental level, differences between children and adults as learners may be few. But if the distinctions highlighted in the table resonate with you as an adult learner, consider this question: How can you *work with* your approach to learning to get the most out of classes you take?

- Participate in class. Volunteer. Offer your ideas. Make suggestions.
- Look for parallels, similarities, and differences between the new material and things you already know. For example, learning how to play the accordion is very similar to practicing yoga (a skill I already am familiar with). Both require a calm and focused attention to breathing.
- Remember to ask yourself: How does this information relate to my goals?
- Regard grades only as they impact the achievement of your goals.

- Be open to instructional activities that may be new to you. Effective instructors may ask you to work in groups, for example, or to review each other's work.

Your Preferred Learning Style

We just looked at a very general "you," the adult learner. We have described a few learning approaches that play into your hand of attitudes to and resources for learning. Next, we want to look at a more specific you, the individual who is now studying this material.

A *learning style* is a way of learning. YOUR preferred learning style is the way in which YOU learn best. Three learning styles that are often identified in students are the *Auditory Learning Style*, the *Visual Learning Style*, and the *Tactile/Kinesthetic Learning Style*. Read about each of these learning styles to identify YOUR preferred learning style.

Are you an Auditory Learner?

Auditory Learners learn best when information is presented in an audio or spoken language format.

- Do you seem to learn best in classes that emphasize teacher lectures and class discussions?
- Does listening to audiotapes help you learn better?
- Do you find yourself reading aloud or talking things out to gain better understanding?

If you answered YES to these questions, you are probably an *Auditory Learner*.

Are you a Visual Learner?

Visual Learners learn best when information is presented in a written language format or in another visual format such as pictures or diagrams.

- Do you do best in classes in which teachers do a lot of writing at the chalkboard, provide clear handouts, and/or make extensive use of an overhead projector?
- Do you try to remember information by creating pictures in your mind?
- Do you take detailed written notes from your textbooks and in class?

If you answered YES to these questions, you are probably a *Visual Learner*.

Are you a Tactile/Kinesthetic Learner?

Tactile/Kinesthetic Learners learn best in hands-on learning settings in which they can physically manipulate something in order to learn about it.

- Do you learn best when you can move about and handle things?
- Do you do well in classes in which there is a lab component?
- Do you learn better when you have an actual object in your hands rather than a picture of the object or a verbal or written description of it?

If you answered YES to these questions, you are probably a *Tactile/Kinesthetic Learner*.

What Do I Do With My Learning Style?

Your learning style is your strength. Go with it whenever you can. When you choose a class, try to select one that draws heaviest on your preferred learning style. When faced with options for a teacher, try to choose one who's teaching methods best matches your learning style. When you decide on a college major and future career, keep your learning style firmly in mind.

See more self assessment resources on the Career Garden website.

Comprehension Questions:

1. If you are aware of your own learning style preferences, what advantages do you have as a learner?
 - A. You can change the way teachers teach so that it corresponds to your strongest learning style.
 - B. You may be able to adjust some of your study habits or choose courses or assignments that let you take advantage of your strongest learning style.
 - C. You know yourself better.
 - D. You increase your listening skills.
2. Which of these learning activities might be most helpful to someone whose dominant learning style is Auditory?
 - A. Reviewing flash cards.
 - B. Acting out a simulation.
 - C. Re-writing lecture notes
 - D. Listening to a recording of the lecture.
3. Which of these learning activities might be most helpful to someone whose dominant learning style is Tactile/Kinesthetic?
 - A. Reading a magazine
 - B. Listening to a recorded lecture.
 - C. Creating gestures to serve as memory aides for concepts.
 - D. Using flash cards
4. Which of these learning activities might be most helpful to someone whose dominant learning style is Visual?
 - A. Flipping through a textbook examining the diagrams and illustrations
 - B. Listening to a recording of someone reading the textbook
 - C. Assembling a model.
 - D. Re-copying lecture notes.

Answers:

1-B; 2-D; 3-C; 4-A. See Discussion of Review Questions, p. 42-46.

Multiple Intelligence Theory

Multiple Intelligence Theory gives us another way to understand ourselves as learners. Traditional intelligence tests (IQ tests) attempted to measure how smart someone was. This measurement was one-dimensional: it assessed only one particular kind of thinking and learning. However, human experience and human learning is extremely broad. As psychologists and other scientists have come to understand thinking, learning and the brain, the notion of intelligence – the means by which an individual makes sense of his/her environment – has become plural. Each of us, to varying degrees, has a measure of each of these intelligences:

- Body/Kinesthetic Intelligence (A pro basketball player is strong in this.)
- Interpersonal Intelligence (A counselor is strong in this.)
- Intra-personal Intelligence (A philosopher is strong in this.)
- Logical/Mathematical Intelligence (A computer programmer is strong in this.)
- Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence (A musician is strong in this.)
- Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence (A poet is strong in this.)

- Visual/Spatial Intelligence (An artist is strong in this.)

Physiologically, the human brain has specific centers for processing the world in each of these modes. The now-classic text on multiple intelligence theory is Howard Gardner's book, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, originally published in 1983 by Basic Books.

Of course it would be wonderful if I could have all of these intelligences well developed. I could learn practically anything, no matter how it were presented to me. But the fact is, some of these are better developed than others, partly because of the package I was given at birth and partly because of experience and practice since then. By understanding my strongest assets for learning, I can maximize my learning experience.

Take a look at the **multiple intelligence survey** presented on the following pages. It is not an IQ test. It is a tool for understanding your own strengths and preferences in learning. Follow the instructions for taking the survey. Then we'll consider how to use the information.

Take the Multiple Intelligences Inventory now.

What Do I Do With My Multiple Intelligences?

We said earlier that understanding your learning strengths is the key to helping you maximize your learning. How can this be achieved? Below are a number of suggestions. Some of these apply more directly to independent learning situations, while others apply more to your participation in a class. Pay special attention to the suggestions relevant for your strongest learning preferences. Put checkmarks next to the ideas you would like to try. Use these suggestions to complete the table at the bottom of the **Multiple Intelligences Inventory** on page 7-8.

Body/Kinesthetic Intelligence

- Make posters or models that explain the material that you are learning.
- Use gestures to communicate your ideas.
- Incorporate movement in the act of studying: study on a bike or while you pace, toss a ball while memorizing or reciting.
- Use case studies and applications to help with principles and abstract concepts.
- Use the computer to reinforce learning through sense of touch.
- Create role-plays, pantomimes, charades, skits, and games.

Interpersonal Intelligence

- Form a study group in which members take turns explaining things to each other.
- Join a club with others who share your interest.
- Ask a friend to allow you to explain something to her.
- Interview others who have expertise in your area of interest.

Continued on p. 8.

Multiple Intelligences Inventory

Check the statements that apply to you in each intelligence category. The space at the end of each intelligence (“*Other...Strengths*”) allows you to write additional information not specifically referred to in the inventory. In the **Summary** at the bottom, record the number of items you checked in each category.

Body/Kinesthetic Intelligence

- I engage in at least one sport or physical activity on a regular basis.
 - I find it difficult to sit still for long periods of time.
 - I like working with my hands at concrete activities such as sewing, weaving, carving, carpentry, or model building.
 - My best ideas often come to me when I'm out for a long walk or a jog, or when I'm engaged in some other kind of physical activity.
 - I often like to spend my free time outdoors.
 - I frequently use hand gestures or other forms of body language when conversing with someone.
 - I need to touch things in order to learn more about them.
 - I enjoy daredevil amusement rides or similar thrilling physical experiences.
 - I would describe myself as well coordinated.
 - I need to practice a new skill rather than simply reading about it or seeing a video that describes it.
- Other Body/Kinesthetic Strengths:*

Interpersonal Intelligence

- I'm the sort of person that people come to for advice and counsel at work or in my neighborhood.
 - I prefer group sports like badminton, volleyball, or softball to solo sports such as swimming and jogging.
 - When I have a problem, I'm more likely to seek out another person for help than attempt to work it out on my own.
 - I have at least three close friends.
 - I favor social pastimes such as Monopoly or bridge over individual recreations such as video games and solitaire.
 - I enjoy the challenge of teaching another person, or groups of people, what I know how to do.
 - I consider myself a leader (or others have called me that).
 - I feel comfortable in the midst of a crowd.
 - I like to get involved in social activities connected with my work, church, or community.
 - I would rather spend my evenings at a lively party than stay at home alone.
- Other Interpersonal Strengths:*

Intra-personal Intelligence

- I regularly spend time alone meditating, reflecting, or thinking about important life questions.
 - I have attended counseling sessions or personal growth seminars to learn more about myself.
 - I am able to respond to setbacks with resilience.
 - I have a special hobby or interest that I keep pretty much to myself.
 - I have some important goals for my life that I think about on a regular basis.
 - I have a realistic view of my strengths and weaknesses (borne out by feedback from other sources).
 - I would prefer to spend a weekend alone in a cabin in the woods rather than at a fancy resort with lots of people around.
 - I consider myself to be strong willed or independent minded.
 - I keep a personal diary or journal to record the events of my inner life.
 - I am self-employed or have at least thought seriously about starting my own business.
- Other Intra-personal Strengths:*

Logical/Mathematical Intelligence

- I can easily compute numbers in my head.
 - Math and/or science were among my favorite subjects in school.
 - I enjoy playing games or solving brainteasers that require logical thinking.
 - I like to set up little “what if” experiments (i.e. “What if I double the amount of water I give my rosebush each week?”)
 - My mind searches for patterns, regularities, or logical sequences in things.
 - I'm interested in new developments in science.
 - I believe that almost everything has a rational explanation.
 - I sometimes think in clear abstract, wordless, imageless concepts.
 - I like finding logical flaws in things that people say and do at home and work.
 - I feel more comfortable when something has been measured, categorized, analyzed, or quantified in some way.
- Other Logical/Mathematical Strengths:*

Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence

- I have a pleasant singing voice.
 - I can tell when a musical note is off-key.
 - I frequently listen to music on the radio, cassette tapes or compact discs.
 - I play a musical instrument.
 - My life would be poorer if there were no music in it.
 - I sometimes catch myself walking around with a jingle or other tune running through my mind.
 - I can easily keep time to a piece of music with a simple percussion instrument.
 - I know the tunes to many different songs or music pieces.
 - If I hear a musical selection once or twice, I am usually able to sing it back fairly accurately.
 - I often make tapping sounds or sing little melodies while working, studying, or learning something new.
- Other Musical/Rhythmic Strengths:*

Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence

- Books are very important to me.
 - I can hear words in my head before I read, speak, or write them down.
 - I get more out of listening to the radio or a spoken-word cassette than I do from television or films.
 - I enjoy word games like Scrabble, Boggle, Anagrams, or Password.
 - I enjoy entertaining myself or others with tongue twisters, nonsense rhymes, or puns.
 - Other people sometimes have to stop and ask me to explain the meaning of the words I use in my writing and speaking.
 - English, social studies, and history were easier for me in school than math and science.
 - When I drive down a freeway, I pay more attention to the words written on signs than to the scenery.
 - My conversation includes frequent references to things that I've read or heard.
 - I've written something recently that I was particularly proud of or that earned me recognition from others.
- Other Verbal/Linguistic Strengths:*

Visual/Spatial Intelligence

- I often see clear visual images when I close my eyes.
 - I'm sensitive to color.
 - I frequently use a camera or camcorder to record what I see around me.
 - I enjoy doing jigsaw puzzles, mazes, and other visual puzzles.
 - I have vivid dreams at night.
 - I can generally find my way around unfamiliar
- Continued from p. 6.*

territory.

- I like to draw or doodle.
- Geometry was easier for me than algebra in school.
- I can comfortably imagine how something might appear if it were looked down upon from directly above in a bird's-eye view.
- I prefer looking at reading material that is heavily illustrated.

Other Visual/Spatial Strengths:

Your Summary:

How many items did you check in each section above?

- Body/Kinesthetic Intelligence
- Interpersonal Intelligence
- Intra-personal Intelligence
- Logical/Mathematical Intelligence
- Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence
- Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence
- Visual/Spatial Intelligence

Complete the Table:

From your above tally, list your top three highest scoring intelligences. Refer to pages 9-10, the list of learning techniques, and choose several that would take advantage of each of the listed intelligences.

MY 3 STRONGEST INTELLIGENCES	LEARNING TECHNIQUE

Intra-personal Intelligence

- Write summaries of your learning.
- Make audio recordings of summaries of your learning.
- Keep a journal.
- Relate or translate the information to something personal.
- When reading, pause occasionally to ask questions of the text and summarize or apply the text for yourself.

Logical/Mathematical Intelligence

- Develop systems and find patterns in the materials.
- Use symbols to represent concepts and objects.
- Write outlines: Organize your materials logically.
- Create diagrams and graphs.
- Make a flow chart that expresses what you are learning in a step-by-step manner.

(Traditional classroom learning tends to favor this intelligence.)

Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence

- Set words you want to memorize to a familiar tune (Example: pre-schoolers sing the days of the week to the tune of “Alouetta.”)
- Create rhythms out of words.
- Study near your classroom, with the environmental sounds that surround your class providing later cues for remembering.
- Play background music when you study (try to select songs that represents what you are learning - classical music has been proven to stimulate the emotional center on the brain).

Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence

- Write a limerick or other poem to help you remember a key idea.
- Rewrite notes.
- Outline chapters.
- Paraphrase what you have heard.
- Write scripts and debates.

(Traditional classroom learning tends to favor this intelligence.)

Visual/Spatial Intelligence

- Create diagrams that summarize ideas and show their relationships to each other.
- Create posters that represent key concepts and post them in your study area.
- Find video formats of the information you want to learn.
- Use color in notes to organize them and highlight important links.
- Look at the person who is speaking; it will help you focus.

Comprehension Questions:

Items 5-11 list learning activities. For each activity, fill in the name of the intelligence that corresponds to that activity. Use each of these only once: Body/Kinesthetic,

Interpersonal, Intra-personal, Logical/Mathematical, Musical/Rhythmic, Verbal/Linguistic, Visual/Spatial.

5. Make diagrams that express the relationships among concepts, ideas, entities.

6. Meet with a study group to review material together. _____

7. Work the information to be remembered into a familiar tune. _____

8. Build a model. _____

9. Keep a journal of your learning and new insights. _____

10. Put information into your own words. _____

11. Outline information to show its organization. _____

Answers:

5-Visual/Spatial; 6-Interpersonal; 7-Musical/Rhythmic; 8-Body/Kinesthetic; 9-Intra-personal; 10-Verbal/Linguistic; 11-Logical/Mathematical. See Discussion of Review Questions, p. 42-46.

2. Preparing to Study: A Good Study Place

Focus Question:

What are the qualities of a quality study area?

In college, I always chose the most uncomfortable study areas in the library, thinking that this would prevent me from falling asleep as I read my assignments. As it turned out, sitting in a hard straight chair, in a dim and isolated part of the library didn't stop me from snoozing. Finally, I realized that I actually needed to be comfortable in order to study well: this meant finding a cozy couch, preferably by a window so that I could occasionally look outside. Once my body was relaxed but alert, my mind was ready to absorb the reading.

Whatever location you choose as your study base, how you set up your study area can affect your ability to stay focused and, if you aren't careful, seriously inhibit quality study time. You need a good study place to be prepared to study: where you study will influence *how* you will be able to study.

You should be able to answer YES to all of the following questions:

1. Is my Study Place available to me whenever I need it?

Your Study Place does you little good if you cannot use it when you need it. If you are using a Study Place that you must share with others for any reason, work out a schedule so that you know when you can use it.

2. Is my Study Place free from interruptions?

It is important to have uninterrupted study time. You may have to hang a DO NOT DISTURB sign on the door or take the phone off the hook.

3. Does my Study Place contain all the study materials I need?

Be sure your Study Place includes reference sources and supplies such as pens and pencils, paper, ruler, calculator, and whatever else you might need. If you use a computer for your schoolwork, it should be in your Study Place.

4. Does my Study Space contain a large enough desk or table?

While working on an assignment or studying for a test, use a desk or table that is large enough to hold everything you need. Allow enough room for writing and try to avoid clutter.

5. Does my Study Place have enough storage space?

You need enough room to store your study materials. Be sure you have enough storage space to allow you to keep your desktop or other work surface clear of unnecessary materials that can get in the way.

6. Does my Study Place have a comfortable chair?

A chair that is not comfortable can cause discomfort or pain that will interfere with your studying. A chair that is too comfortable might make you sleepy. Select a chair in which you can sit for long periods while maintaining your attention.

7. Does my Study Place have enough light?

The amount of light you need depends on what you are doing. It is important for you to be able to clearly see without any strain or discomfort.

8. Does my Study Place have a comfortable temperature?

If your Study Place is too warm, you might become sleepy. If it is too cold, your thinking may slow down and become unclear. Select a temperature at which your mind and body function best.

Having a Study Place that gives you Yes answers to the above questions is important for good studying.

Comprehension Question

12. Which of these is unimportant in finding, creating or choosing a place to study?
- A. The temperature of the place.
 - B. The furniture of the place.
 - C. The quality of the stereo in the place.
 - D. The ability to control interruptions in the place.

Answers:

12-C. See Discussion of Review Questions, p. 42-46.

3. Study Habits

Focus Question:

What are my old study habits?

At this point, you now know yourself better as a learner and have ideas for how to best use your unique set of learning strengths. You may be able to form some new learning-productive habits using the strategies you have considered. Now we are going to look at old habits: What are your current practices related to study, such as scheduling, concentration, reading and note-taking? Are there practices that

you can adjust to make your investments in learning more profitable? The Study Skills Checklist on the next page will help you answer these questions for yourself.

Do the **Study Skills Checklist** now.

Time Management

Focus Questions:

How can I overcome procrastination?

Procrastination (Study Skills Checklist #1-2)

If your study practice is to cram the night before a big test, or to wait until the last day to write that 20-page paper, you have probably been procrastinating!

We procrastinators have good reasons for putting off our assignments (or at least reasons, if not good ones).

The Inner Workings of Procrastination

A = *Activating Event*. The activating event is whatever you are putting off, such as studying, tests or unpleasant tasks.

B = *Belief System*. These are your "hidden" feelings about the task; your feelings govern your motivation. If you have negative feelings, you will tend to put off or delay. These feelings control your response.

C = *Consequence*. This is what we actually do. There are two approaches: rational and irrational. A rational response is "I don't like writing papers at all, but I had better get going on it anyway." An irrational approach is "I hate writing papers, and even though it's due next week, I'll start it later."

The fact is, all tasks are really neutral. Examine your belief system, understand why you dislike the task, and then change your way of thinking.

The table on page 14 identifies some of the reasons we procrastinate as well as some strategies you can adopt to help you slay the procrastination giant.

Study Skills Checklist

The purpose of this inventory is to find out about your current study habits and attitudes. Read each statement and consider how it applies to you. If it *does* apply to you, check **Y**. If it *does not* apply to you, check **N**.

Time Management

1. Y__ N__ I usually spend hours cramming the night before an exam.
2. Y__ N__ When my teachers assign papers I feel so overwhelmed that I can't get started.
3. Y__ N__ If I spend as much time on my other commitments as I need to, I don't have enough time left to study, or when I study enough, I don't have time for my other commitments.

Concentration

4. Y__ N__ I usually try to study with the radio and TV turned on.
5. Y__ N__ I go to class, but I usually doodle, daydream, or fall asleep.
6. Y__ N__ I can't sit and study for long periods of time without becoming tired or distracted.

Note-Taking

7. Y__ N__ My class notes are sometimes difficult to understand later.
8. Y__ N__ I usually seem to get the wrong material into my class notes.
9. Y__ N__ I don't review my class notes periodically throughout the semester in preparation for tests.

Reading

10. Y__ N__ When I get to the end of a chapter, I can't remember what I've just read.
11. Y__ N__ I don't know how to pick out what is important in the text.
12. Y__ N__ I often find myself getting lost in the details of reading and have trouble identifying the main ideas.
13. Y__ N__ I rarely change my reading speed in response to the difficulty level of the selection, familiarity with the content, or my purpose for reading.
14. Y__ N__ I often wish that I could read faster.

In the rest of this module we'll be responding to the items in this checklist. You'll want to pay special attention to the material related to the items you answered with a **Yes**.

REASON FOR PROCRASTINATING	ACTIONS TO TAKE
Complex projects often seem daunting and cause many people to procrastinate.	When faced with a project that seems overwhelming in its complexity, break the project down into smaller steps and tackle each step individually.
Projects that are viewed as being unpleasant can be the victim of procrastination.	While many will tackle an enjoyable task, they may consistently delay working on tasks that are less appealing. Although not all tasks are enjoyable, they still need to be completed. To avoid procrastinating in this situation, try implementing a reward system for the completion of an unpleasant task.
The inability to prioritize contributes to procrastination.	Those who cannot view the tasks at hand and place them into different categories based on their level of importance sometimes have difficulty getting anything done. They constantly switch from one task to another. Instead, list of all of your tasks and rank them in order of importance. Then set a goal of completing a certain number of tasks in the next four hours. After four hours, evaluate your progress and reassess the situation based on the remaining tasks.
The inability to make decisions contributes to procrastination.	Many people simply spend too much time trying to make decisions about their projects. While it is important to weigh your options carefully and make informed decisions, too much time spent trying to make a decision can delay a project. To avoid this problem, set aside some time each day specifically for making decisions. Set a timeline to complete the decision-making process. This will encourage you to use your time wisely and reach a decision quickly.
A fear of failure causes some people to procrastinate.	Some people will subconsciously delay the completion of a project because they are nervous about the reaction that their project will elicit. One way to combat this is to visualize yourself succeeding in the project and imagine the steps that you will need to take in order to succeed. Once you have visualized the steps, it is time to act on them.
Distractions are a major cause of procrastination.	Sometimes the temptation to engage in conversation with your co-workers, play games or do other non-work related tasks can be sources of procrastination. Set up your workspace to minimize distractions. Schedule time to talk with your co-workers to prevent procrastination and keep your project on schedule.

An Insight

Procrastination is self-reinforcing - every time you delay, it reinforces your negative attitude toward that task. Every time you put off something you dislike, you:

1. strengthen the habit of not doing;
2. practice avoidance instead of participation;
3. avoid acquiring training and skills, and
4. indoctrinate yourself with fears.

Active participation in anything tends to give you a positive attitude toward that activity; inactivity helps acquire an unfavorable attitude. In other words, the reason you dislike calculus is because it's hanging over your head, worrying you. Since you haven't acquired skills in it, you can't do the assignments, so why try? Also, there's a test coming up soon, and you MUST do well on it -- except you know you can't. Suddenly everything seems terribly unfair (class is too hard) and you become angry towards the teacher (he goes too fast, and he seems indifferent to my struggles.) The truth is, the sooner you get involved in your studies, the better you will feel.

Steps to the Cure

1. Realize you are delaying something unnecessarily.
2. Discover the real reasons for your delay. List them.
3. Dispute those real reasons and overcome them. Be vigorous.
4. Begin the task.

Practice What You've Learned

- Think of one thing you are currently procrastinating in, and write it on the line below. It might be personal, school or work-related.
- Now write all the reasons for your delay. This may take five or ten minutes because some of them are really hidden from you. These reasons are the controlling influences. Write down as many as possible.
- In the "Arguments Against Delay" column, argue against all the reasons for delay in a convincing manner. If you can argue against them successfully, you will be able to start the task.

I'm delaying on ____ because

Reasons for Delay	Arguments Against Delay
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____

3. _____

4. _____

Comprehension Questions:

13. Which of these is part of stepping out of the procrastination cycle?

- I. Realize you are doing other more important things.
 - II. Discover the real reasons for your delay.
 - III. Dispute those real reasons and overcome them.
 - IV. Begin the task.
- A. I
B. IV
C. II and III
D. II, III, and IV.
E. All of them.

Answer:
13-D. See Discussion of Quiz, p. 42-46.

Balance and Priorities (Study Skills Checklist #3)

Focus Question:

What practical steps must I take to make sure the "small decisions" of how I use my time add up to the things that are most important to me?

Adopting New Priorities

For some of us the old saying is true: "You know the tree by its fruit." That is, if you want to know what is most important to an individual, look at his life to see how he spends his time, money, and emotional investments. To some degree, this is true for us all. Our lifestyles indicate our core values.

On the other hand, we have old habits. "I always turn on the TV after dinner," for example. If you are working through a change in your life – if you are returning to formal study after some time away from school – then your lifestyle might not demonstrate some of your most important values. Your priorities have been shifting, but your habits may not have shifted with you yet. You have new elements to fit into the 168-hours-per-week of your life: classes and study. Without a very conscious and deliberate plan, your old habits can cripple your ability to successfully take on your current priorities.

To live out your priority of study, consider these suggestions:

- **Set up routines** in your week. Schedule blocks of time when you will study.
- **Make plans** for what you will work on during each study session. Write it into your schedule for the day.

- **Begin studying** when you plan to begin studying. For many people, starting is the hardest part.
- **Learn to say “no”** to other activities during designated study times. Set at least some of your regular study times as “appointments” that you will break only in the gravest emergency.

This is really a matter of being true to yourself. You have enrolled in classes because you have a life goal you want to achieve. You can achieve that goal – but not without some effort. Let your investments of time reflect your greatest priorities.

Challenges to Balance: Studying With Kids

I admit it. Simply clarifying your priorities and scheduling study time is not enough when you have other very important priorities for your time and attention. Arguably, few priorities can rank higher than that of effectively raising one’s children. Here are some strategies for playing the double-role of student and parent. These suggestions come from people who have walked that tightrope.

If **your child is a “napper,”** then your blocks of study time are clear. Some student parents have found themselves more efficient in their studies because they knew they had only an hour and a half of uninterrupted time. It forced them to concentrate on the most important and most demanding tasks.

If your children are older, **plan activities** to keep them occupied during your study times. Consider setting routines like “Monday is Clay Day” during your study time. For kids an activity can become “special” just because it is part of a routine. Some of your study times could even become “Family Homework Time” when the kids work on their school assignments at the same time you do.

Focus your attention on the kids before you start your study time. The more occupied you are with work and school, the more the kids will miss you. Sometimes, though, spending five minutes talking with or playing with your child before your study time begins will satisfy their appetite for your attention for a while. They’ll be better able to play on their own. End the conversation setting expectations for the child: “I’m going to start studying now. I’ll talk to you again when the little hand is on the seven.”

Use the television as a babysitter. While many of you will have a problem with this — it’s one that I and my 11-year-old deal with weekly, if not daily — it may be the lesser of two evils. And you can certainly rent (or tape) enough quality shows so you don’t have to worry about the little darlings watching street gangs bash skulls in (or bashing skulls themselves on some video game system).

Adjust your expectations. Even with other diversions planned, you might not be able to get more than 20 minutes of study before being interrupted by your kids. Plan your study tasks with this in mind. If you have some tasks that require longer periods of intense concentration, consider scheduling those for times you know

the kids will be asleep, the kids will be out of the house, or you will be out at the library, café or other study place.

During those inevitable interruptions, consider **taking a short break** – turning completely away from your work and toward your child for three minutes. An intense dose of attention might satisfy the child’s appetite for another hour!

Get help from your spouse. Ask your spouse to occupy the kids during one of your study ties. This was my wife’s favorite strategy while she was completing her degree. Monday night became “Library Night” for me and my son, and Saturday morning was “Dad & James to the Park Day.” These routines guaranteed my wife that two of her blocks of study time in the week would be free of interruption from our son.

Share child care with another parent. If you are in a class, you might find another student with children who will be able to team up with you in an exchange of child care.

Challenges to Balance: Managing a Commute

Your home, your workplace, your school: These three might be a good distance apart from each other. When traffic is bad or when the trains are off schedule, it can feel like your time is draining like water through a sieve. How can you make the best of your travel time? Here are some suggestions:

Try to **avoid heavy traffic times.** If possible, adjust your class and work schedules to keep you off the roads when they are slowest.

Plan to arrive at school a **half hour before class** and stay a half hour after class. This might help you stay out of heavier traffic. It can also provide you some good study times before and after class. And, if things do move more slowly than expected, you are less likely to stress out about arriving late.

Carry your class materials with you to read during the wait and the ride on transit.

Get permission from instructors to **make audio recordings** of class sessions to listen to during your commute.

Mentally rehearse the content of a class meeting on your way home or on your way to the next class meeting.

Unless you have unusually strong powers of concentration, use your commute time for **less intense activities** such as reviewing material or planning/scheduling some of your projects.

Exchange cell **phone numbers** with some of your classmates. If you are running late, it can be helpful for someone in the class to know. Your classmate can save

you copies of any handouts, or, if appropriate, inform the instructor that you are on the way.

Comprehension Questions:

14. Which of these would not be considered a good habit for an adult participating in a training program while holding a full-time job and caring for a family?
- A. Begin studying whenever you feel like it.
 - B. Learn to say "no" to other activities
 - C. Make plans for what you will work on during each study session.
 - D. Schedule blocks of time when you will study.
15. T F It can be helpful to give the kids lots of attention before you start studying.
16. What advantage would a busy student gain if she planned to arrive to class a half hour before the starting time?
- A. She would be less likely to stress out if she experiences a delay in her commute.
 - B. She would have more time away from her family.
 - C. If she arrives early she has time to socialize.
 - D. Arriving early might force her to travel in heavy commute times.

Answers:

14-A; 15-T; 16-A. See Discussion of Quiz, p. XX

Concentration (Study Skills Checklist #4-6)

Focus Question:

How can I improve my ability to concentrate during my study sessions and in class?

Your ability to concentrate, to focus on your study tasks, will very directly impact the benefit you get from each hour you study. As a general rule, set aside a specific time to begin studying. Behavior usually is habitual if it takes place at the same time every day. If you examine your day carefully, you'll find that you tend to do certain things at predictable times. While there may be changes from day to day, aspects of your behavior are habitual and time controlled. It might feel like these habits are engrained in stone: actually, with conscious attention, time-controlled behavior is fairly easy to change. The point is that if you can make studying, or at least some of your studying, habitual, it will be a lot easier to start. And we all know, starting is usually the hardest part.

To set yourself off on the right foot, don't start any unfinished business just before the time to start studying. Most people tend to think about jobs they haven't finished or obligations they have to fulfill much more than things that they have done and gotten out of the way. Uncompleted activities tend to be remembered much longer than completed ones. If we apply that idea to the habit of daydreaming, you might suspect that uncompleted activities and obligations would be more likely to crop up as a source of daydreaming than completed ones. Therefore, when you know you're about to start studying because it's the time you select to begin, don't get involved in long discussions. Try to be habitual with the

time you start, and be careful what you do before you start studying. This can be one way to improve your ability to concentrate.

White Noise: Studying with the radio and TV turned on.

Before I say, "Turn off the TV," let me acknowledge a few notions to the contrary. First, the human brain has a huge capacity to process more input than we realize. Second, there is great diversity among human beings, and some people truly can concentrate better when their environment is filled with "white noise" (a constant level of noise as background sound to cover up distracting sounds). Third, some study tasks require more or less concentration than others.

That said, let me encourage the person who plays the radio or TV during most of their study time to experiment a little:

For the tasks requiring the most concentration, such as "study reading" described later in this module, try turning off the radio or TV. Keep it off when you are in the early stages of writing a paper and organizing your thoughts. You might turn it back on again when you are working on tasks that require less concentration, such as printing out a late draft of your paper. Try working in silence during your most mentally challenging tasks for several weeks. This training can strengthen your ability to concentrate.

For your white noise craving, try out some sounds that might be different from the music that was big when you were twenty. There is actually research indicating that baroque music affects the brain in particular ways that enhance certain kinds of learning. (Bach, Handel, Vivaldi are among the most famous baroque composers.) You could also try listening to natural sound recordings such as wind blowing, rain falling, or surf crashing. You might pick up a small desktop water feature that will give your study spot the soft sounds of water pattering around. Any of these alternatives can occupy your ears and block out the undesirable sounds coming from the neighbors, while not distracting you from the work at hand.

Endurance: "I can't sit and study for long periods of time."

There's nothing wrong with taking a break whenever you feel you need to keep yourself sharp and maximize your quality study time, as long as the breaks aren't every five minutes and don't last longer than the study periods! In general, try to increase your concentration through practice so that you can work at least an hour before getting up, stretching, and having a drink or snack. Many projects will require at least that long to "get into" or organize, and you may find that breaking too frequently will require too much review time when you return to your desk.

Now let me contradict part of what I've just said and talk about micro-breaks. A colleague of mine sometimes says, "The human body was never intended to sit still so long." Standing up every twenty minutes, or even more frequently, is good for circulation and posture. When you see the word *circulation*, think about blood

moving to the brain. When you see the word *posture*, consider back health and the ability to sit at all. Similarly, you will avoid eye-strain by looking away from your books or computer screen for just a few seconds every several minutes. Part of what causes eye-strain is the tension of holding the eye's lens in one position (to focus on close work) for an extended period of time. Momentarily focusing on something across the room, out the window, or on nothing will prevent fatigue. You'll be able to work longer.

In my work setting, I use my phone as a reminder of these things. When my phone rings, I stand up and look away from my work. At such transition points, I often go to the break room and chug down a tall glass of water, then return immediately to my desk. I give my body what it needs: movement, rest for the eyes, and water to help all my physical and mental processes work more effectively. These micro-breaks, **just a few seconds long**, are part of maintaining long-term health and short-term attentiveness .

Distraction in Class: Doodling, daydreaming, or falling asleep.

Does your attention tend to drift off during class? Here are some possible reasons for wandering minds:

You are tired.

You might find yourself zoning out in class after a particularly hard day in the work or family departments. That can happen to any of us once in a while. If your lack of focus becomes chronic – that is, it happens during almost every class meeting – then you have a larger problem. It is a real impediment to your success in class and to ultimately reaching your goals. If you are a chronic zoner, keep reading....

You are sleep-deprived.

How much sleep are you getting on a regular basis? Your body repairs itself during sleep. Sleep scientists say that most of us need a full seven to eight hours of sleep each day for that maintenance work to be completed. Few of us can get by in the long haul with only six hours of sleep per day. Check your schedule. Are you getting less than seven to eight hours of sleep per day? If so, are there activities you can weed out of your schedule to allow your body to do its required maintenance? For example, how many nights a week do you need to watch the 11 o'clock news? Are there alternatives you could take to stay informed, such as catching the news on the radio during a commute?

You are hungry.

If your body does not have enough fuel, it will not function effectively. Your brain is part of your body. An undernourished brain can quickly become dull, losing the sharp edge required for the higher brain functions related to learning. Is your schedule so tight you have left out a meal or two from your daily routine? Make a plan for getting something nutritious into your body in the hour or two before class.

You have experienced stressful events in life.

If you have lost a loved one or gone through a breakup of a marriage, for example, your ability to concentrate will certainly be compromised. Events of such magnitude can affect you off and on for as much as a year. Even smaller stressful events can affect your ability to concentrate as well. (A friend told me a story about getting a traffic ticket while rushing to get to class on time. She wasn't late for class, but she really should have missed the session. She got nothing out of it. Her encounter with the police officer had rattled her so much that she was completely distracted all evening.) If you have experienced a large loss in life, coping with the change will require much of your energy. You may need to slow down and reduce your commitments. You may even need to re-evaluate whether you should invest time and finances in study right now. This is a difficult decision. You might enlist the help of one of your most empathetic friends as you consider what is best for your overall sense of well-being.

The content of the course seems irrelevant.

You tune in for a sentence or two of the lecture. And then tune out again. "Why in the world is he still talking about that?" you wonder, as you resume drawing row after row of little tiny squares around the edge of your notepaper. When you signed up for this class, you thought it would help you do something new in your life. Now this lecture seems completely unrelated to your goal. What do you do? As a teacher, I honestly admit that sometimes I can get a bit off topic during class. I admit, too, that we teachers do not always make clear connections among the current discussion, the overall course theme, and your life goal. You owe it to yourself to make these links very clear in your own mind. A conversation with the teacher may help in this regard, whether you ask in private during a break or after class, or if you raise the question respectfully in the course of class discussion. You may find that the teacher of the pharmacy technician training course is completely off topic when discussing resume development. Or you may learn that you missed a very good reason for devoting some class time to the topic of resumes. Asking the question humbly and respectfully can benefit you, the instructor and your fellow students who might also have been missing the relevance.

Your note-taking skills need improvement.

Sometimes a lecture will seem like just so much blah-blah-blah that goes nowhere. You will be able to better pay attention to a class discussion if you give yourself a task to do: write about what you are hearing and seeing. Stay tuned for more on this very important set of skills later in this module.

You need a new perspective in the classroom.

Here is one last tip to keep yourself attentive in class. If it is permitted, try sitting in a different seat each class meeting. Shifting your perspective from one side of the room to the other can help keep the class stimulating and fresh. Because most people tend to sit in the same place during a course, you may become better acquainted with more of your classmates – an extra plus.

Comprehension Questions:

17. T F You should not listen to music or have the TV on while you are studying.
18. T F Looking up from your work at some distant object for a few seconds every once in a while can help you study longer.
19. What responsible action might you take if the content of class seems irrelevant?
A. Use the time for more important activities, such as balancing your checkbook.
B. Use the time to plan your study sessions for the coming week.
C. Read the class textbook to discover why the teacher has brought up this topic.
D. Ask the teacher questions about how the information is related to other parts of the course.

Answers:

17-F; 18-T; 19-D. See Discussion of Review Questions, p. 42-46.

4. Reading Strategies (Study Skills Checklist # 10-14)

Focus Questions:

What skills does a good reader use?
What reading strategies are appropriate for each reading purpose?

The *Study Skills Inventory* asked about your reading practices. Because there are many skills to consider in these areas, we should first focus on this fundamental question: What is my purpose in reading this text? To understand how to answer this question, let's take a look at the reading process.

Text As Conversation Partner

Your friend Pam comes over. You sit in the comfortable chairs of your front room and catch up

- YOU: How are things with Chelsea?
PAM: She's been kind of weird lately, to tell you the truth. I mean, I think she's been staying clean, but she still seems kind of morose and aloof.
YOU: Quiet, huh?
PAM: Yeah, quiet, and she seems pretty down. I've been wondering if some kind of change would help her. I've been thinking about Wunderbridge.
YOU: What is Wunderbridge?
PAM: Wunderbridge Academy. It's a residential school over in the valley. They are really strict, but they also do a lot of arts across the curriculum.
YOU: Chelsea would like the arts part.

This simple conversation demonstrates a few of the skills used by highly proficient readers.

- Good readers begin by bringing to mind **what they already know** about the subject they are reading about. (You knew Chelsea was Pam's daughter.)
- Good readers **ask questions** of the text based on what they already know. ("How's Chelsea?")
- Good readers periodically **stop to summarize** what they have read. ("Quiet, huh?")
- Good readers ask questions to **seek clarification** when they don't understand something. ("Wunderbridge?")
- Good readers **connect** new information with what they already know. (You previously knew that Chelsea enjoys art. You connect new information, that Wunderbridge uses lots of art, to your previous information, "Chelsea would like the arts part.")

A class textbook may not feel like a friend, but it can still be a conversation partner. The text might dominate the conversation, as indeed Pam did above. But the text will not monopolize the conversation if you are reading effectively.

You may already have the conversational skills needed to perform with a live person as effectively as in the dialog above. Transferring those skills to use with a conversation partner who is ink on paper may not be too difficult.

Before you begin your next reading assignment, identify your **purpose** for reading. Decide if you are

- reading for a high level of comprehension,
- trying to get a general idea about what you are reading, or
- looking for specific information.

Then use the reading style that is appropriate for your reading purpose.

Study Reading: High Comprehension

This approach to reading is appropriate if your purpose is to digest a large chunk (say, a chapter of a textbook) that is complex or in a field that is very new to you. You will work through several steps in this reading process, and your notepad will be next to your book through each step.

Preview

What is the title of this chapter? What do you think the reading will be about? In a few words, jot down a preliminary chapter summary statement. You might discover after further reading, that you need to change your summary. That's OK. It is valuable to anticipate what will be said, to make predictions. This will help you to engage in the reading and become an active reader.

Flip through the chapter page by page. Read the headings of the various sections. Look at diagrams, pictures or charts, and read their captions. Do not read the paragraphs and sentences of the chapter itself. Does the end of the chapter have study aids such as comprehension questions or a chapter outline? Review these

briefly, but don't get stuck on vocabulary or other comprehension problems at this point. Remember, you are only previewing the chapter.

Now look again at your tentative summary statement. Do you need to change it, or does your prediction still hold? Adjust the summary statement if you need to.

Next, ask yourself, *How does this chapter relate to previous chapters of this book?* The way a textbook will build its knowledge base depends on the overall goal of the book. Some books take one slice of information and explore it in great depth, while others try to give a more comprehensive overview of a field.

Here are some examples of how the chapters of a book might be related:

- **Chronological Order:** Each chapter follows chronologically from the previous chapter (as in many history books).
- **Series:** The text's content flows from one topic to the next, covering each section with the same level of depth. The individual topics may or may not be related. (Body systems in a textbook for an anatomy/physiology course)
- **Sequential:** Complexity added to previous content of the text. For example, a book that describes one particular concept or idea.
- **Practical application of theoretical,** such as a car repair manual.

Setting the frame of reference for the chapter will help connect new information to previous information. You will be able to better remember what you have just read and apply the information to subsequent chapters. If new information is not connected somehow, it is likely to simply fall out of your head! Understanding the text's logical structure will actually make the text more meaningful as a whole.

Question

You need to have questions in your mind as you read. Questions give you a purpose for reading and help you stay focused on the reading assignment. The better the questions, the better your comprehension is likely to be.

Form questions by changing each chapter heading into a question. Use the words *who, what, when, where, why, or how* to form questions. For example, for the heading "Uses of Electricity" in a chapter about how science improves lives, you might form the question "What are some uses of electricity?" If a heading is stated as a question, use that question. When a heading contains more than one idea, form a question for each idea. Do not form questions for the Introduction, Summary, or Conclusion. You may always add further questions as you proceed. When your mind is actively searching for answers to questions it becomes engaged in learning.

Read

Study Reading is very different from simply reading the text. As you read, you will engage with the text by using your summary statement and questions you have created. While reading, fill in the information around the mental structures you've been building. Read each section with your questions in mind. Look for the answers and notice if you need to make up some new questions. As you do this, you may decide you need to change a question or turn it into several questions to be answered. Stay focused and flexible so you can gather as much information as you need to answer each question.

Write each question and its answer in your notebook. Reread each of your written answers to be sure each answer is legible and contains all the important information needed to answer the question. Writing will help you to better understand and remember what you have read. Studies have found that the physical action of writing actually encourages the brain to accept new information.

After each section, stop, recall your questions, and see if you can answer them from memory. If not, look back again (as often as necessary) but don't go on to the next section until you can recite the information. Once you've finished the entire chapter using the preceding steps, go back over all the questions from all the headings. See if you can still answer them. If not, look back and refresh your memory, then continue.

REMEMBER: The information you gather from reading is important. If you just go through the motions without learning something, you are wasting a lot of time. By using the Study Reading Style, you can train your mind to learn.

Skimming: The General Idea

Skimming is the reading style used when readers want to quickly obtain a general idea about the reading material. The Skimming Style is most useful when you have to read a large amount of material in a short amount of time. When using the Skimming Style, you should identify the main ideas in each paragraph and ignore the details in supportive sentences. Because you are only looking for the main idea in each paragraph you read, a lower level of comprehension is to be expected than when using the Study Reading Style.

Scanning: Specific Information

Scanning is the reading style used by readers when their purpose is to quickly locate a specific piece of information within reading material. The piece of information to be located may be contained in a list of names, words, numbers, short statements, and sometimes even in a paragraph. Since you know exactly what you are looking for, move

Registered Dietician Registered dietitians (RDs) have specialized training in the nutritional care of groups and individuals and have successfully completed an examination of the Commission on Dietetic Registration. Dietitians assist patients in regulating their diets. Although they are typically employed in hospitals and clinics, they can also be found working with the public in personal nutritional counseling. Education includes a
--

your eyes quickly over the reading material until you locate the specific piece of information you need to find.

Illustrating Skimming and Scanning

Let's illustrate these two reading skills using the text on the right.

To **skim** this text, you approach it with the general question, "What's the gist?" You would quickly look at each heading and the opening sentence of each paragraph. This would probably take only a few seconds. If you were taking notes, your notes might read, "What they do," or possibly "Responsibilities and training requirements."

You would **scan** this text if you came to it with a very specific question, such as, "What are the training requirements for a pharmacist?" You would disregard the information about Registered Dietitians, Pharmacy Technicians and Phlebotomists, once you saw the heading, Pharmacist. Your eyes would sift out words related to the key words in your questions, such as "training." Once you spot a key word in the text you slow down to see if the answer to your question is there. In this case, you find it: "...training for a pharmacist is a five-

year bachelor's degree...." With practice, the process can go very quickly because you get better at deciding which information is irrelevant to your question.

bachelor's degree with a major in dietetics, food and nutrition, or food service systems management in addition o completion of an approved internship.

Pharmacist

Pharmacists (RPh) are licensed by each state to prepare and dispense all types of medications, as well as medical supplies related to medication administration. They may practice in hospitals, medical centers, and pharmacies. The minimum training for a pharmacist is a five-year bachelor's degree; some pharmacists pursue a Doctor of Pharmacy degree (PharmD), which is offered by major universities in the United States.

Pharmacy Technician

Pharmacy technicians assist the pharmacist with preparation and administration of medications, as well as perform receptionist and billing duties. In hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living facilities, their responsibilities may include reading patient charts and preparing and delivering medications to patients. Pharmacists must check all orders before delivery. The technician can copy the information about the prescribed medication onto the patient's profile. Professional certification of pharmacy technicians varies from state to state and is administered by state pharmacy associations.

Phlebotomist

Phlebotomists (LPTs) are trained in the art of drawing blood for diagnostic laboratory testing. Phlebotomists are also referred to as laboratory liaison technicians. Phlebotomists may be nationally certified and are employed in medical clinics, hospitals, and laboratories. Training consists of on to two semesters in a community college program or on-the-job training.

Answer:

20-E. See Discussion of Review Questions, p. 42-46.

5. Note-Taking (Study Skills Checklist: # 7-9)

Focus Questions:

What are different techniques I might choose from in taking notes?

What actions can help me take lecture notes?

Traditional Hierarchical Notes

The notes from your study reading will provide you an outline of the text's content. When I was in elementary school, I remember the teacher trying to teach us how to outline. It seemed like a gobbledegook of Roman numerals and letters, and I couldn't understand its usefulness. Thirty-five years later, I recognize what we were supposed to do: The biggest ideas were labeled with Roman numerals, the sub-points under those were labeled with capital letters, then came Arabic numerals, and further details in lower case roman numerals and the smaller details still were labeled in lower case letters. By outlining information, you can create a tool to enhance your understanding of the material. The outline forces you to consider the relationship among the ideas that are presented to you in a reading (or in a lecture). The outline provides a hierarchical layering of information, from big sweeping ideas to details.

This way of note-taking works for well some learners. (Those whose strength is logical/mathematical intelligence will appreciate this kind of structure.) This is what a traditional outline of this module would look like:

Study Skills

I. Learning Styles and Preferences

A. Learning as an Adult

1. Learner responsibility
2. Life experiences
3. Task orientation
4. Suggestions for adult learners

B. Learning Styles

1. Auditory learners
2. Visual learners
3. Kinesthetic learners

C. Multiple Intelligences

1. Body/Kinesthetic Intelligence
2. Interpersonal Intelligence
3. Intra-personal Intelligence
4. Logical/Mathematical Intelligence
5. Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence
6. Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence
7. Visual/Spatial Intelligence

Comprehension Questions:

20. Which statements are true of Study Reading, Skimming and Scanning?

I. Scanning skills are useful in Study Reading.

II. Scanning is the best approach when a topic is new to you.

III. Skimming is the best approach for reading very complex material.

IV. Study Reading is the best approach to use when a text is organized chronologically.

A. I

B. I and II

C. I, II and III.

D. I, II, III, and IV

E. None of these.

8. Multiple Intelligences Inventory
9. Suggestions of study practices
 - a. Create gestures, pantomimes
 - b. Set ideas to music
 - ...(and so forth)

- II. A Good Place to Study
(...with details broken out as for I. above.)
- III. Study Habits
(...with details broken out as for I. above.)
- IV. Reading and Note-Taking
(...with details broken out as for I. above.)
- V. Lectures and Note-Taking
(...with details broken out as for I. above.)
- VI. Test-Taking
(...with details broken out as for I. above.)

A Note-Taking Alternative: Mapping

You may already have the habit of taking notes like that sample, with or without the "I.A.I.i.a." labels. But let me show you another way to capture for your own use the very same summary of information:

A popular alternative to outlining is called mind mapping or concept mapping. This method of organizing information is popular with visual and spatial learners because of the process of creating the map and the information's appearance on the page. How we think influences how and what we learn. Concept maps identify the way we think, the way we see relationships between knowledge. This form of note-making appeals to visual and spatial intelligences.

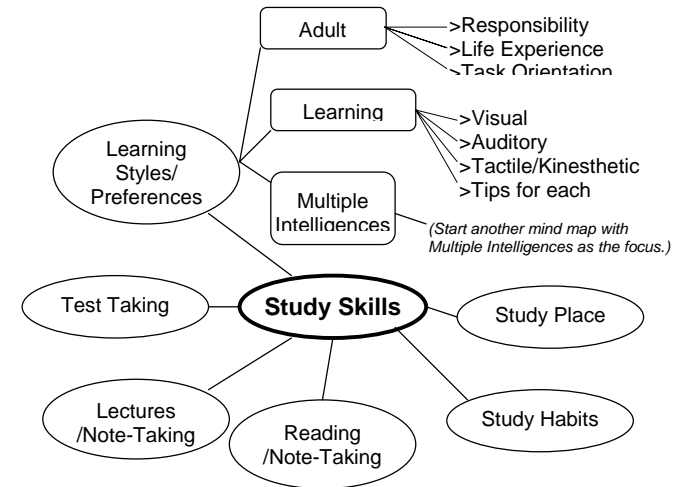
So, how do you create a mind map? First, reject the idea of an outline, or of paragraphs using sentences. **Think in terms of key words or symbols** that represent ideas and words.

You will need:

- a pencil (you'll be erasing!) and a blank (non-lined) big piece of paper
- a blackboard and (colored) chalk
- "post-it" notes

You can develop your map first on a blackboard or a wall and then transfer the information to a piece of paper, or you can work directly on the piece of paper. Remember, as you create your map, that there is no one way to diagram the information. By working this way, you may draw new connections and insights about the material.

A sample mind map follows. This mind map outlines this module about Study Skills. The half-page diagram doesn't capture all the valuable details of the module, but it clearly expresses the relationships among ideas.



Here are some steps to follow in order to create a mind map:

1. **Write down the most important word, short phrase or symbol for the center.**
Think about it; circle it.
2. If possible, use color to organize information.
3. Post other important concepts and their words outside the circle.
4. **Edit this first phase:** Think about the relation of outside items to the center item. Erase, edit, and/or shorten words to key ideas. Relocate important items closer to each other for better organization. Link concepts with words to clarify their relationships.
5. **Continue working outward.**
6. **Freely** and quickly add other key words and ideas (you can always erase!). Think weird: combine concepts to expand your map or break boundaries. Develop in directions the topic takes you--not limited by how you are doing the map. As you expand your map, tend to become more specific or detailed.
7. **Set the map aside. Later, continue development and revision.** Stop and think about relationships you are developing. Expand the map over time (right up to an exam if necessary!)

This map is your personal learning document. It combines what you knew with what you are learning and what you may need to complete your "picture".

Comprehension Questions

21. What is generally true about traditional, hierarchical note taking?
 A. It appeals to those who prefer a Tactile/Kinesthetic learning style.
 B. Smaller details of the information are indented further to the right.

- C. It is necessary to use Roman numerals.
D. It should not be used for taking notes of lectures.

22. Which of these is **false** about mind-mapping?

- A. The most important idea is written in the center of the paper.
B. As a more graphic representation of information, it will be more memorable to some learners.
C. More detailed information is written in the center of the mind-map.
D. Mind maps graphically depict the relationships among ideas.

Answers:

21-B, 22-C. See Discussion of Review Questions, p. 42-46.

Lectures & Note-Taking

Information presented in class often contains the central concepts of the course and the material most likely to be included on exams. Yet, students frequently do not realize the importance of note-taking and listening. Lecture notes can be a critical tool for preparing for exams.

Learning to make notes effectively will help you to improve your study and work habits and to remember important information. Often, students are deceived into thinking that because they **understand** everything that is said in class they will therefore remember it. This is dead wrong! Write it down.

Some students say that they plan to rewrite or type their notes later. To do so is to use a double amount of time. Once to take the original notes and a second to rewrite them. The advice is simple: **DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME!**

As you make notes, you will develop skill in selecting important material and in discarding unimportant material. The secret to developing this skill is practice. Check your results constantly. Strive to improve. Notes enable you to retain important facts and data and to develop an accurate means of arranging necessary information.

Here are some hints on note making.

1. Don't write down everything that you hear. Be alert and attentive to the main points. Concentrate on the "meat" of the subject and forget the trimmings.
2. Notes should consist of key words or very short sentences. If a speaker gets sidetracked it is often possible to go back and add further information.
3. Take accurate notes. You should usually use your own words, but try not to change the meaning. If you quote **directly** from a speaker, quote **correctly**.
4. Think a minute about your material before you start making notes. Don't take notes just to be taking notes! Take notes that will be of real value to you when you look over them at a later date.

5. Have a uniform system of punctuation and abbreviation that will make sense to you. Use a skeleton outline and show importance by indenting. Leave lots of white space for later additions.

6. Omit descriptions and full explanations. Keep your notes short and to the point. Condense your material so you can grasp it rapidly.

7. Don't worry about missing a point.

8. Don't keep notes on oddly shaped pieces of paper. Keep notes in order and in one place.

Comprehension Question:

23. Which of these is a recommended practice for taking lecture notes?

- A. Try to write as much as possible.
B. Only write down the things you do not understand.
C. Listen for the key ideas and write those ideas in short phrases.
D. Only write down the things you understand.

Answer:

23-C. See Discussion of Review Questions, p. 42-46.

6. Test-Taking

Focus Questions:

What techniques can help me prepare for an exam effectively?

How can I deal with "test anxiety?"

What strategies can I use when faced with various kinds of test questions?

From getting your driver's license to preparing for college, and now, too, in applying for many jobs, you have to be ready to take a test. For me, as soon as I hear that four-letter word, t-e-s-t, my knuckles whiten, my jaw clenches and I wonder, "Will I be able to pass?" Calming my anxiety will help me succeed; but more than that, there are specific ways to prepare for taking a test, starting from the very first day of class (as opposed to cramming the night before the exam). We will take a look at some general test prep tips as well as specific ways you can master different test formats.

General Test Prep Study Tips

1. Start preparing for your exams the first day of class. You can do this by reading your syllabus carefully to find out when your exams will be, how many there will be, and how much they are weighed into your grade.
2. Plan reviews as part of your regularly weekly study schedule; consequently, you review over the whole quarter rather than just at exam time.

3. Reviews are much more than reading and rereading all assignments. You need to read over your lecture notes and ask yourself questions on the material you don't know well. (If your notes are relatively complete and well organized, you may find that very little rereading of the textbook for detail is needed.) You may want to create a study group for these reviews to reinforce your learning.
4. Review for several short periods rather than one long period. You will find that you retain information better and get less fatigued.
5. Turn the main points of each topic or heading into questions and check to see if the answers come to you quickly and correctly. Try to predict examination questions and then outline your answers.
6. It may seem old-fashioned, but flashcards can be a helpful way to review in courses that have many unfamiliar terms. Review the cards in random order using only those terms that you have difficulty remembering.

Reducing Test Taking Anxiety

It's normal to be nervous right before an exam: you are being tested, after all. And a small dose of anxiety, by increasing adrenaline, can actually help you test well. Extreme test anxiety, when you excessively worry about doing well on a test, can be a problem. This can negatively impact your test performance by causing severe nervousness and memory lapses among other symptoms. In general, avoid worried test-takers. Remember, test anxiety is contagious and unproductive. The following are tips on reducing test-taking anxiety.

1. Being well prepared for the test is the best way to reduce test-taking anxiety.
2. Space out your studying over a few days or weeks, and continually review class material. Don't wait until the night before and try to learn everything the night before.
3. Keep a positive attitude while preparing for the test and during the test.
4. Exercising for a few days before the test will help reduce stress.
5. Get a good night's sleep before the test. Don't try to pull an all-nighter. Get at least 6 hours of sleep before the test.
6. Eat before a test. Having food in your stomach will give you energy and help you focus, but avoid heavy foods that can make you groggy.
7. Show up to the test early so you won't have to worry about being late.
8. Stay relaxed. If you begin to get nervous take a few deep breaths slowly to relax yourself and then get back to work.
9. Read the directions slowly and carefully. You can lose many points because you didn't follow the directions.
10. If you don't understand the directions on the test, ask the teacher to explain it to you.
11. Skim through the test so that you have a good idea how to pace yourself.
12. Write down important formulas, facts, definitions and/or keywords in the margin first so you won't worry about forgetting them.
13. Do the simple questions first to help build up your confidence for the harder questions. If your strength is essay questions, answer those first to

get the maximum points. Pace yourself to allow time for the more difficult parts.

14. Don't worry about how fast other people finish their test; just concentrate on your own test.
15. If you don't know a question skip it for the time being (come back to it later if you have time), and remember that you don't have to always get every question right to do well on the test.
16. Focus on the question at hand; don't let your mind wander on other things.
17. Save time at the end of the exam to review your test and make sure you haven't left out any answers or parts of answers. This is difficult to do under the stress of exams, but it often keeps you from making needless errors.

Comprehension Question:

24. Which of these is recommended in preparing for a test?
- A. Several shorter review sessions are usually more valuable than one long review session.
 - B. Preparing for a test should begin the week before the test.
 - C. Do not try to predict what questions will be on a test.
 - D. Because you have to take a test on your own, it is best to review for a test alone.

Answer:
24-A. See Discussion of Review Questions, p. 42-46.

Test Formats

Instructors use tests to measure how much students have learned. Unfortunately, tests also measure students' test-taking ability. This study guide outlines some successful test-taking skills. While these skills won't help if you don't know course material, they can keep you from losing points needlessly. In general, there are two basic formats for tests: objective and subjective. Examples of objective tests, ones in which there is only one correct answer, are: multiple choice, true-false, and fill-in-the-blank. Examples of subjective tests, ones in which there is a spectrum of correctness, are: short answer, essay, or oral exams. Each format requires a different set of skills; it is a good idea to be both familiar with the content and form of the test. Make sure to ask your instructor about the test's format.

Multiple Choice

Multiple choice questions usually include a prompt or stem followed by three to five options. Here is an example:

Choose the sentence that best states the role of a resume in your job search.

- A. A resume summarizes your work history.
- B. A resume can be circulated among employees at a business.
- C. A resume is an advertisement to help you get an interview.

D. A resume indicates your strengths as an employee.

To improve your odds in answering the question, you must think critically. Make sure to read the question before you choose your answer. (In the question above about resumes, all of the answers are potentially true, but one of them most directly answers the question.) Also, make sure to read all of the possible answers before making your selection. Usually the correct answer is the choice with the most information. Try using one of these strategies:

Cover each of the options, read the prompt, and try to answer the question on your own, without using the choices provided. Then, select the option that most closely matches your answer.

OR

Read the stem with each option. Which answer makes the most sense? Some of the answers you will be able to immediately eliminate as nonsensical. If allowed, mark words or alternatives in questions that eliminate the option. **Question options that grammatically don't fit with the stem or options that are totally unfamiliar to you. These are probably incorrect answers. Also, question options that contain negative or absolute words.**

OR

Treat each option as a true-false question, and choose the answer that is "most true". In "All of the above" and "None of the above" choices, if you are certain one of the statements is true don't choose "None of the above" or one of the statements are false don't choose "All of the above".

Here are some general tips to also keep in mind:

- **Number answers:**
Toss out the high and low and consider the middle range numbers.
- **"Look alike options":**
Probably one is correct. Choose the best answer but eliminate choices that mean basically the same thing, and thus cancel each other out.
- **Double negatives:**
Create the equivalent positive statement and then consider.
- **Echo options:**
If two options are opposite each other, chances are one of them is correct.
- **Favor options that contain qualifiers:**
The result is longer, more inclusive items that better fill the role of the answer.

- **If two alternatives seem correct,** compare them for differences, then refer to the stem to find your best answer.

If you are still unsure of the answer, and if there is no guessing penalty, always take an educated guess and select an answer. Remember: Don't keep on changing your answer. Usually, your first choice is the right one, unless you miss-read the question. **You are looking for the best answer,** not only a correct one, and not one which must be true all of the time, in all cases, and without exception.

True/False

With this format, you are asked to determine whether a statement is true or false. If you are not penalized for wrong answers, you should answer all true/false questions. You have a 50% chance of being correct! Also, bear in mind that there are usually more true than false answers on most tests.

T F Writing a good resume is the most important part of a job search.

Here are some helpful strategies to practice when taking a true/false test:

- If any part of the question is false, then the entire statement is false, but just because part of a statement is true doesn't necessarily make the entire statement true.
- Read to the end of the sentence. All information in a statement must be true for it to be marked true. If any detail is incorrect, the statement should be marked false.
- Read through each statement carefully, and pay attention to the qualifiers and keywords. Qualifiers like "never, always, and every" mean that the statement must be true all of the time. Usually these types of qualifiers lead to a false answer. Qualifiers like "usually, sometimes, and generally" mean that if the statement can be considered true or false depending on the circumstances. Usually these types of qualifiers lead to an answer of true.
- Exaggerated or complex statements are generally false.
- Statements that contain unfamiliar terminology are usually false.
- If you're unsure if a statement is true or false, mark it true.

Short Answer Tests

An instructor's primary purpose in giving a short-answer test is to cover the material. Go over your notes and the assigned reading. Try to categorize the material. Follow these suggestions when taking the test:

- Use **grammatical clues** within a statement as hints for the correct answer.
- A **guess made with common sense** could get you more test points than if you leave an answer blank. Don't be a smart aleck if you guess
- **Write your short answers in simple**, telegraphic sentences. Packing as much information as you can is more important than literary style.

The Essay Exam

When answering essay questions, remember that the objective is to demonstrate how well you can explain and support an idea, not just what you know. **Before writing out the exam, set up a time schedule to answer each question and to review/edit all your essays.** If six questions are to be answered in sixty minutes, allow yourself only seven minutes for each. If questions are "weighted", prioritize that into your time allocation for each question. When the time is up for one question, stop writing, leave space, and begin the next question. The incomplete answers can be completed during the review time. Six incomplete answers will usually receive more credit than three, complete ones. **Outline your answers: even if you don't have time to complete the answer, you will usually get points for the outline.**

Keep the following in mind:

- Read over all the essay questions before you start to write. **Note if you have any choice in answering questions.** Underline key words like *define, compare, explain, etc.*
- Answers will come to mind immediately for some questions. **Write down their key words**, listings, etc, as they are fresh in mind. Otherwise these ideas may be blocked (or be unavailable) when the time comes to write the later questions. This will reduce "clutching" or panic (anxiety, fear which disrupts thoughts).
- **Before attempting to answer a question, put it in your own words.** Now compare your version with the original. Do they mean the same thing? If they don't, you've misread the question. You'll be surprised how often they don't agree.
- **Think before you write.** Remember, a good answer:
 - Starts with a direct response to the question.
 - Mentions the topics or areas described in the question.
 - Provides specific as well as general information.
 - Uses the technical vocabulary of the course.
- Then map or outline the main points you want to make, determine the order in which you want to write your points, determine the support you want to add, then write. Teachers are influenced by compactness,

completeness and clarity of an organized answer. Writing in the hope that the right answer will somehow turn up is time-consuming and usually futile.

- Do not just assert something is true: **prove it.** What facts, figures, examples, tests, etc. prove your point? In many cases, the difference between an A and a B as a grade is due to the effective use of supporting evidence.
- **Qualify answers when in doubt.** It is better to say "toward the end of the 19th century" than to say "in 1894" when you can't remember, whether it's 1884 or 1894. In many cases, the approximate time is all that is wanted; unfortunately 1894, though approximate, may be incorrect, and will usually be marked accordingly.
- Write legibly. Leave some space so you can add to your answer, later. **Organization and neatness have merit.**
- Proofread your essay. Check for grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc. This often adds points! To know a little and to present that little well is, by and large, superior to knowing much and presenting it poorly--when judged by the grade received.

AFTER THE TEST

If the instructor reviews the exam in class, make sure you attend. Many students choose to skip class of the day of the review because "nothing is happening" that day. On the contrary, this is an important class to attend because it helps reinforce the information one more time in long-term memory. Even if you aren't interested in the "learning" aspect of the class, it is an opportunity to hear what the instructor was looking for in the answers. This can help you on the **NEXT** exam.

Comprehension Questions:

Job Application Exams

Be prepared for the possibility of taking an exam or test as part of the job interview process. You may not know ahead of time that you will be tested. However, being asked to take a test is a good sign, because employers typically do not waste the time and money on testing someone they are not interested in. The following are the five basic types of tests you may encounter:

Intelligence/Mental Ability Tests

These tests are designed to test your critical thinking skills, including problem solving, mathematical aptitude, and memory. They are usually structured in a format similar to the SAT/ACT.

Work Simulation Tests

These tests are designed to provide you with example work scenarios or problems which you must work through to a satisfactory result. For example, a test for a Programmer position may ask the person to develop the program logic for a bank statement program.

Specific Skills Tests

For many highly specialized professions, they will test your skills in specific areas. Many of these tests are tied into certification, such as for Certified Public Accountants (CPA) and Microsoft Certified System Engineers (MCSE). A subset of these certification tests is the specific skills test. These tests are designed to ask questions at a detail level. They are very specific and very accurate. You will be more likely to encounter these tests in technical professions, such as engineering or computers.

Personality Tests

These tests are often the best indicator a company has of someone's personality. If you are familiar with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), you will understand the type of comparison questions: "Would you rather fly a kite or read a poem?" or "Would you rather read a book or fly an airplane?" MBTI is a personality test designed to assist a person in identifying some significant personal preferences.

Honesty Tests

These tests are usually reserved for jobs in high security areas or where there will be access to trade secrets, merchandise, or cash. Many of the questions are repetitive comparisons ("Do you like chess better than poetry?" and "Do you like poetry better than chess?"), although some will ask for absolutes ("Have you ever told a lie?"). You know the answer. And the test knows if you are telling the truth.

While these tests are all an attempt at standardization and greater objectivity, they are all lacking to a certain degree. They still have a subjective element. Be prepared, both mentally and physically, for these tests. I am aware of at least one company that does not begin salary negotiation until after the person has completed the series of tests. The theory is that they are so beaten down that they will accept almost anything that is offered.

Summary

Knowing yourself as a learner can help you adjust your study practices to get the most out of your efforts. That is why we began this module with a discussion of Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences. Then we considered the kind of place you need access to for your study-work. After that, you did a self-assessment of your study habits. From that point on, we looked at specific skills for studying: time management, concentration, reading, note-taking and test-taking. We hope this has given you some tools for more effective use of your study resources.

Review Questions

1. If you are aware of your own learning style preferences, what advantages do you have as a learner?
A. You can change the way teachers teach so that it corresponds to your strongest learning style.
B. You may be able to adjust some of your study habits or choose courses or assignments that let you take advantage of your strongest learning style.
C. You know yourself better.
D. You increase your listening skills.

2. Which of these learning activities might be most helpful to someone whose dominant learning style is Auditory?
A. Reviewing flash cards.
B. Acting out a simulation.
C. Re-writing lecture notes
D. Listening to a recording of the lecture.

3. Which of these learning activities might be most helpful to someone whose dominant learning style is Tactile/Kinesthetic?
A. Reading a magazine
B. Listening to a recorded lecture.
C. Creating gestures to serve as memory aides for concepts.
D. Using flash cards

4. Which of these learning activities might be most helpful to someone whose dominant learning style is Visual?
A. Flipping through a textbook examining the diagrams and illustrations
B. Listening to a recording of someone reading the textbook
C. Assembling a model.
D. Re-copying lecture notes.

Items 5-11 list learning activities. For each activity, fill in the name of the intelligence that corresponds to that activity. Use each of these only once: Body/Kinesthetic, Interpersonal, Intra-personal, Logical/Mathematical, Musical/Rhythmic, Verbal/Linguistic, Visual/Spatial.

5. Make diagrams that express the relationships among concepts, ideas, entities. _____
6. Meet with a study group to review material together. _____
7. Work the information to be remembered into a familiar tune. _____
8. Build a model. _____
9. Keep a journal of your learning and new insights. _____
10. Put information into your own words. _____
11. Outline information to show its organization. _____

12. Which of these is unimportant in finding, creating or choosing a place to study?
A. The temperature of the place.
B. The furniture of the place.
C. The quality of the stereo in the place.
D. The ability to control interruptions in the place.

13. Which of these is part of stepping out of the procrastination cycle?
I. Realize you are doing other more important things.
II. Discover the real reasons for your delay.
III. Dispute those real reasons and overcome them.
IV. Begin the task.
A. I
B. IV
C. II and III
D. II, III, and IV.
E. All of them.

14. Which of these would not be considered a good habit for an adult participating in a training program while holding a full-time job and caring for a family?
A. Begin studying whenever you feel like it.
B. Learn to say "no" to other activities
C. Make plans for what you will work on during each study session.

D. Schedule blocks of time when you will study.

15. T F It can be helpful to give the kids lots of attention before you start studying.

16. What advantage would a busy student gain if she planned to arrive to class a half hour before the starting time?

- A. She would be less likely to stress out if she experiences a delay in her commute.
- B. She would have more time away from her family.
- C. If she arrives early she has time to socialize.
- D. Arriving early might force her to travel in heavy commute times.

17. T F You should not listen to music or have the TV on while you are studying.

18. T F Looking up from your work at some distant object for a few seconds every once in a while can help you study longer.

19. What responsible action might you take if the content of class seems irrelevant?

- A. Use the time for more important activities, such as balancing your checkbook.
- B. Use the time to plan your study sessions for the coming week.
- C. Read the class textbook to discover why the teacher has brought up this topic.
- D. Ask the teacher questions about how the information is related to other parts of the course.

20. Which statements are true of Study Reading, Skimming and Scanning?

- I. Scanning skills are useful in Study Reading.
 - II. Scanning is the best approach when a topic is new to you.
 - III. Skimming is the best approach for reading very complex material.
 - IV. Study Reading is the best approach to use when a text is organized chronologically.
- A. I
 - B. I and II
 - C. I, II and III.
 - D. I, II, III, and IV
 - E. None of these.

21. What is generally true about traditional, hierarchical note taking?

- A. It appeals to those who prefer a Tactile/Kinesthetic learning style.
- B. Smaller details of the information are indented further to the right.
- C. It is necessary to use Roman numerals.
- D. It should not be used for taking notes of lectures.

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- A. The most important idea is written in the center of the paper.
- B. As a more graphic representation of information, it will be more memorable to some learners.
- C. More detailed information is written in the center of the mind-map.
- D. Mind maps graphically depict the relationships among ideas.

23. Which of these is a recommended practice for taking lecture notes?

- A. Try to write as much as possible.
- B. Only write down the things you do not understand.
- C. Listen for the key ideas and write those ideas in short phrases.
- D. Only write down the things you understand.

24. Which of these is recommended in preparing for a test?

- A. Several shorter review sessions are usually more valuable than one long review session.
- B. Preparing for a test should begin the week before the test.
- C. Do not try to predict what questions will be on a test.
- D. Because you have to take a test on your own, it is best to review for a test alone.

Discussion of Review Questions

1. If you are aware of your own learning style preferences, what advantages do you have as a learner?

A. You can change the way teachers teach so that it corresponds to your strongest learning style.

Incorrect. You might discuss your learning preferences with the teacher, but you can't completely control the teacher's actions.

B. You may be able to adjust some of your study habits or choose courses or assignments that let you take advantage of your strongest learning style.

Correct. This is the best answer.

C. You know yourself better.

Incorrect. This is true, but it does not express an advantage.

D. You increase your listening skills.

Incorrect. Awareness of your learning style preferences does not, in itself, help you improve your listening skills.

2. Which of these learning activities might be most helpful to someone whose dominant learning style is Auditory?

A. Reviewing flash cards.

Incorrect. This is a visual activity.

B. Acting out a simulation.

Incorrect. This may be the case, depending on the simulation, but this is not the best answer.

C. Re-writing lecture notes.

Incorrect. This is a visual or slightly kinesthetic activity.

D. Listening to a recording of the lecture.

Correct. This activity lets the auditory learner use his listening skills.

3. Which of these learning activities might be most helpful to someone whose dominant learning style is Tactile/Kinesthetic?

A. Reading a magazine.

Incorrect. This serves the visual learner more.

B. Listening to a recorded lecture.

Incorrect. This serves the auditory learner more.

C. Creating gestures to serve as memory aides for concepts.

Correct. The tactile/kinetic learner is at her best when learning includes physical movement.

D. Using flash cards.

Incorrect. Flash cards are primarily visual. The physical activity of sliding cards through the hands is not as satisfying to this learner as making gestures.

4. Which of these learning activities might be most helpful to someone whose dominant learning style is Visual?

A. Flipping through a textbook examining the diagrams and illustrations.

Correct. Diagrams and illustrations are appreciated visually.

B. Listening to a recording of someone reading the textbook.

Incorrect. This plays into the auditory learner's hand.

C. Assembling a model.

Incorrect. This plays into the tactile/kinesthetic learner's busy hands.

D. Re-copying lecture notes.

Incorrect. This activity may help the visual learner, but the graphics of diagrams and illustrations may be more compelling for the visual learner.

Items 5-11 list learning activities. For each activity, fill in the name of the intelligence that corresponds to that activity. Use each of these only once: Body/Kinesthetic, Interpersonal, Intra-personal, Logical/Mathematical, Musical/Rhythmic, Verbal/Linguistic, Visual/Spatial.

5. Make diagrams that express the relationships among concepts, ideas, entities. Visual/Spatial

6. Meet with a study group to review material together. Interpersonal

7. Work the information to be remembered into a familiar tune. Musical/Rhythmic

8. Build a model. Body/Kinesthetic

9. Keep a journal of your learning and new insights. Intra-Personal

10. Put information into your own words. Verbal/Linguistic

11. Outline information to show its organization. Logical/Mathematical

Almost all of us have at least a little of each of these intelligences, and we can benefit from using variety in our learning activities. These examples illustrate activities in which a person strong in one of these might thrive.

12. Which of these is unimportant in finding, creating or choosing a place to study?

A. The temperature of the place.

Incorrect. Consider the consequences if your place is either too hot or too cold.

B. The furniture of the place.

Incorrect. If the chair hurts you, you won't stay in it long.

C. The quality of the stereo in the place.

Correct. Putting aside the discussion of white noise, the quality of the stereo is unimportant.

D. The ability to control interruptions in the place.

Incorrect. This is essential.

13. Which of these is part of stepping out of the procrastination cycle?

I. Realize you are doing other more important things.

False. This won't help you begin the task you have been putting off.

II. Discover the real reasons for your delay.

This is part of breaking the cycle. A procrastinator always has reasons (good or bad) for delaying a task.

III. Dispute those real reasons and overcome them.

This is part of breaking the cycle.

IV. Begin the task.

This is part of breaking the cycle of procrastination.

A. I

B. IV

C. II and III

D. II, III, and IV.

E. All of them.

D is correct.

14. Which of these would not be considered a good habit for an adult participating in a training program while holding a full-time job and caring for a family?

A. Begin studying whenever you feel like it.

Correct. If one waits until he feels like studying, he might never start.

B. Learn to say "no" to other activities

Incorrect. It is important to say "no" to activities that don't line up with your priorities.

C. Make plans for what you will work on during each study session.

Incorrect. Planning what you will work on helps you budget your time so you don't over-spend on less important study activities.

D. Schedule blocks of time when you will study.

Incorrect. Setting aside blocks of study time is a good habit.

15. T F It can be helpful to give the kids lots of attention before you start studying.

True. Giving a child the attention he craves for just five minutes before you begin studying can satisfy him for a while so that he is less likely to interrupt you.

16. What advantage would a busy student gain if she planned to arrive to class a half hour before the starting time?

A. She would be less likely to stress out if she experiences a delay in her commute.

Correct.

B. She would have more time away from her family.

Incorrect. Having more time away from her family may or may not be an advantage.

C. If she arrives early she has time to socialize.

Incorrect. If she is a busy student, she might better use the time for study. Not her best answer.

D. Arriving early might force her to travel in heavy commute times.

Incorrect. If earlier travel helps her avoid heavy traffic, then it is an advantage.

17. T F You should not listen to music or have the TV on while you are studying.

False. It depends on your study task. If you are at the early stages in writing a paper, the high concentration you need might be compromised by the radio or TV. But if you are waiting for your finished paper to print, the stimulus may be fine.

18. T F Looking up from your work at some distant object for a few seconds every once in a while can help you study longer.

True. Looking away from your work changes your eyes' focus and reduces eye fatigue.

19. What responsible action might you take if the content of class seems irrelevant?

A. Use the time for more important activities, such as balancing your checkbook.

Incorrect. This will appear disrespectful, and there might be a good reason for the "irrelevant" content that you missed.

B. Use the time to plan your study sessions for the coming week.

Incorrect, for the same reasons as A.

C. Read the class textbook to discover why the teacher has brought up this topic.

Incorrect. You do need to know why the teacher has brought up the topic, but you are better off going to the source.

D. Ask the teacher questions about how the information is related to other parts of the course.

Correct. Doing this respectfully can help you and your classmates understand the significance and pay due attention.

20. Which statements are true of Study Reading, Skimming and Scanning?

I. Scanning skills are useful in Study Reading.

False. In scanning, you seek the answer to a specific question. This is not usually the point of study reading.

II. Scanning is the best approach when a topic is new to you.

False. Study reading is appropriate when attacking new and complicated content.

III. Skimming is the best approach for reading very complex material.

False. Skimming gives you the gist of a text, but it won't give you the details you need to understand the complexities of the text.

IV. Study Reading is the best approach to use when a text is organized chronologically.

False. Study reading can be used equally well regardless of the structure of the text.

A. I

B. I and II

C. I, II and III.

D. I, II, III, and IV

E. None of these.

E is correct.

21. What is generally true about traditional, hierarchical note taking?

A. It appeals to those who prefer a Tactile/Kinesthetic learning style.

Incorrect. Tactile/Kinesthetic learners prefer more physical movement.

B. Smaller details of the information are indented further to the right.

Correct.

C. It is necessary to use Roman numerals.

Incorrect. You need not use Roman numerals or lettering at all, if you use some other marker of hierarchy such as indenting or using asterisks (*).

D. It should not be used for taking notes of lectures.

Incorrect. Hierarchical note taking can be used with reading or listening tasks.

22. Which of these is false about mind-mapping?

A. The most important idea is written in the center of the paper.

Incorrect. This is true.

B. As a more graphic representation of information, it will be more memorable to some learners.

Incorrect. This is true.

C. More detailed information is written in the center of the mind-map.

Correct. Details are usually written further from the center; this statement is false.

D. Mind maps graphically depict the relationships among ideas.
 Incorrect. This is true.

23. Which of these is a recommended practice for taking lecture notes?

A. Try to write as much as possible.

Incorrect. Write the most important information only.

B. Only write down the things you do not understand.

Incorrect. Write down the most important ideas. If there is something you don't understand and you are unable to get clarification at the time, consider writing a question mark next to the information.

C. Listen for the key ideas and write those ideas in short phrases.

Correct.

D. Only write down the things you understand.

Incorrect. In lecture notes, you usually try to record the structure of an argument, the relationships among ideas—whether you understand them first time around or not.

24. Which of these is recommended in preparing for a test?

A. Several shorter review sessions are usually more valuable than one long review session.

Correct. You are likely to retain more and experience less fatigue than planning just one long review session.

B. Preparing for a test should begin the week before the test.

Incorrect. Consider that from the first class meeting you are beginning to prepare for the test.

C. Do not try to predict what questions will be on a test.

Incorrect. Predicting the content of a test is a very useful practice.

D. Because you have to take a test on your own, it is best to review for a test alone.

Incorrect. Many learners can gain much from participation in a study group.

25. T F In responding to a multiple-choice questions, choose the answer that is true and most directly responds to the stem.

True.

26. T F Statements that are exaggerated or use absolutes like "never" or "always" are usually false.

True.

27. T F Not guessing on a test is bad, unless there is a penalty for incorrect answers.

True. This statement is worded in a complex way; read it carefully.

28. T F If you are running out of time, an outline of an answer for an essay question can get you more points than no answer at all.

True. That is why it is recommended that you sketch an outline of your answer before you write the first sentence of a response to an essay question.

Prepare to Meet Your Coach

Student

Name: _____

Bring these items completed when you meet with your instructor or coach.

Reflective Writing: What idea or activity in this module has been the most helpful to you? Why?

What questions do you still have?

Instructor

Record student performance in right column of the table.

Item	%age of Module	Standard	Student Performance
Multiple Intelligences Inventory (p. 7-8)	25	Page 8 shows tally of the inventory. Three highest scoring intelligences are written into left column of table, and a relevant learning activity for each appears in the right column.	
Study Skills Checklist (p. 16)	25	Response to each of the items in the Checklist.	
Review Questions	50	23 of 28 correct	
Total:			

Date Module Completed: _____

Notes:

Next Assignment & Due Date: _____