

Classroom Skills

From *How to Get Good Grades in College* by Linda O'Brien

Get over the idea that only children should spend their time in study. Be a student so long as you still have something to learn, and this will mean all your life.

Henry L. Doherty

- **Attend Every Class and Be on Time:** When you miss class, you miss lecture notes, class discussions, homework explanations and assignments. You may also miss quizzes and tests. If you do miss, get a copy of a fellow class member's notes. You may also even want to arrive early.
- **Learn How to Adapt to Different Instructors:** Every instructor is different. Part of the college experience is learning to learn regardless of the instructor's teaching style. You are responsible for your own learning.
- **Be prepared for Each Class:** Have your assignments done before you go to class. Lectures will be easier to follow, and you will better understand class discussions. Read before class what you are going to cover in class. Be an active listener. Do not be afraid to ask questions in class. If you have a question, chances are 90% of the class will have the same question.
- **Sit in the Front of the Class Whenever Possible:** Research shows that sitting in the front of the class is directly related to higher grades. It is easier to see the board and to ask questions. Also, smile at the instructor - make eye contact. The instructor will often respond directly to students who make eye contact.
- **Communicate with Your Instructors:** Most instructors will give you their office hours, etc. Do not hesitate to contact an instructor when you have a question, concern, or problem. Most instructors will be happy to help you.
- **Bring Your Book to Class if the Lecture Follows the Text:** This can help you stay focused. You can also add notes in your book as to what is important. This will help in studying for tests later.
- **Use a system for taking notes:** (see Note Taking Skills) If your instructor uses PowerPoint presentations and posts them online, print them up before class - you can add information to them in class.
- **Listen for Cue Words:** 'this is important;' numbering reasons, etc. 'This may be on the test;' 'for example;' 'Summarizing.' All instructors give clues to what is important and what may be on tests. They may repeat the information more than once. They may pause before giving information to make sure everyone is listening. These are cues that the material is important and will probably be on the test.
- **After Class:** Spend 5-15 minutes going over notes as soon as possible. Clarify, summarize, and think about the major concepts that you learned. Mark information that you think may be on a quiz

or exam. Also note concepts you did not understand so that you can ask questions or spend extra time studying.

- Set up a Study Group: If you set up a study group, you will help members of the group reinforce what you are studying. The teacher in any situation always learns the most. You can also compare notes to make sure you did not miss anything. Get a class buddy that you can share notes with, or call if you need to clarify something, or if you miss class.

Other Websites to Visit:

- Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs web page at <http://studentaffairs.uic.edu/ace/study-strategies/>
- Center for Teaching and Learning at Idaho State University at <http://www.isu.edu/ctl/cls/handouts/index.shtml>

Study Skills

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Students learn 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, 50% of what they see and hear, 70% of what is discussed with others, 80% of what they experience personally, and 95% of what they teach to someone else.

William Glasser

- Find a Good Place to Study: It may be best to have a place where you study regularly, it doesn't matter where you study as long as it has a surface for writing, is well lit, and is comfortable - not too comfortable, you do not want to fall asleep. Your area should be equipped with paper, pencils, and whatever you need. Before you start eliminate anything that could distract you or interrupt your concentration. If you like to listen to music, research has shown that classical music can actually improve your concentration.
- Get Started: Getting started on your studying is sometimes the hardest part. Do not wait until you are in the mood. If you have trouble getting started, begin with something simple or a subject you like.
- Know your Learning Style: If you are a visual learner, use flash cards, charts and diagrams. Form pictures in your mind, and use color in your notes. If you are an auditory learner, read and review aloud. Use memory tricks involving rhythm and rhyme. If you are a kinesthetic learner, use hands-on activities, role playing, and move around while you study. Use objects whenever possible, and roll play ideas and concepts. If you are a technological learner, use the computer, the internet, and high-tech equipment to keep you interested and focused. As a general rule, the more senses you involve and the wider variety of methods you use while studying, the more you will remember the material. You might even try chewing different types of gum with each subject you study. When you take a test in that subject chew the same type of gum. The smell and taste of the gum are good memory enhancers as well as will relieve some stress.
- Organize Your study Time: Before you start to study, make a plan. Decide exactly what you want to do and in what order. Spending 5 minutes to begin with will save much more than 5 minutes. Make sure your plan is both specific and realistic. For example: instead of saying 'I will study biology,' say 'I will read and study pages 12-20, and do review questions at the end of the section.' Form Study Groups: This can make study time more interesting and lively. Limit amount of socializing and do study. When you teach each other, you tend to learn and remember more.

- If you have a lot to do, prioritize your work to make sure that you have enough time for the things that are most important.
- Always allow more time than you think you will need.
- If you have something that seems overwhelming, break it down into smaller parts.
- Alternate types of assignments.
- Know when to take a break. Research has shown that students learn the most during the first and last ten minutes of any study session. After studying 20 minutes, try taking a short break - get up and walk around, etc.
- Know when you study best, and organize your day so that you are able to study when you are the most productive.
- Avoid daytime naps that are longer than 10 minutes. Concentration dips before and after a nap.
- Avoid Internal Distractions:
- Keep a 'to do' list nearby and record any reminders to yourself or worries that may distract you while you are studying. e.g. buy eggs, worry about check clearing, etc. By writing these down you can clear your mind for studying.
- Use a concentration score sheet: Each time you find your mind wandering, make a check mark on the sheet. Within just a few study sessions you should find that you have far fewer check marks and far greater concentration.

Other Websites to Visit:

- <http://www.howtostudy.org/resources.php>
- Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs web page at <http://studentaffairs.uic.edu/ace/study-strategies/taking-lecture-notes/>
- <http://www.edu-nova.com/helping-students-gain-better-study-habits.html>
- Student Education Guide: Good Study Habits: <http://www.distance-education.org/Degrees/Student-Education-Guide--Good-Study-Habits-A525.html>
- <http://www.collegegrant.net/college-student-study-tips/>
- <https://www.timecenter.com/articles/tips-for-making-and-following-a-study-schedule/>