

## II. Memory:

Improving your memory, like improving any other skill, is hard work. These tips and techniques will not necessarily make remembering easier, but they will make you more efficient.

- Realize you can't and don't need to remember everything. Trying to remember every detail you read and hear is probably impossible. Therefore, your ability to identify important ideas and details in the study/learning process is critical to effective recall of information - remember what you want or need to remember.
- Once you identified important information, there are several techniques that can help you organize and recall it. There is not, however one best method for remembering everything.
  1. Associate. Relate new information to something you already know. An isolated idea or fact is hard to remember; if you associate it with information that already makes sense to you, it will be more meaningful and thus easier to organize and remember.
  2. Visualize. Organize information into a vivid, clear mental picture. For example, to remember the necessary elements of a novel, form a picture with all the important characters and dress in the style of the period, doing something representative of the character.
  3. Mnemonic Aids. For information that defies association or visualization, adapt a memory technique. Some mnemonic devices include:
    - *Acronyms*-form a word from the first letter of each word in a series. For example, "HOME" for recalling the Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior.
    - *Acrostics*-make a nonsense phrase so that the first letter of each word is the information. For example, "Every good boy does fine" for the E, G, B, D, F lines of treble music staff. *Word-Part Clues*-remember whether the denotative or connotative meaning of a word is the dictionary meaning by denotative and dictionary both beginning with "d".
    - *Poems & rhymes*-make up short, catchy sayings that include the essential information. For example,

"In, 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue. Regular review and use of information will significantly improve retention and recall, so plan frequent short study sessions. Always include a review of previously learned information as well as learning new information.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT KEY TO YOUR ACADEMIC SUCCESS = GO TO CLASS!!!**

### III. TIME MANAGEMENT

The following time management techniques are about when and where to study.

1. *Study difficult (or "boring") subjects first.* We tend to study what we like first; the courses we find most difficult often require the most creative energy. Save the subjects you enjoy for later.
2. *Be aware of your best time of day.* For example, many people learn best in daylight hours. If this is true for you, schedule study time for you most difficult subjects when the sun is up.
3. *Use waiting time.* Five minutes waiting for a bus, 20 minutes between classes-waiting time adds up fast. Have short study tasks ready to do during these times. For example, carry 3 x 5 cards with facts, formulas, or definitions and pull them out anywhere.
4. *Use a regular study area.* Our body and mind know where we are. When you use the same place to study, day after day, they become trained. When you arrive at that particular place, you can focus your attention more quickly.
5. *Study where you'll be alert.* Don't sleep where you study because your body signals that it is time to sleep not to study. Put yourself into a situation that supports the message that it is time to study.
6. *Use a library.* Libraries are designed for learning because of perfect lighting, low noise levels, and readily available materials.

## VI. WRITING TIPS

Writing is hard for everyone and few people enjoy it. Just because you have a hard time with it doesn't mean you can't do it. Even the pros have a hard time!

1. Approach: How do you go about getting something written?

- Brainstorm. Always write. It's the only way to freeze ideas and keep track of them. Organize Your Ideas. Don't try to write from memory. Make a list of the things you need to say and the order in which you want to say them. Write a Draft. Write first, polish later. Turn those listed ideas in to prose.
- Revise. You didn't say what you wanted to on the first try. The act of writing actually changes our thinking as we go. Revise to account for that. Edit. After the ideas are in place, it is time to worry about punctuation and grammar.
- Proofread. Even when you think the paper's perfect, there are on average 5-10 typos on every page. Read aloud to find them.

1. Perfection in an Imperfect Game: Getting it right when it's gotta be right. Understand the task. You have to know what's being asked for. Writing the most beautiful poem in the world won't help if the teacher wanted an essay. Take the time. Writing does not happen fast. As you gain experience, you'll recognize the absolute minimum time needed at each phase (different for everyone) to produce acceptable or excellent work. Taking the time needed will improve your results. Drafting vs. Editing. "Drafting" means coming up with what you want to say. "Editing" means making sure it sounds like something a human would say (linguistically). Save time and energy: don't edit until your ideas are well developed in drafting. Get a Good Reader. You are not an objective judge of what you wrote. You know what's in your head, not what's actually on the paper. Find someone, and use them consistently, who knows you and who is willing to give you honest feedback. Then give them specific issues to read for. ("Are my ideas in the right order?")

2. What Professionals Do: Habits of people who make their living at this stuff. See connections. "Good writing" isn't good because it's pretty. It's good because it's smart and makes people see things in new ways. That means seeing connections among ideas that people don't usually see. Be a smart thinker.

- Think by writing. Writing gives you ideas. When you're stuck, write. Don't worry about making it elegant prose. Just write down words and see what words they lead to, keep writing. Plan. The more planning you do, the less drafting you'll need to do. This is especially important in timed writing situations. Two extra minutes worth of planning (by writing words as above or listing ideas or "what-if-ing") is worth five minutes of writing. Draft & revise. Again, you can't do it all at once. Professionals know this and plan to take several shots at writing something, making it better in a given area each time. Find good readers. No professional writer does anything without them.

- Big and small stuff. Pros know that editing is small stuff compared to the big stuff of ideas. Read aloud. We hear language because we're used to speaking. By reading aloud you'll hear when things sound unnatural. Yeah, it feels weird, but try it and see how much more you catch in your writing that you want to change.

4. Resources: People who can make your life easier. Here are some other places to go for help when the writing gets tough:

Coppin State University Writing Center: Located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Grace Jacobs Building It is free to all students.

## IV. NOTE TAKING

*Within two weeks you forget 80% of what you hear! Within four weeks you remember only 5% of what you hear! Why take notes?* Because our memories fade quickly and teachers expect us to remember and apply facts we learn. Writing information so that it can be used at a later time is probably the most valuable study aid. Learning to take effective and efficient notes helps you to be an active learner and involves you in the process of learning. Organized note taking from lectures will lead to an enhanced memory and better grades! Before Class

- a. Skim or review any text/material assigned or notes from previous classes.
- b. Gather all material needed: notebook, textbook, pens, & any handouts necessary.
- c. Intend to be an active listener and note-taker.
- d. Plan to arrive to class with enough time to get organized. Set your mind on listening and writing (Listen 80% of the time and write 20% of the time).
- e. Sit in the front of the room; your vision and hearing will be better there.
- f. Date and head your paper before class begins to save time. During Class
  - a. Watch for signals of importance (i.e. Copy whatever teacher writes on chalkboard).
  - b. Always write definitions and listings (i.e. The seven characteristics are... ).
  - c. Listen for important remarks (i.e. Don't forget. .. -or-Pay special attention to...).
  - d. Don't hesitate to raise your hand and ask a question.
  - e. Take your own notes. Handwriting or typing notes for yourself will help encode the information in your brain.
  - f. Don't try to write a verbatim transcript, instead, get the main ideas. If you are writing as fast as you can, you cannot be as discriminating a listener.

### Paraphrase. After class

- a. Ask the teacher questions if appropriate.
- b. Ask other students to help you fill any notes you didn't get during class.
- c. Briefly review notes within 24 hours.
- d. Edit your notes within 24 hours; it helps to organize your notes and makes them more accurate and complete. CORNELL NOTE TAKING An example of effective note taking is the Cornell Method. It provides a systematic format for condensing and organizing notes without laborious recopying. After writing the notes in the main space, use the left-hand column to label each idea and detail with a key word or "cue" take a couple of minutes after class, and later that day/night summarize the information at the bottom.

RECORD in the "Notes" column facts and ideas from the lecture (not word for word!).

1. REDUCE -As soon as possible write down key words from your notes in the column.
2. RECITE -Cover the "Notes" column and say in your own words (using the "key words") the facts and ideas.
3. REVIEW -Spend 5-10 minutes nightly reviewing your notes and summarizing the information from the "Notes" and "key words" columns to the "Summary Column".

Key Words	
Summary	

