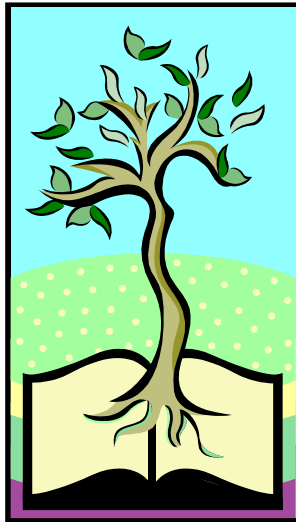


ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Your Guidebook to Learning Styles and Improved Study Strategies



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Study Skills

Study habits can be learned and refined through practice and evaluation. Making small changes in your study behaviors can make significant changes in your mastery of course material.

The purpose of this booklet is to:

- ✓ Help you identify the way(s) you learn best
- ✓ Provide insight into your style of thinking
- ✓ Help you plan, implement and control the strategies that enhance learning
- ✓ Offer practical, “Tried and True” advice based on sound learning theory
- ✓ Teach effective study habits that can be learned and refined through practice and evaluation

Section I of this booklet provides you, the reader, with tools for understanding how you learn. By identifying how you learn, you will be able to incorporate skills specific to your learning style as you study. It answers the question, “How do I learn?”

Section II helps you identify study areas needing improvement and provides concrete advice to become a more efficient learner. It answers the questions, “How can I improve my study skills and behaviors?”

Study *skills* are the potentials for action and success.

Study *behaviors* are the actions themselves.

Section I

How do I learn?



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Learning Styles Self-Assessment

Read each sentence carefully and think if it applies to you. On the line, write the appropriate number:
3 = often applies 2 = sometimes applies 1 = never applies

VISUAL

- _____ 1. I enjoy doodling and even my notes have lots of pictures, arrows, etc. in them.
- _____ 2. I remember something better if I write it down.
- _____ 3. I get lost or am late if someone TELLS me how to get to a new place and I didn't write down the directions.
- _____ 4. When trying to remember someone's telephone number, or something new like that, it helps me to get a picture of it in my head.
- _____ 5. If I am taking a test, I can "see" the textbook page and where the answer is.
- _____ 6. It helps me to LOOK at the person when listening. It keeps me focused.
- _____ 7. I like to be organized.
- _____ 8. It's hard for me to understand what a person is saying when there are people talking or music playing.
- _____ 9. It's hard for me to understand a joke when someone tells it.
- _____ 10. It is better for me to get work done in a quiet place.

Visual Total

AUDITORY

- _____ 1. My written work doesn't look neat to me. My papers have crossed-out words and erasures.
- _____ 2. It helps to use my finger as a pointer when reading to keep my place.
- _____ 3. Papers with very small print or poor copies are tough on me.
- _____ 4. I understand how to do something if someone tells me rather than having to read the same thing to myself.
- _____ 5. I remember things that I hear, rather than things that I see or read.
- _____ 6. Writing is tiring. I press down too hard with my pen or pencil.
- _____ 7. My eyes get tired fast, even though the eye doctor says my eyes are OK.
- _____ 8. When I read, I mix up words that look alike, such as "them" and "then" and "bad" and "dad".
- _____ 9. It's hard for me to read other people's handwriting.
- _____ 10. If I had the choice to learn new information via a lecture or a textbook. I would choose to hear it rather than read it.

Auditory Total

HAPTIC, Kinesthetic, "Hands-On"

- _____ 1. I don't like to read directions: I'd rather just start doing it.
- _____ 2. I learn best when I am shown how to do something and I have the opportunity to do it.
- _____ 3. Studying at a desk is not for me.
- _____ 4. I tend to solve problems through a more trial-and-error approach, rather than from a step-by-step method.
- _____ 5. Before I follow directions, it helps me to see someone else do it first.
- _____ 6. I find myself needing frequent breaks while studying.
- _____ 7. I am not skilled in giving verbal explanations or directions.
- _____ 8. I do not become easily lost, even in strange surroundings.
- _____ 9. I think better when I have the freedom to move around.
- _____ 10. When I can't think of a specific word. I'll use my hands a lot and call something a "what-cha-ma-call-it" or a "thing-a-ma-jig."

Haptic Total

adapted from Lynn O'Brien, Specific Diagnostics, Inc. Rockville, Maryland

STUDY BEHAVIORS for VISUAL LEARNERS

- Choose classes and professors that emphasize visual materials. Readings, films, overhead projectors, handouts, notes on the board, pictures, graphs and drawings are all good ways for you to learn.
- Flash cards, graphic organizers, patterns, outlines, and summary sheets are good ways for you to learn material. Incorporate color, pictures and graphics into the material that you are learning.
- Try “Inspiration”, the web/mind-map software available in the Learning Center to create study sheets.
- When you mark your textbooks, use highlighters (no more than 10% of the material should be highlighted). Draw pictures and illustrations and write words when you are marking in the margins of your text, or when you are making text notes.
- Write your own test reviews and summary sheets. Test yourself by turning the captions in your textbook into questions. Write the answers and check the text and your notes for correctness.
- Write questions from the main ideas and key terms in your lecture notes. Practice writing a summary of each answer.
- If you are expecting an essay test, anticipate test questions and practice writing the essay answers. Outline the answers to help you remember them.
- Use visuals when creating study aids. Different colors and drawings or graphic patterns help you learn terms, concepts, etc.
- As you study, turn visuals into words and words into visuals. Redraw pages from memory. Put ideas into words and reconstruct images in different ways.
- Before you read, take advantage of any visual clues that are available. Look at pictures, illustrations, changes in type face, use of color, and captions and subcaptions.
- Sit at the front of the room and watch the speaker’s face and body language. This will help cut down on visual distractions and help you focus on what the speaker is saying.
- Visual learners usually study better in a quiet place, and they often study better by themselves. Take lots of notes during lecture. Since listening is not your strongest modality, it will be particularly important that you have a complete set of notes.
- When you are working on a math problem, draw a picture of the problem before you start. List what is known and what is not known. Write down the steps of the problem to learn the process.

STUDY BEHAVIORS for AUDITORY LEARNERS

- Choose courses and professors that emphasize lecture, discussion, question-answer periods and other forms of spoken instruction. You learn best through your ears.
- Use study groups. Being able to discuss the course material and review for tests with other people will help you hear and remember the information.
- Do remember to take notes during lecture. Review and rewrite (not copy) them as soon after class as possible, adding any additional information that you remember. Recite your notes out loud to learn them.
- Summarize and tape record your lecture notes in your own voice. Also, record summary sheets for tests. Listen to your tapes while you are doing other activities that do not require your full concentration: laundry, cooking, cleaning, driving, or working out. Put your study tapes into your Walkman or car tape player instead of music. After you have heard the tapes several times, you will find that you know a great deal of the information when you sit down to quiz yourself.
- Rehearse the steps to math problems out loud. When you can explain the steps of the problem to yourself, you will have mastered the solution.
- Recite your lecture notes out loud. If you are in a place where talking is not possible, try to hear the words in your head. Internal conversations are another good way to use spoken language to learn.
- Review flash cards by reciting the words and their definitions. Also, give an example out loud.
- Read particularly difficult passages out loud. Carry on imaginary conversations with the author when you try to wrestle meaning from the reading.
- Tutor other students. You will increase your own knowledge as you listen to yourself explain to someone else.
- See a tutor or your professor to discuss the material. These conversations will improve your memory.
- Describe pictures, visuals, and concepts to yourself as you study.
- Create questions from the main ideas in your lecture notes or the captions in your textbook and recite the answers to yourself.

STUDY BEHAVIORS for KINESTHETIC LEARNERS

- Walk back and forth, gesture, and say the material that you need to learn. The kinesthetic learner needs to move.
- Study in the question/answer format. Shift your body position from question to answer.
- Record your summarized lecture notes and your summary sheets for tests and quizzes. Listen to them as you jog, ride a bicycle, walk, cook, drive, do laundry, clean house, dance, and work out. Repeat the information that you are hearing to help you concentrate.
- Take lots of lecture notes. Add pictures and illustrations to your notes as you listen. Keep your writing hand busy. Write comments and questions using the key terms and the main ideas from the lecture in the margin of the paper. Sit in the front of the room and stay as active and focused as you can.
- Choose classes and instructors that emphasize labs, field trips, and experiential learning.
- Study with someone else. Talk, listen, discuss, ask questions and argue.
- Interactive study may be very helpful to you. Try a tutor, a friend or a study group.
- Choose a study area that gives you room to move. Change your study position from the desk to the floor to the bed, etc.
- Keep your study periods short, approximately 25 minutes each. After a 25 minute session do some push-ups or take a five minute break before you resume studying. Break reading into clumps and try to read for four or five 25 minutes sessions each day instead of one long session of reading. Change to a different subject when you tire or get frustrated, and return to the other subject later in the day. Change the kind of study activities you engage in; read a while, do problems for a time, write a paper, study lecture notes, make a test review, then return to reading.
- Stay active while you read. Highlight your textbook. Make questions from the captions and answer them; write in the answers. Take notes. Discuss what you are reading with yourself. Combine your text notes with your lecture notes. Add examples from your own experience.
- Create questions from the main ideas and key terms in your lecture notes. Write them in the margin of the notebook. Answer them out loud or write them down. Add examples from your own knowledge.

MBTI: Myers Briggs Type Indicator

College is for learning, however, not everyone's learning style is the same. According to type theory, each of the sixteen MBTI types has a different style that works best for them. If you are having difficulty learning new material it may be because you are trying to learn in a way that is not consistent with your natural style. Or, you may be using your preferred style so exclusively that you are missing the chance to learn other strategies which may be more effective.

Learning Styles Associated with Each Preference

E Extraversion

Learn best when in action
Value physical activity
Like to study with others
Say they're high in verbal and interpersonal skills
Say they need training in reading and writing papers
Background sounds help them study
Want faculty to encourage class discussion

S Sensing

Seek specific information
Memorize facts
Value what is practical
Follow instructions
Like hands-on experience
Trust material as presented
Want faculty who give clear assignments

T Thinking

Want objective material to study
Logic guides learning
Like to critique new ideas
Can easily find flaws in an argument
Learn by challenge and debate
Want faculty who make logical presentations

J Judging

Like formal instructions for solving problems
Value dependability
Plan work well in advance
Work steadily toward goals
Like to be in charge of events
Drive toward closure
Want faculty to be organized

I Introversion

Learn best by pausing to think
Value reading
Prefer to study individually
Say they're below average in verbal expression
Say they need training in public speaking
Need quiet for concentration
Want faculty who give clear lectures

N Intuition

Seek quick insights
Use imagination to go beyond facts
Value what is original
Create their own directions
Like theories to give perspective
Read between the lines
Want faculty to encourage independent thinking

F Feeling

Want to be able to relate to the material personally
Personal values important
Like to please instructors
Can easily find something to appreciate
Learn by being supported and appreciated
Want faculty who establish personal rapport with students

P Perceiving

Like to solve problems informally
Value change
Work spontaneously
Work impulsively with bursts of energy
Like to adapt to events
Stay open to new information
Want faculty to be entertaining and inspiring

Right Brain vs. Left Brain Whole Brain Thinking and Learning

This theory of the structure and functions of the mind suggests that the two different sides of the brain control two different "modes" of thinking. It also suggests that each of us prefers one mode over the other.

The two different sides, or hemispheres, of the brain are responsible for different manners of thinking, as illustrated in the following table:

<u>Left Brain</u>	<u>Right Brain</u>
Logical	Random
Sequential	Intuitive
Rational	Holistic
Analytical	Synthesizing
Objective	Subjective
Looks at parts	Looks at wholes

Most people have a distinct preference for one of these styles of thinking. Left-brain learners focus on logical thinking, analysis, and accuracy. Right-brained thinkers focus on aesthetics, feeling, and creativity.

Some people are whole-brained and equally adept at both modes. In an integrated brain, the functions of one hemisphere are immediately available to the other, producing a more balanced use of language. Whole-brain thinking emphasizes active learning, in which the learner makes connections that tap both hemispheres.

Students can dramatically increase their learning power by employing active study techniques such as patterning, metaphors, analogies, visuals, and movement into reading, calculation, and analytical activities. For example, rewrite notes to include verbal, linear, sequential thinking AND flow charts, idea webs, and visual triggers.

Whole-brain thinking also helps manage emotional stress. Test anxiety triggers the “fight or flight” response that temporarily inhibits clear thinking. The right brain will typically re-engage before the left brain; students can tap their right brain to help get their mental “juices” flowing so that they can demonstrate their knowledge on the test.