Effective Study Techniques

Below are some study techniques that have proven to be successful for students. There are many other techniques, but these will get you started.

A. Repetition, Repetition, Repetition: Repetition is effective for learning long lists of relatively unrelated facts (such as classification systems in biology and foreign language vocabulary). The problem with repetition is that it is easy to forget the material. If you must memorize long lists, try:

- Writing out the list to be remembered repeatedly;
- Associating the items on the list with a phrase that is easily remembered;
- Drawing a diagram with the words and how they relate to one another.

B. Analyze Your Test Results: Previous tests can be a great study guide for subsequent tests in a class.

- Look over the last test you took in a class. What level of detail did the professor want in an answer? Determine the reason for your errors. Did you just not know the correct answer, or did the question ask for more detail?
- Where did the test material come from: lecture notes; textbook; class discussion; outside reading, etc.? Did the questions emphasize details or general concepts?
- For essay questions, look to see whether the instructor wants: organized paragraphs; details; original ideas; or instructor's ideas.

C. Quiz Yourself: Anticipating the questions that may be on an exam is a very effective study technique. If you are studying with a group, have each group member write questions.

- Write questions on 4x6 inch cards with answers on the back. This will provide a central filing system you can reference at test time rather than fumbling through your notes and texts. If you have already taken an exam in the class, be sure that the questions you write are similar to the previous test questions.
- Take questions from both book and lecture notes.
- Questions should be in the same format as test items on previous tests (essay, true/false, matching, etc.)

D. Study in a Group: Form a study group. In the group, ask each other questions; test each other; and explain difficult concepts to each other. Teaching someone else is a very effective method of learning.