

# Strategies to Help You Be a Successful Student:

## LEARNING AND STUDYING TIPS

### 1. Learn Deeply

You want to engage in deep learning - not in shallow or surface learning. Well, what is the difference? When you learn deeply it sticks in your brain much longer and helps you apply learning and remember it! For example, try to understand how the concept you're studying relates to the other concepts you've already learnt.

Watch Dr. Stephen Chew explain more about **Deep Learning** in his video: *How to Get the Most Out of Studying: Part 3 of 5, "Cognitive Principles for Optimizing Learning"*

### 2. Don't Multitask

Research shows that your brain cannot focus on multiple things at one time. Remove distractions (your phone, internet, etc) to maximize your learning potential.

### 3. Determine Distinctiveness

Figure out what makes a concept very **unique** or different from others.

### 5. Think Out Loud

Think a Problem Through Out Loud! In other words, **talk out loud through a problem**. Also, ask someone who understands the concept to talk out loud and share with you how they think through it (which steps and paths they take).

### 4. Learning Styles

Forget Learning Styles! (you read it right!) There is no research evidence to support so-called "learning styles". You learn in many ways and you need to use a variety of methods to learn. Focus on **learning in more than one way** such as describing what you have learned to a friend, drawing a simple diagram or illustration (it doesn't have to look great!), writing out your notes, key words, or watching a video of the concept. Learning in many different ways will allow for storage of information in various regions of the brain. Figure out which strategies work best for you!



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### 6. Take Good Notes

By hand is better! Taking notes by hand has been shown to result in better understanding of content than typing. Here are a few things to consider:

- If you take a lot of notes while listening to the instructor, you are processing in a surface format. Stop and take meaningful notes that focus on **KEY ideas** and major **CONCEPTS**
- Borrowing notes is a poor substitute for being in class. It is always better to attend class yourself
- Chunk/classify your notes into sections

### 7. Make a Visual Representation

Create a visual representation of concepts, topics and components that connect one to another. This helps you see the relationships between ideas and helps the brain learn better. Draw a map, a flowchart or a diagram to help see all the pieces and how they relate.

### 8. Use Active Reading

Active Reading instead of Passive Reading makes a big difference when trying to understand information! Consider the following:

- **Generate questions** as you are reading. (If you can find the answers to your questions, even better!)
- Don't highlight all the bolded or definitions (they are already bold for a reason!). Pick out other **key words** that make a complete meaning. A big blob of yellow highlighter doesn't help you make learning connections.
- Make a summary note of your reading. When you put in your own words what you have read, the brain will remember it better! After you have read a chapter or an article, write a one paragraph summary. Pretend you are writing your explanation to someone that has never heard of the subject.

### 9. Retrieval & Application

Practice Appropriate Retrieval and Application: don't just memorize isolated facts (you can't learn deeply/remember it a longer time if you memorize a bunch of facts that are not connected). Instead, figure out ways to remember what you need to know and **where/when/how** to apply it.

Practice and study ways in which your teacher will want the content to be recalled.

### 10. Teach a Friend

The best way to learn something is to teach it to someone else –someone who doesn't know about the topic.

Break down the concepts into your own words and find a way to share that learning with someone else! (e.g., podcast, blog, group discussion).

