

SEMINAR HANDOUT ON
EFFECTIVE STUDY SKILLS
(Grades 6 to 10)

PRESENTED BY

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Effective Study Skills For Being An Effective Student

1. Introduction

In general, there are no poor students with learning difficulties. There are only effective and ineffective students. The effective students have mastered the learning skills. The ineffective students are unaware that there are study skills, note taking skills and exam writing skills. This seminar will make you aware about these skills and teach you many of the techniques used by the effective students. You too can become an effective student - make learning an enjoyable experience - and improve your performance in exams.

Become interested in school.
Become interested in the courses you take.
Have a positive attitude towards learning.
Have a determined will to learn rather than a wish.
Be willing to pay the price in time and effort.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said:

Sow an action and reap a habit
Sow a habit and reap a character
Sow a character and reap your destiny.

Good habits lead to success in life. Bad habits lead to failure in life. If you have good regular study habits, you are on the right track to becoming a successful student. Replace bad study habits with good study habits.

Good study habits allow you to get more done in less time. It is not "how much" you study but "how well" you study. Many investigations show that students who have been instructed in "how to study methods" have better grades and spend less time in studying than those who have not been so instructed.

Habit is a learned skill. You can change your habits. How?

Tackle one habit at a time.
Start with easy habits first.
Practice the proper response for thirty days.
Replace a bad habit with a good habit.

2. Do Regular Daily And Weekly Reviews

A person forgets about 50% of what one learns in the first eight to twenty-four hours. It takes another 30 days to forget another 50%. On the 31st day, what remains is only about 25% of what you heard about a month back.

A class was divided into three groups and tested. Group A tested on the same day got 85%; Group B tested next day got 55%; and group C tested one month later got 30%.

How do you overcome this shortcoming.? Do daily reviews. Spend 10 minutes per hour of lecture for daily reviews. Daily reviews of all classes for that day will not take more than one hour. Find time to do these reviews. You can miss supper but don't miss these daily reviews.

Do weekly reviews. Review over the weekend the material covered during the week. Review the entire material on completion of a major section or topic.

3. Use Spaced Learning For Effective Learning

A person repeats 67 times to learn something at one sitting. However, if repeated at spaced intervals, it takes only 36 repetitions. The learning time is halved.

Write the formulas, poems or whatever you are learning on 75 mm x 125 mm cards. Carry it in your pocket - learn in the cafeteria, or while standing for a bus etc. Fix this card to the bathroom mirror - learn while brushing your teeth. Fix it on the kitchen cabinet.

4. Focus On Important Half A Dozen Activities

In any activity, there are about half a dozen important activities that ensure the successful completion of a project. Identify these half a dozen items and pay attention to these items. You will succeed.

If you want to be an effective student and perform well in the exams, there are half a dozen items to which you should pay attention. In my fifteen years of experience as a teacher, the fundamental reason why many students don't do well in their studies is - they haven't paid attention to these half a dozen items. If you pay attention to these half a dozen items, there is absolutely no doubt, that you will excel in your studies. What are these items? They are as follows:

Regular attendance; Sit in front and pay attention in class; Do all assignments well and on time; Do regular (daily and weekly) review; Prepare for the exam.

5. Sit In Front Of Class

There is definite co-relation between sitting in front of the class and better marks in the exam. Many lecturers without their knowledge make eye contact with students seated in front of the class. You concentrate more and absorb more when there is eye contact with lecturer. You are not distracted by the antics, twitching or yawning of your fellow students.

6. Pay Attention To Classroom Manners

Attend classes regularly, including tutorials and discussions.

Be on time to class and submit class work on time.

Don't talk in class. Don't fool around.

Don't associate with friends who are mischievous in class.

Don't ask too many questions. Be courteous to the lecturer. Don't argue or find fault with the lecturer.

Don't gather up your books and put on your coat 5 minutes before the period ends.

Bad manners and bad study habits lead to poor marks.

Good manners and good study habits lead to good marks.

7. Designate Daily Study Time

We feel more physically alive and mentally alert at certain times of the day or week or month. When are these times for you? And when do you feel sluggish and dull? Determine your peak times and study the difficult, boring and important subjects during these times. Study the easy and interesting subjects during your sluggish period.

Designate daily study time. Study at the same time every day. Stick to it every day. Do not set study time that you will break every day. Designated study time may be broken due to unavoidable circumstances.

For Eg: If you designate 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm as study time; you must avoid meals, making and taking phone calls, watching TV, talking to your parents, spouse, children or brothers and sisters within these hours. It is tough. It requires discipline. This is the way to do well and be successful in your studies.

Study in sizeable time periods. Studying in 30 minute blocks is unsuitable. Studying long hours without break is ineffective. Designate one to three hour study blocks with 5 or 10 minutes break every 40 minutes.

8. Spread Studies Over Several Regular Sessions

Research studies show students get 20% higher marks by studying five sessions of half an hour each day rather than cramming into a single two and a half hour study session. In basketball, a group practiced free throws 10 minutes a day for three weeks, and another group practiced 30 minutes every 3 days. Both groups had 210 minutes of practice. The first group improved free throws by 20%.

Start with the subjects that interest you the least, and study the interesting subjects later. Study for short periods those subjects that make you bored and fatigued - spread it over more sessions.

Reward yourself consistent with effort, when studying subjects you dislike or doing difficult assignments. Do the difficult things first and then have a good time and not the reverse.

9. "A Healthy Body Goes With A Healthy Mind" or "Mind Your Body And Mend Your Mind"

Exercise regularly. Find time to exercise every day. Your efficiency will be greater if you exercise everyday. It helps you to relieve stress. Don't make exercise a drudgery. Don't over exert.

Eat nutritional food. Never go to class with an empty stomach. Have a good breakfast. Neither overeat before studies nor study on an empty stomach. Eat one balanced meal a day. Avoid overuse of pills and stimulants.

Sleep well. What is your minimum hours of sleep? Find out for yourself. For most of us, it is somewhere between six and eight hours. Get your minimum hours of sleep.

Maintain cleanliness of body and clothing.

Lead a balanced life.

10. Have A Study Area

It is important to have a designated study area. Keep your study area free of distractions such as photos, radio, T.V. etc. If you use the dining table as study table, clear the dishes from the dining table before getting down to study.

Find your optimum area for study and use it.
Try and study in the same place every time.
Never sit on a chesterfield or bed to study.
Never listen to music or have the T.V. on while studying.

11. Use A Proper Chair

Use a chair that is neither too comfortable nor uncomfortable.

12. Proper Lighting In Study Area

Lighting should neither be too dim nor too bright. Both types of light produce eye strain. You tire out mentally and loose concentration.

BELIEVE YOU CAN AND YOU CAN

If you think you are beaten, you are;
If you think you dare not, you don't;
If you like to win, but think you can't,
It's almost a cinch that you won't.

If you think you'll lose, you are lost;
For out in the world we find
Success begins with a fellow's will;
It's all in the state of mind.

If you think you're outclassed, you are;
You've got to think high to rise.
You've got to be sure of yourself
Before you can win the prize.

Life's battles don't always go
To the strongest or fastest man;
But sooner or later the person who wins
Is the person who thinks he or she can!

Wishing You The Very Best For A Future

References:

“Study Skills” – Audio in MP3 by N. Pas Paskaran
(free download from <http://humanpotential.cjb.net>)
“Memory Power” – Audio in MP3 by N. Pas Paskaran
(free download from <http://humanpotential.cjb.net>)
“Writing Exams” – Audio in MP3 by N. Pas Paskaran
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