Effective Learning and Study Strategies
Are you a Good Reader?

A good reader is able to comprehend and remember what you read thus use specific strategies to facilitate your understanding. Here are some strategies you might want to adopt (Dole, Duffy, Rocher, & Person, 1991):

- **Determining importance.** Good readers identify main ideas and separate them from examples and supporting details.

- **Summarizing information.** Good readers summarize information by reviewing all the ideas in a passage or chapter, differentiate important from unimportant ideas, then synthesize the ideas to create a statement that represents the meaning of the passage or chapter.

- **Drawing inferences.** Good readers use inference extensively to fill in details omitted in a text and to celebrate on what they read.

- **Generating questions.** Good readers maintain active involvement but generating questions and attempting to answer them while they read.

- **Monitoring comprehension.** Good readers are not only aware of the quality and degree of their understanding but also know what to do when they fail to comprehend material.
Exercise: Assessing Your Reading Strategies
How often do you use these strategies when you read?

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<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
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<tr>
<td>I preview all my textbooks to review the learning aids provided by the authors</td>
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<tr>
<td>I preview each chapter before I read</td>
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<td>I think of questions as I read</td>
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<td>I underline my textbook as I read</td>
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<td>I look for main ideas as I read</td>
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<td>I use maps or charts to organize the content I read</td>
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<td>I complete exercises or answer questions at the end of each chapter when I am finished reading</td>
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<td>I make notes to identify material I don’t understand</td>
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<td>I constantly monitor my understanding as I read</td>
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<td>I read my assignments before attending lectures</td>
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Now you have better understanding on how to become a good reader and evaluate your own study strategies. Here we have some note-taking strategies to prepare you to study:

**Before study**

1. Preview the book for learning aids.
2. Survey the assignment before each reading session.
3. Read questions at the beginning or end of each chapter or study guide that may accompany your textbook, or that are provided by your instructors.

**During reading**

1. As you begin reading, think of the text as a conversation between the author and yourself.
   a. What is the author trying to tell me?
   b. Which sentences state the main idea?
2. Turn the headings in a textbook into questions and answer them. If there are no headings, write questions in the margin of the textbook.
3. Underline the answers to your questions and annotate the textbook.

**After reading each passage or section**

1. Answer out loud the questions that you generated from the headings, printed in the textbook, and given by your instructor.
2. After you have underlined the material, re-read questions to check whether underlining provides sufficient clues to answer questions. If necessary, make modifications in underlining.
3. Check your understanding of the material you read by attempting to answer the questions.
4. Consider summarizing, outlining, or representing that material.
Developing an Effective Study Plan

An effective study plan includes what, how, and when content will be reviewed. It includes a variety of learning and study strategies that will help you respond correctly to both lower and higher level questions. Here is a six-step procedure for how you can develop a Study Plan:

Step 1: Determine the content coverage and questions format of the exam

“I never miss a class before exam as the instructor usually reviews the content coverage. I also take the time to check that I have all the needed resources before I begin study.”

Step 2: Organize and separate the content into parts

“I have identified six different types of problems I need to learn how to solve in chemistry. I’ll work on the problems in three different study sessions.”

Step 3: Identify specific study strategies

“I decide which study strategy is most helpful for the different content I must learn. For example, I prefer to use representations for more complex material and note cards for factual content.”

Step 4: Estimate the amount of time needed for each strategy

“During my first semester, I underestimated how much time was needed for revision. I now begin to study for exams much earlier because I can’t review a large amount of content in a day or two.”

Step 5: Allocate time for each study strategy in a weekly schedule

“In preparing examination, I try to schedule my study during the day so in the evening I will have time finishing up writing papers and projects.”

Step 6: Modify the plan as needed

“I never realized how many unexpected events occur that interfere with my study time. I revise my study plan each night and make needed changes.”
Dealing with Procrastination

If you tend to procrastinate, you are likely to be either lack of conscientiousness or avoidance in fear of anxiety and fear of failure. Strategies for dealing with procrastination include improving time management, maintaining attention and concentration, using specific behavioral changes, such as 5-minute plan, reducing anxiety, and challenging irrational beliefs. Please visit this webpage for more details: http://counsel.ust.hk/publications/procrastination.pdf

Managing your Time

The purpose of time management is to ensure that you complete all important tasks every day. If you have difficulty or lack of awareness about how you spend your time, you may refer to this link and help yourself to develop a more efficient time management system: http://counsel.ust.hk/publications/TimeManagement.pdf

Sources:

Professional Help-seeking

The University provides professional counseling services for undergraduate and postgraduate students. You may check out the profiles of our Student Counselors on our webpage and make an appointment with them online. Two weeks’ advance booking is allowed. Please be reassured that all sharing and discussion during counseling sessions will be strictly confidential.

Counseling and Wellness Center
http://counsel.ust.hk Room 5003 (via lift 3)
Email: counsel@ust.hk Tel: (852) 2358-6696

Meet Our Counselors