



Memory and Concentration



Memory and concentration work together but one does not necessarily lead to the other. (An important common element for both is to pay attention to the task at hand!)

Memory Tips: (**Memory:** the ability to recall and remember information)

1. Create an environment conducive for your learning. Sit close to the speaker during lectures. Eliminate excessive noise or other distractions. Have study materials, flash cards, etc. available. **Create a work atmosphere.**
2. Organize your information. Use acronyms or other mnemonic devices (See Week 4 Study Tips). Make schematic maps, Venn diagrams, flow charts, etc. Don't approach all your materials as if it was of equal importance; divide it into what you know and what you don't know. Also, **prioritize** the information that is important from what is less important. (If you have a difficult time doing this, come to the Study Strategies Desk in the LC.)
3. Be actively involved in the study process. **Repeat** information to help you remember key points. **Recite** the concepts in your own words. **Link** new information to known information. Read with a pencil in your hand so you can make notes, highlight, question, and clarify information.

4. Approach new information globally and then break it into smaller chunks. Read the chapter introduction and summary to **create a framework** for attaching information. Turn the bold words and headings into possible test questions and answer them as you read. **Group information** into logical chunks.
5. Make it meaningful. What will be the eventual use for this information? How can it be applied in other situations? What is important to the author, hence, you? **Be aware that negative attitudes make it more difficult to remember information.**
6. Over learn. Review material covered in a previous class or study session. Reorganize/recite it in a different manner. Rehearse possible test questions. Your goal is to move the material into **long term memory.**

Concentration Tips: (**Concentration** - The ability to direct your mental powers or efforts towards a particular issue; intentionally focus)

1. Take Two: Create an environment that is conducive to your learning and study actively with a pencil in your hand. (See above.)
2. Quiet your mind. Before you start to study, take a minute to close your eyes and **breathe** deeply. Be still and focus on your breathing. Open your eyes slowly and begin...
3. Set a goal for the study session. At the beginning of the session, you may even want to evaluate on a scale of 1-5 how well you know the information. Then at the end of the session, **evaluate your progress.** You may find it reinforcing to see that you have moved from a 1 to a 4 during your study session.
4. Monitor your attention. When you “zone out” pull yourself out of automatic pilot and tune into the task at hand. **Self talk** may help to stay on track. Cue yourself every few minutes to ask yourself, “What have I learned in this section?” “What main points has the professor made in the last 10 minutes?”

5. Study in small chunks; not marathon sessions. Time yourself for a relatively short amount of time, perhaps 15 minutes, and study/read intentionally and actively. Every time your mind wanders, put down a tally mark. If you remember other things you need to do, write them down but then return to your reading. At the end of 15 minutes, **take a little break**, and return to study/read again. This time, see if you can have your mind wander less. Little by little, you will get a purer amount of concentration. When you see this happening, extend your study time to 20 minutes. Keep doing this exercise as your skills improve.
6. Establish a reward system for successful study sessions. Give yourself **incentives**. (Ex. If you finish a paper, visit with friends; if you study for an hour, you can get on Face book for 10 minutes)
7. Study your more difficult subjects first. Your mind will be fresher. Also, you will get a sense of accomplishment by tackling a difficult task. This helps to **alleviate procrastination**. Vary the order of your studying.
8. Take care of yourself! **Get plenty of sleep and eat a balanced diet**...Easier said, than done, we know! However, your health habits do affect your concentration and memory. Remember the campus' resources, including the Counseling Center, if you have some personal problems that are interfering with your ability to concentrate. (Counseling Center LU 320, 285-1736)

**BE PROACTIVE ABOUT GETTING HELP RATHER THAN REACTIVE AFTER IT
IS TOO LATE!!!**