



## STUDY SUCCESSFULLY

1 September 2015

I know for some of you exams are still some way off. But then for others, such as Grade 12's, they are just around the corner. And even if your exams are still in the future, you should not be leaving everything to the last minute and cramming if you want to do well.

### ***Study Tips***

- Work out how many hours per week you need to spend studying to achieve the results you want. Most courses will give you a guideline as to what is required.
- Schedule all your activities into a weekly calendar. That means everything you do, including work, play, exercise, family responsibilities, etc. Then add in the study schedule so that you include time for the full number of hours you need to devote to your studies. If there are not enough hours you will have to prioritise in terms of importance.
- You will be successful when you get yourself into a habit of studying. So for the first month you will need to be disciplined about putting in the hours. If you need a friend or family member to phone you to get you going then organise for that to happen. If you will be more disciplined if you have a study buddy then arrange for that. If you need to set an alarm to remind you to start studying do that.
- There will be temptations to do other things. You will definitely come up with other activities that are a lot more attractive than sitting down and studying. Don't tell yourself that you would rather be doing something else. Remind yourself how your life will be better in so many respects once you have passed your exams and obtained your qualification.
- Set yourself milestones and reward yourself along the way for meeting milestones. The milestones could be based on time, such as weekly, or they could be based on work completed such as finishing a chapter or module. Once you have met the milestone, that is, completed the set number of hours or finished the module, then give yourself a reward.
- Make sure you are eating and sleeping properly. Also schedule some timeout. You need to add in one or two activities a week which are completely different to your studies to give you a break from working and studying routines.
- A study routine which I often recommend to clients who are studying part time while working full time, is to study Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Then you know you have Thursday and Friday off. Then study on Saturday mornings and you have the rest of the weekend free.
- Find a good place to study. Think about a place you can go to where you can do nothing else but study - such as a library.

- Use social pressure to your advantage. Tell your friends and family when you will be studying so that you will be embarrassed if you don't. Tell people when you are studying and make sure they don't interrupt you during that time.
- Form a study group to make some of your studying more active and interesting
- Post reminders or motivational messages on your wall, phone and computer. At the beginning of the term write a motivational letter to yourself and read this often. Post your study fees over your desk
- Get interested in the subject of your studies.
- Visualise yourself in your future career. You can post pictures pertaining to that career along with things you plan to buy with your future earnings. Stick them above your desk where you study.
- If someone has said something negative to you, use your anger as a motivator. "I'll show them" can be a very powerful motivator.
- Link your schedule to someone else's. Then you cannot rearrange your schedule without messing up their schedule. Preferably it should be someone who studies hard, not someone who will find any reason to avoid their studies.
- Create artificial deadlines. Promise someone that you will finish a chapter or assignment question by a certain time and then email to confirm when it is done.
- Tell friends and family your specific study goals for the week and then ask them to check back with you at the end of the week. You may want to increase the incentive by offering them a treat (e.g. pizza) if you don't achieve your goals.



### **Learning and remembering the information**

- Practice doing what you will be asked to do in the exam.
- Prepare study sheets that reorganize the information in ways that fit your learning style (e.g., Tables, Figures, Flow Charts, etc.).
- As you survey what you are going to be reading, formulate questions you will answer as you read. (Who, What, Where, How, Why, Significance).
- Form a study group and spend time asking each other questions and "teaching" one another the most important material.
- When reading something you must remember, test yourself by attempting to recite it in your own words.

- Don't simply stuff your head with facts. Relate material to your life, job and daily activities. Relate ideas to one another.
- Take some basic concepts from your notes and turn them into a song, poem or even rap about them
- Get someone to ask you questions on what you have learned. Throw around ideas and interpretations with a friend. Test one another on the study material.
- Use a two column study sheet - headings on the left and details on the right. You can cover up the right hand column and then quiz yourself using the headings on the left.
- Constantly paraphrase as you read .. "Oh I see he/she is saying....."
- Stop at the end of a paragraph or section to highlight a phrase or write a brief note in the margin.
- Use all your Senses - Abstract ideas are difficult to memorize because they are far removed from our senses. Shift them closer by coming up with vivid pictures, feelings and images that relate information together.
- Teach It - Find someone who doesn't understand the topic and teach it to them.
- Find Patterns - Look for patterns in information. Information becomes easier to organize if you can identify broader patterns that are similar across different topics.
- Build a Large Foundation - Reading a lot and having a general understanding of many topics gives you a lot more flexibility in finding patterns in new topics. The more you already know, the easier it is to learn.
- If the textbook is very difficult, look to buy a review book or look for a summary on-line.
- Examples can frequently help you comprehend complex ideas. Once you have read something, think of a few examples to illustrate what you have read.
- Actively look for areas of confusion and talk to experts in these areas to clear up confusion.
- Try some past exam questions, but (and this is important), try them under exam conditions. After you have worked through the questions on your own check them with peers or against a model answer to see if you have done them correctly. Give yourself 2 to 4 practice exams before taking the exam.

You can pick some of these methods and try them and see what works for you. Mix things up. Make studying fun.