

# Middle Georgia State University Student Success Centers

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## 10 Steps in Learning to Learn

*Effective study skills and strategies are the basis of effective learning. They give you an opportunity to approach learning tasks systematically and independently. By always using good study habits – learning to work smarter – you will work like and become a successful student .*

### Learn to Learn

Learning is a very personal matter. There isn't one study/learning skill or strategy that works for every person in every situation. Therefore, learning to learn strategies are about learning what you know, learning what you don't know, and learning what to do about it. Your repertoire of study/learning strategies will:

- Enable you to take more responsibility for your own learning
- Allow you to spend your time effectively and stay on task
- Help you select the best approach(s) for each assignment/task
- Provide you with the knowledge and skills needed to begin, follow-through, and complete assignments/tasks
- Present you with access to a variety of content and reference materials
- Give you the confidence to know when and who to ask for help

### 1. Know Yourself

Begin by honestly assessing your strengths and weaknesses in basic college skills – reading, writing, listening, and mathematics – and study/work habits such as organization, time management, concentration, listening, and note taking.

In addition, consider when (are you a morning person or a night owl) and where (do you concentrate best in a bright room with noise or in a cozy, quiet corner) you are at your best for learning.

### 2. Manage Your Time and Life

The first step in learning to manage your time – controlling your own life – is to identify what your goals are and then to establish priorities to help you reach them.

Analyze how you are using your time. If you are not spending time on your priorities, you must make the necessary adjustments or you won't reach your goals. If school, learning and good grades are a priority, then you must make and follow a schedule that gives a significant amount of time to class and study.

**3. Improve Your Concentration**

As a good student, you will not necessarily study more than a poor student, but you will definitely use your study time more effectively. Learn to keep your attention focused on the task at hand — concentrate. When you are in class or ready to study, give it your full attention.

And remember, how well you learn something, not how fast you learn it, is critical factor in remembering. You must “get” something before you can “forget” it.

**4. Know What Study Means & How To Do It**

Learning take more than just going to class and doing homework. It is really a four part cycle: preview → class → retrieve → feedback for stable facts and working examples for math-type problems.

When you establish a learning—cycle routine you will be able to learn more in less time with less stress.

**5. Develop a Thinker's Vocabulary**

English is the richest language with the largest vocabulary on earth. Each of our words is a symbol that represents an idea or object. Your ability to understand the meaning of the words others use and to select the right one(s) to communicate your ideas, information, and feelings is very important to effective learning.

To develop a thinker's vocabulary, you must become sensitive to words and develop strategies for unlocking the meaning of new words and a process for remembering the new words and their meanings.

**6. Become an Active Reader**

Did you ever fall asleep while playing tennis or when watching your favorite television show? Probably not. How about when you're reading? Probably so. What makes the difference? If you are actively involved, physically and mentally, you stay interested and committed. When you become passive, you rapidly lose interest and drift away.

To learn from study/reading material, you must be an active, thinking participant in the process, not a passive bystander. Always preview the reading and make sure you have a specific purpose for each assignment. Read actively to fulfill your purpose and answer questions about the material. Keep involved by giving yourself frequent tests over what you've read.

**7. Become an Active Writer**

Writing that accurately expresses your ideas demands not only writing skill but focused attention, critical thinking and active involvement. Only if you become actively involved in the writing process will you be able to communicate your ideas clearly.

Your writing must have a purpose, a controlling idea or thesis, organized development of your idea with major and minor supporting details, and a logical conclusion.

**8. Build Listening & Note Taking Skills**

Accurately listening to a lecture and deciding what is important are two skills that must be mastered before you worry about how to write the information in your notes. Again, being an active rather than a passive participant is the key to your success.

Taking good notes demands that you: prepare for class, become an active listener, distinguish major from minor points, use a note taking system, participate in class, and retrieve often.

**9. Know How to Study for & Take Exams**

Exams are your way to show a professor how much you've learned. Preparing for exams will give you a better understanding of the material, lower your anxiety, and improve your scores.

Find out as much as you can about the exam, study and recall from memory using feedback the material over a period of time (use the night before as a final review not a cram session), pace yourself during the exam, and always go over your grades with your professor.

**10. Master Every Course**

You can't get something for nothing. You can, however, get nothing for something and that's exactly what you will get from any course if your only investment is money. True education is not about cramming material into your brain. True education is the drawing material out of your brain, making connections, and expanding your capabilities, of bringing yourself into the world. Professors can merely set the stage for you to create learning through your own actions.