

HigherLearning

An Education Series

6 Study Habits to Avoid and Adopt

No matter what age or academic level, employing effective studying strategies can make all the difference between acing a class, barely passing or, worse, failing miserably. This year, ditch the surprisingly shoddy study habits and, instead, utilize proven effective and emerging technology-based strategies as building blocks to get ahead — in school and, ultimately, in life.

6 Bad Study Habits Students Should Change Immediately:

- 1. Studying at home:** Studying at home might be convenient and easy, but there are way too many distractions lurking around the residence which can break concentration and make studying less effective. Consider going to the library and finding a quiet room or desk away from all of these diversions.
- 2. Listening to music:** Recent studies show that music may actually impair cognitive abilities and hinder memorization because of the changing words and notes in songs. Studying in silence or amid a little white noise will not distract from thinking and can help a student concentrate without disruption.
- 3. Procrastinating:** If a student is pulling frequent all-nighters or rushing in fire-drill mode to finish every essay or project, then it is time to work on time management skills and a schedule earlier, and calmer, study sessions.
- 4. Not making an outline:** If a student is not making outlines while studying or writing a paper, then the results most likely will not be the intended grade. Outlines help to keep track of large amounts of information, organize ideas, and present the class material in a logical way.
- 5. Highlighting the textbook:** Highlighting is actually one of the least effective ways for students to remember content. Instead of coloring entire pages with highlighters and trying to reread the text, a student can quiz themselves on the

material they just read.

- 6. Pulling All-Nighters:** Not only does sleep deprivation turn students into zombies, but it also takes a serious toll on happiness and overall well-being. The best way to avoid pulling all-nighters is to study ahead of time.

So, what can a student do to make their studying endeavors more effective?

6 Good Study Habits for Academic Success:

- 1. Pay attention to study location:** Find a quiet, uncluttered, distraction-free area away from the residence, and try a few locations until the ideal study place is discovered. Whatever the location, leverage powerful new mobile, interactive study solutions that allow high school and college students to better prepare for tests and course work through any portable device from anywhere, at any time.
- 2. Vary study topics:** Psychologists say alternating study topics rather than cramming on a specific one in a single session leaves a deeper impression on the brain. So, don't grind on the same subject all night. Change it up, take breaks and re-visit the material in intervals.
- 3. Make information meaningful:** The University of Maryland reports that mnemonic devices, or memory tricks, are particularly useful for remembering factual information like names, dates, formulas, or other information that requires rote memorization.
- 4. Tap online resources:** Companies like Academic Earth offer a comprehensive online collection of free video tutorials for college courses — all accessible at no cost. Other companies like OpenStudy enable Internet users to readily connect and engage with other students who are learning the same subjects at the same time.
- 5. Engage in social learning:** In one recent study from the Jacobs School of

Engineering at the University of California San Diego, it was revealed that "the higher the volume of interaction, the more likely the students were willing to exchange information in more complex ways and with greater frequency, forming 'information cascades,' a mechanism that spreads information from a single source to one or multiple sources." The data showed that the higher the scores of the students, the higher the percentage of their interactions that were constant.

- 6. Have a great study attitude:** Rather than dreading the experience, thinking positive will make the time to study easier to approach and mindshare won't be expended on feeling resentful. In fact, "study attitudes" was identified in research as one of four pillars that "play a critical and central role in determining students' academic performance."

Ultimately, students should identify their own study preferences — what works for them on a consistent basis — and act accordingly." Knowing exactly what does and does not work on a personal level, even tracking study patterns and correlating it with related grades, and then proactively creating a study plan and schedule around the proven effective methods, is the most powerful study tool of all.**AT**

About the Expert:

Education futurist Ashish Rangnekar is CEO of BenchPrep, a pioneering EdTech company that uniquely creates test prep and other subject-based interactive courses that can be accessed via computer, iPhone, Android and iPad for on-demand, on-location learning. Visit him online at www.BenchPrep.com.

