Academic Skills

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What Gets in the Way of Good Learning?

“I got this”
The Stanford experience

pace

volume

complexity
High Achievers...

If I get stuck, I suck

If it’s hard or taking too long I must be doing it wrong

Having a standard of excellence means being perfect

Must. Read. Every. Word...
Active Learning
We learn in layers

Learning = a process
Skills for Each Layer

- Taking notes
- Writing Papers
- Exams
- Procrastination
Managing Time

- Write things down.
- Think about how long things will take, and map them onto your calendar.
- Reduce transition times.
- It’s ok if things get de-railed: push the reset button.
Classroom Learning
Office Learning Tips

- Go to class!
- Turn off wi-fi!
- Prepare for class by thinking about the last class, what you read, etc.
- Get there early and look over notes from last time.
- Read the syllabus and anticipate what today’s class will cover.
- Formulate questions about the material.
attention

prior knowledge  context
Active reading means engaging prior knowledge and context to develop questions.
Not all words are equally important: your job as a scholar is to determine the relative importance of them.
Get baseline data to know how fast you read and how much time to set aside.
Read with others. Discuss.
Taking Notes
Notetaking Skills

- Notes should be interpretive – they capture your ideas and the connections you make.
- Notes should be in your own words.
- If you review your notes within 24 hours of taking them, you will retain 40% more than if you wait a week.
- Share with others. Discuss
Studying for Exams

- friends
- lots of time
- internet
- office hours
- textbook
- notes
- tutoring
Review and rehearse SOON and FREQUENTLY after lecture.

Work together. Discuss.

SAY OUT LOUD what the concept is, how it works, how it fits with the rest of what you’re learning, and why it’s important.

Don’t mistake familiarity with comprehension.
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Taking Exams
Taking Exams Skills

- Warm up cognitively.
- Don’t expect new problems to be familiar.
- Slow down.
- Sometimes it’s better to go slower and do fewer problems.
- Identify which concept is being used (from studying).
- Be systematic.
Raw Meat Warning
Re-read the syllabus to find out what the class is all about.

Take notes that provide a breadcrumb trail back to what you were thinking when you first read the text.

Refer to those notes to get you started.

Systematically transform those notes (organize, cull, craft).

Before “ending” your work session, make a plan for the next one – build momentum when you have some.
Procrastination

STUDY VERY HARD PSET

DO REALLY HARD homework
Procrastination Tips

- Analyze: what is the nature of “the mountain”?
- Break things down into smaller tasks
- Develop a plan including reminders:
  - ...intelligence is malleable: more time on task, more effort will yield results
  - ...you don’t have to do everything all at once
  - ...learning is hard and not getting it easily means you’re stretching muscles
What new thing will YOU do?

1. Time Management
2. Classroom Learning
3. Reading
4. Taking notes
5. Exams
6. Writing Papers
7. Procrastination
The Resilience Project posits that rejection, failure, or disappointment, in the context of learning, are as valuable as the success we strive for. Many of the reflections in these videos and on the pages you'll