Ten Timely Tips

1. Study 1/5 of a week’s reading (per subject) each day for five days, doing all of SQ4R on that 1/5. Use days 6 & 7 to pull it all together, re-read tough parts, work on memory, etc. Preplan your stopping points so that when you begin each day, you’ll know how much you are going to do that day.

2. As you read, ask yourself:
   a) What is the author trying to tell me?
   b) How is this important to the course?
   c) How is this important to my (future) career?
   d) What would make a good test question?

3. If you can talk out loud to yourself for 15 minutes, you have a good knowledge of the topic. After reading, walk and talk out loud to yourself. As you drive to and from school and work, talk out loud to yourself.

4. Highlight only the words you want to re-read each time you review.

5. Study similar topics in different colors. You can recall the colors at test time, and it will help you keep the subject matter separated.

6. Adopt a symbol that you can put in your notes to indicate the material was also in the text. Use the same symbol in your text to indicate the teacher covered that in class. The symbol indicates that both the teacher and the author consider that material important.

7. Label a page “In 5 Minutes or Less.” Divide it into two columns, one for study items, and one for non-study items. Calling a chatty friend five minutes before you have to walk out the door can save a lot of time later in the day. Think of everything you can study in a short amount of time. Suggestions include: reviewing notes, writing a 3x5, writing an acronym, previewing before class, learning one fact, etc. The list becomes endless.

8. If content is really hard to comprehend, get a lower level book of the course. Learn the basics at a lower grade level, and then return to the college text to add the details. If no lower book is available, just looking at a different text in different wording can be helpful.

9. Be active with the material. If the first time you try to recall it is at test taking time, it will be extremely difficult. Practice recall with active writing and talking. A study buddy is valuable because you can discuss it. Each time you pull it out of your brain, you are also putting it back into your brain.

10. Be positive. A test is a chance to show your teacher what you know. Make sure you are absolutely certain you know what a question is asking. If an essay question has several points in it, consider it a gift; the teacher is telling you what he or she is going to grade you on. Answer the easiest ones first while you are fresh and won’t misread them. Don’t leave anything blank. The first answer that pops into your head is usually the right one.

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