
Supporting Student Study Skills

IDENTIFY CORE CONCEPTS

Clearly define the core concepts your students will need to learn to be successful in your course. Explain how these concepts will help them in their future studies and/or careers. Refer to them often and connect your assessments and assignments to them. Help your students track their progress in mastering them. Expect your students to apply the concepts in higher order thinking exercises.

BUILD A GROWTH MINDSET

Research shows that students with a growth mindset are more resilient and are able to overcome challenges. Show students that effort equals learning. Have them track their progress so they can see their improvement over time. Help them understand how learning works by explaining the importance of practicing retrieval of key concepts to arrest forgetting and to strengthen retrieval routes.

PROVIDE PRACTICE TESTS

Share typical test questions in the same format they can expect to see on your exams. Show a few throughout the class and have students record their responses. Revisit them at the end of class and discuss the correct answers. Have students create their own possible test questions from their notes and readings. Build retrieval practice into courses by providing a brief quiz over the important concepts from the current as well as prior classes at the end of class.

USE SPACED PRACTICE

Spaced practice is a schedule of practice that revisits concepts over a period of time. It works because retrieving knowledge from memory is more beneficial when practice sessions are spaced out so that some forgetting occurs before you try to retrieve again. The added effort required to recall the information makes learning stronger. For spacing within the class, revisit important concepts from the class at the end of the class. For spacing across classes, revisit important concepts from earlier classes at the beginning of the next class. Both are helpful but the longer interval between classes will help with long term retention.

CONTINUE TO REVISIT CORE CONCEPTS

Revisit content from previous classes on a regular basis. Require students to continue to use skills and content already covered. Include questions from prior units of study on current exams. Help students make connections between current and past content.