Successful students know that studying isn’t always something that comes as a natural skill. Sometimes it takes a refined technique to know how to learn. This is true when it comes to behavior before, after, and during a test or even when you’re trying to learn something for the sake of bettering yourself. Here are a few things you might want to consider doing to make sure that you know what you’re doing. Studying might not be surgery, but it does require careful and learnable technique.

**KNOW THYSELF**

There is no single technique to learn something that is going to work for every single person. There are multiple types of intelligences and learning styles. One of the most important parts of studying is to know how you need to study, so you may need to know whether you lean toward the watching, doing, conceptualizing, or experiencing end of the learning spectrum. To find out what type of learner you are by taking a LEARN11 course at Long Beach City College. Another key part of understanding yourself is to make sure you know what your peak concentration time is. Peak concentration time refers to the time that you are usually most awake and alert during a day. Your ability to memorize and understand information will be much better during this time, regardless of whether it’s at 8am or 8pm.

**HELP OTHERS, HELP YOU**

Study groups are an important part of the learning experience. Teaching is one of the best ways to learn something as it deploys many senses associated with memory, including visual, audio, tactile (touching materials, the book, the board), and muscle memory when you demonstrate concepts. By helping others, you help yourself and form lasting relationships with your fellow students for the future. A good study group is full of people who want to learn. 3-5 people is the best size, as larger groups can decrease concentration. Study groups allow for multiple perspectives and a way to fill in any blanks in your understanding of material. Find a good area for study groups, such as a study room or a center with large tables, and regularly schedule meetings with a consistent study group for best effect.

**BE PREPARED**

Before we get started, take a moment to consider what it is you do now to study. Is it effective? Are you getting the grades you want in your classes? It is important to establish that there may be some things in your study techniques right now that you already find useful, as each person has his or her own best way to learn. Do not lose track of what works, simply add on to make your technique better than ever and you’ll find yourself an expert student in no time!

If you have to keep getting up and interrupting your concentration to get materials, you’re not using your time or brain effectively. Always have your materials prepared before a study session. This means pens, pencils, paper, calculators, your textbook, highlighters, notes, whiteboards with markers, and other class-specific materials. There are other materials that you can use to make your studying more effective as well. Flash cards, content maps, annotated texts, study guides, and previous copies of the test are all effective study tools. To get a copy of a previous test, ask your instructor. Some instructors recycle tests, so this may not be an available resource, but if it is you should certainly take advantage of it. There are plenty of other study tools you can create on your own, so feel free to experiment!

Last but not least, use the past and other resources available to you. If this is not your first test in the class, use your experience to study the material in the style that the teacher presents it on an exam. As a memory trick, if you can find a room similar to the room you will be taking your test in, it can help you develop visual reminders within the room to study there. After each test you have, take an inventory of what you did to study for that test. What worked? What could use improvement? Learning about yourself is as important in college as learning the information from your courses. If you feel like you still need help, the Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction Center at Long Beach City College provides additional assistance free of charge to current students. Call (662) 938-4474 or visit in L-203 to make an appointment, walk-in, or get more information.

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