



- Studying hard? Study SMART! -
Strategies and Techniques to better get through University

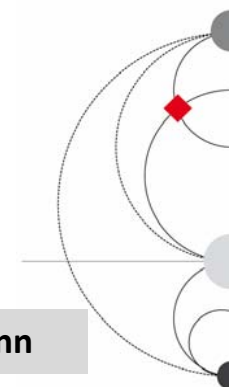
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Agenda

- How to study smart?
 - Preparation
 - Mindset
 - „SMART Studying“
- How to motivate yourself to study?
- Procrastination – can you beat it?



How to study smart?

Preparation

1) Get a **STUDY GAME PLAN**

- *specify* the day you begin to prepare for your exams
- create a *daily schedule* of tasks you want to accomplish during exam preparation
- create a *detailed to-do-list* (be keen on the really important things)
- *enumerate* the books you need to read (or better: the important sections/chapters you really need to know for tests etc.)
- *itemize* the various tasks and exercises you want to do for preparation

You could also *categorize* the weeks/months for preparation into different *phases*:

I) basic refreshment of knowledge, II) studying, revision, and exercises, and III) intensive cracking down (be careful to not put your social life completely on hold)

SMART WAY: Have a clear goal that you pursue gradually with your plan to avoid many extra-hours and to help you focus on the important!

How to study smart?

Preparation

2) SUMMARIZE

- *create summaries* while working through books/literature
 - ⇒ establish the fundament on which you can build upon during upcoming study phase
- train yourself to *quickly identify key statements/contents* in large texts that are likely to be tested in exams
 - ⇒ it'll be easier for you to skip large amount of irrelevant data while sifting through the study literature

How to study smart?

Preparation

3) SEPARATE the WHEAT from the CHAFF

- While listening to a lecture or reading through a textbook try to continuously *separate information that is important*

⇒ „Could this knowledge be tested in an exam?“

from *information that is unimportant*

⇒ „Is my teacher digressing or listing irrelevant data?“

- Continually *take notes of the important points* your teacher talks about and add them to your script => this later helps you to grasp important coherences
- *Highlight important sentences/passages* in your readings or in your script => helps you avoid reading through large amounts of unimportant data later

How to study smart?

MINDSET

1) When you study, GIVE at least 100% (better 110%)

- *reduce distractions to a minimum*
(e.g., a quiet study space, solid stock of supplies, healthy refreshments, offline, comfortable clothing)
- give your best to *avoid procrastination*
- set yourself a *time limit*

=> Use the time you have to a maximum to make it as productive and focused as you can!

How to study smart?

MINDSET

2) CONTINUITY

- *no all-nighters in the days before your examinations*

(this will exhaust you and force you to rush through the data instead of studying properly)

⇒ instead: consider spending half an hour each day after university with

POST-TREATMENT

(e.g., reading a book chapter, making a summary, doing some exercises => this helps you to *spend more time with studying* during exam preparation period)

Why is this SMART? If you already did the groundwork during the term, you'll be able to focus a lot more on smart ways of studying.

How to study smart?

„Studying SMART“

1) Don't try to memorize, UNDERSTAND!

- learning by heart is time-intensive and mostly corresponds with studying hard, not smart
- => Focus your attention on *understanding and comprehension* of knowledge!
- ✓ Establish *links and associations*, try to spot ties between topics and concepts you already understand
 - ✓ *Imagine* the subject matter as vividly as possible => visualize, think in pictures
 - ✓ Connect *emotions* with your subject => try to become more *curious* about your subject and develop an *interest* in it
 - ✓ Simplification through *analogies* => try to compare a complicated issue with a more simplified one
 - ✓ Make use of *acronyms* => excellent aide-memoire for memorization (e.g. SMART goals = **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ccepted, **R**ealistic, **T**ime bound)

How to study smart?

„Studying SMART“

2) Keep the BIGGER PICTURE in mind!

3) Perfect YOUR TYPE of studying!

Four basic types of studying:

I: **Visual Learners** – study most effectively when learning material is depicted in a visual way, e.g. in the form of charts, maps, or brainstorming

II: **Auditory Learners** – study most effectively by hearing the information, for instance in a lecture or by recording their own voice

III: **Emotional Learners** – study most effectively by associating feelings, emotions and vivid images with the information

IV: **Kinesthetic Learners** – study most effectively when the information can be experienced and felt, i.e. via ‚learning by doing‘

⇒ Discover your preferred learning mode and align your process of learning to make the most of it!

How to motivate yourself to study?

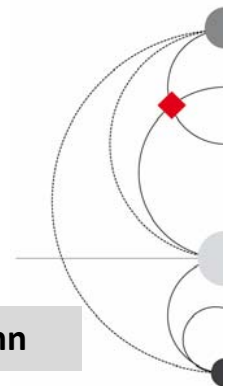
I.) The motivational power of having a goal!

Set yourself *well-thought-out goal(s) or objectives* (long- and short-term), because they:

- keep you focused and enable you to „do whatever it takes“
- Inspire you to greater heights
- Increase your perseverance

Tips for goal-setting:

- 1) Write your goals down
- 2) Avoid vagueness, negations, and necessities
- 3) Split complex goals into main targets and sub-goals
- 4) State how you intend to achieve your goal
- 5) Visualize the accomplishment of your objective and what it feels like
- 6) Gratification: reward yourself once the goal is reached



How to motivate yourself to study?

II.) Gratification: Reward yourself!

By rewarding yourself, whenever a goal is achieved, your brain elicits positive emotions, leading to the realization that an effort results in a positive reward => Formula:

*high effort + accomplishment of the objective = **gratification***

- Transfers to upcoming challenges as further chances to get rewarded
- Increases motivation to study and keep motivation on a high level
- Raises your willingness to make an expenditure (e.g. studying) in order to accomplish the objective

Rule: *demanding objective = glorious reward vs. simple goal = small reward*

DO NOT reward yourself if you fail! Reward yourself only, once the goal is reached and not prior to this.

How to motivate yourself to study?

II.) Gratification: Reward yourself!

Tips for rewarding yourself to become motivated to study:

- 1) Set a goal and determine an appropriate reward for it's accomplishment
- 2) Associate the efforts you take with the positive reward
- 3) Ambitious challenges require outstanding rewards
- 4) Basic objectives should only be rewarded slightly
- 5) Do not allow yourself to receive a reward if you fail
- 6) Reward yourself subsequently after achieving the goal

How to motivate yourself to study?

III.) Just do it and start studying

„It doesn't matter where you go, as long as you get going.“

Forcing yourself will allow you to free your mind from all kinds of negative thoughts about being lazy or lacking the right motivation („being a victim“) and take action.

Tips to just get started with studying:

- 1) „Force“ yourself to do 15-20 minutes of studying for now
- 2) Don't agonize yourself by picturing the alternatives to studying
- 3) Try not to procrastinate
- 4) The more you focus on your task, the faster you're finished
- 5) If you're tired, get up and jump on the spot, take a shower (or the like)
- 6) Prevent distractions (TV, internet, email, phone, friends, ...)

How to motivate yourself to study?

VI.) One step at a time – avoid prolonging

- Constantly keep up with your tasks in university on a daily basis!

At beginning of the term you could write down the specific goals you aim to accomplish = ***letter of motivation*** (or commitment) for the upcoming semester!

Whenever you feel a lack of motivation or disinterest, grab this letter and ***reassure yourself of the higher purpose*** of why you are studying!

Realize that you have a „once in a lifetime“ opportunity to get accepted at the destination of your choice, so you might as well make the best of it!

How to motivate yourself to study?

V.) Music – there is no easier way to get motivated

- Music is a wonderful way to stir your motivation, as it elicits positive emotions and wisely chosen can cause a spirit of optimism that evokes the feeling of being able to do anything!

Rule of thumb: no ballads, chill-out or lounge music

Choose songs that you find motivating and inspiring, that immediately energize your whole body and make you smile. Once you are energized:

Just do it and start studying!

How to motivate yourself to study?

VI.) How bad do you want to succeed?

- Foundation of *all* motivation!

Do you really – *thoroughly* – want to succeed in your study?

Tips to increase your desire to succeed:

- 1) Find out the reason why you are studying!
- 2) What is your driving desire to succeed in university?
- 3) Where do you want to be after finishing your education?

How to motivate yourself to study?

VII.) A positive approach!

Attitudes and mindsets can have a huge impact on your motivation!

Positive attitudes towards your studies boost your motivation and help you keep your academic motivation high.

Example (-): *University is a place where I face daily anxieties and get mentally tortured by my professors.*

Example (+): ***University is my chance to gain important knowledge, develop myself and get ready to start my career.***

How to motivate yourself to study?

VIII.) True interest

true interest in your study object = effective motivational element

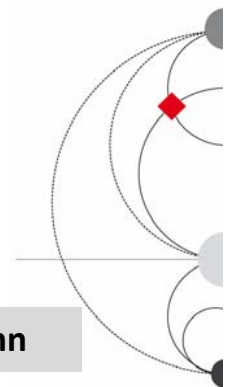
Tips to become truly interested in studying:

- 1) Get curious about the subject
- 2) Read interesting books, magazines or articles on the topic
- 3) Team up with others that are interested in the subject

How to motivate yourself to study?

IX.) Beat procrastination and distraction!

Procrastination is a mechanism for coping with the anxiety associated with starting or completing any task or decision.



How to motivate yourself to study?

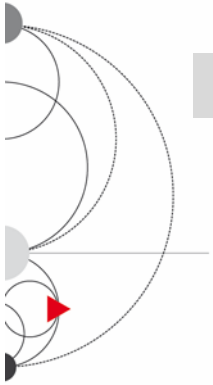
IX.) Beat procrastination and distraction!

- Create a study space where you do not get distracted (make it so boring that studying becomes the most exciting thing)
- Choose to study – what, when, where and how (instead of telling yourself you ‚have to‘ or ‚should‘)
- Change the way you talk to yourself:
 - „I have to“ becomes „I choose to“
 - „I must finish“ becomes „When can I start?“
 - „This project is so big and important“ becomes „I can take one small step“
 - „I must be perfect“ becomes „I can be perfectly human“
 - „I don't have time to play“ becomes „I must take time to play“

Recommended Reading

- www.planetofsuccess.com
- www.learningfundamentals.com
- www.wikihow.com/Get-Motivated-to-Study.html

- Fiore, N. (2007). *The Now Habit: A strategic program for overcoming procrastination and enjoying guilt-free play*. Penguin Books.



THANK YOU!
Happy studying SMART
(and only periodically hard 😊)

