



The Study Cycle and Active Study Strategies

Regular reinforcement of information is a necessary part of learning course material and becoming a strong problem-solver. The study cycle provides a structure for you to effectively learn material for any class.

Active study strategies help you learn material better than passive study techniques like reading your notes. Try exercising your brain more with some of the below strategies!

The Study Cycle	
Preview	Prepare for class by reading assigned texts, skimming relevant pieces, or looking over PowerPoints or problem sets. Identify what main ideas will likely be covered and come up with a few questions to ask.
Attend	Attend class, take notes on the main ideas you identified and ask the questions you developed.
Review	Review your notes from class the same day as you take them. Use the textbook or any other materials to fill in gaps in your notes, put things in your own words, and creating new connections.
Study	Find 20-30 minutes 4 – 6 times a week to study the material covered in class. Complete practice problems or use active study strategies (see below) instead of passive ones like reading your notes.
Check	Every week or two check if you have truly learned the material. See if you can teach it to others without consulting your notes, textbook, or other course materials.

Active Study Strategies for Study and Review Sessions

Concept Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick a concept, area, or chapter to focus on. Put a 5-minute timer on your phone and list out everything you can about those topics. You will use this to build your concept map. • Your goal is to build a map that includes all of the listed out items. Focus on creating strong connections between items—describe how concepts relate and interact. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you continue in the course, keep adding items to your concept maps to further understand how different parts of the class interrelate.
Flashcards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flashcards can be helpful review tools, but they are most useful as study aids when you are making them! Defining concepts in your own words, drawing diagrams, and thinking of examples for each concept are all great active learning strategies. • When studying with flashcards, don't solely state the definition and move on. Pick out two or three cards at a time and explain how they relate. Imagine how a concept on one card would look in different situations.
Envision Exam Questions	Practice your knowledge of the content by creating exam questions that mirror those asked in problem sets, quizzes, other exams, etc. Exam questions should be hard! If you agree with a few friends to come up with 5 questions each, you'll have your own practice exam to test yourself!
Talk-Question (TQ) Sessions	We learn best when we're teaching others. TQ Sessions are 30-minute teaching sessions where you talk about a topic for 15 minutes while a friend asks you questions. After 15 minutes, switch roles and keep teaching and challenging each other!

Adapted from *Teach Students How to Learn* (McGuire, 2015)