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## Teacher Resource: Note Taking, Study Tips, Test Taking

**Note Taking:**

Students need to understand that note taking is **NOT** about writing down everything that is said, but rather capturing the key ideas and making connections between concepts. During class, **SHOW examples** of various types of note taking. As educators, we know that there is no one size fits all model for note-taking; however, most students do not have this understanding. Students often seek a “one hit wonder” method of studying, learning and note taking and so they need to be taught that this is not the case.

***Key Messages for Students:***

* Focus on developing a system that works for them! Model your own note taking. Use a short, simple piece of text that can be shared with the students and talk them through how you would take notes on the piece. **SHOW THEM** exactly how/what you would do. Put the text up on the board/document camera and do the highlighting, write in the margins and type up the notes with your class.
* Push the importance of **attendance and completing assigned readings/assignment. This is CRUCIAL!**
* Students must be taught **HOW TO REVIEW their notes.** Many will believe that simply taking notes is enough.
* Technology can be a double edged sword for many faculty. Students are reliant on their personal devices; however they need to be taught how to use them as a tool rather than a distraction. This is a concept that is new to many of our students. It is our job as educators, to help students to comprehend this difference and empower them to use them in a meaningful manner. It is also important to remind students that social media applications/networks should be turned off while in lecture, as dividing attention and focus between lecture and social media can be difficult.
* Show examples of various note taking styles and help students choose the one that best suits their learning style. The Cornell method is well-known, but may not suit all leaners.

**Study Tips:**

Consistent and effective studying is a key component for success in college. Just as students need to develop a system of note taking that works best for them, it is essential to develop a study plan that best suits their lifestyle and learning needs. Students must be reminded that cramming the night before is not necessarily the most effective method for studying. Test anxiety often comes from a lack of preparation and so we must remind students that studying is an integral part of the learning process.

***Key Messages for Students:***

* Studying begins the moment that the lecture/discussion starts. Many students overlook the fact that attentive listening and active note-taking are the building blocks to effective studying.
* Students must realize that just because lecture notes are posted online does not mean that they don’t have to attend class. Help the students understand that critical information is mentioned during class discussions which cannot be captured on a PowerPoint posted on Blackboard.
* Attending class, taking notes, and asking questions are important elements of being an **active learner** rather than a passive participant.

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**Setting up an environment for studying**

* Encourage students to make a visual study schedule with allotted breaks.
* Teaching students how to chunk information into groups can help to make study sessions more effective. Students need to be reminded to be realistic—it is impossible to learn everything in one night—break it up and spread out the studying over time.
* Students should also be reminded that freeing themselves from distractions during studying is crucial.
* Staying hydrated and consuming healthy snacks will help students to remain alert and engaged.

**Strategies that work**

* Index cards (quick and portable), study notes, mnemonic devices (a mnemonic device to remember the order of the planets might be **M**y **V**ery **E**ducated **M**other **J**ust **S**erved **U**s **N**utella where the first letter of each word corresponds with each planet), join/start a study group, be the teacher.
* Actively using study notes is an important part of studying. Remind students to write on their notes, highlight/underline, and write in the margins. Studying is an **active process**, something which is often not considered.

**Test Taking:**

The word “test” often elicits extreme anxiety in many students. Like note taking, students need to be taught strategies for test taking. Many students do not prepare for tests/exams effectively nor do they approach the test in a manner that will elicit success.

***Key Messages for Students:***

* **Be prepared.**  Attend class and do all assigned readings/assignments.
* **Scan the test & mind dump.**  As soon as students get the test, encourage them to write down any information/ideas/formulae that come to mind. After doing that, students should scan through the entire test so that they know what to expect. Tell students to do what they know first and pay attention to the marking scheme.
* **Read questions carefully.** The majority of student error does not come from lack of knowledge but from misreading the question. Remind students to **take their time** when reading the question and **jot down** any information that comes to mind. Encourage them to ask themselves, “What is this question asking me?”
* When students receive their marks, tell them to look carefully🡪 check marks, ask questions, figure out where they might have gone wrong.

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