

Four Strategies to Make Your Studying More Productive

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Supported Learning Groups (SLGs) use these evidence-based strategies in every session. You can use these strategies on your own and with friends to study effectively for all your classes.

Retrieval

- Retrieval, also called practice testing or active recall, helps you retrieve information from long-term memory.
- Create a brain dump of everything you remember without your notes first. Then, check your notes to see what you missed and repeat the process.
- Make flashcards and practice questions. Use them to test your memory without using your notes.
- These techniques have proven to be more effective in improving your recall than just highlighting, underlining, or repeatedly rereading your notes.

Spaced Practice

- Spaced practice entails spreading your study sessions over time rather than studying intensely in a short period.
- Schedule two or more times per week to study for each class. Regularly reviewing your course material builds your long-term memory and makes preparing for tests and exams much easier.
- A sample study schedule could include studying for one class every Tuesday and Thursday after lunch, and studying for another class every Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon.

Interleaving

- Interleaving means alternating between different types of content within the same study session.
- Study topics in a different order from which they were presented in class. Try setting a timer to remind yourself to switch to a new topic during study sessions.

Elaboration

- Elaboration asks you to explain why a concept or answer is correct or true. This technique includes asking “why” and “how” questions, answering them, and making connections between concepts.
- Study with a friend and take turns asking each other questions or explaining your thought process for solving a problem. For example, break down the steps you took to reach an answer. Look for connections between the answer and other topics in the class.

Reference

Dunlosky, J., Rawson, K. A., Marsh, E. J., Nathan, M. J., & Willingham, D. T. (2013). Improving students' learning with effective learning techniques: Promising directions from cognitive and educational psychology. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 14(1), 4–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100612453266>