

What You Can Do to Improve Your Academic Success

Don't wait!

- As soon as you realize you are not doing as well as you'd like on quizzes, homeworks, etc., **it's probably time to enhance your study skills. Review the info below! Take advantage of the resources MTSU offers.** Generally, *doing more of the same thing* won't produce different results.

Learn how to succeed from the instructor/TA

- Most instructors include **clear expectations and tips for success in the course syllabus.** Review them and try them out.
- When you come across something in class or in notes that you aren't clear about, **do you go to the instructor's office hours,** check the explanation in the text, talk with peers or otherwise try to clarify and deepen your understanding?
- Have you **met with the professor during office hours** to ask for their tips on how to succeed in the class, especially if you find you are struggling in a particular area?
- For papers, **did you talk your topic/thesis through with the instructor** to make sure it was sound?

Realistically assess how you study - If you are doing everything the instructor recommends, can you be more effective?

- Do you **prepare for class** (e.g., do the reading before class and go in with questions you want answered, etc.) so you get the most out of the lecture?
- Do you **take good, detailed notes** in class (or during online lectures) **and review them the same day** you take them (while it's in your short-term memory)?
- When you do the reading, do you find yourself thinking after you've finished a chapter, "Well, I don't really remember any of that"? Or **do you take notes to get a big picture idea of what's going on** as well as to grasp the details?
- Do you **compare the concepts/information in the text to what you've been doing in class**?
- Do you have a **study buddy/group to talk about the material with** (not just to swap answers, but to deepen everyone's understanding of the material)?
- When solving problems, **do you really reflect on what, conceptually, is going on in the problem before attempting to solve it?** Or do you look for problems that are similar and automatically use the same strategies for answering them?
- When writing a paper, **do you do the research to support your argument(s)?**
- **Do you give yourself enough time** to draft, edit, proof, and edit the paper again?
- **Do you know how to properly cite your sources?**

Are you sabotaging your own learning/study time?

- **Do you study when you aren't productive?**
 - Are you studying at times of day when you aren't naturally productive, trying to study for long periods without a break, or "studying" when you are really also checking social media, messaging with a friend, etc.? *For many students, the actual focused time spent studying is a lot lower than the time set aside for studying.*
- **Are you studying between classes/during the day** or leaving everything to the night?
 - Studying during the day helps you break studying out into manageable bits and also makes starting classwork at night less overwhelming because some of it is already done.

Is your brain function optimal?

- Do you get **basic exercise**? You don't have to be a gym rat - brisk walking is fine. How were you active in high school and are you continuing that?
- Are you **getting adequate sleep** (6-8 consecutive hours a night)?
- Are you **feeling overwhelmed, unhappy, or so stressed that you aren't able to focus on your schoolwork?** MTSU has resources to help!