Effective and Efficient Learning Strategies

- **TIME MANAGEMENT** = ORGANIZE YOURSELF WITH SCHEDULES. i.e., semester, weekly, monthly (more specific to plan for upcoming exams or term papers), and/or "to do" lists. WHY? TO SAVE TIME AND FOCUS.

- **NOTETAKING** = NOTES WITH QUESTIONS PREDICTED IN THE MARGIN. WHY? You see (visual), write questions (kinesthetic), and answer out loud (verbal, auditory).

- **MEMORY** = KEEP IT EXCITING WITH GENERAL MNEMONICS (see #4 and 5 below) AND SPECIFIC MNEMONICS (acronyms, acrostics, rhymes, jingles, stories, songs--funny, weird).

- **CONCEPT MAPPING** = MORE OR A PICTURE, CONCEPTUAL, RIGHT-BRAINED. ANY STYLE (matrix, flow chart, etc.). MAIN POINT, SUB-POINTS (~4-5), SUPPORTING DETAILS, EXAMPLES.

- **PQ3R** = PREVIEW, QUESTION, READ, RECITE, REVIEW. WHY? Warm up the brain, motivate. See, say aloud (during recite), write an outline/summary and/or write in the margins and underline in the book (during review). THIS WILL REALLY INCREASE RETENTION.

- **STUDY GROUPS** = WHY? TEACH ONE ANOTHER, SAY ALOUD, ASK QUESTIONS, ANSWER QUESTIONS, WRITE IT DOWN. THIS IS YOUR BEST ASSET. IT IS FUN TOO.

REMEMBER: DO THE VAK! (visual, auditory, kinesthetic).

Highlights of Effective and Efficient Learning Strategies

Time Management

As you know it is really difficult to learn when you are not organized. Calendars are just one way to get you to focus on your studies. They also keep you in the habit of distributing your learning so as not to cram.
Note Taking

Using the Cornell method of NT is best because you write on 3/4 of the page so that you can put yourself into the instructor's shoes to predict test Q's. This is an active process and so, besides keeping you awake when you go over your notes, you are allowing yourself to really understand the material. You must really think to ask a "good" Q. and so this takes time at first but it really saves you time in the long run. Once you have your well thought out Q's in the margins then test yourself out loud. (or better yet a friend and/or group).

Memory

There are lots of creative ways to learn. Use them. The main idea is to get active by using your five senses as much as possible. This is fun. Yes, learning can be a whole lot of fun. We used lots of memory techniques in this class. In general, realize that you learn by visual, auditory, and kinesthetic stimulation. Therefore, to get the big picture, use concept maps and PQ3R summaries. To learn specifics use such mnemonics as acronyms, acrostics, rhymes, stories, songs, peg, link, and method of loci. As with just about everything in life, variety is the spice. This certainly holds true for learning.

Test Preparation

All of the above mentioned information will prepare you more than adequately for an exam. But remember to work with friends and study groups. You've enjoyed making up test questions and playing games in class, right? Well, you can continue this in your future college classes as well. It doesn't take much. For example, each person can make up 5 Q's. A game can be played afterwards. Games do not have to take a long time (our games in class were only approximately 15 minutes long). Also, remember the things we talked about for test preparation. Refer to the "goldenrod" handout titled "Helpful old adjunct Q's".

A Final Note:

"Knowing what to do, without doing what you know, is wasted knowledge".

So, do what you know. The techniques that you learned and used this semester will be transferred to all other classes, right? These techniques are effective and efficient which means that you can learn MORE in LESS overall study time. Really, try counting the hours you used to spend verses the time you are spending now with the newly acquired techniques. I think you will find that there is the same amount of hours there but you are learning a whole lot more and this knowledge is being stored more often in long term memory. (this is especially true once you master the techniques-- So, do not give up and you will get good at this). Just like any skill, practice makes perfect.