

A's Through Self-Testing

The Self-Testing Concept is for you if you fit into one of the following 3 categories:

- You have not done well academically but believe you can do better.
- You earn grades below potential but don't know how to improve.
- You earn excellent grades but would like to re-duce the amount of time spent studying for them.

Using self-testing principles, learners in all 3 categories have discovered and unleashed an enormous potential for learning and earning better grades in less time. Using the Self-testing Concept, learners can study, learn, understand and remember as never before. They have earned grades previously only dreamed of. This welcome success can be yours if you decide to follow the easy steps in the Self-testing Concept. Before explaining the specifics of the Self-testing Concept, a little background information is useful.

Unfortunately, few people have been taught intentionally and directly but anyone can learn how to learn better.

As a result, many people unnecessarily remain victims of 1 or more stifiers of academic success:

1. **Memories of past academic failures.**
2. **Recollections of previous unpleasant academic experiences.**
3. **Negative attitudes about education.**
4. **Believe that because learning was difficult in the past that it will so be in the future.**
5. **Have low expectations of your own academic potential.**
6. **There were/are low expectations of your academic potential from significant persons in your life.**
7. **Believe undue amounts of time are necessary to succeed academically.**

Choose what it is that you will do. Only AFTER that is it possible to find a way to do it.

These stifiers of academic success stem from personal experiences related to learning tasks. It is logical then to assume that different experiences would have produced different results and perceptions of learning. If so, then it is reasonable to say that perceptions about learning come from *past* experiences.

Bad experiences = negative perceptions about learning

Good experiences = good perceptions about learning

This is good news because **YOU** are in control of your experiences, now. That is, you can intentionally create situations where

Positive experiences with learning are almost guaranteed!

You can create situations that lead to positive learning experiences. The outcomes are **positive perceptions** about yourself and learning. You can create positive experiences by choosing to eliminate whatever stifiers to academic success you have experienced in the past, and leave them there.

You can devise educational experiences that will change every one of the stifiers of academic success into *motivators* for more academic success. These past stifiers can become:

- 1. Happy memories of new academic successes.**
- 2. Recollections of pleasant academic performance.**
- 3. Positive attitudes about education.**
- 4. Finding that learning has become easier and more enjoyable.**
- 5. Have high and attainable expectations of your own academic potential.**
- 6. Have high and attainable expectations for your academic potential from significant persons in your life.**
- 7. Learn that time spent on academic pursuits is worthwhile and can be kept to a minimum without sacrificing academic success.**

Many students never discover how to release the hidden hunger to learn, unleash their internal desire to excel or experience the joys of academic success that exist in everyone. But for you, **if you choose**, your life is about to change.

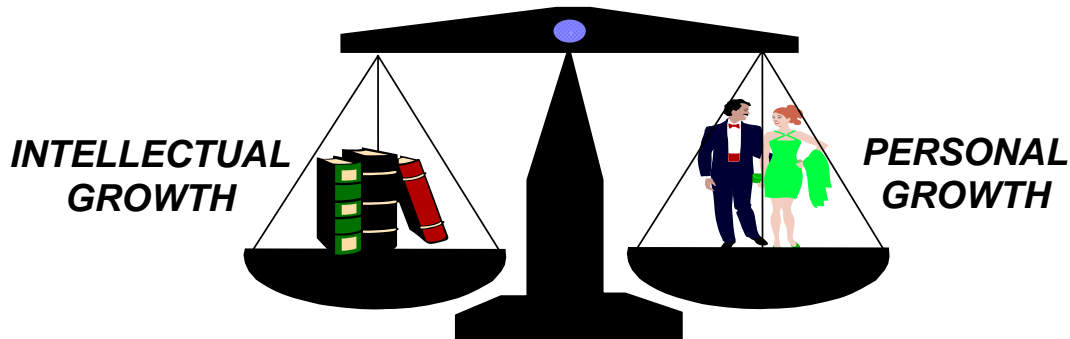
If you can read and follow simple steps, you can release your potential for academic success starting a few moments from now.

As a result of better grades and learning ability, you can consider exciting major fields of study and higher paying careers not available to students with lower grades. You can become more confident in yourself and your ability to learn anything you choose to learn. You can become an independent learner with the ability to earn whatever grades for which you choose to work.

Maintaining Balance

One technique any student can master to maximize the potential to learn, understand, remember important facts and related information is to regularly ***recite aloud*** what it is that must be remembered. This can be done numerous ways; each with its own degree of efficiency. But, many students don't want to spend any more time than is necessary to learn the material well enough to earn an A.

Educational balance is important



A chief advantage of the Self-Testing Concept is that it **keeps study time to a minimum without sacrificing understanding, learning, and INTELLECTUAL GROWTH.**

Another advantage is that because it is so efficient, **more time is freed up to benefit from the equally important other half of college - PERSONAL GROWTH.**

Self Testing

The Self-Testing Concept uses the mighty weapon of **recitation** for combating forgetting and **DOUBLES ITS EFFECTIVENESS** for use in learning.

The Power of Self-Testing is:

You can discover what you have learned and what you have not learned before you take a test while you can still do some thinking about it!

To begin, using notecards to organize notes makes self-testing easiest although any organized format for notes will work. Notecards are recommended because they are:

- 1. Easy to carry with you.**
- 2. Easy to review in the short time periods which are normally wasted such as between classes, at meals, on the bus, walking to class, etc. This reduces study time to the minimum without a sacrifice in grades.**
- 3. A very easy way to organize notes.**
- 4. A very fast way to recite material to be learned. Reciting material speeds the movement of information toward long-term memory which is where it needs to be for accurate recall on exams and after graduation.**

During a lecture, it's best to format note information into the Cornell System or use outlines, or some other organized format. As soon as possible after lecture, formulate questions and answers out of main ideas and details and put them on notecards for example, while the lecture is still fresh in your mind. This is important because as time passes between lecture and rewriting notes, more and more is forgotten.

Quiz: What is the easiest way to study using a textbook?

Answer: Read it only once, take notes, and then *learn from your notes*.

Many students try to learn test material for exams by *reading*.....*re-reading*.....*re-reading*.....*re-reading*.....*re-reading*.....



One way to use the Self-Testing Concept is to place main ideas in the form of questions on one side of a notecard. Related details are condensed and recorded as answers and placed on the other side of the notecard. Studying and learning is then done from the condensed material on the notecards. There is no need to read a textbook chapter more than once using this note organization format. You can avoid the time-eating **Monster** of re-reading. Rereading and rereading does not reveal for certain if the material is learned or not until after an exam grade is returned. Let's face it, **that's too late:**

What can you do about the Grade then?

Zilch! Zip! You blew it! Sorry Charlie! The fat lady is singing! Its' taps. It's over! Sayonara! So long! Sha-na-na-na, hey, hey, good-bye! Too late.

Steps for Self-Testing

STEP	WHY
<p>1) Take each main idea and use it as a CUE for recollection of related details.</p> <p>The CUE may be a word a phrase or a heading turned into an exam-like question.</p> <p>3 good formats for organizing CUES and RESPONSES are:</p> <p>1. Notecard Question & Answer Format</p>	<p>a. Begins separating main ideas from each other making them harder to confuse during learning and recall.</p> <p>b. Begins separating main ideas from the details that explain and clarify each main idea.</p> <p>c. Begins the process of mental manipulation of the material to be learned that is vital for learning and recall.</p>

Example 1.2

NOTECARD FORMAT

The diagram shows two separate notecards. The top notecard has a red horizontal line at the top and is labeled "QUESTION". The bottom notecard has a red horizontal line at the top and is labeled "ANSWER".

CORNELL SYSTEM FORMAT

The diagram shows a notecard with a vertical line down the center. The left side is labeled "QUESTION" and the right side is labeled "ANSWER". There are several pairs of "QUESTION" and "ANSWER" entries, each preceded by a small circle.

MAIN IDEA AND DETAILS FORMAT

The diagram shows a notecard with a vertical line down the center. The left side is labeled "QUESTION" and the right side is labeled "ANSWER". There are several pairs of "QUESTION" and "ANSWER" entries, each preceded by a small circle.

STEP

WHY

3) To begin recitation, it is important for learning and remembering to read **QUESTIONS** aloud.

4) Recite **ANSWERS** containing related details aloud, from memory, as if lecturing a class. Some students prefer writing **ANSWERS** from memory, as if taking an exam.

Doing both only speeds learning.

5) Look at **ANSWERS** to check for completeness and accuracy.

This involves using auditory as well as visual skills in learning. This speeds assimilation of material to be learned.

a. Immediately assesses the completeness and accuracy of **ANSWERS** recited or written from memory.

b. Provides instant feedback on what has and hasn't yet been learned **BEFORE TAKING AN EXAM** when something can still be done about it.

a. Reinforces correct **ANSWERS**, increases learning speed and motivation.

b. Provides immediate corrective feedback for inaccurate or incomplete **ANSWERS**. This prevents learning incorrect or incomplete information.

c. Decreases study time by limiting time spent on material already learned. More time can be spent on unlearned material where it is most needed.

e. Test anxiety fades you discover that the material is learned. You don't get test anxiety when you know, not just believe, but know that you know the material. For example, how anxious would you be

6) If ANSWERS are recited correctly from memory on the 1st try, put that notecard in the "learned" pile.

7. When ANSWERS are inaccurately recited, follow these 5 steps. (notecards are used to demonstrate this step)

Step 1. Read an ANSWER aloud as if lecturing a class and/or write it out.

Step 2. Read the QUESTION aloud.

Step 3. Recite the ANSWER aloud and/or write it without looking.

Step 4. Check the accuracy of an ANSWER on the notecard.

Step 5. If an ANSWER IS CORRECT, place that card in a "not yet learned" pile. If you recited the ANSWER INCORRECTLY, repeat steps 1-4 until recited aloud or written correctly from memory.

Then, place that notecard in the "not yet learned" pile and go to the next notecard.

8) As long as ANSWERS are recited incorrectly on the first try each time you review, consider them "not yet learned."

9) Keep "learned" & "unlearned" material separate by using 2 separate piles of notecards. See EXAMPLE 1.3.

about an exam on the name of 5 family members?

Seeing progress as material is learned increases confidence and motivation.

a. **THIS IS WHERE LEARNING TAKES PLACE.** Without these steps in some form, learning is difficult to impossible.

b. Fills in missing or incompletely learned information and corrects inaccurately recalled material with complete and accurate information.

c. Increases concentration and begins the thinking and analyzing processes necessary to learn, understand and recall information when needed.

d. Provides practice recalling information needed for correct answers just as one must do on exams.

e. Is an easily mastered learning method.

f. Prevents "believing" or "thinking" material has been learned when it hasn't.

g. Material needing more review is identified making it ready for quick review in short time periods during the day.

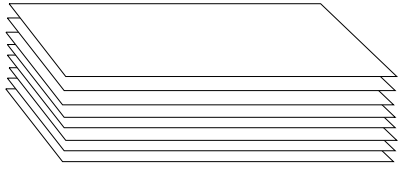
a. You only get one chance to recall the material on exams.

b. Its easy to see what has and has not been learned so you can determine how much time to allot for studying where to focus your efforts.

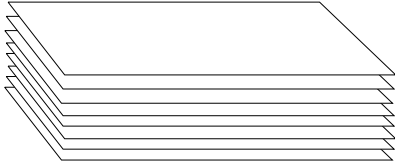
This makes it easy to see where to concentrate your efforts.

Example 1.3

NOTECARD FORMAT Learned Pile



Not yet Learned Pile



CORNELL SYSTEM FORMAT * = learned

<input type="radio"/> *QUESTION	ANSWER
<input type="radio"/> QUESTION	ANSWER
<input type="radio"/> *QUESTION	ANSWER
<input type="radio"/> QUESTION	ANSWER
<input type="radio"/> QUESTION	ANSWER

MAIN IDEA AND DETAILS FORMAT * = learned

<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	QUESTION ANSWER
<input type="radio"/>	QUESTION ANSWER
<input type="radio"/>	*QUESTION ANSWER
<input type="radio"/>	*QUESTION

STEP

10) Review by reciting/writing answers as often as it takes until you can recall **ALL ANSWERS** correctly, by memory, on the 1st try each time you review.

Only this way do you know for sure that material is learned. See Example 1.4.

Go over learned material 2-3 times per week to prevent something that is absolutely normal when material is not reviewed often enough: forgetting.

WHY

a. As the number of times one reviews increases, the greater are the chances of recall at exam time.

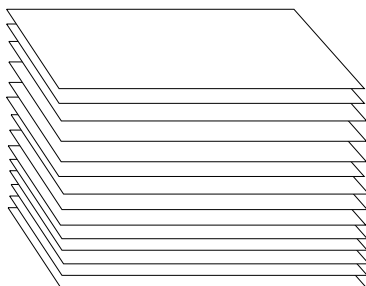
b. "One becomes better at that which is practiced." If looking at QUESTIONS and recalling ANSWERS from memory is practiced, you become better at the activity for doing well on exams.

If you practice not doing these things, you become better at that, too.

Nothing reduces test anxiety like **KNOWING FOR CERTAIN** that you know the material.

Example 1.4

NOTECARD FORMAT Learned Pile



CORNELL SYSTEM FORMAT * = learned

<input type="radio"/> *QUESTION	ANSWER
<input type="radio"/> QUESTION	ANSWER
<input type="radio"/> *QUESTION	ANSWER
<input type="radio"/> *QUESTION	ANSWER
<input type="radio"/> *QUESTION	ANSWER

MAIN IDEA AND DETAILS FORMAT * = learned

<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	*QUESTION ANSWER
<input type="radio"/>	*QUESTION ANSWER
<input type="radio"/>	*QUESTION ANSWER
<input type="radio"/>	*QUESTION

The number of reviews needed to earn "A's" varies. A few students can review 3 times and earn an "A" on a test while others must review 5, 7, or 9 times to earn an "A."

Learning speed is individual and has *no correlation with intelligence*

Learning Speed Varies with each Person This is Normal

Learning speed *does* affect how many reviews each person must do to earn an A.

How many reviews you need in order to earn an A is revealed when you identify the number of reviews you did to exam/quiz scores or grades. If grades are less than desired, verify that notes are complete and accurate and increase the number of reviews for the next exam.

A Time-Saving Tip

Consider using the memory principle of Distributed Practice. There are 2 kinds of Distributed Practice. One kind is **Long Term Distributed Practice**. This means that you learn more by studying material for 6 hours spread over 3 days in 1 or 2 hour time periods rather than 6 hours all at once.

Another kind of Distributed Practice is **Short Term**. This means you reduce concentration problems if you study for some time period (say 20 minutes), take a 5 minute break, then study for another 20 minutes, and so on. The result is better recall at test time than when studying in done for long periods of unbroken time.

The length of these time periods to maximize concentration and learning is individual. Some student must break after 20, 30, 45, 60 minutes. To find your breakpoint, study until concentration becomes difficult, then take a 5 minute break before returning to study.

Develop Your Own Style

Feel free to develop your own self-testing style using the above basic fundamentals as a guide. Grades earned on exams and quizzes will provide feedback if further refinements are needed in your self-testing methods.

Don't give up if you don't get the desired results on the 1st try. Persistence to refine self-testing methods will eventually earn the grades of which you are capable when this powerful technique for learning is mastered.

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