

Teaching Tips

A Forum for discussion and tips for advancing teaching and learning at Mona

Centre for Excellence in
Teaching and Learning, The
UWI Mona



Study Strategies: Helping Students to Make Better Choices

April 2022

Volume 14 Number 6

Special points of interest:

- The **Teaching Tips Newsletter** is a publication of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) at the UWI, Mona.
- The newsletter is published three times during each semester and a summer edition. It provides tips for improving teaching and learning in higher education and is available online (<http://mona.uwi.edu/cetl>) as well as in the office of the CETL.
- If you need additional teaching tips on specific classroom practices please contact us.



We know much about best practices in studying. There are several good studies out there on study strategies and how they might be used to improve examination performance and of course, improve learning in higher education. Oftentimes, our students are unaware of many of these tried and proven study strategies. They engage in passive study techniques such as reading, rereading, spending time highlighting passages in their books, and in many cases, understanding is equated with memorization. These approaches to studying do not generally work well. Blaisman et al. (2017) found that students relied on relatively ineffective study strategies during the semester and a day or two before exam tried to maximize their potential to do well by engaging in mass studying approaches, in many instances, cramming. At the UWI, Mona Campus, study marathons are utilised by many students and usually these are done just before exams.

Research on studying offers concrete evidence that there are more appropriate approaches to studying than those mentioned above. For instance, there is self-testing, regular ongoing review, reviewing several topics during a study session, and elaborating and explaining course content to others are some of the more effective approaches. These improve performance on exams and help students understand the course content in better ways. In fact, these approaches help to promote long term retention. As university teachers, there is a role for us to play in helping our students develop study skills that will assist them to be successful in university and in life. However, do we know how our students study? We need to know so that we can use that information to respond to their needs for learning and effective studying. Further, we need to know when our students study, with whom, how long, and what they do when they study.



I would like to share with you some questions from a segment of the copyrighted questionnaire “How Do You Study for Exams?” Members of faculty are able to use this form without permission to gain information on their students studying habits. In this regard, you are also allowed to alter the questions and change the survey format.

Questionnaire:

How Do You Study for Exams?¹

A Note from Your Teacher

I'm interested in learning more about how you study for exams in general, and how you're studying for them in this course. My goal is to teach in ways that support your efforts to study, that help you learn the material, and do well on the exams. I can do that better if I'm not guessing about how you study. So please be honest. The goal here is not to impress me with how much you're studying, but to help me understand your exam preparation process. Thanks for taking the time to answer these questions. I will be talking to the class about what I learn.



Tell me about your study habits in this course:

When do you start studying in earnest for an upcoming exam in this course?

How much time you devote to studying for an exam in this course? In your hardest course?

If the goal is getting an A on an exam in this course, how long would you estimate you will need study?

Briefly describe how you study for exams in this course.

When you're studying and you discover something you really don't understand, what do you do?

How do you decide what you need to know for the exam?

When you go into an exam in this course, how confident are you that you've studied the right things?

Do you multi-task when you're studying for exams in this course? If so, what else are you doing while you are studying?

What study strategies are working best for you in this course?

Are there any instructional strategies being used in the course that help you prepare for exams?

Are there any aspects of my teaching or how the course is organized that make it difficult to prepare for the tests?

End Note

1. For full copyrighted questionnaire, please contact the CETL.

Reference

Blaisman, R. N., Dunlosky, J., & Rawson, K. A. (2017). The what, how much, and when of study strategies: Comparing intended versus actual study behavior. *Memory*, 25 (6), 784-792.

Check us out at:

Our website: myspot.mona.uwi.edu/cetl **Twitter:** twitter.com/cetlmona

Facebook: www.facebook.com/cetlmona

Email: cetl@uwimona.edu.jm

Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/cetlmona/>

Voice: 876-935-8341 extn 2341, 2730