How to Get the Most Out of the Course After It’s Completed
OR
Keeping Ahead of the Game

“Someone told me I should take the Becoming A Master Student course. Supposedly they teach you how to get through college without cracking a book. They have a bag of tricks on taking exams that will guarantee a “C”. In the course they promise to solve all your problems. So I took the course, and in desperation even read the textbook. They have the secret all right. Only they call it WORK. Work and more work, that’s it. Now I am studying and recreating on a well planned timetable, listening in class when I should be catching up on my sleep, taking notes when I could be reading the Daily, asking myself questions until I feel like a Quiz Bowl member and, get this, I spend hours talking to myself, reciting they call it. Supposed to retard forgetting and aid comprehension when you learn this way. I’m even learning how to read again. Man, I’m a scheduled, motivated, interested, active, flexible, shrewd, disturbed, SQ3R’d, questioning, reciting fool! Know what though? It works! Three B’s and two A’s this semester and they say you get the most out of the course in later quarters. The best is yet to come. 4.0 average I hear you calling”.

Unfortunately, not all of us can expect the somewhat dramatic changes the above student reports. Some of us do improve momentarily, but eventually we let ourselves slip back into our old habits. Others never really become convinced of the values of effective study so they delay or never put into practice the habits they have learned. Even those who do continue to use effective study skills need to take a look at themselves periodically to reevaluate. Research studies indicate the improvement from a study skills course is most marked immediately after the course is taken and then begins to diminish.

The real test of study skill growth is the degree of your own motivation and drive to improve. Has your motivation been stimulated and directed toward self-improvement during this course? Any changes you make after the course will be done on your own initiative. Remember that the habits you now have accumulated over a long period of time will not be replaced by new responses overnight and without effort. You have been introduced to some effective study techniques, now apply and continue to improve them on your own.

Here are a few hints I can give for continued improvement.

1. If personal problems continue to persist until they interfere with your study, seek help and advice from friends, parents and perhaps a professional counselor at the University.
2. Plan a realistic schedule at the beginning of the semester, revise when it is necessary, and follow your schedule each semester.
3. Adopt an honest, self evaluation attitude towards your study habits and your college work in general. Don’t allow yourself to be ruled by your worst characteristics and habits. Know yourself and become goal oriented. Adopt a realistic goal that is achievable in light of your known abilities and interests. Avoid the neurotic pattern associated with over-reaching yourself to achieve unattainable ends.

4. Read for ideas in your study, not just words.

5. Maintain interest in material read by questioning beforehand.

6. Use aids to comprehension provided by the material you are studying such as graphs, charts, headings, table of contents, index, bold-faced type, summary statements and italics.

7. Set time limits for reading and study. Use rewards and sub-rewards to help motivation.

8. Practice flexibility in study type reading. Adjust your rate to purpose in reading and type of material being read.

9. Be sensitive to new vocabulary as you encounter it in reading.

10. Escape distractions as much as possible in reading and study. Plan a good study environment and maintain it.

11. Read critically, not passively, examining the author’s motive in write.

12. Avoid head moving, finger pointing, vocalizing, etc. in reading.

13. Avoid re-reading previously read sentences or paragraphs.

14. Avoid heading only slow, difficult material. Read enough easy material to maintain rate flexibility.

15. Avoid studying passively, spend some effort, become involved; think of it as an active task that requires more than passive receptivity on your part.

16. Study with a purpose; know what your study goals are.

17. Try to enjoy study, consider its values to you.