The Study Cycle
(A “work-out system” for your brain)

If you would like to drastically improve your grades and/or get more done in less time, this system will help. Based on cognitive science research and the experience of thousands of students, this tool will surprise you with how effective it is. Use this system in combination with working at the higher learning levels (see the handout: Learning Levels; Bloom’s Taxonomy.) Integrate other study tools such as concept mapping, practicing retrieval and creating test questions. Learn about these and more learning resources at UNLV’s Academic Success Center.

1. Preview

Preview before class
Look over bold and italicized print, headings, outlines, formulas, images and graphs of the assigned material. Skim the chapter, read over summaries and material at the end of the chapter. Ask yourself what questions you would like to have answered in class.

2. Attend

Attend Class
Ask questions, take creative meaningful notes (draw maps, and other images that make sense of the content.) Due to the preview, you will find yourself feeling more confident and “connected” to what is going on. Your notes will be more meaningful and clear.

3. Study

Review Often
Repetition is the key to strengthening your brain’s ability to create long term memory AND to process more complex concepts. The more you review and the more ways you do it—the better your brain is at recalling the information.

4. Reflect

Reflect on what you have learned
Teach someone else, create your own test questions, recreate the test environment, figure out what study strategies and tools worked best, recreate concept maps or outlines...

Three Important Times to Study/Review:

1. After Class 5-10 min
   Look Over Class Notes: Fill in holes, note any questions you may have.

2. During the Week 30-50 min
   *Intense Study Sessions (see description)
   2-4 each day—enough to understand material

3. On the Weekend 30-50 min
   Pull it together - Review all notes from that week, test yourself, create concept maps...

Intense Study Session:

1. Set a Goal 1-2 min
   Decide what you want to accomplish in your study session

2. Study with Focus 30-50 min
   Study with focus and action - organize, map, summarize, process

3. Take a Break 5-10 min
   Reward yourself – call a friend, play a short game, get a drink and a snack

4. Review 5 min
   Go over what you just studied

Developed /designed by Sarah B. Baird, MA and faculty of LSU’s Center for Academic Success, adapted from the work of Frank Christ, PhD