Concentration

The Problem

In many colleges over 8% of the students report problems concentrating on their studies. Most of these students blame outside distractions for their problems.

Many research studies manipulating noise levels and distractions have found that such disturbances may increase, decrease, or not even affect concentration. These researchers have therefore concluded that distracters don't cause concentration problems directly. It is the way the distracters are interpreted by the students that disrupts their study.

Creating a Study Environment

[1] Find a place to study and keep it for study only.
[2] Tool-up the environment with all study needs.
[3] Control noise level and the visual environment to acceptable levels.
[4] Avoid relaxing while working; create a work atmosphere.

When to Study

[1] Best during the day and early evening; you'll remember better.
[2] Best when there are the fewest competing activities in progress.
[3] Best when adequate rest periods are provided.
[4] Stop studying when fatigue or lack of attention occurs.

How to Study & Concentrate

[1] When distracters are present, become intensely involved.
[2] Keep a pad of paper handy to jot down extraneous thoughts that cross your mind while studying, get them out of your mind and on to paper.
[3] Set study goals before you begin each period of study
(number of pages, number of problems, etc.)
[4] Design adequate rewards after specified goals are attained.
[5] Break-up the content of study by mixing up subjects and building in variety and interest and removing boredom.
[6] Make the most of rest periods-do something quite different.
[7] Don't try to mix work and play.
[8] Start with short study periods and build to longer periods only as fast as you maintain concentration.
[9] If necessary, make a calendar of events to clear your mind of distractions.
[10] Realize that you won't lose friends, respect, or a "good time" just because you're studying... these will keep.
[11] Plan the length of your study period by the amount of material you have decided to cover, not by the clock. (Often the clock is one of the most serious distracters.)

Diagnostic Matters

It is probably necessary that you identify which subjects are related to the most serious concentration problems. You may notice that you really don't give yourself a chance with these subjects because of the time, order, or place you use to study. It may also be valuable to assess what your motives are for studying in the first place? What is your reward for your efforts?

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