

## Action Menu

Dear Student:

The information that follows starts with a section that includes the latest in research about learning methods that work. Following that are suggestions for habits or practices you might employ to get better results from your effort. You may wish to include one or more of these ideas in developing the Student Growth Plan you will share during your conference. We hope these suggestions will move you closer to becoming an effective, efficient, independent, lifelong learner.

Sincerely,

Dr. Discher

### **14 Learning Techniques that Research Shows to be Most Effective\***

1. Struggle / effort – the *hard* work to understand makes learning more durable and lasting
2. Practice retrieval – recall information from memory, without hints or prompts
3. Spaced repetition – allow a little time for forgetting between *retrieval practices*
4. Work on a problem *before* being taught the methods for solving it
5. Testing makes a difference – a form of *practicing retrieval*; whether self-test or by someone else
6. Make mental models – organize new information in ways that make sense
7. Elaborate – give material meaning by putting information into your own words and attaching it to previous knowledge
8. Note patterns, rules, and underlying principles of new information
9. Identify key concepts from the text and test yourself on them
10. Define key concepts from memory or write them into paragraphs
11. Rephrase concepts in your own words
12. Find examples of concepts outside the text
13. Write questions from main points and answer them later in study (testing yourself)
14. Interleaving – mixing different but related experiences (*generally by the teacher/coach*)

\*This information was taken from *Make it Stick, The Science of Successful Learning* by Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel

### **General Home Habits**

- Quiz yourself on your notes from the day
- Make your homework sessions a ritual. Set aside specific time to do homework each day, and stick to the time.
- Work in a homework center
  - Include all the materials needed for most days (better if the materials are dedicated to homework)
  - Ensure good lighting
  - Ensure a productive work setting
    - negotiate the elimination of distractions with other family members

- eliminate distractions from electronic devices
- Maintain a good “working” posture (upright rather than reclined)
- Break homework into manageable chunks of 15-25 minutes at a time with short breaks in between
- Establish a consistent bedtime routine to ensure sufficient sleep (8-9+ hours/night), including weekends
- Be intentional about good nutrition through the day, and limit/eliminate caffeine and sugar

### **General Academic Habits**

- Record questions that come up in homework and ask them in tutoring or class.
- Conquer Procrastination: plan ahead, space out project demands, chunk the work and follow the plan
- Find the balance for giving your best: work thoughtfully and stop short of perfectionism
- Organize locker so everything has a place and everything is in its place, everyday
- Clean out and organize the notebook for each class once a week, so assignments, tests, and notes are easy to find
- Put papers, notebooks, and materials away, right away, immediately when done
- Maintain a system to ensure that completed assignments are turned in, every day
- Accurately and clearly record all assignments, tests, projects, and events in the student planner.
- For the ultra-quiet student: Volunteer to answer a question or ask a question \_\_\_\_\_ times a day/week
- Attend tutoring during 2<sup>nd</sup> half of lunch \_\_\_\_\_ times per week (offered M, T, W, Th, F)
- Attend before/after school tutoring \_\_\_\_\_ times per week (offered M, T, W, Th, F)
- Get assignments from a classmate when missing class for any reason, or speak with a teacher immediately after any absence from school , to identify expectations for the work that was missed
- Make a weekly tutoring schedule and track your own attendance
- Check progress with each teacher once a week
- Master the vocabulary of each subject

### **Math**

- Ensure you have clearly recorded the proper solutions to problems worked in class
- Correct every homework, test, or quiz problem you missed
- Make flashcards for new vocabulary, properties, or formulas
- Master your basic math facts (addition, subtraction, multiplication tables, etc.)
- Identify the types of problems that challenge you and seek to master the approaches to solving them
- Re-do, without notes, a problem from the previous day’s work each night

### **Science**

- Draw or redraw from memory, the diagrams in your notes that are being discussed in class
- Challenge yourself to recall main ideas from class for 5 minutes before starting homework
- Make flashcards for new terminology

- Teach someone else the process you just learned/teach someone younger than you
- Look up videos/animations online for the processes discussed in class
- Blank out old quizzes and take them again, or have someone else ask you the questions
- Make a sample test from your notes; including multiple choice, matching, short answer questions
- Have a friend make a sample test and take each other's test
- Make corrections on homework and tests immediately when returned, whether you get credit or not
- Correct every homework, test, or quiz problem you missed; and redo them from scratch
- Master the vocabulary and definitions of key terms
- Recognize the types of problems that challenge you and seek help to master the approaches to solving them
- Practice making real life metaphors or applications about processes learned
- Write a one sentence explanation for why an answer was wrong
- Use manipulatives for any process, concept map, or diagram
- Practice breaking down vocab by its roots or nomenclature

### **Lit/Comp/Humane Letters Reading**

- Circle words you do not understand in any reading and consult a dictionary before completing the assignment
- Listen to white noise or instrumental music to blot out distractions when reading
- Follow your teacher's instructions on annotating
- Write a brief "chapter" summary as you go
- Think of two questions while reading that you can discuss in class the next day
- Develop a signal to let your teacher know that you are ready to share an idea about the reading
- Meet with your teacher \_\_\_\_ times per week to make sure you understood what you read
- Explain what you have read to someone else
- Set a goal to speak \_\_\_\_ times each class period
- Bring up textual evidence to support a comment in class and in papers
- Consistently exercise close listening and giving consideration to others

### **Writing and Grammar**

- Quiz yourself on grammar rules
- Teach a family member or friend the day's lesson
- Read your paper out loud and listen to see that it makes sense; possibly to someone else
- Consult with your teacher before finalizing your outline or thesis
- Have someone proofread your writing using the rubric, before the paper is due
- Have the rubric beside you as you reread your paper
- Review grammar notes \_\_\_\_ minutes per night
- Put <<<< marks around >>>> words or passages that you may want to change later, as you write, so you can maintain the flow of writing.

## **History**

- Write a note or question next to each piece of text you underline or highlight
- Summarize, in a sentence or two, each section you read as you go
- Quiz a partner on a reading, or on important content, and have them quiz you
- Quiz yourself on key concepts for a few minutes each night.
- Make flashcards for key concepts. Test yourself with them a few minutes each day.
- Illustrate major events, battles, concepts, etc. in your notes. Label these images and use them as study aids.
- Ask clarifying questions of peers or the teacher during lunch or tutoring.
- Note questions about homework while completing the work and ask the questions in class
- Note questions that occur in class and ask them immediately or consult the teacher outside of class.
- Make connections between major ideas or periods when learning new information
- Consult with a friend about history notes

## **Latin**

- Practice vocabulary words 10 minutes each day (flashcards, quiz, with a partner, etc.)
  - Latin to English
  - English to Latin
  - Practice spelling/writing out Latin vocabulary
- Quiz yourself on class notes before beginning homework, and before tests
- Quiz yourself on noun and verb forms frequently (know the charts)
- Practice conjugating verbs outside of class
- Practice declining nouns outside of class
- Retranslate a passage without using notes or prepared translations
- Read a Latin passage aloud
- Make sure your translations make sense (proper word order and context)
- Rework homework or class assignments
- Make flash cards of class notes to study with

## **Modern Languages**

- Speak only in the target language in class!
- Quiz with vocabulary flash cards 2x/day, saying words out loud
- Communicate in the target language whenever possible outside class
- Watch a familiar movie on DVD in that language
- Listen to music in that language
- Keep a journal in the target language
- Read in the target language (books, magazines, newspapers, etc.)
- Use language applications on electronic devices

## **Music**

### **Singing:**

- Practice singing 10-15 minutes daily (space practice is much more effective than large blocks of practice)
- When practicing singing, focus on one difficult section rather than trying to run the entire song over and over.
- Practice singing in an isolated room with the piano or keyboard on the computer if you do not have a real keyboard at home.
- To improve matching pitch use sing-along songs that you are familiar with, played on the radio (you can do that even while driving home)
- Practice your music with the peers
- For the vowel improvement, practice in front of the mirror. Look at yourself.
- Mark your music score with directions given in rehearsal
- Perform your part for someone (parents, siblings, friends, cousins) Who can help you realize how well you know the song and build the confidence when performing publicly.
- Be vigilant about solving problems immediately during the practice. Correct errors; strive for a quality practice and performance. PRACTICE with intention!
- Practice to make improvement each day. Only PERFECT practice makes perfect.

### **Music Theory:**

- Quiz yourself on the previous chapter before starting the next one
- Consistently quiz on the rules that will be applicable for each topic

### **Music History:**

- Engage in class discussion to aid memory
- Quiz yourself on the material a day or two before an assessment and ask questions in class
- Take great notes during the in class discussions. Compare them with a friend

### **Music Recorder playing:**

- Practice every day 10-15 minutes to develop healthy practice habits
- Control your instrument and follow teacher's (conductor's) instructions closely
- Be responsive to the timbre and quality of your sound
- Learn the fingering of new notes early so your practice can be at your best
- Quiz yourself on the fingering often
- Be vigilant about solving problems immediately during the practice. Correct errors; strive for a quality practice and performance.
- Practice to make improvement each day. Only PERFECT practice makes perfect.

### **Music Participation**

- Speak meaningfully each day in each class
- Listen and build off of the comments of other students
- Make comments that refer specifically to content in the text \_\_\_ times per discussion
- Practice SLANT (Sit-up, Listen, Ask and Answer questions, Nod your head, Track the speaker)
- Proactively choose to go to recovery when you become aware that you are distracting others and get yourself together quickly
- Ask questions of a friend before going into class (to build confidence before class)

- Discuss ideas with others outside of class (to build confidence before class)

### **Studio Art**

- Create an art-specific workspace with materials and enough room to work
- Spend the entire allotted time for homework
- Capitalize on tutoring hours
- Maintain an orderly, clean workspace in class
- Focus on craftsmanship
- Complete every assignment with pride
- Make each assignment as clean as possible before handing in