

## Anthony Wayne Middle School Counseling Department

### Quarter I Topic: Study Skills



Success as a student, especially in middle and high school, depends greatly on how effectively students use their time. The final responsibility lies with the student, but parents help when they show their interest and emphasize that schoolwork is important.

Help your child to "manage" his or her time so that there's adequate time each day to study. You can also help by making sure your child has an appropriate study area. Particularly with younger children, check to be sure homework is completed every night. If you have questions about your child's progress, talk with the teacher.

Most important, recognize your child's academic achievements - including a good grade on a difficult exam or project, or improvement in a tough subject.

Here are some additional tips from classroom teachers to help students reach their full potential in school. Be sure to share these hints with your child.

#### Studying

- ❖ Study a little bit every night, and avoid trying to study too long at one time. Take a break occasionally. Don't try to cram all your studying into the night before a test. If you think of studying as a comfortable way to help you learn, rather than a chore, you're less likely to put it off and get behind in schoolwork.
- ❖ Your study spot should be well lit, comfortable, and distraction free. Few students can concentrate with the TV or stereo playing.
- ❖ Rest, relaxation, exercise, and proper diet are also important for academic success. Feeling good physically will help you to stay sharp mentally. For example, a high-protein, low-sugar breakfast helps maintain a steady energy level, helping you stay alert throughout the morning.

#### Preparing for tests

- ❖ Keep up with your schoolwork. It's not only a better way to learn, but will also build your confidence and prevent you from having to cram before a test. Besides, once you fall behind, it's tough to catch up.
- ❖ Pay attention to review sessions. Ask what types of questions to expect on an upcoming test. If you don't understand something, ask the teacher.
- ❖ As you study, emphasize the major concepts of the test material. For example, learn key vocabulary words and have your parent or a study partner quiz you on them.

## Taking the test

- ❖ Don't panic! Everyone feels anxiety before a test. Some tension is good - it can help you stay alert. Let your tension work for you, but don't let it overwhelm you.
- ❖ Read over the entire test before you begin your work. This will help you to:
- ❖ Get rid of some of the butterflies;
- ❖ Find and answer the easiest questions;
- ❖ Budget your time;
- ❖ Start your mind working on the tougher questions - you'll find that when you come back to them, the answers will pop right out; and
- ❖ Find information that will help you answer other questions.
- ❖ As you read through the test, look for clues in the questions themselves:
- ❖ On multiple-choice questions, if you're not sure of the correct answer, try to eliminate the wrong answers.
- ❖ Watch for subtle differences in wording that can make a wrong answer appear to be the right one.
- ❖ On true/false questions, look for words such as all, always, never, and none - if you can think of any exceptions, the answer is probably "false".
- ❖ For essay questions, think before writing. Jot down a few key words or phrases representing the ideas you want to convey. Make sure these key words relate to what's asked in the question, then use them as an outline for writing your answer.
- ❖ Similarly, for an oral response question, use preparation time to organize your thoughts in writing, forming an outline for what you will say. Then write out your response and practice presenting it.
- ❖ If you have trouble interpreting a question, think about the concepts you studied - one of them will probably be the key to the correct answer.

## Taking notes

- ❖ When listening to the teacher in class, don't try to write down everything she or he is saying. Listen carefully until you understand the key point, then write it in your own words. Pay particular attention to examples.
- ❖ Don't hesitate to ask questions when you don't understand - chances are, there are other people in your class who have the same question.
- ❖ When you study in the evening, go over your class notes from that day. Add to or correct your notes, as needed, so the information will be clear to you later when you're studying for an exam or preparing a term paper. If something is not clear to you, ask the teacher about it the next day - don't wait until the night before a test.



## Reading skills

Before beginning a reading assignment, preview the material by doing the following:

- ❖ Look at all the illustrations and read the captions.
- ❖ Read all the chapter headings, boldface words, and any vocabulary words.
- ❖ Read the first and last paragraphs of the chapter.
- ❖ Briefly read any questions, summaries, or learning objectives that appear at the end of the chapter.
- ❖ Skim the entire chapter, scanning the material quickly to pick up random words and phrases.
- ❖ Previewing gives your mind an outline of what you're about to read. When you thoroughly read the material you have previewed, it's more likely to make sense to you - and you're more likely to remember the material.

## Reading environment

- ❖ Distractions significantly reduce reading comprehension among most people, so your study area is also probably your best reading area.
- ❖ Read sitting up, not slouched over or lying down. Good lighting is also a must. Light should come over your shoulder onto your reading material to avoid shadows and glare. Avoid reading under a bright light in an otherwise dark room.
- ❖ If you can't read for a reasonable time without getting eyestrain or becoming tired or restless, you may have a vision problem. Have your eyes checked if there is a problem. If you already have glasses for reading, wear them.



## If you have a problem

Not many students can say they don't have a tough subject or two. Here are some ways to deal with your more difficult subjects:

- ❖ Ask your teacher or school counselor if there are tutoring programs available.
- ❖ Ask the teacher if there are any reading materials, worksheets, or computer programs that could help you learn the material better.
- ❖ Study with other students in your class. Take turns "teaching" each other what you're learning - teaching is a great way to learn!
- ❖ Whatever the problem, talk to your teacher. He or she will want you to learn and succeed, and can suggest ways to help you.

*School staff and families...the more we work together, the more we'll help our children.*