

ENHANCING RECALL

Are you feeling overwhelmed by the amount of information you have to take in and later recall on an exam? Good news – there are many ways to increase your ability to recall information! Remember that there are many more strategies than the ones we've listed below – find a method that works best for you. Feel free to attend an OAR workshop or make an appointment with an OAR staff member to develop an individualized approach to learning your course material!

TIPS FOR ENHANCING YOUR ABILITY TO RECALL INFORMATION

- **Goal-setting:** All studying must have objectives and outcomes. Before you begin reading or studying, set a goal for what you want to learn or accomplish. *The more specific the goal, the better.* Rather than writing, "study chemistry over the weekend" on your to-do list, write something more specific *and concrete*: "review chemistry formulas in chapter 5 from 3-4pm on Sunday."
- **The sooner, the better:** When it comes to reviewing information for an exam, the sooner you start, the better off you'll be. Even though your first midterm may be four or five weeks away, now is the time to begin studying! Spending just 15-20 minutes per course each week reviewing your class and reading notes will really pay off.
- **Be selective:** Before you begin studying, make sure you know what you need to learn and how you will be tested. What information will you be tested on? What is the format of the exam? What information, if any, will you have access to during the exam? If you've already mastered certain sections of the content, don't spend too much time reviewing it – focus your time and energy on what you still need to master.
- **Know your learning style:** Think back to past exams that you've done well on and how you studied for those exams. Try to identify your learning style, or how you learn best. Maybe it helps you to see the information in a visual form, such as a chart or on flashcards, or maybe you learn best if you repeat the information out loud. Try different approaches to figure out what works best for you, and keep in mind that you may want to study differently depending on the course.
- **Accountability matters:** Find a group of friends or classmates whom you can regularly study with and who will hold you accountable if you don't show up for a study session. Make sure you find the balance between studying with a group and studying on your own. Sometimes it's difficult to test your own abilities and knowledge when studying with a group; make sure you allow time for honest self-assessment.
- **Make connections:** Put bits and pieces of information together to create information maps inside your brain. Try to think about how what you learned from week 1 relates to week 3 – and how all of that information relates to the course itself. The stronger your connections, the stronger your memories!
- **Review, review, review:** There's no magic bullet to remembering all the information you may be tested on in your courses. Regularly and consistently reviewing information is the best way to commit information to memory for the long-term. Many students also benefit from reviewing material in a variety of formats, such as visual mind maps, organized charts or tables, audio recordings or notes, working out problem sets, and so on. This allows you to create a variety of memory traces and enhances opportunities for recall later on.

Cited and adapted from: Pauk, W. & Owens, R.J.Q. (2014). *How to study in college*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning