Information for Parents: Study Tips for Your Student

STEP 1 - Creating STUDY NOTES for each subject:
The first stage is to encourage students to make their own study notes on a regular basis. A great habit to develop is for students to make study notes at the end of each topic rather than waiting until just before exam time. This means students work through the topic, find the areas they don't understand and spend time working through them and writing down the important points. Making study notes means students organise the information in ways to make it easier to learn and this process reduces what they will need to read through to study.

_Students should follow these steps to making summaries:_
1. Look through all the material on the topic; their class notes, worksheets and textbook.
2. Make a list of the main headings or sections.
3. For each heading, read through the information and write down the key ideas in point form.
4. Try and put information into lists or tables whenever they can - the more they can organise the information the easier it will be to remember it.

STEP 2 – ACTIVELY REVIEWING the content:
Once students have some decent study notes it is time to move into the next phase: LEARNING AND PRACTISING!!!! Students have to learn, understand and sometimes memorise the content, then they have to practise applying what they have learnt by practising the skills of the subject. Students should keep alternating between learning and practising. At first they may spend more time learning than practising but as they start to move information into their long-term memory they'll spend less time reviewing their notes and more time practising under exam conditions.

LEARN the content

PRACTISE the skills

Keep alternating between reviewing the content and doing past papers or review questions.

STEP 3 - Doing as many PAST EXAM PAPERS or QUESTIONS as possible:
- Do all papers UNDER EXAM CONDITIONS (time limits and without looking at notes)
- Students should mark/correct their work at the end or ask their teacher to check it.
- Students need to then see their teacher about things they could not work out.
- Students should add notes to their summaries about things they need to remember.
- After each paper, students then review areas they did not know properly.
- It is important that students try to do as many different types of practise questions as possible. It may be worth purchasing a study guide or a different textbook for subjects they find difficult so they have lots of questions to use as revision.

Enhanced Learning Educational Services
Top Tips to Help Your Children in School

You can help your children succeed in school by helping them follow these 12 tips:

1. Always look ahead.
2. Take regular Brain Breaks.
3. Help them learn HOW they learn.
4. Prioritize what must be done.
5. Focus on Homework.
6. Keep notes neat and clear.
7. Move on if stuck.
8. Keep schoolbags neat.
9. Use technology.
10. Research wisely.
11. Communicate with teachers.
12. Apply the TEFCAS learning formula

Tip #1: Always look ahead. Your children should use their school planners or their own schedules to anticipate what they will need to be doing soon. Encourage them to do a little bit extra, even when they seem to be finished with the homework for that day. If a test is coming up, make sure they don’t leave studying to the last minute. Do a Mind Map summary of all the things they need to do for each subject – e.g. Main branch Maths, sub branch Math’s problems Page 35.

Tip #2 Take regular Brain Breaks. It is really important to take breaks from studying every hour. Encourage your children to get up, walk around, bounce a basketball, put away their washing, juggle or do something different for 3-5 minutes to let their brain absorb the information they have been learning and give their brain oxygen they need for thinking. Set the kitchen timer for 50 minutes as a reminder and join in to improve your brain as well as help them get back on track at the end of the 5 minutes.

Tip #3 Help them learn HOW they learn. Help your children develop their memory, reading and thinking skills. At some point we forget that before they can learn facts, figures, data, STUFF, they have to keep learning how they learn and apply it. Have fun at home learning some of the memory techniques such as the Roman Room Method. Read the same books they read so you can have a fun discussion over the dinner table. As a family do a Mind Map plan of your next holiday/vacation and put it up on the fridge.

“Learning HOW to Learn is life’s most important skill”
Tony Buzan

Tip #4: Prioritize what must be done. Help your children learn to prioritize the things they need to do. Schoolwork and extracurricular activities must come first. Make this very clear to your children and help them stick to this priority.

Tip #5: Focus on Homework. For each subject, whether your children have been given homework or not, make sure they review their notes at the end of the day or week. This ensures that when a big
test or an end of unit test comes up, they will be prepared to study for it. Part of homework is getting ready for the next lesson, and ready to ask any questions that might come up.

**Tip #6: Keep notes neat and clear.** While your children are applying Tip #5, they can "kill two birds with one stone" by improving the quality of their notes. Make sure your childrens' notes contain all the information they need to know. Have them highlight or underline the most important points - these can then be summarized into key words for inclusion in a Mind Map. Notes full of crossed out words and messy ink patches can either be rewritten or summarized in a Mind Map.

**Tip #7: Move on if stuck.** If your children get stuck on a particular piece of homework, have them leave it and move on to the next piece. Otherwise, frustration will rise and make matters worse. Have your children go back to the piece they left after a while. Things might be clearer then. See if the task can be broken down into smaller steps so they don't feel overwhelmed.

**Tip #8: Keep schoolbags neat.** At least once a week have your children empty their schoolbags at the kitchen table. You will be amazed by what they might find! Often, some "lost" notes or homework will show up just in time. This helps develop the habit of neatness.

**Tip #9: Use technology.** Help your children learn to use a computer effectively for their schoolwork. Let them experiment with PowerPoint, Publisher, Front Page, and other programs. Help your children learn to type efficiently and use Word correctly – this will help them improve their spelling and be much more efficient at high school, university, college and ultimately at work. Install appropriate audio books on their iPods and watch the Discovery Channel and other educational television programs with them.

**Tip #10: Research wisely.** If research is involved in a project, be careful about how your children use the Internet. The Internet is a valuable resource, but it can be very distracting. Your children might get sidetracked and waste time going from topic to topic. Every now and then, take your children to the library to do their research. They will find valuable information and learn many useful research skills.

**Tip #11: Communicate with teachers.** This applies to you as parents as well as to your children. If there is any doubt about an assignment, contact the teacher. Encourage your children to ask the teacher if they find something to be unclear. Your children can do this after class or the next day. Doing this will also help your children develop important communication skills and build their self-confidence.

**Tip #12: Apply the TEFCAS learning formula.** Schoolwork is not about trial and error – it is about trial and learning.

In this extract, Tony Buzan uses the example of juggling as the learning task. Juggling is a great metaphor for learning – you complete a cycle very quickly. Juggling is also a great activity to keep the brain active during homework.

"Let's examine each of the six main steps of TEFCAS:

**T - Trial** – No matter what you are learning, nothing will happen if you don't at first try. You learning progress is marked by the number of trials. When you are learning to juggle you must first throw the ball; when you are learning to dance you must take the first step; when you are learning mathematics
you must attempt to derive a new formula; when you are learning to write you must make the first mark.

When you have tried, there will inevitably be an:

**E - Event** – In juggling, the event may be that the ball lands on the floor, or on your head, or lands in your hand, or lands in your colleague’s coffee cup! The universe does not really care. If you try there will always be an event.

This event will inevitably give you:

**F - Feedback** – Whether you wish it or not, the universe supplies you with a cascade of information about your trial and event that feeds back through all your senses. This is one reason why it is so important to have a healthy mind in a healthy body – so that your senses can provide you with more and more pure information. Your brain will absorb this feedback on both the conscious and par-conscious levels. In the juggling example this will include the sight, sound and feeling of the juggling balls. It may also include feedback from your friends if your ball lands in their coffee cup!

With all this feedback pouring in, your brain will:

**C - Check** – This will happen both automatically and consciously, and will be done in relation to your goals. Continuing with the juggling example: your brain will check the energy put into the attempt; its appropriateness’ the height and trajectory of the ball in relation to the goal; your breathing; your poise and posture, etc.

Having done this your brain will:

**A - Adjust** – You will compare your performance against your goal, and make what you consider to be appropriate realignments for the next trial. While considering the element of adjustment, you should always consider the underlying goal. Not matter what you are learning, the vision toward which you are aiming your efforts is one of:

**S - Success!** – No matter what you do, your brain’s aim is to succeed in doing it. From tasks as simple as making yourself a cup of tea, to the far more complex and large life goals, success is the main beacon.”

At first glance it would appear that the TEFCAS formula has no possible room for error. We often think that dropping the ball or getting low marks in a test is ‘failure’.

**There is never failure – just Feedback.**

If you Check, Adjust and Try again you may get some more ‘Feedback’ (particularly if the ball lands behind the cupboard). Having the attitude of Feedback rather than Failure helps your children be more resilient and open to learning new things.

For more about TEFCAS see pages 70-95 in Ultimate book of Mind Maps

Some tips have been adapted from an article by Florence Bernard, Parental Consultant. how-to-
Where to from here
We have a number of training programs coming up that will help you with your study skills – check them out now.

Or Grab a copy of Ultimate book of Mind Maps, The Speed Reading Book, Buzan Bites on Memory, Speed Reading, Mind Mapping or Mind Mapping for Kids