# Personalized Approaches to Learning

## ENVIRONMENTS:

Learning environments refer to physical locations and context in which students learn best. It is often helpful to bring awareness to what learning environments serve your unique learning needs. Below are a few example questions that can help you identify your learning preferences.

- Do you work best when it is quiet or when you have background noise?
- Do you focus better at home or in the library?
- Do you work on an assignment until it is completed or do you prefer to take breaks to refocus?
- Do you learn by moving around or sitting in one place?
- Do you prefer working in groups or independently? How does this vary between subjects and assignments?
- What study situations need to avoided to be productive? (working with headphones, studying in front of the TV, studying with friends)
- What times of the day do you focus best?(morning ,afternoon, evening, right after class)
- Learning space needs to be neat and organized or that is not a concern?
- Any other important factors.

## LEARNING STYLES:

Learning Styles describes an individual's unique approach to learning based on strengths, growth-edges, and preferences.

| Learning Style | Study Strategies |
|---|---|
| Visual (spatial)<br>Learn best through observation | ▪ Use thinking or concept maps instead of an outline (graphical tools for organizing and representing knowledge)<br>▪ Refer to diagrams to understand processes<br>▪ Create pictures in mind while reading |
| Aural (auditory-musical)<br>Learn best while actively listening | ▪ Record lectures<br>▪ Repeat information aloud<br>▪ Ask questions in class that requires professors to summarize or restate information<br>▪ For math and science watch videos online (Khan Academy: https://www.khanacademy.org/) |
| Verbal (linguistic)<br>Learn best by speaking information aloud | ▪ Study in groups for opportunities to verbally explore information<br>▪ Recite subject matter in creative ways (debates, act out scripts) |
| Physical (kinesthetic)<br>Learn best through completing tasks | ▪ Utilize flash cards<br>▪ Take more frequent breaks with less amount of time during breaks<br>▪ Tap a pencil, squeeze a stress ball, or do something with hands while studying |

## BLOOMS TAXONOMY / HIGHER-ORDERED THINKING SKILLS:

This tool can be useful for students when incorporating higher-ordered thinking skills into studying regimens. Specific professors or courses may require exploration of knowledge at higher levels.

| | |
|---|---|
| Creating | Designing, constructing, producing, inventing |
| Evaluating | Checking, hypothesizing, critiquing, experimenting, judging, testing, detecting |
| Conceptualizing | Organizing, deconstructing, attributing, structuring, integrating |
| Applying | Implementing, carrying out, executing |
| Connecting | Interpreting, summarizing, inferring, paraphrasing, classifying, comparing, |
| Remembering | Recognizing, listing, describing, identifying, naming, locating, finding |

## STUDY TECHNIQUES:

Strategies that build a **foundation** for learning include:

- Rereading
- Highlighting and underlining
- Summarization
- Keyword Mnemonic (memory technique to help your brain better encode and recall important information)(example: NESW → **N**ever **E**at **S**our **W**atermelon to help students remember the direction of a compass)
- Imagery for text

Strategies that take learning to the next level and incorporate higher-ordered thinking skills include:

- **Practice Testing** : Self- test using flashcards, self-generated questions, predict test questions, utilize graphic organizers (without looking at notes)
- **Distributed Practice**: Study over a longer period of time rather than cramming, reviewing notes after every class
- **Interleaved Practice:** Mix up studying; switch between subjects or topics within the same subject helps with focus and memory techniques
- **Elaborative Interrogation** : Ask yourself higher-level thinking questions while studying, make own connections within text, ask "why" something works (Refer to Bloom's Taxonomy as a guide to formulate questions)
- **Self-Explanation:** teach a friend, in math/science not only complete the problem but explain why you chose specific steps