

# Davis Research Project

Fall 2009

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## A Message From Su Yeong Kim, Chief Researcher

We are very pleased to have you continue with the Davis Research Project. In this issue, we highlight information on taking note, making goals, and setting studying strategies.

Please note that the project is now housed at The University of Texas at Austin. We look forward to your continued support and participation in the project. We can be reached by e-mail at [projectfamily@gmail.com](mailto:projectfamily@gmail.com), by phone at (415) 271-0390 or 1-(866)7-FAMILY (toll-free), and on the internet at <http://webpace.utexas.edu/syk343/>. When you move or when your contact information changes, please update your contact information.

## Note Taking

Proper note taking is vital to a student's success. Taking notes forces you to listen carefully and helps you remember the important points during class. Information presented in class is important because it often contains the central concepts and examples that will most likely be on tests. The following are some tips on how to take effective notes so that your note-taking process will go smoother.

### Before Class

- **Check with your instructor to see if he/she posts lecture notes.** If PowerPoint slides or other lecture notes are available online, print them ahead of time and bring them to class so that you can take notes directly onto the instructor's notes. Make sure to write down examples given in class.
- **Ask your instructor if he/she uses any note taking services.**

Sometimes instructors record their lectures and provide them online. You can also bring a tape recorder to record lectures if the class is fast paced, but make sure to ask your instructor for permission first.

- **Bring all note-taking materials with you to class.** Bring several pens (in different colors), pencils, and highlighters as well as notebooks or loose-leaf paper to class.
- **Bring a laptop to class if you prefer to type out your notes.** A laptop can be helpful if you type faster than you write by hand.
- **Bring your book to class if the lecture closely follows the text.** The text often has the main ideas outlined and contains charts, pictures, definitions, and examples the instructor may refer to in class.



## In Class

- **Date, title, and number the pages of your notes.** This will help keep your notes organized.

- **Take notes in outline format.** Use indentions to help distinguish major from minor points. The outline format will also make the material easier to study later. For further instructions of how to make an outline, refer to the next section.

- **Use abbreviations, symbols, and shorthand that make sense to you.** This will make the note-taking process more efficient by saving time.

- **Rephrase lecture notes in your own words and write down examples.** This will increase your understanding of the material. Make sure you differentiate between your own thoughts and the lecturer's material in your notes. Try using a different color pen to underline or highlight them.

- **Be alert and actively listen for main points and cues.** Instructors often give cues to what is important to write down. Some of the common cues to pay attention to are material written on the blackboard, repetition, and emphasis through change in tone of voice, gesture, or the amount of time spent on a concept.

- **Leave space in your notes for missed notes.** If you miss something in class, skip a few pages or spaces and get the information later from a classmate, textbook, teaching assistant, or instructor.

## After Class

- **Briefly look over your notes after class.** Spend 5 to 15 minutes going over your notes to clarify information

you do not understand and to summarize major concepts you have just learned. This is important because retention improves significantly with immediate reinforcement.

- **Supplement your notes with textbook information.** Add notes from your textbook, handouts, or other credible sources so you will have multiple sources to study from. Use a different color ink for each source to help you distinguish between lecture and textbook notes.

- **Keep all of your materials organized.** Keep your notes, handouts, and other materials in order and in one place instead of in random places. Carry lined 8 ½ x 11 loose-leaf sheets to class to take notes on, then insert them into a large, loose-leaf binder with dividers afterwards. Keep separate loose-leaf binders for each course.

## How to Format Your Outline

- Label the main ideas with Roman numerals (I, II, III, etc.). Main ideas are the key points, topics, or chapters' subsection titles.

- Label the subtopics of each main topic with A, B, C, etc.

- Label the details for each subtopic with 1, 2, 3, etc.

- Label the sub-details for each detail with a, b, c, etc.

Title of Outline

- I. Main topic
    - A. Important subtopic
    - B. Important subtopic
      - 1. Detail
        - a. Sub-detail
        - b. Sub-detail
- II. Main topic
  - A. Important subtopic
    - 1. Detail
  - B. Important subtopic



***Rephrase lecture notes in your own words and write down examples.***

Each student needs to develop his own method of taking notes to fit his specific studying needs and learning style. Taking notes will not only help guide you through the class lectures, but also is a valuable studying tool for academic success. Learning to take notes effectively is an essential skill to have and will be useful throughout your life whether it be in school, at home, or in the workforce.

## Goals, Time Management, and Studying Strategies

Goal setting and time management are essential tools that help you prioritize and accomplish a variety of tasks in your life. Effective study strategies are also important because they are the gateway to school success, graduation, college entry, and job advancement. Equipped with these tools, you will be in a better position to achieve your potential. The following are information on how to set goals, manage time efficiently, and develop good study habits both inside and outside of the classroom.



### Goal Setting

Goal setting is important for academic success because goals provide motivation and define clear tasks for you to accomplish. When setting goals, make short-term and long-term goals that state what you will do and when you will accomplish them. The more clear and specific your goals, the more likely you will achieve them. Set performance goals instead of outcome goals. Performance goals are measur-

able and are based on personal skills or knowledge. Outcome goals, on the other hand, are based on whether or not the goal is accomplished and are extremely vulnerable to failure because of factors beyond your control. For example, if you are competing in a race, an outcome goal would be placing top three in the race, whereas a performance goal is setting a goal of finishing the race in a particular time. Performance goals are preferred because you have more control over achieving your goals and you have concrete criteria for measuring progress.

### Time Management

People often report that their inability to manage time is the biggest obstacle in life. Time management is a skill few people master, but everyone needs. Success depends on effective time management. By managing your time effectively, you will have a clear idea of what you need to accomplish in the amount of time you have, enabling you to be more focused on accomplishing those tasks. The following are a few time management strategies.

**1. Know how your time is spent** by writing down your classes, appointments, meet-

ings, work schedule, assignment due dates, and exam dates in your planner.

- 2. Prioritize the activities in your planner with a daily to-do list** so that you use your time wisely. When studying, get in the habit of beginning with the most difficult subject or task.
- 3. Try to multitask by combining activities.** For example, if you are riding the bus to school, you can study your notes or memorize flashcards while you are waiting for the bus.
- 4. Break up big tasks into small specific tasks** so that you can visualize your progress.

### Studying

Developing good study habits will help you in your academic career. The first thing to do is to set priorities and use your time and resources efficiently. Figure out your most productive period and locate a suitable atmosphere for your learning and reviewing needs. One method used to determine the most productive time is by keeping a record of how much time you spend studying for a particular class, when

you study, and how productively you studied during that time. The following are additional suggestions for achieving good study habits and creating an optimal studying environment.

- **Determine the best setting.** Get a dedicated space, chair, table, lighting, and environment that fit your needs. For example, some people work better in environments with background noise while other people study better in quiet environments.
- **Stick to a routine that accommodates your energy level.** For example, some people might study better in the morning, whereas other people may study better at night.
- **Focus before you begin to study** by taking a few minutes to list your learning objectives.
- **Take breaks between long periods of studying and reward yourself** when you have completed a task.

## Are You Moving?

Please update your address and phone number with us! We would like to keep in touch with you for a follow-up project in the future.

Updating your information is easy:

By Phone: (415)271-0390

By Phone: (866)7-FAMILY (toll-free)

By E-mail: [projectfamily@gmail.com](mailto:projectfamily@gmail.com)

By Web:

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## The University of Texas at Austin

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- **Try other studying techniques** if you do not understand the material.

—**Use mnemonics** such as acronyms. An acronym is an invented combination of letters where each letter is a clue to help you remember a concept. (e. g. ROYGBIV stands for Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet)

—**Create flashcards** for definitions, formulas, or lists that you need to memorize. Put the topics on one side and the answers on the other.

- **Ask your instructor for help** and attend office hours.

- **Consult with a tutor**, a classmate, a study group, or your school's study skills center.

Time is precious when you are juggling multiple responsibilities. The key is remembering that you need to find and adopt study strategies that work best for you. By using the tips provided above, we hope you can make the most of your resources by setting goals, using your time effectively, and developing better studying skills.