Success in Psychology
Academic Success Center
Iowa State University

Students committed to learning will find many possible paths to success. No path is error free, but the path best for you may not look like the same path as another student. For this reason, students should continuously assess their academic progress in courses and adjust their academic strategies accordingly.

While there is no magic formula, the following suggestions may improve your ability to succeed in psychology and increase your retention of knowledge.

The information was adapted from http://www.100studytips.com/topics/psychology-study-tips.html and http://internal.psychology.illinois.edu/~lyubansk/Therapy/Tips.htm

Tips:

1. **Reading a book and studying a book are two different things**: Use the SQ3R method of reading: Before you read, **Survey** the chapter. **Question** while you survey by turning the title, headings and learning objectives into questions. When you begin to **Read**, look for answers to your questions, re-read captions and study graphics. **Recite** by orally asking yourself questions after each section. **Review** is an ongoing process. Other active studying strategies include: taking notes on the text by jotting down one or two main point for each section, testing yourself using the headings as questions and starting with the summary in the back of the chapter which can give you an idea to the main points.

2. **Pay attention in class**: You will miss out on concepts presented in class that you can’t make up for during private study time

3. **Study for recall rather than recognition**: Study as if you will be filling in the blank with no assistance rather than for a multiple choice test in which you study to familiarize yourself with terms. This provides a deeper level of understanding.

4. **Read widely**: Some professors use essay questions and reading all around the subject in various other texts or other references online will help you gain a mastery of the subject.

5. **Consider a study group**: After you have studied alone initially to concentrate on the material, think about studying in a group. You share insights and everyone emerges with a better understanding of concepts and also you may use it to help prepare for tests.

6. **Review past exams**: This help prepare you for possible types of questions and you can use these as a practice exam. If these are not available, change the section headings into questions and practice answering them as short or essay questions.
7. **When in doubt, draw it out:** Use diagrams and other model maps such as compare and contrast charts to connect concepts to help you understand what is being presented in class and in the book.

8. **Make concepts personal:** Relate material back to yourself and something that you have gone through. This will assist in your understanding and retention of the material.