What Are Some Of The Best Ways To Study For A Test?

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When I was thinking of what topic to write for this paper, one lesson that stood out was the most effective way of studying. That might have stood out to me because I am a student, and it would have me questioning how I study for my classes. I learned a lot, and now I want to teach this topic to others. The topic of this paper will be effective ways to study for a test while using Long Term Memory.

When studying material for a test, you may forget what you just read the day before or not grasp the material well. This may be because most students are not trying to store this information into Long Term Memory, which stores information for long periods. One of the steps that everyone takes is encoding, which is gathering information and transferring that information into memory. Then the next step is where many people take different routes in studying information. Some people may be taking part in Maintenance rehearsal, which, according to Goldstein, is a "Rehearsal that involves repetition without any consideration of meaning or making connections to other information. Results in poor memory." This type of rehearsal will not allow you to remember the information you may need on a test because no real connection was being made to store it correctly. The other type of rehearsal is Elaborative rehearsal, which according to Goldstein, is "Using meanings and connections to help transfers information to LTM, which results in better memory." This type of rehearsal is the best use because it will help store your information in long-term memory. Then the last step is retrieval, which is getting the information from Long Term Memory to working memory. This is the step you want to use while taking your test or exam because it will help you answer the questions being asked.

When studying for a test, the most common techniques used by students would be highlighting their notes/textbook and re-reading their notes/textbook. However, there may be more effective techniques. According to Goldstein, the most effective study methods would be

“Elaborate, Generate and Test, Organize, Take Breaks, Avoid ‘Illusions of Learning, and Be an Active Note-Taker” (Slide 13). The most critical step to help use these effective techniques would be retrieval while studying and during your test. One tip that could strengthen your retrieval is retrieval cues, words, or other things that help us remember the information stored in our memory. You could make connections with certain words that will spark your memory and allow you to remember the information related to the question.

One study I found that tested this was in the textbook *Cognitive Psychology: Connecting Mind, Research, and Everyday Experience*, in chapter 7. The paper that Pam Mueller and Daniel Oppenheimer did is titled “The Pen is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking.” Their study was on what method of note-taking would allow students to understand better the material they were learning in their lectures, laptop note-taking or longhand note-taking. When they conducted this study, they found that the groups of students that took laptop notes had taken more notes because of its eraser and faster than those who were taking longhand notes. However, when they looked at the notes taken longhand, they found that those notes had a more word-for-word transcription of the lecture, and when both groups were tested on the material from that lecture, the longhand students performed better than those who took laptop notes. These results cause both authors to question why the laptop note-taking group did poorly compared to the longhand note-taking group. According to Mueller and Oppenheimer, “the shallow processing associated with simply transcribing what the professor is saying works against learning. In contrast, creating hand-written notes are more likely to involve synthesizing and summarizing the lecture, which results in deeper encoding and better learning. The bottom-line message of the Mueller and Oppenheimer paper is that “active and “involved” note

taking is better than “mindless transcribing.” This study shows that deep processing will result in better memory, a better understanding of the material, and a better score on your test.

An example I can share on this topic would be sharing my study habits. When I go to class, I take hand-written notes on my Ipad. This works well for me because I can go back and organize my notes better when I study, and I do not type fast, so it is easier for me to write them out. This is an example of being an active note-taker and staying organized within my notes. Once it is time to start studying for a quiz/exam, I usually ask my professors if they will have a study guide so I can use that to help me look through my notes and write all the information for that topic on a new page for the study guide. This helps me stay organized, so I do not have to look through all my notes from different lectures; it is all on one document. Another strategy I use is Quizlet so that I can quiz myself on definitions or the topics that are in the study guide. This helps me process the information better because I continuously quiz myself on the definitions/topics. I take breaks in all my studying because it can be draining, so it is important to give yourself time to reset yourself and go for another 30 minutes of studying.

References

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