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A Newsletter of the Academic Success Center

Avoiding Interruption: How to Study in Peace on Campus



by Angela Zanardelli, azanardelli@wayne.edu

Why is it that every time you attempt to study you are interrupted? How come your phone is ringing off the hook as soon as you get to the library? Why do you get so distracted when you try to write a paper at Starbucks? Well, the answer is simple...Your behaviors may welcome interruption.

If you are studying in the library, why is your phone not on silent? This is an unwanted interruption to both you and others around you. And if it is on silent, why is it right in front of your face where you stare waiting for it to light up? It's up to you to decide when people can get a hold of you. You have all the right to turn

off your cell phone and take the time you need to complete your task. You should never feel guilty about putting your school needs first.

And the Starbucks issue, do you feel that writing a paper in Starbucks is effective for you? Unless you have the concentration skills of a Buddhist monk then you're not going to write an A paper at Starbucks. It is so important to recognize in which environment you learn best. If you are someone with stellar focus and do study easily in Starbucks then more power to you. If you know that you don't concentrate well in areas where a lot of people are coming and going, don't try to study there. It's that simple.

You know that your time is very limited in college so it's up to you to make the most of your time. You also know where and when you're effective. It's up to you to take control of your study situation and set boundaries. Once you learn to avoid unwanted interruptions you will make better use of your time and studying will no longer be a marathon event. You have the choice, putting yourself first is not a crime. With regards to academia, it's a must.

Show Your Textbook Who's Boss

By Omarl Jackson, omarljackson@wayne.edu

Textbooks are critical to one's success. Many people might say that this is obvious. However, take a second to think about this—have you had a course in which you have absolutely forgone reading the assigned text? How well did you do in the course? Even if you passed a few exams, how much did you learn? Many times students would much rather read a novel than a textbook because

novels are more interesting. Textbooks are not so much uninteresting as maybe just a little challenging.

When reading a textbook, keep in mind that it differs drastically from a novel. This difference requires a different mindset. First, prepare to read the textbook.

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Aim to
comprehend,
not to read
fast.

Identifying goals helps create opportunities for them to come true.

Setting Goals for Success

by Susan Sheiner,
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Writing your goal down is the number one guideline for successful goal setting, says Susan B. Wilson, author of Goal Setting. "Effective goals are written," she writes. "Many of us daydream about what we would like to accomplish. But...once a dream is committed to paper, it becomes concrete. Writing down your goals is the first step to achieving them."

After you write down your goals it is important to look at each one and evaluate them. This is the next step to achieving them. Online, this site, www.goal-setting-guide.com

- S = Specific
- M = Measurable
- A = Attainable
- R = Realistic

outlines a method for "SMART Goal Setting."

When evaluating goals, the website explains, goals should be specific. This helps individuals to focus their efforts and define what they are going to do, the website explains. "Ensure the goal you set is very specific, clear and easy." It is also important for a goal to be measurable. "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it," writes Arina Nikitina the author of the website.

Identifying goals helps create opportunities for them to come true. Keep your goals within reach, Nikitina says. "A goal needs to stretch you slightly so you feel you can do it and it will need a real commitment from you," she says. Similarly, she writes that goals need to be realistic, though this does not mean easy. "Devise a plan or way of getting there

which makes the goal realistic."

Finally, Nikitina advises setting a timetable. Effective goals are manageable. This is also an integral part of Wilson's advice on goal setting.

In her book she writes, "Sometimes a goal can seem overwhelming because of its size. But if it is divided into smaller components, then it becomes easier to manage and is achievable," she



said.

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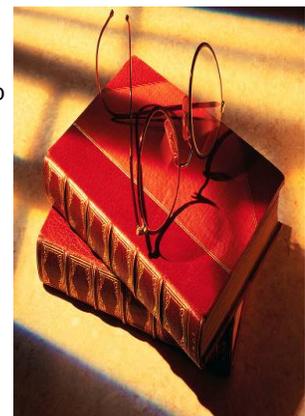
Determining attainable goals can give you something to work for.

By Rosalind Reaves,
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A problem college students frequently encounter is the inability to concentrate and maintain focus. This especially plagues students when attempting to read textbooks. Countless moments are wasted reading and rereading the same paragraph. But don't despair! Below are a few tips that can be used to improve focus and expand your concentration.

Find a good study location. In determining where to study, you'd want to take into account noise level, lighting, ventilation, and possible distracters (such as roommates, phones, TV, etc. that can lure you away from your studies.)

Avoid studying in bed, as too much comfort leads to sleepiness. Having a table in front of you is ideal. Trying to read with a book in your lap can cause neck and eye strain.



Continued on page 3.

Show Your Textbook ... *continued from page 1*

Second, read in an active manner.

Third, focus on comprehension; speed will come later. Though time-consuming at first, this approach will get faster with time and be beneficial when taking exams and writing papers.

Prepare to read a textbook. Assemble your studying materials such as highlighters, pens, pencils, and notebooks. Then grab a bottle of water or juice to keep nearby. All of these materials will alleviate a natural tendency to break one's focus.



Furthermore, develop a mindset for studying. Ask yourself, which level of focus is necessary. If you are reading the chapter for the first time, maybe you want to focus on everything lightly. Then, go over a second time, reading carefully. On the other hand, if you have attended a lecture and are studying portions of your notes, you may want to skim, refreshing yourself and at the same time reinforcing what you have learned.

A good strategy to keep in mind when reading a textbook is first, to ask yourself questions as you read and look for answers. These measures—assembling materials, developing a mindset, asking and answering questions—will help students take ownership of the textbook and improve reading.

Second, read actively. That is, read with a purpose. Ask who, what, where, when, why, and how. Students who ask and attempt to answer questions are more attentive than the passive reader who reads without a purpose and without questioning what is being read. When you find answers to questions that you've posed (or questions raised by the text), highlight the information. However, use the highlighter sparingly. You do not want to highlight everything.

Additionally, do not be afraid to write in your text. Marginal comments are great at jogging the memory. After all, we remember information best when we have written it in our own words instead of someone else's words. This may seem like tedious work that is guaranteed to slow our reading. In reality, reading with a purpose, asking and answering questions, and highlighting key points increases speed because speed increases with comprehension.

Third, aim to comprehend, not to read fast. All of us can move our eyes across the page quickly. But reading without comprehension is an outrageous goal. Students' intention should be to understand what they are reading. To understand quicker, try summarizing small amounts of information and work your way up to larger amounts. For example, try reducing a paragraph to a sentence. Next, reduce a page to a paragraph. You cannot summarize what you do not comprehend! The more you practice, the faster you will become.

Take advantage of free tutoring, supplemental instruction and academic coaching.

<http://www.success.wayne.edu/>

Concentration ... *continued from page 2*

To fight boredom and burnout, try varying your subjects. Spend forty-five minutes to an hour on one then switch to another. Sometimes the change of pace is all you need.

Take a short break. Get a drink of water. Walk around a little. This can stimulate better blood circulation to your brain.

Set goals for yourself. Determining attainable goals can give you something to work for. Consider rewarding yourself with a study break or a special treat when you reach your goal.

Don't just start reading. Instead, begin an assignment by previewing the chapter. Skim through looking at chapter and paragraph headings, and at summaries, if they're provided. Doing this will allow you to gather a rough outline of the chapter in your mind.

To avoid "eye glide" (looking at the page without taking in the contents), close the book when you get to the end of each section and see if you can summarize what you have just learned.



A Newsletter of the Academic Success Center

Leading the way in evidence-based academic support and excellence.

Top Ten Cultural Sites on or near Wayne State University

by Susan Sheiner, ax5983@wayne.edu; and Angela Zanardelli, azanardelli@wayne.edu

1. Elaine Jacob Gallery - 480 W. Hancock St., attached to Old Main. The gallery will be 10 years old in September and is part of Wayne State University's Art and Art History Department. This classic contemporary space holds exhibits featuring national, regional and international artists.

2. Community Arts Gallery - 150 Community Arts Building (attached to WSU Art Building). This gallery is also part of the university's Art and Art History department featuring prominent Michigan Artists since 1956.

3. Hilberry Theater - 4743 Cass Avenue at Hancock. This architectural jewel is home to the Hilberry Repertory Company, Wayne State University's MFA Graduate Theater Company. The 2007- 2008 season includes *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)* and *The Lusty and Comical History of Tom Jones*.

4. Bonstelle Theater - 3424 Woodward Avenue. This historic building is home to Wayne's undergraduate theater student performances. The 2007-2008 calendar of performances include; *Uncommon Women and Others* by Wendy Wasserstein, and *Black Nativity* by Langston Hughes.

5. Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History - 315 E. Warren Avenue. Founded in 1965, it is the largest museum celebrating the diverse history and culture of African Americans. *And Still We Rise* is a multi-level interactive exhibit part of the permanent collection.

6. Detroit Public Library - 5201 Woodward Avenue. There is much more to the Detroit Public Library's Main

Branch than books. Check out the annual Detroit Public Schools' Student Exhibition as well as the extensive art collection on the second floor.

7. Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) - 5200 Woodward Avenue. Exhibitions, the film theatre, great dining,



and Friday night musical entertainment? Walk over between classes to expand your mind or make it a weekend adventure. There's something for everyone.

8. Detroit Science Center - 5020 John R Street. Between the IMAX, the Planetarium, and the traveling exhibits, the Science Center

will entertain you while teaching you things you may have never learned otherwise.

9. International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit - 111 East Kirby. To expand cultural knowledge, this is the place. They have an immigration ship collection and an international doll collection on display. All that learning making you hungry? Visit the International Café in the basement.

WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY

Academic Success Center

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We're on the web:

<http://www.success.wayne.edu/>

Mission Statement

The mission of the Academic Success Center is to help students become independent and motivated learners. To support students' success in the University environment, the Academic Success Center aims to provide individualized services and the tools to develop effective learning skills.

Free services that the office offers include:

- Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction
- Individual Support by a Learning Specialist
- Study Skill Enhancing Workshops
- Accessibility Services such as Alternative Testing

Thank you to our editorial board:

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