

10 Easy Ways to Study More Effectively

Whether you have grade school, middle school, high school or even college students, you can support and encourage their successful learning in two important ways – by helping them create a positive study environment and by providing them with learning tips that apply at home and in the classroom. This report from SuperCamp and Quantum U addresses what students and supportive parents can do in each area.

Creating a Positive Study Environment

Developing strong study habits is an extremely important learning skill, but it's often overlooked when thinking of ways students can take control of improving their grades. Here are some of the ideas we share with students who attend SuperCamp and with their parents.

1. Establish a defined study area

The most important factor in selecting a student's study area is that it is quiet and away from distractions. It can be the student's bedroom, a spare room, a den, a loft, or a bonus room in the basement or over the garage. Also, try to pull together a combination of furniture that fits his or her style. Lighting is also important. The space should be well lit without hurting the eyes.

2. Create affirmation signs for the home study area

Positive signs have the ability to remind a student's subconscious mind of his or her potential to learn. You and your kids can make some signs that contain affirmations such as those listed below. When you make the signs, use lots of color (our brains love color!).

- EVERYONE HAS THE RESOURCES TO BE SUCCESSFUL
- I BELIEVE IN MYSELF
- EVERYTHING I DO DESERVES MY BEST EFFORT
- EVERY CHALLENGE OFFERS A GIFT
- I AM UNIQUE AND VALUABLE
- I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT I CREATE
- I CAN LEARN THIS!
- LEARNING IS FUN AND NATURAL!

3. Provide the proper study tools

Stocking the study environment with reference books, writing materials, text books, and notes ensures maximum learning. Make this a project with your kids - get their ideas on what will work for them and help them create it. Some other ideas include adding a bulletin board where visual aids such as charts, lists, or pictures can go, putting up a book shelf to promote better organization, and using a daily planner (while there are online options, the physical presence of a planner open to the current day or week is a good reminder of the immediate priorities).

Of course, if the student has access to a computer at home for research when studying, it would be best if it can be located in the study area, rather than an open, noisy part of the house that contains distractions.

4. Add some music to the mix

Some classical music is "brain friendly" and enhances the study environment. Baroque music helps students to focus and to access their most resourceful learning state. The music optimizes the functions of the brain that store and retrieve information. Many (most?!) children will think that their own music is best, but try to convince them to try Baroque - they may well notice that it makes their study time easier, and want more! By the way, it works for working as well as for learning! Try some of the following:

- Bach
- Handel
- Pachelbel
- Vivaldi

Learning Tips for Home and School

The learning tips provided below are a part of the learning skills training that students receive in far more depth at SuperCamp and Quantum U.

1. Help your kids tap into their particular learning styles

Finding out your kids' learning styles can help you understand additional elements that support their natural learning and the effectiveness of their study time. Every one of us learns through Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic means, or modalities. Visual learners remember best through what they see, auditory learners from what they hear, and kinesthetic learners from movement and touching. Although each of us learns in all three of the modalities to some degree, most people prefer one over the other two.

If you identify your son or daughter as a visual learner, pictures, graphs, charts, and other organizational tools are most helpful for learning and retention of information; it helps them see the big picture. Those students with an auditory preference benefit from hearing the information; they learn best when they have the opportunity to recite information aloud and remember best what was discussed. Kinesthetic learners learn best with physical manipulation of information; they like the hands-on experience and they memorize through actions related to the content.

2. Help your student realize what's in it for them

Attitude is something that comes into play for students every day at school and at home when they study. A student may enter some classes excited to be there, and enjoying the teacher and the subject. Maybe he or she enters other classes "knowing" that the class will be boring, and guess what... the class is boring. Many students spend half their days at school wishing they were somewhere else, doing something else. How successful do you think they will be with that attitude?

The quickest way to achieve an attitude adjustment in your son or daughter, if one is needed, is to help them realize what's in it for them, or as we say at SuperCamp "WIIFM" (What's in it for me?). Ask your son or daughter, "Why would you want to learn what the teacher is teaching?" The answer may be as simple as, "So I can pass my exams." And why would you want to pass your exams? Maybe I'll get more free time; maybe I'll get into the college I want to go to. Why would you want those things? So I can be more successful in life.

By understanding what's in it for them, students will find that their time in class and time spent studying has far more purpose. Attitude is a small thing that makes a big difference!

3. Have a test prep game plan

Athletes are told to practice with purpose. Sounds logical, but it doesn't always happen. A golfer can hit thousands of balls on a driving range, but if he or she doesn't have a plan in mind for the practice time, all those swings aren't helping all that much. It's the same when a student is studying for and preparing to take a test. Here are SuperCamp's top ten ways to prepare for a test:

1. **Know you know.** Be prepared. Practice. Simulate the exact conditions and tasks of the exam.
2. **What's it all about?** Find out the format of the test. Is it multiple choice? Essay questions? Sentence completion? Short answer? True/False? Open book?
3. **Eat it.** Your breakfast, that is. Have a healthy, light breakfast that includes some protein like eggs, lean ham or yogurt and fruit. It's great for your energy without making you sluggish.
4. **It's about comfort.** Dress in layers. You never know what the test-room temperature will be. Be ready for anything.
5. **Memorize important facts and formulas.** Write them down in margins when you first get the test.
6. **Ask your teacher.** Seriously. Ask for clarification or rephrasing of questions you don't understand. This may help trigger information in your head.
7. **Write it down.** Write down your reasoning, even if you don't know the exact answer. Get partial credit where you can.
8. **Picturing.** If you can't remember a fact, close your eyes and picture where it is in your notes, in your book, or on your Mind Map.
9. **Know your needs.** Prepare everything you need for the exam the night before.
10. **Get psyched, stay psyched.** Talk to yourself before and during the test. Say things like: "I know the material and will remember it easily."

4. Be in the moment when studying

Each moment contains magical opportunities. The only moment that counts is the one that's already in your hands. At SuperCamp this concept is called "This is it!" It's one of our 8 Keys of Excellence that we teach campers throughout the 10 days. It's about being fully engaged in the now. When you are, life is more exciting and fulfilling.

Nowhere does this mindset come into play more for a teen or pre-teen than when he or she is studying and in school. If you can enlighten your son or daughter to the fact that they're going to be in school anyway, so why not make the most of it, it can have a huge impact on their focus, curiosity and ability to learn. Similarly, with studying, the student knows he or she will be putting in the time to study, if for no other reason than to keep the parents quiet. But, a "This Is It!" approach to study time can turn "killing time" into "quality time."

5. Taking Notes + Making Notes = Better Studying

"Notes:TM" is a note-taking strategy taught at SuperCamp that employs a whole-brain approach, sparks creativity and reduces study time. Simply put, it involves *taking* notes (capturing the important information provided by the teacher) and, at the same time, *making* notes (recording thoughts, feelings, questions that the student has pertaining to the teacher's information).

To implement this technique, it's as simple as putting a line down each sheet of paper that divides the page into two-thirds for taking notes and one-third for making notes. The student takes notes on the left portion of the page and as thoughts and questions occur, he or she can make those notes in the corresponding area on the right side of the page.

When it comes time to study using these notes, the student not only has the facts available, but also the other notes he or she made in class that will help trigger other information stored in the brain and could provide subject matter for test essay answers.

6. Use SLANT in class and the same principles when studying at home

SLANT is an acronym we use at SuperCamp that stands for techniques students can employ to manage their own state. A student's state consists of his or her thoughts, feelings, breathing and physiology (body posture).

Learning and absorbing information is a skill just like reading and writing. Here's how students can get a new SLANT on learning:

S – Sit...up in your chair in the front row or middle section of the class.

L – Lean... forward as if you are hanging on the teacher's every word.

A – Ask... questions during class, even if it's only for clarification of class notes.

N – Nod... your head to let the teacher know that you are interested.

T – Talk... to the teacher to establish a relationship with him or her.

This SLANT strategy (adapted from the work of Dr. Ed Ellis) will help your son or daughter achieve higher grades without having to spend additional time studying.

For more information on SuperCamp, Quantum U and Parent Weekend, visit our websites at www.SuperCamp.com and www.Quantum-U.com or call one of our customer service and enrollment specialists at 800-285-3276.