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## Study Techniques

A useful technique for studying, that will ensure an organized and disciplined approach to test and exam preparation is the **SQ4R**. It not only enables you to engage in the material in a systematic way, but also allows an opportunity for the development of revision notes. These can be used later for revision before tests and exams.

The basic technique has the following steps (many of which may be familiar to you, but a few that will, no doubt, be new):

- **SURVEY:** Quickly looking through the chapter to identify the main ideas or unifying themes. To do this, briefly look at the Table of Contents, the Introduction and Conclusion, headings, sub-headings and diagrams. This should only take you a few minutes and will give a “snap shot” into what the chapter is about.
- **QUESTION:** This will enable you to establish a purpose to your studying by forcing you to begin thinking about the material as you read it. To achieve this create questions out of the material you’ve surveyed (turn headings and sub-headings into questions), and read the questions asked at the end of the chapter. Write these questions down and try to answer them as you read the material.
- **READ:** Carefully read (in manageable chunks) the chapter you are learning. In so doing try to answer the questions you’ve already generated, identify the main ideas of the material read and note important details and relationships of ideas. Remember to reduce your reading speed for difficult passages.
- **RECITE:** Now you begin testing how well you’ve read by checking if you can answer your original questions with the book closed. Do this **orally** (say aloud) and state the key facts and concepts you’ve studied. Reread any areas which are unclear.
- **RECORD:** This is what changes reading into studying, and where most of your work will be learned. Make sure you take accurate notes on basic concepts of things that you’ve read. These should be done as a brief outline of the material studied, and will later become your revision notes for exam preparation. You should do this as you are reading the material or after reading a small manageable chunk of material.

- **REVISE:** Long-term memory is improved with frequent practice (or revision). As such review your revision notes frequently (preferably at the end of each evening), answer all questions you generated (and review questions that you didn't know the answers to) and try to predict exam questions. Revision should be done through-out your studying, as well as just before a test or exam.

If you have any difficulties please pop-in and see one of our professionally trained psychologists at the **Student Counselling Centre** located at:

*Lower Library Complex  
(next door to Financial Aid)  
Steve Biko Campus  
(031) 373 2266*