Proper Study Techniques

Mark R. Domenic
ETCV 520
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Title: Proper Study Techniques

**Description:** This is a one to two-hour lesson designed to teach proper study skills.

**Target Learners:** The learners are college graduates who just entering military service in the field of Military Intelligence. All learners are attending the Military Intelligence Basic Officers Leadership Course (MIBOLC).

**Overall Goal:** When presented new information during MIBOLC all students will demonstrate verbally and in writing proper study techniques. Students will be able to establish a personal study schedule, employ effective reading techniques, and demonstrate effective note taking techniques.

**Rationale:** Approximately 10-15 percent of the students that attend MIBOLC fail at least one written exam. Once a student fails an exam, the student receives one on one mandatory retraining and retesting with a qualified MIBOLC instructor, creating a huge burden on a shrinking instructor base.

**Scope of the lesson:** The lesson will provide basic study skills and how to apply them during MIBOLC. Students will create their own individual study plan for use during MIBOLC.
Goal and Objectives:

GOAL STATEMENT: When presented new information during MIBOLC the student will demonstrate verbally and in writing proper study techniques. Students will be able to establish a personal study schedule, employ effective reading techniques, and demonstrate effective note taking techniques.

Objectives:

TIME MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE: Given an example scenario, within 15 minutes MIBOLC students will demonstrate their knowledge on two time management skills. Both time management skills must be demonstrated with 100 percent accuracy. (Taxonomy: Comprehension)

READING OBJECTIVE: Given an example scenario, within 15 minutes MIBOLC students will demonstrate their knowledge on four effective reading with 100 percent accuracy. (Taxonomy: Comprehension)

NOTE TAKING OBJECTIVE: Given an example scenario, within 15 minutes MIBOLC students will demonstrate their knowledge on four note taking skills. All four note taking skills must be demonstrated with 100 percent accuracy. (Taxonomy: Comprehension)
NEEDS ASSESSMENT

NEEDS ASSESSMENT: Approximately 10-15 percents of the students that attend the Military Intelligence Basic Officer Leadership Course (MIBOLC) fail at least one written exam. Once a student fails an exam, the student receives one on one mandatory retraining and retesting with a qualified MIBOLC instructor, creating a huge burden on a shrinking instructor base. Through analysis of the current and past MIBOLC student population, historical test scores and end of course student critiques, instructors have identified three possible reasons for student test failures. In order of probability we believe failures are due to students having inadequate study techniques, the overwhelming amount of information students are required to learn, and ineffective teaching techniques by some MIBOLC instructors. While we will address all three reasons, the first one addressed will be the student’s study techniques. Following implementation of this lesson, we would like the percentage of students who fail to meet the requirement on at least one test to decrease to five percent.

1. DESIRED OUTCOME: When presented new information during each block of instruction during MIBOLC, students will demonstrate effective study skills by establishing a personal study schedule, employ effective reading techniques and demonstrate effective note taking techniques.

2. CURRENT PERFORMANCE: Based on observation and student counseling, it is estimated that 10-15 percent of MIBOLC students have never received a lesson on proper study techniques and do not know what comprises proper study techniques. While all MIBOLC students are college graduates, many have problems mastering the skills required at MIBOLC.

3. DISCREPANCY VS. NEEDS: All MIBOLC students will be able to demonstrate effective study skills.
Learner/Context Analysis:

Learners: Learners are newly appointed US Army officers in the field of Military Intelligence who are either in the active Army, National Guard, or the Army reserve. All learners are college graduates with at least a bachelor’s degree. Some (less than 10 percent) will also have a master’s degree or higher. Over 90 percent of all students are between 22 – 27 years old. Approximately 16 percent of the students are female; race breakdown is not available. Approximately 20 percent of the students will have prior experience as enlisted members of a branch of the US military; most of these will have prior enlisted experience in the US Army. Not all prior enlisted experience is in the field of military intelligence, prior experience can come from all branches of the military. Most learners come from three primary commissioning sources; the Military Academy at West Point, Officer Candidate School (OCS) or the Reserve Officer’s Training Corps (ROTC). A very small percentage of learners are commissioned through a fourth source, the National Guard direct commissioning program. These students will have no military background or experience. Specific information for each information category is shown below.

- Entry behaviors: Through the officer selection process that includes written and verbal testing, all students have met the minimum requirements required of US Army officers. Through this selection process learners are assessed to have the aptitude to learn the skills required of Intelligence Officers. Historically those selected for the Military Intelligence field score in the top 20 percent of those selected as officers.

- Prior knowledge of topic area: Since all MIBOLC students have a minimum of a four year degree, all learners have practical experience with study skills. Approximately 85 percent of all learners have received a formal class on effective study skills; however these formal classes were presented in a college setting and may not include skills applicable to MIBOLC. Because MIBOLC is fast paced, much faster than most college settings, students struggle when they attempt to apply techniques that worked previously; that is in a much slower learning environment. Most students apply skills that worked in an environment where classroom lessons totaled 15-20 hours a week. MIBOLC classroom lesson total in excess of 40 hours a week.

- Attitudes towards content and potential delivery systems: The vast majority of MIBOLC students dislike PowerPoint delivered instruction as it has the reputation of being dry and boring. Since all learners are college graduates, most have preconceived notions of what encompasses proper study skills.
• Academic motivation: All learners volunteered to join the Army and become officers. Most have worked very hard to meet the requirements of Intelligence Officers during the selection process. Therefore motivation is very high. Presented in the proper manner, this lesson can be viewed as helping learners reach their objective of successfully completing MIBOLC.

• Educational and ability levels: All learners are assessed as having the mental capacity to apply the lesson to create their own proper study skills. All learners have demonstrated the desire to complete formal study programs as they acquired their college degree.

• General learning preference: Most learners prefer discussion based lessons as opposed to instructor dominated, PowerPoint based lectures. Lessons including small group (4-5 students per group) practical exercises involving problem solving or brainstorming are very popular. Web based interactive programs such as Flash are also very popular.

• Attitudes toward training organization: Most learners have a positive attitude towards both the instructors and content of MIBOLC. However, since MIBOLC is an extremely fast paced course, some students feel overwhelmed during certain times of the course.

• Group characteristics: Class size varies in number between 35 and 50 students per class. During certain times of the year classes are dominated by a certain category of student. For example winter classes during the months of January through March are dominated by National Guard and Army Reserve students; summer classes during the months of June through August are dominated by graduates from the Military Academy at West Point entering active duty. Historically those students from the Military Academy at West Point have little trouble in meeting all MIBOLC requirements.

**Learner Strengths:**

• Strong motivation – all volunteered to attend training

• Very high desire to not only meet but exceed all course requirements

• College graduates

• Met rigorous selection criteria; assessed to have capacity to learn difficult concepts

• Mature

• Strong sense of duty and commitment
• Little problem with authority – ready to accept learner’s role

**Learner Weaknesses:**

• Different levels of military experience, some learners are still acclimating to military life

• Students from the three commissioning sources tend to form cliques creating tension and animosity in the classroom

• Some learners are overwhelmed by fast paced curriculum at MIBOLC

• Some learners are intimidated by large class size (35-50 students per class)

• Learners bring pre-conceived notion of proper study skills

**Areas of Potential Difficulty:** Classroom instruction is straightforward and should be easily understood by all learners. However, because the lesson contains multiple objectives, one or two objectives might be forgotten before learners have a chance to implement them. It is important that students remember and apply all three objectives to maximize the benefit of the lesson.

**Description of Learning Context:**

General description: Training will be conducted in a classroom setting during the first week of MIBOLC. Each student will have a computer available during training and during the entire MIBOLC. Each classroom has an overhead projector attached to a computer for projecting instructional material onto a screen. All classrooms and equipment are maintained and in excellent working condition; equipment based training distracters are fixed immediately.

**Advantages:**

• Students will have access to computer during entire time at MIBOLC

• Classrooms are available after school hours for student use

• Classrooms structured to enhance learning

• Classrooms are well lit and provide a comfortable learning atmosphere

• White boards are available for brainstorming and illustrating concepts

• Reproduction support is available so students will receive personal copy of all training materials

• Classrooms can accommodate various learning styles
Limitations:

- One - two hour time limit available for instruction
- Training site will not replicate all student study sites – some students do not have desks or tables in their apartments/hotel rooms
- One instructor for up to 50 students makes it difficult to facilitate learning; hard to engage students one on one

List of teaching strategies:

- At the end of the lesson, provide students with a hand out containing a step by step checklist on how to implement objectives covered in lesson
- Provide students with techniques to memorize key parts of the lesson
- Clearly state learning objectives at the start of lesson
- Lessons will include embedded items to strengthen the learner’s memory of study techniques.
- Early in lesson explain how study skills will help learner succeed during MIBOLC
- Explain that the lesson will enhance, not replace, existing study skills to ensure student acceptance of lesson
- Explain the difference of college study versus how to study at MIBOLC
- Examples provided during lesson will specifically address how the lesson will prepare students for those areas of MIBOLC that students fear the most, such as the 45 minute individual mission analysis briefing
- Learning will be reinforced through small group practical exercise centered on student problem solving
- Lesson will be presented in three easy to process steps (identified during task analysis)
- Provide handouts that will outline lesson and contain explanations of key concepts and terms
- Students will take a short quiz following lesson; scores will be used to assess learner’s mastery of lesson and determine what areas of lesson need more/less reinforcement
Instructional Goal: When presented new information during MIBOLC all students will demonstrate verbally and in writing proper study techniques. Students will be able to establish a personal study schedule, employ effective reading techniques, and demonstrate effective note taking techniques.
Assessment Instrument: Effective Study Techniques

True or False: Circle the correct response.

T / F 1. Word for word memorizing should never be used in studying.
False. It should be used where exact memorizing is required, such as with dates, formulas and foreign languages.

T / F 2. Some people naturally have poor memories and therefore cannot get good grades.
False. Developing a good memory is a skill that can be learned.

T / F 3. Mere repetition does not guarantee learning.
True

T / F 4. The most common cause of failure in schoolwork is lack of mental ability.
False. The most common cause of failure is poor study habits

T / F 5. Following a carefully planned schedule may give a student more free time for other things.
True

Circle the correct response.

6. Jim is a freshman at the University of Arizona South, and is failing history. In an attempt to improve his grades, his friend, Bob, offers to help with his study. Bob looks over Jim’s notes and notices that Jim is attempting to write down everything the instructor says during every class. Jim has over 30 pages of notes, which looks like a script of what the instructor has said over the last semester. What should Bob tell Jim regarding his note taking?

   a. Keep try to write down everything the instructor says – it is a good study tool.
   b. During class Jim should only note key concepts and listen for key phrases or clues the instructor might give.
   c. Jim should never use shorthand when taking notes– it’s best to write words out fully and completely.
   d. Jim should tape recording every class instead of taking notes since it is a lot easier than written notes.
7. After Bob helps Jim with his note taking, they turn to Jim’s preparation for tests. Jim explains to Bob that once he starts studying, he will study for 2 – 3 hours and then take a 30 minute break. What should Bob tell Jim about taking breaks during studying?

a. Jim has it right, study for 2-3 hours and take a 30 minute break.
b. Jim should study for 50 minutes then take a 10 minute break.
c. Jim should study for 30 minutes then take a 5 minute break.
d. There is no set standard for study and break times.

8. Jim tells Bob history class does not interest him at all. Jim’s mind wanders during class and when he tries to read the history text he falls asleep. Jim asks Bob the best way to handle a class that is dry and boring. What should Bob tell him?

a. Jim needs to get actively involved with the text – be aggressive.
b. Jim should keep re-reading the material until he remembers it.
c. Jim should drop the history class and find a more interesting class.
d. There is nothing Jim can do – he just needs to do the best he can.

9. Bob offers to let Jim join his history study group. They meet on Monday and Thursday nights for two hours. Jim asks Bob how many students are in the study group. Bob says they adhere to the principle recommended by the research on the subject of study groups. Based on this, what is the best size of a student study group?

a. At least 10 - 15 students.
b. Between 8-10 students.
c. No more than 6 students.
d. Research does not support a set number for study groups.

10. Jim decides to join Bob’s study group. In preparation for the first meeting, Jim is trying to understand the concepts of communism and democracy. What should Jim do that will help him to see relationships between different concepts or ideas?

a. Transfer his notes to an electronic device such as a PDA or laptop.
b. Transfer his notes to note cards (5x7) and study them constantly.
c. Take large amounts of notes in class and try to memorize all of them.
d. Use a tool that presents information graphically such as a mind map.
Final Exam Essay Questions

Write a short paragraph that describes your study environment. At a minimum include a description of the room where you study and the amount of time you study. Student’s study environment should meet all criteria discussed in the lesson.

Write a short paragraph that describes the tenets of proper note taking to include in class and post class activities. Students should describe listening for magic words; i.e. “This is Important”; taking accurate, brief notes during class; immediately after class rewriting fully detailed notes; and being exact – listening to instructor.

Write a short paragraph that explains the four effective reading techniques. Students should explain fluid Eye Movement; no Lip Movement; strong vocabulary and interest in topic.
Instructional Plan

Description of the Model

This instructional model is based upon Gagne’s Nine Significant Events (see below).

Gagne’s Nine Significant Events of Instruction
1. Gain learner’s attention
2. Inform learner of objectives
3. Stimulate recall of prerequisites
4. Present stimuli
5. Provide guidance
6. Elicit performance
7. Provide feedback
8. Assess performance
9. Enhance retention and transfer

Gagne’s model states instruction should occur in blocks with each block containing multiple steps from the model. Progression through the model is recursive rather than linear, meaning blocks are similar to repeating cycles of steps. Repeating cycles most commonly contain, but aren’t limited to, steps 4, 5, 6, and 7 as new material is presented. This cycle represents the presentation of new material (event 4), clarification of the material (event 5), elicitation of learner performance (i.e., ensure learner understanding through participation) (event 6), and lastly provides feedback to the learner regarding his/her performance and corrects any misunderstandings (event 7). New material is presented with another cycle beginning at event 4 and continues until all material has been presented. Instructors may utilize multiple events throughout instruction. For example, gaining learners’ attention (event 1) must be done frequently while follow through activities to enhance retention and transfer (event 9) may be completed only once.
### INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN FOR STUDY SKILLS CLASS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Completed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intro</td>
<td>Introduction to class/instructor. Administrative tasks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gain learner attention</td>
<td>Provide statistics of MIBOLC students who fail at least one test and the ramifications of failure.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>On the average, approximately 15 percent of MIBOLC students fail at least one test. That means out of a class of 50, eight of you will fail at least one test.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Once a student fails a test, that student will be placed on academic probation. Once on academic probation, students are required to attend mandatory study halls, held Monday through Friday after normal duty hours, and on either Saturday or Sunday.</td>
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<td>This lesson can help you stay off academic probation, and also help you keep your GPA among the highest in your class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inform learner of objectives</td>
<td>Present terminal objective and enabling objectives. Handout printed versions of objectives as well as final evaluation/grading checklist. The purpose of this program is to introduce you to proper study techniques. During this lesson we will discuss the following topics; creating an effective study environment; employing effective reading techniques; and effective note taking techniques. By the end of this program, you will be able to establish your own personal study program and improve your study habits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recall of prerequisites</td>
<td>No prerequisites required.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gain learner attention</td>
<td>Pose question: “How well do you know how to study?” Do you know how to study and learn at the same time?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instruction Begins.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Present stimuli</td>
<td>Creating an effective study environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide guidance</td>
<td>Present on screen and use handouts. Explain that first step in improving study habits is creating an effective study environment. Discovering the best approach to studying is a personal process. What works very well for one student may</td>
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not work for another. However, here are a few rules that will help you in creating a study friendly atmosphere.

- Turn off the TV and the radio.
- Let an answering machine or your roommate take phone messages.
- Be sure there is adequate lighting.
- Use a desk that is neat and free of distractions. Ideally, the desk should face a wall rather than a window so you are not distracted by what is going on outside.
- Use a chair that supports your back, not one that invites you to lounge and eventually fall off to sleep. Never study on your bed.
- Have everything you need close at hand when you begin, so you do not have to interrupt your studying to find materials.
- Study 50 minutes and then take a 10 minute break. During the ten minutes, stretch, relax or have an energy bar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elicit performance</th>
<th>Ask students for examples of proper study environment for their own situation. Lesson will have imbedded assessment tools.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide feedback</td>
<td>Correct any misconceptions. Use feedback to enhance learning and confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain learner attention</td>
<td>As you continue your education, one of the most important activities that will occupy your time is silent reading. Many of us are guilty of the following faults; if this also applies to you, now is the time to correct them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present stimuli</td>
<td>Present on screen and refer to handout: Employing effective reading techniques.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide guidance</td>
<td>Better readers proceed across the page by making a few pauses, perhaps three or four per line. These are called “fixations” and the fewer fixations per line, the more rapid the reading. Some readers immediately reread something to try to comprehend an item they missed. This “regression”, as it is called, causes more fixations and slows the pace. Movement of the eyes is a motor adjustment. Therefore reading is in large a matter of developing the proper motor habits; decreasing the number of fixations per line and the lengths of the fixation time. Some people have developed the habit of vocalizing each word they read. When we realize that words can be seen much more rapidly than they can be pronounced, they it is easily understood why lip movement slows the speed of reading. You can test this by reading a page silently, and then read it out loud, keeping an accurate record of the elapsed time each way. The habit of vocalizing, as lip reading is called, is developed in the same way as other habits. It can also be overcome by a conscious and persistent effort. Needless to say, the speed of reading can be improved by eliminating this habit.</td>
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</table>
Reading for study is purposeful and focused – it is not like reading for pleasure. Rarely do you read a textbook cover to cover like reading a novel. In fact, spending hour after hour reading textbooks is not recommended. After a few minutes you may find yourself at the bottom of a page with no idea what you have just read.

**Elicit performance**

Ask students for examples of how they would recommend to someone with these faults how to overcome them.

**Elicit performance**

Promote discussion and use additional imbedded assessment tools.

**Provide feedback**

Correct any misconceptions and reinforce correct answers/behaviors.

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In class note taking is perhaps the most vital part of the studying process. However, simply writing down, or even trying to write down, everything the instructor says is not the most effective use of notes. The important aspects of note taking are listening for magic words, taking brief but accurate notes during class, and being exact in your note taking.

**Gain learner attention**

In class note taking is perhaps the most vital part of the studying process. However, simply writing down, or even trying to write down, everything the instructor says is not the most effective use of notes. The important aspects of note taking are listening for magic words, taking brief but accurate notes during class, and being exact in your note taking.

**Present stimuli**

Present on screen and refer to handout: Magic Words

**Provide guidance**

Often, instructors will give clues as to what they think is important...say important enough to consider testing. Some of these clues are:

- Repeating important points several time, write them on the board, or give handouts
- Some instructors will use certain gestures for important points
- Ask the class to consider certain points, or use as the basis for class discussion.
- Listen for these magic words: “This material is important” or “This is important – you need to know this.”

Put yourself in the instructor’s head – what questions would you ask? Also, brainstorm test questions with other students.

**Elicit performance**

Have students give examples they may have of “magic words”; use imbedded assessment.

**Provide feedback**

Correct any misconceptions and reinforce correct answers/behaviors.

**Present stimuli**

Present on screen and refer to handout: take brief but accurate notes during class.

**Provide guidance**

Don’t attempt to write down everything the instructor says. Look for information that involves “who”, “what”, “where” and “when.” Note this information as briefly as possible. Also, abbreviate. Use as much shorthand as possible. Then, as soon as possible after the lecture or class, write your notes in full detail. This serves two purposes: it adds to the accuracy and completeness of your notes, and it affords you an opportunity for restudy or
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Elicit performance</strong></th>
<th>Review of your notes.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provide feedback</strong></td>
<td>Have students provide their own examples of how to take brief but accurate notes. Use imbedded assessment.</td>
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<td>Correct any misconceptions and reinforce correct answers/behaviors.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Present stimuli</strong></td>
<td>Present on screen and refer to handout: be exact in your note taking.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Provide guidance</strong></td>
<td>Make sure you are writing down what the instructor says – not what you think the instructor says! If the question is “what is nine times six” and you answer 37, you are wrong! If the instructor says “this will be on the test” and you write down “this will not be on the test”, well you can figure out the result! Be alert, be careful, and concentrate!</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Elicit performance</strong></td>
<td>Have students provide examples of how to be exact in note taking. Use imbedded assessment.</td>
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<td><strong>Provide feedback</strong></td>
<td>Correct any misconceptions and reinforce correct answers/behaviors.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Enhance Retention and Follow-Through Activities</strong></td>
<td>Provide students with opportunity to design their own effective study program with skills provided during lesson. Within three days of presentation of lesson, have each student provide in writing a program that encompasses creating an effective study environment; employing effective reading techniques, and effective note taking techniques. Mentors can provide constant feedback following each test; failed exams can be negatively reinforced and passed exams can be positively reinforced.</td>
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