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Academic Mentoring Partnership (AMP)
Resource Booklet

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What Kind of Student Are You?

Attitudes and Habits for Improving your Motivation

1. Decide what you are trying to do in college, then identify something from each class that makes it relevant to your goals.
2. Get to know your professors. This will help you understand what they want you to achieve in class and why, and you will be more motivated to do it. Knowing your professors could possibly lead to internship or employment opportunities.
3. Update your syllabus on a regular basis. Cross off completed assignments, tabulate your grade on a regular basis and keep track of future due dates.
4. Tackle projects in small steps, not large leaps. Map out each stage of a large project and assign due dates for each stage.
5. Determine things you can and cannot change to become a better student. Knowing which things are beyond your control will make your workload feel much more manageable.
6. Minimize interruptions. Every time you check your email or look at Facebook breaks your concentration and makes it harder to keep working on the task at hand.
7. Consider the consequences before you act. Going to a party on a weeknight might be more fun than studying, but you will regret it during your cram sessions later.
8. Do unpleasant tasks first and save the best for last.
9. Join a club or participate in a campus activity. You can’t spend all your time studying, and allowing yourself a break to do something you enjoy will make the study times you do have more productive. Getting involved will ultimately set you apart when it comes to internship or job hunting.
10. Reward Yourself for a job well done!

When you feel discouraged, remind yourself of your past successes. You’ll recapture a sense of confidence which will help motivate you in your current challenges.

Academic Self-Concept

Think about yourself as a student. How does that impact how well you do at BU? Have outside influences affected you in the past? Do they continue to do so?

- What kind of student were you in elementary school, middle and high school?
- What messages did you get about the importance of school and your academic abilities from your friends, family and teachers?
- Why did you choose to attend college at this time? Why Boston University?
- What kind of student are you now?
- What kind of messages do you get about your academic abilities now from your family, friends and professors?
- In addition to “a student” how else would you describe yourself?
  (Example: A dancer, a runner, a musician, etc.) How do those things affect one another?

What kind of learner are you?

Visual Learners: Mind-Mapping
- Involves finding patterns vs. listing ideas
- Can be useful for making notes and planning essay answers
- Topic in middle of page with major points branching out from the middle
- Connect ideas/points from different branches

Auditory Learners: Cornell System
- Allows you to capture general ideas
- Use your own abbreviations to save time. After lecture, write down key words in summary column (left margin)
What Kind of Learner Are You?

The VARK®, an inventory designed by Neil Fleming, is designed to offer individuals profiles of their learning preferences. This tool is a useful conversation-starter when talking to students about how they study and how they might develop more effective learning strategies. It’s also a great way to dissuade students from cramming.

There are specific ways to exploit each of these learning preferences throughout the process of acquiring information and truly learning it. Understanding our individual learning styles allows individuals to become more self aware both in the classroom and beyond, in everyday life.

The VARK breaks learning preferences into five categories:

Visual learners prefer images, diagrams, graphs, flow charts and symbols.

Aural or Auditory learners benefit from group discussions, explaining concepts to others, recording lectures and reading aloud.

Read/Write learners like lists, reading, and definitions and benefit from re-writing notes and interpreting quantitative information with words.

Kinesthetic learners use all of their senses and benefit from trial and error, experimentation, and applying concepts to real-world examples.

Multimodal learners incorporate all of these learning preferences. According to Neil Fleming’s VARK® A Guide to Learning Styles website, multimodal learners are often in the majority of any one population.

The subject of learning style preferences has been receiving more attention in the education industry, from elementary schools to high schools and higher education. Teachers, and administrators who work directly with students, are increasingly discussing the variety of teaching strategies they can utilize in the classroom to reach all students.

For more information about learning styles or to request a Learning Styles Discovery workshop for your student organization or student employees, please contact Cecilia Lalama, Assistant Director for Mentoring and Outreach at the Educational Resource Center at clalama@bu.edu or at 617-353-7077.
The VARK Questionnaire

Choose the answer which best explains your preference and circle the letter(s) next to it. PLEASE CIRCLE MORE THAN ONE IF A SINGLE ANSWER DOES NOT MATCH YOUR PERCEPTION.

1. You are helping someone who wants to go to your airport, town center or railway station. You would:
   a. go with her.
   b. tell her the directions.
   c. write down the directions.
   d. draw, or give her a map.

2. You are not sure whether a word should be spelled `dependent` or `dependant`. You would:
   a. see the words in your mind and choose by the way they look.
   b. think about how each word sounds and choose one.
   c. find it in a dictionary.
   d. write both words on paper and choose one.

3. You are planning a holiday for a group. You want some feedback from them about the plan. You would:
   a. describe some of the highlights.
   b. use a map or website to show them the places.
   c. give them a copy of the printed itinerary.
   d. phone, text or email them.

4. You are going to cook something as a special treat for your family. You would:
   a. cook something you know without the need for instructions.
   b. ask friends for suggestions.
   c. look through the cookbook for ideas from the pictures.
   d. use a cookbook where you know there is a good recipe.

5. A group of tourists want to learn about the parks or wildlife reserves in your area. You would:
   a. talk about, or arrange a talk for them about parks or wildlife reserves.
   b. show them internet pictures, photographs or picture books.
   c. take them to a park or wildlife reserve and walk with them.
   d. give them a book or pamphlets about the parks or wildlife reserves.

6. You are about to purchase a digital camera or mobile phone. Other than price, what would most influence your decision?
   a. Trying or testing it.
   b. Reading the details about its features.
   c. It is a modern design and looks good.
   d. The salesperson telling me about its features.
7. Remember a time when you learned how to do something new. Try to avoid choosing a physical skill, e.g. riding a bike. You learned best by:
   a. watching a demonstration.
   b. listening to somebody explaining it and asking questions.
   c. diagrams and charts - visual clues.
   d. written instructions – e.g. a manual or textbook.

8. You have a problem with your heart. You would prefer that the doctor:
   a. gave you a something to read to explain what was wrong.
   b. used a plastic model to show what was wrong.
   c. described what was wrong.
   d. showed you a diagram of what was wrong.

9. You want to learn a new program, skill or game on a computer. You would:
   a. read the written instructions that came with the program.
   b. talk with people who know about the program.
   c. use the controls or keyboard.
   d. follow the diagrams in the book that came with it.

10. I like websites that have:
    a. things I can click on, shift or try.
    b. interesting design and visual features.
    c. interesting written descriptions, lists and explanations.
    d. audio channels where I can hear music, radio programs or interviews.

11. Other than price, what would most influence your decision to buy a new non-fiction book?
    a. The way it looks is appealing.
    b. Quickly reading parts of it.
    c. A friend talks about it and recommends it.
    d. It has real-life stories, experiences and examples.

12. You are using a book, CD or website to learn how to take photos with your new digital camera. You would like to have:
    a. a chance to ask questions and talk about the camera and its features.
    b. clear written instructions with lists and bullet points about what to do.
    c. diagrams showing the camera and what each part does.
    d. many examples of good and poor photos and how to improve them.

13. Do you prefer a teacher or a presenter who uses:
    a. demonstrations, models or practical sessions.
    b. question and answer, talk, group discussion, or guest speakers.
    c. handouts, books, or readings.
    d. diagrams, charts or graphs.
14. You have finished a competition or test and would like some feedback. You would like to have feedback:
   a. using examples from what you have done.
   b. using a written description of your results.
   c. from somebody who talks it through with you.
   d. using graphs showing what you had achieved.

15. You are going to choose food at a restaurant or cafe. You would:
   a. choose something that you have had there before.
   b. listen to the waiter or ask friends to recommend choices.
   c. choose from the descriptions in the menu.
   d. look at what others are eating or look at pictures of each dish.

16. You have to make an important speech at a conference or special occasion. You would:
   a. make diagrams or get graphs to help explain things.
   b. write a few key words and practice saying your speech over and over.
   c. write out your speech and learn from reading it over several times.
   d. gather many examples and stories to make the talk real and practical.
## Scoring Chart

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Count the number of each of the VARK letters circled to score each category

- Total V’s
- Total A’s
- Total R’s
- Total K’s

If fewer than 25 items endorsed = the highest individual scores on the specific learning styles (Visual, Aural, Read/write, Kinesthetic) is the main learning preference.

If greater than 25 items endorsed = multimodal learner/preference.
Time Management 101

The Time Grid is a tool that visually lets you see and quantify where your time is going and holds you accountable. Here’s how best to use it:

1. Record class and lab times (including rehearsal/practice times for CFA students). Be sure to include 10 minutes before and 10 minutes after each class as review time. Studies show that the retention of the material increases with these review blocks, which helps to avoid the unnecessary drama and stress that comes with cramming. If a student has two back-to-back classes, after that second class, the student should review for 20 minutes. This allows for time to write questions/circle concepts to ask a professor during office hours or via email. If it’s a Monday and the class does not meet again until Wednesday, the student has 48 hours to get those questions answered before the professor moves on to new material. Getting on the professor’s radar well before the midterm is a good way to be savvy in the classroom.

2. Record meal times—eating meals roughly around the same time everyday M-F will help you manage your time.

3. Record regularly scheduled weekly meetings, employment and athletic obligations

4. Record sleep. You should be getting 7.5-8 hours a night. The key to getting the best sleep and managing your time wisely is to go to bed the same time Sunday-Thursday night and wake up at the same time M-F. Base the time you go to bed Sunday-Thursday based on your earliest class. Example- If you have class M, W, F at 9AM, plan to be up between 7:30AM and 8AM M-F, and plan to go to bed between 11PM and midnight Sunday-Thursday.

5. Schedule studying time across all 7 days in the week

6. Make Time for YOU!! Find a minimum of an hour a day for you. This is your stress reduction time. You will need at least an hour a day to de-stress and keep your sanity. Research shows that taking time for you everyday will not only give you a better sense of well-being but you this can help to reduce the tension and help you get through a tough semester.
# Time Management 101

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After filling out the grid, you can look to see how much of your time is falling into each of these quadrants. How much of your time is spent on urgent and important things, and how much time are you devoting to things that are neither urgent nor important???
# Time Management Grid Example

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Syllabus Management 101

**EC 101: Microeconomics**
- Exam 1: October 17 ................................ 25%
- Exam 2*: November 11 .......................... 25%
- Final Exam: December 19, 3—5 PM .......... 25%
- 9 Problem Sets**: throughout semester .......... 25%
  *Lowest exam dropped; **Two lowest problem sets dropped

**LS 111: First Semester Spanish**
- Exam 1: September 22 .......................... 11.6%
- Exam 2: October 17 .............................. 11.6%
- Exam 3: November 18 ........................... 11.6%
- Composition 1: November 28 ................. 7.5%
- Composition 2: December 5 ................... 7.5%
- Oral Presentation: December 7 ............... 10%
- Final Exam: December 19 ...................... 20%
- Homework: throughout semester ............. 20%

**MA 121: Calculus I**
- Midterm 1: October 5 ............................ 25%
- Midterm 2: November 11 ...................... 25%
- Final Exam: December 20, 9—11 AM ......... 30%
- Discussion Grade: ................................ 20%

**WR 100 or WR 150: Writing Seminar**
- Paper 1: September 20 ......................... 20%
- Paper 2: October 13 ............................ 20%
- Paper 3: November 9 ........................... 20%
- Portfolio: December 10 ....................... 40%

Office Hours Prep Sheet

Class: Professor: Office Hours:
Building and Room#:

Homework/Reading Date: Page#:
Problems:

Tests/Quizzes Date: Page#:
Problems:

Material Covered in Class Date: Page#:
Problems:

Lecture/Discussion Notes Date: Page#:
Problems:

Making a list of talking points or questions may make it easier to approach a professor or TA during office hours.
**Test Preparation**

**General Test Prep Tips...**

1. Stay positive — remember how hard you worked and how long you’ve studied.
2. Identify the format of the exam and your weak spots as you prepare.
3. Panic and stress from classmates is contagious; arrive on time for your exams, but not too early.
4. Cover up multiple choice answers if you cannot pick one and try to answer the question in your own words. Then go back to the choices and pick the closest fit.
5. Reward yourself — leave any thoughts associated with your exam behind when you leave the classroom.

**ERC Test Prep 101**

*How well do you prepare for tests? Take the quiz below and learn to take easy steps towards academic success. If you answer “no” to a lot of these questions, it’s time to reevaluate your habits. It’s never too late to reinvent your study style.*

1. Do you take at least 10 minutes before and after class every day to review your notes and flag questions?
2. Do you take those questions and raise them during office hours or email the instructor?
3. Are you mentally present for class — well rested and fed?
4. Do you find linkages between concepts in readings and lectures?
5. Do you write questions in the margin of your notes?
6. Do you write questions that either an instructor or fellow students raised in class in the margins of your notes?
7. Do you review past tests, quizzes and homework to identify your strengths and weaknesses with the material?

**R.A.P.P.R.**

*Five steps to studying smarter*

If you don’t know where to start, try following these steps to streamline your study process...

**RECALL**

What do I need to know for this exam?  
How will I find out?  
- Review sheets  
- Course syllabi  
- Notes from classes and review sessions

**ASSESS**

Where are my weak spots?  
How do I find them?  
- Review Midterms, quizzes, homework, labs and professor comments  
- Recall conversations from office hours  
- Form a study group — working with others will not only highlight your own weak spots, but will allow you to utilize your classmates as resources and act as a resource for them as well.

**PLAN**

How much time will I have to study?  
Which chapters need attention? How will I prioritize topics?  
- Make a schedule for the entire study period. From there, decide what to study first and what will require more time.

The following page-and-a-half illustrates the “plan” portion of the RAPPR method.
Multiple Choice Test Prep Strategies

Adequate and Effective Preparation (60% to 80% right)
- Creating study calendar based on the number of days out from a test
- Preparation and review strategies (flashcards, repetition of math problems)
- Office hours to get questions answered before the next lecture
- Reviewing notes 10 minutes after class everyday
- Not cramming—studying and reviewing the material daily

Problem-solving strategies (20% to 30% right)
- Underlining key words in the question
- Not being fooled by “second-best” answers
- All of the above/None of the above
- Covering answers to figure out in your own words

Guessing Strategies (0% to 10% right)
- Use sparingly
  - An answer that contains an unfamiliar term is probably wrong

Guessing Without a Strategy (0% to 10% right)

General Multiple Choice Guessing Strategies

1. Extremes/absolutes are rarely the correct answer/true. Usually they are distractors.
2. True answers are more plentiful than false simply because it takes more work to create a false question.
3. Answers that contain specific, in-depth details with more words are more likely to be correct.
4. A correct numerical answer is usually caught between lower and higher answer choices.
5. If you have two opposites included in your answer choices, one is most likely to be correct.
6. If you have five answer choices and you can eliminate three of them, then you have increased your chance of a correct answer to 50%—the same percentage as a True/False question.
7. Attempt to answer the question without looking at the options. If necessary, cover the options.
8. If options/quantities are similar, chances are one of them is correct.
9. When guessing, choose answers that are not the first or last option.
10. Answer the questions you know first. This will boost your confidence!

Adapted from College Study Skills: Becoming a Strategic Learner
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Essay Test Prep Strategies

• Remember to read the directions for the exam before you begin.

• Don’t study for total recall of names, dates, facts, and figures as you might for an objective test. Don’t merely memorize material.

• Do learn main ideas, key terms, steps in argument, stages in a process, etc.
  Also memorize verbatim at least some key phrases, definitions, or short passages. These will give an authoritative air to your answer.

• Do anticipate exam questions.
  If, for example, you have studied both the fall of Greece and the fall of Rome since the last test, you can anticipate a question which asks you to compare and contrast these.

• Read through the whole test first.
  Answers will come to mind immediately for some questions. Jot down key words now while they are fresh in mind, but don’t start writing your answer.

• Budget your time.
  Allow enough time at the end to go back and finish incomplete answers and to proofread your paper. When the time is up for one question, stop writing and begin the next one. On a five question exam, for example, five incomplete answers will usually receive more credit than two complete ones, so try not to leave any questions unanswered.

• Answer the questions you know best first.
  And don’t panic about anything you think you don’t know. Stay calm.

• Take time to Structure your answer, even if you are in a hurry.
  Whenever you can, work from a brief outline jotted down on scratch paper before you begin to write. Select what is clearly relevant; try to avoid a rambling effect.

• Come straight to the point in your answer.
  Make your very first sentence sum up your main point. If you are writing a lengthy answer, summarize the key points you intend to make in an introductory paragraph.

• Take time at the end to reread the exam.
  Make sure you have answered ALL parts of the question.

• Qualify answers when in doubt.
  It is better to say “Toward the end of the 20th century” than to say “1984” when you can’t remember whether its 1984 or 1987. The approximate time may be all that is necessary, but you may lose credit for an incorrect date.
Study Guide Organizer

Exam/Date/Location ________________________________
Professor’s Office Hours ____________________________
TA’s Office Hours _________________________________
Review Session Dates/Locations ______________________
Exam Format _______________________________________
Study Techniques (flashcards, etc.) ____________________
This exam is ______________________ % of my grade

Most Important Topics to Know for this Exam are:

1. ___________________________ PAGE # ______________ DATE OF LECTURE
2. ___________________________
3. ___________________________
4. ___________________________
5. ___________________________
6. ___________________________
7. ___________________________
8. ___________________________
9. ___________________________
10. ___________________________

PREPARE

Gather materials. Make study tools: flashcards, study guides, concept maps, etc. Here are some examples:

- Study sheets — List terms, formulate facts, etc.
- Concept maps — Illustrate terms, make flow-charts to show relationships between concepts.
- Word/ problem cards — Use these to self-quiz on predicted questions. Write steps on back.
- Self-test — Create based on what you know will be on the exam. This will foster creative thinking.
- List of 20 — Make a list of 20 topics you predict will be on the exam; list definitions and important concepts.
- Essay question list — List predicted essay questions and outline them.
- End-of-chapter questions — Go back to each covered chapter and answer questions you think will be taken from them.
- Study group material — Form a study group; teach others what you know!

REVIEW

- Read study sheets, flashcards and concept maps out loud.
- What needs work? Review material that needs extra attention.
- Practice writing formulas. Writing out information reinforces memorization.
- Re-mark and recite notes; review highlighted points in text and notebook. Read them aloud.
- Redo “missed” problems from quizzes, homework and previous exams.
- From memory, recreate the concept maps, word cards and essay answers you’ve prepared.

Encourage students to fill out one form for each exam far in advance of the test. Planning ahead demystifies the content that has to be covered and makes the process of studying much more pleasant.
Decision-Making

H.H.E.L.M. Decision-Making Triangle

Decision Point

Measure

Identify the Situation:
Choosing a Major, Class Selection, Choosing a Career, Internship v. Volunteering

Head Check: What are the facts? How many credits will I need to graduate if I transfer to SMG? Will I still graduate in two years?
Heart Check: What does my gut tell me about this decision?
Expert Check: Academic Advisor, graduate student, senior, Center for Career Development, etc.
Loved Ones Check: What do the people whose opinions I value say about this decision?
Measure: Putting it all together and making a decision.

Goal-Setting 1-2-3-4

1. Review your Past
   What activities have you enjoyed the most? How much time do you spend on these activities? What were some past aspirations you felt especially good about? What were the most significant decisions in your life thus far and how did those decisions impact your future?

2. Review your Present
   What do you value most in your life? What kinds of activities currently satisfy you most? What are your present major concerns? What specific changes could you make in order to move in the direction of a more satisfying life?

3. Review your Future
   How will any costs or obstacles impact how your future plays out? What are some of the aspirations you want to fulfill? In what ways could you overcome them? What about personal and financial sacrifices? Once you’ve determined obstacles, figure out who/what can help you overcome them!

4. Goal-Setting Perspective
   Now that you have your goals established and see potential obstacles, take a step back and think about them and their overall effect on your life. Think to yourself, HOW DOES MY GOAL AFFECT ME...
ERC Corner

The Educational Resource Center is the campus academic support center. We work with students to teach them how to recognize their learning styles and take ownership of their academic success.

The ERC offers individual advising appointments, peer tutoring in many first and second-year core courses, ESL and academic skills workshops and writing assistance. Test prep is among many academic skills workshop topics we offer.

Visit our website at www.bu.edu/erc to learn about our programs.

ESL Grammar/Writing/Speaking Workshops:

www.bu.edu/erc/workshops/esl/esl-registration/

The link above will take you to our Spring 2012 schedule and registration page. Workshops kick off on February 3 with Intro to Academic Writing in English.

Academic Skills Workshops:

Begin the week of January 23 with time management and syllabus management. Please refer to www.bu.edu/erc during the first week of classes for a full schedule.

For both AMP Peer Mentors and AMP students, explore our programs, come early and come often.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Important Registrar Dates

MLK Day — Classes Suspended: Monday, January 20
Last Day to Add Classes: Wednesday, January 29
President’s Day — Classes Suspended: Monday, February 17
Monday Schedule of Classes: Wednesday, February 19
Last Day to Drop Without a W: Thursday, February 20
Spring Break: Saturday, March 8 - Sunday, March 16
Last Day to Drop with a W: Friday, March 28
Patriots Day — Classes Suspended: Monday, April 21
Monday Schedule of Classes: Thursday, April 24
Last Day of Classes: Thursday, May 1
Final Exams: Tuesday, May 6 - Saturday, May 10

University Resources

CAS Academic Advising Office
(617) 353-2400 cas105@bu.edu
www.bu.edu/cas/students/undergrad-resources/advising/
Center for Career Development
(617) 353-3590 future@bu.edu
www.bu.edu/careers
Behavioral Medicine
881 Commonwealth Avenue, (617) 353-3569
http://www.bu.edu/shs/behavioral/index.shtml