

Learning to Learn Handbook

Meta-Learning Strategies

Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

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Why a Learning to Learn Handbook?

We hope this handbook will assist students, advisors, mentors and instructors in promoting successful learning experiences by providing some simple meta-cognitive or meta-learning strategies.

Meta-cognitive or meta-learning strategies are ways in which we “think about thinking” or “learn to learn” to become successful learners in class, at university, and most importantly, can assist us in life-long learning and success in our personal and professional world.

We hope this will help:

Instructors by

- Providing strategies that they can teach their students at the beginning of the first semesters, and will provide practice opportunities and reinforce these strategies throughout the semester.

Advisors and Mentors by

- Reinforcing and reviewing strategies that instructors are using with their students.

Students by

- Empowering you to become independent and self-directed successful learners.

A few things to keep in mind for Meta-Learning Strategies to be effective:

- **Time**—it takes time upfront to learn some of these strategies but great pay off in time and results in the long run
 - For instructor- take time during first few classes to teach “learning to learn strategies”
- **Practice**—For a new behavior to become a habit, must practice for 21 days
 - For instructor—remind and give students opportunities to practice
- **Individual Preference**—We all have our own preferences and styles. Not all techniques work the same for each person. Try and see if these “fit” and what strategies might each person prefer

Good luck to all of you. To paraphrase R. Emerson’s “Life is a journey, not a destination”: Learning, too, is a journey and not a destination, as our learning never ends. Enjoy the journey!

Respectfully,

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What's in it for Me?

Why are you here?

What is motivating you to be here?

INTRINSIC	EXTRINSIC

What do you hope to gain from this?

What can you contribute?

How do you hope to apply it in the future?

Goal Setting and Action Plan

List three goals that you hope to gain from this experience.
After each goal, list strategies that will help you meet that goal.

Goal:

Strategies:

Goal:

Strategies:

Goal:

Strategies:

Organizing for Success: Templates

To-Do Task List

☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____

Weekly Task List

October 1-8

School

☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____

Personal/Work

☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____

Monthly Task List

October Tasks: Personal/Work

☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____

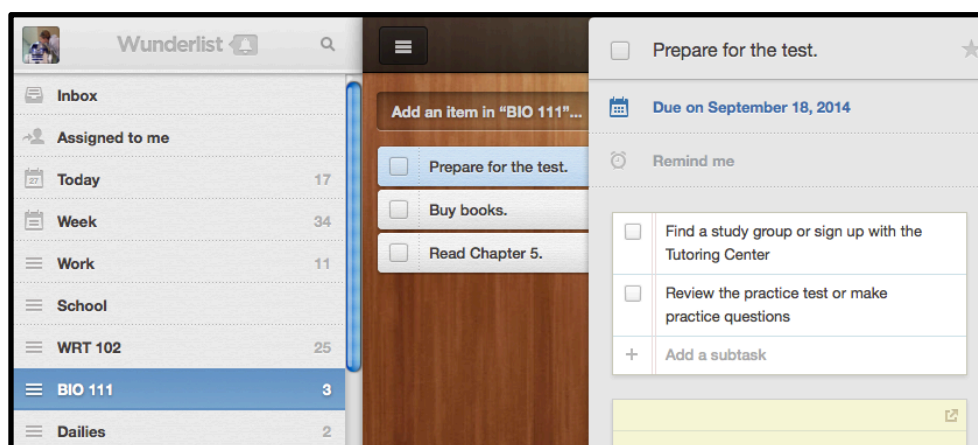
October Tasks: School

☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____

Make Your Smartphone Smarter.

Use Task Apps.

Smartphones have powerful, simple apps that sync across all devices, alert you with reminders, and go everywhere with you.



Organizing for Success: Monthly Calendars

Month:

Month:

Accountability Coach

Name

Email

Phone

Description

Type of Contact

Frequency of Contact

Metacognitive Note-Taking

Topic:		Date:	
Reflections/Thoughts		Notes	
Summary and Takeaways			

MetaCognitive Note-Taking for better retention

To Begin: This approach to note-taking can make your time taking notes more closely connected with how well you learn. Whenever you start a new section of notes, write the Date, Course & Topics on the top of the page, then draw a line down the middle of the page, 1/4 or 1/3 the way from the left edge.

Date:

Course/Event:

Topics:

Putting this information at the top of the page primes your brain with what you already know about these topics, making it easier for you to make new connections. It also makes it much easier to keep your notes organized.

Reflections/Comments

Notes

Reflections:

Use this space for noting your reflections on what is being presented and your reactions to it.

Write or draw, include your feelings, questions, emerging ideas and other comments.

When you come back to review, your associations with how you experienced what was presented will make it easier to remember. What you put in this column acts as a key and an index, aiding recall.

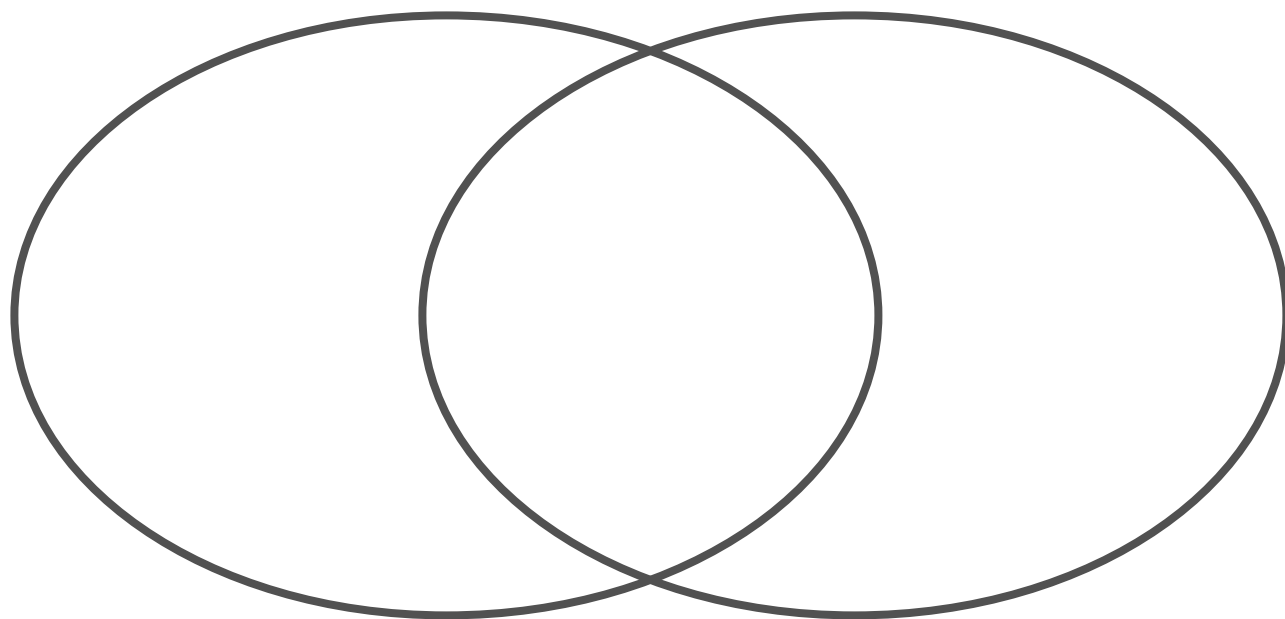
Notes: *Use this space for taking traditional notes on what is being presented, in whatever way you already like using.*

Summary:

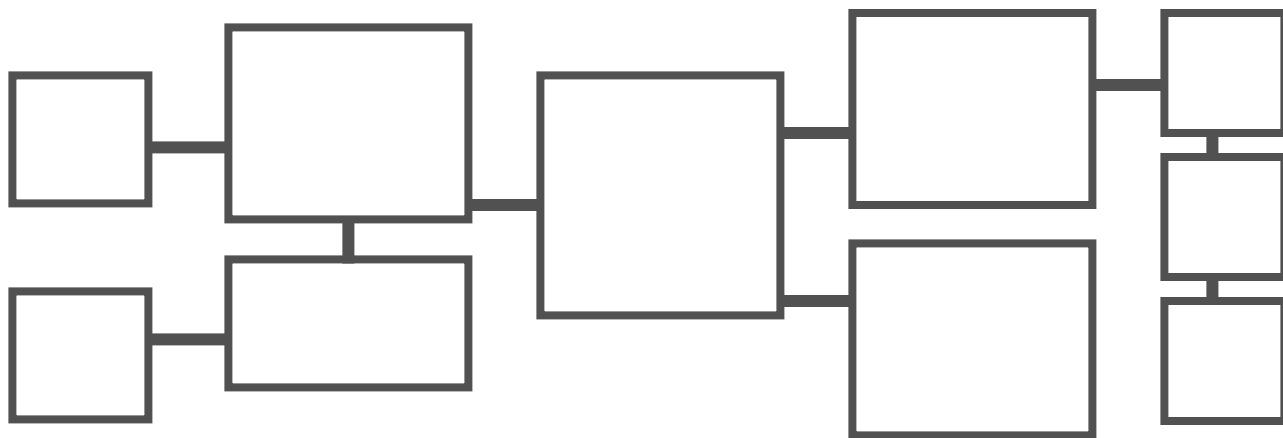
Here's where brain-based research really kicks in: *As you finish taking the notes, draw a line below your notes to write a summary. As soon as possible, take 3-5 minutes—and no more than 4-5 sentences—to write a summary of what you want to remember from these notes. Be sure to do this **before you sleep**. This will help solidify the new neural connections you want to keep. Review your summary after sleeping, within 24 hours of class, to move what you learned from short term to long term memory. When you review your notes, in most cases all you'll need to review is your summaries.*

Class Content Note-Taking Templates

Venn Diagram



Web



Linear

- I. _____
 - A. _____
 - 1. _____
 - 2. _____
 - B. _____

Productive Motions for Studying

HUG

Give yourself a hug. It's good for the brain, and might draw some attention at the library.

STRETCH

It's good for body and for focus to stretch since studying often keeps you sedentary.

BREATHE

Intentional breathing can give your brain a break, which helps you refocus, relax, and go back at it re-energized.

MOVE

Our brain is most energized when the body is in motion. Walk, do some pushups, or play with your dog.

INDULGE

Go ahead and send a text or grab a snack, but make sure this is only done during the break. When it's time to get back at it, put away the phone and turn off notifications.

TIME

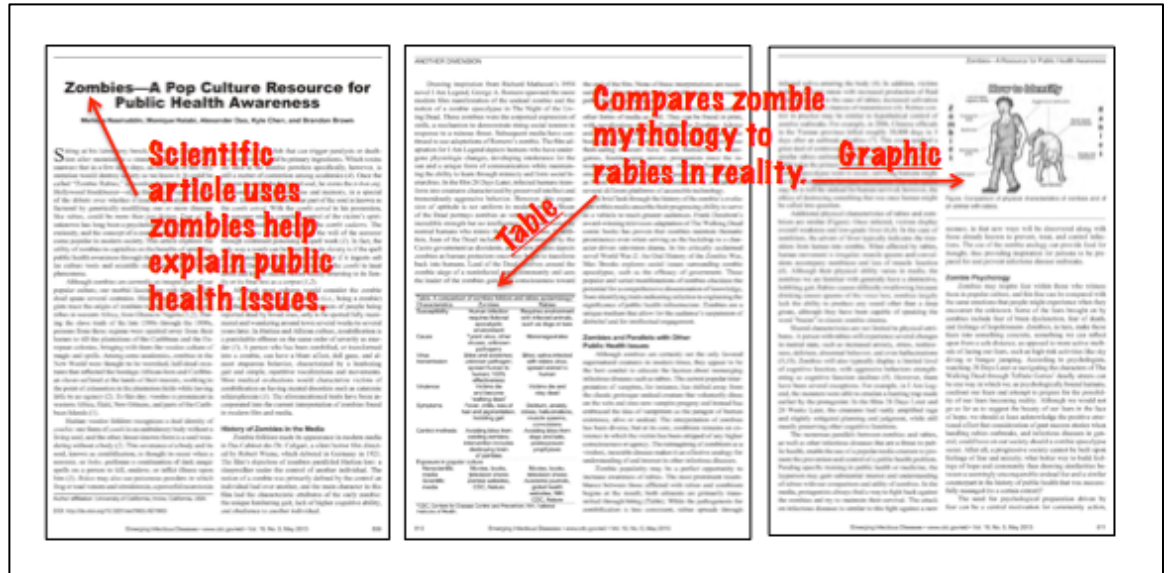
In class, use mini-lectures to ensure a change of activity every 20 minutes.
At home, take a quick stretch break work and study for 20 minutes, or work for 45 minutes and take a 15-minute break.

Strategies for College-Level Reading

Pre-Read: Understand the landscape of the text.

Scan the text to understand its structure and types of data.

Articulate the context and purpose. More than what does it say, identify why it is saying it. What is most important to the text? Why are we reading it at this point in the class?



Think about the topic at hand. What do you already know about this? What does it make you think of?

Read Critically: Be active participants rather than passive reading sponges.

Table. A comparison of zombies folklore and rabies epidemiology*		
Characteristics	Zombies	Rabies
Susceptibility	Human infection requires fictional apocalyptic environment	Requires environment with infected animals, such as dogs or bats
Cause	Tyrant virus, other viruses, unknown pathogens	Mononegavirales
Virus transmission	Bites and scratches; unknown pathogen; spread human to human; 100% effectiveness	Bites; saliva infected with rabies virus; spread animal to human
Virulence	Victims die and become "walking dead"	Victims die and stay dead
Symptoms	Fever, chills, loss of hair and pigmentation, hobbling gait	Delirium, anxiety, stress, hallucinations, muscle spasms, convulsions
Control methods	Avoiding bites from existing zombies; intervention includes destroying brain of zombies	Avoiding bites from dogs and bats; postexposure prophylaxis
Exposure in popular culture		

potential for a comprehensive dissemination of knowledge, from identifying traits indicating infection to explaining the significance of public health infrastructure. Zombies are a unique medium that allow for the audience's suspension of disbelief and for intellectual engagement.

Zombies and Parallels with Other Public Health Issues

Although zombies are certainly not the only favored supernatural creatures in modern times, they appear to be the best conduit to educate the layman about reemerging infectious diseases such as rabies. The current popular interpretation of vampires, for instance, has shifted away from the classic grotesque undead creature that voluntarily dines on the vein and sires new vampire progeny and instead has embraced the idea of vampirism as the paragon of human existence, alive or undead. The interpretation of zombies has been diverse, but at its core, zombiism remains an existence in which the victim has been stripped of any higher consciousness or agency. The reimagining of zombiism as a virulent, incurable disease makes it an effective analogy for understanding of and interest in other infectious diseases.

Use **two** highlighters, one to note key concepts; the other to note questions.

Keep a **reading journal**, or space to write reactions to the text and ideas based on the text.

Post-Read: Make sure it sticks.

- Review and reflect (pre-reading and notes)
- Summary before switching gears/before sleep
- Review within 24 hours

Strategies for Studying

L= low impact (Summarization, Highlighting, Keyword Mnemonic, Imagery for Text)

M= medium impact (Elaborative Interrogation, Self-Explanation, Interleaved Practice)

H= High Impact (Practice Testing and Distributed Practice)

Practice Testing

Create your own test questions.

Prompts

Why ...

Describe ...

Compare and Contrast ...

Outline ...

Distributed Practice

Spread out studying over several days and periods. Calendar planning helps automate this productive study habit.

DEBRIEF

Reflections and Takeaways

How did this learning experience add to/change my

- Knowledge/understanding?
- Skills (including meta-cognitive skills)?
- Behaviors, dispositions, attitudes?
- How (when and where) will I use this in the future? Next steps?

Additional Reflections

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