

# HOW TO DEVELOP BETTER CONCENTRATION WHILE STUDYING

Think of concentration as a three-step process:

## 1. LEARN THE CAUSES OF POOR CONCENTRATION AND DECIDE WHICH ONES APPLY TO YOU.

### External Causes

- a. NOISE--especially intelligible conversations and music which is interesting to you.
- b. ENVIRONMENT--look at your study place. There may be highly distracting things which invite poor concentration (TV, chairs, snacks, other people, etc.).

### Internal Causes

- a. BOREDOM.
- b. DISLIKE/ANXIETY about the subject being studied.
- c. DAYDREAMING while reading.
- d. WORRIES and personal problems.
- e. AWESOMENESS of the study task.

## 2. UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO CONTROL THESE FACTORS.

### External Controls

- a. If you find yourself paying more attention to people and music than to your books, you may want to train yourself to study away from others and in silence.
- b. Leave or re-arrange an environment with too many temptations and go elsewhere to study when you mean business. Be aware of the time of the day or night and the place that works well for you.

### Internal Controls

- a. To combat boredom and dislike, find some reasons which satisfy you for taking the course and passing it. Talk with other students and/or the instructor.
- b. One helpful way to diminish anxiety is to check your study skills and make sure you know the most efficient ways to learn the subject. Talk to SLAC counselors for other suggestions.
- c. Learn to separate clearly daydreams and reading by beginning to channel your daydreams. When your mind starts to wander, stop and recall important points you have just read. Then turn away from the book and try to continue the fantasy. When you're ready to read again, do so. The trick is not to daydream and read at the same time.
- d. When personal worries interfere a lot, do something concrete to help. (Talk with a friend, call telephone counseling, go to the Counseling Center.)
- e. A good way to deal with a study task that seems overwhelming is to break it up into small sections, read each, then stop and recall each. Finally, try devising a system of "rewards and punishments" for having or not having accomplished what you intended to do.

### **EXTRA TIPS!**

Before reading:

1. Decide whether you really intend to work. (If not, do something more constructive).
2. Decide how long you intend to study the subject.
3. Decide how much work you intend to accomplish during this time.

SET REALISTIC AND SPECIFIC GOALS FOR YOURSELF

## 3. MAKE YOUR CONTROL OF THESE FACTORS HABITUAL.

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