

Concentration

So you have set aside time to study, but can't seem to get any work done. Are you having trouble concentrating? Below are some suggestions to assist you in maintaining your focus.

- ❖ Set aside a place for study and study only!
 - Find a specific place (or places) that you can use for studying (for example, the campus library, vacant classrooms, the SRC, bedroom at home, etc.)
 - Make a place specific to studying. You are trying to build a habit of studying when you are in this place. So, don't use your study space for social conversations, writing letters, daydreaming, etc.
 - Insure that your study area has good lighting, ventilation, a comfortable chair (but not too comfortable), and a desk large enough for your materials.
 - Insure that your study area does not have the following: a television, a loud stereo, a distracting view of other activities that you want to be involved in, a telephone, a roommate/friend who wants to talk, and a refrigerator stocked with goodies.

- ❖ Divide your work into small short-range goals
 - Do not start any unfinished business before you begin studying. Most people begin to think of jobs they have not finished or unfulfilled complications before studying. This tends to lead to long distractions and complicated discussions which take time away from studying. Try to be habitual about the time you begin studying and what you do before studying.
 - Set your goal when you sit down to study, but before you begin to work.
 - Do not set vague goals. "I am going to spend all day Sunday studying!" these goals are usually too large and lead to a sense of failure and discouragement.
 - Take the time block that you have scheduled for study and set a reachable study goal. "I am going to write the rough draft of the introduction of my English paper."

- ❖ Take a break
 - If your mind wanders, stand up and move away from your books. Do not sit at your desk, looking at your book, getting angry, and grumbling about your lack of willpower. This imbues the book with negative feelings of guilt. If you must daydream, and everyone

does, change your position. The physical act of standing up helps bring your thinking back to the job.

- Relax completely before you begin to study. If you are stressed and anxious, you may not be able to get the most from your study time.
- After a period of time, thirty to forty-five minutes, take a five to ten minute break from studying. Reward yourself with a drink. This will refresh your mind and chase away any lethargy.