

Study Attack Plan

If you have a lot of material to learn in a small amount of time, the Study Attack Plan is one method to accomplish this. This is a way of becoming really productive in learning a large amount of material either in a short period of time or over a set period of time where you don't have a lot of guidance. The basic approach is fairly simple. First you start by taking the syllabus, you write out all the major topics headings that you have to understand and learn. This creates you a very simplified to-do list of what you actually need to understand in order to do well on the exam, or to consider you're learning effort a success.

Start by taking the syllabus of whatever course you're doing. The next step is to breakdown each of those syllabus items into specific concepts, and sets of facts that you need to learn. This can take a little bit of work, it can take you a few hours to go through the Study Attack Plan, but once you create a list you'll know every single concept that you need to understand, as well as, every single set of facts that you need to understand. So, if you are taking an algorithms class, you might have concepts such as red-black trees or linked lists or quick sorts. Whereas, if you're in an anatomy class, you may have factual sets, like you may need to know the names of all the bones in the foot as an example of a set of facts that you need to understand.

So once you've created this list of all the concepts and facts, then you have a to-do list. So, now you know all the concepts and facts. All the specific things that you need to know, to learn, in order to go through this set of problems. Now you need to convert this into a to-do list. So one way you can turn this into a to-do list is to create learning tasks to learn each of those items. Now you don't have to be entirely specific on this, but you need to have some form of barometer to tell yourself whether or not you've learned the particular item. So, one way you can do this is to actually specify which learning task you're going to use. So if you have particular concepts, then you can say well, for each concept I'm going to create three metaphors and I'm going to do one practice problem, just as an example. Or, for a factual set, you're going to I'm going to use the image associated vocabulary method on all of these and then I'm going to use flash cards to self-test. So, once you've created your learning tasks, now you have a to-do list.

Now make sure you're learning tasks involve two parts. One, actually understanding the idea and exploring the idea, so this means using techniques like metaphor; active reading; **[inaudible 2:26]** note taking and visualization; image association vocabulary. All the holistic techniques we've talked about in this program. You want to use those so that you can understand the idea deeply. The second part is you need to include self-testing. And this self-testing is a way of checking yourself to make sure that using those techniques was enough and was adequate for understanding the idea. So, you want to have a combination of both tasks. But, once you've created this, it should be a long list of both the concepts as well as how you're going to learn them and as well as how you're going to self-test that

you've learned them. So with those three things in mind, you've created this list of to-do items. Then you can funnel that into your weekly goals which you can funnel into your daily goals.

So let's just walk over a hypothetical example of you go through this with a class. Let's say you're learning physics and only have three weeks to learn physics. The first step would be to take the syllabus, break it down into all of the components that you have to learn over the course by the topic headings. So if you know what the title of each of the lectures were, then that is a great way of creating the topic headings.

The next step is to break those down into the specific concepts that you have to learn within the class. If you have to review over the notes and make notes of all the concepts that you're learning. Again, broad ideas, you don't need to understand all of the ideas but just get a glimpse of what you'd have to be learning. And the same thing goes with factual sets that you need to remember. Once you've created this list, then you're going to create a set of learning tasks that you're going to use to learn the material, as well as, self-testing tasks that you're going to learn to check whether or not you've actually learned the material.

So, create those lists and then create it as a big to-do list, so one big to-do list which is your Study Attack Plan. Then, if you have three weeks to do it, pick off the good first-third, or the first half of it and funnel that into your weekly goals. So, your weekly goals will be accomplished, items one through twenty-seven of your learning Attack Plan. Then, you can use your weekly goals and transfer those to your daily goals so you know what you have to learn each day. So, you know you have to accomplish learning tasks one through five for Monday, for example.

Now this approach of taking the syllabus, breaking it into concepts, breaking that into learning tasks and then finally funneling that into your weekly-daily goals, makes a very systematic approach for having to learn a lot of material in a short period of time. The best part about this, is that you're actual daily goals are not overwhelming. You're not bogged down in all the details of feeling that you have to learn everything. You've taken a very systematic approach and as long as you stick to it, and you follow the learning tasks you've established, and you follow your actual daily and weekly goals, then you should be able to accomplish it in the time period you've set.