**Vista PEAK PREP Secrets of Effective Study**

Finals week is upon us and our ability to study well is a huge skill we hope every VP student has in their toolbox.  Since grade school, most students have been taught the "right" way to study: Dedicate yourself. Memorize. Lock yourself in a quiet room and don't leave until you know the material. Recently, however, the [*New York Times*](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/07/health/views/07mind.html?pagewanted=1&ref=homepage&src=me) reported that many of these habits are scientifically unsound, and that some strategies that seem counterintuitive actually do work. Below are some of the methods the *Times* sheds light on, plus ones that teachers at VP have found to be tried and true.  (2013 The Huffington Post.com, Inc)

**Alternate study spaces**

* Don’t always study in the same place / mix up the context & who you study with.

**Study & homework groups**

* Many hands lead to lighter lifting.  If you had 20 concepts to master and you had to create study notes for each one it could take you up to 2 hours.  Invite 4 friends to group study and it would only take 30 minutes then the rest of the time can be spent on mastering and discussing the content...not just creating it.  Much learning comes from conversation and asking authentic question of one another.

**Use flashcards word attack/root study techniques**

* Just reading definition out of the book is not the most effective means in which to understand concepts.  Pulling out key concepts with associated vocabulary and placing them on flashcards of cut up pieces of paper can be a great way to test your true mastery or to quiz friends and discuss our answers.  Words can be hard, but roots of words can be a great resource.  Take the word “Ecocentrism” which comes from psychology. (see example below)

A flash card could be made like to to master this concept:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Front of flash card*****“Eco”centrism** | ***Back of flash card***Nature centered vs. Human centered (comparative thinking)**Example**: Respect and care for animals and plants for their own sake.  i.e. deforestation is bad...who cares of we need houses to live in...We need oxygen to live in a house.   |

You may say...it will take a lot of time to make these!  You are correct...the time spent in constructing them will also be an effective form of study and you will be surprised how much you learn from just creating them.  If you had 4 friends in your study group, this would really speed things up as well.  If you make your flash cards in Google you can also capture images and place them on your card as well.  Then print out the cards...cut them up...and staple them together.

**Use Cornell Notes the way they were intended**

Many student take lots of Cornell notes at VP, but never realize that they are designed to become a tool for study.  Simply fold the notes you have taken to test yourself or a friend on the content.  Revisit the answers to see you you are correct and add examples that help you to remember. Using this method you could save time in creating note cards by strategically setting up your notes for study later on.  Be sure to be organized so you do lose the notes you will need for individual & group study later.

**The Science of Effective Study**

The following video comes from a college psychologist

* Deep processing / Focus on Comprehension
* Question generation / Metacognition
* Elaboration / Explaining concepts to peers
* Attaching new knowledge to things we know well

**Getting the most out of your studying**: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9GrOxhYZdQ>

**Additional Resources**

* The internet is also a good resource you could use to study more efficiently, with sites such as [www.Cramster.com](http://www.cramster.com) or [www.MatchVenue.com](http://www.matchvenue.com) that connect you to students who are willing to share their wisdom.