

# REVIEWING COURSE MATERIAL

*Original learning must take place. You have to learn the material before you can review it.*

## **Early review is most efficient, most productive.**

*Before* you attempt to learn new material in class or through reading, glance over previous chapters or notes and run through your mind what you know already. Since memorization of new material is most effective when it is associated with material already known, this process brings all available mental "hooks" to the surface.

Immediately *after* learning:

- Rework your notes, adding material that comes to mind. Don't just recopy--this is wasteful.
- Order and organize what was learned. Use stars, arrows, additional comments, etc.
- Integrate new material with what you already know.
- Use spaced review rather than massed practice. Break-up the learning period for any one subject. Using 60 minutes of study time in 3 groups of 20 minutes each is more effective than 60 minutes used all at the same time. By using this spaced review method, one can avoid fatigue, strengthen previous learning, and improve concentration.
- Space initial early reviews to support original learning. Several brief periods spread over five to ten days is usually enough to ensure good recall for intermediate review.
- Relearning is easier if it is done quickly.
- Forgetting is most rapid after learning. Review helps combat this.

## **Intermediate review is important when work is spread out over several months or longer.**

For example, when a final is four months away, follow this schedule:

- Original learning.
- Immediate review of limited material, same day, five to ten minutes.
- Review before exam.

## **Final review is a review to draw together the final main currents of thought.**

- Be brief. Review the entire semester's work in two to four hours. Set a time limit--stick to it.
- Outline and organize from memory. Don't bother copying.
- Recite in writing or aloud to a friend or to yourself. This is not "cramming" of unlearned material. No new learning takes place.

## **Intermediate and final reviews should stress understanding and organization of materials.**

Source: Ellis, David B. *Becoming a Master Student*. Rapid City, South Dakota: College Survival, Inc., 1993.