

## Learning Before, During and After Class

**Three stage learning**, also known as the **before, during and after class** system, ensures you get the best from every class.

### Preview

When previewing, use the Learning Outcomes and course outline/timetable to help you decide what to preview. This can be done in a number of ways:

1. Skim reading the relevant chapters in your text or notes provided
  - Check the contents page and/or the index for the relevant section (See Reading Strategies handouts) .
  - Skim through the section. Look at headings and sub-headings.
  - Read the introduction and conclusion and summary if there is one.
  - Look at diagrams and read the captions.
2. Scanning through handouts. Look **at** headings and sub-headings
  - Make up questions to focus your reading using the 5WH method:  
What?            Where?            When?            Why?            Who?            How?
3. Discussing the topic with a classmate
4. Searching the internet
5. Drawing a mindmap or framework to gain an overview of the topic(s).

Remember the purpose of previewing is not to learn the material comprehensively, but to gain an understanding of a topic that will be enhanced in class.

### Listen / Take Notes

Previewing will have helped you to identify the main points in your topic. This enables you to better understand your lesson and thus take good notes. Take notes according to the lecture outline/mindmap/framework you have developed, leaving plenty of space for adding in information and details from later reading and for anything you might add when you review your notes after class (see handout Making Notes).

## Review

Without reviewing you will only remember about 10 percent of the information after one week. Each time you review you will remember the information more easily. Information is stored in your long-term memory by repetition. Reviewing and testing your recall help this.

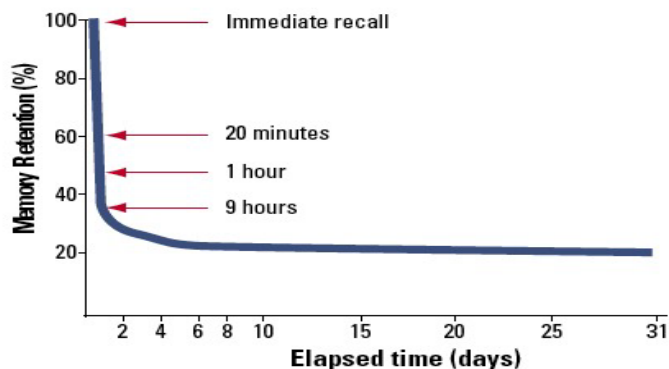


Figure 1: The forgetting curve (Stahl et al., 2010, p. 492).

Review as soon as possible and develop a review cycle.

- Within 24 hours go over your notes, while your memory of the lecture or tutorial is fresh.
- Review again after three days
- Review again at the end of each week
- Review again at the end of each topic
- Review at the end of each month.

If you review regularly your understanding and recall will improve and if you review regularly you will have less work to do before a test.

## Review Actively

How you review is just as important as how often you review. Just reading over your notes is ineffective studying, so try one of the following:

- Edit your notes. These form the basis of your learning and so you need a good set. Don't just re write them but highlight key words, add colour and diagrams, note problem areas and underline important points. Make study notes from them or a mind map. Summarise your notes and put the main points on cue cards.
- Practise problems and get feedback
- Make up some questions to answer

Identify areas that you don't understand or problems that you are having. Sort these out as soon as possible by:

- Asking another capable student
- Doing further reading
- Asking your tutor

## Reference

Stahl, S. M., Davis, R. L., Kim, D. H., Gellings Lowe, N., Carlson, R. E., Fountain, K., & Grady, M. M. (2010). Play it again: The master psychopharmacology program as an example of interval learning in bite-sized portions. *CNS Spectrums*, 15(8): 491-504. Retrieved from [http://mbldownloads.com/0810CNS\\_Stahl.pdf](http://mbldownloads.com/0810CNS_Stahl.pdf)