A decorative graphic on the right side of the page features three blue circles of varying sizes, each composed of concentric circles in different shades of blue. Thin blue lines intersect at the top left and extend towards the circles. The word "LEARN" is rendered in large, bold, blue 3D block letters, with a reflection underneath. A computer mouse is positioned to the right of the word, with its cord looping around the base of the letters.

**LEARN**

# An Instructors View on Student Success

## **Be an Active Learner**

*The key to you for a successful class will depend in most part by how good you are in listening, questioning, note taking and studying and most important, test taking. My Objective is to give students these basic skills to help the dedicated student become successful in their learning experience.*

**Dominick Saffioti**

# DOMINICK SAFFIOTI

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I wrote this book to help students become successful in their chosen course of studies. Being an Automotive instructor for almost five years teaching in the public school system, and in the private sector I find that students of all ages from 13 to 55 years old struggle the most with knowing how to take notes how to study after a lesson and how to prep for a test. I hope that this book helps many who struggle with learning.

**Dominick James Saffioti**

# Introduction

## Effort

The key to you for a successful class will depend in most part by how good you are in listening, questioning, note taking and studying and most important, test taking. My Objective is to give students these basic skills to help the dedicated student become successful in their learning experience.

People learn best when they are ready to learn! Are you ready?  
As a student you will play the biggest part in your education. If you do your part and your Instructor does his part you **will be successful**. The instructor will give information in many ways; this is to make sure that all learners in the class can understand the main concepts and ideas needed by his students. He will ask questions to check you understanding and he will encourage your participation in the lesson. Your job as a Student is to listen to your Instructors ideas and information during his lesson. Discuss these ideas and share your own thinking and views with the class and your instructor.



It is vital that no matter what level of education you bring into the course, you should always keep an open mind and try to get something new out of the lesson. There will be times that the information your instructor is given will be very basic for those students with a lesser understanding of the subject. Try not to get frustrated, or bored because the lesson in your opinion is dragging on. Instead you should raise your hand and tell the class some of your experiences in this area that will support what the instructor has just covered. Your instructor is looking for this type of interaction.

**“The more you put into your education the more you will get out of it”**

# Table of Content

Authors Note i

Introduction ii

## **LESSON 1**

Lesson preparations 1

## **LESSON 2**

Listening 3

## **LESSON 3**

Note taking 5

## **LESSON 4**

Study Habits 8

## **LESSON 5**

Test preparation 11

## **LESSON 6**

4 Test Taking Suggestions 14

## **LESSON 7**

Test Taking Suggestions 18

## Lesson 1

# Lesson preparation

## Lesson Preparation

### Before Lecture:

Pre- read all assigned material so that you can follow the lecture. This will also help with procrastination! It is more difficult to get motivated to read if you wait until after the lecture is over. Also, reading beforehand will help you take more to the point notes. This will also help you understand an Instructor who has an accent or a fast talking Instructor.



When pre-reading pay attention to the lesson objectives they are after all, what your instructor will test you on. Think about it, If you are told that after a lesson you will be able to ... “for example ... perform a task” you can rest assured that there WILL BE an evaluation test question on that objective.

Before a lesson I ask all my students to find the pages of the lesson that discuss each of the objective and write the page number next to that objective, This helps students who over study for tests or study the wrong information for the test. I have seen an immense change in my students test score when they apply this strategy.

Always Review notes from previous lectures. In the automotive field we always build up on previous lectures.

Use the learning center on line at [www.utialumni.org](http://www.utialumni.org) Take notes and bring them to class. Once in class, you can take your notes from the slide show presentation and the instructor lead discussion.

## **Lesson 2**

# **Listening**

# Listening

Listening is a skill, which must be developed. The responsibility for interest and understanding lies with you, not with the speaker. **Learning is up to the learner.**

If you can't hear, arrange things so you can. Move away from sources of noise (student or mechanical). Sit where you can see the speaker easily, and where other distractions are at a minimum. Look for the main idea or ideas of the presentation.

Maintain eye contact with the instructor and Focus on content, not how the instructor is delivering the information. Stay active by asking yourself questions. Here are some questions you can ask yourself as you listen. What key point is the Instructor making? How does this fit with what I know from previous lectures? How is this lecture organized?

**“Positive thinking gets Positive results”**

## **Lesson 3**

# **Note Taking**

# Note Taking

Having good class notes will help you to be better prepared for tests and you Instructors discussion. **Caution:** don't use the online availability of information as an excuse to skip class! You need the "full story" and the examples given in class if you are going to understand the notes well enough to answer test questions. There are many types of note taking strategies to choose from, you can go online or go to the local library to research the best way for your learning style.

## During Lecture:

- Come early and **sit in front**. You're less likely to "zone out" or fall asleep when you are closer to the Instructor.
- Bring your Course book to class it will give you another source of information being given in class. This can also help you stay focused because it gives you more to do (you can consult the text as the lecture proceeds).
- Keep your attention focused on what your teacher is saying. Do not let your fellow students take your attention away from what the instructor is saying.
- Listen for cues that tell you that what your teacher is about to say is important to write in your notes. Ask reflective questions when you're not sure of what was being discussed.

Examples of cue statements are “The most important Point...” and “Remember that . . . “Be sure to include in your notes,

Information your Instructor repeats and also has you repeat. Also note any additional things he writes on the whiteboard. Write quickly so that you can include all the important information in your notes. Do this by writing abbreviated words such as med for medicine, using symbols such as % for percent, and writing short sentences. Place a “?” Next to information whose meaning you are not sure.



- Think about how to write your notes so that when you study for an exam you will be able to quiz yourself off your notes.
- Write the date at the top.
- Use abbreviations and omit unnecessary words.
- Listen for cues, such as organizing statements “the first step” and transition words like “This can be applied to”.

- Record legibly, including both what the Instructor says and what are written on the board.
- Include examples in your notes, as these will help you both understand and remember the material. Also, The Instructor often uses the very same examples in their test questions.
- Don't rely on recording a lecture or reading someone else's notes.
- **If you miss something** because the lecture is moving too quickly or because you've "zoned out," skip a few lines and make a note that you missed something. After class, get the info from a classmate, the book, or the Instructor. (Ask instructor to slow down. Try not interrupting the class because you fell behind)
- At the end of the lecture, if not before, ask questions. Also, linger and listen in to the questions asked by other students. The Instructors answer is often extremely helpful!

### **After Lecture:**

- **As soon as possible after class, spend 10 to 20 minutes going over your notes.** Clarify, summarize, and if you used shorthand rewrite the notes out in long hand before you forget what your abbreviations and shorthand characters were. Think about the major concepts you learned. Retention improves significantly with immediate reinforcement. Put your new knowledge to work as soon as possible to help move it from your short-term memory to your long-term memory.

### **Learning Log**

One method to put the new knowledge to work is what's called a **Learning Log**. A learning log is nothing more than a log of what you learned that day. The student after a lesson writing down in a log what they have learned, what they feel was easy or hard in that days lesson and how they can apply this new information in there day to day work environment.

- Review your notes and Log frequently, both alone and with a study group.
- Compare your notes to another student's in order to pick up ideas about how to make your notes more useful to you.
- You might want to add notes from your textbook so that you will have a single source to study from when the test approaches. Use a different color of ink so that you will know what came from lecture and what came from the book.
- If you don't understand the course material, don't just re-read it. Try something else! Consult with the Instructor, a tutor, an academic advisor, a classmate, and or a study group.

## **Lesson 4**

# **Study Habits**

# Study Habits

You can prepare yourself to succeed in your studies. Try to develop and appreciate the following habits: Take responsibility for yourself. Recognize that in order to succeed you need to make decisions about your priorities, your time, and your



resources. Center yourself on your values and principles. Don't let friends and acquaintances dictate what you consider important, put first things first. When you need extra help with your studying try to get help. Ask your instructor about Tutoring, He might be able to give you the names of other students who have been successful in that class or tutor you him/her self.

Make study a habit, sit down at the same time each day to do your homework, essay writing or revision. Some basic study habits can help you be a better student, and make studying a lot less painful.

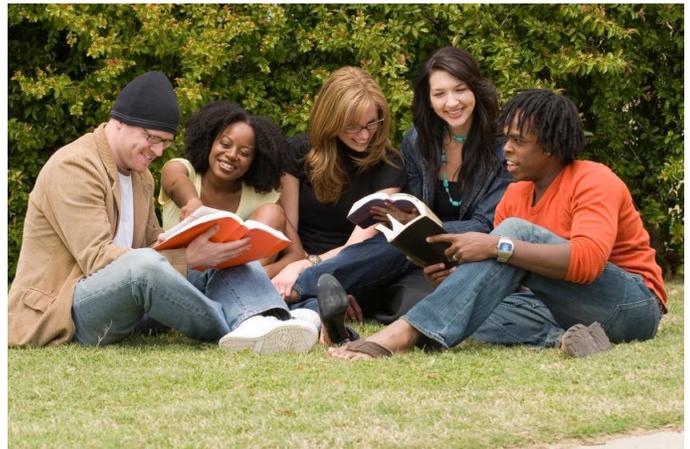
## Study environment

- It doesn't matter where you study as long as the space is quiet, comfortable and distraction-free. Wherever you choose to study, put up motivating quotes, pictures, or anything else that makes you feel good.
- Know your peak times People work best at different times of the day, and only you know when you work most efficiently. Figure out when you seem to get things done most efficiently and organize your routine around that.

For example

If you work better in the morning, get to bed early and get up before school or on the weekends. If you work better at night, try working on Friday or Saturday nights so you can sleep in the next day.

- Know your learning style. Different people also have different learning styles. Some people work well when they plan things



visually, other people get their best results from working in a group. Once you figure out your personal learning style, you can get your work done more effectively.

For example:

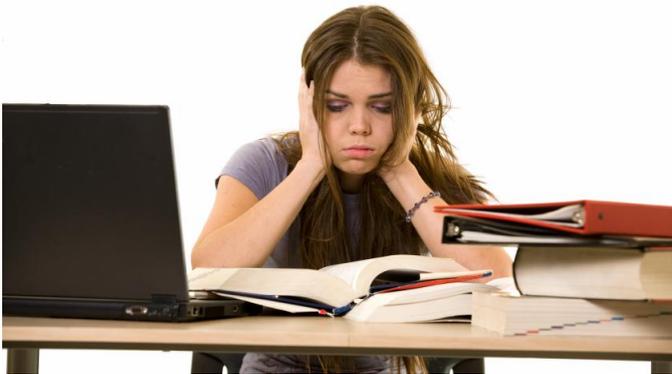
If you're a visual learner try:

Writing your notes in boxes with headings and diagrams

Taking photographs, sketching pictures or drawings to help you think through ideas using colored pens, and highlighters

## Take a break

- If you feel like you're not getting anywhere while studying, take a break and come back to your work later. You're rarely productive if you keep trying to work when you're tired or stressed.



## Be constructive

- When things go wrong, don't beat yourself up. One of the best ways to deal with a poor test score, a incorrect answer on a test or during the lesson is to use this as a learning experience find out why you got the question wrong. This maybe your last chance to get the information you did not

understand. If you're not happy with your progress in class ask your Instructor for feedback on how or what you could do to improve. Be open-minded to the instructors' comments.

***“There are NO problems in life just Challenges”***

## **Lesson 5**

# **Test Preparation**

# Test Preparation

To do well on tests you must first learn the material. You need to read over your lecture notes and ask yourself questions on the material you don't know well before the test.

Below are a few techniques to help you to better understand the material:

## Getting ready for the test

- Take good notes in your class lectures and textbooks  
See the Guides on 'Taking notes' in this document.
- Review your notes soon after class/lecture  
Review notes briefly before the next class
- Schedule  
Make time at the end of the lesson for a longer review

- Reviewing

**Study the lessons Objectives.** Your Instructor told you that this is what you should be able to do after the lesson. What you should have learned will be on the test.

- Organize  
Organize your notes, texts, and assignments  
According to what might be on the test
- Test yourself  
Test yourself on the material in the Objectives.  
**Flashcards** may be a helpful way to review in courses that have many unfamiliar terms. Review the card in random order using only those terms that you have difficulty remembering. Finish your studying the day before the exam.

## Something to think about

In order to succeed in anything we do, it is important to surround ourselves with the right people. If you want to learn how to make money, who would you hang around with? Someone who is rich or poor? If you want to learn something that is hard, who would you hang around with? Would it be the student with poor grades or the student with good grades? Now don't get me wrong I am not saying to stop being friends with someone just because they struggle in school, but also work with others that can help you be successful.

## **Lesson 6**

# **Test Taking Suggestions**

# Test Taking Suggestions

When I was young I would suffer from test anxiety, this made me very uncomfortable during testing. I would get a pounding headache my vision would blur and I would choose any answer just to get it over with. If this is you try to take a few deep breaths and to relax tense muscles. Repeat this throughout the test. This process will help you to stay relaxed and to make more energy available for remembering, thinking, and writing. Be confidence and keep a positive attitude. Avoid speaking with any fellow students who have not prepared, who express negativity, who will distract your preparation. As we all know Misery loves company.

The night before the exam I try to get a good night's sleep. Stay away from alcohol it is a depressant and also will dehydrate you. **Drink plenty of water** the human brain will give up its water when we are dehydrated this makes it harder to think and concentrate when we are dehydrated. Don't get upset over a question that you think is extremely difficult or unfair; ask a question if you can, or wait for the review to find out what the instructor was looking for.



It is always wise to read all the test instructions before answering any question on the test. Not doing this can hurt your test score. Preview the test to see how much time you need to allot for each section. If the test is all multiple-choice questions, it is good to know that immediately. Answer the questions that require the least amount of thought first, and then go back to the questions that require more thought.

## **Lesson 7**

# **Test Questions**

# Test questions

There are many types of test questions that you will encounter, some are **True / False** some will be **multiple choice**, and some will be **ASE Style**.

## Answering Strategies

- Look for the central idea of each question. What is the main point?
- Statements that begin with “**always, never, none, except, most, are**” are probably NOT the answer. **Underline** these or other key words **if you are allowed** to write on the test paper.
- Look for information that has been provided in another question that might help you to find the answer. Some times another question can give you an answer you need.
- Tech A Tech B type questions

Treat each statement as two separate true or false questions. Each tech is answering an independent question; they are not arguing. Most of these types of questions are independent questions and answer.

- Mark an answer for every question. If you skip an answer mark it so you don't put the rest of your choices in the wrong place.

- Use the process of elimination

Go thru all the choices and mark the ones you know are incorrect this will give you better odds if you have to guess.

- If you *have* to guess:
  1. The length of choices can be a clue. Choose the longest.
  2. If two choices are similar, choose neither.
  3. If two choices are opposites, choose one of them.
  4. The simplest alternative is usually the right answer.

## After the test

If the instructor reviews the exam in class, make sure you attend. This is an important because it helps reinforce the information one more time in long-term memory.

If you have done poorly, learn from your mistakes! Always analyze your tests to determine how you can improve future test results.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

There have been many experiences both positive and negative in my life that has had a major impact on me in my life. From my loving mothers relentless encouragement, my wonderful wife's encouragement and undying patience with my stubbornness. There have been many books I have read that have given me a new outlook on education along with classes I have taken and many hours of seminars and workshops I've attended over the years. Below is a list of people and resources I used in this book.

## People

James Zink MFT Orlando, FL.      Geoffrey Mohl      MFT Orlando, FL.  
Dr. David Hall      AYES

## Resources used in my research

Teaching Reading in the Content Areas 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition      Copyright © 1998 McRel

Guide to the Automobile Certification Examination

4<sup>th</sup> Edition James G. Hughes      Copyright © 1997 Prentice Hall

