

Studying Your Study Environment

How familiar is this scene, "Sweetie, have you done your homework? Yeeeee Mom, I am finishing it right now!" You peek around the corner only to find the TV on, dim lighting,, and your student plopped on the couch, eyes glazed over, half asleep, but sincerely holding on to that vocabulary list or calculator, as if trying to channel the information into their mind. If your student isn't quite old enough to realize the comfort that comes with studying this way, careful, it's probably coming. If this scene is indeed familiar to you, don't worry. It's familiar to many families all across the country. The problem is that most students are never taught the practical and necessary study skills required to succeed in studying, test taking, and retention. While there are many issues we could raise with this scene, we're going to discuss what's probably the most overlooked study skill that will help your student improve the way they study, and in turn improve the way they perform in school, setting a study environment. The most obvious problem with our student's study habits is that it, in no way-shape-or-form, mimics that of their test-taking environment. Your memory uses triggers to recall information, whether it is words, pictures or noises our minds naturally make mental associations between information intake and the environment in which it is taken. It's similar to when you hear a song that makes you remember high school, or see a painting that reminds you of a vacation you once took. You never purposely made those connections; your brain did it automatically. It's the same with studying. Many students will put forth an effort to actually make triggers in order to remember information, like using acronyms or word associations. But there are many of other connections our minds make and we don't even realize it. Studies have shown that if students could study in the exact environment that they test in, performance would rise drastically. Why? It's because our minds remember environment. Using this information, we can deduce that if in class you are sitting up straight, at a desk, with no distracting noises or voices, this is how you should study. While it is very rare to be able to study in the exact same environment you take tests in, every effort should be made to make it as close as possible. This may mean turning off the television, sitting at a table or desk instead of sitting on the couch, and even turning off the television. (Unless music is classical, which has shown to be beneficial when played softly in the background, music should be omitted too.) Improving your study environment can almost guarantee better performance. Sometimes the smallest effort to improve any aspect of studying, whether it be environment or something else, can make all the difference on test day and even contribute to remembering it long after. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of books written on study skills, promising improved performance. Chances are each and every one has something good to say, but all the books and tips in the world can't help a student that studies in front of the television eating cookies. So often all we need is that small incremental step in the right direction to drastically improve results in the end. It's much more effective to attempt small or practical study goals. Improving your study environment is a seemingly common sense improvement, but is overlooked by many parents. By making this effort you will be setting your student on a track for improved study habits that will stay with them and yield results for years to come.

About the Author

Roger Seip is a nationally known memory trainer. He has helped thousands of students across the country improve their memory as well as study habits. His new program, The Student's Winning Edge - Memory Training, teaches students how to train their memory to study more effectively and get better grades. For more information on how your student can have a more powerful memory visit <http://www.memorytrainingforstudents.com> or email info@memorytrainingforstudents.com.

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