20/10 Method of Studying?

How to stay focused during Study Sessions

Start by creating **SMART objectives** for a Study Session

- **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant & **T**ime Sensitive

Ex. Read chapter 2, paragraphs 1-8.

Within your 2 hour Study Sessions, start by planning for **20 minutes of study**, followed by **10 minutes of break** = 20/10

At the end of the 20 minutes, evaluate how you spent your time by asking:

- Am I focused? Did I understand & what I was reading / studying?
- Could I teach what I have just read / studied to someone else?

If the answer is 'yes' to one or both of these questions: you might want to consider increasing the amount of study time: maybe 25? 30? 35?

If the answer is 'no' to one or both of these questions, consider the following:

1- Assess your environment – is it distracting? Is the environment too noisy? If so, consider changing environment.
2- Are you tired? Hungry? Use the 10 minutes to have a snack and take a break.
3- Is the material you are covering too dense? Maybe the objective is too big, so break it down into smaller objectives. You may want to drop your study time down to 15? Maybe 10?

Regardless of how long you study for, you are raising awareness and this is essential! Evaluating as you go is very important. Do not leave the evaluation to your professors: you should be the one evaluating first!

In your 10 minute break, reward yourself, firstly with some positive self-talk, & then with a brisk walk, a snack, a glass of water, a cup of coffee, or another activity that you enjoy. Make sure that the activity you choose will last only 10 minutes, (emails often lead to the internet which leads to a black-hole of time!), & will allow you to continue to your next study session without being distracted.

As you implement this strategy, you will be able to be aware of the passage of time, which is a very important aspect of studying.

Sources:
Virginia Tech Division of Student Affairs, Cook Counseling Center. Time Management Strategies for Improving Academic Performance.