

# Teen study tips that pay off in school and life

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(ARA) - In the balancing act of life, teens who juggle school with activities, like social networking and sports, typically find that studying is the ball that gets dropped most often. Poor study habits extend beyond middle and high school to damage a teen's ability to succeed in college. But with parents' help, teens can break poor habits and develop a solid study routine that leads to college success.



The roots of the study problem lie in time management and organization problems, and it can begin as early as seventh grade, according to Dr. Robert Neuman, former associate dean for academic development at Marquette University. During his 25 years of working with thousands of college students, he discovered a set of key study problems that cause students to either drop out or take years longer to graduate.

"The sad truth is that most college students do not graduate on time. Only one out of three (33 percent) graduate from a 4-year degree program in four years. Nearly 40 percent take seven or more years to graduate," says Neuman. In today's economy, neither parents nor students can afford the financial drain resulting from not being prepared for the work that lies ahead.

Neuman adds that succeeding in college depends on strong learning strategies and students' self-management abilities. It's not just about being "bright." Many smart students don't graduate because they can't manage themselves: Control their time, get organized, and handle the independent study that college requires. The results are devastating.

Even students who get good grades in high school may struggle later because, instead of studying, they have honed last-minute cramming to a fine art, Neuman says. "Their test grades are often good and might get them into college, but students won't have the knowledge a professor expects. It evaporates within weeks of cramming and later takes its toll." The US now ranks 12th in the world with regard to young people with college degrees.

Neuman has written a book to help students practice the study management skills they need long before they get to college: "Are You REALLY Ready For College? A Dean's 12 Secrets for Success." He says parents should guide students as early as middle school to use simple tactics that will make all the difference in college. Here are some examples:

## Learning self-management

Do your teens know where their time goes? They need a plan, and it should include daily study time for each course as well as giving additional time to harder courses. This takes organization.

1. Always use a day-planner. Planners help teens "see" and manage what they are doing: Study, music lessons, extracurricular activities, cell phone time, TV, and team practices. If teens can't fit everything in when they write it all down, they're overbooked. Later, in college, this habit of being crunched for study time causes lots of woes and delays graduation.
2. Limit extracurriculars. Teens should participate in no more than three extracurricular activities -- they squeeze out study time. And if activities call for large time commitments, like school plays and competitive sports, one activity is probably plenty.
3. Keep track of key due dates. Kids should transfer dates for tests and major assignments to their day planner and refer to it daily so events don't creep up and catch them unprepared.
4. Use the "never-no-homework" rule. When students don't get a homework assignment, they should still use time to study the subject: re-read a chapter; copy and reorganize class notes or formulas; make charts, flashcards, and timelines to help learn the material.
5. Create a noise-free zone. Real studying occurs in quiet places without cell calls or Internet socializing creating constant interruptions. Social lives can be turned back on when study is finished.

## Be proactive in avoiding problems in college

Students must practice and strengthen these kinds of study tactics during middle and high school. Why? In college, no one will guide their behavior. That's why parental coaching is so important now.

"If your teens were inexperienced campers, you wouldn't simply drop them off in the woods and tell them you'll see them next week," Neuman says. The same is true of college.

While teachers take care of students at school, parents should coach kids at home: monitoring study time, tracking their grades, and encouraging them to seek help when needed - before they take a test.

College is full of distractions and temptations to skip studying. Teens should be well practiced in independent learning strategies as well as managing and organizing themselves before they leave for college when they're on their own. The habits they bring with them to campus are critical. Parents should start early to nurture study values. It will pay off.

According to Neuman, these few tips only scratch the surface of the problem. Neuman's book, *Are you really ready for college? A College Dean's 12 Secrets For Success - what high school students don't know offers many more ways parents can start helping their young students succeed in college -- and then enter adulthood prepared.* The book is available only online at [www.GetCollegeSmart.com](http://www.GetCollegeSmart.com), Amazon, Barnes & Noble, or other online booksellers.