Reinforcing Learning Styles at Home

Help your student utilize his learning style by encouraging him to use some of the following techniques at home. Remember that it is always better to combine modalities.

Auditory Learners

1. Use books on tape.
2. Drill information by saying it aloud.
3. Put class notes on tape and listen to them.
4. Read aloud papers to assist in fluency and editing.
5. Review reading material through discussion.
6. Create songs or rhymes to aid memory.
7. Read aloud assignments and or directions.

Visual Learners

1. Read all assignments.
2. Use color to organize and categorize information.
3. Draw pictures and maps.
4. Create charts, outlines and timelines.
5. Look at notes for review.
6. Use a computer.

Tactile Learners

1. Read assignments; write down main ideas and summarize.
2. For review make flashcards, Cornell sheets, charts, summaries, drawings.
3. Use a computer.
4. Trace over letters of words/names/foreign language phrases you need to remember. Do this in sand or shaving cream.
5. Use magnetic letters to improve spelling/vocabulary.
6. Use manipulatives of any kind.

Kinesthetic Learners

1. Rock in a chair or pace while reading or reviewing assignments.
2. Highlight or underline while reading.
3. Combine movement with any of the above suggestions.

Tips to Improve Reading Comprehension: List by Students

1. Underline or highlight main ideas *after you read the paragraph first.*

- *Don't* highlight whole paragraphs.
- Highlight only key words within the paragraph.
- You might start by highlighting topic sentences in one color and detail words in another paragraph.

2. Outline.

- Read the paragraph or section first.
- Go back and outline after reading.

3. Takes notes on the reading (again, read first; then take notes on what you read).

4. Make flash cards for vocabulary, concepts, key ideas, characters (people).

5. Use a tape recorder (i.e., summarize on a tape as you read; get a taped version of the book and listen to it – preferably while reading along in the book).

6. Read the material more than once.

7. The most important ideas; highlight *only* things you don't know.

8. Make up questions and put them in the margin or on paper.

9. Put summary notes in the margins.

10. Have a dictionary handy to look up words you do not know. (Mark words as you read; look them up later).

11. Briefly summarize after each chapter or section of the book. You might also write a sentence or phrase at the top of each page regarding the main event on the page.

12. Make a sheet of the 5 W's: who, what, where, when, why.

13. Read questions at the end of each chapter ***before*** reading the chapter to target most important points.

14. Use SQ3R – survey, question, read, recite, review. This helps you know what you will be learning about in the assignment.

15. Use the computer to do notes, summaries, onlines, and/or answers to questions.

16. Read in a quiet place (free from distractions – it may increase concentration).

17. Read when you're alert (check your learning style…).

18. Read ***a lot*** …newspapers, magazines, short stories, novels, etc. Usually, the more you read, the better your reading becomes.

19. Actually ***read Summer Reading!*** Don't look for shortcuts, such as movies or Cliff's Notes!

20. For difficult portions of an assignment, if you're an auditory learner, read the section aloud to see if your comprehension is increased.

21. Discuss what you've read with someone, as this often helps retention and understanding.

22. Try to associate new material with something you already know.

23. If you ***don't*** understand what you're reading…***stop***, reread, ask questions, write a summary, make up questions, etc. See the teacher in tutorials if you still don't understand.

24. Use the Cornell note taking method; use it later to study.

25. ***Use a form to help*** organize your reading.

26. Use context clues (hints in the passage) to help determine the meaning of new words.

27. Help keep yourself interested when reading a short story or novel by a predicting what will happen next.

28. Read a section of a textbook; then tell yourself in your own words what you just read.

29. Ask yourself questions: What is the topic I'm reading about? What are the details? What are the key words in reading?

30. Look at graphs, pictures, tables in your textbook; tell yourself about them.

31. Make a mind map (diagram) of what you're reading.

32. Draw a "picture" of what you're reading about (i.e., molecules; gov't. organization).

33. Make charts (i.e., historical sequences; investors).

34. Look in the index and/or glossary at the back of the book to help locate answers to questions.

Organization Techniques

1. Make sure you always record assignments! Have a specific place in which to write them down, such as an organizer or planner.
2. Manage your time:
    a. Use a schedule, if necessary. There are planners that break the day into time slots – get one, if you need that type of structure.
    b. If you do not have enough time to get homework done and to study each night/weekend, record what you are doing every hour for two weeks. Analyze your data to locate blocks of time where you can schedule additional study time.
    c. Make a homework planner. Put your tests and long-range assignments on it. Also, plot out reading of a novel (split it up evenly, putting down chapters of pages you need to read each day). On weekends, plan what you need to get done and list it on Sat. and Sun. Keep updating your planning as assignments/tests are scheduled. Make sure you start writing compositions ahead; allow time for rewriting. Break down long assignments into small components…plot those on your planner. As you complete something, cross it out, check it off, or highlight it. This will make you feel as if you are accomplishing something.
    d. If you are going to be sitting in an orthodontists' office, etc., take something with you to review…don't lose that valuable time!

3. When you sit down to study, make sure you have everything you need *before* you begin.
4. Plan your study time…for example, study for 50 minutes and take a 10 minute break. Then begin your next hour.

5. Other tips you might try:
    a. Attach a small plastic clip to the mirror where you shave/put on make-up/do your hair. You can put cards there to help you review.
    b. Tape notes, main points in your reading. Listen to the recording whenever possible.
    c. If you have a job, use your break time efficiently. If you have unfinished homework, start disciplining yourself to do a couple math problems or to drill on vocabulary while you grab a sandwich or snack.
    d. If you can't locate an answer in a textbook, always check you index to see if it will direct you to the pages on which you can find the answer.
    e. Set time goals for yourself…for example, in the first 15 minutes of my study time, I am going to get through 7 math examples. Some students have found that setting alarms helps this process. One student I know used to keep peanuts or M&M's in desk drawer…when he met his goals, he rewarded himself…when he didn't, he denied himself the reinforcement. If you do something like this…don't always use sweets or fatty foods!
    f. Make lists—prioritize your tasks for the day. When you do homework, it is usually suggested that you work on your more difficult assignments while you are fresh. However, I know that some students prefer getting the easy things out of the way so they don't feel like they have something left to do after they have completed a long, hard assignment.
6. Organize your notebooks regularly—at least once a week. Make sure that notes, homework, handouts, returned tests are in the appropriate places. Doing this will help you study for tests, find things when you need them.
7. When you complete homework, put it in the pocket in front of your binder so you will have it to hand in when the teacher collects it.
8. If you use your locker, clean it out at the end of the week. Put any work into your back pack and put it in the appropriate location when you get home.

9. At the end of the semester, you may want to put the material in your notebook into a folder file or into a cheaper notebook. Often, the material you work on now will come in handy later—in a future language course or even in college…this is true for English courses, math, science, and history.
10. Keep needed school implements with you so you are prepared for each class…i.e., pens, pencils, highlighters and binders.
11. If you find that you can't focus on your homework, try changing the location in which you are doing your homework. Sometimes, that gives you a fresh start. (Remember, though; don't go someplace where it's going to be noisy and distracting).

A Few Suggestions for Studying Mathematics:

1. If there are gaps in learning, a good tutor is probably the most effective remedy.
2. Remember…look at the examples given to you in class by your instructor and at the examples in you text!
3. Explaining (teaching) newly studied concepts to someone else (even to a parent) can be very effective in clarifying the process in your mind, as it helps you realize that you understand what must be done to solve the type of problem under consideration.
4. Formulating sequential steps involved in solving a problem is helpful. You write these down and check off each step until the process is internalized and stored in memory. This could also take the form of a flow chart, if visualization works best for you. Then have these steps or flow chart for easy reference as problems are worked . Gradually, the cue should no longer be necessary.

This can also take the form of a check list that you can use to check off steps as a problematic concept is worked through to a solution.

5. Keeping a record of key words associated with specific types of problems can be helpful. Using tools such as a Cornell sheet, flash cards, or tape recorder can be invaluable (i.e., write the concept "quadratic equations" on a blue index card; on the same color, you might write "standard form" on one side and an example of it on the other side; on the same color, you might continue with "function"f(x), "linear equations, "second-degree polynomials", "rules for factoring", "quadratic formula"). When you move to a new concept, you could use a different color. Sometimes, color coding helps you visualize and recall associated terms/process.
6. Sometimes, computer software is available for helping learn/ reinforcement math concepts.
7. If appropriate, drawing pictures of the problem is useful (i.e., for geometry of word problems).

8. Reviewing errors made on a quiz/test is very effective. Reworking those problems and correcting them is important to learning. Keep a record of those errors so you can work on avoiding the same ones in the future.
9. Prior to a test, doing chapter review is ***vital***, especially if you are having trouble with that particular chapter.
10. Attending tutorials is necessary if you are struggling with a specific concept.
11. Sometimes, studying with someone else (who does well in the course) is valuable.
12. If you're having trouble paying attention to details (i.e., positive and negative signs), highlighting those (or writing them in a different color) often helps.
13. Check answers whenever possible.
14. Class notes and examples in the text should be coordinated "to get a complete picture"
15. When doing homework, ***read*** the text sections that appear ***before*** the homework examples.
16. When you do not understand what is being studied in class, seeking help ASAP is important because math is such a cumulative skills based subject.

Basic Suggestions for Written Expression:

1. Be certain that you understand what the written task is before you start writing. It is important that you take responsibility for getting clarification if you do not understand an assignment.

2. You need to understand the importance of prewriting. Make notes about your topic…brainstorm your ideas. Organize your thinking based on these notes. In addition to listing (or mapping) the main points that you are going to make in your written work, make notes on the support that you will offer for each main idea presented. If appropriate, list the quotes that you're going to use, too. All of this is done before writing of the first draft commences. (One possible form to use follows this page).

3. Computers can be very helpful. Editing is so much easier! If you aren't a good typist, you might want to take a keyboarding class, as typing becomes even more important in college.

4. Developing some means for self-proofing is important; you **must** learn to do this. There are also mnemonic devices that can help you; some examples are:

   "COPS" **C**-"Have I ***capitalized*** the first word and proper nouns?
   O-"What is the ***overall*** appearance?
   P-"Have I used end ***punctuation***, commas, & semicolons correctly?
   S-"Do the words look like they are ***spelled*** right? Can I ***sound*** them out, or should I use the dictionary?

   "TREE" **T**-"Topic"
   R-"List ideas about the topic"
   E-"Examples"
   E-"Ending"

"PLEASE" **P**-"Pick a topic"

L-"List ideas about topic"

E-"Evaluate your list of ideas"

A-"Activate with a topic sentence to introduce the paragraph"

S-"Supply supporting sentences"

E-"End with a clincher sentence to summarize the paragraph and hold ideas together"

Reading the first draft, revised draft, and the final copy ***out loud*** can make such a difference! You'll pick up many errors that you might otherwise miss.

5. Some students need to ***say/dictate*** their composition first. For some very bright students, getting their ideas down in written form is so taxing that they either write as little as possible, or they forget much of what they intended to write (they have to concentrate so hard on the process of the actual writing). By dictating into a tape recorder (which takes practice to be comfortable) or by dictating to someone else, some students can produce excellent work. You might want to try this and see how it works for you.

6. Another thing that can help you--keep track of the errors you make in written expression. Make sure you understand why these are mistakes and how to correct them. Focus on eliminating these a few at a time; when you write a composition, check your list of previous mistakes—make sure you haven't repeated them in the current composition.

Helping Memory:

1. When you are learning something new, ask yourself, “what things that I already know does this remind me of? (Connecting new material to something you already know makes it easier to learn the new concept).
2. Use “tools” that work for you. Some of these might include:
    - Pictures
    - Charts
    - Flash cards
    - Cornell sheets
    - Do mapping/webbing (organizes information in a visual picture)
    - Mnemonics
    - Rhymes
    - Associations (i.e., “loquacious Anne”, a talkative friend)
    - Summarizing and/or paraphrasing (putting it in your own words) material
    - Using a tape recorder
    - Putting notes in books and reviewing those
    - Write/practice on the board (or on paper)
    - Review material
    - Organize information by categories to help you remember it
    - Correct mistakes on tests/quizzes
    - Review things you’re having trouble remembering just before you go to bed; look at it/say it right away the next morning
    - Review class notes/reading within 24 hours (most forgetting occurs within the first 24 hours after you’ve seen new material); then go over it regularly
    - Do something active with material you’re reading (i.e., answer questions after or while reading it, highlight, take notes, summarize, put notes on each page or in the margins)
    - Use visualization (i.e., close your eyes and picture a room; in different places in that room, put facts you need to learn; or as you recite material for review, picture yourself standing in the classroom saying your answers to the teacher)

- Write questions in the margins of your book; look at them often and answer them
- Try strategies such as SQ3R (survey, question, read, recite, review)
- Use the 5 W's: who, what, where, when, why to review material
- Use colors to help recall and visualize material

3. To get information into long-term memory:
    a) You must understand the fact-you must be able to explain it in your own words. If you can do that, you've "got" the concept.
    b) Analyze the fact: look at it from every side; think of all implications; consider all approaches to the problem.
    c) Have the right mental attitude- if you intend to learn, your chances of doing so improve greatly!

    *Pay attention.

    *If you have questions about something covered in class, ask the teacher…if you learn something correctly the first time, you don't have to relearn it!

    *See if you can put the information in your own words by explaining it to someone else.

    d) Remember: you will remember the 1st and last time items on a list you're memorizing… so spend more time on those middle items!
    e) Recitation-saying material out loud works ***very*** well for transferring information from your short-term into your long-term memory. (You can read some information; stop; say it out loud in your own words)

    *You're getting another modality involved-this ***always*** improves memory.

    *This forces you to maintain focus.

4. It is believed by psychologists that the neural traces in your brain need some time (from 4 seconds to around 15 minutes) to consolidate information received. This is why reviewing your notes after class consolidates the information and strengthens the neural traces.

5. Distributed practice- these are short study periods broken by rest intervals. This works for many students because:
    a) You don't get as tired.
    b) It's easier to keep yourself motivated.
    c) It helps decrease the boredom in subjects that aren't as interesting to you.
    d) Research shows that this improves both long-term and short-term memory.
    e) Massed practice (not using distributed practice) is often better for things like writing a paper or some other creative project.

6. Visualization- try to "practice" what you're reading about; this can apply to facts, too (i.e., one student had to remember Abraham Lincoln was born in 1809…he pictured a log cabin with 1809 over the door).

7. Association-make a reasonable association when you have you have a fact to remember (as in the "loquacious" example in the list given).

8. Use mnemonics-memory tricks. Some examples include:
    a) To remember the components of free enterprise:
        I. Private property
        II. Choice
        III. Voluntary exchange
        IV. Competition
        V. Incentives

    You might use the first letter of each word/phrase above: p,c,v,c,i. Make up a silly sentence that you will remember

(using these letters for the beginning of each word in your sentence): **P**eter **c**aught **V**icki **c**hunking **i**ce.

b) You can also use the letters in a word to help you remember something. For example, the word **FORCE** can give you the stops for preparing for a test:

F= *find* out (what will be covered on the test)

O= *organize* (collect materials needed to prepare for the test)

R= *review* (general review…skim chapters, charts, maps, summaries, questions, vocabulary, highlight, notes, review old tests & assignments)

C= *concentrate* (make study sheet)

E= *early exam* (practice by presenting)

c) **PLEASE**= prewriting process

P= *pick* a topic

L = *list* ideas about the topic

E = *evaluate* your list of ideas

A = *activate* with a topic sentence to introduce each paragraph

S = *supply* supporting sentences

E = *end* with picking a clincher sentence (for your opening)

d) **SCORER** = strategy for taking objective test

S = *schedule* time (spend more time on difficult questions)

C = *clue* words (look for "tip-off" words such as all, always, none, never, usually, sometimes)…you might want to underline/highlight those.

O = *omit* harder questions on your first pass-put a light check next to the numbers of those so you can review the skipped numbers later

R = *read* your answers. **Use your test!!** There may be other test items that will help you answer questions

you skipped or that will give you extra information to put in your essay.

E = ***estimate*** answers… if calculations are necessary.

R = ***review*** work. As time allows, go over the questions…don't be too eager to change answers… have a good reason for changing any answers.

Theories about Forgetting:

1. *Fading theory:* "If you don't use it, you'll lose it". (Like a path in the woods!)

2. *Retrieval Theory*- There is so much information in your mind, you can't find, or retrieve, a specific fact.

3. *Interference Theory*- This one consists of 2 parts: What you've learned in the past makes learning something new more difficult to "keep"; the new material that you learn causes you to learn some of what you learned in the past. (In each case, there is interference).

4. *Interactive Interference Theory*- When you learn three facts at different times, you tend to forget the middle one the fastest; this information is being affected by your newest AND your oldest learning.

   Example: **oldest:** Pike's Peak gold rush took place in 1852.
   middle: California gold rush (Sutter's Mill took place in 1849.
   newest: Klondike gold rush took place in 1897.

5. *Reactive Interference Theory*- You dislike a subject, or react negatively to it; this makes it harder to remember the material in that subject…you need to work harder at it!
6. *Motivation Theory*- If you want to forget something, you usually will. (i.e., people you dislike).