

# **Faculty of Community Services**

## **Academic Support & Resource Centre**

### **Make the Most of Study Sessions**

*Using your study time effectively begins with preparing a written weekly study schedule and setting SMARTR goals (Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic, Timed, and Rewarded). The following are additional strategies for using your study time as efficiently as possible:*

- Work on your most difficult subjects during your peak energy times when your mind is fresh.
- In a long study session, try to vary tasks. For example, if you have been doing something verbal or conceptual for a while, switch to a different type of thinking such as working with numbers.
- If you have no choice about working on one task for a long period of time, begin by doing the hardest part, while you're still awake and focussed. Save easier or more mechanical parts of the task until later. For instance, if you're working on an essay, start by writing the draft. Later, work on something that requires less mental effort, such as compiling your Reference List.
- If the professor asks you to complete assigned readings before class, try to schedule the reading close to that specific class, such as the night before.
- Schedule time for reviewing notes as soon as possible after a lecture, preferably within 24 hours.
- In a long study session, build in time for short breaks. Get a feel for how long you can work before you need a break. You may need to work for shorter periods when you are doing something that requires a high level of concentration. When you take a break, do something that has a definite end. Don't try to fool yourself into thinking that you will watch television or surf the Internet for a few minutes; it is too easy to lose track of time this way. Instead, try to do something physical, such as taking a short walk around the block or doing stretching exercises. As well, don't do something during a break that uses the same part of your brain as when you were studying; for example, don't read a newspaper as a break from reading a textbook.
- If you have difficulty staying committed to your schedule, promise yourself a reward if you stick it out until the end. Don't cave in and give yourself the reward if you don't finish the work!