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# Who I Am

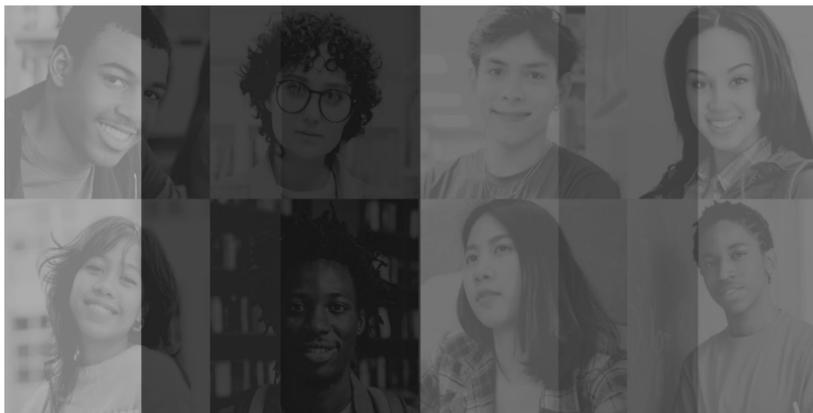
MYCHAL WYNN

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WITH STUDENT CONTRIBUTORS

**Volume III**

***My Time Management & Study Skills Plan***



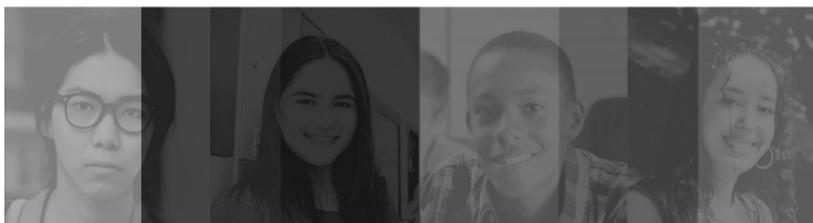
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# Who I Am

MYCHAL WYNN

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WITH STUDENT CONTRIBUTORS



**Volume III**

*My Time Management & Study Skills Plan*

# **Who I Am - Volume III**

## ***My Time Management & Study Skills Plan***

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# Table of Contents

Student Contributors .....	vii
Foreword - Andrew McGee, Ed.S. ....	ix
From the Author .....	xi
How to Use This Book .....	xiii
<i>The Socratic Method</i> .....	xv
Chapter 1: Why I Am Here .....	1
Chapter 2: My Time Management Plan.....	13
<i>Sample Weekday Schedule</i> .....	15
<i>Jocelyne's Résumé</i> .....	16
<i>Time Spent on Each Activity Table</i> .....	36
<i>Williams College Award Letter</i> .....	40
<i>Daily Activity Commitment Table</i> .....	42
<i>Daily Class Commitment Table</i> .....	43
<i>The Importance of Having a Plan</i> .....	47
Chapter 3: My Study Approach.....	49
<i>Illustration: Decision-making Stairs</i> .....	65
<i>Nishan's Résumé</i> .....	71
Final Chapter: My Study Skills Plan.....	73
<i>High Value-Low Value Table</i> .....	78
References.....	102
Index .....	106
Other Books .....	110

# Student Contributors

We are appreciative of the contributions of current and former students participating in our national college planning program. Our contributors attend school in California, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina and exemplify our belief that the strategies presented in our on-line curriculum and set forth in this book can be embraced and applied by any student.

## **Middle School** —

Morgan - 6th Grade

Teni - 6th Grade

Aliyah - 7th Grade

Piers - 7th Grade

Griffin - 8th Grade

Layla - 8th Grade

Naomi - 8th Grade

## **High School**

Jocelyne - 9th Grade

Anna - 10th Grade

Nishan - 10th Grade

Angel - 11th Grade

Jayla - 11th Grade

Omar - 11th Grade

Tuyen - 11th Grade

## **Illustrator**

Jocelyne - 10th Grade

## Foreword - Andrew McGee, Ed.S.

I am honored to write this foreword, for my colleague and friend Mychal Wynn, who has delegated his career to serving underprivileged children and marginalized communities. Our professional beliefs consist of leveling the playing ground for all children to rise above the challenges. I believe the *Who I Am* series of books provides an opportunity for teachers to be enriched and strengthened by the strategies presented in this, and each book in the series. However, the real winners are students for whom Mr. Wynn, as a child of poverty, has gained unique insight. In this book, Mr. Wynn is advocating for students to, in his own words, “Own the Process.” The strategies set forth are commonsense, doable, and guide students along the pathway to owning their educational outcomes and placing themselves onto their desired career trajectories.

After reviewing, participating, and engaging in the discussions on how the work he is doing is helping to excite the work of teachers and motivate students, Mychal Wynn has supported the work of enriching lives by giving hope to students attending any school, but especially students attending Title I schools. As a child of poverty, Mr. Wynn believes that any student is entitled to dream and to receive the guidance for pursuing their dreams.

As a former Director of Federal Programs for 27 years, and Deputy Superintendent of Turnaround Schools, I have first-hand experience with the unique challenges facing school districts who serve challenging populations. However, as a child of poverty, Mr. Wynn writes from a unique perspective—one of empowerment. He is a walking,

Andrew McGee Ed.S.

talking, and living manifestation of the potential of all children, no matter where they live or where they attend school. While campuses are challenged with increasing student achievement and effectively serving students who are disadvantaged, marginalized and underserved across racial and socioeconomic backgrounds, Mr. Wynn has not only provided the tools to inspire, but is working day-by-day in the trenches inspiring students and opening pathways into some of the country's most selective colleges and universities, on the strength of full scholarships, and without the lifelong burden of student loan debt. I have attended national and state conferences, where I listened with appreciation and attentiveness as Mychal Wynn defined his mission and vision to involve schools, students, parents, teachers, and communities to embrace a shared capacity building vision for our children.

It is inspiring to see *Who I Am* going wide. The informational discussion helps teachers and students alike get better at becoming the person they wish to be. Wynn's powerful strategies and research base is intended to support best practices for all students. This book provides valuable lessons on information assurance and covers the necessary strategies. *Who I Am* is a critical topic to your personality, temperament, intelligence, mindset, and grit providing insight to who you are.

Andrew McGee, Ed.S.

Deputy Superintendent

Turn Around Schools

Author of *A Champion Within:*

*4 Essential Principles, A Guide for Male Students of Color*

## From the Author

I was born into poverty in rural Pike County Alabama and given up for adoption before my first birthday. I was put on a segregated bus from Montgomery, Alabama to Sharon, Pennsylvania where I was adopted by another poor family from Chicago, Illinois. I was an awful student in Chicago Public Schools. At my second grade parent-teacher conference, my teacher told my mother that she doubted if I would make it beyond elementary school. I had a speech impediment and stammered, also commonly referred to as stuttering. I was routinely suspended from school in elementary school and middle school and I was expelled from high school in the 10th grade; and yet, here I am.

As the first person in my family to graduate from high school, I had no doubt in my mind that I was going to college so as a high school senior, I applied to Northeastern University. I did not apply to only one college because I was confident that I would get in, but because I did not know that it would have been advisable to apply to more than one college. In fact, I did not get in, sort of. I received a “*conditional acceptance*.” My acceptance was conditional on my passing classes in physics and calculus—classes not offered in my high school—so I enrolled into community college for one semester. I passed physics with an *A*; I passed calculus with a *B*; and then I boarded my first airplane and I was off to Northeastern University in Boston where I would graduate 4 years later with a degree in business and computer information systems.

Since graduating from college (*cum laude*) as my family's first college graduate, I have been an educator, researcher, and entrepreneur for nearly 50 years. Over this period of time, I had written 28 books before redirecting my attention to developing the curriculum for our on-line college planning program. Consequently, for several years I had been unable to find time to return to writing until I was inspired by the students with whom we are working to put pen to paper, or in this case, the computer, once again. Our on-line college planning curriculum places life after high school within the context of what a student should be doing today as an elementary, middle, or high school student.

Recognizing that despite the advances in technology with computers and cell phones, many students continue to learn best with paper and pencil. Rather than struggling to find a reliable Internet connection, many students still prefer to hold a book in their hands. So my return to writing begins with the *Who I Am* series of books in which I have invited some of my students to contribute their responses and share their essays. Each book in the series provides examples of how middle school and high school students have approached each topic. When I published my first book, "*Don't Quit - Inspirational Poetry*" in 1988, I had a goal of writing 50 books. Well, despite a long layoff, with the publishing of this book, I am now over 30 books and excited about writing once again.

Mychal Wynn

Author

CEO/Founder

The Foundation for Ensuring Access and Equity

## How To Use This Book

This book is part of the *Who I Am* series. Each book in the series presents strategies and introduces topics that are research-based (what researchers have presented or theorized) and research-responsive (how students have used or responded to the research). While reviewing the research of the authors of “*Make it Stick: The Science of Successful Learning*,” I found the following statement to be particularly relevant and reaffirming:

*The popular notion that you learn better when you receive instruction in a form consistent with your preferred ‘learning style,’ for example as an auditory or visual learner, is not supported by the empirical research. People do have multiple forms of intelligence to bring to bear on learning, and you learn better when you ‘go wide,’ drawing on all of your aptitudes and resourcefulness, than when you limit instruction or experience to the style you find most amenable. [p. 4]*

The information being presented through the *Who I Am* series is “going wide.” Your personality, temperament, intelligences, mindset, and grit provide insight into who you are. Your goals and aspirations for the future provide insight into the type of person you want to be, things that you want to accomplish, and impact that you want to have in your family, community, or in the world. Developing strategies to better learn, avoid or resolve conflicts, and create spaces that are mentally and emotionally healthy, is “going wide.”

*Chapter 1: Why Are You Here?* is repeated in each book in the series as a reflection point—what is your purpose for learning? Most chapters open with *Guiding Questions*

reflecting two high value learning strategies, referred to as *Assessing Prior Knowledge* and *Pre-thinking*. Your responses to the questions will reflect prior knowledge of the topics being presented and stimulate thinking as to what you think you will learn. Chapters typically end with the affirmative statement, “What has become clearer to me.” While *Summarization* is typically considered to be a low value learning strategy, we have evidence that when students “go wide” by using their multiple intelligences to engage in thoughtful self-reflective narrative writing, summarization can be a high value learning strategy.

The *End of Chapter Discussion* is designed to engage you, and others, in the metacognitive process, supported by high value learning strategies, which can be further supported by the Socratic method (see following page), as used in our small group discussions.

*Metacognition is, put simply, thinking about one’s thinking. More precisely, it refers to the processes used to plan, monitor, and assess one’s understanding and performance. Metacognition includes a critical awareness of a) one’s thinking and learning and b) oneself as a thinker and learner (Chick 2023).*

These evidence-based approaches are essential to guiding discussions; deepening learning; and developing critical thinking skills. They have proven effective for students participating in our college planning program as evidenced by their pensive, thoughtful, and self-reflective writing shared across this series of books. I am confident that collectively, these books will help you increase your K — 12 success and expand your opportunities after high school.

## **The Socratic Method**

The Socratic method is named after the Greek philosopher Socrates who taught students through persistent questioning. The principle underlying the Socratic method is that students learn through the use of critical thinking, reasoning, and logic. It focuses on providing more questions than answers as a means of fostering further inquiry and inspiring further analysis and research.

This book supports the Socratic method used in our college planning program, where students participate in discussion groups facilitated by discussion group leaders and college interns. Students present what they have learned and how they are going to apply what they have learned in discussions where their thoughts and ideas are shared, challenged, and debated.

In this regard, as you are introduced to such topics as learning styles, personality types, temperament, grit, and mindset, you are not told what to do, but rather encouraged to engage in further inquiry, set goals, and develop strategies.

We believe that this approach will not only support your personal use of this book, but guide your conversations with parents, teachers, counselors, coaches, mentors, siblings, and classmates.

## **This chapter will...**

- Open each book in the series and serve as a reminder of why being vested in your own learning is essential to understanding the ideas and utilizing the strategies being presented in the *Who I Am* series
- Provide examples of how other students are using their aspirations for the future as motivation for maximizing their success in school today
- Provide insight into the type of students that colleges and scholarship programs are looking for

## **Guiding Questions**

- What is your purpose for reading this book?
- How do you think high school students who are planning to go to college after high school would answer the question, “Why am I here?”
- How do you think middle school students who are planning to go to college after high school would answer the question, “Why am I here?”

# Chapter 1



## Why I Am Here

The first question we ask students participating in our college planning and summer enrichment programs is, “*Why are you here?*” Within the context of this book, the question is, “*Why are you reading this book?*” Answering the question, why you are doing something, provides insight into whether your motivations are intrinsic or extrinsic. For example, if your response to the question is, “*I am being forced to read this book.*” Being *forced* to do something can result in apathy, low motivation, or even resistance. Apathy can result in your reading the book, but not paying attention to details or giving much thought to some of the larger concepts. Low motivation can result in reading and proceeding through the

# End of Chapter Discussion

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## Why I Am Here

**Student Responses?** Which student's response to the question, "Why are you here?" most resonated with you and why?

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**Student Responses?** Did any of the student responses reflect a shared aspiration? If so, which response and what aspirations do you share with the student?

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## **This chapter will...**

- Provide guidance in developing and assessing the effectiveness of a daily schedule and consistent routines
- Provide insight into the connections between consistent routines and positive mental health
- Provide an example of a 24-hour schedule and associated routines

## **Guiding Questions**

- Do you have a planned daily schedule and consistent routines? If so, did you develop them on your own or with guidance from a parent, teacher, or counselor?
- What is the value of having a planned daily schedule and consistent routines?
- Will your personality, temperament, and mindset allow you to follow a daily schedule and consistent routines?
- Can having a planned daily schedule and consistent routines have a positive impact on your mental health and overall level of stress?

# Chapter 2



## My Time Management Plan

**T**he reasons for developing a time management plan is not the same for every student. School can be stressful for even the most academically accomplished students, top athletes, students who are extraordinarily gifted, and those who are just ordinary everyday students trying to do their best so that they can be promoted to the next grade. What type of student are you? What type of student do you want to become? What type of goals are you pursuing? Whatever your answers to each of these questions, your time management plan should follow. *Volume I* of the *Who I Am* series provides guidance in developing a learning style plan while *Volume II* provides

insight into personality, temperament, mindset, and grit.

Jocelyne is a high school sophomore in a rigorous academic program who is the principal illustrator for the *Who I Am* series. I am so impressed with Jocelyne's character, leadership, and sense of service that I invited her to write the *Foreword* for *Who I Am: Volume IV - My Goals*. In the *Foreword* she provides insight into how she would respond to the question, "What type of goals are you pursuing?"

*I began to sense a promising future for myself through the program. That jump started my entire college planning process. I was quite ambitious before the program and I had high-reaching aspirations, but I lacked knowledge on how to actually achieve my aspirations—a gap in my knowledge that the College Planning Cohort so graciously filled. (p. ix)*

Jocelyne, who joined our program in the 6th grade, has been intentional in building her résumé and developing a body of work that will provide a pathway into a top college and a full scholarship. This means that to minimize the stress of being involved in multiple activities, dealing with the academic rigor of being in an IB Program, and maintaining her mental health as she navigates the many stressors of life as a teenager, she has developed a daily schedule aligned with her response to the question, "What type of student do you want to become?"

On the following page is the weekday schedule that allows her to manage school and the many activities reflected on her résumé (page 16). Developing and following this type of schedule requires sacrifice. Her daily schedule is focused and there is little time for distractions. While she makes posts

to social media, there is little time to spend hours browsing social media or being distracted in a manner that interferes with her studies or with the ambitious goals that she has set for herself. In a similar manner, you must develop a daily schedule that works for you and supports your current goals and future aspirations.

### **Weekday Schedule**

6:30 am	Wake up
6:45 am	Wash-Up and Get Dressed
6:50 am	Eat Breakfast
7:05 am	Leave for School
7:20 am	Arrive at School
7:25 am	Begin Morning Classes
11:45 am	Lunch - Club Meetings
12:10 pm	Begin Afternoon Classes
1:55 pm	School Ends
2:00 pm	Pitchforks (a cappella group) Practice
3:00 pm	Theater Rehearsal
5:30 pm	Leave for Home
6:00 pm	Shower
6:30 pm	Dinner
7:00 pm	Homework and Extracurricular Work
12:00 am	Go to Bed

A successful time management plan must take into account your learning style and be responsive to your personality and temperament. Developing a successful time management plan and study skills plan will require a deep understanding of who you are, your motivations, and your stressors. Even the best time management and study skills plan will have little value if you do not implement the plans.

## Step #1 - Create A Daily Schedule

On the following page, write down each activity and the time that you begin the activity. Following is a sample daily schedule:

- 6:00 am Wake up
- 6:15 am Wash-up and get dressed
- 6:45 am Eat Breakfast
- 7:30 am Go to the school bus stop
- 7:35 am Take the school bus to school
- 8:00 am Arrive at school
- 8:30 am Begin morning classes
- 11:00 am Lunch
- 11:45 am Begin afternoon classes
- 3:30 pm School ends
- 3:45 pm Go to practice (band, football, track, etc.)
- 6:15 pm Practice ends
- 6:45 pm Take school bus home
- 7:15 pm Arrive home
- 7:40 pm Shower
- 8:00 pm Dinner
- 8:30 pm Homework
- 11:00 pm Go to bed

### Time spent on each class/activity

- Math: \_\_\_\_\_
- Science: \_\_\_\_\_
- English/Language Arts: \_\_\_\_\_
- Social Studies: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other:\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- Other:\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- Other:\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- Other:\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- Activity #1: \_\_\_\_\_
- Activity #2: \_\_\_\_\_
- Activity #3: \_\_\_\_\_
- Activity #4: \_\_\_\_\_
- Activity #5: \_\_\_\_\_
- Activity #6: \_\_\_\_\_
- Activity #7: \_\_\_\_\_

Daily time committed to school work and activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Daily time committed to health and wellness: \_\_\_\_\_

Daily time on telephone or social media: \_\_\_\_\_

Daily time on sleeping or napping: \_\_\_\_\_

**Total daily time (cannot exceed 24 hours): \_\_\_\_\_**

## **This chapter will...**

- Provide guidance in incorporating your learning style preferences into your study skills plan
- Explain how incorporating your senses into your study skills plan can increase memory retention
- Provide insight into the impact of personality, temperament, mindset, and grit in developing effective study strategies

## **Guiding Questions**

- What are the 3 distinct times in which learning occurs?
- Which of the following should be considered in developing your approach to studying: learning style preferences; personality; temperament; mindset; or grit?
- What are the 5 senses and what is their impact on memory retention?

# Chapter 3



## My Study Approach

**D**eveloping a study skills plan will be strongly connected to, but expand upon, the learning style plan that you developed in *Who I Am: Volume I - My Learning Style Plan*. While your study strategies should reflect research-based strategies for improving your ability to absorb, retrieve, and apply information, the strategies should also take into account the situations and circumstances through which you best learn, i.e., the learning style preferences reflected in your learning style plan. For example, if you identified that you need to move around and snack frequently, sitting still without snacks would not be an effective study skills plan, no matter how long you studied. Similarly, if you are able to

move around and snack in a noisy environment, when you need a quiet environment to concentrate, you will experience difficulty, despite having the ability to move around and snack. I believe that developing a successful “*Study Skills Plan*” could also be stated as developing a successful “*Life Plan*.” While school is an important part of your life, there are so many other aspects of your life in which you are likely to aspire to be successful, such as cooking a meal, driving a car, introducing yourself to someone, learning a skill, or creating music or art. Consequently, learning how to effectively approach learning can result in success in many areas of your life beyond school. A successful study skills plan must reflect your learning style; your personality type; your temperament; your grit; and even your mindset. Your plan must also account for your daily schedule as identified in the previous chapter. So the success of whatever plan you develop must be your plan and one to which you are willing to commit to doing what you identify that you must do.

Successful learning occurs at 3 distinct times:

- **In The Moment:** This is when a teacher is teaching, a coach is speaking, or someone is giving you instructions.
- **In Your Time:** This is when you are studying, reviewing notes, experimenting, or creating something.
- **In Preparation for an Event:** This is when you are preparing for a performance, test, game, competition, or presentation.

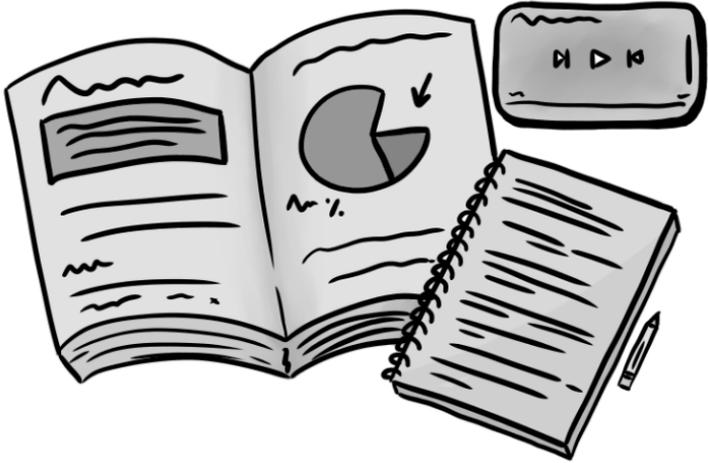
## **This chapter will...**

- Provide insight into the differences between high value and low value learning approaches
- Provide insight into the difference between pursuing “performance goals” and “learning goals” and the impact on your future SAT or ACT scores
- Introduce the 3 primary components of learning—encoding, retention, and retrieval

## **Guiding Questions**

- What is the difference between learning “input” and learning “output?”
- What is the difference between encoding, retention, and retrieval as they pertain to learning?
- How would you organize the following 3 study strategies in order of highest value to lowest value: Rereading; Self-explanation; and Self-testing?
- Which of the following are considered high value study approaches: Varied Practice; Spaced Practice; or Distributive Practice?

# Final Chapter



## My Study Skills Plan

The real test of if you have developed an effective time management plan and study skills plan is if you can consistently follow each plan. It is unlikely that your first plan will work perfectly. It is more likely that you will need to engage in a daily assessment for as long as it takes to shape your plan into the right plan. The cornerstones of a successful plan will be your learning style, personality, temperament, and mindset. Your personality and temperament will determine how closely you follow your time management plan. Your learning style preferences will determine if you have developed a study skills plan that reflects your learning style preferences and temperament.

## **The Impact of Goals on Learning**

When evaluating the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of any strategy, you must do so within the context of your goals. If your goal is to “pass” rather than to “excel,” low value strategies may allow you to pass. The same would apply if your goal was to earn a final grade in a class of C as opposed to earning a final grade of an A. If your goals are performance oriented—focused on earning a particular grade; versus learning oriented—focused on learning and expanding your knowledge and skills.

Now that you are nearing the end of this book, you need to return to the beginning to fully understand the impact of what you have learned thus far and your response to the big question raised in the first chapter, “Why are you here?” or “Why are you reading this book?” You answer this question consciously or unconsciously in every class that you take and activity in which you participate. Not only will your personality, temperament, and mindset influence how you respond to the question, your grit will influence how intentionally you pursue strategies to reach the highest levels of learning.

In essence, no matter how comprehensive the information being presented is, or how effective or ineffective certain study approaches are, you are in control of your own success. The strategies provided will only support you in the journey to achieve the level of success that you are pursuing.

## My Study Skills Plan

Some researchers refer to retention as consolidation—the process of reorganizing and stabilizing memory, providing meaning, context, and connections to past experiences and other knowledge stored in our memories. Choose the strategies that result in the greatest encoding, retrieval, and retention.

The table presented below shows the value of different learning techniques and study approaches. Whatever study approaches you choose, you must continuously ask yourself the question, “Is this approach working?”

### High Value - Moderate Value - Low Value Learning Strategies

Technique	Utility	Learners	Materials	Criterion tasks	Issues for implementation	Educational contexts
Elaborative interrogation	Moderate	P-I	P	I	P	I
Self-explanation	Moderate	P-I	P	P-I	Q	I
Summarization	Low	Q	P-I	Q	Q	I
Highlighting	Low	Q	Q	N	P	N
The keyword mnemonic	Low	Q	Q	Q-I	Q	Q-I
Imagery use for text learning	Low	Q	Q	Q-I	P	I
Rereading	Low	I	P	Q-I	P	I
Practice testing	High	P-I	P	P	P	P
Distributed practice	High	P-I	P	P-I	P	P-I
Interleaved practice	Moderate	I	Q	P-I	P	P-I

Note: A positive (P) rating indicates that available evidence demonstrates efficacy of a learning technique with respect to a given variable or issue. A negative (N) rating indicates that a technique is largely ineffective for a given variable. A qualified (Q) rating indicates that the technique yielded positive effects under some conditions (or in some groups) but not others. An insufficient (I) rating indicates that there is insufficient evidence to support a definitive assessment for one or more factors for a given variable or issue.

Source: *Improving Students' Learning With Effective Learning Techniques: Promising Directions From Cognitive and Educational Psychology*

## Learning Strategies

Strategies are listed in alphabetical order together with the learning value of each strategy.

**Active Retrieval Testing [High Value]:** Create quizzes of new material and actively quiz yourself spaced out over time.

- Develop a quiz of each new topic being presented in class
- Quiz yourself at regular intervals over a period of time, such as every 2 to 3 days over the course of the grading period or school year
- Begin combining quizzes on different topics (interweaving)

**Assessing Prior Knowledge [High Value]:** How much do you know about information being introduced and what is your level of self-motivation for learning the information. Perhaps there is no subject where this dynamic is more revealed than chemistry. While most students have little prior knowledge when first introduced to the Periodic Table, there is a much smaller percentage of students who are highly motivated to learn chemistry beyond memorizing the Periodic Table of molecular formulas, like H<sub>2</sub>O, to pass a test.

- What do you know about this topic?
- What do you want to learn about this topic?
- How does this topic relate to things that you are interested in, like cooking, gardening, or the impact of herbs and spices on your digestive system?