

Teaching Study Skills

Dorothy Zemach



Why?



- Because we have to.
- Because we can.



In-class Skills



Pair work

- Asking and answering questions
- Repeating
- Knowing when to ask for help
- Assisting a struggling partner



Group work

- Staying on task
- Ensuring participation
- Note-taking
- Time-keeping
- Agreeing/disagreeing, & other language functions



Individual work

- Staying focused
- Self-evaluation of quality
/ correctness



Out-of-class Skills



Organizational

- Managing time
- Managing health
- Coping with stress
- Preparing tools and supplies
- Creating an efficient work environment
- Managing physical clutter
- Managing digital clutter
- Managing technological use/distractions



Academic

- Memorizing (vocabulary; content info)
- Studying for tests
- Reviewing information
- Completing homework (on time)
- Coping with writer's block
- Managing long-term assignments
- Preparing for future study /

Methods

- **Lecture / reading:** Give students information
- Language **tasks** built around study-skills content
- **Awareness-raising activities:** class/group surveys, discussions
- **Research:** read online, interview others, share results
- **Journal:** What works? What doesn't?



Textbooks that support teaching study skills



OpenMind / MasterMind, Macmillan.

Coursebook (topic/content based), 6 levels

- Every unit has a spread (2 pages) of a study skill.
- Lowest level: Speaking & Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Reading, Grammar, Listening, Writing
- All other levels, Life Skills:
 - Study & Learning
 - Self & Society
 - Work & Career





studySkills



WORDS YOU KNOW

A How much English vocabulary do you know? Take one minute (exactly 60 seconds!), and write down as many words in English as you can. When the time is up, count your words.

B  Work in pairs. Share your words. Were any of them different?

C  Work in groups. Play a vocabulary game. One player chooses a letter. Other students have 30 seconds to write down English words that begin with that letter. The student with the most correct words wins!



MAKING FLASHCARDS


A Look at the two sides of a flashcard. What information is there?



umbrella

My umbrella is in my bag.

B Create three flashcards for three words you learned in this unit or in Unit 1.

C  Exchange flashcards with a partner. Quiz each other like this:

A: [showing the picture] What's this?

B: It's an umbrella.

A: How do you spell it?

B: U-m-b-r-e-l-l-a.

A: Please say a sentence with umbrella.

B: My umbrella is in the bag.



MACMILLAN
LIFE SKILLS

MY WAY TO PRACTICE ... VOCABULARY

A Read about how these students practice vocabulary. Which student is like you?



Hans: I write new words in a notebook. I sometimes write the meaning in English or draw a picture. I sometimes write a translation in my own language.




Sebastian: I like to learn new words! When I hear a new word, I say it out loud, and then I type it into my cell phone. Then I email it to my laptop.



Emilia: I make vocabulary flashcards. I keep them together. I use them everywhere—at home, at school, and on the bus.

B Are these ways of learning and practicing vocabulary good for you? Complete the survey.

		No <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
1	Read the textbook again.			
2	Make flashcards with words.			
3	Make flashcards with words and pictures.			
4	Write words in a notebook and draw pictures.			
5	Write words in a notebook with a translation.			
6	Say words out loud.			
7	Check new words in a dictionary.			
8	Listen to the <i>openMind</i> audio.			
9	Learn five words every day.			
10	Learn the new words from a unit at the end of the week.			

C  Work in pairs or in small groups. Share your answers from Exercise B. Talk about more ideas to practice vocabulary.

A: I make mind maps with words in the same category. What about you?

B: I write words in a notebook, with example sentences to show the meaning.

SET A GOAL:

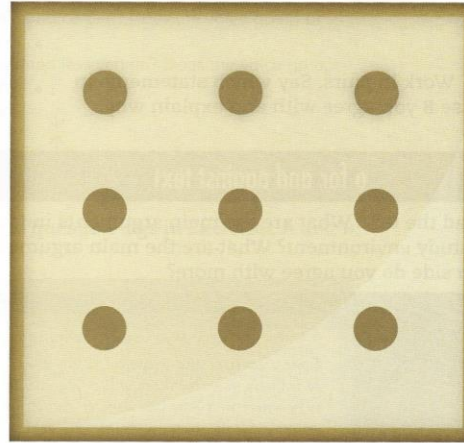
Write one new way you plan to practice vocabulary.



THINKING LOGICALLY

- Question your assumptions.
- Approach the problem differently.
- Think of new ideas and test them.

A Do this puzzle. Connect these dots by drawing four straight lines, without lifting your pencil off the paper and without going back over a line. You have two minutes.

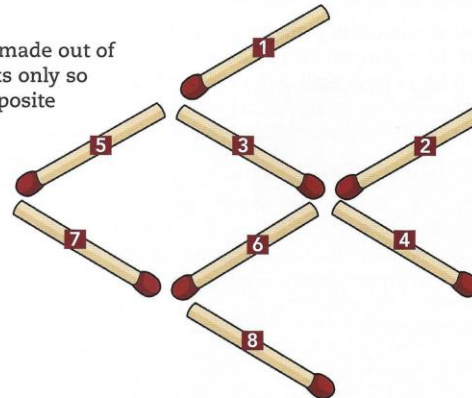


B If you solved the puzzle, well done! If you didn't, it might help you to question your assumptions. To do this, decide whether these sentences about the puzzle are true (T) or false (F).

- 1 The instructions say each line has to start and end on a dot. T / F
- 2 Your lines can go further than the rows of dots. T / F
- 3 Each line has to go through three dots. T / F

C Now try the puzzle in Exercise A again. If you still can't work out the answer, find someone who has the answer and ask them to show you how to do it.

D Do this puzzle. Look at this fish made out of matchsticks. Move three matchsticks only so that the fish is swimming in the opposite direction. You have one minute.

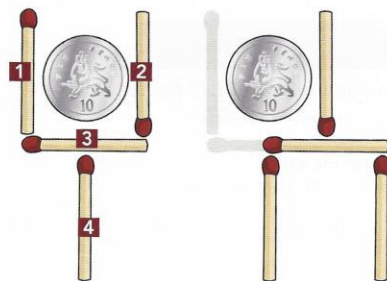


E If you solved the puzzle in Exercise D, read this text and decide if it describes how you think. If you didn't solve the puzzle, read the text and think about how you should approach the puzzle in Exercise D differently.

Logical thinking

There are times in all our lives when we need to think more logically. It might be in a real-life situation, such as making a business decision. Or it might be when we are doing a test or puzzle of some kind. The problem some of us have when it comes to thinking logically is that we think certain limits exist, when in fact they don't. It's all about our assumptions.

We all have lots of assumptions – things we think are correct, even if there's no reason to. To illustrate, take a look at this well-known puzzle using matchsticks. The coin looks as if it is inside a 'glass' formed by four




matchsticks. You have to move just two matchsticks to get the coin outside the glass. You cannot move the coin! It seems impossible ... and it is impossible, as long as you assume that the glass has to stay the same way up. However, the puzzle becomes very easy if you think about making an 'upside-down' glass. To do this, all you have to do is move matchstick 3 to the right a little and move matchstick 1 down.

The key to solving this problem is to question your assumptions. And questioning your assumptions is a big part of logical thinking.

Logical thinking is not just about the artificial world of puzzles. This same kind of thinking can be very useful in real life, too. If we aren't careful, we can assume things about ourselves, other people and the world around us, which limit our thinking. By analysing and questioning our assumptions, we can think more logically and systematically about a problem, and perhaps find solutions that we simply couldn't see before.

F Now try the puzzle in Exercise D again. Use what you learnt in the article to help you.

G  Work in pairs. Brainstorm a list of real-life problems and how logical thinking might help to solve them. Then explain your ideas to the rest of the class.

Problem: How to get a huge new sofa into your house

How logical thinking might help: It can help you think of different ways, e.g. through the window.

HOW TO SAY IT

Discussing logical thinking

One problem which could be solved using logical thinking is ...

Do you think logical thinking would help if ...?

How would logical thinking help in that situation?

If ..., logical thinking could help you to ...



REFLECT ... How can improving your logical thinking help you in **Self and Society** and **Work and Career**?



BECOMING MORE SELF-AWARE

- Find out how others see you.
- Think about how you react in different situations and why.
- Decide how you could change.

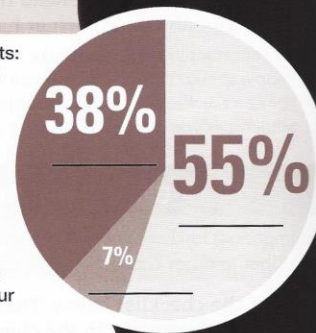
A Read this article. Label the sections in the pie chart with these phrases.

Body language Tone of voice Words

In any face-to-face communication, there are three basic elements: the words we use, our tone of voice (how we say the words), and our body language (the movements and gestures we make with our arms, hands and face).

We often think that the words we use are the most important factor. In fact, studies have shown that when we are talking about personal feelings, the words only carry 7% of the message. Our tone of voice carries 38% and our body language carries 55%.

Effective communicators are usually people who understand this and are self-aware. Self-awareness is our ability to understand our own reactions and the messages we send out to other people.



B Answer these questions by ticking the red boxes.

- Which word or words best describe the way you usually speak to other people?

confident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	quiet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	nervous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
loud	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	aggressive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- How much do you use your hands when you talk?

all the time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	a lot of the time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	sometimes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
rarely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
- How much do you use eye contact when you talk to someone?

all the time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	a lot of the time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	sometimes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
rarely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
- Which word or words best describe the way you are feeling at the moment?

comfortable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	defensive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	open	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
relaxed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	stressed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	nervous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

C Work with a partner you know well. Ask how they would answer each question about you, and mark your partner's answers about you in the blue boxes.

- A:** Which word or words best describe the way I usually speak to other people?
B: I think probably ...

D Look back at your answers and your partner's answers about you. In general, does your partner see you in the same way you see yourself? Are there any surprises?




Self and Society

Work and Career

Study and Learning



E  You are going to work in groups and give a short talk to your group, and answer their questions. Follow these instructions.

- Work alone. Complete the sentences so they are true for you.
I wish I had more time to ... because ...
I hope in the future, I ...
If only ...
If I had ..., I ...
If I hadn't, I ...
- Practise what you are going to say.

F  Work in groups of three, Students A, B and C. Work with students you don't usually work with.

Student A, stand up and give your talk to your group. Answer any questions.

Student B, listen carefully and ask Student A questions.

Student C, observe Student A carefully, and complete the evaluation form. Don't say anything.

Then swap roles.

Evaluation

Circle all the words that apply.

1 How did Student A appear?

confident quiet nervous
loud friendly aggressive

2 How much did Student A use their hands when they were talking?


all the time a lot of the time sometimes
rarely never

3 How much did Student A use eye contact when they were talking?

all the time a lot of the time sometimes
rarely never

4 Which word or words best describes Student A's body language?

comfortable defensive open
relaxed stressed nervous

G  Give each other feedback on how you appeared when you were giving your talks. Were you surprised by anything? What would you change about how you appear when you're talking to someone?

HOW TO SAY IT

Responding to feedback

You said I looked ..., but actually I felt ...

I don't think I used my hands enough / made enough eye contact.

I think I should ... more.

I would like to appear more ..., so I'm going to ...



REFLECT ... How can becoming more self-aware help you in **Work and Career** and **Study and Learning**?



**MACMILLAN
LIFE SKILLS**

Skillful, Macmillan. Dual-skills series: listening/speaking; reading/writing

- Every unit has a study skills page.
- Half of the units have awareness activities, a case study, and a plan of action
- Half of the units have content from Stella Cottrell's *The Study Skills Handbook*



STUDY SKILLS Taking tests

Getting started

Discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 How do you prepare for tests?
To prepare for tests, I ...
- 2 If you complete a test early, what do you do?
If I complete a test early, I ...

Scenario

Read this scenario. Think about what Victor is doing right and what he is doing wrong.

Consider it

Read these tips on how to take tests effectively. Discuss each one with a partner. Do you agree with all of them?

- 1 Get enough sleep the night before a test.
- 2 Eat a healthy meal just before the test.
- 3 Prepare the things you will need to take to the test. Arrive early.
- 4 Choose a comfortable place, with enough space.
- 5 Preview the whole test quickly. Check the number of questions and the different question types.
- 6 Read the directions carefully. If there is a model answer, it's there for a reason. Look at it to be sure you answer in the same way.
- 7 Answer questions in a strategic order. Decide what works for you. For example, you could answer easy questions first to build confidence, or answer the questions with the most points first.
- 8 Pay attention to time. Adjust the speed at which you answer questions to reflect the amount of time you have left.
- 9 Save time at the end to review and check answers. Don't leave if you finish early.

Over to you

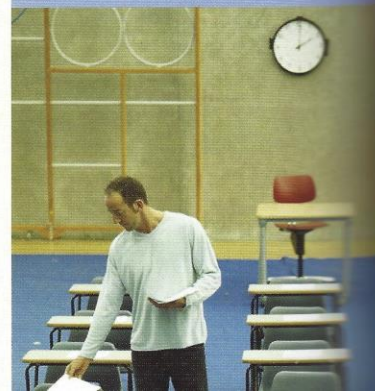
Discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 Are you a good test taker? Why or why not?
I am / am not a good test taker because ...
- 2 What other tips can you suggest for taking tests?
I think it's important to ...

Victor feels he knows how to take tests effectively. He always gets enough sleep the night before a test, and he eats a healthy meal the day of the test.

He likes to sit in the back of the room because it's often quieter. When he gets the test paper, he begins right away. He starts with question 1 and works in order as fast as he can to answer all the questions. He reads the directions carefully and looks closely at model answers.

He also pays close attention to the time. He sometimes has extra time at the end of a test. If he does, he reviews the questions.



STUDY SKILLS Dealing with exam stress

Getting started

Discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 How do you feel when you take an exam?
When I take an exam, I feel ...
- 2 What are some ways to relax before / during an exam?
You can ... before / during an exam.

Scenario

Read this scenario. Think about what Micah is doing right and what he is doing wrong.

Consider it

Read these tips on how to deal with exam stress. Discuss each one with a partner. Which ones are good to do before an exam? Which are good to do during an exam? Which can be either?

- 1 Think of a reward to give yourself after the exam.
- 2 Do something relaxing before the exam. Last-minute cramming isn't helpful.
- 3 Remind yourself that a little stress can be a good thing.
- 4 Avoid other classmates who have exam stress.
- 5 Remind yourself that an exam is only an exam.
- 6 If waiting causes stress, distract yourself. Read a magazine or play a game.
- 7 Focus on answering the questions, not on your grade.
- 8 Think positive thoughts, such as "It's natural to make some mistakes."
- 9 Think again about the reward you promised yourself after the exam.

Over to you

Discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 Are all the tips useful? Why or why not?
I think number ... is / isn't useful because ...
- 2 What are some other ways to deal with exam stress?
One way to deal with exam stress is to ...

stress /stres/

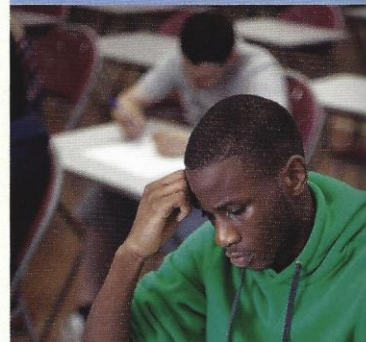
NOUN [UNCOUNT]

a worried or nervous feeling that stops you relaxing

Micah often has exam stress. He gets very nervous before every exam.

He and another friend cram together before exams. Sometimes he plays a game on his phone to distract himself from the exam he is about to take. He thinks of a reward to give himself after the exam. This gives him something positive to think about. He also thinks things like "No one is perfect."

When he is taking the exam, he focuses on the grade he is probably going to get. After the exam, he gives himself the reward, but only if he is happy with his grade.



STUDY SKILLS Taking notes effectively

Getting started

Discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 When you take notes in class, what do you write down?
- 2 Do you write your notes only in English, only in your first language, or both?
- 3 Do you use charts, tables, or other ways to organize your notes?
- 4 Do you write down your thoughts, reactions, and questions about the lecture?

Scenario

Read the scenario and try to think of three things Ling could do to take notes more effectively.

Consider it

Look at these tips for taking notes effectively. Which ones does Ling already do? Which do you think can help Ling take better notes?

- 1 **Listen for key points** Don't worry about writing down every word of the lecture, but be sure to write down the main ideas.
- 2 **Watch the board** If your professor puts a fact, key term, or diagram on the board, you should probably copy it in your notes.
- 3 **Write down what the professor emphasizes** Many professors will specifically tell students to write down key information, or to make sure that they remember it.
- 4 **Paraphrase** Try to put the professor's ideas in your own words. This will help you understand the lecture better.
- 5 **Don't worry about complete sentences** Write down key phrases to help you remember the information. Don't worry about writing full sentences.
- 6 **Use charts and tables** For example, if a lecture is about the pros and cons of an idea, make a chart with the pros in one column and the cons in another.
- 7 **Write down questions** If anything isn't clear, make a note of this so you can ask questions at the appropriate time.

Over to you

Discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 Which of the things above do you already do?
- 2 Which of the tips do you think will be most useful to you?
- 3 What are some other ways that you take notes effectively in class?

Ling is a second-year Engineering major, and her classes are very challenging. Her professors cover a lot of material very quickly, so she knows that it is important to take good notes. In every lecture, her goal is to write down every word her professor says so she can memorize it later. In addition, she always copies down anything her professor writes on the board, as well as anything the professor tells the class to put in their notes. Sometimes she doesn't understand the professor's ideas but she just writes down the words and hopes she can figure it out later. Many of her lectures are in English, so she tries to take notes in English. She finds this frustrating, however, because she is used to writing her notes in complete sentences, and she sometimes makes grammar mistakes.



STUDY SKILLS Finding an idea to write about

Getting started

Discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 When you write an essay for school, how do you decide what to write about?
- 2 When do you usually think of the point you want to make about the essay topic: before you begin to write, while you're writing, or after you've finished the first draft of your essay?

Scenario

Read the scenario and think of at least one thing Hassan could have done to improve the idea in his essay.

Consider it

Look at the tips for finding an idea to write about. Which ones did Hassan keep in mind? Which ones could have helped Hassan?

- 1 Decide on an idea for your essay before you write.
- 2 Before you begin, you should be able to describe your idea in one or two clear sentences.

It is often said that the Olympic Games bring different nations closer together, but the way the Games are shown on television actually makes nations more isolated from one another.

- 3 An idea is different from a topic; it is also different from the arguments that support the idea.

Topic: How the Olympic Games are shown on television.

Arguments:

- *Each nation broadcasts only the sports that they are good at or enjoy.*
- *The news media focus only on which countries have won the most medals, which encourages pointless competition among nations.*

- 4 A good idea comes from your own thinking and reflection, and doesn't simply repeat information you've read in another place.

Over to you

Discuss these questions with a partner.

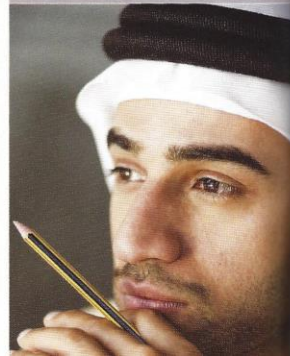
- 1 Which of the tips above do you already use?
- 2 Which of the tips do you think are most important?
- 3 What are some things you can do to think of an idea to write about?
- 4 How will you use the advice above to help you in your next writing assignment?

Hassan is a first-year engineering major who is taking a required course in composition. He was recently asked to write an essay on the question, "What do the Olympic Games mean to you?" Because this was not a question Hassan had thought about before, he spent a few days reading about the most recent Games and reflecting.

Hassan prefers to plan, so he did not begin writing until he had a good idea of what he wanted to write about. Finally, he had an idea: how the Olympics are shown on television. This seemed very interesting, and he knew he could write a few pages about it, so he began the essay as soon as he thought of the idea.

He was sure he would complete the essay quickly, but after a few hours, Hassan realized that he wasn't actually sure of what he wanted to say.

In the end, it took a few days to finish the essay, and his professor said it had an interesting topic but didn't have a clear idea. It was a frustrating experience that Hassan would not like to repeat.



Memory thrives on organization

by Stella Cottrell

Activity

- 1 Read List A for 15 seconds, then cover it.
- 2 Say a nursery rhyme (to stop yourself practicing the list).
- 3 Write down the words you remember.
- 4 Check List A and note down your score. Now do the same with List B, including the underlined words. Even if you did not do well with the first list, have a go.

List A

plum	elbow	giraffe	caravan
puppy	banana	foot	apple
pony	cherry	barge	bungalow

List B

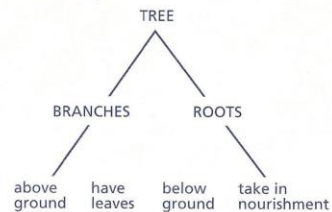
<u>Fruit</u>	<u>Animal</u>	<u>Home</u>	<u>Body</u>
plum	giraffe	house	foot
banana	puppy	apartment	knee
apple	donkey	bungalow	elbow
cherry	pony	caravan	hand

You probably remembered many more items from List B. List B is more memorable because:

- grouping similar items together helps recall
- using group headings helps recall
- being able to see that there are only four types of information gives the task manageable boundaries
- many of the items on List B were also in List A — and going over information again helps recall.

Organising information into pyramids

Concept pyramids (see example below) organize associated information into hierarchies. They are excellent memory aids.



In an experiment in 1969, Bower and other psychologists asked a group of people to learn 112 words. The words were grouped and linked meaningfully, as in List B above, and organized into four pyramids. People remembered 100% of the words by the third attempt.

By contrast, a second group of people were given the same words, also arranged into pyramid shapes, but this time with the words randomly assigned to each pyramid — they were not meaningfully (or semantically) linked. The second group remembered only 47% of the words by the third attempt.



This suggests the importance of both:

- linking information meaningfully, and
- organizing ideas into hierarchies or concept pyramids.

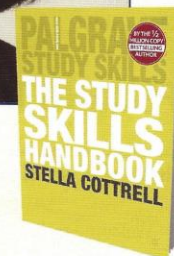


Study support networks

by Stella Cottrell

Types of support network

Some courses organize a study support group or network. This may be led by a "mentor" – a student from the year above. If a group does not exist, you may like to start one yourself. You could get together by telephone or email, or meet after class in somebody's home.



What a support group can do

A support group can help in many ways, but the following activities are helpful to most students.

Encourage each other

- Arrange to phone each other to encourage work on a particular activity.
- Find a helpful comment you could make about each group member's work. Write these out on separate pieces of paper and give them to each other to take home. At home, put your list where you can see it, to encourage yourself.

Review lectures

Review a lecture together, talking about the main points. Fill the gaps in your own notes. Each person notes different things, so by sharing information you each end up with a better set of lecture notes.

Solve study problems

- Give one person, A, five or ten minutes to describe a study problem, while the rest of the group listen without talking.
- As a group, spend ten minutes talking about the problem. Brainstorm as many ideas as you can for dealing with the problem. Now A listens without talking.
- Finally, Person A has ten minutes to choose an option, decide how and when to do it, and ask the group for support.

Share background reading

Read different texts around the subject, and summarize the main points for each other. Discuss your ideas about what you read.

Make friends with each other

Simply listening to each other can be very helpful.



Ways to work study skills into your regular class



- Choose one in-class skill per day (or week), write it on the board, and remind students to practice it throughout the lesson
- Designate a short period every week for organization (tidying up notebooks, deleting emails, filling out planners)
- Have notebook checks (and locker checks)
- Have students keep study habits journals
- Let students do study skills reports or activities for extra credit or “do overs”



Thank you for coming!

