Supporting Student Study Habits
“Learning is hard work, but not all hard work leads to learning.”

Instructors can have a deep positive impact on their students’ learning by helping them develop the study skills they need to succeed in their courses. Below we list several roadblocks that students at Brown commonly encounter while studying and tips for faculty to help students overcome these issues.

**Metacognitive Mismatch** - Students fail to accurately judge their understanding of course materials and stop studying before they master the content.
- Provide students with frequent opportunities for feedback to help them understand their own knowledge and where to target their study.

**Cramming** – Students believe that learning is fast and wait to complete assignments or to study at the last minute.
- Encourage students to work *throughout* the semester by designing assignments & milestones that prompt students to engage with and review materials regularly.

**Learning Facts in Isolation** – Students believe knowledge is composed of isolated facts and target their study towards superficial memorization and fail to make key connections.
- Provide a conceptual framework to reinforce the connectedness of knowledge.
- Create assignments that require meaningful analysis.
- Provide students with opportunities to generalize their learning to other contexts.

**Multitasking** - Students who divide their attention while studying are inefficient in their learning and suffer poor metacognition.
- Let students know that studying complex materials requires their full attention.
- Provide study strategies and activities that encourage students to focus.
- Recommend policies about the use of devices in class and while studying.

**Feeling Discouraged** – Students experience difficulty in focusing after struggling with material or perceiving messages of inadequacy.
- Promote the belief that intelligence can grow with work and study, so that students will continue to work towards mastering knowledge, even in the face of setbacks.
- Actively listen to and acknowledging the feelings that the students share.
- Normalize failure: communicate that it is OK to struggle along the way.

**Focus on grades instead of learning** – Students fail to connect their grades to their learning and perceive assignments as busywork rather than learning opportunities.
- Articulate the connections between assignments and learning.
- Make grades transparent so that students can understand when they’ve learned and how their grades are related to learning (not their effort).
- Provide opportunities for students to receive feedback, then to iterate & improve.

**Not making use of available resources** - Students can fail to seek out help because they do not realize that they need it or because of feelings of intimidation, shame, etc.
- Explain what resources are available to the students and why they should use them.
- Encourage students to work collaboratively, e.g, host an office hour as a drop in session that students can attend to work on assignments together.

For more information see the Sheridan Center resources on Mentoring & Advising ([http://brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning/mentoring-advising/general-resources](http://brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning/mentoring-advising/general-resources)) & Study Skills Tips ([http://brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning/resources-students/study-skills](http://brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning/resources-students/study-skills))
STEM Resources
For faculty (& students)

Advising | Study Skills | Tutoring

Science Center: SciLi 3rd floor.
http://brown.edu/academics/science-center/advising/

Math Resource Center: Kassar House.
http://www.math.brown.edu/mrc/

Tutoring Office: Group tutoring in the sciences, math, economics & statistics. Email tutoring@brown.edu;
one-on-one tutoring requests—
http://brown.edu/academics/college/support/tutor/

Advising Central: Study skills workshops & coaching. Email advising@brown.edu.

Curricular Resource Center: Departmental Undergraduate Groups (DUGs); Reflecting on Success. http://brown.edu/go/crc/

DoC Open Hours: General academic concerns & coaching. http://brown.edu/academics/college/open-hours

Mentoring Programs

New Scientist Program (NSP): nsp@brown.edu.
Women in Science & Engineering (WiSE)
National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)

Drop-in Sessions (for undergraduates)

Science Center, SciLi 3rd floor:
1. Biology: Tuesdays, 8:00-10:00 PM
2. Chemistry: Tuesdays, 8:00-10:00 PM
3. Physics: Thursdays, 6:00-8:00 PM
4. Math: Sundays, 6:00-8:00 PM

For faculty from the Sheridan Center

Available throughout the year and upon request:

Individual Course Consultations:
• http://brown.edu/sheridan/consultations

Events & Workshops:
• http://brown.edu/sheridan/events-workshops

For more information:
• How to Get the Most Out of Studying: A Video Series (by Prof. Stephen Chew, Samford University) - http://www.samford.edu/how-to-study/
• The Study Group Starter Kit (from LSU’s Center for Academic Success) provides tips for students studying in groups - http://cas.lsu.edu/study-groups