

Good afternoon everyone and welcome to my presentation on study to learn. I'm Renee LeBeau-Ford. And before I get started and talking about studying, I'd like to talk to you a little bit about myself and why I feel and think that maybe what I have to say might make a difference and how you attack your study skills. I started college thinking that I was bright, talented, and could do anything I wanted to do. I had been praised by my parents. I had mostly A's in high school. My test scores weren't bad at all. But what no one told me was that college wasn't anything like high school. No one in my family had gone to college and no one had prepared me. My first semester. I was told to meet people, get involved, do all of those things that would look great on my resume. But no one talked to me about how to survive on the academic side of college. I didn't do well. I struggled. I procrastinated, I never ask for help. I changed my major four times. I changed schools just about as many times. Finally, somewhere in my mid-twenties is when I started finally thinking about college seriously. I was the only one in a new job without a degree. All my friends had degrees and I started feeling a little left out. Finally clicked and I finished my degree in economics in ten years. So what I want to talk to you about is hopefully some skills that will prepare you and get you going so that it won't take you ten years because college is a lot more expensive than it was when I went to school. So why did I fail as an undergrad? I wasn't dumb. I was just under prepared. I was unprepared. I wasn't ready for it all. Let's talk a little bit about the difference between studying and learning. So we all say, we need to study for a test. But what you're really doing is you're studying to learn the information so that you do well on the test. So we think of these words are similar, but they actually aren't. What we want to do is we want to gain knowledge or skill. And you do that by studying. So just studying doesn't mean that you know or have learned a new piece of knowledge. It just means that you studied it, you read it, you listened to it. What you want to do is learn it. So let's talk about a few pieces here on some of the things I think you need to think about in terms of yourself and how you're going to get yourself prepared to study properly. The first thing is being organized and figuring out what it is you actually need to know for this class. You need to be ready and willing. You need to be dedicated. You need to know what your grade is at all times. And you need to think about what grade you want and you need to study actively. So those are kind of the topics we're going to go over here as we progress. So let's talk about being organized. It sounds like it's easy. Take a class. Think to yourself, take second here. Think about a class. Think about a class that just has so much stuff. You got lecture notes, you've got a textbook, you got hand-outs, and PowerPoints. You've got all those old exams and instructor, but it's like it's just so much and you're just kind of overwhelmed. Figure out maybe the pieces of each of those things that you need to do. Maybe condense all of that into one place to study from. Sometimes I think in my case there was just too much stuff coming in at me. I just didn't really know where to start. The other piece here is that in any given class, your instructor is going to assume that you have some common knowledge. You know that Washington was the first president of the United States. So if you're in a poly psy class and they start talking about Washington, they might not say he was the first president. They're going to assume that you know that. So if you're ever sitting in a lecture, you ever reading something just doesn't quite make sense. Maybe it's because you don't have some of that fundamental knowledge that you were supposed to have before you took this class, assumed knowledge or those things that an instructor assumes that you've got in another class or assumes you learned from Chapter three now that we're on Chapter nine. Ok, again, if it doesn't make sense to you and you are having trouble with it, maybe you don't have a piece of that assumed knowledge. Being ready and willing. As I said in my little blurb about myself, I spent all my time having fun. I was getting to know people. I was living in the dorms. I joined the symphony, I joined the basketball pep band, I went jogging. I did all of those things. But the problem is I didn't think about how

much time I was going to have to take to study. You know, we've all heard that kinda like three hour rule. And if you haven't, what it is is for every unit you have, you should be studying three hours a week. So that would mean for typical class, you're gonna study nine hours. Ok, so everybody, you're by yourself right now. Are you really, really sitting nine hours a week for every class you're taking? Probably not. I'm not saying that you need to study for nine hours, but you need to realize that it takes time. That studying takes time, learning takes time and you can't just do it the night before an exam. So you need to think about all those minutes that you have and how they add up. And what I'm going to talk about is taking the pieces of, of knowledge and information that you want to gain and putting into pieces so that you could, for example, while you're waiting in line or while you're in the car, or while you're walking between classes, you can kind of just recite those theories and those definitions in your head. And in a sense, you would be studying as you're walking across campus. Notecards, a great way to trigger what we're going to be talking about, which is asking yourself questions. But most importantly, you have to be willing here you can't just sit back and say, oh, it will come to me the night before the final. If you're struggling, if you think you're not on track, you need to ask for help. Start with your instructor. Start with your roommate, start with your classmates. There are lots and lots of places to get help on this campus. And there are lots of people there to help you. Being dedicated. I know that sounds pretty obvious. But what I want to talk about is being dedicated when you're studying. So the most effective way to learn something is to do it frequently and in small pieces. I'm going to call that chunking. Okay. So right off the bat, I say frequently. Frequently doesn't mean once a week. Frequently need you need to think about a topic that you're supposed to be learning and do something with it every day. I know that sounds like a lot, but after you do it for several days, you might actually have learned it. Do it in small pieces and you're trying to grass too much at once. It's not going to sink in. Learning to fast does not allow for assimilation. What that means is it won't sink in. You will, might be able to memorize something and regurgitate the facts at a quiz in 20 minutes, but you're not going to remember it in the long-term. And college is about the long-term. Colleges about learning things that build and build and build. For example, when you learn to play football, basketball, baseball, tennis, whatever it might be, you didn't just jump in and hit a home run. It's something that you did frequently in small pieces. When you learn to play an instrument, the same thing, you learned all the fingerings then you dealt with your mouth. And eventually you could read music. It took time. Everybody learns words to songs. Can you usually, well, maybe bad songs, but can you just spit out the word without even thinking about them more than once? No. You have to sing the song a couple of times, you hear it, you repeat it to yourself in your head, or maybe you actually sing out loud in the car. Either way, you're doing something active. Remember that word with those words to help you remember that song. Next thing about getting organized is thinking about your grade. What grade do you want, and where are you presently on that grading scale? Okay. So I know everybody wants to say, oh, I want an A. But realistically, can you get an a in every class? You might not be able to. That's fine. But where do you want to be? You want to get A's in the classes that are your core classes for your major. And so things get tight, you're going to pass on another class. So want to talk to you a little bit about grading system and kind of putting each of your classes in or on a scale to think about where you might want to be. So this is how I like to think about grades, okay? An F, an F means. And my topic here is the legalization of marijuana. So let's pretend I'm taking a class, poly psy class contemporary issues in political science. And as we all know, the concept of marijuana being legalized for medicinal or for recreational purposes is is hot button item these days. So let's say that's what this whole class is about. Well, if I'm the clueless person who says, oh yeah, I know everything I need to know about marijuana. Why should I study? You know, I smoke it. I'm seeing people

smoke it. I know it's good, I know it's bad. You're clueless. You really don't have any factual knowledge. You haven't learned anything. D, a recognition. You might recognize a few words. Ok. So you know that there's the medicinal marijuana and then there's the recreational, you know, that it's legal in some states and not in others. You've got you know, kind of this general, I understand it, but you really don't okay? C, you've got some some understanding. You might be able to describe some of the controversies about medicinal marijuana and some of the cons about recreational marijuana. But you don't have a total grasp of everything you need to become an expert in this class. You just have some understanding. That would be someone who's maybe read the textbook, listened to the lectures, but hasn't really done anything else. To gain that B, you need to be able to learn more. You need to be able to recall, retrieve, and have a full understanding of the concept of marijuana, would you be able to describe the pros and cons of both sides of this issue thoroughly. That's what a B is about. An A is the expert. Could you, or would you be able to fully and completely discuss all of the legal, economic, social arguments for and against marijuana. Ok, that's where you need to place yourself for each class. Think about what it is you want, where you want to be. So I've said the word actively before. And what I'm talking about here is studying actively, okay? And what that means is you take things in small pieces. You do everything frequently, and you ask yourself questions. So I'm talking about engaging with the topic, not just reading about it. You want your brain to have to think about what you are reading. You need to process it, relate it to something that's relatable to you, connect with. It's think of examples that you can remember. Simply reading and re-reading text or notes is not actively engaging in the material. And that is what most of you are doing. It is simply rereading your notes. Only doing the readings for class is not studying. It is simply doing the readings. Re-reading leads to quick forgetting. Think of reading as an important part of pre-setting. But learning information requires actively engaging in the material. Active studying does not mean highlighting or underlining, re-reading or memorization. These activities may, however, help you engage in the task, but they're not considered active. And they relate weekly to improved learning. So what are some things that might be active type engagements? Let's put you through a little example here first, pretend that this is the face of a dollar bill. Ok? You can imagine there's a picture in the middle and hopefully most of you know who that picture is. There's the letter, the number one in the corners. There's maybe a little thing that says In God We Trust How many of you could actually replicate the front of a dollar bill, okay, something most of us see quite frequently. I hope. The point here is that you can look at things all you want. You can look at your textbook all you want. But just looking at it and reading it is not going to make you learn it for the long term. Okay? So how do we learn? Think about you and how you're presently studying, listening, reading, seeing, discussion, practice and teaching. Those are all different ways we take in and learn things. But some of them are better than others. And for some of us, one might be better than another. We don't all learn the same. Listening. Just listening. If you just listen to my voice and I didn't even have a PowerPoint out there, that would be the absolute worst way to learn something. Reading. And this is what most of us are doing when we're studying, we're reading, reading our textbook or re-reading are lecture notes. It is not an active activity. Seeing is a little better. If I'm seeing something, you remember things more. So that's why I have a PowerPoint here, hoping that you will look at these words and you'll remember some of the things I said. So the top three ways to actually learn something is to discuss it. And why is that? Because you can't discuss it if you don't know the material. There was a question posed in a book that I found quite entertaining. And I'm going to put it to you guys. If I were the instructor and I said to you, would you prefer to learn the topic of our discussion thoroughly so that you could get an A or would you prefer to give the lecture of the topic to the class? And most people responded that they would prefer to learn

the material on their own. Why? Because failure is not seen by your peers. If you take a test and you bomb it, it's only between you and your instructor. No one else knows what a poor job you did. But you have to get in front of all those people and you have to teach something and you don't know what you're talking about. You would be so embarrassed. Think about that. Think about when you're preparing for something, how you would teach it to someone else. And that is the top way to learn is to teach it. Because if you teach it, you've got to know what you need to be able to answer all those questions that people might ask you. So a little overview slide here. Passive studying is reading, looking at something. Listening, highlighting. Basically, not doing much. Active is taking that information that you're trying to learn and doing something with it. You want to discuss it with someone. That's when we talk about group discussions. Discuss it with yourself if you're by yourself, practice it, okay, that's why with math, your math instructors will tell you, here's a whole bunch of practice problems. Same thing with chemistry, with biology. There are lots of things you can practice if you're even trying to learn a timeline, let's say in history, practice, In that case might be actually writing it down on a piece of paper. And teaching, teaching, I don't mean like talk teaching to a class. Teaching it to yourself. Pretend that you're teaching it to someone. Because if you can't in your car, teach yourself what happened in the Civil War by just thinking it through in your head, then you don't know enough facts. And that's how you're going to know if you're prepared or not prepared. If you can't teach it to someone else, then you're not, you don't you don't know it. So I'm going to walk you through something here, which is a little exercise and we're going to pretend that this is your textbook. And again, we're taking a class on medicinal cannabis. And the pros and cons of this is chapter three, the health and psychological effects of cannabis use. So as we're reading this textbook, or if I were to, if this were my lecture. What are we looking at here? What do we need to take out of this? Give you like 1 second to kinda read that through. So I'm going to start reading and talk to you as I read. This chapter summarizes the most probable adverse health and psychological effects of acute and chronic cannabis use. Okay. What do I need to know from that first sentence? Well, I know that what we're talking about is adverse health and psychological effects. That could be the topic of my notes that I'm taking. I could possibly highlight that even though I'm not going to recommend highlighting. But that is the theme of what you're talking about. Okay. It focuses on the effects that our greatest potential health significance. Do I need to memorize that sentence? No. Does that sentence really tell me anything? No. Okay. Not until the next sentence where it actually says the adverse effects considered include... bingo, "include." See that word? Make a list. If you're taking notes, these are the things that you need to memorize. These are the things that you need to be able to discuss. The effects of cannabis, motor vehicle crashes, dependency syndrome, smoking on the respiratory AND cardiovascular systems, and psychosocial development, mental health, cognitive performance and brain function. The last sentence. Not a whole lot there. So I've taken this one little paragraph. And really what I have here is I have a theme which is adverse health and psychological effects. And I have a list under it of all the things that I need to learn. Okay? So in this slot I have highlighted in red. Basically here's the theme of what you're looking for. An underneath here are the things that I need to start learning about. So I could memorize those lines if that's what I want to do. But just memorizing those lines is actually not very active. It's not necessarily going to stick in my head. What I need to do is think about each of those and have an example maybe, maybe an example that relates to me. Something that I will remember. Okay? So all of that stuff's coming in and we now know that we need to work on these topics right here. Driving while under the influence. How you might become dependent. What it's gonna do to me physiologically and psychologically. Break those apart. Okay. Driving, delayed reaction, coordination problems twice as many accidents. If you had been

smoking marijuana. Visualize it. Take a note card at the top of the note card. On one side, maybe write driving on the back of the note card, you might write delayed reaction, coordination accidents. That's how you can test yourself constantly. Those note cards you can use anywhere. You can do note cards on your phone, you can do them on your laptop. The idea is, is that you would be able to say, okay, what are those health consequences of marijuana? And you would be able to go driving and then list those four reasons. Same thing with dependence. So I've chunked these out into little pieces and like I said, just five minutes. But you know what, in on this small little topic right here. If I take five minutes to learn driving, dependence, physiological and psychological. And then the next time I go back, I'm probably going to remember about half of it. I'm going to look at the answers. I'm gonna go back and try again. But by the third or fourth time, I'm going to have these suckers memorized in such a way. They might stick in my head because I have remembered them using examples that are related to myself. Once you have something learned, you don't need to just forget about it and say, Oh, I learned that you need to go back and look at it. And that's where when we talk about reviewing for a test, that's really what we're talking about. You've already learned it. And what you're doing is you're going back and checking yourself to make sure you still remember at all. So that's where when we talk about the frequency of studying, you need to take those note cards out occasionally and just run through them, making sure that you still have that knowledge and you haven't lost it over time. You're creating questions for yourself. Okay. So your note card might say, what are the main concerns regarding marijuana? On the back of my note card, I might say driving, dependence, physiological, psychological. I might actually create this little acronym over here, DDPP, to help myself remember that there are four main categories under this question. What are the short and long-term psychological effects? Same concept. Okay. If I have that question in front of me and the answers on the back of the card. Just test yourself constantly. Okay, a few things about active studying in general. Remember again, reading, listening, highlighting, are not active. So before lecture, you really need to look at your textbook. Okay? And I'm not talking about like looking at the picture. I'm talking about looking at the chapter. Somehow your instructor has conveyed to you that you are working on chapter six for this week. If you have not figured out the tie in between the lectures and your textbook then ask your instructor. You have a right to ask those questions. Shows your instructor that you want to read your textbook, but you just want to make sure that you are reading the right stuff. Okay. Before you go into the lecture hall, look at your previous class notes. Where did we Where, when did we stop off on a certain topic? Did I understand that topic? Maybe I need to go back and review that topic because I didn't quite get it. Because if it just keeps building and I didn't get Monday's topic, how am I possibly going to Wednesday's topic? Think about all of that stuff that's already been discussed. So kind of put yourself, prepare yourself for a lecture. Think about what it is you're going to be talking about. During the lecture. Some obvious things. Listen for the connections. Listen for your instructor saying, "this is very important." Listen for your instructor to say, "this is something that may I'm a test you on." Listen, look for those things that are written on the board, okay. Try and separate the unimportant from the very important your mind versus the lecture. As you can probably figure, your mind works a lot faster than a lecture can talk. And that is a problem because your mind starts to wander. It wonders about the young person sitting in front of you and you like their shoes. You wonder about the test you have next hour. You're going to have to, you have to figure out a way to keep your mind on track, okay? If there's something that's bothering you, put it in a closet and close, lock the door, figure out how not to think about it during the lecture. Turning off your devices. Now, that means primarily your phone, but it could mean your laptop. If you're sitting in a lecture hall or even at your, if you're at home doing zoom. It's very easy to be doing something else.

Okay? The catch is, multitasking does not necessarily work well if you're trying to learn something for the long-term. So what happens is you're sitting there in the lecture hall and the instructor is going on and on and on. And you just found this so boring and it all makes sense. So why do you need to pay attention? But somewhere along the lines, you have probably miss something that was important. We don't have too many instructors that are just going to talk for 50 minutes just to hear themselves talk. They're trying to convey something to you. There's a message in their lecture, note-taking. Now, there's another presentation on note-taking, So I hope you will attend that one. But you need to think about how you're going to take notes before class starts. Are you going to do an outline format? Are you going to try and tape record, in which case you need to get your instructor's approval. Are you going to borrow somebody's notes? Not wise. And then you need to focus on the lecture and the lecturer not your neighbor. Okay? And this is one reason why if you're having a problem paying attention in lecture hall, I'm going to suggest that you practice social distancing with all your friends. Don't sit next to your friends during a lecture. Why? Because they're going to say something funny and you're going to laugh and you're going to start it up and guess what? Next thing you know, you've missed 15 minutes of lecture. After the lecture, look for ways to tie your lecture notes into your Textbook. Review your notes immediately for better retention. Okay, there's lots of studies that have shown the faster you go back and start learning and reviewing what you were lectured on, the more likely it is that you'll retain that piece of information. Let's talk a little bit about textbooks. Here in the library I am actually in-charge of the textbook purchasing program. So I actually see every textbook that's purchased because I purchase them. And I want to say that I know there are very expensive textbooks out there and very cheap ones. And some that are really hard to read, and some that are easy. Some that are full of pictures and some that are full of graphs. And I can tell you right now that the ones that have all that fun stuff in the quizzes and the pictures and the cartoons and the quizzes. Those are the ones that cost the most because that is all stuff that had to be generated and they had to pay somebody to generate it. So ironically, what I've noticed is those textbooks that are just plain fact and figures and text are the cheaper Of the books. They don't have any online modules or anything like that. So in your textbook, if your textbook is full of pictures, headings, terms, what we wanna do is we want to review all of this stuff before we start reading. Why? Because there a distraction. You're reading along and then there's a cartoon. Read the cartoon first. Read some of the charts first, get an idea if how those charts are going to relate to what it is you're reading. When you're reading your textbook, you're going to have to chunk it. And you'd have to frequently again, don't try and read chapters upon chapters the night before something, it is not going to sink in. So take your textbook and if you can grab one right now and look at the heading of a chapter. And then you'll notice a lot of textbooks have subheadings. Take those subheadings are headings and turn them into questions. And think in terms of, here's the question and as I read, I should be getting the answer. Ok. Now you could possibly write in your textbook and write those questions in there. You could write them on a note card. I would think that using a no car would actually be better. Because you could test yourself. You could write down the question and you would write the answers on the back. And at any given time you could turn to those notecards and start learning that information. The other problem that I still have, and it's something you have to fight probably forever. Is we have we all have we all want to read and read and read and read because we need to read chapter one by tonight. But it's not doing you any good if all you're doing is reading, you need to be learning it or you're going to have to go back and read it again. Okay? So what I'm going to suggest is that you read a small section. Can you close that book? And can you then answer a question? Can you recite what you learned in your own words? Remember, in your own words is going to help you

learn things. Just memorizing someone else's words doesn't work. Think about creating that question and think about what you just read and write those questions and answers down. If you can't repeat or have no idea what you read then you need to read it again and again until you've got it. Now, there are some studies out there which I know this would be really hard to do, but it kinda makes sense, would be to take a chapter, read the first paragraph, write out your questions and your answers. Or, or just in your head, think about what you just read. Then read the second paragraph and tie it in your head, the first paragraph. So when you close that book, can you then repeat to me everything you learned from the first paragraph and the second paragraph. Do it again for the third paragraph. By the time you're done reading that whole section, you should have thoroughly understood everything. But again, it's making your brain dig in and remember what you read. Okay, so as I said, some textbooks or just a bare, okay, try something else. There are lots of other ways to learn some of these materials. Now I'm not saying that you should be substituting your textbook for Wikipedia, God no, or a book in the library. But what you can do is take a fundamental topic and read it somewhere else. So, yes, I'm in the library and this has been a typical question for years. Somebody will come in and say, I don't understand my philosophy book. Do you have anything that might help me? So I can substitute something for you. But if there's a specific topic in philosophy that you're not understanding, we could find that topic somewhere else and possibly have you understand it in wording that's maybe a little more appropriate for you. And then you could go back and maybe you can reread your textbooks. This was something that I learned along ago and when I was working on my second Master's Degree in Information Technology, I took a class in networking. And the book was about a foot thick. And it was so technical and way over my head. And the class was more about networking for supervisors. Not really knowing all the specific technical details, just kind of the overview of how things worked. So at the time Hastings was still alive. I went down to Hastings, I bought a Dummies Guide, Dummies Guide to networking. And those things are so easy to read and they have all kinds of great cartoons and pictures. I was able to read the beginning of that book, and I could then grasp enough of what I was supposed to be getting out of my main textbook. The library does purchase dummies guides. We have them online, we have them in print. We, one of the most popular books in the library is actually Dummies Guide to organic chemistry. And I've actually said to the organic chemistry instructors and they know that some people just don't get the textbook or maybe they're not understanding the lecture enough. Try some other book, a guide, Wikipedia, whatever it is, try something else. Let's talk about highlighting a little bit. Highlighting. I know that's what we all do, but it's not terribly productive. What you're doing is highlighting a bunch of words and then you're going back and you're looking at those words or you're reading those words, and as we talked about earlier, that's not necessarily active studying. Now, if you looked at the word and then said, okay, we'll, Why did I highlight that word? What's important about that word, did you create a question with that word? And this is the answer. That might be a little bit different. So think about your highlighting. I'm not going to say don't do it, but I'm want you to think about how you're using it. When you go back and you're as we all say, you know, prepping for your exam the night before, cramming for exam the night before. Is that really going to be the best way to learn something by looking at those highlighted words. So just a little bit of an example. Using the marijuana. What are the health effects of marijuana use? Delayed reaction, loss of coordination, attention span, hunger, obesity. Okay. So what are the health effects of marijuana use would be on one side of the note card. The answers would be on the other side of the note card. Some of you might be aware of mnemonics. This is a method of keeping track of words in a certain order if you need to memorize something. So let's say you're in a physics class and for some reason you just can't seem to remember the colors of the spectrum in the right order. You

got all the colors, but you can't remember the order. You create something. So Richard is red, is orange, York is yellow, gave is green, and you end up with a mnemonic. Now, this mnemonic doesn't really mean a whole lot to me. Make up one that relates to you. So biology, the order of the kingdom phylum class order. I never can remember that one, right. So I made this one up. Kids prefer cheese over fried green spinach. Is that something you can remember? Math operators, again, you're just going to have to know their order which comes first, or you're never gonna get math. Certain things you just have to memorize. Mnemonics are very, very popular. You can make them up yourself. If you want to remember them for the long run, you actually should create a mnemonic that relates to yourself. And for some reason, I can always tell you how to spelled arithmetic. That was probably the first mnemonic I learned. Arithmetic is a rat in Tom's house may eat Tom's ice cream. I think I learned that in second or third grade and for some reason I can still remember that. Sorry, I'm having issues with my mouse. Hang on a second. Okay. So in conclusion, you just need to ask, there are plenty of people here on this campus there are plenty tools and resources on campus. We want you to succeed. I don't know if anybody's ever told you this, but part of our funding is actually getting you to succeed, OK? If you flunk out or you stopped going to school, it's not good for us. So we have the same mission in mind. We want you to graduate with a degree. We want you to know something when you graduate so that you will go off and get a great job and have a great life and be able to say that UCA assisted you with that. Couple things. I'm just going to list here tutoring services in various places. Talk to your instructor. Okay. They might not be the person to tutor you, but they're going to tell you where to go to get help. Other students in your class, the library and the Internet. Those are all places, those are resources for you to learn to study properly. So thank you for your time. And I hope some of this sinks in, and I hope you can utilize it. And good luck.