

I'm going to talk today about improving your grades. And as I asked Marvin whenever, we got started. Did he ever fail a test in college? And he said, yes, I have to. I the first one I ever failed was my freshman year and went to every class, took notes. Loved the class. It was kinda hard, but loved the class. And whenever I got the test, I remember I recognized none of the questions. I didn't know where she had gotten them. I panicked. I didn't answer a lot of the questions that she asked. And when I got, I knew I had done poorly, and when I got the test back, I was confirming that I failed it. And one of the things that I realized was I wasn't doing something which was reading the textbook and had no clue that she was going to be asking those questions. Also I did some of the things that we talk, we're gonna talk about today. So just let you know that it happens to all of us. We just because we don't do well on something. And I talk about flat-out failing something, but maybe it's a grade that's a C and you're used to getting A's. So I'm not going to judge you on how bad it is. Just know that if you are finding yourself needing to improve your grades, the strategies that we're going to talk about today are going to be incredibly helpful to you. So I'm assuming you can see my screen. Just nod, those of you who are, Okay. I'm going to keep it on this view if you don't mind, just because it makes it easier for me to deal with chat. But if you have any questions or any comments that you want to include and just drop them in the chat and I'll do my best to to monitor that. So first of all, I'm assuming you are here because you have some interest in the topic. And maybe you're thinking that there's something that you can do this semester or maybe even next semester that can help you. And so I applaud you for being here. Just know that if you are, your grades are a little bit lower than you'd hope, or maybe you're in jeopardy of failing a class. That you can do some constructive things to make a difference. And so we'll, we'll talk about how to go about doing that. The first thing that I want to do though, I'm not going to harp on growth mindset and fixed mindset. But I just want to keep this as kind of the umbrella of what we're talking about today. The idea that if you fail something, you can do something to improve your learning or your grade is the essence of growth mindset. And so if you have adopted a growth mindset where you believe that you can learn, you can improve, that you can use any kind of setback or challenge as a, as information to do better than you are embracing that growth mindset. It's that fixed mindset. Gets a failing grade or doesn't do as well as he or she hoped and says, that's it. I'm giving up. This is a, for me, that's a fixed mindset. So all of the things that we talk about today are going to be couched in that growth mindset kind of overview. So here's what I'm going to walk you through. Basically, if you ever make a low grade on, let's say a test, I'm going to ask you to ask yourself three questions. What did I do? What can I do differently? What else do I need to now? And really what I'm trying to get at is helping you develop what we call meta-cognition. Knowing what you know and don't know, and being aware of how you are adjusting your thinking and your study strategies. So knowing those three, asking yourself those three things can be incredibly important to help you diagnose what it is that happened and then help you make some changes along the way. So I'm going to deep dive into each of those questions. And the first one that I asked or have you ask yourself is why did I do? Is, you really have to take a hard look at the, the assignment that you failed. I hear students all the time who don't look, they look at the grade, but they won't actually look at the assignment. And they will assume that oh my gosh, if it's 72, let's say, well, okay, I can deal with a 72, but I'm not going to look at what I missed and what I got right. I'm going to really encourage you to push yourself to go back to assignments, even if they are kind of painful, to look and see what it is that's happened. We call it a test autopsy in journeys to success. And it is essential to this process. So you are, when you go back to that assignment or to that test, you need to be looking at what exactly happened that kept you from earning the grade that you want. Did you not follow the directions? I get a lot of students who will not complete answers because they didn't follow

the the follow directions very well. Were you rushed, did you feel like you were not, you didn't have enough time to do it that could contribute to your poor grade. Did you get confused by the question or the prompt? Maybe you knew the material, but the way it was asked was just confusing to you. And I think knowing that about yourself is really, really important because that's going to tell you what you need to do differently. Did you leave out sections of information? Did you leave sections blank? I always tell all of my students that if you have the time, don't skip any questions, write something, even if it's just gibberish and it is something that you think might entertain your professor who knows you might get a point. Or even if you just try to attempt to answer it with the information that you have, really, really important. Did you not know the information? That is a big one. A lot of times we just assume that if you didn't do well on a test or an assignment, you didn't know the material, and that's not always the case. But definitely if it is the case that you just didn't understand the psychology chapters as well as you thought, then that's going to help you be, figure out what you need to do differently. And then the last one is were you just not confident. I think sometimes we can be our own worst enemies in terms of, you know, feeling like we can't do this, are being intimidated by the experience. And there are things that you can do to be much more confident along the way. I'm gonna check chat just to make sure that there's nobody. Oh, it's just Marvin. Okay. Make sure nobody had any questions and feel free to drop them in the chat. Okay. So we talked about those questions and those things. All of those things will give you an improved self awareness about what it is. And I'll be honest with you, probably most of the times when I did not do as well on a test as I could have, it was because I rushed through it. So I knew that about myself and that allowed me then to go into future tests telling myself, calm down, take your time, don't hurry through something. The example that I gave you that actually was from a geology class. I didn't know the information. And so because I realized that then I started reading the textbook, started taking notes on it and using that to study from. So, what did I do? That is your first step. Then you need to start considering what can I do differently before the test or before the assignment? I can't tell you how many students do not ask professors, how is the test going to be laid out? What are we focusing on? They might ask about chapters, but they certainly don't ask how many multiple choice questions are there going to be? Am I going to expect, be expected to write an essay in this test? Sometimes your professors are really good and sharing that information, but not always. And so getting clarification on the assignment is really, really important because it can help you prepare better the next time. If your professor is doing an online exam, maybe you need to ask, are there any things that I can't use like, you know, can I use my book, can I use my notes. What are the parameters there so you can be better prepared to do, do well. Another piece of this is you need to ensure that you have not missed any content. Did you read all the assignments? Did you attend every class? Did you get notes? Sometimes students who don't do well on tests, it's because they missed a couple of class periods and that shouldn't be a big deal. But they never read the material. They never got notes from somebody. They never incorporated the missing information into their study strategies. And for some reason just assumed that since they weren't there, it wouldn't be on the test or I don't know what what is exactly going on there. I see it happen a lot of times. And probably one of the biggest ones is they didn't use affective study strategies. A lot of times students will tell me that they did not give themselves enough time. They procrastinated. That's always good to know because you need to change your habits there. And they also did not necessarily employ the most effective study strategies. And I'm gonna talk about those in a minute. I can tell you right now what doesn't work. And we're gonna talk about that and then talk about what does work. So effective study strategies. Well, let me just tell you right now. Ineffective study strategies would be rereading any material that you already read the first time. And it would be

re-reading notes that you already created. So if you are doing that to study in college, I need you to stop. Stop doing it because it is not affective. Cramming is not effective. Waiting till last minute is not effective. A lot of brain research around that. And then re-reading something you have already read is not effective as well. So get that and move that out of your, your toolbox of study strategies and put these tools in there. First of all, you need to space out your studying over time. A lot of students are really good at this. They figure this out. I've got to spend, instead of studying for three hours the night before, I'm going to do an hour three days before, and one two days before, and maybe an hour the day before. Great, great strategy. Another piece of it that you need to add though, is you've got to do what's called interleaving. Another word for it is mixing up the content. So if you are studying for a psychology test, and it is our chapters 1-4, you don't just study chapter one, then study chapter two, then chapter three, then chapter four, you mix up the content. And the reason that you want to do this is it is going to surprise your brain in a way and make your brain work a little harder to kind of remember what it was that maybe you studied four or five weeks ago whenever you pair it with something that you just recently study. And then the last piece of this that is really, really, really important. If you remember nothing that I say today, it is you have to practice, test yourself. And you have to practice retrieval. If you're taking a test. You are going to be doing this in real time. And don't you want to practice the test before you actually take it? If your professor gives you practice tests, Awesome. Take advantage of it. If he or she doesn't, then you need to create your own practice tests or your own retrieval practices, such as flash cards, such as covering up your notes and then trying to remember what it was that your notes, what were the key points of your notes? It could be talking to another classmate and quizzing them. It could be Quizlet, it could be a variety of things. But you want to do practice testing or retrieval practice is also what it's called. And you need to do it in a timed environment. So if your test is only an hour and it's got 30 questions, then you want to come up with 30 questions and you want to give yourself an hour. That is really, really crucial to helping you really refine your skills. Ok? But like I said before, if you leave, leave with nothing other than this, then you're going to be good. And that is that retrieval practice or practice testing is really important. And you can see I'm very, very adamant about this. Seriously, use practice tests, flashcards, teaching someone else, covered your notes. All of those things that I already talked about. Okay. I want you to take a moment right now. If you've got your mics and you're in a place where you can say this loud and proud, I want you to do that. So you're going to say it with me in just a second. Re-reading. Okay? Ready? Re-reading is not a study strategy. Let's say it one more time. Re-reading is not a study strategy. Okay. Thank you. A. I know you're alive, B. You got to do something that I wanted you to do. I I don't know how else to tell you that it's not a study strategy, but it's not. Well, I will tell you how, how to distinguish this re-reading or reading to begin with, is a storage practice. Practice, testing is a retrieval practice. You gotta do both because if you've never read the chapters to begin with, you're not going to be able to test yourself on it, but you need to do the retrieval part a majority of the time that you're doing testing. So research science says that 40 - 60%, if you want to just take the middle of that 50%, is what you need to be doing in terms of testing yourself on material. So how can we break this down? In one 60 minute session of studying, maybe you do look at the material for 25 minutes, but then you spend 35 minutes retrieving what you read. So this is particularly helpful if you didn't really read it very well to begin with, to monitor yourself and give yourself that much time. Again, if you've already read the material, you've got great notes on it, then I would say majority of your time, if not all of your time needs to be on practice testing or retrieving it. But if you are having to balance that, note that you're going to want to spend more time on practice there. Okay. So what can I do differently during a test? So we talked about, you know, basically a test

autopsy looking at what you did and examining it. And then we just talked about what can you do right before a test and we did a study strategy. Now while you're actually taking the test, I want to talk about some things that you need to do. One is you need to make sure that you follow the directions. So I did this exact question in one of my classes yesterday, I had students who did not follow directions. So don't assume that you know how to do a true-false question because your professor may be sending you, giving you something a little special, something a little different to do, and you want to make sure you capture all the points. So for example, this says directions: If the statement is true, write the word true next to it, if the statement is false, write the word false to, next to it and rewrite the entire statement to make it true. So in this case, you would get no points or very few points for an answer that looks like this. So f, estimate three times, even though factually the student understood that the statement is wrong or false, and that in the student knew how to make a change to it. The student didn't follow directions. And so your professors maybe very, very particular about how you answer things. And they may take off or not give credit for anything that is not exact. I'm thinking about like the sciences, especially chemistry. If you are missing a number or it is somewhere else than it should be. Oftentimes you'll miss the whole problem. Math is like that, can be like that too. So in this case, the student answer is correct. And it does follow the directions. Student that did it earlier, the one that I just showed you. They both probably knew the material, but they didn't necessarily both follow directions. And you want to make sure that you are able to do that. Okay, here's another example. Explain the significance of the statement to forget is to fail. And the directions tell you that you need to thoroughly answer the question and at least two sentences. Again, I see students that kind of skip these directions and they just throw down information that is not necessarily accurate and correct and precise. In this case, the student not only doesn't follow the directions, but also doesn't really answer the question. And that is something that you need to go back if you're missing points for things, go back and look and see. Did I did a truly answer it? Did I really give the detail that I needed? Sometimes your professors will say No, you need to do things a little differently. So here's an example of how that could look, and look right? So in this case, the student says The importance of the statement is that researchers have found it to be untrue and that for getting actually helps people develop strong memories, which is a strategy for success. So this is a thorough answer and a correct answer. This one is not. Does not show that you've understood the material at all. Okay. Y'all doin okay? You with me still? Getting some ideas? Alright, so just curious and I want you to type it into the chat right now. What is one thing that I have said so far that kind of resonated with you where you kind of went oh, okay. I hadn't thought of that before. It can also be something that you already do. And you just want to shout it out that you do it. So type in chat, something that resonated with you, something that made you go, Huh? That none of that or something that you already do? I'll give you a second to do that. So, Emily said spacing out study days, I'm going to assume Emily, that you already do that because that is very common for students to do. Haley, Thank you so much for being honest that you reread your notes, re-reading, You are not alone. There are a lot of students that do that. So mixing up chapters together when studying. Good Jacob, I'm glad that you recognize that as a good strategy. I I feel like we almost need to say it one more time. Re-reading is not a study strategy, but hopefully you got some good ideas to replace it with. Maggie says I separate each chapter and study and need to mix it up. Very good. Lots of good ideas there. So Jake says that I often re-read notes often because I feel like I don't register the information on the first read. And I think Jake, I'm so glad you said that because I think that is why a lot of students do. And it feels comfortable and it feels, I don't know, safe. I'm gonna challenge you to if you don't, if you don't feel like you know the material very well, don't worry. Cover it up. Try to remember what it was, that the content was, or what

the concepts were, and get as much on a clean sheet of paper as possible, then go back to the original work and see where the gaps are. So don't don't assume that. Okay, in order for me to study effectively, I have to clearly and concisely be able to remember everything. No, the whole process is you're gonna mess stuff up. And let's do that in a practice session with studying. So good. I feel like I'm winning today. Alright? So we talked about reading and following all directions. Take time to slow down and read carefully. Make sure you understand what's being asked, and also make sure that you leave nothing blank at all. So I'm going to talk a little bit about this graph. And then we're going to talk about some strategies of things to do afterwards. So for those, I'm not a math major, so it's really dangerous than I am even playing around with math. But this is an example of a midterm test that I gave a couple of weeks ago. And I asked my students to predict their midterm grade, their test grade. And I asked them, what do you think you made and then we compared it with what they actually made. So for those of you who are not familiar with kind of the line or the I guess, I don't know what you call this. I guess a scatter plot kind of thing. That some, dot that's on the line represents somebody who accurately predicted the exact score that they made. So this person right here, it's between a 60 and an 80, probably 75, I would say. So somebody thought they made a 75 and they actually made a 75. That means they have really good metacognition. And they knew what they knew and they knew. They knew they know what they know and they know what they don't know. This person up here, this little dot at the top that's on the line as well is somebody who predicted she would make a 94 and she made a 94. So that tells me that students really studied effectively. She was not only did she do a good job of mastering the content. She understood when she took the test, she got most everything right. The problem lies in anybody below the line. So here we've got somebody who thought they made an 85, that's the lowest dot there. They actually made a 35 on the test. They thought they made a B and they made an F. This person right here thought they made an 85 and they made a 40. That tells me that they have very poor metacognition, meaning that they thought they knew the material. And they were confident when they took the test that they knew the material, but they did not know the material. That points to the fact that they have poor metacognition and probably really poor study strategies. Chances are they re-read the material, sorry, the step on toes there. They re-read the material. They felt confident, but they didn't really know it. And so your professors are going to ask you to be able to recall information. That's why you need to study. Recall strategies or retrieval strategies in order to study effectively. Alright, so what can I do differently after the test? Again, I talked about that self-awareness. You need to analyze your results and determine what and why you missed or got right. Because I think there could be situations where students get answers right, and they don't know why they got it right, that's still not a good place to be. You want to know why you got something right or why you got something wrong. And being able to analyze how you did it. It's going to be really, really key. You need to read all feedback from your professor. So if they're giving you some suggestions like this was not very clear, or you define this incorrectly. Use that feedback to get a better sense of what you can do next time. I highly encourage and I know it's really difficult to do because it feels bad. But if you don't do well on a test or assignment, make an appointment with the professor to figure out what happened. This happened to me in college. I didn't do it my freshman year, but my sophomore junior year I failed a another test and I just got confused. I didn't study very well, thought I knew the material didn't really do the things I'm teaching you how to do. And I made an appointment with her and I said, hey, I just want you to know, this is how I studied. The test seemed to be difficult for me. Can you help me figure out what I could do differently next time? And she was quite lovely. And she didn't judge me. We don't judge you guys. We actually enjoy talking to you about making things better and helping you along the way. So you may find out in

that meeting that you studied the wrong stuff or that you should have done a different study strategy. All of that information is going to be helpful for sure. I said this before and I'll say it again. Please, please, please. Even if it's a good grade, don't just look at your grade, just the number or the letter and just put it away, go back through it and actually figure out why you did well and why you didn't do well, depending on what it is. Do that all. Alright, I want to give you some bonus information. I call it bonus information because I think everything I've given you up till now is really hopefully helpful to you in terms of what you can do to study better and what you can do to kind of improve your self awareness. But there's another piece of this that I think is really, really key. And you need to figure out if you need to panic or not. I said don't panic. So maybe not panic, but at least be concerned or not. There can be two different ways to handle a low grade. One is not worrying about it at all because you don't realize how it's affecting your grade. And the other is worrying way too much because you don't know how it affects your, your overall grade. So if you get a low grade in a course for an exam or a test or an assignment. One of the first things you need to do after you do all the stuff that I talk about is go and figure out where it fits into the whole scheme of all of the grades. So for example, a student makes a 32 out of a 100 on a, on a college algebra test, that student may panic and think, oh my god, I'm going to fail this class. Not necessarily. The other side of that is they could go, oh, it's no big deal. I get plenty of other yeah, we got lots of time in the semester. I'm going to be able to make that up. Maybe not. It depends on how your professor has basically organized the class. So I'm not gonna make you do math here. But I just wanted to show you that a student he makes a 32 out of a 100 on the first test, makes the 70 out of a 100, a C on the next test, makes 50 out of 50, which is a 100% on their homework, then what could they do to pass the class? Could they possibly pass the class if they had a final that was worth a 150 points. Right now currently sitting before they take the final, they have a 60%. So it doesn't look very good. It looks like, oh, well I've got a D. I'm probably going to make a D. But that may not necessarily be the case. That student could actually make a 90% on the final and pull out a 71%. So knowing how that those low grades or a low grade could potentially affect the rest of your grades, can help you kind of focus on what you need to know. So this student right here, had she been told, hey, look, you can do well in this class you can pass, but you're going to have to make a 90% on the final. That tells that student how she needs to prepare for that final. Maybe she needs to spend a lot more time a mixture that she goes to tutoring, make sure she talks to the professor, make sure she's got everything she needs to do to study to, to earn that for sure. So you want to make sure that you look at how it affects your low grade, so that you need to know how the low-grade may affect your overall grade. You need to ask yourself, how is it calculated, what other grades are still in play? Will I be able to do what it takes to raise my grade? That is going to be a question you have to answer. I always tell students mathematically, you, you could make a B in this class even if you failed on some thing. But honestly, you have to talk to yourself about your willingness to put in the work to make that happen. So you need to ask yourself those questions. You also need to look at how a overall low grade might affect your term GPA, or might have some other effects as well. So you gotta do that. Walking through all those scenarios. I know it can be painful. But you have to ask yourself, well, if I make an F in this class or a D in this class, or maybe even a C in this class. Is that going to trigger some other things that make it, make it harder for me to stay in my degree plan or get financial aid or something to that effect. So those are big, heavy questions. But I do think it's something that you want to think about, especially if you're concerned about pulling that grade up later on. And just a friendly reminder, your advisors are great to talk to about this. Your professors are great, peer mentors are great. So looking for those support mechanisms or the support people to be able to help you talk this through can be really, really helpful.

I'm going to wrap this up as the last slide, but I want to open it now to questions or any comments that you want to make as well. You can type them in the chat. If you want to take yourself off mute, you can do that as well. And we can hear your live voice. That would be great. Just a reminder that if you want to improve your low grade or a grade, no matter how low it is. You need to ask yourself these three questions. What did I do? What got me to that grade? What can I do differently? And already many of you already said, I'm going to stop re-reading as a study strategy only. And then what else do I need to know about this grade? What impact could it potentially have, and how can I plan for that? So I said a lot, I talked a lot. Now want to hear if you've got any questions. By the way, speakers love questions. Oh, Thank You. Are, and nice comments as well. I would love to hear anybody and you can put it in chat. One thing you are going to do starting tomorrow that I talked about, one thing that you're going to do. Go put that in chat. I think I'm going to start trying to spread out my studying. I felt like I was trapped. Whenever I study, I feel like I'm trying to cram a lot in at once even if I'm doing it like weeks before an exam or something. But I feel like I really just need to space it out. Like anywhere from like maybe from now I should, maybe set a timer, hour and a half to an hour. And then once that timer's up, just I give myself like a short break to just sort of process everything. Jake, That's fantastic. I'm going to give you an idea of how to do it. It's called the Pomodoro technique. You may have heard of it. And it is basically setting a time for timer for 25 minutes. And then when the timer goes off, you you take a five-minute break and then you go back and do another 25 minutes and then a five minute break. And you do that as, as long as you want. But it keeps you from getting, you know, actually keeps you from getting your focus lost. Because we know from science that, that our attention spans are only about 20 minutes. And so if you're studying for two hours, it's probably not really, truly deep studying. So if you do it in small little chunks like that, it can be really helpful. Good. So some people said reaching out to professors, I'm so glad that you're going to do that. And I like that Jacob said, starting to look over my test, even if they're good grades, I'll share a story with you. And if you know her and tell her, I will kill you. But my daughter is a college senior. And when she was a college junior and she got into some of our upper level classes that were a little harder. She really was challenged with some quizzes that a professor was giving her and she was failing every single one of them and she freaked out. So I had to calm her down and say, first of all, we need to diagnose what's going on. So I took her through the steps that we just did. And what it was what was happening was she was not reading the material as deep as she needed to. And whenever I went over the test, quiz questions with with her, she was getting some of them right and she had no idea how she got them right. And I said that's about as bad as not knowing why you got it wrong. And so she really has, she ended up talking to the professor and the two of them worked out a better strategy for her. It was that she wasn't academically a solid student because she had been up into that point, wasn't because she didn't, you know, wasn't aware of some of the things, but she really had to learn another skill set that she hadn't at that point. And she was able to improve her grade and ended up with a decent grade in that class. So, but it was her identifying oh my gosh, I got some of these right. I didn't even know why. And I got some wrong, I don't know why. Okay. What what's going on that's causing me to be completely missing stuff. So Abby says, I've been changing my study habits, mostly getting rid of distractions. Very, very good. And then looks like Nandini will try to understand the concept and talk to the professor after the test. How many of you are going to start asking what the test is going to be like or do you already do that. Emily, do you, do you mind sharing if you have an opportunity to take off mute, tell me what do you usually ask whenever you ask that. I usually just asked what chapters it's going to cover. So I know what to look over. Okay. Do you ask what the format is? No. I think mostly they like they usually tell us. Okay, good. From my experience. Yeah.

No, that's wonderful and I'm glad professors do that. They don't always remember to do that. Or they may go, well, it's going to be a mix of multiple choice and true, false, and some open ended questions. And so you could follow up with, gee Could you tell me how many or how much of it is going to be multiple choice. The midterm that I just gave in one of my classes, the students I think, were aware that there were open-ended questions and multiple choice. They just were surprised that there were so many open-ended and so had they figured that out earlier, or asked about it, then I think they could have prepared a little bit. Alright, I appreciate your time and attention. I hope that you learned something to do differently. Sounds like a lot of you did, so I appreciate your, your expressing that. Do know that it is not the end of the world. You're going to learn from it if you really take the time to do the things that I talked about and you are going to get better. And you may find that you're a few semesters in and everything's going well and then boom, like my daughter end up having a kind of a meltdown the first semester of her junior year because the thing she used to do weren't working because, she just had to adapt and change. So Marvin, is there anything else that you'd like me to share? No. This was wonderful. You covered everything that you needed to cover. They engaged and I can't say enough. What she was saying about re-reading is not studying. I really hone that with my, with my students that you have to, reading it's passive. It's passive learning. So active learning means you are manipulating the material in some kind of way where you have to question yourself to see if you know if you know it or not. And so one of the best ways to do that is to create practice quizzes for your quizzes for yourself. So to go through your, if you're going to read the notes, write yourself a question and see if you can answer it. So manipulating the material is, is what you're going to need to do instead of re-reading. So I can't reiterate what she said enough about that. So this was really great. I thank you all for engaging, for turning on your camera some of you. And I'd like to thank you, Dr. Baldwin for doing this presentation today. Thank you. Thank you so much.