UNBC Academic Success Centre

Math Study Skills

Read what the instructor will be lecturing on before you go to class.

Reading mathematics is not like reading a novel or even history. Speed reading techniques are not appropriate. Every word and symbol is important to the meaning. Do not skip the symbolic part of the text. This is often the most important part. If you do not understand a symbol, look in the glossary or in the earlier part of the text. Symbols are often explained when they are first introduced. If you still can not find out what a symbol means, ASK!

Every time the author does a problem, do it on your own—either before or after you read his or her explanation. This makes sure you know what steps have been shown and, more importantly, which ones were omitted.

Try to formulate a question about it. Often if you can ask a specific question, you can answer it yourself. If you can't answer it, you know what part of the instructor's lecture requires your complete attention. Your question is ready if the lecture does not clear up your misunderstanding.

Understand the concepts

Don't be satisfied with vague ideas about how to work problems. Do the examples yourself, understand the concept illustrated, then try making up your own examples. Keep in mind that the questions on the exam may be very different from the example in the book.

Be sure you understand the concepts before you practice. Then practice will help you remember and give you confidence in your mastery. Force yourself to remember the methods as you work problems; don't look back in the book. Mathematics is not a spectator sport. The only way to learn mathematics is by doing it.

(whether they are graded or not).

The pace is much faster in college and keeping up to date with assignments

- 3. Translate the information into an equation get into the habit of doing this for easy problems. The longer problems will not seem as difficult.
- 4. Solve the equation you have written and label your answer then find any other quantities to be found.
- 5. Return to the original problem and check your answer(s). Do they make sense in the original problem and answer the question posed in the problem?