7 KEYS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR
BRAIN POWER!

1. **Externalize important information.** In other words, on anything you'll need to recall later. Make lists. email/text reminders to yourself. Write things down brain energy holding information in your memory. "Get it out of your head!" Take notes Write reminders on post-it notes or so that you're not wasting valuable

2. **Externalize time-related tasks and due-dates.** Conserve valuable brain energy by NOT relying on your brain to remember everything. Instead, write down deadlines. Record all you need to do in a planner or electronic calendar. Use digital reminders. Set a timer while doing homework, taking a study break, or to remind you to get somewhere on time.

3. **Break up lengthy tasks into many small steps.** Got 100 pages to read? Plan to read 25 pages a day over 4 days. Got a big paper due? Write down on your calendar all the sub-tasks, from finding sources to developing your thesis to creating your bibliography (the Writing Center Tutors can help you to this). Break it down!
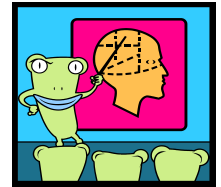
4. **Externalize sources of motivation.** Some people believe all motivation should come "from within." That's a commendable notion…in an ideal world. In the real world, however, we all appreciate some outside motivation. Create incentives (food, fun, flopping…) for when you've finished tough tasks and reward yourself with them when you've earned them. Your brain will thank you.

5. **Externalize mental problem-solving.** Get what you can out of your head! (Already said, I know—but it applies here, too.) Use calculators. Make lists (of vocab, formulas, rules, events, concepts…). Draw diagrams. Put what you need to learn on flashcards and walk around with them in your pocket. Or shuffle cards of events and then rearrange 'em into order. Write it now and review it often to better recall it later.

6. **Replenish your brain's fuel tank.** When your computer freezes or gets sluggish, what do you do? You shut it down and restart it. Typically, it doesn't take long for a computer to return to normal. The same is true for your brain. Here are some ways to jumpstart and replenish your brain's power supply:
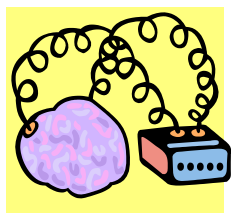
- **Take breaks.** (Intersperse easier stuff with your heavy duty work.)
- **Exercise.** (Aerobic activity will > your energy and the brain's functionality.)
- **Hydrate. (**Carry around a water bottle.)
- **Visualize your goals to stay motivated.** (Eyes on the prize.)
- **Eat brain-boosting snacks** (fruit, carrots, yogurt, nuts & other protein…)
- **Use positive self-talk.** ("I'm competent." "I got this.")

7. **Repeat to the point of "automaticity."** Practice the essentials (rules, problems, dates) so much you don't have to work at it. What becomes automatic, requires 50% less brain power —which means you'll have brain energy for something else!