

it. Suspension of judgment is one of the first things a learner has to learn: we have to learn how to entertain ideas without promptly either affirming them or denying them. Here again it is a matter of that difficult business of restraining the mind's own native impetuosity, the natural desire of the reason to be unreasonable. We want to jump to conclusions before we have reached them; to take sides, make a stand, vehemently affirm or deny

before we have considered, examined, tested, proved."

St. Thomas Died in 1274

Memorization may seem more worthwhile to you if you perceive it, like Victor White does, as a tool of dispassion. Memorization is not commitment. It's just a way to hold onto thoughts as you sift through sometimes frightening new ideas looking

for the ones you will come to live by. Remember that—even if you can't remember when St. Thomas died. Meanwhile, you can be sure researchers will press on, looking for a memorizing formula you can live with. ■

Patricia Westfall, a contributing editor for Insider, spends snowed-in Iowa winters searching for the ultimate in study methods.

To Each His Own Study Method: Four Scholars Describe Theirs



No Time for Calculation

Chemical engineering senior Devon Clausing does everything she can to save time when studying for her classes at University of Cincinnati.

The president of one engineering club and active in two others, Clausing is forced to use what little study time she has very efficiently in order to maintain her 3.7 grade average.

"My freshman year I did all my homework every night," she said. "As I got more involved in activities, I didn't have time to do all of it. That's when I started finding short-cuts."

Most of an engineer's study time is spent working problems, she said. To save time, Clausing sets up the equations to solve the problems and makes sure she understands them, but she stops short of doing the actual calculations.

For non-engineering courses, Clausing will read assigned material before a class only if she expects the teacher to call on her for an answer. Otherwise, she prefers to read the material as time permits after the professor has lectured on it.

Clausing keeps books for non-engineering classes in the bathroom "by the john," and is "able to keep up pretty well that way."



Ready, Set, Write

For most students, writing papers at the last minute is a final act of desperation. For Katherine Donnelly, University of Chicago sophomore, it's just good strategy—one that produces "A" work.

When Donnelly has a paper to write, she reads over the relevant material two or three times and thinks deeply about her topic. Then she waits.

The night before the paper is due, Donnelly arranges her notes and books on an isolated library desk and sits down to write. The words pour out quickly and steadily, racing against the clock. When the frenzy subsides, Donnelly proofreads the paper she's created and tosses it into a folder, to be turned in the next day.

The California native says the best papers she's written have been produced in a last-minute flurry of activity.

One epic effort—a comparison of the themes of freedom and authority in *King Lear*, Kant, *Paradise Lost*, *The Federalist Papers* and Plato—was written in a fast four hours.

The last-minute papers almost always earn "A's," says Donnelly. Papers she writes over a long time period come

out sounding stilted and usually receive "B's." "When I'm under pressure to do it and I'm tired, I just say exactly what I want to say and get it over with," she says. "You don't have time to overthink."

Although her last-minute method has proven itself over and over again, Donnelly—a very conscientious student—has reservations about using it:

"I don't always trust it. Something inside me says, 'Don't leave it until the last minute.'"



Booking It

Roberta Rusch, a senior at St. John's College, won't have any tests this year, but she often spends six hours a day studying in the library—for the fun of it.

This self-motivation is typical of students at the small school in Annapolis, Maryland. The demanding St. John's curriculum emphasizes traditional liberal arts, such as grammar, logic and rhetoric. The reading list includes most of the "great books" of Western tradition.

There are no tests at St. John's, but grades based on papers, homework and class participation are recorded on each student's transcript. More important than grades, however, is the "don rag"—an annual oral evaluation of each student's progress.

Without the threat of impending exams, St. John's students must discipline themselves to study regularly, says Rusch.

"You've got to form habits. Once you're into the habit of regular study, it becomes a part of you." She adds, "I think basically people here like to study. We're interested in the books."



In the Swim

Yale University senior Dan Ortiz finds that swimming every day helps him study better.

"Keeping in shape and having that mental relaxation is good," he said. "It gives my mind an hour or so to rest."

"If I don't swim I start feeling heavy and fatigued. I begin fading out around 10 o'clock."

Ortiz, an English major whose grades earned him entry into Phi Beta Kappa honorary society, tries to break his study time into two- or three-hour blocks. He says he can't concentrate much longer than that. He also enjoys changes of scenery when he studies.

For writing, which he finds difficult, Ortiz holes up in "a rather sterile engineering library." He doesn't know many engineers, so he's not distracted by friends interrupting.