Math Study Skills

Chapters 6 & 7
Take Assessment 1 – 10 questions
Chapter 6 – Your class notebook

- Assessing your organizational style
- Please take 5 minutes to write a paragraph assessing your current state of organization.
- Tell how those habits help, or hinder, you in math class
Three rings, no circus

- The author suggests you get a sturdy, yet thin (2 inches or less) three ring binder
- This binder should be dedicated to your math class alone
- The first page in the binder should be an info page about yourself
- The next five sections should have their own tabs:
  - Handouts
  - Class notes
  - Homework
  - Exams
  - Glossary
Some points about the five sections

- **Handouts** – in this class, basically what I gave you on the first night
- **Class notes** – more on this subject in Chapter 8
- **Homework** – make sure you keep your homework in order for easy reference when studying
- **Exams** – make sure you ask about the correct answers and then write them in red ink
- **Glossary** – words come up in lectures, textbook reading, and homework. Try to write the definition in your own words, so it makes the most sense to you
More on math notebooks

- Use a three-hole punch to punch pages that do not already have holes
- Avoid the habit of shoving pages in the pouches in the front of the binder
- Bring your notebook to class
- I may be somewhat impressed if your notebook is neat and organized, but contrary to the book, I am not going to give up test answers in my joy over your notebook
Exploring the notebook format

- Take 5 minutes to explain why each of the five notebook sections may benefit you in this math course:
  - Handouts
  - Class notes
  - Homework
  - Exams
  - Glossary
Chapter 7 – Your textbook and homework

- The author says your textbook should be one of ‘your best buddies’ – not only would it be an expensive buddy ($140 for a soft cover), it would be lame.
- The point the author is making is a math book cannot be read like a novel, or like a phonebook.
- It doesn’t have much of a plot.
- You can’t just pick and choose your chapters without understanding the rest of the chapters.
- Take three minutes and explain how often and how well you use your math textbook.
How to read a math textbook

1. Survey the material – quick glance-through, making note of the structure of the section
2. Survey the homework – is it all small problems, story problems, or some of each?
3. Read the section – jot down glossary terms, do practice example problems – be active when reading
4. Survey the material again – make sure you didn’t miss anything vital
5. Homework
Trying the reading technique

- Take three minutes and point out any problems you think you may have in using the five-step “reading technique” in the previous slide. OR, if you can see it being helpful to you, please write down why.
What if you get bogged down?

- Before moving on to the next section, try some of the practice problems and examples in the current section.
- Write down any questions you may have, to share with the instructor or study group.
- Be sure to ask about the stickier sections in class; remember, we don’t want to get stuck or lost, because things move faster the further in the semester we go.
Doing homework

- So far, you’ve all done a great job in turning in neat, complete homework
- From here going forward, homework will be harder and more involved
- Try not to go into your homework section cold
- Warm up your mind by going over the textbook and/or notes before starting homework
Seven step homework procedure

- Begin by reading the textbook section
- Review your class notes
- Start the homework. If necessary, search the book or your notes for similar examples.
- Record each step neatly. (so far, you all seem to do this)
- Never do homework in pen.
- 10 Minutes of Frustration rule – after 10 minutes, stop and ask about the problem in class
- Always finish your homework by doing a problem you know how to do – if your last problem fell in the “10 Minutes of Frustration”, then go back and do an easy one again – end on a high note
What if I get bogged down doing homework?

- First, take a 15 minute break from the work
- Try to contact me if necessary: rletterl@ivcc.edu
- Use the IVCC tutor center (math lab in B)
- Ask one of your classmates for an assist
The Best you can be

- Take five and describe which of the techniques in either section (reading the textbook, doing homework) will be useful to you. If one of the techniques will NOT be useful, please write about that, too.