CHECKLIST: HOW DOES YOUR STUDY AREA SHAPE UP?

☐ I have a specific place that feels like the “right” place to study—it is not used for other purposes, but is dedicated to this type of work (e.g., since my bed is also used for sleeping, I don’t want to confuse my body by studying there: it will want to slip into that other use, and I will have to fight off sleepiness/excessive relaxation).

☐ My chair is comfortable enough to study (encouraging good posture, to fight fatigue), but not so comfortable as to encourage me to slump or slack off.

☐ The lighting is good—not too bright, not too dark. I can see my materials without eyestrain.

☐ My study area is reasonably distraction-free. Friends/roommates will not interrupt, and the TV and radio/iPod are not on (exception: if you prefer to have background music on to screen out other noises, be sure that the music does not carry interest through its lyrics, etc.—the key word is “background”).

☐ My cellphone, FaceBook, instant messaging or other interactive devices are muted/closed, so they will not take my attention away from study.

☐ I have room to work with my materials without too much crowding and confusion.

☐ I bring all the materials I expect to be working with to the study space before beginning my study, so I can avoid having to get up and down to fetch things.

☐ I have a pad of paper handy to note down intrusive thoughts, in order to remember that I will deal with them later.

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Study areas on campus beyond your room may include study rooms in your residence hall, Morris Library study areas (a great variety of settings—wonderful when research is part of the work), Daugherty Hall (in Trabant Center)…and many, many more.

If you’re living with family or friends, it’s very tempting to put study off until “after this chore/activity”—consider building into your day study time in the library or somewhere else on or near campus, so it does not have to compete with your responsibility to your family/community.