

COMMENT

At the beginning of your accounting studies, I suggest you create a folder or a file containing basic information. This involves grouping in the material in the same location, which can be used for more than one course, or even the entire program.

Here are examples of what such a permanent personal file can contain:

- a complete set of model financial statements;
- a list of useful Web links (e.g. www.ifrs.org);
- basic formulas (e.g. ratios) and discount tables;
- a glossary;
- diagrams and tables that summarize the essentials of the subject at a glance;
- various summaries of the subjects studied.

Prior to showing up for class, I suggest that, at very least, you perform a preliminary reading of the topics on the agenda in order not to be completely lost after some 15 minutes. For instance, before attending a class on fixed assets, one must have acquired knowledge as to their nature (definition), be able to identify that which forms part of the acquisition cost, know that this cost must be amortized and that there are various methods of doing so. You will quickly observe that these are the first concepts set out in the Table of Contents of any financial accounting volume. It does not appear to me to be necessary to know all the Hows and Whys in the most intricate detail. However, by understanding what amortization is, for instance, you will more easily and quickly grasp the operation of the various methods explained by the professor.

Active Listening

Attending classes is a dynamic activity that requires constant mental involvement. It requires more than simply sitting down and waiting for the professor to transfer his or her knowledge to us. Active listening requires training and concentration in order to establish, as soon as possible, the basic premises for an understanding of the subject-matter. The goal is simple: understanding and learning the greatest amount of knowledge in a given time period.

Here are a few items to consider in order to promote your in-class learning.

- ☺ ***Adopt a constructive attitude.*** Being positive and willing to learn are the keys to success. After all, you are there since you deliberately chose to be there. When you come to class, consider the new subject-matter that will be taught in that class as an opportunity rather than something you are compelled to do. Have the reflex to use the teaching that is provided to you optimally. In other words, denigration and criticism are a waste of time. Instead, show a constructive attitude.
- ☺ ***Remain focused.*** Since each course relates to new concepts, one must find ways to not lose sight of the unifying thread of what is being taught. Unfortunately, it happens too often that being distracted, if only for a few minutes, will impede the understanding of what follows. Attending a course without really understanding what is being debated is a no no.

COMMENT

The pace of the course is too slow for you?
You're finding it difficult to keep your focus?



Find something to do!

You can consult, read or annotate the reference volume,
draw small diagrams summarizing the subject-matter
in the margin,
complete your notes taken during the course,
or even answer the review questions appearing
at the back of the volume.



Remain active and concentrated!

P.S.: I am only referring here to the activities relating to your training!

- ☺ ***Visualize the progression of the teaching.*** It appears to me to be important to examine the manner in which the subject-matter is presented in order to better absorb it. In other words, one must elicit the structure relied on. For instance, understanding the nature of fixed, semi-variable and variable costs is crucial to an adequate determination of the break-even point or of the contribution margin.

It is very useful to identify prerequisites from one topic to the next.