Tips for Doing Well in a Math Course

Study Routine and Attending Classes:

Before class:
1. Review notes from previous classes. Remind yourself of what you already know.
2. Do the required readings before class.
   - Familiarize yourself with the main concepts and new vocabulary. You do NOT need to understand everything!
   - Write down questions that you have. You will get answers to these during class.

During class:
1. Attend ALL classes.
2. Write down everything that is written on the board (even if you don’t understand something).
3. Ask questions! No question is a stupid question.
4. Participate in all the activities.

After class:
1. Review your notes within 24 hours.
   Here are some strategies for review:
   - Focus on understanding the steps and process.
   - Think of the “big ideas” of the lesson. Use the course learning objectives to help guide you.
   - Add notes to your cheat sheet or create a summary of main points.
   - If you don’t understand something, find out the information (on-line, from a peer, from the professor, textbook, Math Drop-in Centre, etc.). Don’t leave gaps in your knowledge!
   - Try the questions you did together in class on your own.

2. Do all the assigned homework and practice questions.
   - Practice, practice, practice. It cannot be emphasized enough in math!
   Math is a skills-based course meaning that you must know the theory AND you must be able to apply it to specific problems.

3. Seek help if you are stuck!
   - If you’ve tried your best to solve a problem and it’s just not working out, get help!
     Don’t waste too much time and make yourself very frustrated.
   - To get help, review a similar example from class, look at the relevant section in your textbook, find on-line resources related to the topic, ask a friend or drop by the Math Centre!
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Preparing for a math assessment:

**Quiz or test:**

- Look at the learning outcomes for the content that is being tested. This is what you need to know for the quiz or test!
- Prioritize what you know very well, what you somewhat know and what you need to re-learn.
- Review your course notes, textbook and cheat sheet to remind yourself of the theory.
- Do practice questions, do more practice questions, and then do some more. Keep doing them until you can do them all correctly. (If you are stuck, get help!)
- Time yourself on practice assessments at home. Create test-like conditions (e.g. no calculator) and see how long it takes you! If you are not quick-enough, you have to keep practicing.

**Math assignment:**

- **Understand** the questions. What is given? What is being asked?
- Identify the topics and main concepts for each question.
- Review these topics and concepts in your notes, textbook or other resources.
- See how many marks each question is worth. This is a good estimator of how much work you will need to do/show.
- Process is important! Show all the steps.
- Arrive at a final answer. Is your answer reasonable?
- Keep your solutions organized.
  
  This is a good guide to follow:

  1. Write down what is given in the question in point form.
  2. Draw a diagram or visual representation of the situation in the question, if you can.
  3. Write down the unknown. Include the units, if applicable.
  4. Write down the formula, theorem or concept that you will use to solve for the unknown.
  5. Show all your steps. Check for reasonableness of your final answer.
  6. Write the final answer in sentence form using the context from the question.