How to upgrade my learning method

In the ninth grade, I encountered a significant academic challenge in my approach to learning, particularly in science.

At the outset of the semester, I harboured the belief that my previous learning methods were foolproof. As a high school student, I assumed my customary strategy of comfortably listening to lectures without actively engaging with the material would suffice. The practice of not taking detailed notes seemed effective as I could effortlessly grasp concepts and theories during class. Post-lecture, I would diligently complete my assignments, leaving weekends for leisure, dismissing the need for further review or additional study materials. This approach, I believed I smart enough and would undoubtedly lead to success in examinations.

However, reality proved me wrong, and I faced a rude awakening during the midterm exam. Despite my initial confidence, I barely passed the exam. The moment I received my test paper, a wave of panic engulfed me. I took several deep breaths before I recovered, and slowly walked out of the classroom while holding on to the wall. This unexpected setback left me questioning the efficacy of my previous learning methods.

I have always studied like this before, and my test scores were pretty good every time. What happened this time? Have I become stupid? Or did someone play a trick on me and secretly chang my answer? When I leaned on the wall and thought that the median grade for the class was 82%, I knew I was in big trouble!

In the following week's science class, I found myself confused, and unsure of how to rectify my study approach. Seeking inspiration, I observed my fellow students, particularly those who excelled in the subject.

In front of me is Ali, an old friend and elementary school classmate, known for his consistently good grades. However, this time, even he had fared poorly. I looked from my place, Ali seemingly attentive in class. But if you look carefully, you would find he looks like listening to the teacher, but why was he always lowering his head? I discovered his secret. He was covertly reading comics under his handouts. This revelation exposed his lack of engagement during lessons, emphasizing that intelligence alone was insufficient without active class participation.

Not far from Ali is Miya, a little girl with some freckles on her nose. She is a new classmate in high school. She listened to the teacher carefully. Her folder on the table, and she was taking notes while listening to the lecture. I remember she did well in the exam this time. So how did she learn it?

Last weekend, when Ali and I went to the library, we met her in the study area by the window. She was sitting there with her laptop, handouts and homework on the table. We said hello to her and chatted for a while. I remember there were no games or comics on her desk. She was probably going to study on her own. By the way, what was opened in the browser was the science course at Khan Academy. Did she learn science again? And did she do the Khan Academy exercises after reviewing the lecture notes?

Oh, it turns out that she not only did the homework given by the teacher, but also found extracurricular homework by herself, and she also spent extra time reviewing.

Comparing our academic outcomes, it became evident that our grades correlated with our study habits and attitudes. Ali's neglectful approach failed, my passive acceptance of classroom learning yielded marginal success, and Miya's proactive and persistent dedication resulted in near-perfect marks.

This realization led me to a conclusion that, while unpalatable, underscored the essence of high school studies – success is not solely determined by innate intelligence but by a combination of hard work, proactivity, and persistence. Merely coasting through classes and sporadically studying would not yield optimal results. Instead, adopting a planned approach, investing time daily, engaging in additional exercises, and absorbing knowledge progressively emerged as the keys to academic success.

In light of these insights, I find myself contemplating a shift in my study habits. The wishful notion of a magical "memory bread" that could effortlessly transfer knowledge to my brain seems enticing. However, the reality demands a more structured and disciplined approach to learning.