

Super Study, Quiet Hours create temporary inconvenience

BY EMMA HTUN

Now that we're several weeks into the school year, all of us have experienced the lovely, wonderful block of time called Super Study. Isn't it superb? Isn't it just divine that we get to sit

very nicely in a classroom full of people we'd like to talk to and do our homework quietly?

By now, most of you juniors are debating whether to cart me off to the nearest asylum I'm sure. But luckily for my sanity, my response to the lines above is "weirded out look...iiiiight..."



Students read and do homework in Super Study.

Super Study is definitely not everyone's cup of tea. This nightly hour and a half of forced work time is generally not appreciated by the NCSSM public. There are a variety of complaints: it's hard to focus for 90 minutes straight; you can't discuss work with your classmates; and you can't bring a laptop so it's impossible to do webassign (which now days makes up a good part of our work load). Most of us, I'm sure, feel a little like being let out of a jail cell once the allotted time is up and we run off to Happy Half or retire to our rooms. "I'm freeeee, I'm freeee!"

Likewise, seniors are undergoing something similar to Super Study from 8:30-10:00, though not quite as confining. Study Hours are in affect for this trimester, meaning we have to sign out every time we want to go off hall and we're supposed to be in our room or in the lounge studying.

Many find this a little ridiculous because after all, did we seniors not prove our mettle in the last two trimesters of last year without Super Study? Was it thought that we would forget all our study skills over summer? After actually getting into NCSSM, I'm sure many of us are a little offended that we're forced into a study hall, since supposedly we're here for our good grades and (usually) decent study skills.

But of course, there is (supposedly) a reason for all this. After the first couple weeks of school, most of us have probably realized that the work load is not too peachy. And I confess, I'm one of those freaky anomalies who actually didn't mind Super Study my junior year. I found, after the first couple days of being bored to tears and listening to my Mp3 player that if I worked on my homework instead of sulking, I could

actually get stuff done. Gasp, shock, and amazement.

In reality, there are simple ways to get around the troubles of not having a laptop. If you have an essay to do and you're at a loss for lack of laptop, write out the rough draft. If you have a webassign, try to print out the webassign problems before hand. A bit of a waste of paper, but it helps.

As for Study Hours...all I can say is I guess we're supposed to be trying to get back into the swing of things after our not-long-enough summer. This is a minor annoyance and at least we can still get out for meetings and trips to the library. You just can't vacuum for housekeeping or blare music.

So, the question is, how can we make things more interesting? How can we "spice up" our mandatory study time? An anonymous source says "give out food and drinks!"

Time management proves to be valuable skill for NCSSM success

Balancing sleep, study, socializing, and sports provides challenges in a busy environment

BY STACY KVIT

A hypothetical Student X wakes up in the morning, realizing he almost overslept. He quickly dresses up and rushes to class (no time for breakfast!). After Student X survives through this class as well as several others, he goes back to his room, exhausted. There, he just collapses on his bed and takes a short nap or browses the internet, deeply irritated by Websense. Around 6 pm he goes to dinner and an hour later finally gets to do some homework. According to Murphy's second law, it takes much longer than he thought it would, especially when combining chemistry problems with the latest episode of his favorite show. Suddenly, he realizes that it is 2 a.m. and that he's very tired, so with a heavy head this poor student drifts off to sleep. Next morning, as you might foresee, he wakes up at 7:55, and the vicious cycle starts all over.

You may or may not identify yourself with Student X, but unfortunately, many students seem to have a similar daily schedule (maybe not as bad, though). I confess that his daily routine is based on one of my "worst days". However, as you might see later, I am working on it!

NCSSM has a deep-rooted reputation of being a "hard school", which might sound equivalent to "academically challenging", especially for starting-year juniors. Yet, eventually (perhaps after a couple of all-nighters), they realize that academics is not the core concern. It is much more difficult to balance those mandatory classes with something just as essential- sleep and non-academic activities: sports, clubs, etc. The old "words of wisdoms" declares that you get only two out of three (sleep, studies and socializing) and students prove those words countless times by dozing off in class.

I would not call this wisdom, but rather poor time management. Ideally, you get eight hours of sleep, leaving you 14 hours of a conscious state. About seven hours out of these get eaten off by classes and meals. Challenging school

homework plus tutorials would require three more hours, leaving you four hours of spare time. This is not much, of course, but you can still fit exercise and perhaps a club into this time slot. A minimum would be an hour of workout each day plus going to "Happy Half", while you still will have more than a hour left for going out to 9th Street, solving differential equations, breeding guppy fish, or whatever your hobby might be. So, theoretically, a balanced day is possible.

In practice, it is not. In the real world, time seems to move in strange ways- it flies when you IM with a friend, yet it creeps when you're in a class or Super Study. You can try to manage it, though, by downloading a simple timer and limit yourself to 30 minutes, for example, of IMing per séance. Then let the timer buzz release you from the cyber world. Also, get a very good alarm, especially if you tend to sleep soundly. However, do not rely on alarm to wake you up after four hours of sleep- eventually you'll get so tired that even the cannon fire will not disturb your nap. If 8 hours of sleep is something completely impossible for you, get at least seven--this will not just boost your class performance, but also your alertness, therefore decreasing your drowsiness during classes. As for a daily workout, you can at least do a couple of warm-up exercises each morning, which will wake you up and give you an additional boost of energy to start the day.

Also, do not waste those extra few hours you have each day from a free block--if you want a nap, take one, but perhaps do a little homework instead, so you will not have to do it later. Or you can go to lunch out down on 9th street to reward yourself. If it helps, each day write a short plan of what you plan to start, finish, achieve, etc. At the end of the day, check what you actually had time to do, and if it wasn't everything you planned, ask yourself "why?" Eventually, time management will become your habit, and a very good one. You do not have to be a Super Smart Student to balance the three S's--everybody has a potential to do it!

Global role for U.S. raises questions to be explored within American society

Globe continued from page 4

project could result in an even more threatening super-region containing an army of battle-hardened insurgents in Iraq and a nuclear weapon-pursuing Iran.

Is it possible that our leaders would guide us into a trap that could demonstrate to the world the limits of U.S. power? If the Vietnam War is any indicator, then yes. However, there is still the possibility that there exists a wider strategic importance for a U.S. presence in Iraq. The "official" reason for invasion may have been both the elimination of threat and democratization, but that does not expunge the truth: that Iraq sits at the heart of the world's energy resources, a region described by the State Department in 1945 as "a stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history." In a world with continually tightening oil markets from the booming economies of India and China, it sure would be convenient for the U.S. to have more influence over the spigots to the black gold that fuels nearly every inch of current global economic development.

The desire for greater influence in the Middle East can be further justified by the growing competition from China. Of course, the Chinese depend on the U.S. economically just as much as the U.S. does on them, which is one reason why there has been a limited amount of conflict so far. This will not continue forever, though. Indeed, China and Russia, in an attempt to take advantage of lagging U.S. popularity and its position in Iraq, continued their anti-hegemonic alliance this summer by conducting joint military training operations and by requesting that the U.S. abandon its military bases in the Caspian region. More recently, China even deployed warships to intimidate Japan into accepting its proposal for natural gas mining in a disputed region. These occurrences make it seem more likely that the strategic significance of a military presence in

the Middle East was an important consideration to rationalize a U.S. invasion.

The United States will face major challenges in the next few years. Jim Hunt suggested this in his convocation speech, and many indicators suggest the same. Global warming, natural disasters, terrorism, rogue states, the depletion of oil resources, and the rise of the next

superpower, China, will present possibilities beyond most Americans' experiences. Our

generation never went through Vietnam, and thus the inability to imagine that the all-powerful United States might lose runs deeper. Burst the bubble, read the news, and succeed; the future

of this country depends on it. To update and reinterpret Benjamin Franklin: History has given you an empire, if you will keep it.

The reality is that democratic outcomes do not always ensure friendly governments.

the stentorian

the north carolina school of science & mathematics
1219 broad street, durham, nc 27705

stentorian@ncssm.edu

Editors-in-Chief: Rachel Shauger and Sara Wise
Advisor: John Kirk

News Editor: Max Rose
Features Editor: Ellie Norton
Opinion Editor: Emma Htun
Sports Editor: Kevin Chen
Photography Editor: May Liu
Backpage Editor: Margaret Yim
Website Editor: Bonnie Bommelje

Staff Writers: Connie Chu, Hattie Chung, Priya Desai, Anna Englelke, Nick Hamden, Max Harned-Beckman, Steven Ji, Mary Kohlmann, Stacy Kvit, Caroline Nobles, Teryn Norris-Hale, Amy Wen, James Winder, Jamie Winslow

Contributing Layout Crew: Ben Bogardus, Grace Kim, Amy Wen, Jamie Winslow

Photographers: Nick Hamden, John Kirk, May Liu, Sue Anne Lewis, Chris Leyton, James Winder, Jamie Winslow