

Regional & Continuing Education
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CHICO STATE
SUMMER SESSION

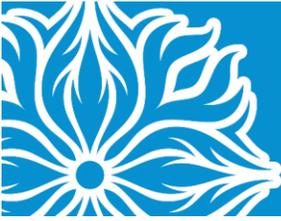
Study Tips for a Successful Summer Session

We're not going to sugarcoat it...Summer Session is tough. In a fraction of the time, you'll complete the same amount of material as in a 15-week course. But if you can stay focused and put some of these tried-and-true study tips to work for you, you could be closer to your degree before the fall semester even begins. Good luck!

Ready, Set, Read!

Due to the shorter length of classes, you will likely have LOTS of reading to cover each day. The following recommendations can improve your speed and comprehension:

- **Get Comfortable.** Create a place that is designated for reading. If your reading spot is too comfortable you will fall asleep. Too uncomfortable and you will spend more time thinking about your discomfort than the reading. Find a place that's just right and you're much more likely to stick with it.
- **Eliminate Distractions.** You'll make much better use of thirty minutes of disruption-free study than an hour's worth of commotion-filled learning. If you can't escape in-home interruptions, try the library or a coffee shop. Schedule your designated study time when you can be in a distraction-free environment and your chances for success will increase and the time you need to devote to your course will decrease.
- **Focus on New Information.** We learn things best when we can connect new information to something we already know. Rather than simply highlighting information, write down questions such as, "How does this concept relate to what I read in other publications?" For many people, highlighting sentences is counter-productive because they spend more time trying to make sure the lines are straight than they do paying attention to what the text actually says.
- **Speed Up.** Many people read at the speed they talk, yet research tells us that our brains process information much faster than we realize. Get in the habit of moving your eyes faster and see if you catch things you didn't actually verbalize in your mind. You'll be surprised at how much you actually comprehend when you speed up your reading.
- **Allow Extra Time.** Lecture notes and other materials posted online in Blackboard Learn will supplement or entirely take the place of the traditional class lecture. Reading online is slower and more difficult than reading a physical text book so allow adequate time to cover the material.



Write it Down

Whether you are taking notes in an on-campus class lecture or from online class materials, effective note taking will be very important to your success. Writing helps you retain knowledge; don't rely on memory alone.

Follow these tips for effective note taking:

- Organize your notes along the order of chapter objectives. Your notes should contain:
 - definitions of new vocabulary words
 - new concepts discussed in a chapter
 - any new procedures that are explained
 - questions you have about the material
- If you take good notes the first time you read a text, you will be better prepared to locate and use that information later. It is a poor use of your time to reread books and articles you have read before. File your notes so that you can locate them later. You might even stick a note inside the book telling you the location of your note.
- Review your notes within 24 hours of first studying the material. If you don't review for 10-15 minutes within 24 hours, you will only retain 20% of what you initially learn.
- Keeping good notes for each unit or topic will give you a tool you can use to prepare for exams without feeling like you're "cramming" everything in at the last minute.
- Review, review, review!

Participate in Online Discussions

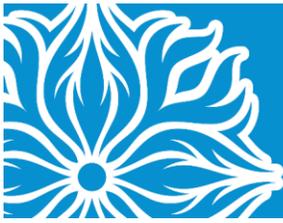
Threaded discussions are text-based messages that allow you and your classmates to engage in classroom discussions. By using online threaded discussions in Blackboard Learn, you can extend classroom discussions beyond the traditional boundaries of physical class time and interact with students and instructors in asynchronous time. Students in online classes may get to know one another more from recognizing the writing style and expression of thoughts and ideas rather than by physical attributes. Many students develop meaningful connections with their online classmates that can translate into career networking opportunities later. Remember that these discussions are viewable to the entire class and follow the rules of Netiquette.

In a study of successful online students, students mentioned some interesting techniques. One student commented, "Interacting with the other students was the fun part of my (online) classes. As much as possible, I would post a response, question, or comment to another student's posting. This built up an online relationship." Another student suggested, "Respond to several student postings, but make sure you have something meaningful to add, don't just say 'good post.'"

Netiquette

With online communication, be more polite than you might be in person. It's easy for misunderstandings to develop online because you aren't able to use tone of voice or facial expression.

Be careful of what you say. Remember that anything you write to one person could be easily forwarded to others.



Tip: It's a good idea to type answers in separate documents before posting to a discussion board for 3 reasons:

1. It allows you to lay out and think through your answers before posting.
2. You have a record of the responses in case in the middle of posting you lose a connection.
3. You have an ongoing log of everything you've posted in the event that you need or want to refer to it long after the class is over.

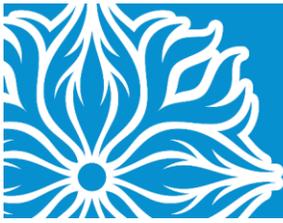
Develop a Time-Management Strategy

Time management will be one of the most important skills needed for success in a January Intersession class. You will have to discipline yourself in order to maintain the accelerated schedule.

- Identify "Best Time" for Studying: Everyone has high and low periods of attention and concentration. Are you a "morning person" or a "night person"? Use your power times for the most intensive reading and writing; use lower energy times for reviewing notes, reading discussion threads, or taking a walk and reflecting on the material.
- Study Difficult Subjects First: When you are fresh, you can process information more quickly and save time as a result.
- Blocks & Breaks: Study in shorter time blocks with short breaks between. This keeps you from getting fatigued and "wasting time." This type of studying is efficient because while you are taking a break, the brain is still processing the information.
- Make Sure you Have Time to Sleep and Eat Properly: Sleep is often an activity (or lack of activity) that students use as their time management "bank." When they need a few extra hours for studying or socializing, they withdraw a few hours of sleep. Doing this makes the time they spend studying less effective because they will need a couple hours of clock time to get an hour of productive time. This is not a good way to manage your time.
- Try to Combine Activities: Use the "Twofer" concept. If you are spending time at the Laundromat, bring your psychology notes to study. If you are waiting for the bus or the pizza you've ordered, bring your flashcards to memorize.
- Treat your computer time for your course completely differently than you treat *personal* computer time. In other words, while working on your class, do not watch TV, talk on the phone, check personal email, surf the Web, or interact with family members.
- Create a calendar before the beginning of the term that incorporates important test and assignment dates from the syllabus, as well as other dedicated times for group work, studying, or online discussions. Post this calendar where you can review it often.

Take Five!

Too much studying at one time can overload your brain. Periodically take a walk, have a light meal, or shoot some hoops and then finish up your session with a fresh brain.



Technical Issues

- Take the Blackboard Learn tutorial so you don't need to ask the professor unnecessary technical questions.
- Make sure you have extra supplies of printer ink and paper.
- Backup! First and foremost, create your postings in a word processor and save the document. Then copy and paste the information or upload it. Needless to say, it is frustrating to lose information due to a lost internet connection or corrupted file. Name your files clearly and use folders so you can find documents quickly.
- Before the start of the term, try to access every part of the course materials. That way you can work out any bugs early on.
- Have a back-up plan in case you lose Internet access. Locate a coffee shop with free wi-fi, know your library's hours, or ask a friend if you can work at their house.
- Make sure you have a pdf reader such as Adobe Reader.

Stay Connected

With the Instructor: You need to take the initiative to ask questions and resolve problems that the instructor may not be able to perceive. Many of the non-verbal cues that instructors use to determine whether a student understands the material are not as available in an online class as they are in face-to-face learning environments. If you experience difficulty on any level, either with the technology or with the course content, you should immediately communicate concerns or the instructor will not know how to help.

With Other Students: Whether your class is on campus or online, make a point to connect with other students in your class and look for ways to work together and encourage each other. Students who team up typically try hard to make sure they not only finish assignments, but that they turn in only the highest quality work possible. That personal "accountability" is a great motivator.

Make Flash Cards

The act of writing information onto easy-to-carry cards helps cement the information in your brain and is one of the easiest and most helpful study tips. It also gives you a handy, portable set of study terms that you can pull out anytime you have a few free minutes to study.