

September [2021]

The Handout

1 mask, 2 clean hands and 6 feet apart
I protect you. You protect me.

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University
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...and more!



THE HANDOUT

September [2021]

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From A Class?**

Organization

Set Up for Success: Implementing Effective Study Habits



by
Lizzie Hinds
Litchfield/Newbury ARM

A new school year has finally begun, and syllabus week is over! What comes next? For most, that will be essays, exams, notes, labs, and quizzes. These classroom aspects of learning are incredibly important, but let's not forget about what must take place outside the classroom as well. Taking time to regularly study throughout the week is an essential part of education. This studying, however, is subjective to each student in its methods, topics, and duration. So what does it look like to study well? How do we achieve it?

When Should I study, and For How Long?

This answer will change not just for every person, but for every class. The way students study for math will likely vary from the way they study for English. Likewise, the amount of time a student spends studying for an asynchronous class will likely differ from how long they study for an in-person class. The real trick to distinguishing how, and how long, one should study for any particular class is to use a trial and error period.

Once a course and extracurriculars schedule has been created, it will be easier to pinpoint when there are free times to study. As a general note: try to avoid late-night study sessions. Just like the body, the brain gets tired as the day goes on. Pushing it to work too late will not only be unenjoyable, but also ineffective. Likewise, pushing your brain straight into studying early in the morning won't typically have an impact on academic performance. The human brain produces melatonin, the sleep chemical, until mid-morning. Without a brain that is fully awake, purposeful studying cannot take place.

Do you have thirty minutes between classes? Do you have a day with fewer classes than others? What about weekends? These are all great times to sit down and review course materials. Studying does not always need to be intensive. Skimming your notes between classes or flipping through flashcards can be quick ways to give your mind a small reminder of what it needs to retain. Sometimes all that is needed is a fifteen-minute refresher, and other times, perhaps around midterms and finals, an intensive and longer study session is needed. Much like how people learn to listen to what their body needs, the same can be done for the mind.

Where Should I Study?

There have been countless research projects done on study locations. Much like timing, this is subjective. However, such research projects have given students insights on what will most likely work for them. For more "creative" minds, research has found that studying in a busier environment has proven beneficial. This does not necessarily mean populated, but perhaps decorated. Having a stack of books, familiar photos, or personal items nearby may encourage productivity. In contrast, individuals with more systematic minds are more likely to

prefer clean, clear, and organized spaces to study. Having some form of a "blank slate" can be seen as having ample room to place thoughts and ideas as well as retain information.

Logistically, there are many great study spaces located on both WCSU campuses. Some residence halls have individual study rooms, and for some the general lounges may work perfectly. The libraries have spaces that can be just quiet enough, or maybe just busy enough for studying, much like classroom buildings. The same can be said for the respective Campus and Student Centers. For some, a private room in the residence hall is all that is needed. While science advises against doing homework or studying in bed, being in a personal space can oftentimes lead to very productive and proactive studying.

How Should I Study?

The million dollar question when it comes to studying is how do we do it? The first step in answering this question is identifying your learning style. There are a plethora of online quizzes that can provide this information, but most students likely already know. Sequential learners prefer having step-by-step instructions, auditory learners prefer listening to a lecture or instructions, visual learners prefer diagrams or video demonstrations, and kinesthetic learners prefer physically completing a task or activity. Here are some helpful study tricks based on your learning style:

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Set up for success (Cont.)

Sequential: Take bullet notes, create an order of operations for studying, and repeat that order multiple times to retain the information. Flashcards can also be a great way of doing this!

Auditory: Read your notes aloud and into a voice recording. Then, as you're walking to your next class, listen to that recording.

Visual: If your professor uploads class slides to BlackBoard, download them for personal use. Create diagrams for character maps, compound structures, or a timeline for historical events. Keep them handy for frequent use!

Kinesthetic: Create a matching or memory game for vocabulary terms. Build a small replica of a cell or compound. More simply, physically write out everything you want to remember. Studies show that handwriting information leads to better retention. This is especially the case for kinesthetic learners!

Regardless of your learning style, you can try *any* of these methods. As time goes on, you'll establish what works best. For help with deciphering all things study related, WCSU has resources that can be used! Each building has at least one Academic Resource Mentor that can be a great first point of contact to get study habits going effectively. With an abundance of opportunities, and a wealth of information, starting the semester strong is obtainable for each and every student.

Did You Exercise This Week?

by Vivian Pereira, Centennial ARM



Let's get active on campus!

Since we've all been in this education system, health classes highlighted the importance of exercise, but chances are if you didn't participate in athletics, the habit of exercising only once in a blue moon started at a young age. These shouldn't be the same habits we carry on into this stage of our life because sadly we aren't young anymore and there are so many factors contributing to our health in this day and age. Covid-19 and stress have not made exercising seem like such a fun idea, but the benefits of exercising are so much more than a "fit body."

Have you exercised today?

Exercise is all about what you make it, as long as you get your body moving, that's all that matters. There are so many ways to stay healthy. Exercise can produce more sleep, and isn't that the one thing all college students struggle with?

There are multiple forms of exercise, so you make it work **for** you and not try to **work** for exercise. In exercise, there are intensities, moderate and high intensity.

Moderate intensity is an exercise that allows you to have a conversation during this activity. Some activities include tennis, walking, and dancing. How ironic is it that we all walk to class? You can get your steps in and get a workout in all at the same time.

With high intensity, you cannot have any conversation while doing the activity. Some activities include running, kickboxing, hiking, and many more. On-campus we have a walking trail, which would be great to go on a hike, in fact, most of the walking done on campus could be considered hiking with the way it brings my heart rate up!

Getting up is the first step. We can't expect to be healthy if we sit 24/7. Walk to the dining hall instead of driving, take a dancing class on the weekend, watch a Chloe Ting video before you have class in the morning. Do some yoga to wind down from your long day. There are so many exercise options out there that are better for you than to resort to laying in bed and watching Netflix.

STUDY TIPS: BACK TO IN-PERSON CLASSES

by **Finan Deakin,**
Pinney ARM

I can say for myself that the pandemic has made my energy levels decline drastically. Both my motivation and my health have been affected. When I took the time out to run again every morning, I actually saw the physical changes happening to my body and I saw the mental changes as well.

The benefits of exercise are too good for us to not partake in it, especially with college students being in the most vulnerable state of their health at this stage. We stress eat, or don't eat at all; we lay in bed all day, not choosing healthy options; and we are not sleeping enough. If we can at

least do this one thing, everything else will follow, because who doesn't want to feel good?

30 mins of exercise for 5 days of the week is a breeze and I believe in everyone being able to do this. The first thing you have to do is get up and actually move. Once you get into it, you're going to love the rush exercising gives, and then you're never going to want to stop. I believe in you taking your first step to a healthier life, and I support all of us doing this 100%!

Study Tips



It is the start of a new semester back on campus. Transitioning from online classes back to in-person classes can be very stressful for many students. It is important to relax and get into a good routine. I have created a list of study tips for back to in-person classes to make this transition a little smoother for all of you!

Utilize your Classmates

When taking an online class, it is hard to introduce and connect yourself with your classmates. In some cases, students aren't provided a list of the other students in the class and therefore aren't even aware of who their classmates are. Now that we are back in person, utilizing your classmates can be useful for asking questions, getting a different perspective on a certain topic, and getting help with topics you are struggling with. By creating relationships with students in your class, you can now form a study group. Study groups allow students to properly prepare for exams. Each student brings different studying tactics, ideas, and questions to the table. Due to this, students can learn from each other and better their knowledge on the topics being tested.

Study a Little Every Day

A lot of times, online classes allowed students to take a test over a long span of time, giving them plenty of time to prepare. Now, tests are given on a certain day and at a certain time. Due to this, you might find yourself cramming at the last minute the night before to try and properly prepare. By studying a little every day, it will lower your stress. Research shows "that students with low levels of test anxiety achieve higher scores on multiple choice question (MCQ) examinations than those with high anxiety levels." Not only will it lower your stress levels, but it will also lower the amount of studying needed when the test arrives. The night before the test, you will now be reviewing the material instead of trying to teach yourself it. This tactic is very important when you have a few classes on one day. With in-person classes, test days are likely to overlap, causing even more stress. If you set time aside to review the materials taught in class every day, when those days occur you will be prepared.

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Make Flashcards

Flashcards are a great studying method. Using them helps you learn the material twice. First, when making the flashcards, you are indirectly studying. Your brain is learning the material as you write the information down on the cards. Then when it comes to studying for the test, flashcards allow you to learn the information through repetition. This repetition allows the information to enter your memory and will prepare you for your exam. Another reason why flashcards are an effective studying tip is because you can study anywhere. You can study at home, bring them to a friend's house, and even bring them to class to quickly review before the test. Flashcards can be a fun way to study in groups but also are an effective way to test yourself.

Take Study Breaks

It is important to keep your mind fresh when preparing for an exam. It is easy to panic and try to cram all your studying into a few hours. This method of studying is less effective because your mind is taking in too much information at once and you will lose motivation. Taking a nap or taking time to eat a snack will allow your brain to reset itself. When you come back, you will be ready to focus and learn more information. Personally, I like to take a break every 30 minutes. These breaks include; stretching, walking around, or getting a snack. I recommend making your breaks purposeful, meaning try not to distract yourself by going on social media when taking one. Everyone's break will look different. It is important for you to find something that works for you and allows you to return motivated.



Work cited- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1484796/>

FEELING OVERWHELMED?

by **Gabriella DeMaro**, Grasso ARM

The first semester for any student, whether an underclassman or upperclassman, can be extremely overwhelming. The deadlines start to creep up early, and all of a sudden you have essays and exams. On top of that, you have work, clubs, relationships, and a ton of other things to worry about. So how could you keep this under control? Is it even possible?

Being Prepared

The easiest way to tackle this feeling is head on. Making some sort of schedule or daily to-do list could help you get all your thoughts out onto paper. This way, you are not constantly thinking about what you need to do since it's already written down. If you find yourself unable to stick with a schedule daily, you could try making a priority list so you know that things need to be done first that day.

Take Care of Yourself

This is an important step that many people seem to miss out on. Decreasing the amount of stress you have by using self-care techniques is helpful. Schedule time in your day to do what you love, whether that be painting, hiking, or sitting down with a good book. Doing assignments is much easier when you have a clear head.

Set Goals

Setting achievable short term and long term goals could help you prioritize your work.

Perhaps you want to make the dean's list this year, so you'd prioritize your academic classes above other things. Making sure these goals are attainable is important to promote confidence to do more in the long run, so start small.

Create Healthy Boundaries

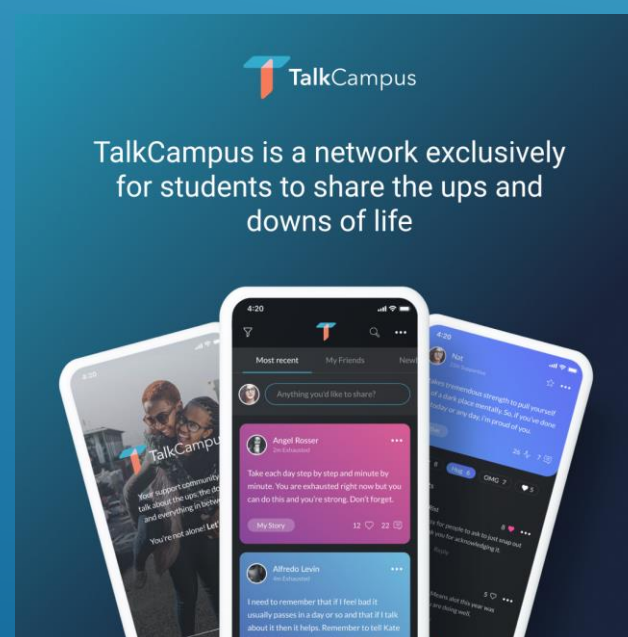
Being involved with many activities on and off campus is great! But there will be times when you find yourself just not having enough time for it all. In that case, it's OK to say NO! You put your best foot forward when you're not spread too thin. Setting boundaries with people can be a scary thing, but it doesn't have to be. People will understand!

Asking for Help

Sometimes, being overwhelmed can lead to more serious issues, such as depression and anxiety. Thankfully, WestConn has plenty of resources when you feel you cannot deal with these issues on your own. The Women's Center and Counseling Services offer free therapy. TalkCampus is a free app for WCSU students that connects you to other students if you are concerned about your mental health. Asking for help is a big step, and a scary one. You don't have to do it alone. Talk to a friend, a family member, or even your RA or ARM about how you're feeling. Chances are, they have gone through something similar and will be willing to work with you to find the help you need.



September is Suicide Prevention Month. Know the signs of someone who is struggling: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/how-we-can-all-prevent-suicide/>



<https://www.talkcampus.io/wcsu>

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU WITHDRAW FROM A CLASS?

by **Lindsay Larisa**, Pinney ARM

Welcome back to school, I hope the first few weeks have gone well. I wanted to discuss with all of you withdrawing from a class – the negatives and the positives.

Whether you are a new freshman or a senior in your last semesters here at WestConn, I'm sure withdrawing from a class has crossed your mind. What was your reasoning? Was the class too hard, or it didn't fit into your schedule? It's completely understandable to feel this way. But I want to give you a few tips to really think your decision through. To really make sure it's something that will completely benefit you and your academic career.

The university sets time frames for withdrawing from a class and when it is permitted. The final day to drop a class this academic semester is November 19th.

A full-time student is a student who has 12 credit hours. If a student drops below 12 credit hours, a few different things can happen. In order to live in housing a student is required to be a full-time student and to be enrolled in 12 or more credit hours. Like housing, in order to be eligible to play NCAA sports here at WestConn it is a requirement to be enrolled in 12 credit hours. Do you see a pattern? **12**

credits! That is the minimum. For example, what happens if a student is currently enrolled in 14 credit hours this fall semester, but November 12th comes around and the student is failing their chem class and decides to drop it? Chemistry classes are typically, if not always, four-credit hour classes. By dropping the chemistry class, the student's credit level then drops to 10 credits, making them ineligible to live in housing or to play a sport here on campus.

Financial aid is also based on being a full-time student. If you again drop below the 12 credit hours, the financial aid you had received may become affected. It is recommended that you discuss with the Office of Student Financial Services any repercussions before deciding to withdraw.

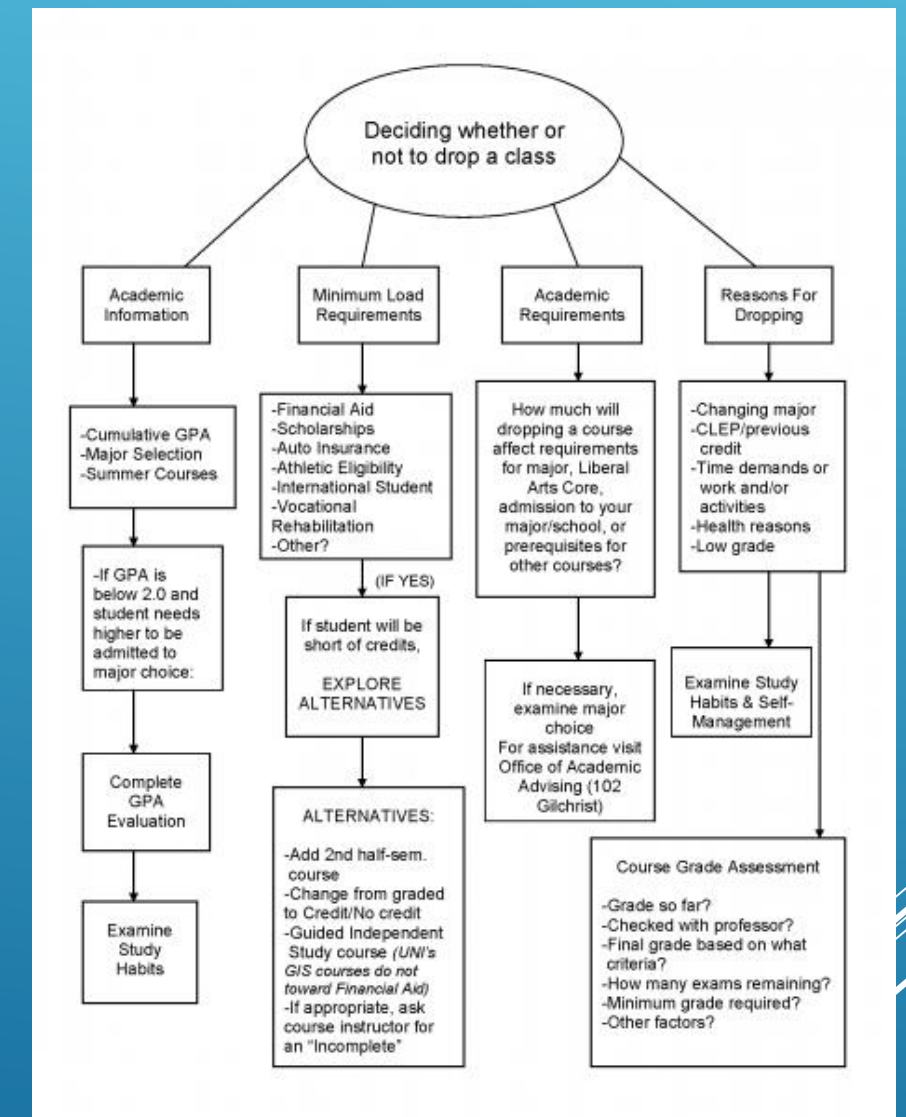
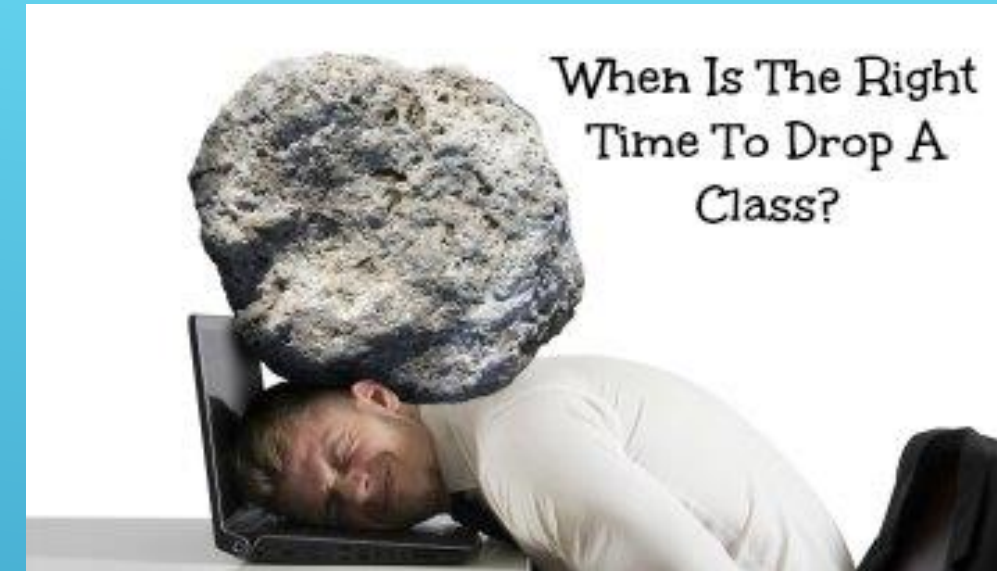
The best way to know if dropping a class is absolutely necessary is to talk with an advisor. The advisors on campus are available by appointment Mondays through Thursdays. Another thing to think about; at this time in the semester, withdrawing from a class means a W will appear on your transcript. What this means is it will appear on the transcript but no grade will appear and it won't affect your GPA.

Now the negatives from withdrawing are significant, but there are a few positives. Withdrawing from a class can help you with other classes, allowing you to focus on your other classes or previous time commitments, making them more manageable. Often times students will overbook themselves in the beginning of the semester without making the realization that some classes require a significant time commitment. If it is absolutely necessary to drop a class, I want you to be prepared for the process.

First, speak with an advisor making sure that this move is absolutely necessary to continue academic progress and success. Next, speak with the Office of Student Financial Services to make sure it won't affect anything financially. And lastly there is a form to fill out. It is located on the Western Connecticut State University website, under the Office of the Registrar tab. Fill the form out and submit it.

Good luck this semester! You've got this!

"Successful people are not gifted; they just work hard, then succeed on purpose." - G.K. Nielson



Organization

by Gracie Johnson, Centennial ARM



Diving into a new semester can be exciting yet overwhelming for most college students! Students often face difficulty adjusting to a new demanding schedule, especially coming from a relaxing and stress-free summer vacation. Various new classes, jobs, and social events are added and tend to pile up quickly on students' plates. This transition can be challenging due to an increase in time commitments, duties, and responsibilities. One of the best ways to tackle the stress that comes along with a new semester is getting organized!

Why is organization so important?

Organization is crucial, especially as a college student, because it makes it possible to carry out the many demands of a college student. There is no doubt that students juggle many obligations that need to be kept track of. Efficiently managing these obligations allows for better productivity and successful completion of daily tasks. It also minimizes stress levels, reduces the risk of forgetting important deadlines/assignments, and inhibits falling behind. Organization is also an important life skill that can be carried throughout the entire life; almost any job or other responsibility requires some degree of being organized.

There are many different forms of organization that can help fuel success as a college student. This can range anywhere from keeping up to speed with academics to scheduling self-care throughout the busy week.

Maintaining structure in all aspects of life is crucial for keeping a healthy mindset that will last the entire semester. Here are some ways to implement various organization methods in your life!

Organize Your Time

Time management is one of the most critical building blocks to staying organized. A highly useful tool in doing this is utilizing a planner or calendar to write down important events and due dates. This can look like a physical paper notebook, a large calendar on the wall, or even a digital calendar on your device. Use whatever is easiest and works best for you! Planning ahead of time and sticking to schedules can help you maximize your time and decrease stress levels.

Organize Your Classes

Staying organized in your classes is important for academic achievement and getting good grades in your courses. Using materials such as binders or folders are great for keeping all of your papers and assignments neatly organized. Using different colored pens or notebooks is also a great way to visually categorize each class. At the beginning of the semester, the long list of assignments and exams typically found in the syllabus can be daunting. Using the "Divide and Conquer" method is helpful for breaking larger assignments into more manageable chunks, instead of cramming at the last minute.

Organize Your Mind

As silly as it sounds, organizing your mind can have a large impact on your well-being. The mindset plays a large role in motivation, productivity, and coping skills. Be sure to fit time into your day to take care of your mind and to get rid of any unwanted or provoking thoughts. Some practices include writing down to-do lists, journaling to get emotions off your chest, or partaking in a relaxing self-care activity.

Start integrating organization skills into your life today, as the rewards and benefits are truly endless. You can try out some of the ideas listed or explore additional tips and tricks - find what works best for you! Always remember that a little organization can go a long way!



Just a reminder that the
Housing & Residence Life Offices

are in Pinney Hall, suites C21 and C24.

Our phone numbers are the same, but you'll need to come to the Westside with an appointment to see us!



Want to know more about campus resources and other advice to improve your academic life? You can check it all out on Gab & GROW, a podcast you can find here:

www.wcsu.edu/houaing/gab-grow/



About *The Handout*

The Handout is a product of the Department of Housing & Residence Life at Western Connecticut State University. There are 6 editions each year, 3 in the fall semester and 3 in the spring semester.

The ideas for and execution of the articles are the work of the Academic Resource Mentors, or ARMs, who provide academic coaching and resource referral to all members of the WCSU residence community.