

A Practical Guide to Student Success in Online Learning

Kerri and Eric here, we're FRCC faculty and instructional coaches and we're here to share some evidence-based strategies to help you succeed and learn in your classes for the rest of the semester.

- **Remember that we're all in this together!** We know taking all your classes online isn't what you expected. Keep in mind that your teachers have been working hard to convert to online learning but most of them are new at this too. Let's be understanding and kind to each other as we work together to make the best of the rest of the semester.
- **Find the D2L site for each of your courses** and take time to review any announcements posted by your teacher. Click the envelope icon near the top right of your D2L homepage and then open Internal Messages. Also, use E-Wolf to **check your CCCS student e-mail** for any messages that teachers might have sent there.
- **Check into D2L frequently and stay in touch with your teachers.** Realize that each of your teachers has probably designated one or more specific ways to communicate with you: the announcements area, D2L internal messages, a discussion area, etc. Pay attention to the communication channels used in each of your classes and then use them to **ask questions when you are confused!**
- **Take the initiative to help yourself succeed by completing the D2L orientation** that you can access using the main menu across the top of your D2L screen when inside a class. Click on Tech Support and then on D2L Student Tutorials.
- **For current information from FRCC on Covid19** including updates, FAQs, etc:
 - <https://www.frontrange.edu/being-a-student/campus-security/frcc-covid-19-updates>
 - Also keep an eye on the main D2L page that you see before you log into a course. Read the announcements posted there since these are often important FRCC updates.
 - Check your CCCS student email everyday. There could be important FRCC messages sent there.

Research Based Study Strategies

- **Don't multitask** since your brain isn't designed for it. Each time you shift your attention from what you are studying to check a text or pet your dog or watch Youtube, you lose productivity and efficiency. Put your phone on mute for 15 or 20 minutes at a time and really focus on the task at hand. Then, take a short break to check your phone and pet your dog.
- **Spaced Study is a key to learning.** Now that your classes aren't meeting normally, there may be less guidance about when to do homework and study throughout the week. Take it on yourself to space out your studying since there is tremendous evidence that this has a huge impact on learning. In fact, studying for three 20-minute blocks on different days during the week can be 50% more effective in learning

compared to one 60-minute study session.

- **Interleaving works with Spaced Study.** Interleaving is just a fancy word for “mixing it up.” While it feels easier to study one topic for a whole hour compared to switching your topics every 20-minutes, the harder approach works much better for learning. Once you’ve focused on your math studying for 20-minutes, take a short break and then pick up your anatomy or history book or work on your English essay for 20-minutes before taking another break.
- **If you need to memorize anything,** one of the best ways to do it is to create flashcards to quiz yourself. Make sure you struggle to get the answer (guess if you need to) before looking at the answer. After you start to get most of the answers right, shuffle the cards and keep working. Study in short blocks and then come back to the flashcards several times a day over the course of a week or more. There are lots of online quizzing apps that you could use instead of physical flashcards OR use both.
- **Pretesting is worthwhile.** There is a lot of evidence that pre-testing yourself on anything will help you learn more. So, if you have access to quiz questions (maybe in the back of the textbook or using the publisher’s website) take a quiz on the chapter or unit before you do the reading or watch a lecture. You won’t do well on this pretest but the point isn’t to get the answers right! The point is to prime your brain for learning, to highlight all your pre-existing knowledge about the topic and to get your brain ready to make new memories and to integrate them into your existing network of knowledge.
- **Work together!** The research into learning suggests that we learn almost everything better when we work with partners or teams. Teams offer intrinsic motivation to work hard and learn. Teams allow for multiple explanations and viewpoints and more examples and ideas. Find a study partner or team even if your teacher doesn’t provide these for you.
- **Get enough sleep and exercise.** Sleep is critical to learning. Sleep is vital to forming and encoding memories and in creating robust networks of memories. You need about 8-hours of sleep each night! Exercise is also important to forming memories and learning. Certain neurotransmitters necessary for memory formation are created only when you exercise!