

Teaching Tip of the Month

October 2021

Theme: Managing Midterms

Tip 1: Manage Time

As we approach the mid-semester mark, some students prepare for midterms while others prepare for final exams in seven-week courses. This can be stressful for students, but time management practices could alleviate some of the stress. To help students plan for this busy time, encourage them to account for their time and schedule time to study, sleep, eat, exercise, and relax. Using a planner to account for time can help even the busiest student “find” time for activities such as an extra hour of sleep or a 30-minute self-care activity. Using a calendar or planner with color codes can give students a visual of how much time they spend on each activity. Time management apps or setting phone reminders as a cue to transition to the next activity could help students stay on track. For additional ideas, view this [list of time management tips](#).

Tip 2: Mix It Up!

How can we help students work/study smarter to prepare for midterms? Some experts say mixing it up is the best study strategy. Two sample strategies are chunking and interleaving:

- [Chunking](#) is a memory technique that involves grouping larger amounts of information into smaller bits or grouping information by patterns or associations. Writing or recording a summary of sections of a textbook chapter for later review is one example of chunking. View [this video](#) for a few more examples of chunking.
- [Interleaving](#) as a study strategy differs from the common method of blocking (focusing on one skill or topic at a time). Interleaving involves mixing different yet related skills or topics in a single study period. For example, if studying for a language course, block studying could mean studying vocabulary for 30 minutes one day and grammar for 30 minutes the next day; on the other hand, interleaving could involve 15 minutes of vocabulary and 15 minutes of grammar in the same study session for both days. This type of spaced practice allows you to revisit the material over multiple periods, which [promotes a deeper understanding of material and better long-term retention of the material](#).

More Info on Teaching Tips

“Teaching Tips of the Month” began as a project of Program for Active Learning in STEM (PALS) and Teaching to Increase Diversity and Equity in STEM (TIDES) grants. Many thanks to Ray Gonzales and Alla Webb, who served as Principal Investigators of the TIDES grants. You can view archived issues of Teaching Tips of the Month (from spring 2015 to spring 2021) on [The Hub](#). We welcome feedback and invite you to submit ideas for this publication to Angela Lanier, angela.lanier@montgomerycollege.edu