February 29, 2012

Happy Leap Day! Today, may you find your springboard for whatever leaps you want or have been trying to make in your life. So the question is: what are you leaping to learn this year? As you approach new learning as a nontraditional student keep in mind it is a daily walk to judge not based on the past, to be open to the possibilities, and just let it all flow over you.

**Exam-ingly Exhausted?** It is that time in the semester where quizzes, exams, and projects are all on tap. Your first graded exams and papers of the semester should serve as a guide for future assessment. You should be more prepared for exams now that you know what the professor expects. I encourage you to exercise your professor’s office hours if you need extra help or clarification. The Academic Support Center in McCutchan Hall has tutors for all subjects, so don’t hesitate to use all the campus resources that are available to you.

http://www.uww.edu/acadsupport/tutorial/

**Did you know?** Contrary to popular belief, research proves that studying several subjects in one sitting, studying them in different settings, and frequent testing helps students improve memory. Benedict Carey wrote about the research for the New York Times on September 6, 2010: “psychologists have discovered that some of the most hallowed advice on study habits is flat wrong.” Carey writes.

1. **Vary Your Study Space**
Carey cites a study in which students who studied a list of words in a windowless room and again in a room with a view did far better on a test than students who studied only in the viewless room. Surprisingly, that study was conducted in 1978, and still we haven’t learned. “The brain makes subtle associations between what it is studying and the background sensations it has at the time, the authors say, regardless of whether those perceptions are conscious,” writes Carey.

2. **Vary What You Study**
The same principal may apply to what you study. Carey suggests that musicians and athletes have known this for years. They practice cross-training.
“Varying the type of material studied in a single sitting — alternating, for example, among vocabulary, reading and speaking in a new language — seems to leave a deeper impression on the brain than does concentrating on just one skill at a time,” Carey writes.

3. Test Yourself Often

It also turns out that when a student is required to retrieve information, say for a test, that information is re-stored in the brain in a more accessible way for future use. Carey reports that researchers don’t know why this is true, just that it is. “It may be that the brain, when it revisits material at a later time, has to relearn some of what it has absorbed before adding new stuff — and that that process is itself self-reinforcing,” he writes. “The idea is that forgetting is the friend of learning,” Carey quotes Dr. Nate Kornell, a psychologist at Williams College, as saying. “When you forget something, it allows you to relearn, and do so effectively, the next time you see it.” Practice tests, then, are powerful learning tools.

Reminder: If you transferred into UW-Whitewater, be certain that you have submitted your final official transcripts from your previous college so the credits can be posted to your UW-W Advising Report.

Office Hours: Beginning Wednesday, March 7th, I will have office hours until 6:00p.m. each Wednesday until the end of the semester.

Adult Student Connections now has a Facebook presence. Check out what is happening with nontraditional students on Facebook: UWW-Adult-Student-Connections

A potluck is being planned for Wednesday, March 21st in the Non Trad Pad- UC – 133 Stay Tuned for more details!

Did you know that the city of Whitewater Parks and Recreation Department offers many activities for you and your family to participate in? Check it out: http://www.whitewater-wi.gov/

Grant yourself the permission to do something fun this weekend. It will take your mind off school and refresh you as we head into mid-terms next week. Have a great weekend!

Lynn Smith