

# Online Learning

## Studying

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**Overview:** A student's approach to learning will influence how well and how quickly knowledge is acquired. Traditionally, most students utilize a surface approach to learning, where they focus on the reproduction of knowledge, learning only what is required to pass an exam, and regurgitating examples and explanations provided in readings or lectures. A deep approach to learning involves the transformation of knowledge through application to new situations, the generation of novel examples, and the synthesis of or connections between ideas. In order to reach this deeper understanding, students must engage actively in learning, which requires that students do something with course material, as opposed to passively learning, where information is merely presented to and seen/heard by students. This need for a deeper approach does not change when courses and readings are online.

### Things You Can Do:

#### Visual Thinking/Graphic Organization

Visual thinking (also called graphic organization) is a way of combining text and visuals to organize new information, deepen comprehension, and make connections between ideas or concepts. Visual thinking can take many forms, including timelines, flow charts, Venn diagrams, tables, concept maps, schematics, or almost any other visual representation (Athuraliya, 2020).

#### Example: Concept Mapping

A concept map is an active learning strategy where students create an explicit picture or web of related ideas, which promotes a rich construction of knowledge by requiring the student to organize, select, relate, and interpret information (Cañas et al, 2011; Chmielewski & Dansereau, 1998; Nesbit & Adesope, 2006).

#### Paraphrasing & Summarizing Notes

Paraphrasing means that you are restating an idea or argument in your own words, at roughly the same level of detail as the original material. Summarizing means that you reduce a large section of text into a concise expression of its most essential ideas.

Engaging in paraphrasing and summarizing as a review strategy are valuable methods for developing and demonstrating comprehension of what has been read or heard.

Summarizing, in particular, demands and develops the following skills:

- Identifying the key information in a text, lecture, article, or essay, and separating those ideas from less pertinent ones;
- Reflecting on and asking questions about what has been heard or read; and
- Stating and connecting main ideas, condensing information, and learning to integrate what they have learned.

#### Self-testing

One thing students often forget to do as part of their studying process is to evaluate how well they know the material, which can be done by self-testing, an evidenced-based strategy for increasing retention (Dobson & Linderholm, 2015; Kornell & Son, 2009). One way of doing this is by generating and then answering test questions based on the content being covered. You can create flash cards, use quiz apps, or write outlines to answer potential essay questions (Foos, Mora, & Tkacz, 1994; Kelley et al., 2019).

*Note: Any and all study strategies, whether mentioned here or elsewhere, require two things in order to be successful – time and effort.*