

the New Leaf



A Note from the Learning Center Front Desk

Have you ever wondered why it's so important to log in when you visit the Learning Center? Well, wonder no more. Logging visits allows us to determine the most popular tutoring times, how many tutors are needed, and how to address technology needs. You can log in at the front desk or at the kiosks by the glass doors. Thanks to all the students who diligently log in each time they arrive in The Learning Center!

The Learning Center also provides one free print card a semester to students, Scantron purchases, headphones and calculator checkouts, and group study room reservations.

Please stop by the front desk to find out more about our services. We're here to help!

Seasonal Affective Disorder: Feeling SAD?

As winter approaches, the gradual shortening of daylight hours may result in more than lower temperatures and the approach of frozen precipitation. The shortening of daylight hours may also result in Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Also known as winter depression, SAD is a medically-recognized condition that can be treated if it becomes severe.

What are some of the symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder? According to the Mayo Clinic, signs and symptoms of this disorder include sleeping problems, low energy, and feeling depressed. You could also experience changes in your appetite and difficulty concentrating.

What causes SAD? Most experts feel that the main cause is a change in your internal biological clock, also known as Circadian rhythms, as a result of fewer hours of sunlight. There may also be changes in the levels of certain brain chemicals like serotonin and melatonin which may affect your mood and sleep patterns.

There are a number of ways to combat the onset of these winter blues. Here are a few:

- (1) **Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet. Include a number of fruits and vegetables into your daily meal plan as well as some protein and fiber sources.**
- (2) **Go outside during the sunny part of the day and get some exercise and fresh air.**
- (3) **Find a relaxing activity like yoga, meditation, or watching your favorite movie or TV show.**

If symptoms of SAD persist or begin to interfere with your daily routine, consult a doctor. It could be caused by an underlying problem that a medical professional can diagnose.

Have Your Say!

In a few weeks, you will be receiving an invitation to take a brief survey about The Learning Center. We are excited to hear what you think we are doing well and where you think we could become better. Please take a few minutes to let us know what you think.

Is Mom Wrong?

Have you ever been told, “Don’t go outside with a wet head, you’re going to get a terrible cold!” or “You can’t go out in this weather without a hat, you’re going to get sick!”? Well, get ready to refute these myths (and others)!

MYTH: You can get the flu from a flu shot.

FACT: The flu is passed through viruses spread person to person.

MYTH: Alcohol warms you.

FACT: Alcohol actually prevents your internal organs from being able to warm themselves.

MYTH: Coughing up green mucus means you have pneumonia.

FACT: Green mucus is an indicator a cold is coming to its end, yellow mucus is a warning you are fighting an infection, and clear mucus shows your body is just starting to fight off something.

MYTH: Allergies go away in the winter.

FACT: If you have indoor pets your allergies may still flare up. Tightly shut windows also add to poor air quality. Meanwhile, mold grows in warm environments, like cozy homes, in cold weather.

MYTH: Running, walking, and playing in the cold air can make you sick.

FACT: Other people’s germs make you sick. Exercise boosts your immune system—even in the cold.

MYTH: Don’t go out without a hat because you’re going to get cold.

FACT: You lose, at most, 10% of your body heat from the top of your head, so just wearing a hat is not enough.

MYTH: You don’t need sunscreen in the winter.

FACT: The earth is closer to the sun in winter. Consequently, there is the risk of higher exposure that is compounded by snow (or ice) reflecting 80% of the UV rays back at us.



How to Survive Finals

- 1. Know your schedule.** ECC’s final exam schedule can be found here. Put reminders in your planner or where you can see the dates.
- 2. Spread them out.** If you have multiple exams on one day, ask your instructors if you can test on another day. It never hurts to ask!
- 3. Make sure you know what your exams will look like.** Are they essay or multiple-choice? Are the tests cumulative or just over the last chapters? Talk to your instructors.
- 4. Find study guides and review opportunities.** For example, the math department has midterm and final review guides posted on their website.
- 5. Plan ahead** and make arrangements to take extra time off work during finals week to study and take tests.

Winter Weather Safety

Winter weather is often synonymous with hazardous conditions. Freezing rain, sleet, and snow are common occurrences during winter. Although most of us would like to stay inside our cozy homes to wait out the cold weather, we still have places to go. Read on for some helpful items to keep in your car to be ready for winter weather.

First aid kits, spare clothing, nonperishable food, water, jumper cables, and a cell phone charger are useful items in an any emergency.

Consider adding cat litter, blankets, and a Mason jar containing matches and a candle. If your car is stuck in snow or on ice, pouring cat litter in front of the tires can help your car gain traction. In the unfortunate case of being stranded, blankets will help you stay warm as you wait for help, and using those matches to light the candle in the Mason jar can provide extra warmth and dependable light.

If you need to stay at home to wait out the weather, stay at home. Have your car serviced so it is as ready as possible for the weather, and don’t forget to check for ECC Alerts before leaving home.

TLC By the Numbers

So far this semester:

- We have had over 7,755 visits this semester, 1222 tutoring sessions, and 409 students have used our online tutoring services.
- Students have received tutoring for 55 different courses.

Last semester:

- 68.9% of students who had three or more tutoring visits received an A, B, or C in their course.
- 58.6% of students who had little to no tutoring received an A, B, or C in their course.

But our work isn't just about the numbers. The ultimate goal of tutoring is to help students become independent learners. More specifically, tutoring presents an individualized learning experience that helps develop subject matter knowledge, different viewpoints, academic performance, confidence, and personal growth.

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I come because I'm not good at science. The Learning Center tutors are really nice and don't make me feel stupid for asking questions.

*Alyssa Harding,
Sophomore*

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Yule Be Doing What?!

This time of year, students and faculty alike are thinking about December 21st, the day East Central closes for the winter break. Here in the Learning Center, many of us have plans and traditions which we look forward to all year.

Learning Center Assistant **Cheryl Temme** looks forward to getting out of town and spoiling the grandkids over the long break, while Learning Center Specialist **Allison Tucker** will use the time away from the college to bake, read, and make wassail—a kind of mulled cider—with members of her family.

Learning Center Specialist **Tim Derifield** and his family observe two distinct traditions on the night of the Winter Solstice. The first is the making and drinking of krupnik, an Eastern European cordial. The second is leaving milk on the front step, not for Santa Claus, but for gift-giving fairies, in keeping with Scandinavian tradition.

Learning Center Specialist **Kathy Wright** enjoys spending holiday time with as many generations of her family as possible. Board games are a particular highlight; one Christmas the family had as many as nine games of Clue going at once.

Testing Center Assistant **Justin Kavanagh** has two Christmases. One side of his family celebrates Christmas on the “normal” date of December 25, while the other side follows the Orthodox calendar, and celebrates Christmas on January 7. He enjoys watching old Christmas movies, in particular the 1954 classic *White Christmas*, and *A Hobo's Christmas*, which was filmed in his hometown of Salt Lake City.

While many Americans are camping out and trampling each other to get their hands on discounted merchandise, Learning Center Director **Erin Anglin** will be spending Black Friday decorating; her Christmas tree goes up on the Friday after Thanksgiving every year, without fail. Erin is an expert gift wrapper and especially looks forward to drinking hot chocolate and spending time with her large extended family.

Associate Director **Kristin Milligan** hopes for a *White Christmas*; an occurrence she remembers from childhood but which hasn't happened for several years. One of her friends has a tradition of setting aside an entire day just for making Christmas cookies. By the end of “Cookie Day,” she has made hundreds of cookies, which are then given away as gifts.

Of course, the most famous member of the Learning Center Team, **Franklin the Falcon**, will be following his usual migratory route from East Central Missouri down to his winter home in the sunny Turks and Caicos Islands, where he plans to spend the winter break taking advantage of the Caribbean sunshine and plentiful supply of easy-to-capture prey.

Tips for Planning Next Semester's Courses

Time is a tricky, yet crucial factor in planning college courses, since all of a course's time commitments may not be obvious. Though you might be tempted to focus on the times listed for each course section, that's not the only thing that needs to get added to your phone's calendar.

For instance, don't underestimate the time commitments for online courses. Just because the class doesn't meet twice a week does not mean it won't need a planned hour of concentration on homework every Tuesday and Thursday.

It can be tempting to load up on science courses, but labs (and lab reports) can take more energy than the course's hours might suggest. Taking multiple labs can make for a punishing semester.

Always read course descriptions to get a sense of what the class will demand of them. Labs and independent research will make significant demands on time. Talk to friends who have taken the course, ask your advisor, or even email the instructor to feel it out.

College can be grueling, and taking five brutal classes may not be worth it if it harms grades, health, or both.

Please join TLC staff in congratulating Moriah Swoboda who has been accepted into the Pierre Laclède Honors College at UMSL! Moriah has been a tutor in TLC for one year, and while we will miss her, we are excited for her as she continues her education.

Crush Your Finals!

The Learning Center's step-by-step guide to having the best finals week ever.

Lay a Strong Foundation (2-3 weeks before finals)

1. Capture the big ideas. Write down the main ideas from each class. Create a practice test from your actual tests over the semester.
2. Review flashcards and notes, then create a list of the items you need to study more. Tackle what you don't know first.
3. Don't stop at memorizing facts. Ask yourself: Why is this important? How does it compare to...? What facts support this idea? What would the result be if...?

Fill in the Gaps (one week before finals)

1. Concentrate on what you don't know.
2. Practice, practice, practice. Space the practice. Recalling information over several days and in several places drastically improves your ability to recall that information.
3. Meet with a tutor and/or your instructor to receive final help on the trouble areas you have previously identified.
4. Attend review sessions (check the Moodle page "Learning Center Resources" for a schedule of review sessions).

Rest on your knowledge (the night before)

1. Get 6-8 hours of sleep.
2. Eat healthy food. Don't skip meals, and lay off the junk food.
3. Take breaks regularly, especially to exercise.
4. Visualize success!
5. Practice relaxation by deep breathing, grounding, meditating, etc.

