

All night Cram

Students learn benefits of last minute studying

BY JEFF WOLFSHOHL
The Battalion

Carrie Jacobs, a junior journalism major, realized one day that she had become past due on 15 weeks' worth of put-off projects and stalled studies.

This week, she will pay her penance with the time-honored retreat of responsibility — cramming.

Jacobs said last semester she had several papers to write instead of final exams that she knowingly put off until the last minute.

"I had a 16-page paper for my political science class and I wrote it all in one day," Jacobs said. "I did the research on the Internet the night before it was due, then woke up the next morning to write it."

Jacobs said she finished the paper 20 minutes before it was due.

"I think I would have done the same quality of work I had worked on it for an extended period of time," Jacobs said.

She said that although she was sweating at the brow, she has no regrets about cramming.

"I would do it again because I was successful, and with my schedule, it's kind of necessary," Jacobs said. "I might be a little over confident at times, but so far so good."

Cynthia Samples, a chemistry graduate student, said the amount of cramming needed is directly related to how far behind the student is.

"Cramming is better if you have enough time to cover the material because you are getting a big overview, learning all the information at once," Samples said. "But if you run out of time, you will get screwed because you probably won't study all the material."

Samples said she learned how to best utilize her time when she was studying late for a test.

"For one of my chemistry exams, I went through homework and found all of the equations used; then went through the notes and matched them," she said.

Samples said studying homework is a good solution in searching for the best reference material.

"With the homework, the teacher emphasizes what you need to know," Samples said. "Most teachers give homework problems on the exams, but they are just reworded."

Snack food and coffee provide the fuel students need to get them through an all-night study binge.

Natalie Brumley, a junior marketing major, said she would eat and drink large amounts of sugar and caffeine just to stay awake.

"I was in my sorority house with one of my friends, and we drank a lot of caffeine and ate a lot of sugar [foods]," Brumley said. "This kept me awake but probably didn't help me study."

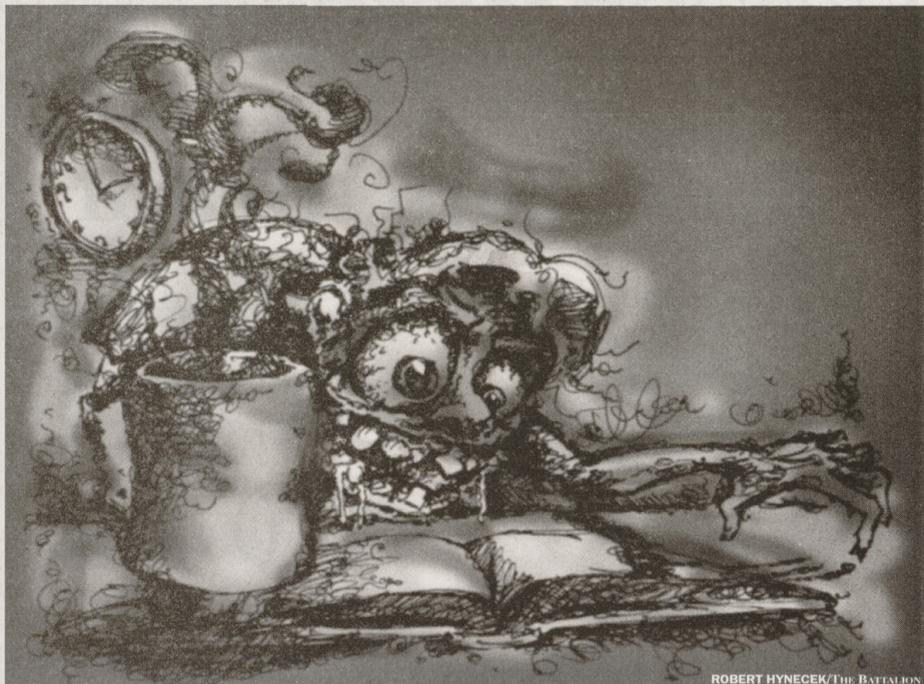
Brumley said the main reason she studied late was because she was overloaded with other academic duties.

"I was stressed out about my other accounting class because I was borderline in it with my grade," Brumley said.

Brumley said she did well on her accounting exam but did not do well on other exams she crammed for.

Kenneth Grizzelle, a sophomore business administration major, said he stayed up all night studying for an exam last year.

"Me and a friend got together and went to '4.0 and Go' to take the practice test," Grizzelle said. "We then went home and studied it until 4 a.m. I got an A in the class because of it."



ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

Grizzelle said going to class is part of the cramming process.

"If you don't go to class, there's no use in cramming because you probably have no clue what is going on," Grizzelle said. "If you do go to class, then cramming gets everything fresh in your mind."

Cramming comes with consequences. Joel V. McGee, program coordinator for the Center of Academic Enhancement, said class lectures are the best complete preparation for finals.

"There are some classes you can't learn overnight, like calculus and physics," McGee said.

McGee said a person's body reacts poorly to cramming.

"You can't push your body further than it wants to go," McGee said. "At some point, it's better to sleep because if you cram past a point, you will have problems."

Some of the indicators of these problems, he said, are better fixed with a good night's sleep than a gallon of ground coffee.

"If you are starting to nod off or you are physically not feeling well or it starts becoming harder to memorize something, then you have reached that

point," McGee said.

Michael Vincent, a freshman political science major, said he wants to avoid the state of cramming madness by being prepared.

"I'm trying to get an early start," Vincent said. "I've been studying all weekend."

Vincent said one of the ingredients he uses to be successful is working in a study group.

"I like group studying because of the fact that if you don't know the answer, one of the other members could maybe explain it," Vincent said.

"It is also easier to understand the explanation from a group member rather than the professor."

Cramming, as an academic crutch, can become addicting, Grizzelle said he will probably put off studying again because cramming is a hard habit to break.

"I'm a procrastinator, and I will not study for an exam more than a few days before," Grizzelle said.

Samples said she sees cramming as an inevitable occurrence in the finals experience.

"It's just not feasible that someone will go home after class and study for three hours every day," Samples said. "No one is completely prepared for their final exam."

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