Student Success Library

Welcome to the Student Success Library

Each subject in our Table of Contents below is linked to student success content which includes videos, readings, activities as well as tools for educators. You are welcome to enjoy these resources via this PDF format, or online via the Student Success Library website, which has links to each item of content for ease of use on your favorite device.

Enjoy and have a great experience. Please feel free to reach out and give feedback, contribute your student success resources for inclusion in the Library, or to request content for a new topic.

N.B.: The Student Success Library was customized for students attending Santa Monica College (SMC, smc.edu) in Santa Monica, CA. You may come across SMC-specific resources, links, or activities that do not apply to you. I encourage you to search for your own school's resources or google for similar tools that can help wherever you live, study and work.

STUDENT SUCCESS LIBRARY

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Explore Your Personal Values and Motivation

https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/personalvalues

Learning Objectives

- Identify your personal values and sources of motivation;
- Explore how to define and meet your personal needs;
- Tell the difference between the types of motivation and understand your own.

". . . my wish for you is that you feel no need to constrict yourself to make other people feel comfortable."
— Ta-Nehisi Coates, author

PERSONAL VALUES, MOTIVES AND NEEDS

The journey of achieving success in college begins with a single step: identifying your personal values. Your personal values are your core beliefs and guiding principles. They shape the roles you play in daily life. They color your interests and passions, and frame your thoughts and words. In essence, your values are a compass that help you make decisions and choices.

What are your values, then? Which are most important to you, and which are least important? How do your values fit into your educational goals? How do your educational goals relate to your future career?

To help you answer these questions, you can use a "self-assessment" survey. These surveys can help you evaluate your personal identity—your thoughts, actions, attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors—in relation to the task at hand, like going to college and preparing for a career.

Many different self-assessment surveys are available from college career centers and online sites. Some are designed as personality tests, like the Keirsey Temperament Sorter, or as inventories, like the Myers- Briggs Type Indicator (MTBI®), the most widely used personality inventory in history. You may also come across instruments designed as scales, or measures, games, surveys, and more. These descriptors are often interchangeably used, although most often they refer to questionnaires. The distinctions are not as important as whether or not the instrument meets your self-assessment needs.

Connect Your Values and Interests to Careers

Once you understand your personal and cultural values, you can begin to connect them to your interests. From there, it's a short step to identifying careers that incorporate or compliment your values and interests. Some ideas to narrow in on career-related interests include:

- Take this Career Cluster Interest Survey, https://bit.ly/npcareerclustersurvey, to identify career clusters (groups of jobs that have overlapping themes or interests) you might enjoy exploring. This survey asks you to rate the activities you enjoy, your personal qualities, and school subjects you like;
- The Career Bridge Survey, https://bit.ly/npcareerbridgesurvey, takes into account the activities you like to do, your personality traits and subjects that interest you. The automated results rate 16 different career clusters from best to worst fit based on these factors;
- Explore internships (learning while getting paid for a limited amount of time on the job) or job shadowing (visiting a business for a day or a week) opportunities to get a sense of what you might enjoy doing;
- Ask a trusted relative or elder for advice and reflection. Listen to what they think you'd be good at or enjoy;
- Attend job fairs and internship fairs to learn about different jobs and careers;
- Explore current job trends.

Stages of Life

Keep in mind that your personal values and interests can and do change as you get older. This is evidenced in research conducted by a number of contemporary social scientists, like Erik Erikson and Daniel Levinson. Their studies show how our values affect our choices and how our choices can characterize the stage of life we're in

For example, college students, ages 18–26, tend to make choices that are tentative (more short-range) and support a desire for autonomy. Later, during ages 27– 31, young adults may rethink decisions and lean toward more permanent choices. In ages 32–42, adults tend to have a greater sense of commitment and stability, as shown by their choices. In essence, our personal identity and values change over time, but they continue to affect our choices and can illuminate the stage of life we're in, https://bit.ly/lumenlifestages.

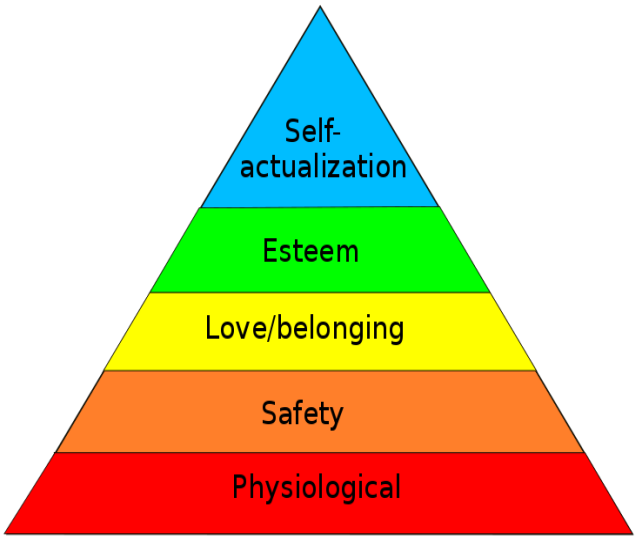
Keeping in mind that there are many phases of life, you can expect changes in your values and choices as you get older. You may experience a significant change in perspective while you are in college! To better understand your relationship with your values, you can continually reassess what is important to you. Make a

commitment to examining your thinking, actions, and choices, and keep taking self-assessment tests. This will put you in a stronger position to manage changes in your educational goals, your career, living situation, hobbies, friends, and other aspects of your life. Changes are part of everyone's life transitions.

Your Motives and Needs

Abraham Maslow's theory frames personal needs or motives as a hierarchy, meaning that basic or "lower-level" needs have to be satisfied before higher-level needs become important or motivating (1976, 1987). Compared to the stage models of Piaget and Erikson, Maslow's hierarchy is only loosely "developmental," in that Maslow was not concerned with tracking universal, irreversible changes across the lifespan. Maslow's stages are universal, but they are not irreversible; earlier stages sometimes reappear later in life, in which case they must be satisfied again before later stages can redevelop. Like the theories of Piaget and Erikson, Maslow's is a rather broad "story," one that has less to say about the effects of a person's culture, language, or economic level, than about what we all have in common.

In its original version, Maslow's theory distinguishes two types of needs, called deficit needs and being needs (or sometimes deficiency needs and growth needs). Deficit Needs are prior to Being Needs, not in the sense of happening earlier in life, but in that Deficit Needs must be satisfied before Being Needs can be addressed. As pointed out, Deficit Needs can reappear at any age, depending on circumstances. If that happens, they must be satisfied again before a person's attention can shift back to "higher" needs. Among students, in fact, Deficit Needs are likely to return chronically to those whose families lack economic or social resources or who live with the stresses associated with poverty (Payne, 2005).



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Get Your Basic Needs met

Deficit Needs are the basic requirements of physical and emotional well-being. First are physiological needs—food, sleep, clothing, and the like. Without these, nothing else matters, especially nothing very "elevated" or self-fulfilling. A student who is not getting enough to eat is not going to feel much interest in learning! Once physiological needs are met, however, safety and security needs become important. The person seeks out stability and protection, and welcomes a bit of structure and limits if they provide these conditions. A child from an abusive family, for example, may be getting enough to eat, but may worry chronically about personal safety. In school, the student may appreciate a well- organized classroom with rules that ensures personal safety and predictability, whether or not the classroom provides much in the way of real learning.

After physiological and safety needs are met, love and belonging needs emerge. The person turns attention to making friends, being a friend, and cultivating positive personal relationships in general. In the classroom, a student motivated at this level may make approval from peers or teachers into a top priority. They may be provided for, materially, and find the classroom and family life safe enough, but still miss a key ingredient in life— love. If such a student (or anyone else) eventually does find love and belonging, however, then their motivation shifts again, this time to esteem needs. Now the concern is with gaining recognition and respect—and even more importantly, gaining self-respect. A student at this level may be unusually concerned

with achievement, for example, though only if the achievement is visible or public enough to earn public recognition.

Become the Best That you can be

Being Needs are desires to become fulfilled as a person, or to be the best person that you can possibly be. They include cognitive needs (a desire for knowledge and understanding), aesthetic needs (an appreciation of beauty and order), and most importantly, self-actualization needs (a desire for fulfillment of one's potential). Being Needs emerge only after all of a person's Deficit Needs have been largely met. Unlike Deficit Needs, Being Needs beget more Being Needs; they do not disappear once they are met, but create a desire for even more satisfaction of the same type. A thirst for knowledge, for example, leads to further thirst for knowledge, and aesthetic appreciation leads to more aesthetic appreciation. Partly because Being Needs are lasting and permanent once they appear, Maslow sometimes treated them as less hierarchical than Deficit Needs, and instead grouped cognitive, aesthetic, and self-actualization needs into the single category self-actualization needs.

People who are motivated by self-actualization have a variety of positive qualities, which Maslow went to some lengths to identify and describe (Maslow, 1976). Self-actualizing individuals, he argued, value deep personal relationships with others, but also value solitude; they have a sense of humor, but do not use it against others; they accept themselves as well as others; they are spontaneous, humble, creative, and ethical. In short, the self-actualizing person has just about every good quality imaginable! Not surprisingly, therefore, Maslow felt that true self-actualization is rare. It is especially unusual among young people, who have not yet lived long enough to satisfy earlier, deficit-based needs.

Video

Why Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs Matters

Play this video to learn about Maslow's hierarchy of needs and how it has become invaluable for understanding the modern world. https://bit.ly/maslowandneeds

MOTIVATION

Human motivation has long been considered the result of evolutionary processes. In other words, we tend to be motivated by things that help us survive (food, sex, water) and things that are associated with these essentials (money that can be used to buy food, and so on). However, motivation is not quite so simple. We now have a number of theories that attempt to accurately describe why certain states may motivate some people but not others. This idea can be extrapolated at the level of culture and society as well. For example, the state of hunger might cause us to be highly motivated by food. However, hunger itself may be under strict cultural control. In fact, most aspects of our eating habits are linked in some way to culture. As such, motivators are also, in some way, linked to our culture. This unit touches on the

universal theories of motivation and examines how certain approaches to culture can better determine what will be a motivating factor versus what will not.

Motivation as Self-Determination

A recent theory of motivation based on the idea of needs is self-determination theory, proposed by the psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (2000), among others. The theory proposes that understanding motivation requires taking into account three basic human needs:

- Autonomy—the need to feel free of external constraints on behavior
- Competence—the need to feel capable or skilled
- Relatedness—the need to feel connected or involved with others

The key idea of self-determination theory is that when people feel that these basic needs are reasonably well met, they tend to perceive their actions and choices to be intrinsically motivated or "self-determined." In that case they can turn their attention to a variety of activities that they find attractive or important, but that do not relate directly to their basic needs.

If one or more basic needs are not met well, however, people will tend to feel coerced by outside pressures or external incentives. They may become preoccupied, in fact, with satisfying whatever need has not been met and thus exclude or avoid activities that might otherwise be interesting, educational, or important. If these individuals are students, their learning will suffer.

Self-Determination and Intrinsic Motivation

In proposing the importance of needs, then, self-determination theory is asserting the importance of intrinsic motivation. The self-determination version of intrinsic motivation, however, emphasizes a person's perception of freedom, rather than the presence or absence of "real" constraints on action.

Self-determination means a person feels free, even if the person is also operating within certain external constraints. In principle, a student can experience self-determination even if the student must, for example, live within externally imposed rules of appropriate classroom behavior. To achieve a feeling of self-determination, however, the student's basic needs must be met—needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Self-determination theory recognizes this reality by suggesting that the "intrinsic-ness" of motivation is really a matter of degree, extending from highly extrinsic, through various mixtures of intrinsic and extrinsic, to highly intrinsic

(Koestner & Losier, 2004). At the extrinsic end of the scale is learning that is regulated primarily by external rewards and constraints, whereas at the intrinsic end is learning regulated primarily by learners themselves. By assuming that motivation is often a mix of the intrinsic and extrinsic, the job is not to expect purely intrinsic motivation from students all the time, but simply to arrange and encourage motivations that are as intrinsic as possible.

Video

A Pep Talk from Kid President to You
How about a little pep talk from Kid President?
https://bit.ly/kpsppeptalk

Types of Motivation

- Pure Extrinsic motivation means a person lacks the intention to take any action, regardless of pressures or incentives. For example, you won't complete any homework (unless you happen to be internally motivated), even when pressured or incentives are offered;
- Very External motivation means actions are regulated only by outside pressures, incentives and controls. For example, you would complete an assignment only if reminded of the incentive of grades or negative consequences of failing;
- Somewhat External motivation means specific actions might be regulated internally, but without reflection or connection to the person's needs. For

example, you might complete an assignment independently, but only because of fear of shame or guilt about the consequences of not completing the work;
- Somewhat Internal motivated action is recognized by an individual as important or valuable as a way to achieve a more valued goal. For example, you generally complete your school work independently, but only because of its value in gaining admission to college;
- Very Internal means the actions adopted by an individual are integral to self-concept and to a person's major personal values. For example, you generally complete your school work independently, because being well-educated is part of your concept of yourself;
- Pure Intrinsic Regulation means one's actions are practiced solely because they are enjoyable and valued for their own sake. For example, if you enjoy every topic, concept, and assignment that every teacher ever assigns, and complete school work solely because of the enjoyment you take from the work.

In certain ways, self-determination theory provides a sensible way to think about your own intrinsic motivation and therefore to think about how to manage your own learning. A particular strength of the theory is that it recognizes degrees of self-determination and bases many ideas on this reality. Most people recognize combinations of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation guiding particular activities in their own lives. To its credit, self-determination theory also relies on a list of basic human needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—that relate comfortably with some of the larger purposes of education.

Goals: Setting and Reaching Them

http://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/settinggoals

Learning Objectives

- Learn about the different types of goals;
- Understand your motivation for setting and achieving goals;
- Learn how to write strong goal statements;
- Make a plan for your own goals;
- Set Motivating Goals;
- Set SMART GOALS;
- Put your Goals into Writing;
- Make and Action Plan;
- Stick WITH IT!!!

"The size of your dreams must always exceed your current capacity to achieve them. If your dreams do not scare you, they are not big enough."
– Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former president of Liberia

MOTIVES AS GOALS

One way motives vary is by the kind of goals that students set for themselves, and by how the goals support students' academic achievement. As you might suspect, some goals encourage academic achievement more than others, but even motives that do not concern academics explicitly tend to affect learning indirectly.

Every day we make choices. Some are as simple as what clothes we decide to wear, what we'll eat for lunch, or how long to study for a test. But what about life-altering choices—the ones that leave us at a crossroads? How much thought do you give to taking Path A versus Path B? Do you like to plan and schedule your choices, by making a list of pros and cons, for instance? Or do you prefer to make decisions spontaneously and just play the cards that life deals you as they come?

Tips for Motivation

- Keep your eye on your long-term goals while working toward immediate goals;
- Keep your priorities straight—but also save some time for fun;
- Work on keeping your attitude positive;
- Keep the company of positive people; imitate successful people;
- Don't let past habits drag you down;
- Plan ahead to avoid last-minute pressures;
- Focus on your successes;
- Break large projects down into smaller tasks or stages;
- Reward yourself for completing significant tasks;
- Avoid multitasking;
- Network with other students; form a study group.

What's Your Motivation?

What kinds of achievement goals do students hold? Imagine three individuals, Maria, Sara, and Lindsay, who are taking algebra together. Maria's main concern is to learn the material as well as possible because she finds it interesting and because she believes it will be useful to her in later courses, perhaps at college. Hers is a **mastery goal** because she wants primarily to learn or master the material. Sara,

however, is concerned less about algebra than about getting top marks on the exams and in the course. Hers is a **performance goal** because she is focused primarily on appearing successful; learning algebra is merely a vehicle for performing well in the eyes of peers and teachers. Lindsay, for her part, is primarily concerned about avoiding a poor or failing mark. Hers is a **performance-avoidance goa**l or **failure-avoidance goal** because she is not really as concerned about learning algebra, as Maria is, or about competitive success, as Sara is; she is simply intending to avoid failure.

As you might imagine, mastery, performance, and performance-avoidance goals often are not experienced in pure form, but in combinations. If you play the clarinet in the school band, you might want to improve your technique simply because you enjoy playing as well as possible—essentially a mastery orientation. But you might also want to appear talented in the eyes of classmates—a performance orientation. Another part of what you may wish, at least privately, is to avoid seeming like a complete failure at playing the clarinet. One of these motives may predominate over the others, but they all may be present.

Mastery goals tend to be associated with enjoyment of learning the material at hand, and in this sense represent an outcome that teachers often seek for students. By definition, therefore, they are a form of intrinsic motivation. As such, mastery goals have been found to be better than performance goals at sustaining students' interest in a subject. In one review of research about learning goals, for example, students with primarily mastery orientations toward a course they were taking not only tended to express greater interest in the course, but also continued to express interest well beyond the official end of the course, and to enroll in further courses in the same subject (Harackiewicz, et al., 2002; Wolters, 2004).

Performance goals, on the other hand, imply extrinsic motivation, and tend to show the mixed effects of this orientation. A positive effect is that students with a performance orientation do tend to get higher grades than those who express primarily a mastery orientation. The advantage in grades occurs both in the short term (with individual assignments) and in the long term (with overall grade point average when graduating). But there is evidence that performance-oriented students do not actually learn material as deeply or permanently as students who are more mastery oriented (Midgley, Kaplan, & Middleton, 2001). A possible reason is that measures of performance—such as test scores—often reward relatively shallow memorization of information and therefore guide performance-oriented students away from processing the information thoughtfully or deeply. Another possible reason is that a performance orientation, by focusing on gaining recognition as the best among peers, encourages competition among peers. Giving and receiving help

from classmates is thus not in the self-interest of a performance-oriented student, and the resulting isolation limits the student's learning.

Some people are goal oriented and seem to easily make decisions that lead to achieving their goals, while others seem just to "go with the flow" and accept what life gives them. While the latter may sound pleasantly relaxed, moving through life without goals may not lead anywhere at all. The fact that you're in college now shows you already have the major goal to complete your college program. A goal is a result we intend to reach mostly through our own actions. Things we do may move us closer to or farther away from that result. Studying moves us closer to success in a difficult course, while sleeping through the final examination may completely prevent reaching that goal. That may be an extreme case, yet still a lot of college students don't reach their goal of graduating. The problem may be a lack of commitment to the goal, but often students have conflicting goals.

One way to prevent problems is to think about all your goals and priorities and to learn ways to manage your time, your studies, and your social life to best reach your goals. Consider these four students:

1. To help his widowed mother, Yuxi went to work full time after high school. Now, a few years later, he's dissatisfied with the kinds of jobs he has been able to get and has begun taking computer programming courses in the evening. He's often tired after work, however, and his mother would like him to spend more time at home. Sometimes he cuts class to stay home and spend time with her;
2. In her senior year of college, Becky has just been elected president of her student union and is excited about planning a major community service project. She knows she should be spending more time on her senior thesis, but she feels her community project may give her the opportunity to make contacts and connections that can help her find a better job after graduation. Besides, the project is a lot more fun, and she's enjoying the esteem of her position. Even if she doesn't do well on her thesis, she's sure she'll pass;
3. After an easy time in high school, James is surprised his college classes are so hard. He's got enough time to study for his first-year courses, but he also has a lot of friends and fun things to do. Sometimes he's surprised to look up from his computer to see it's midnight already, and he hasn't started reading that chapter yet. Where does the time go? When he's stressed, however, he can't study well, so he tells himself he'll get up early and read the chapter before class, and then he turns back to his computer to see who's online;
4. Sachito was successful in cutting back her hours at work to give her more time for her engineering classes, but it's difficult for her to get much studying

done at home. Her husband has been wonderful about taking care of their young daughter, but he can't do everything, and lately he's been hinting more about asking her sister to babysit so that the two of them can go out in the evening the way they used to. Lately, when she's had to study on a weekend, he leaves with his friends, and Sachito ends up spending the day with her daughter—and not getting much studying done.

What do these very different students have in common?
Each has goals that conflict in one or more ways. Each needs to develop strategies to meet their other goals without threatening their academic success. And all of them have time management issues to work through: three because they feel they don't have enough time to do everything they want or need to do, and one because even though he has enough time, he needs to learn how to manage it more effectively. For all four of them, motivation and attitude will be important as they develop strategies to achieve their goals.

Goal work begins with setting goals and thinking about priorities. As you think about your own goals, think about more than just being a student. You're also a person with individual needs and desires, hopes and dreams, plans and schemes. Your long-term goals likely include graduation and a career but may also involve social relationships with others, a romantic relationship, family, hobbies or other activities, where and how you live, and so on. While you are a student you may not be actively pursuing all your goals with the same fervor, but they remain goals and are still important in your life.

Goals also vary in terms of time. Short-term goals focus on today, the next few days and perhaps the next few weeks. Mid-term goals involve plans for this school year and the time you plan to remain in college. Long-term goals may begin with graduating college and everything you want to happen thereafter. Often your long-term goals (e.g., the kind of career you want) guide your midterm goals (getting the right education for that career), and your short-term goals (such as doing well on an exam) become steps for reaching those larger goals. Thinking about your goals in this way helps you realize how even the little things you do every day can keep you moving toward your most important long-term goals.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

A goal is a desired result that you envision and then plan and commit to achieve. Goals can relate to family, education, career, wellness, spirituality, and many other

areas of your life. Generally, goals are associated with finite time expectations, even deadlines.

As a college student, many of your goals are defined for you. For example, you must take certain courses, you must comply with certain terms and schedules, and you must turn in assignments at specified times. These goals are mostly set for you by someone else.

But there are plenty of goals for you to define yourself. For example, you decide what you'd like to major in. You decide how long you are going to be in college or what terms you want to enroll in. You largely plan how you'd like your studies to relate to employment and your career.

Goals can also be sidetracked. Consider the following scenario in which a student makes a discovery that challenges her to reexamine her goals, priorities, and timetables:

Janine had thought they would be an accountant, even though they knew little about what an accounting job might entail. Their math and organizational skills were strong, and they enjoyed taking economics courses as well as other courses in their accounting program. But when one of their courses required them to spend time in an accounting office working with taxes, they decided that accounting was not the right fit for them, due to the higher-stress environment and the late hours.

At first they were concerned that they invested time and money in a career path that did not match their disposition. They feared that changing her major would add to their graduation time. Nevertheless, they did decide to change their major and their career focus.

Janine is now a statistician with a regional healthcare system. They are very happy with their work. Changing their major from accounting to statistics was the right decision for them.

This scenario represents some of the many opportunities we have, on an ongoing basis, to assess our relationship to our goals, reevaluate priorities, and adjust. Opportunities exist every day—every moment, really!

Below is a set of questions we can ask ourselves at any turn to help focus on personal goals:

- What are my top-priority goals?
- Which of my skills and interests make my goals realistic for me?

- What makes my goals believable and possible?
- Are my goals measurable? How long will it take me to reach them? How will I know if I have achieved them?
- Are my goals flexible? What will I do if I experience a setback?
- Are my goals controllable? Can I achieve them on my own?
- Are my goals in sync with my values?

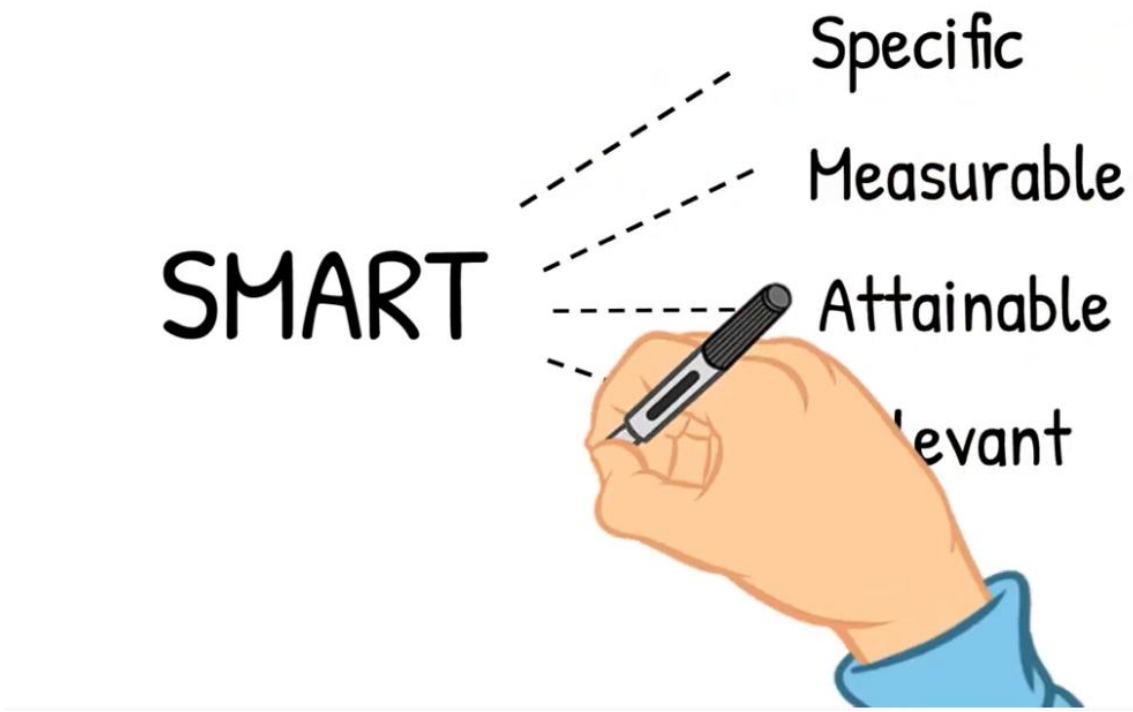
As you move through your college career, make a point to ask these questions regularly.

Keep Them S.M.A.R.T

SMART is an acronym to help guide you with goal setting. It helps you develop goals which are clear and reachable. Each letter represents a step in the process:

- S is for specific, simple, significant, sensible;
- M is for measurable, meaningful, motivating;
- A means achievable, agreed, attainable;
- R relevant, reasonable, realistic, resourced and results-based;
- T time bound, time based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive.

Video



How To Write Smart Goals Effectively | Lifehack

This video visually represents the steps to creating SMART goals and is helpful for understanding the concept: https://bit.ly/smartgoalshowto

Know Your Priorities

Thinking about your goals gets you started, but it's also important to think about priorities. We often use the word "priorities" to refer to how important something is to us. We might think, this is a really important goal, and that is less important. Try this experiment: go back to the goals you wrote in Activity 1 and rank each goal as a 1 (top priority), 2 (middle priority), or 3 (lowest priority). It sounds easy, but do you actually feel comfortable doing that?

Maybe you gave a priority 1 to passing your courses and a priority 3 to playing your guitar. So what does that mean—that you never play guitar again, or at least not

while in college? Whenever you have an hour free between class and work, you have to study because that's the higher priority? What about all your other goals—do you have to ignore everything that's not a priority 1? And what happens when you have to choose among different goals that are both number 1 priorities?

In reality, priorities don't work quite that way. It doesn't make a lot of sense to try to rank goals as always more or less important. The question of priority is really a question of what is more important at a specific time. It is important to do well in your classes, but it's also important to have a social life and enjoy your time off from studying. You shouldn't have to choose between the two—except at any given time. Priorities always involve time: what is most important to do right now. As we'll discover later, time management is mostly a way to juggle priorities so you can meet all your goals. When you manage your time well, you don't have to ignore some goals completely in order to meet other goals. In other words, you don't have to give up your life when you register for college—but you may need to work on managing your life more effectively.

But time management works only when you're committed to your goals. Attitude and motivation are very important. If you haven't yet developed an attitude for success, all the time management skills in the world won't keep you focused and motivated to succeed.

We believe in you!

Attitude Adjustment

What's your attitude right now—what started running through your mind as you read the "An Attitude for Success" heading? Were you groaning to yourself, thinking, "No, not the attitude thing again!" Or, at the other extreme, maybe you were thinking, "This is great! Now I'm about to learn everything I need to get through college without a problem!" Those are two attitude extremes, one negative and skeptical, the other positive and hopeful. Most students are somewhere in between—but everyone has an attitude of one sort or another.

Everything people do and how they do it starts with attitude. One student gets up with the alarm clock and cheerfully prepares for the day, planning to study for a couple hours between classes, go jogging later, and catch up with a friend at dinner. Another student oversleeps after partying too late last night, decides to skip their first class, somehow gets through later classes fueled by fast food and energy drinks while dreading tomorrow's exam, and immediately accepts a friend's suggestion to go out tonight instead of studying. Both students could have identical situations,

classes, finances, and academic preparation. There could be just one significant difference—but it's the one that matters.

Here are some characteristics associated with a positive attitude:

- Enthusiasm for and enjoyment of daily activities;
- Acceptance of responsibility for one's actions and feeling good about success;
- Generally upbeat mood and positive emotions, cheerfulness with others, and satisfaction with oneself;
- Motivation to get the job done;
- Flexibility to make changes when needed;
- Ability to make productive, effective use of time;

And here are some characteristics associated with a negative attitude:

- Frequent complaining;
- Blaming others for anything that goes wrong;
- Often experiencing negative emotions: anger, depression, resentment;
- Lack of motivation for work or studies;
- Hesitant to change or seek improvement; and
- Unproductive use of time, procrastination.

Video

Procrastination – 7 Steps to Cure

This 9-minute video unpacks the psychology behind procrastination, helps you draw connections between your personality type and procrastination and offers several strategies for overcoming procrastination: https://bit.ly/beatprocrastination7steps

We started this section talking about goals, because people's goals and priorities have a huge effect on their attitude. Someone who really wants to succeed in college is better motivated and can develop a more positive attitude to succeed. But what if you are committed to succeeding in college but still feel kind of doubtful or worried or even down on yourself—what can you do then? Can people really change their attitude? Aren't people just "naturally" positive or negative or whatever? While attitude is influenced by one's personality, upbringing, and past experiences, there is no "attitude gene" that makes you one way or another. It's not as simple as taking a pill, but attitude can be changed. If you're committed to your goals, you can learn to adjust your attitude.

We all have conversations with ourselves. I might do badly on a test, and I start thinking things like, "I'm just not smart enough" or "That teacher is so hard no one could pass that test." The problem when we talk to ourselves this way is that we listen—and we start believing what we're hearing. Think about what you've been saying to yourself since your first day at college. Have you been negative or making

excuses, maybe because you're afraid of not succeeding? You are smart enough or you wouldn't be here. Even if you did poorly on a test, you can turn that around into a more positive attitude by taking responsibility. "OK, I goofed off too much when I should have been studying. I learned my lesson—now it's time to buckle down and study for the next test. I'm going to ace this one!" Hear yourself saying that enough and guess what—you soon find out you can succeed even in your hardest classes.

Make a Plan

Okay, you've got a positive attitude. But you've got a lot of reading for classes to do tonight, a test tomorrow, and a paper due the next day. Maybe you're a little bored with one of your reading assignments. Maybe you'd rather play a computer game. Uh oh—now what? Attitude can change at almost any moment. One minute you're enthusiastically starting a class project, and then maybe a friend drops by and suddenly all you want to do is close the books and relax a while, hang out with friends.

One of the characteristics of successful people is accepting that life is full of interruptions and change— and planning for it. Staying focused does not mean you become a boring person who does nothing but go to class and study all the time. You just need to make a plan.

Planning ahead is the single best way to stay focused and motivated to reach your goals. Don't wait until the night before an exam. If you know you have a major exam in five days, start by reviewing the material and deciding how many hours of study you need. Then schedule those hours spread out over the next few days—at times when you are most alert and least likely to be distracted. Allow time for other activities, too, to reward yourself for successful studying. Then when the exam comes, you're relaxed, you know the material, you're in a good mood and confident, and you do well.

Planning is mostly a matter of managing your time well, as we'll discover later. Here are some other tips for staying focused and motivated:

- If you're not feeling motivated, think about the results of your goals, not just the goals themselves. If just thinking about finishing college doesn't sound all that exciting, then think instead about the great, high-paying career that comes afterward and the things you can do with that income;
- Say it aloud—to yourself or a friend with a positive attitude: "I'm going to study now for another hour before I take a break—and I'm getting an A on that test tomorrow!" It's amazing how saying something aloud puts commitment in it and affirms that it can be true;

- Remember your successes, even small successes. As you begin a project or approach studying for a test, think about your past success on a different project or test. Remember how good it feels to succeed. Know you can succeed again;
- Focus on the here and now. For some people, thinking ahead to goals, or to anything else, may lead to daydreaming that keeps them from focusing on what they need to do right now. Don't worry about what you're doing tomorrow or next week or month. If your mind keeps drifting off, however, you may need to reward or even trick yourself to focus on the here and now. For example, if you can't stop thinking about the snack you're going to have when you finish studying in a couple hours, change the plan. Tell yourself you'll take a break in twenty minutes if you really need it—but only if you really work well first;
- If you just can't focus on what you should be doing because the task seems too big and daunting, break the task into smaller, manageable pieces. Don't start out thinking, "I need to study the next four hours," but think, "I'll spend the next thirty minutes going through my class notes from the last three weeks and figure out what topics I need to spend more time on." It's a lot easier to stay focused when you're sitting down for thirty minutes at a time;
- Never, ever multitask while studying! You may think that you can monitor your emails and send text messages while studying, but in reality, these other activities lower the quality of your studying;
- Imitate successful people. Does a friend always seem better able to stick with studying or work until they get it done? What are they doing that you're not? We all learn from observing others, and we can speed up that process by deliberately using the same strategies we know works with others. Visualize yourself studying in the same way and getting that same high grade on the test or paper;
- Separate yourself from unsuccessful people. This is the flip side of imitating successful people. If a roommate or a friend is always putting off things until the last minute or is distracted with other interests and activities, tell yourself how different you are. When you hear other students complaining about how hard a class is or bragging about not studying or attending class, visualize yourself as not being like them at all;
- Reward yourself when you complete a significant task—but only when you are done. Some people seem able to stay focused only when there's a reward waiting;
- While some people work harder for the reward, others are motivated more by the price of failing. While some people are almost paralyzed by anxiety, others are moved by their fear to achieve their best;

- Get the important things done first. We'll talk about managing your academic planner and to-do lists later in the section, but for now, to stay focused and motivated, concentrate on the things that matter most. You're about to sit down to read a chapter in a book you're not enjoying, and you suddenly notice some clothing piled up on a chair. "I really should clean up this place," you think. "And I'd better get my laundry done before I run out of things to wear." Don't try to fool yourself into feeling you're accomplishing something by doing laundry rather than studying. Stay focused!

Network for Success

Making friends with people with positive attitudes not only helps you maintain a positive attitude yourself, but it gets you started networking with other students in ways that will help you succeed.

Did you study alone or with friends in high school? Because college classes are typically much more challenging, many college students discover they do better, and find it much more enjoyable, if they study with other students taking the same course. This might mean organizing a study group or just getting together with a friend to review material before a test. It's good to start thinking right away about networking with other students in your classes.

If you consider yourself an independent person and prefer studying and doing projects on your own rather than with others, think for a minute about how most people function in their careers and professions, and what the business world is like. Most work today is done by teams or individuals working together in a collaborative way. Very few jobs involve a person always being and working alone. The more you learn to study and work with other students now, the more skills you are mastering for a successful career.

Studying with other students has immediate benefits. You can quiz each other to help ensure that everyone understands the course material; if you're not clear about something, someone else can help teach it to you. You can read and respond to each other's writing and other work. You can divide up the work in group projects. And through it all, you can often have more fun than if you were doing it on your own.

Studying together is also a great way to start networking—a topic we'll discuss more in upcoming student success materials. Networking has many potential benefits for your future. College students who feel they are part of a network on campus are more motivated and more successful in college.

Here are some easy ways you can tap into goal-supporting "people power":

- Make new friends;
- Study with friends;
- Actively engage with the college community;
- Volunteer to help others;
- Join student organizations;
- Get an internship;
- Work for a company related to your curriculum;
- Stay connected via social media (but use it judiciously);*
- Keep a positive attitude;
- Congratulate yourself on all you've done to get where you are.

Setbacks Happen

Even when you have clear goals and are motivated and focused to achieve them, problems sometimes happen. Accept that they will happen, since inevitably they do for everyone. The difference between those who succeed by solving the problem and moving on and those who get frustrated and give up is partly attitude and partly experience—and knowing how to cope when a problem occurs.
Lots of different kinds of setbacks may happen while you're in college—just as to everyone in life. Here are a few examples:

- A financial crisis;
- An illness or injury;
- A crisis involving family members or loved ones;
- Stress related to frequently feeling you don't have enough time;
- Stress related to relationship problems.

Some things happen that we cannot prevent—such as some kinds of illness, losing one's job because of a business slowdown, or crises involving family members. But many other kinds of problems can be prevented or made less likely to occur. You can take steps to stay healthy, as you'll learn in the Health section. You can take control of your finances and avoid most financial problems common among college students, as you'll learn in the Money item. You can learn how to build successful social relationships and get along better with your instructors, with other students, and in personal relationships. You can learn time management techniques to ensure you use your time effectively for studying. Most of the sections in this book also provide study tips and guidelines to help you do well in your classes with effective reading, note-taking, test taking, and writing skills for classes. Preventing the problems that typically keep college students from succeeding is much of what this book is all about.

Not all problems can be avoided. Illness or a financial problem can significantly set one back—especially when you're on a tight schedule and budget. Other problems,

such as a social or relationship issue or an academic problem in a certain class, may be more complex and not easily prevented. What then? First, work to resolve the immediate problem:

1. Stay motivated and focused. Don't let frustration, anxiety, or other negative emotions make the problem worse than it already is;

2. Analyze the problem to consider all possible solutions. An unexpected financial setback doesn't automatically mean you have to drop out of school—not when alternatives such as student loans, less expensive living arrangements, or other possible solutions may be available. Failing a midterm exam doesn't automatically mean you're going to fail the course—not when you make the effort to determine what went wrong, work with your instructor and others on an improved study plan, and use better strategies to prepare for the next test;

3. Seek help when you need to. None of us gets through life alone, and it's not a sign of weakness to consult with your college counselor if you have a problem;

4. When you've developed a plan for resolving the problem, work to follow through. If it will take a while before the problem is completely solved, track your progress in smaller steps so that you can be assured that you really are succeeding. Every day will move you one step closer to putting it behind you.

Video

How President Obama Solves Problems
This video packs a lot of wisdom into 2-minutes, play to learn how former President Obama solves problems: www.bit.ly/C20_PresidentObama

After you've solved a problem, be sure to avoid it again in the future:

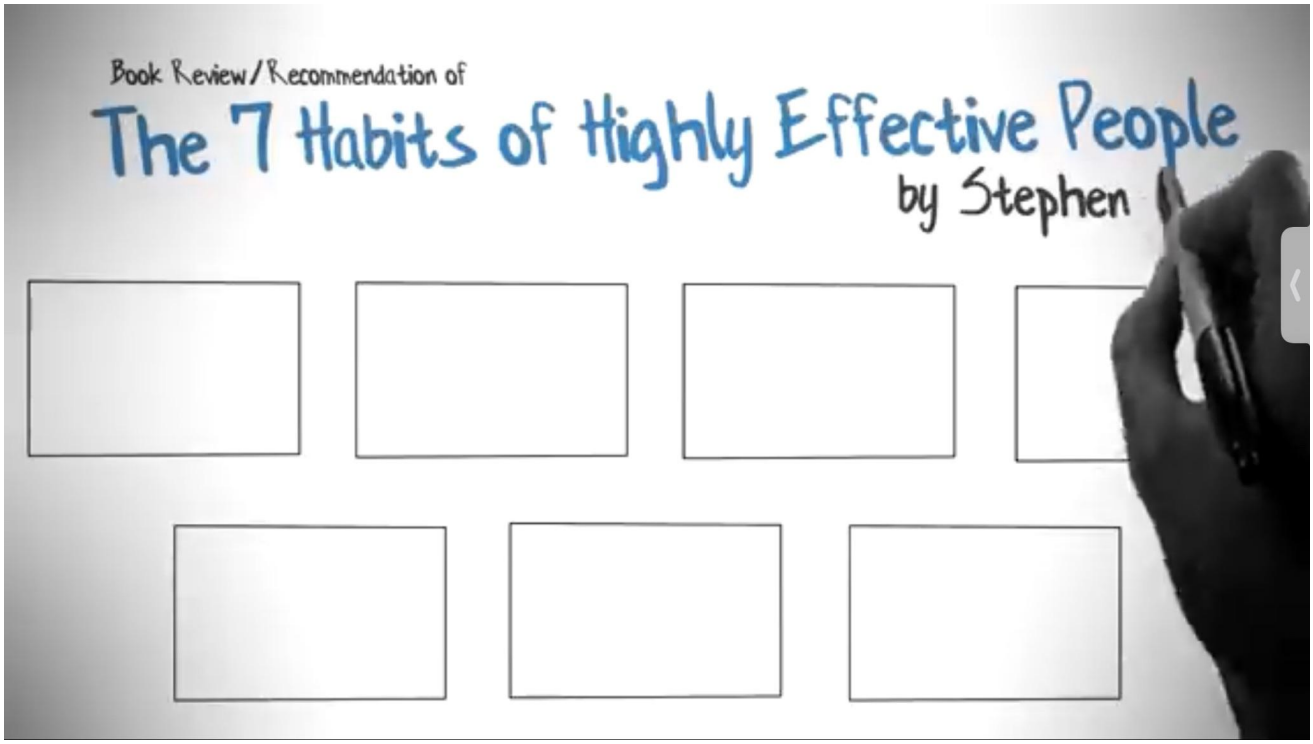
- Be honest with yourself: how did you contribute to the problem? Sometimes it's obvious: a student who drank heavily at a party the night before a big test failed the exam because they were so hung over they couldn't think straight. Sometimes the source of the problem is not as obvious but may become clearer the more you think about it. Another student did a lot of partying during the term but studied all day before the big test and was well rested and clear-headed at test time but still did poorly; they may not yet have learned good study skills. Another student has frequent colds and other mild illnesses that keep them from doing their best: how much better would they feel if they ate well, got plenty of exercise, and slept enough every night? If you don't honestly explore the factors that led to the problem, it's more likely to happen again;

- Take responsibility for your life and your role in what happens to you. Earlier we talked about people with negative attitudes, who are always blaming others, fate, or "the system" for their problems. It's no coincidence that they keep on having problems. Unless you want to keep having problems, don't keep blaming others;

- Taking responsibility doesn't mean being down on yourself. Failing at something doesn't mean you are a failure. We all fail at something, sometimes. Adjust your attitude so you're ready to get back on track and feel happy that you'll never make that mistake again;

- Make a plan. You might still have a problem on that next big test if you don't make an effective study plan and stick to it. You may need to change your behavior in some way, such as learning time management strategies. (Read on!)

Video



THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE BY STEPHEN COVEY - A...

In this video, wisdom is shared from the classic book, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey, www.bit.ly/C20_7Habits.

Below is a simple list of four problem-solving strategies. They can be applied to any aspect of your life.

1. What is the problem? Define it in detail. How is it affecting me and other people?
2. How are other people dealing with this problem? Are they adjusting their time management skills? Can they still complete responsibilities, and on time?
3. What is my range of possible solutions? Are solutions realistic? How might these solutions help me reach my goal/s?
4. What do I need to do to implement solutions?

You may wish to also review the earlier set of questions about focusing with intention on goals.

Be confident that you can return to your intended path in time. Acknowledge the ways in which you need to regroup. Read inspiring words from people who have faced adversity and gained. Line up your resources, be resolved, and proceed with certainty toward your goals.

How Can I Set And Achieve My Goals?

Goals are commitments we make and keep in order to achieve the future we want for ourselves.

Some of us might find it difficult to answer when someone asks, “What do you do?” or “What do you want to do when you ‘grow up’?” It is easy to get caught up in our day-to-day lives and lose track of who we want to be, what we want to have, or what we wish to achieve in the future. Building a practice of goal-setting can help clarify, focus and motivate us.

Here’s an article with resources and tips for getting clear on goal setting as a skill, https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/goals.

Key Takeaways

- Goals should be realistic, specific, and time oriented, and you must be committed to them;

- Setting priorities helps keep you focused on your goals but doesn't determine how you use your time at all times;
- Attitude is an important reason students succeed or fail in college. Everyone can work on developing a more positive, motivating attitude;
- Planning, the essence of time management, is necessary to stay focused and continue moving toward your goals;
- Networking with other students helps you stay motivated as well as making studying more effective;
- Since problems and setbacks are inevitable, knowing how to solve problems is important for reaching goals. With a good attitude, most common student problems can be prevented.

Your Turn: Activity

GOAL REVIEW

On a sheet of paper or document, answer the following questions:

1. Which of the following goal statements is written in a way that shows the person has carefully considered what they want to achieve?
    A. I will do better in my math course;
    B. I will earn at least a B on my next English paper;
    C. I will study more this term.

2. List ways in which a negative attitude can prevent students from being successful in college;

3. Think about your friends in college or other students you have observed in one of your classes. Choose one who usually seems positive and upbeat and one who sometimes or frequently shows a negative attitude about college. Visualize both their faces—side by side—as if you are talking to both of them. Now imagine yourself sitting down to study with one of them for a final exam. Describe how you would imagine that study session going;

4. Think back on the four students described at the beginning of the chapter. Each of them is experiencing some sort of problem that could interrupt their progress toward their goals. Think about each student and write down a solution for each problem that you would try to work out, if you were that person:
    - For Yuxi:
    - For Becky:
    - For James:

- For Sachito:

5. List a few things you can do if you're having trouble getting motivated to sit down to study.

Your Turn: Activity

WRITE YOUR OWN ACADEMIC GOALS

In order to achieve long-term goals (from college on), you'll need to first achieve a series of shorter goals. Medium-term goals (this year and while in college) and short-term goals (today, this week, and this month) may take several days, weeks, months, or even a few years to complete, depending on your ultimate long-term goals. Identify what you will need to do in order to achieve your goals. Gain a full view of your trajectory.

Objectives:

- Identify and prioritize 3–5 long-term academic goals;
- Identify three related medium-term and short-term academic goals;
- Identify what you are doing toward achieving these identified goals (for example, how you are managing time).

Directions:
Review the statements and examples below, and fill in the blank sections to the best of your ability.

Guidelines:

- Phrase goals as positive statements: Affirm your excitement and enthusiasm about attaining a goal by using positive language and expectations;
- Be exacting: Set a precise goal that includes dates, times, and amounts, so that you have a basis for measuring how closely you achieve your goals;
- Prioritize: Select your top goals, and put them in order of importance. This helps you understand the degree to which you value each of them. It will also help you better manage related tasks and not feel overwhelmed;
- Assume you are the captain of your ship: Identify goals that are linked to your own performance, not dependent on the actions of other people or situations beyond your control;
- Be realistic but optimistic and ambitious: The goals you set should be achievable, but sometimes it pays to reach a little higher than what you may think is possible. Certainly don't set your goals too low;
- Be hopeful, excited, and committed: Your enthusiasm and perseverance can open many doors!

Examples of Long-Term Academic Goals:

- I will graduate with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. My major will be Radio-Television-Film, and my minor will be Spanish;
- I will graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service degree with a major in international history;
- I will earn an associate's degree in nursing (ADN).

Examples of Medium-Term or Short-Term Academic Goals:

- I will study abroad in Spain before I graduate;
- I will get involved in a service-learning project in my community, as part of my preparation for eventual service work;
- I will join the student government organization so that I can gain some experience at the community college where I take classes part-time.

YOU WILL achieve goals because you clearly organize the process and follow through with commitment. Focus your sights on what you want to acquire, attain, or achieve. Prioritize the steps you need to take to get there. And organize your tasks into manageable chunks and blocks of time. These are the roadways to accomplishment and fulfillment. You've got this!

What Does Success Mean to you?

http://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/success

Learning Objectives

- Examine positive self-talk and develop your inner self talk;
- Identify the difference between growth and fixed mindsets and emotional intelligence;
- Define college success;
- Learn characteristics of a successful college student;
- Practice visualizing your own success.

"On my own I will just create, and if it works, it works, and if it doesn't, I'll create something else. I don't have any limitations on what I think I could do or be."
— Oprah Winfrey

In this chapter, you will have the opportunity to identify your self-talk habits and how it impacts your everyday life and college success. We hope you'll understand growth and fixed mindsets as they relate to learning. We often think we are open to

learning yet, we may create our own mental blocks. Self-empowerment involves celebrating your strengths and improving upon your weaknesses to increase your self-confidence. You will inevitably experience challenges while in college, but don't be afraid. You have the power within to overcome many common obstacles.

The success section will help you define what success in college means to you. Success means different things for different people. By discovering what your personal values are, you will identify what keeps you motivated. Are they intrinsic or extrinsic types of motivation? When you take advantage of your self-empowerment abilities, you will be able to increase your self-efficacy and achieve your greatest success in college and in life.

THE POWER OF POSITIVE SELF-TALK

Is your inner voice positive or negative? What thoughts dominate your mind when you sit down to study?

Positive self-talk is very important when it comes to your success in college. If you are always telling yourself that you won't do well, eventually, you will start to believe that.

It may seem simplistic, but make sure you are thinking positively about what you are studying. Make sure you have confidence that you can achieve good grades. Always remember to not be extremely critical about a bad grade. A bad grade (or a good grade) should not define you. Perhaps an unsatisfactory grade is sending you a message to study harder, increase your academic support and create a plan to achieve your goal.

Getting an undesirable grade could also mean that instead of continuing with the way you studied, maybe you need to make some changes in your study habits so that you are better able to grasp the material. Never get discouraged though, keep trying, keep making adjustments if needed, and your hard work will pay off.

Your Turn: Activity

ARE YOU A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE THINKER?

Go to "Are You a Positive or Negative Thinker?"
www.bit.ly/C20_MindToolsThinking

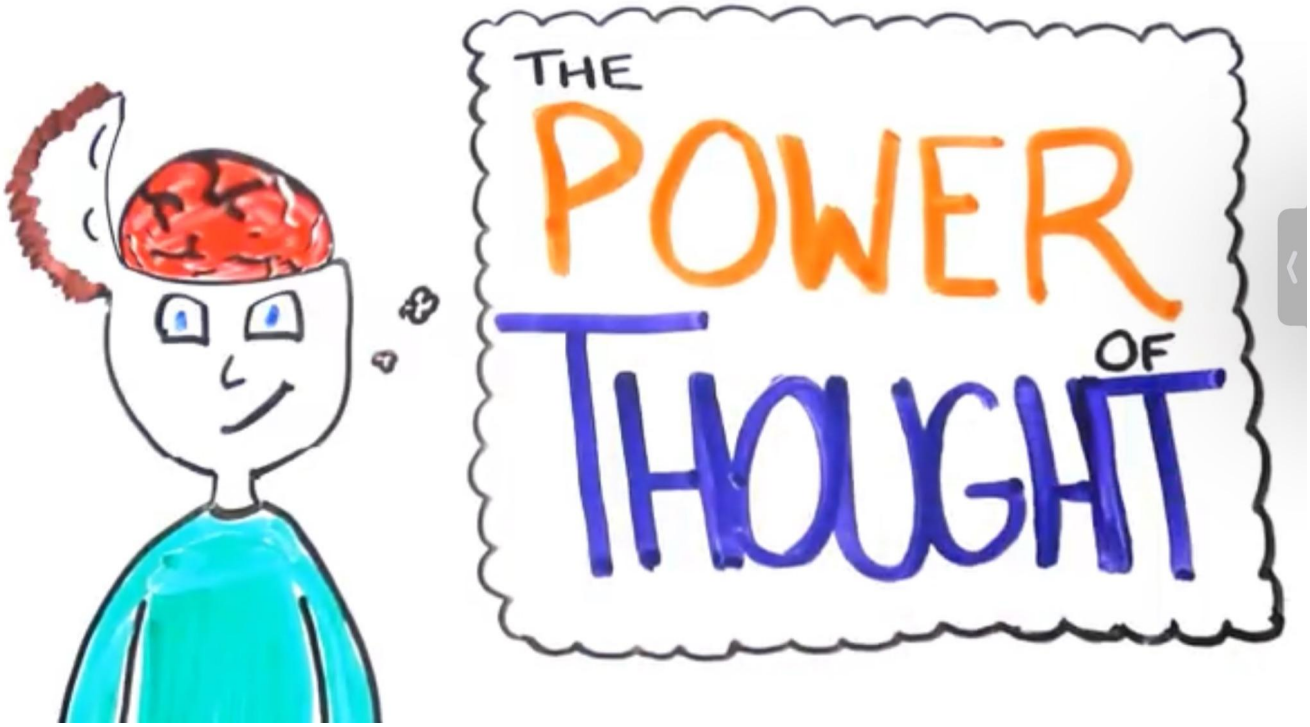
Read the article and do the activities to learn how positive and negative thinking can become self-fulfilling prophecies. Positive thinkers are more optimistic, happier, and healthier than negative thinkers. Therefore, positive thinkers are associated with positive actions and outcomes. This site offers a quiz to determine whether you are a positive or negative thinker. The article gives us examples of how pessimistic thinkers frame a situation so that outcomes are self-defeating, whereas optimists see the same event as an opportunity for gain or change!

When in doubt, keep telling yourself you CAN do well, even if it is in a challenging subject. The table below shows some examples of positive affirmations you can use to develop a positive attitude towards learning and the good habit of positive self-talk.

Please take time to develop positive affirmations in areas of your life you would like to improve. We highly encourage you to develop a couple of positive affirmations for your continued success in academics.

It is important to become aware of our learning habits, our self-awareness of how we view ourselves and understand how we adopted our thinking. There has been research conducted to identify how we react to failure. Moreover, to identify how we can acquire a new way of thinking to manage our success.

Video



The Scientific Power of Thought

The Scientific Power of Thought, this video gives a brief overview of brain and thought processes and the neuroscience behind them: www.bit.ly/C20_Powerofthought

REFRAMING NEGATIVE SELF-TALK

- Instead of thinking to yourself, “I’m not good at this!” You could try asking, “What am I missing here?”
- Instead of saying, “I give up,” you could say, “let me try one of the strategies we learned that is new to me;”
- Instead of saying, “this is too hard” to yourself, you could say, “this might take more time and effort than I anticipated;
- Instead of resigning yourself to failure and saying something like, “I just can’t do math,” you could consider, “I may not be great at Math now, but I think I could train myself to improve.”

These are just a few ways to encourage yourself. What do you say to yourself? How could you re-script your self-talk?

FIXED AND GROWTH MINDSET

According to Carol Dweck, https://bit.ly/caroldweckwiki, individuals can be placed on a continuum according to their implicit views of "where ability comes from." Dweck states that there are two categories growth mindset vs fixed mindset .Those with a "fixed mindset" believe that abilities are mostly innate and interpret failure as the lack of necessary basic abilities, while those with a "growth mindset" believe that they can acquire any given ability provided they invest effort or study. Dweck argues that the growth mindset "will allow a person to live a less stressful and more successful life."

Dweck defined both fixed and growth mindsets:
"In a fixed mindset students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are fixed traits with a restricted amount. Eventually, their goal becomes to appear smart all the time and to never come across as dumb. In a growth mindset students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence. They don't necessarily think everyone's the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone has the ability to be smart if they work hard.”

A large part of Dweck's research on mindsets has been done in the field of education, and how these mindsets affect a student's performance in the classroom. The growth mindset is clearly the more desirable of the two for students. According to Dweck, individuals with a "growth" theory are more likely to continue working

hard despite setbacks. Individuals' theories of intelligence can be affected by subtle environmental cues. For example, children given praise such as "good job, you're very smart" are much more likely to develop a fixed mindset, whereas if given compliments like "good job, you worked very hard" they are likely to develop a growth mindset.

While elements of our personality – such as sensitivity to mistakes and setbacks – can make us predisposed towards holding a certain mindset, we are able to develop and reshape our mindset through our interactions.[1] In multiple studies, Carol Dweck and her colleagues noted that alterations in mindset could be achieved through "praising the process through which success was achieved," and "having [college-aged students] read compelling scientific articles that support one view or the other", or teaching junior high school students "that every time they try hard and learn something new, their brain forms new connections that, over time, make them smarter." These studies all demonstrate how framing and discussing students' work and effort play a considerable role in the type of mindset students develop and students' conceptions of their own ability.

Carol Dweck and Jo Boaler have done extensive research on the topics of fixed and growth mindset. However, studies on mindset depict results that show that there is a disparity in the fixed and growth mindsets among genders. In Boaler's Ability and Mathematics: The Mindset Revolution that is Reshaping Education, https://bit.ly/mindsetwiki, she notes that fixed mindset beliefs lead to widespread educational inequities. Boaler's research shows that many feel as though they are not smart enough or capable enough to continue in certain subjects, such as STEM areas of academia. Boaler uses Carol Dweck's research showing that, "gender differences in mathematics performance only existed among fixed mindset students." (Boaler, 2013)

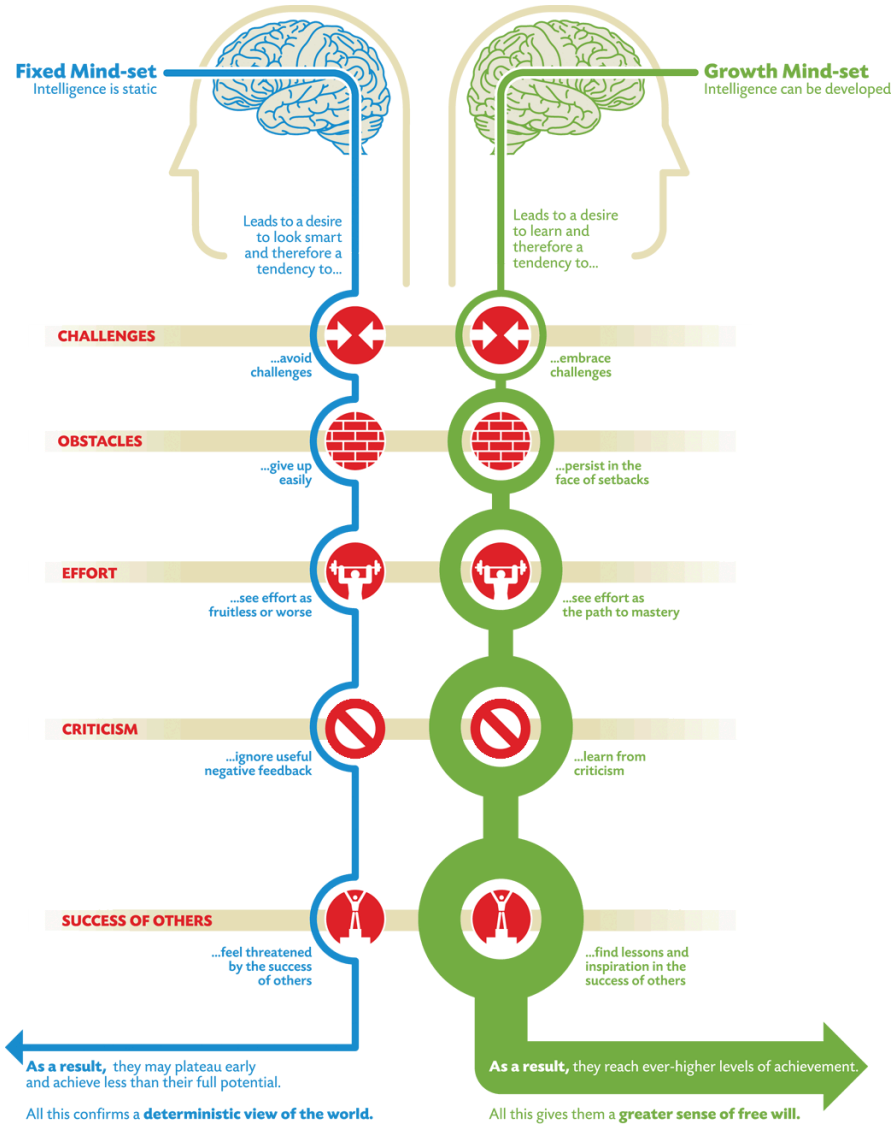
Dweck's research and theory of growth and fixed mindsets has been useful in intervention strategies with at risk students, dispelling negative stereotypes in education held by teachers and students, understanding the impacts of self-theories on resilience, and understanding how process praise can foster a growth mindset and positively impact students' motivation levels.

For those with fixed mindsets, intelligence is static. There is a desire to appear smart and therefore a tendency to avoid challenges, give up easily and think of efforts as fruitless. They may also ignore negative feedback, even if it is useful, feel threatened by the success of others, and therefore may plateau early and not reach their full potential. Those with a growth mindset believe intelligence can be developed, which leads to a desire to learn, embrace challenges, and persist in the face of setbacks.

These people believe effort is required to get really good at anything, learn from criticism and find lessons and inspiration in the success of others. As a result, those who develop growth mindsets achieve more and have a stronger sense of free will.

The mindset you choose defines your behavior and your world. In one world, the world of fixed mindset, success is about proving you are smart or talented, or validating yourself. In the other, the world of growth mindset, it is about stretching yourself to learn something new.

Please take time to reflect on a situation where you exercised a fixed mindset. Really evaluate how it impacted you. Imagine if you had the opportunity to go back in time, how would you apply a growth mindset? I can remember when I was enrolled in my first semester of college and I was so excited and scared. I feared my peers and professors would find out I was an average student. I exercised a fixed mindset by continuing my same learning behavior as a college student. I soon found I was not passing my classes. If I could go back in time, I would have a growth mindset and develop my learning habits by asking for support. I would go to tutoring, talk to my professors, ask follow up questions and ask my peers what their understanding of the lesson was. I would take responsibility to learn what I did not know and not pretend I knew the information.



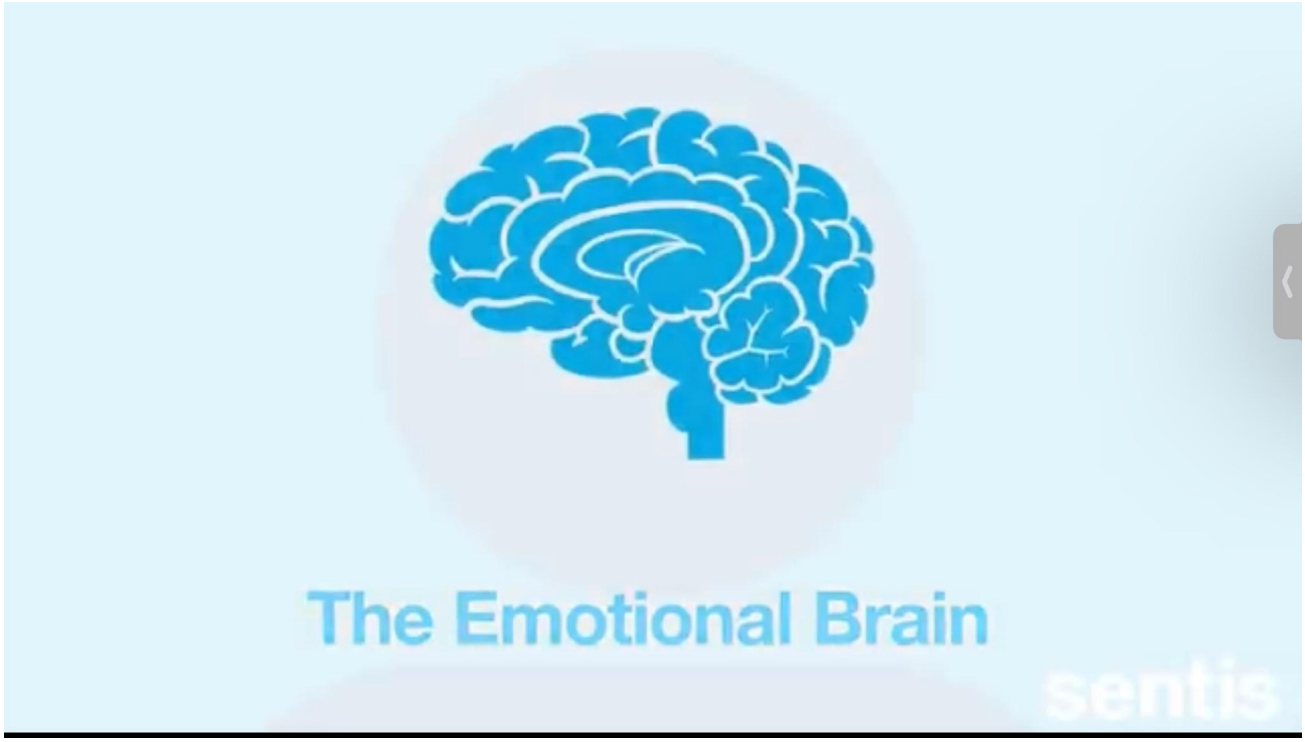
[Growth Mindset Image]

I encourage you to practice a growth mindset, review the Fixed Mindset vs. Growth Mindset charts 2.2 and 2.3. Develop an understanding of how you can apply a growth mindset. As I mentioned earlier, I had a fixed mindset in college; I wanted to look "smart" and avoid challenges, especially in math and science courses. In addition, I was not able to really understand positive criticism. I did not know how to receive it and translate it as a resource to help me become a better learner. My experience with criticism was always negative and it was not intended for my best interest. Honestly, other peoples' success intimidated me and really highlighted how much I doubted my learning abilities.

The biggest mistake I made during my college years was to develop a script in my mind where I focused on a “fixed” deficit mindset. I was really hard on myself and I created mental barriers and convinced myself of not having the abilities to learn. Once I was on academic probation I evaluated my situation. If I continued on this path, I needed to make a commitment to my education. I valued my opportunity to become the first in my family to earn a college degree. I took a leap of faith and was honest with myself. I identified and created a support system on campus. I made counseling appointments, used the tutoring lab, went to instructor office hours and attended class every day. I acquired new learning habits, time management, note taking strategies, committing to my study time, asking questions and learning from my mistakes.

We will continue to develop your self-awareness. Along with self-awareness it is important to learn about emotional intelligence and how you apply it to your everyday life.

Video



Emotions and the Brain

This brief video highlights how emotions affect our thinking and emotional response: www.bit.ly/C20_Emotions

Today, let's decide together to learn from our mistakes. Let's learn new concepts and take positive risks. Let's go!

COLLEGE SUCCESS

Take Responsibility for Your Success

A college education is aligned with greater success in many areas of life. While enrolled in college, most students are closely focused on making it through the next class or passing the next test. It can be easy to lose sight of the overall role that education plays in life. But sometimes it helps to recall what a truly great step forward you are taking!

It's also important to recognize, though, that some students do not succeed in college and drop out within the first year. Sometimes this is due to financial problems, or personal/family crises. But most of the time students drop out because they're having trouble passing their courses.

In this section, we examine the elements of college success. Are there patterns of success you strive for but aren't yet reaching? Where might you increase your support? What strategies can you use to achieve success in your college endeavors?

Success in college is the theme of this program—and you'll be learning more about a wide variety of topics related to doing well in and outside of school. Let's first define what success really means so that you can get started, right now, on the right foot.

Understand first that no program, book or class can "make" you be successful—it can only offer the tools for you to use if you want. What are you thinking right now as you read these words? Are you reading this right now only because you have to, because it is assigned reading in a course you have to take—and your mind keeps drifting to other things because you're feeling bored? Or are you interested because you've decided you want to succeed in college?

We hope it's the latter, that you're feeling motivated—and excited, too—to do a great job in college. But even if you aren't much concerned at present about these issues, we hope you'll keep reading and do some thinking about why you're in college and how to get motivated to do well.

"Success" and "Failure"

So what does "success" actually mean in college? Good grades? That's what many students would say— at least toward the beginning of their time in college. When you ask people about their college experience a few years later, grades are seldom one of the first things mentioned. College graduates reflecting back typically emphasize the following:

- The complete college experience (often described as "the best years of my life";
- Exploring many different subjects and discovering one's own interests;
- Meeting a lot of interesting people, learning about different ways to live;
- Learning how to make decisions and solve problems that are now related to a career;
- Gaining the skills needed to get the job—and life—one desires.

When you are achieving what you want in life and when you are happy and challenged and feel you are living life to its fullest and contributing to the world, then you likely feel successful. When you reach this point, the last thing you will consider are your grades in college.

This is not to say that grades don't matter, getting good grades is not the ultimate goal of college or the best way to define personal success while in college. Five or ten years from now, no one is going to care much about what grade you got in freshman English or Biology 101. A successful college experience does include acceptable grades, but in the end, in your long-range goals, grades are only one component of a larger picture.

How Much do Grades Really Matter?

As you begin your college experience, it's good to think about your attitude toward grades, since grades often motivate students to study and do well on assignments.

Valuing grades too highly, or not highly enough, can cause problems. A student who is determined to get only the highest grades can easily be frustrated by difficult college classes. Expectations that are too high may lead to disappointment—possibly depression or anxiety—and may become counterproductive. At the other extreme, a student who is too relaxed about grades, who is content simply with passing courses, may not be motivated to study enough even to pass—and may be at risk for failing courses. What is a good attitude to have toward grades? The answer to that depends in part on how grades matter generally—and specifically in your own situation. Here are some ways grades clearly do matter:

- At most colleges, all students must maintain a certain grade point average (GPA) to be allowed to continue taking courses and to graduate;
- Financial aid and scholarship recipients must maintain a certain grade in all courses, or a minimum GPA overall, to continue receiving their financial award;
- In some programs, the grade in certain courses must be higher than simply passing in order to count toward the program or major.

After graduation, it may be enough in some careers just to have completed the program or degree. But in most situations, how well one did in college may still affect one's life. Employers often ask how well you did in college (new graduates at least—this becomes less important after one has gained more job experience). Students who are proud of their grades usually include their GPA on their résumés. Students with a low GPA may avoid including it on their resume, but employers may ask on the company's application form or in an interview (and being caught in a lie can lead to being fired). An employer who asks for a college transcript will be able to review all your grades, not just the overall GPA.

In addition to the importance of jobs, grades matter if you plan to continue to graduate school, professional school, or other educational programs—all of which require your transcript.

Certainly grades are not the only way people are judged, but along with all forms of experience (work, volunteer, internship, hobbies) and personal qualities and the recommendations of others, they are an important consideration. After all, an employer may think, if this person goofed off so much in college that they got low grades, how can I expect them not to goof off on the job?

Your Turn: Activity:

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR GPA

Because of various requirements for maintaining a GPA at a certain level, you may need to know how to calculate your GPA before grades come out at the end of the term. The math is not difficult, but you need to consider both the grade in every course and the number of credit hours for that course in order to calculate the overall GPA. Here is how you would do the calculation in the traditional four-point scale. First, translate each letter grade to a numerical score:

A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1

Then multiply each grade's numerical score by the number of units or hours for that course: B in Math 54 × 4 hours = 3 × 4 = 12, B in English 1 × 3 hours = 3 × 3 = 9, C in History 10 × 3 hours = 2 × 3 = 6, A in Counseling 20 × 3 hours = 4 × 3 = 12

Then add together those numbers for each course: 12 + 9 + 6 + 12 = 39.

Then divide that total by the total number of credit hours: 39 / 13 = 3.0 = GPA of 3.0.

Speak with a Counselor if you have transcripts from other colleges and have + and – grades.

The best attitude to take toward grades in college is simply to do the best you can do. Almost everything in this book—from time management to study skills to social skills and staying healthy—will contribute to your overall success and, yes, to getting better grades.

If you have special concerns about grades, such as feeling unprepared in certain classes and at risk of failing, talk with your academic counselor as much as needed. If a class requires more preparation than you have from past courses and experience, you might be urged to drop that class and retake the class—or to seek extra help. Your advisor can help you work through any individual issues related to doing well and getting the best grade possible.

Can you Challenge a Grade?

Yes and no. College instructors are very careful about how they assign grades, which are based on clear-cut standards often stated in the course syllabus. The likelihood of an instructor changing your grade if you challenge it is very low. On the other hand, we're all human—mistakes can occur, and if you truly feel a test or other score was miscalculated, you can ask your instructor to review the grade. Just be sure to be polite and respectful.

Most situations in which students want to challenge a grade, however, result from a misunderstanding regarding the expectations of the grading scale or standards used. Students may simply feel they deserve a higher grade because they think they understand the material well or spent a lot of time studying or doing the assignment. The instructor's grade, however, is based on your actual responses on a test, a paper or other assignment. The instructor is grading not what they think is in your head, but what you actually wrote down.

If you are concerned that your grade does not accurately reflect your understanding or effort, you should still talk with your instructor—but your goal should be not to

argue for a grade change but to gain a better understanding of the course's expectations so that you'll do better next time. In addition to your professor schedule an appointment to talk to your academic counselor to discuss all of your options. Additionally, you can speak with the Ombuds office, www.smc.edu/ombuds, at Santa Monica College to discuss a grade dispute. The Ombuds office acts as a listening ear, conciliator, mediator and resource for students for issues involving faculty, administrators, and other issues.

Instructors respect students who want to improve. Visit the instructor during office hours or ask for an appointment and prepare questions ahead of time to help you better understand how your performance can improve and better indicate how well you understand the material.

A major aspect of college for some students is learning how to accept criticism. Your college instructors hold you to high standards and expect you to have the maturity to understand that a lower grade is not a personal attack on you and not a statement that you're not smart enough to do the work. Since none of us are perfect, we all can improve in almost everything we do—and the first step in that direction is accepting evaluation of our work. If you receive a grade lower than you think you have earned, take the responsibility to learn what you need to do to earn a higher grade next time.

Get Started on the Right Foot, Right now

The first year of college is almost every student's most crucial time. Statistics show a much higher drop- out rate in the first year than thereafter. Why? Because, for many students, adjusting to college is not easy. Students wrestle with managing their time, their freedom, and their other commitments to family, friends, and work. It's important to recognize that it may not be easy for you.

Are you ready? Remember that everything in this book will help you succeed in your first year. Motivation and a positive attitude are the keys to getting off to a running start. The next section lists some things you can do to start right now, today, to ensure your success.

- Make an appointment to talk with your academic counselor if you have any doubt about the courses you have already enrolled in or about the direction you're taking. Start examining how you spend your time, and ensure you make enough time to keep up with your courses;
- Check for tutoring assistance if you feel you may need it and make an appointment or schedule time to visit tutoring centers on your college campus to find out what help you can get if needed;
- Like yourself. You've come a long way to reach this point, you have succeeded in taking this first step toward meeting your college goal, and you are fully

capable of succeeding the rest of the way. Avoid the trap of feeling down on yourself if you're struggling with any classes;
- Plan ahead. Check your syllabus for each class and highlight the dates of major assignments and tests. Write on your calendar the important dates coming up;
- Take in your classroom and plan to introduce yourself right away to one or two other students. Talking with other students is the first step in forming study groups that will help you succeed;
- Introduce yourself to your instructors, if you haven't already. In a large lecture, go up to the instructor after class and ask a question about anything in the lecture or about an upcoming assignment;
- Participate in your classes. If you're typically a quiet person who prefers to observe others asking questions or joining class discussions, you need to take the first step toward becoming a participating student—another characteristic of a successful student. Find something of particular interest to you and write down a question for the instructor. Then raise your hand at the right time and ask. You'll find it a lot easier than you may think;
- Vow to pay more attention to how you spend your money. Some students have to drop out because they get into debt;
- Take good care of your body. Good health makes you a better student. Vow to avoid junk food, to get enough sleep, and to move around more.

Excellent! Start doing these few things, and you'll be a step or two ahead—and on your way to a successful first year!

Success and Pride

If the prospect of committing to the path of higher education still feels daunting, you might find inspiration in thinking about the many potential gains you can experience. Talk with friends, family members, and others who have been to college and to people who have succeeded—in whatever ways they define success. Listen for clues about what they feel worked and what didn't and what they would change. Do you hear threads of topics broached so far in this course?

College success is an attainable goal, so be encouraged that you are on a path of great potential. Below is the success story of a college graduate. Might your story be similar to this one someday?

Your Turn: Activity

REFLECTING ON YOUR GPA & TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

On a sheet of paper or document, answer the following questions:

1. At your college or for your specific major, do you need to maintain a minimum GPA in order to continue in the program? (If you don't know, check your college catalog or website.) What is that minimum GPA?

2. What was your cumulative GPA in high school?

3. Because college classes are usually more difficult than high school classes, figure—purely as a starting point—that with the same effort, your college GPA could be a full point (or more) lower than your high school GPA. Does that give you any cause for concern? If so, what do you think you should work on most to ensure you succeed in college?

4. For each of the following statements, answer T for true or F for false:
   - You talk to your academic counselor only when it's time to register for courses or when the college requires you to;
   - The best way to get help with a class is to pick whoever seems like the smartest student in class and offer to pay that person for tutoring;
   - A positive attitude about yourself as a college student helps you stay motivated to work on succeeding in your classes;
   - Understanding one's own learning style makes it easier to understand how to apply one's strengths when studying and to overcome obstacles to learning by adapting in other ways;
   - Meeting other students in your classes is important early on because you can skip classes once you arrange to borrow other people's notes;
   - Participating in class is a key to being successful in that class.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL STUDENT

What does it take to be a truly successful college student? Do you believe you already are or will be successful? What things do you need to embrace to ensure your success?

Your Turn: Activity

CHARACTERISTICS THAT IMPACT STUDENT SUCCESS

Below is a list of some important characteristics that impact student success. By answering the questions on a scale of "I usually do" to "I seldom do," you'll gain insight into the characteristics you've got going for you already and where you might

need to build some new habits. Remember, these characteristics aren't things you're born with—you have to develop and practice them. On a sheet of paper or document, answer the following questions on a scale of "I usually do" to "I seldom do."

DO I . . .

- Plan my course load realistically based on my non-college responsibilities?
- Know how to get in touch with my academic counselor?
- Schedule my classes at times when I learn best?
- Calculate the amount of study time needed per course and schedule it?
- Ensure that any computer hardware and software I need for classes is updated and working smoothly?
- Know all my passwords for email, courses, financial aid, etc.?
- Review my class locations before the first day of class by printing and marking them on a map?
- Know how to find the library, testing center, computer center, and tutoring center before classes begin?
- Enlist friends and family to support my academic goals and plans, to help keep me on track?
- Show up to class?
- Participate in class?
- Take notes in class?
- Show up to class?
- Participate in class?
- Take notes in class?
- Review my notes after class, organize them, and add details after I reflect on what I learned?
- Stay caught up on class work, and not get behind?
- Read the required material before class?
- Start assignments a couple days before they're due?
- Complete assignments?
- Complete assignments fully, and answer all parts of the questions?
- Turn assignments in on time?
- Understand the main ideas, and not just memorize details?
- Get phone numbers from a few students in the class, so I can contact them with questions?
- Ask other students for clarification?
- Ask other students who have taken the course from my instructor about their teaching style and expectations?
- Talk to my instructor during office hours, when needed?
- Ask my instructor about the materials taught and assignments when I have questions?

- Start reviewing materials and studying for exams, well before the exam date?
- Review my old exams, problem sets, and quizzes before the final?
- Show my work on homework and exam problems?
- Find a study group to work through difficult assignments and study for tests?
- Keep all my exams, and review the materials and types of questions?
- Get involved in a campus organization?
- Find the balance between academics and life outside of class?
- Make my education a priority?
- Eat nutritious meals?
- Get adequate sleep?
- Exercise?
- Make certain that I'm physically and mentally healthy?
- Make certain leisure activities don't interfere with studying and class?

Your Turn: Activity

DEVELOP YOUR PERSONAL DEFINITION OF SUCCESS

For this activity, create your own definition of success. Dictionary.com defines success as "the favorable outcome of something attempted." For many students in college, success means passing a class, earning an A, or learning something new. Beyond college, some people define success in terms of financial wealth; others measure it by the quality of their relationships with family and friends.

Ultimately, before we can know if we are successful, we must first define what success means for ourselves.

Instructions:
Develop a 750-word essay defining what success means to you in college and beyond. To help you develop this essay, you might want to consider the following:

- Find a quote (or make one up) that best summarizes your definition of success (be sure to cite the author and the source, such as the URL);
- Why does this quote best represent your personal definition of success?
- What people do you consider to be successful and why?
- What is your definition of success?
- What will you do to achieve success?
- What is the biggest change you need to make in order to be successful in college?
- How will you know you've achieved success?

VISUALIZING SUCCESS

Throughout this course we have focused on multiple factors that contribute to college success. We discussed the power of motivation and positive talk and you developed your own personal definition of success earlier in the semester. You deeply examined your values and goals and now it's time to visualize your success! Let's revisit your personal definition of success.

Visualization is a technique commonly used where one creates a mental image of what one desires. In this case visualize yourself achieving your personal definition of success. Create a mental image and focus on the details of what your success is like, what it feels like and who may be involved with you. Picture the details in your mind and think of your personal, academic and career success. Where do you hope to be in the next 2, 5, 7, or 10 years? Where are you and who are you with? What are you doing and what is a typical day like for you? What are you wearing and how do you feel? Create as many details as possible in your mental image so you can feel into your future clearly. This feeling is something that is so strong it motivates you to work harder and harder each day until you make this vision a reality. Repeat this visualization exercise daily, maybe once or twice a day. Take anywhere from 3 - 5 minutes a day to practice visualizing your success.

In addition to visualization techniques, think of a symbol that represents success to you. As you move more deeply into your college journey, consider selecting a symbol of your commitment to success.

Consider your own personal definition of "success." What would a physical representation of that success be like? Many people consider graduation caps or diplomas to be symbols of college success. If those are meaningful to you, consider choosing one. Alternatively, yours can become more personal— an item that speaks to you as a sign of what you're working toward and how you'll know you've "made it."

Some ideas from previous students include:

- A stethoscope, for an aspiring medical student;
- A set of professional salon scissors, for an aspiring beautician;
- An office door nameplate, for an aspiring law student.

Once you find a meaningful symbol—perhaps an object or an image or even an idea—keep it in a place where you can easily access it. In moments when you need a

boost, you can remind yourself that college success begins and ends with your commitment to learning well.

The symbol of success you decide on along with your mental image of personal success can serve as strong motivators that serve to reinforce your efforts throughout your college journey and beyond.

Key Takeaways

- While success in college involves many benefits and experiences, grades remain one important measure of success;
- Acceptable grades are important for continuing your college program and financial aid, for graduate school or other future educational opportunities, and for obtaining a good job in most careers;
- Succeeding is especially important in one's first year of college because this is the most critical period to avoid the factors that lead to many students dropping out;
- You can launch yourself on a path of success immediately by taking the first steps for help with studies, developing a positive attitude, meeting your instructors and other students, and participating actively in your classes.

Time Management

http://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/timemanagement

Learning Objectives

- Examine how your personality and time management are related;
- Evaluate how you spend your time;
- Define and practice different time management strategies;
- Recognize how you can battle procrastination.

"The challenge is in the moment, the time is always now."
– James Baldwin

TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Time management is critical to student success. When you know what you want to do, why not just sit down and get it done? People who complain frequently about "not having enough time" would love it if it were that simple! Time management isn't actually difficult, but you do need to learn how to do it well.

Time and You

People's attitudes toward time vary. Some people are always rushing while others are unconcerned about time. Since there are so many different "time personalities," it's important to realize how you approach time. Start by trying to figure out how you spend your time during a typical week, using the following activity.

Your Turn: Activity

WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

Use a sheet of paper or a document to account for a week's worth of time. For each of the activity categories listed, make your best estimate and list the number of hours you spend on them in a week. (For categories that are about the same every day, just estimate for one day and multiply by seven.) You may also find it helpful to use an online Daily Schedule Calculator, www.bit.ly/C20_DailySchedCalc, developed by the California Community Colleges Online Education Initiative.

- Sleeping;
- Eating (including preparing food);
- Personal hygiene (i.e., bathing, etc.);
- Working (employment);
- Volunteer service or internship;
- Chores, cleaning, errands, shopping, etc.;
- Attending class;
- Studying, reading, and researching (outside of class);
- Transportation to work or school;
- Getting to classes (walking, biking, etc.);
- Organized group activities (clubs, church services, etc.);
- Time with friends (including television, video games, etc.);
- Attending events (movies, parties, etc.);
- Time alone (including television, video games, surfing the Web, etc.);
- Exercise or sports activities;
- Reading for fun or other interests done alone;
- Talking on phone, email, Facebook, etc.;
- Other—specify:

Now use your calculator to total your estimated hours. Is your number larger or smaller than 168, the total number of hours in a week? If your estimate is higher, go back through your list and adjust numbers to be more realistic. But if your estimated hours total fewer than 168, don't just go back and add more time in certain categories. Instead, ponder this question: *Where does the time go?* People who

estimate too high often feel they don't have enough time. They may experience anxiety and often feel frustrated. People at the other extreme, who often can't account for how they use all their time, may have a more relaxed attitude. They may not actually have any free time, but they may be wasting more time on less important things than they realize.

People also differ in how they respond to schedule changes. Some go with the flow and accept changes easily, while others function well only when following a planned schedule and may become upset if things change. If you dislike unexpected disruptions in your day, schedule some free time into your calendar to account for the unexpected. This is all part of understanding your time personality.

Another aspect of your time personality involves time of day. Are you more alert and focused in the morning, afternoon, or evening? Do you concentrate best when you are anticipating a relaxing activity later on, or do you study better when you've finished all other activities? Do you function well if you get up early—or stay up late—to accomplish a task? How does that affect the rest of your day or the next day? Understanding this will help you better plan your study periods.

While you may not be able to change your "time personality," you can learn to manage your time more effectively. The key is to be realistic. How accurate is the number of hours you wrote down in the activity? The best way to know how you spend your time is to record what you do all day in a time log, every day for a week, and then add that up.

HOW DO YOU USE TIME?

Time management for successful college students involves these factors:

- Determining how much time you need to spend studying;
- Knowing how much time you actually have for studying and increasing that time if needed;
- Being aware of the times of day you are at your best and most focused;
- Using effective long- and short-term study strategies;
- Scheduling study activities in realistic segments;
- Using a system to plan ahead and set priorities;
- Staying motivated to follow your plan and avoid procrastination.

Study Formula

For every hour in the classroom, college students are expected to spend, on average, two hours outside of class dedicated to studying for each hour in class. Studying

includes: reviewing lecture notes, reading assigned materials, creating flashcards, writing papers, doing homework, and so on.

If you are a full-time student registered in fifteen units, this means you are in class about fifteen hours a week. Applying the study formula mentioned above, you should dedicate thirty (15 x 2 = 30) hours a week for studying. A fifteen unit course load translates into a forty-five hour a week commitment, which is about the same as a typical full-time job. If you hold a part time or full time job, then time management skills are even more essential to succeed in college.

Think back on the number of hours you wrote in the last activity for a week of studying. Did you account for two hours of study time for every hour in class? Many students begin college not knowing the study formula. Remember this is just an average amount of study time—you may need more or less for your own courses. To be safe, and to help ensure your success, add another five to ten hours a week for studying. Doing this will ensure true learning throughout the semester and will help you avoid cramming before exams.

To reserve this study time, you may need to adjust how much time you spend in other activities. Activity 1 will help you figure out what your typical week should be like.

The *Where Does The Time Go?* activity shows most college students that they do actually have plenty of time for their studies without losing sleep or giving up their social life. But you may have less time for discretionary activities than in the past. Something, somewhere has to give. That's part of time management—and why it's important to keep focused on your goals and priorities. The other part is to learn how to use the time you do have as effectively as possible, especially your study time.

If you're a new college student who plans to study for three hours each evening but procrastinates and intentionally (often habitually) puts things off until another day or time, and gets caught up in a conversation, loses time to social media, email and text messages, listens to loud music while reading a textbook, then maybe you actually spent four hours "studying" in total, however only two of those hours were dedicated to productive work. In this scenario, you end up behind and feeling like you're still studying way too much. The goal of time management is to actually get three hours of studying done in three hours and have time for your life as well.

Special Note for Students who Work

You may have almost no discretionary time available after all your "must-do" activities. If so, you may have overextended yourself—a situation that inevitably will

lead to problems. You can't sleep two hours less every night for the whole school year, for example, without becoming ill or unable to concentrate well on work and school. It is better to recognize this situation now rather than set yourself up for a very difficult term and possible failure. If you cannot cut the number of hours for work or other obligations, talk to your counselor right away. It is better to take fewer classes and succeed than to take more classes than you have time for and risk failure and jeopardizing your wellbeing.

TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

The following are some strategies you can begin using immediately to make the most of your time:

- Prepare to be successful. When planning ahead for studying, think yourself into the right mood. Focus on the positive. "When I get these chapters read tonight, I'll be ahead in studying for the next test, and I'll also have plenty of time tomorrow to do X." Visualize yourself studying well;
- Use your best—and most appropriate—time of day. Different tasks require different mental skills. For some kinds of studying, you may be able to start first thing in the morning as you wake, while others may need your most alert moments at another time;
- Break up large projects into small pieces. Whether it's writing a paper for class, studying for a final exam, or reading a long assignment or full book, students often feel daunted at the beginning of a large project. It's easier to get going if you break it up into stages that you schedule at separate times—and then begin with the first section that requires only an hour or two;
- Do the most important studying first. When two or more things require your attention, do the more crucial one first. If something happens and you can't complete everything, you'll be less stressed knowing the more crucial task is complete;
- If you have trouble getting started, do an easier task first. Like large tasks, complex or difficult ones can be daunting. If you can't get going, switch to an easier task you can accomplish quickly. This will give you momentum, and often you feel more confident tackling the difficult task after being successful in the first one;
- If you're feeling overwhelmed and stressed because you have too much to do, revisit your planner. Sometimes it's hard to get started if you keep thinking about other things you need to get done. Review your schedule for the next few days and make sure everything important is scheduled, then relax and concentrate on the task at hand;

- If you're really floundering, talk to someone. Maybe you just don't understand what you should be doing. Talk with your professor or another student to clarify the assignment and help get back on track;
- Take a break. We all need breaks to help us concentrate without becoming fatigued and burned out. As a general rule, a short break every hour or so is effective in helping recharge your study energy. Get up and move around to get your blood flowing, clear your thoughts, and work off stress;
- Use unscheduled times to work ahead. You've scheduled that hundred pages of reading for later today, but you have the textbook with you as you're waiting for the bus. Start reading now, or flip through the chapter to get a sense of what you'll be reading later. Either way, you'll save time later. You may be amazed how much studying you can get done during downtimes throughout the day;
- Keep your momentum. Prevent distractions, such as multitasking, that will only slow you down. Check for messages, for example, only at scheduled break times;
- Reward yourself. It's not easy to sit still for hours of studying. When you successfully complete the task, you should feel good and deserve a small reward. A healthy snack, a quick video game session, or social activity can help you feel even better about your successful use of time;
- Just say no. Always tell others nearby when you're studying, to reduce the chances of being interrupted. Still, interruptions happen, and if you are in a situation where you are frequently interrupted by a family member, spouse, roommate, or friend, it helps to have your "no" prepared in advance: "No, I really have to be ready for this test" or "That's a great idea, but let's do it tomorrow—I just can't today." You shouldn't feel bad saying no—especially if you communicated in advance;
- Make time for yourself. Never schedule your day or week so full of work and study that you have no time at all for yourself, your family and friends, and your larger life;
- Use a calendar planner and daily to-do list. We'll explore these time management tools in the next section.

Time Management Tips for Students Who Work

If you're working and taking classes, you may not have large blocks of free time. Avoid temptations to stay up very late studying, for losing sleep can lead to a downward spiral in performance at both work and school. Instead, try to follow these guidelines:

- If possible, adjust your work or sleep hours so that you don't spend your most productive times at work. If your job offers flexible scheduling, arrange your schedule to be free to study at times when you perform best;

- Try to arrange your class and work schedules to minimize commuting time. If you are a part- time student taking two classes, taking classes back-to-back two or three days a week uses less time than spreading them out over four or five days. Working four 10-hour days rather than five 8-hour days reduces time lost to travel, getting ready for work, and so on;
- If your employer does not offer flexibility with scheduling, consider online courses that allow you to do most of the work on your own time;
- Use your daily and weekly planner conscientiously. Any time you have 30 minutes or more free, schedule a study activity;
- Consider your "body clock" when you schedule activities. Plan easier tasks for those times when you're often fatigued and reserve alert times for more demanding tasks;
- Be aware of any "hidden" time potentials. For example, you may prefer the 30-minute drive to work over a 45-minute train ride. However, being on the train gives you time to read during your commute. That's 150 minutes of reading every week. An hour a day can make a huge difference in your studies;
- Can you do quick study tasks during your break at work? Take your class notes with you and review during your free time;
- Remember your long-term goals. You need to work, but you also want to finish your college program. If you have the opportunity to volunteer for some overtime, consider whether it's really worth it. Sure, the extra money would help, but could the extra time put you at risk for not doing well in your classes?
- Be as organized on the job as you are academically. Use your planner and to-do list for work matters, too. The better organized you are at work, the less stress you'll feel and the more successful you'll be as a student also.

If you have a family as well as a job, your time is even more limited. In addition to the previous tips, try some of the strategies that follow.

Time Management Tips for Students With Families

Living with family members leads to additional demands on your time. You may have family obligations that require careful time management. Use all the strategies described earlier, adding family time in your daily plans the same way you would plan hours spent at work. Don't assume that you'll be "free" every hour you're home because family events or a family member's need for your assistance may occur at unexpected times. Schedule your important academic work well ahead and in blocks of time you can control. You may need to use the library or another space to ensure you are not interrupted or distracted during important study times.

Students with their own families are likely to feel time pressures. After all, you can't just tell your partner or kids that you'll be with them in a couple years when you're not so busy with your job and college! In addition to all the planning and study strategies discussed so far, you also need to manage your family relationships and time spent with family. There's no magical solution for making more hours in the day. But, here are some ways to balance your life well:

- Talk to your family members to garner their support. Share with your family members the changes that can occur with you going to school. Don't shock them with sudden household changes. Keep communication lines open so that your partner and children feel they're together with you in this new adventure;
- Enjoy family time and appreciate every moment you are together, whatever you're doing. You may not have as much time together as before, but cherish the time you do have—even if it's washing dishes together or cleaning house. If you've been studying for two hours and need a break, spend the next ten minutes with family instead of checking email or streaming television. Ultimately, the important thing is being together;
- Combine activities to get the most out of your time. Don't let your children busy themselves with the television or play video games by themselves while you're cooking dinner. Instead, bring the family together in the kitchen and give everyone something to do. You can have a lot of fun together and share daily chores. This will help you to not feel so guilty when you have to go off and study by yourself;
- Share the load. Even children who are very young can help with household chores to give you more time. Attitude is everything. Try to make it fun for the whole family to work together, not something they "have" to do and may resent just because Mom or Dad went back to school. (Remember, your kids will reach college age someday, and you want them to have a good attitude about college.) As they get older, they can do their own laundry, cook meals, and get themselves off to school. Older teens can run errands and do the grocery shopping. They will gain in the process by becoming more responsible and independent;
- Schedule your study time based on family activities. If you face interruptions from young children in the early evening, use that time for something simple like reviewing class notes. When you need more quiet time for concentrated reading, wait until they've gone to bed;
- Be creative with child care. Usually options are available, possibly involving extended family members, sitters, older siblings, cooperative child care with other adult students, as well as child-care centers. You might also be able to take your child along to campus when you attend an evening course, if there is somewhere the child can quietly read. Make sure to ask your

professor. At home, let your child have a friend over to play with. Network with other older students and learn what has worked for them. Explore all possibilities to ensure you have time to meet your college goals. And don't feel guilty: "daycare babies" grow up just as healthy psychologically as those raised in the home full time.

Time Management Tips for Student Athletes

Student athletes often face unique time pressures because of the amount of time required for training, practice, and competition. During some parts of the year, athletics may involve as many hours as a full- time job. The athletic schedule can be grueling, involving weekend travel and intensive blocks of time. You may be exhausted after workouts or competitions, affecting how well you can concentrate on studies thereafter. Students on athletic scholarships often feel their sport is their most important reason for being in college, and this priority can affect their attitudes toward studying. For all of these reasons, student athletes face special time management challenges. Here are some tips for succeeding in both your sport and academics:

- Realize that even if your sport is more important to you, you risk everything if you don't also succeed in your academics. Failing one class in your first year will require you to make up that class and you'll end up spending more time on the subject than if you'd studied more to pass it the first time;
- It's critical to plan ahead. If you have a big test or a paper due the Monday after a big weekend game, start early. Use your weekly planner to plan well in advance. For example, make it a goal to have the paper done by Friday instead of thinking you can magically get it done Sunday night after victory celebrations. Working ahead will also free your mind to focus better on your sport;
- Accept that you have two priorities (your sport and classes) and that both come before your social life. That's just how it is for a college athlete. If it helps, think of your classes as your job. You have to "study" just like others have to go to work;
- Use your planner to take advantage of any downtime you have during the day between classes and at lunch. Other students may seem to have the luxury of studying during much of the afternoon when you're at practice. While they can get away with hanging out between classes, you don't have that time available, especially during the season. You need to use all the time you can find to keep up with your studying;
- Stay on top of your courses and don't fall behind. Once you are behind, you'll lose momentum and find it more difficult to understand what's going on in the class. The stress will also affect your athletic performance;

- Get help when you need it. Many athletic departments offer tutoring services or referrals for extra help. Don't wait until you're at risk for failing a class before seeking help. A tutor won't take your test or write your paper for you. They can only help you focus on using your time productively in your studies. You have to want to succeed.

Calendars and Planners

Calendar planners and to-do lists are effective ways to organize your time. Many types of academic planners are commercially available (check your college bookstore), or you can make your own. Some people like a page for each day, and some like a week at a time. Some use computer calendars and planners. Any system will work well if you use it consistently.

Some college students think they don't need to actually write down their schedule and daily to-do lists. But, it is easy to forget when you have lots going on.

Calendars and planners help you plan ahead and write in important dates and deadlines so you don't forget. But it's just as important to use the planner to schedule your own time, not just deadlines. For example, you'll learn that the most effective way to study for an exam is to study in several short periods over several days. You can easily do this by choosing time slots in your weekly planner over several days that you will commit to studying for this test. You don't need to fill every time slot, or to schedule every single thing that you do. But, the more carefully and consistently you use your planner, the more successfully you will manage your time.

But a planner cannot contain every single thing that may occur in a day. We'd be instantly overwhelmed if we tried to schedule every telephone call, every email, every bill to pay, every trip to the grocery store. For these items, we use a to-do list, which may be kept on a separate page in the planner.

Below is an image of a sample weekly planner. You can copy this page and begin using it. Fill in this planner for next week.

- Write in all your class meeting times; your work or volunteer schedule; and your usual hours for sleep, family activities, and any other activities at fixed times. Don't forget time needed for transportation, meals, and so on. Your first goal is to find all the blocks of "free time" that are left over. Remember that this is an academic planner. Don't try to schedule everything in your life—this is to plan ahead to use your study time most effectively;

- Check the syllabus for each of your courses and write important dates in the planner. If your planner has pages for the whole term, write in all exams and deadlines. Use red ink or a highlighter for these key dates. Write them in the hour slot for the class when the test occurs or when the paper is due. (If you don't yet have a planner large enough for the whole term, use the Weekly Planner in Figure 3.2 and write any deadlines for your second week in the margin to the right. You need to know what's coming next week to help schedule how you're studying this week.);

HOURS	Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
6–7 AM							
7–8							
8–9							
9–10							
10–11							
11–12 PM							
12–1							
1–2							
2–3							
3–4							
4–5							
5–6							
6–7							
7–8							
8–9							
9–10							
10–11							
11–12 AM							
12–1							
1–2							
2–3							
3–4							
4–5							
5–6							

Sample Weekly Planner

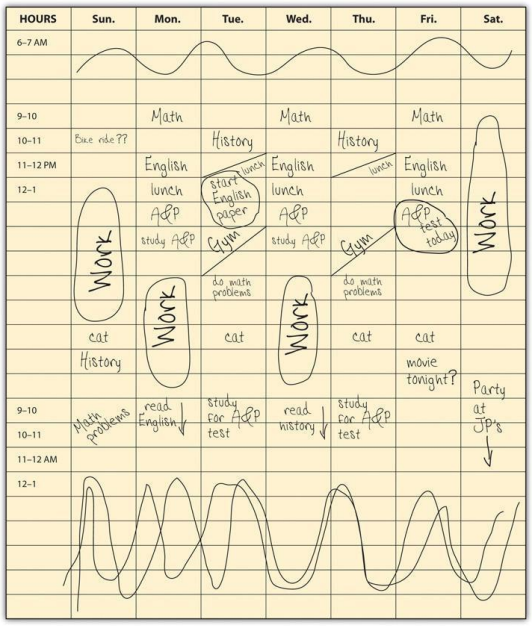
Remember that for every hour spent in class, plan an average of 2 to 3 hours of studying outside of class. These are the time periods you now want to schedule in your planner. These times change from week to week, with one course requiring more time in one week because of a paper due at the end of the week and a different course requiring more the next week because of a major exam. Make sure you block out enough hours in the week to accomplish what you need to do. As you choose

your study times, consider what times of day you are at your best and what times you prefer to use for social or other activities. Don't try to micromanage your schedule. Don't try to estimate exactly how many minutes you'll need two weeks from today to read a given chapter in a given textbook. Instead, just choose the blocks of time you will use for your studies. Don't yet write in the exact study activity—just reserve the block.

Next, go over the major deadlines for projects and exams that you wrote in earlier. Estimate how much time you may need for each and work backward on the schedule from the due date. For example, you have a short paper due on Friday. You determine that you'll spend 10 hours total on it, from initial brainstorming and planning to drafting and revising. Since you have other things also going on that week, you should start early. You might choose to block an hour a week ahead on Saturday morning to brainstorm your topic and jot down some preliminary notes. Monday evening is a good time to spend 2 hours on the next step or prewriting activities. Since you have a lot of time open Tuesday afternoon, you decide that's the best time to reserve to write the first draft. You block out 3 to 4 hours. You make a note on the schedule to leave time open that afternoon to talk to your instructor during office hours in case you have any questions on the paper. If not, you'll finish the draft or start revising. On Thursday, you schedule a last block of time to revise and polish the final draft that is due Friday.

If you're surprised by this amount of planning, you may be the kind of student who used to think, "The paper is due Friday. I have enough time Thursday afternoon, so I'll write it then." What's wrong with that? First, college work is more demanding than many first-year students realize, and the instructor expects higher-quality work than you can churn out quickly without revising. Second, if you are tired on Thursday because you didn't sleep well Wednesday night, you may be much less productive than you hoped. Without a time buffer, you're forced to turn in a paper that is not your best work.

The image below, "Example of a Student's Weekly Planner Page with Class Times and Important Study Sessions" shows what one student's schedule is like for a week. This is intended only to show you one way to block out time. You'll quickly find a way that works best for you.

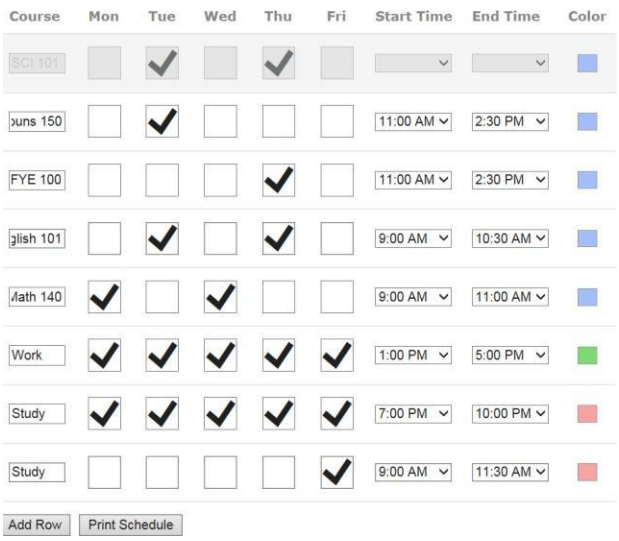


Example of a Student's Weekly Planner Page with Class Times and Important Study Sessions

The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office has developed an Interactive Study Schedule. You may use this tool to create a printable class/study schedule to help you plan your time during the week. To access the interactive study schedule visit the CCC Online Education Initiative Study Schedule webpage, http://bit.ly/C20StudySchedule.

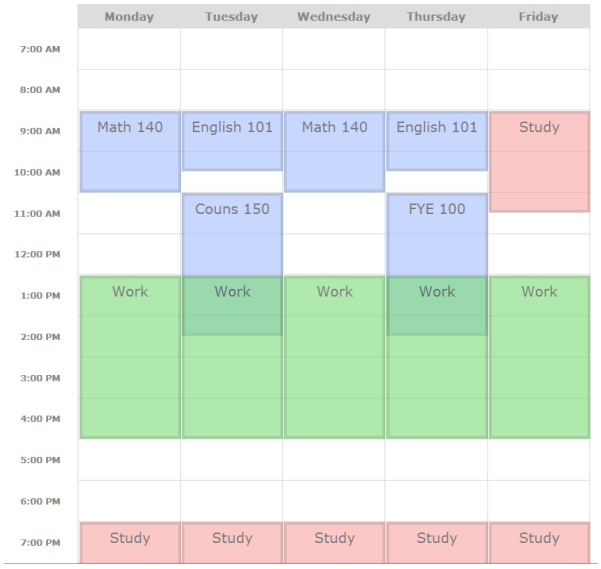
- Add your courses and study times to the first column;
- Select the appropriate days of the week;
- Enter start and end times and select a color to color-code items in your chart;
- As you fill out each row, your schedule will populate. Add additional rows as you need them. The first row is used as an example and will not be added to your schedule;
- Once you have entered all of your information click "Print Schedule" to produce a hard copy for reference.

Refer to the sample below:



Course	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Start Time	End Time	Color
SCI 101	☐	☑	☐	☑	☐			
ɔuns 150	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	11:00 AM	2:30 PM	
FYE 100	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	11:00 AM	2:30 PM	
glish 101	☐	☑	☐	☑	☐	9:00 AM	10:30 AM	
Math 140	☑	☐	☑	☐	☐	9:00 AM	11:00 AM	
Work	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	1:00 PM	5:00 PM	
Study	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	7:00 PM	10:00 PM	
Study	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	9:00 AM	11:30 AM	

Add Row Print Schedule



Here are some more tips for successful schedule planning:

- Studying is often most effective immediately after a class meeting. If your schedule allows, block out appropriate study time after class periods;
- Be realistic about time when you make your schedule. If your class runs to 4 p.m. and it takes you 20 minutes to wrap things up and reach your study location, don't figure you'll have a full hour of study between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m.;
- Don't overdo it. Few people can study 4 to 5 hours nonstop. Scheduling extended time periods like that may just set you up for failure;
- Schedule social events that occur at set times, but just leave holes in the schedule for other activities. Enjoy those open times and recharge yourself;
- Try to schedule some time for exercise at least three days a week;
- Plan to use your time between classes wisely. If three days a week you have the same hour free between two classes, what should you do with those three hours;
- Use it to review your notes from the previous class or for the next class. Read a short assignment. Over the whole term, that hour three times a week adds up to a lot of study time;
- If a study activity is taking longer than you had scheduled, plan ahead and adjust your weekly planner to prevent the stress of falling behind schedule;
- If you maintain your schedule on your computer or smartphone, it's still a good idea to print and carry it with you. Don't risk losing valuable study time if you're away from the device;

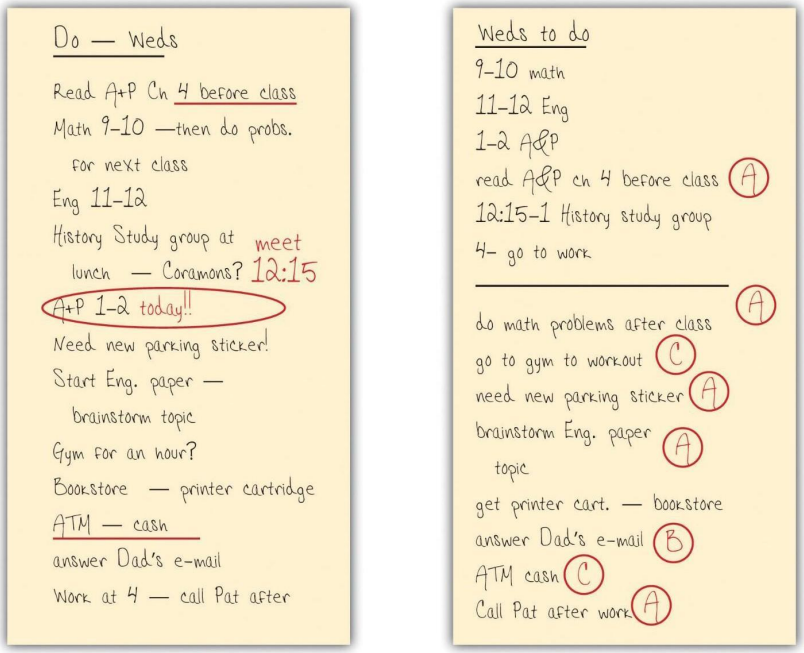
- If you're not paying close attention to everything in your planner, use a colored highlighter to mark the times blocked out for really important things;
- When following your schedule, pay attention to start and stop times. If you planned to start your test review at 4 p.m. after an hour of reading for a different class, don't let the reading run long and take time away from studying for the test.

To-Do Lists

People use to-do lists in different ways, and you should find what works best for you. As with your planner, consistent use of your to-do list will make it an effective habit. Some people prefer not to carry their planner everywhere, but instead copy the key information for the day onto a to-do list. Using this approach, your daily to-do list starts out with your key scheduled activities and then adds other things you hope to do today. Some people use their to-do list only for things not on their planner, such as short errands, phone calls or email. This still includes important things, but they're not scheduled out for specific times.

Although we call it a daily list, the to-do list can also include things you may not get to today but don't want to forget about. Keeping these things on the list, even if they're a low priority, helps ensure that eventually you'll get to it.

Start every day with a fresh to-do list written in a special small notebook or on a clean page in your planner. Check your planner for key activities for the day and check yesterday's list for items remaining. Some items won't require much time, but other activities such as assignments will. Include a time estimate for these so that later you can do them when you have enough free time. If you finish lunch and have 25 minutes left before your next class, think of things on the list you can do now and check them off.



Examples of Two Different Students' To-Do Lists

Finally, use some system to prioritize things on your list. Some students use a 1, 2, 3 or A, B, C rating system for importance. Others simply highlight or circle items that are critical to get done today. The image "Examples of Two Different Students' To-Do Lists" shows two different to-do lists. Each is very different but equally effective.

Use whatever format works best for you to prioritize or highlight the most important activities. Here are some more tips for effectively using your daily to-do list:

- Be specific: “Read history chapter 2 (30 pages)”—not “History homework;”
- Put important things high on your list where you’ll be reminded of them every time you check the list;
- Make your list at the same time every day so that it becomes a habit;
- Don’t make your list overwhelming. If you added everything you eventually need to do, you could end up with so many things on the list that you’d never read through them all. If you worry you might forget something, write it in the margin of your planner’s page a week or two away;
- Use your list. Lists often include little things that may take only a few minutes to do, so check your list any time during the day you have free time;
- Cross out or check off things after you’ve done them. Doing this becomes rewarding;

- Don't use your to-do list to procrastinate. Don't pull it out to find something else you just "have" to do instead of studying!

Your Turn: Activity

TIME MANAGEMENT REVIEW

On a sheet of paper or document, answer the following questions:

1. What time(s) of day are you at your most alert?

2. What time(s) of day are you at your least alert?

3. What category of discretionary activity (not sleeping, working, studying, etc.) represents your largest use of time?

4. Can you reduce the time you spend in that activity if you need more time for your coursework?

5. For each of the following statements about time management, answer T for true or F for false:
    - Think yourself into a positive mood before starting to study;
    - Always study just before going to sleep so that you'll dream about the topic;
    - Break up larger projects into smaller parts and stages;
    - Get everything done on your to-do list before studying so that you're not distracted;
    - When feeling stressed by a project, put it off until tomorrow;
    - Talk with your instructor or another student if you're having difficulty;
    - Try to study at least three hours at a time before taking a break;
    - Reward yourself for successfully completing a task;
    - Avoid studying at times not written in on your weekly planner; these are all free times just for fun;
    - Whenever interrupted by a friend, use that opportunity to take a break for up to thirty minutes;
    - Turn off all electronic devices when reading an assignment except for your laptop if you use it to take notes;
    - Since people procrastinate when they're distracted by other things that need doing, it's best to delay studying until you've done everything else first;
    - Studying with a friend is a sure way to waste time and develop poor study habits;

- Use a study journal to observe how you use your time and determine what things are keeping you from getting your work done;
- There's no reason to keep a weekly calendar if all your instructors have provided you with a syllabus that gives the dates for all assignments and tests;
- Studying for a particular class is most effective immediately after that class meets.

6. Without referring to your planner, to-do list, or anything else in writing, quickly write a list of everything you need to do in the next few days. Then go through your planner, to-do list, and any other class notes for anything you missed. What might you have forgotten or delayed if you weren't keeping a planner and to-do list?

7. Without referring to your weekly or daily schedule, think about your typical week and the free time you have when not in class, working, studying, eating, and socializing, and so on. List at least three "downtimes" when you don't usually study that you can use for coursework when necessary.

BATTLING PROCRASTINATION

Procrastination is a way of thinking that lets one put off doing something that should be done now. This can happen to anyone at any time. It's like a voice inside your head keeps coming up with these brilliant ideas for things to do right now other than studying: "I really ought to get this room cleaned up before I study" or "I can study anytime, but tonight's the only chance I have to do X." That voice is also very good at rationalizing: "I really don't need to read that chapter now; I'll have plenty of time tomorrow at lunch…."

Procrastination is very powerful. Some people battle it daily, others only occasionally. Most college students procrastinate often, and about half say they need help avoiding procrastination. Procrastination can threaten one's ability to do well on an assignment or test.

People procrastinate for different reasons. Some people are too relaxed in their priorities, seldom worry, and easily put off responsibilities. Others worry constantly, and that stress keeps them from focusing on the task at hand. Some procrastinate because they fear failure; others procrastinate because they fear success or are such perfectionists that they don't want to let themselves down. Some are dreamers. Many different factors are involved, and there are different styles of procrastinating.

Just as there are different causes, there are different possible solutions for procrastination. Different strategies work for different people. The time management strategies described earlier can help you avoid procrastination. Because this is a psychological issue, some additional psychological strategies can also help:

- Since procrastination is usually a habit, accept that and work on breaking it as you would any other bad habit: one day at a time. Know that every time you overcome feelings of procrastination, the habit becomes weaker. Eventually, you'll have a new habit of being able to start studying right away;
- Schedule times for studying using a daily or weekly planner. Carry it with you and refer to it often. Just being aware of the time and what you need to do today can help you get organized and stay on track;
- If you keep thinking of something else you might forget to do later (making you feel like you "must" do it now), write yourself a note about it for later and get it out of your mind;
- Counter a negative with a positive. If you're procrastinating because you're not excited about a certain task, try to think of the positive future result of doing the work;
- Counter a negative with a worse negative. If thinking about the positive results of completing the task doesn't motivate you to get started, think about what could happen if you keep procrastinating. You'll have to study tomorrow instead of doing something fun you had planned. Or you could fail the test. Some people can jolt themselves right out of procrastination;
- On the other hand, fear causes procrastination in some people. Don't dwell on the thought of failing. If you're studying for a test and you're so afraid of failing it, you won't be able to focus on studying and will start procrastinating. Instead, try to put things in perspective. Even if it's your most difficult class and you don't understand everything about the topic, that doesn't mean you'll fail;
- Study with a motivated friend. Form a study group with other students who are motivated and won't procrastinate along with you. You'll learn good habits from them while getting the work done now;
- Keep a study journal. At least once a day write an entry about how you have used your time and whether you succeeded with your schedule for the day. If not, identify what factors kept you from doing your work. This journal will help you be aware of your own habits and distractions so that you can avoid things that lead to procrastination;
- Get help. If you really can't stay on track with your study schedule or if you're always putting things off until the last minute, talk to a college

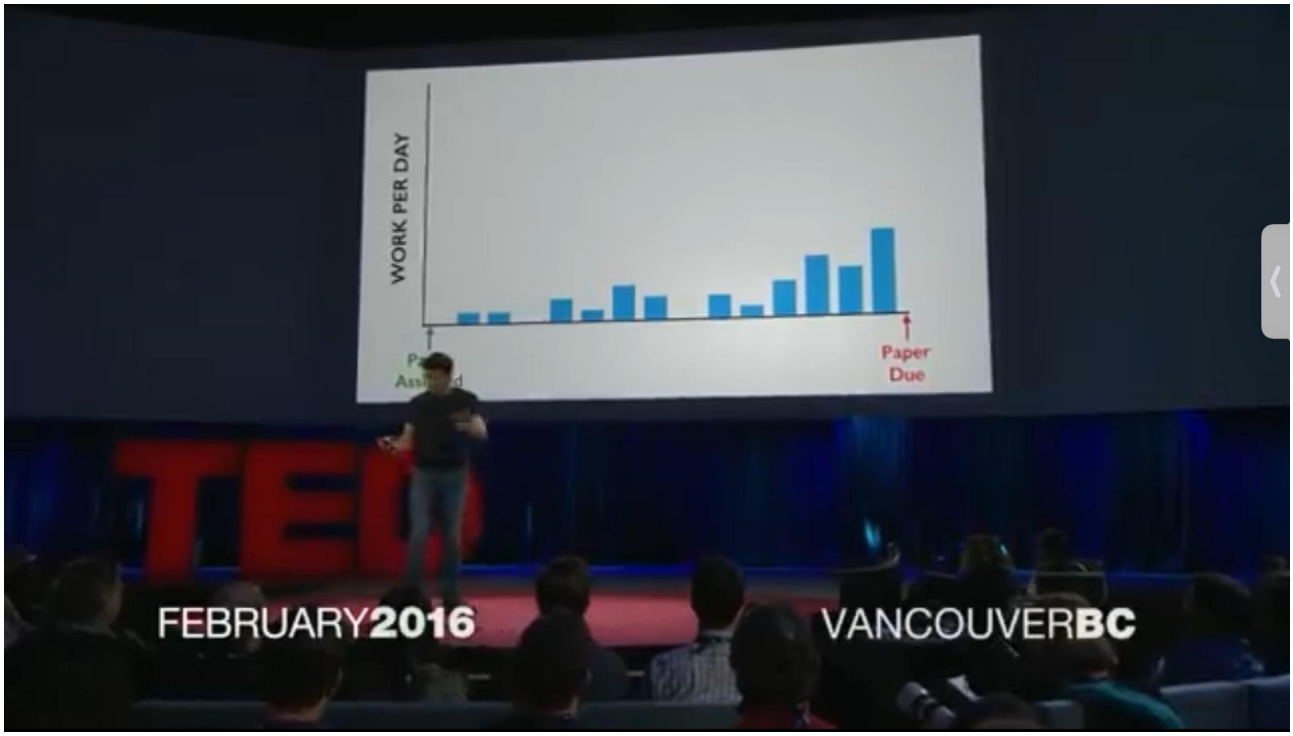
counselor. They have lots of experience with this common student problem and can help you find ways to overcome this habit.

After an hour of studying, the idea of continuing to study is dreadful, UNBEARABLE! Your brain stops retaining new information. Your mind can't stop wondering about other topics. You're almost willing to actually go do your laundry than sit there and study any longer. Why is that, you ask?

In a study by Alejandro Lleras, a professor at the University of Illinois, it was discovered that your brain really isn't built for constant stimulation.

Studying for an hour or more is considered a constant stimulation, which gradually causes your brain to stop registering your sight, sound, and even feelings. Eventually your brain will just categorize everything as unimportant since the stimulus is unchanging. In Lleras' experiment, students who were productive were distracted for a short period of time during their task compared to those who just powered through. His experiment proved that your brain is built to detect changes and respond to those changes rather than focusing on a topic for a stretched out period of time.

Video



Tim Urban: Inside the mind of a master procrastinator | TED

Tim Urban has a very unique way of explaining procrastination. On this TedTalk Urban describes, in a very fun way, the struggles of the rational decision-maker inside all of us. He considers himself "a lifelong procrastinator who thinks about this topic all the time." But he doesn't lecture from the perspective of a psychologist. He talks from the point of view of an everyday procrastinator. Play the video, www.bit.ly/C20_BeatProcrastination, and once you are done, read Tim's advice on How to Beat Procrastination, https://bit.ly/waitbutwhyprocrastination

THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE

Francesco Cirillo put Lleras' theory into action in the late 1980s. The Pomodoro technique consists of 5 steps to managing your time.

Step 1: Identity the tasks you want completed. Once you have a realistic list of tasks to accomplish for the day, break the tasks up into 25-minute long tasks, or a pomodoro. If your tasks are to write a 4-page paper for English and read a chapter for Biology, you know that it'll take you about an hour to actively read your chapter. Therefore, break that task into 2-3 pomodoros (25 minute sessions). Break your paper into bite-sized pieces such as focusing on creating an outline and writing just a couple paragraphs per topic, per pomodoro. Just remember to keep your list of pomodoros realistic and write them down.

Step 2: Set a timer for 25 minutes, or 1 Pomodoro. These 25 minutes are meant for you to buckle down and work, work, work. Why only 25 minutes? It's because 25 minutes is a non- threatening time frame, unlike the time frame of an hour or more to just do homework. Use an egg timer or even a phone app, anything to keep track of the time so that you don't have to. If you are staring at a clock to keep track of time, you'll be too distracted to really get anything done.

Step 3: Put a checkmark next to your accomplished task when the timer goes off. Once the timer goes off, you have finished a task so check it off your list with pride! Checking off the task on a list is important because it will give you a sense of accomplishment, which will boost your self-esteem.

Step 4: Set a timer for 5 minutes. These 5 minutes are meant for you to take a break. Facebook and playing a game on your phone do NOT count as a break activity. During break time, you want to get up and move. Moving will circulate your blood and rejuvenate your body so that you are mentally and physically ready to return to your pomodoros.

Step 5: Repeat. Repeat these steps until you have accomplished all of your tasks for the day. If you exceed 4 pomodoros, give yourself a longer break, 15-20 minutes.

NOTE: You can exchange the 25 minutes of studying for 30 minutes if you are up for it. When studying for 30 minutes, give yourself 10-minute breaks after each pomodoro.

Video

How to Use the Pomodoro Technique - Study Tips - Time Management
This video breaks down the steps for using The Pomodoro Technique: https://bit.ly/studentsuccesspomodoro

Key Takeaways

- Time management is critical to student success;
- Identifying your attitude towards time can be helpful in developing strategies that are most helpful for your style;
- For every hour in the classroom, college students are expected to spend, on average, two hours outside of class dedicated to studying for each hour in class;
- Identify strategies that are helpful to stay organized and manage your time.

Learning How To Learn

https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/learninghowtolearn

Learning Objectives

- Identify the stages of the learning process;
- Define learning styles, and identify your preferred learning style(s);
- Define multimodal learning;
- Describe how you might apply your preferred learning strategies to classroom scenarios.

"The learning process is something you can incite, literally incite, like a riot."
— Audre Lorde, writer and civil rights activist

THE LEARNING PROCESS

Stages of the Learning Process

Consider experiences you have had with learning something new, such as learning to tie your shoes or drive a car. You probably began by showing interest in the process and after some struggling it became second nature. These experiences were all part of the learning process, which Lumen Learning, https://bit.ly/lumenlearningprocess, describes in four stages:

Stage 1: Unconscious incompetence: Remove assumptions, you do not know what you don't know yet. During this stage, a learner mainly shows interest in something or prepares for learning. For example, if you wanted to learn how to dance, you might find an instructional video, talk to an instructor, or sign up for class.

Stage 2: Conscious incompetence: You begin to register how much you need to learn—you know what you do not know. Think about the saying, "It's easier said than done." In Stage 1 the learner only has to discuss or show interest in a new experience, but in Stage 2, they begin to apply new skills that contribute to reaching the learning goal. In the dance example above, you would now be learning basic dance steps. Successful completion of this stage relies on practice.

Stage 3: Conscious competence: You are beginning to master some parts of the learning goal and building on prior knowledge about what you do know. For

example, you might now be able to complete basic dance steps with few mistakes and without your instructor reminding you how to do them. Stage 3 requires skill repetition.

Stage 4: Unconscious competence: This is the final stage in which learners have successfully practiced and repeated the process they learned so many times, they can do it almost without thinking. At this point in your dancing, you might be able to apply your dance skills to a freestyle dance routine you create yourself. However, to feel you are a "master" of a particular skill by the time you reach Stage 4, you still need to practice constantly and reevaluate which stage you are in so you can keep learning.

For example, if you now felt confident in basic dance skills and could perform your own dance routine, perhaps you would want to explore other kinds of dance, such as tango or swing. That would return you to Stage 1 or 2, but you might progress through the stages more quickly this time on account of the dance skills you acquired earlier. [1]

Consider Kyle, who was excited to take a beginning Spanish class to prepare for a semester abroad in Spain. Before his first vocabulary quiz, he reviewed his notes many times. Kyle took the quiz, but when he got the results, he was surprised to discover he had earned a B-, despite having studied so much.

Kyle's professor suggested he experiment with different ways of studying. For example, in addition to studying his written notes, he might listen to an audio recording of the vocabulary words.

IDENTIFYING LEARNING STYLES

Many of us, like Kyle, are accustomed to learning styles as a result of our industrialized educational training as Kindergarten through High School students (in the US). For instance, we can all remember listening to a teacher talk, and copying notes off the board or other styles of presentations. However, when it comes to learning, one size does not fit all.

People have different learning styles and preferences, and these can vary from subject to subject. From the previous example, while Kyle might prefer listening to recordings to help him learn Spanish, he might prefer hands-on activities like lab exercises or demonstrations to master the concepts in his biology course.

Learning styles are also called learning modalities. Walter Burke Barbe and his colleagues proposed three learning modalities: Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic (often identified by the acronym VAK):

1. Visual learners learn by seeing pictures (either with their eyes or being able to visualize pictures in their minds), shapes, sculptures and paintings;
2. Auditory learners listen, are aided by rhythms, tones and chants or by repeating sounds or reading aloud;
3. Kinesthetic learners learn through gestures, body movements, object manipulation and positioning.

Neil Fleming's VARK model expanded on Barbe's modalities described above and added "Read/Write Learning" as a fourth. The four sensory modalities in Fleming's VARK model are:

1. Visual learning describes a preference for seeing (visual aids that represent ideas using methods other than words, such as graphs, charts, diagrams, symbols, etc.);
2. Auditory learning would be best served through listening (lectures, discussions, cd's/audio recordings, etc.);
3. Read/write learning is described as a preference for written words (readings, dictionaries, reference works, research, etc.); and
4. Kinesthetic learning would be when one prefers to learn through experience—moving, touching, and doing (active exploration of the world, science projects, experiments, etc.).

In the college setting, you will probably discover instructors teach their course materials according to the method they think will be most effective for all students. Thus, regardless of your individual learning preference, you will probably be asked to engage in all types of learning formats. For instance, even though you may consider yourself to be primarily a "visual learner," you will still probably have to write papers in some of your classes. Research suggests that it is good for the brain to learn in new ways and that learning in different modalities can help learners become more well-rounded. Consider the following statistics on how much content students actually absorb, and are able to recall at a later time, through different learning methods:

- 10% of content they read;
- 20% of content they hear;
- 30% of content they visualize;
- 50% of what they both visualize and hear;
- 70% of what they say; and
- 90% of what they say and do.

The range of these results underscores the importance of mixing up the ways in which you study and engage with learning materials.

Your Turn: Activity

IDENTIFYING YOUR LEARNING STYLES

Objective:

- Define learning styles, and recognize your preferred learning style(s).

Directions:

- Take the VARK Questionnaire, www.bit.ly/C20_VARK;
- Review the types of learning preferences;
- Identify three different classes and describe what types of activities you typically do in these classes. Which learning style(s) do these activities relate to?
- Describe what you think your preferred learning style(s) is/are. How do you know?
- Explain how you could apply your preferred learning style(s) to studying;
- What might your preferred learning style(s) tell you about your interests?
- Consider which subjects and eventual careers you might like.

Multimodal Learning

While completing the learning-styles activity, you might have discovered you prefer more than one learning style. Applying more than one learning style is known as multimodal learning. This strategy is useful not only for students who prefer to combine learning styles but also for those who may not know which learning style works best for them. It is also a good way to mix things up and keep learning fun.

Consider how you might combine visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles to a biology class. For visual learning, you could create flash cards containing images of individual animals and the species name. For auditory learning, you could have a friend quiz you on the flash cards. For kinesthetic learning, you could move the flash cards around on a board to show a relationship among the different concepts you are learning.

Video

What is VARK? How to Use VARK to Find Your Learning Style to be a Better L...

This video introduces the VARK learning modalities and helps you to discover your own learning style(s) and optimize your approach to studying, https://bit.ly/learningwithvark

The next activity can help you extend and apply what you've learned about multimodal learning to current classes and studying.

Your Turn: Activity

APPLY LEARNING STYLES TO YOUR CLASSES

Objectives:

- Define multimodal learning;
- Apply your preferred learning styles to classroom scenarios.

Directions:

- Review the three main learning styles and the definition of multimodal learning;
- Identify a class you are currently taking that requires studying;

- Describe how you could study for this class using visual, auditory, and kinesthetic/tactile learning skills.

The Information Processing System

https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/information

Learning Objectives

- Learn, remember and retrieve information;
- Identify active reading strategies;
- Discern the note taking strategies that will work for you.

"Action is the antidote to despair."
– Joan Baez, contemporary American folk singer/songwriter

Whenever we are exposed to new information we have two options: disregard the information or keep it. If the brain decides to keep it, the information will be encoded and placed into the short-term memory (STM). After it arrives at the STM it must be transformed and manipulated if we want to keep it in the long-term memory (LTM). Once in the LTM, we should be able to retrieve information as desired, and when necessary. This process of perceiving information, registering it with our senses, encoding information into short-term and working memory, then either storing to or retrieving from long-term memory using executive control processors is what educational psychologists call the information processing system (IPS). You're welcome to read more about the IPS, https://bit.ly/C20IPS, in an article by Imed Bouchrika on Research.com.

If this process of storage and retrieval feels so simple, then:

- Why do college students have such a hard time remembering things during exams?
- What does learning really mean?
- How and when do you know that you have actually learned something?

There are no simple answers to those questions since multiple factors, including overall health, stress, language, learning environment and social and cultural power dynamics all affect learning.

In this text, we discuss effective learning strategies that help with both storage and retrieval of information, which really only addresses one aspect of the learning process, but that we hope will help you. In the article Focus, focus, focus,

https://bit.ly/focuslearningnetwork, you'll learn how the brain processes information and be linked to a TED talk about Working Memory and how it works in everyday life. Since one of our goals is to help you think with a critical mind, you could use the following questions to reinforce what you have learned:

- How could I manipulate and transform the information I'm receiving in order to make it permanent knowledge?
- What current strategies I'm using to help me retrieve information and how often do I practice them?

MEMORY

Learning, remembering and retrieving information is required for success in school. The first thing our brains do is to take in information from our senses (what we see, hear, taste, touch and smell). In many classroom and homework settings, we primarily use hearing for lectures and seeing for reading textbooks. Information we perceive from our senses is stored in what we call the short-term memory. It is useful to then be able to do multiple things with information in the short-term memory.

We want to:

- Decide if that information is important;
- Save or store the information we decide is important in our long-term memory;
- Retrieve any stored information when we need to for exams or performing tasks.

In some classes and with some textbooks it is easy to determine information important to memorize. In other courses with other textbooks, that process may be more difficult. Your instructor can be a valuable resource to assist with determining the information that needs to be memorized. Once the important information is identified, it is helpful to organize it in a way that will help you best understand.

Moving Information From Short-Term Memory to Long-Term Memory

There is no shortcut for truly encoding information into long-term memory. Students who skip putting in the work often end up cramming before an exam, but may not be able to retrieve important information after the exam is completed. Preview the information you are trying to memorize. The more familiar you are with what you are learning, the better. Create acronyms like SCUBA for memorizing "self-contained underwater breathing apparatus." Organizing information in this

way can be helpful because it is not as difficult to memorize the acronym, and with practice and repetition, the acronym can trigger the brain to recall the entire piece of information.

Flash cards are a valuable tool for memorization because they allow students to be able to test themselves. They are convenient to bring with you anywhere, and can be used effectively whether a student has one minute or an hour. Once information is memorized, regardless of when the exam is, the last step is to apply the information. Ask yourself: In what real world scenarios could you apply this information? And for mastery, try to teach the information to someone else.

ACTIVE READING STRATEGIES

Successful students approach reading with a strategy that helps them get the most out of their reading. These students read actively. They seek out the main idea of the material, themes, and for words they do not understand. The opposite of reading actively is reading passively. Passive readers simply skip over things they do not understand and have difficulty understanding the material as a result. In this unit, we are going to practice active reading. You will find that active reading is more enjoyable, lets you understand more of what you have read, and leads to better test scores.

Active Versus Passive Reading

The first part of active reading is to read through the material once while making notes about anything you find interesting or important. It is okay to not understand everything the first time through. Make a note next to any words you may need to define later. When you finish, stop for a few minutes and think about what you just read. What is your first impression? Did you enjoy it? Why or why not? What was the most memorable part of the reading? Did something in it surprise you? Take a few minutes to add these thoughts to the notes you took while reading.

Now, take a break and go do something else. Get outside, run an errand, or take care of some chores. Allow yourself to absorb what you read without thinking too much about it or worrying about what you did not understand. When you come back, use a dictionary to find the definitions of the words you marked earlier because you were not sure what they meant. Revisit any sections you did not understand the first time through and decide if they make more sense now. If something is still unclear, review your notes and briefly read the material a second time. Any confusing parts will likely be much clearer now! If the material is still unclear, it is time to go to your

instructor's office hours, ask a peer or seek support through the various tutoring services, smc.edu/tutoring, offered by SMC.

Video

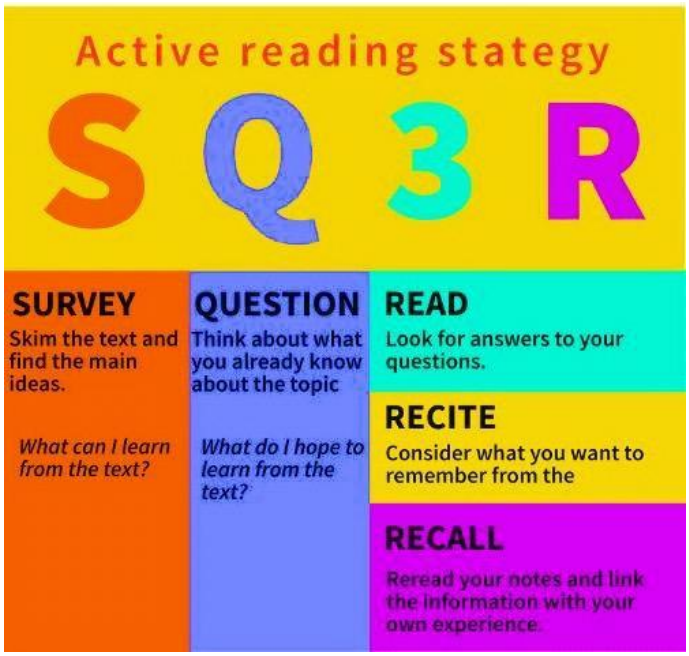
5 Active Reading Strategies for Textbook Assignments - College Info Geek

Review this video, 5 Active Reading Strategies, https://bit.ly/activereadingFrank, that takes you through different active reading strategies to improve your ability to understand and recall the material that you read.

- As you observe the video, take notes using Thomas' suggestions;
- Next, take a few moments to reflect on the video. Consider questions like:
    - What was the most memorable part of the video?
    - What is one new piece of information you learned?
    - What questions do you have about the video?
- Review your notes. If you do not understand all of the main points, replay the video. You don't have to go through the whole thing again--it's okay to just review sections that address the specific questions you have or replay it at a faster speed.

SQ3R

Active reading strategies can significantly increase learning new information. SQ3R is one of the most popular active reading strategies designed to help retain information into long term memory.



The five-steps involved in the SQ3R include:

STEP 1. SURVEY – WHAT CAN I LEARN FROM THE TEXT?
Before reading, skim the material:

- Skim the table of contents and find 3-5 main ideas that will be presented in the text;
- Pay attention to names, headings and subheadings;
- Read the captions under images, tables, diagrams and maps;
- Pay particular attention to the introductory and final paragraphs, which often contain a summary of the text.

STEP 2. QUESTION – WHAT DO I HOPE TO LEARN FROM THE TEXT?
Before reading a section, formulate questions and do the following:

- Rephrase headings into questions;
- Determine whether the author has formulated questions at the beginning or end of the section;
- Recall what you already know about the topic and what you still want to learn about it;
- Ask yourself:
    - "What did my instructor say about this chapter or subject when it was assigned?"
    - "What do I already know about this subject?"

You may find it helpful to write out these questions for consideration. These questions could very well serve as potential test questions for upcoming quizzes, midterms, and/or the final.

STEP 3. READ – WHAT ARE THE ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS?

- Read captions under images and diagrams, and search for highlighted information;
- Be open-minded by paying attention to new ideas and differing opinions;
- Stop and reread difficult and unclear parts;
- Answer the questions you created in Step 2;
- Reread captions under pictures, graphs, etc;
- Note all the underlined, italicized, bold printed words or phrases;
- Study tables, charts, and graphs;
- Stop and reread parts which are not clear;
- Read only a section at a time and recite after each section.

STEP 4. RECITE – WHAT DO YOU WANT TO REMEMBER FROM THE INFORMATION OBTAINED?

- Think about what you've read and summarize the main ideas expressed in the text;
- If you don't understand something, reread that section;
- Take notes, expressing ideas in your own words;
- Reciting:
    - The more senses you use, the more likely you are to remember what you read;
    - To triple strength learning apply: seeing, saying and hearing;
    - To quadruple strength learning apply: seeing, saying, hearing, and writing.

STEP 5. RECALL – HOW CAN YOU LINK THE INFORMATION TO YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE?

- After reading the whole text, reread your own notes and pay attention to the main ideas and connections between the ideas;
- Connect what you have learned to your own experience and other sources of information;
- This step is an ongoing process;
- For example:

Day One

- After you have read and recited the entire chapter, write questions in the margins for those points you have highlighted or underlined;
- If you took notes while reciting, write questions for the notes you have taken in the left hand margins of your notebook.

Day Two

- Page through the text and/or your notebook to re-acquaint yourself with the important points;
- Cover the right-hand column of your text/note-book and orally ask yourself the questions in the left hand margins;
- Orally recite or write the answers from memory;
- Develop mnemonic devices for material which need to be memorized;
- Make flash cards for those questions which give you difficulty.

Days Three, Four and Five

- Alternate between your flashcards and notes and test yourself (orally or in writing) on the questions you formulated;
- Make additional flash cards if necessary.

Weekend

- Using the text and notebook, make a Table of Contents - list all the topics and subtopics you need to know from the chapter;
- From the Table of Contents, make a Study Sheet;
- Recite the information orally and in your own words as you put the Study Sheet together;
- As you have consolidated all the information you need for this chapter, periodically review the Sheet/Map so that at test time you will not have to cram.

Online Reading Strategies

If you choose to take online courses, be prepared for more reading! The online learning environment differs from the traditional face-to-face format. The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Online Education Initiative focuses on providing online students with the support and resources, www.bit.ly/C20_OnlineLearningResources, necessary for success. Take time to explore the site if you choose to pursue online courses.

For now, we will focus on the Online Student Readiness Tutorial titled Online Reading Strategies, http://bit.ly/C20_OnlineReadStrat to help you:

- Understand some of the differences between reading print versus reading online;
- Learn strategies for staying focused when reading online;
- Discover ways to maximize your reading speed and comprehension.

In an online educational environment, you're probably going to do more reading than listening. You may do some of your reading in printed form—say, an assigned novel or textbook—but some of it might also be online in the form of a webpage. Reading online isn't the same as reading in print, so you should practice some strategies that will improve your online reading comprehension and speed. Some of the strategies you learn about here will help you with any kind of reading you might do, not just online content.

Print Versus Online Reading

What do we mean when we say that reading print is different from reading online?

- First, when you read something that's been printed by a reputable publishing house, you can assume that the work is authoritative. The author had to be vetted by a publishing house and multiple editors. When you read something online, however, it can be written or posted by anybody. This means that you have to closely scrutinize the source of the information. Pay attention to who was writing what you're reading. Can you identify the author? What are their credentials?
- Second, in the print world, texts may include pictures, graphics, or other visual elements to supplement the author's writing. In the digital realm, however, this supplementary material might also include hyperlinks, audio, and video. This will fundamentally change the reading experience for you because online reading can be interactive in a way that a printed book can't. An online environment allows you to engage with content rather than passively reading it;
- Finally, when you read in print, you generally read sequentially from the first word to the last. Maybe you'll flip to an index or refer to a footnote, but otherwise the way you read is fairly consistent and straightforward. Online, however, you can be led quickly into an entirely new area of reading by clicking on links or related content.

What, Why, How, When, Where?

Now that you've heard about how reading online differs from reading print, you should know that this has some really practical implications for reading comprehension. Improving your online reading comprehension will save you time and frustration when you work on your assignments. You'll be able to understand

your course subject matter better, and your performance on your quizzes and exams will improve.

Consider the "Why, What, and How" of reading comprehension:

- Why? – Why am I being asked to read this passage? In other words, what are the instructions my professor has given me?
- What? – What am I supposed to get out of this passage? That is, what are the main concerns, questions, and points of the text? What do you need to remember for class?
- How? – How will I remember what I just read? In most cases, this means taking notes and defining key terms.

When you keep the "Why, What, and How" of reading comprehension in the forefront of your mind while reading, your understanding of the material will improve drastically. It will only take a few minutes. Doing so will not only help you remember what you've read, but also structure any notes that you might want to take.

QUESTIONS ABOUT ONLINE READING FROM STUDENTS:

Q: I'm so used to reading printed texts and I actually prefer it because I don't get distracted as easily as I do when I'm online. How can I keep myself from getting distracted when reading online?

A: When you read online, the hyperlinks, images, audio, and video interactivity embedded in the text can be a really tempting distraction. Try reading a passage straight through at least once without clicking on any of the hyperlinks or participating in any of the interactive opportunities. First, get a basic "feel" for the passage, then read it with the interactive components to augment your reading. Another strategy is to turn off notifications from other apps while you are doing a short reading session.

Q: I once had a professor who didn't want us to use our phones to read our assigned texts. Why does this matter?

A: Depending on the text, when you read your assignments from the small screen of a phone. It may be easy to miss words and meanings when the reading process itself is already challenging. The brain benefits from being able to take in phrases, clusters of words as well as staying oriented using the headers and general formatting of text that may be easier to use in printed material or on a larger screen.

Q: You've talked a lot today about comprehension, but I'd really like to know how I can improve my online reading speed. Can you share some tips?

A: To read more quickly and efficiently online, try to avoid distractions like ads, notifications from other apps, pop-ups, or hyperlinks that will lead you away from your assignment. Another strategy you can try is to scan the page before actually reading, focusing on keywords and phrases rather than every single word. It will not only help you to read faster, but also give you a sense of the main ideas.

Video

The 9 BEST Scientific Study Tips

Go deeper with these 9 Best Study Tips that scientists who study learning have compiled for you, https://bit.ly/9tipsforstudying

How to tame your wandering mind | Amishi Jha

Amishi Jha studies how we pay attention: the process by which our brain decides what's important out of the constant stream of information it receives. Both external distractions (like stress) and internal ones (like mind-wandering) diminish our attention's power, Jha says -- but some simple techniques can boost it. https://bit.ly/wanderingattention

NOTE-TAKING

Taking effective notes while reading a text or listening to a lecture is an important part of active reading as well as a great strategy to help you encode information from working memory into long-term memory storage. One strategy for effective note taking is called the Cornell Note-taking System. After you have read through this section once, try reading it again and practice your active reading by implementing the Cornell Note-taking System.

The Cornell Note-taking System was devised in the 1950s by Walter Pauk, an education professor at Cornell University. The Cornell Note-taking System is used in universities all over the world.

It has Five Steps which begin with R:

1. Record
2. Reduce
3. Recite

4. Reflect
5. Review

How To Take Cornell Notes

- Use a blank piece of paper. Down the left side, draw a vertical line 2 1/2 inches, or less than 1/3rd the width from the edge of the paper. End this line 2-inches above the bottom of the paper, or about 1/5th the total height. Draw a horizontal line across the bottom of the paper, 2-inches above the paper's edge;
- In the narrow (2 1/2") column on the left, you will write cue words or questions you have about the content. In the wide (6") column, or right 2/3rds of the page, on the right, you will write your topic content, lecture, or reading notes;
- In the space at the bottom of the sheet, you will summarize your notes.

QUESTIONS & KEYWORDS	**NOTES**
SUMMARY	

Step 1: Record Your Notes

During a lecture, stay focused, listen attentively to the lecture, and take notes. Do not just listen! Try to write down as many meaningful ideas and facts as possible on the right hand side of the page. If you miss a word, just insert a blank space and keep writing. After class when you review your notes, you can check the textbook or other resources and check with other students in the class to fill in the blanks. If

something the instructor says is confusing, put an * next to it so you know to ask for clarification about the point later. Taking notes keeps the mind focused so the information is received by the brain and registers in short-term memory instead of just passing through. Avoid all interruptions such as music, text messages, and daydreaming.

Step 2: Reduce Notes to Questions and Keywords
After class, write questions in the left hand column that go along with the notes on the right. Think of What, Who, Where, When, How, and Why, questions. When it's time to study your notes, cover up the note section of the page and quiz yourself using the questions you wrote in the left column. You may also write key words for important concepts on the left hand side of the page. This rehearsal strategy helps you work with the information in your short-term working memory.

Step 3: Recite
Now cover the notes, and use the keywords and questions as cues to help you recall the different points in the notes. Recite the answers to the questions and explain the key words. Then uncover your notes to check if the information you recalled is correct. This strategy is a rehearsal strategy that helps you work with the information in your short-term working memory. The longer and more frequently you work with the information by answering the questions and recalling the notes, the longer the information stays in working memory.

Step 4: Reflect and Summarize
At the bottom of the page, write 3 to 7 sentences summarizing in your own words what the notes on the page say. Explain the main point or points as if you had to teach someone else. Use keywords, be concise, and clarify. Assign meaning to the information by stating how it is of value to you, why you need to know this, and if this information reminds you of any prior learning. These elaboration strategies help to transfer information in the brain from short-term to long-term memory.

Step 5: Review
Review your Cornell notes frequently to help you work with the information and retain it. The more frequently you work with information the longer the information will remain in store so you can retrieve it on the day of a test.

In addition to using Cornell Notes for lecture, you may also apply this style of note-taking while reading text materials for each of your classes.

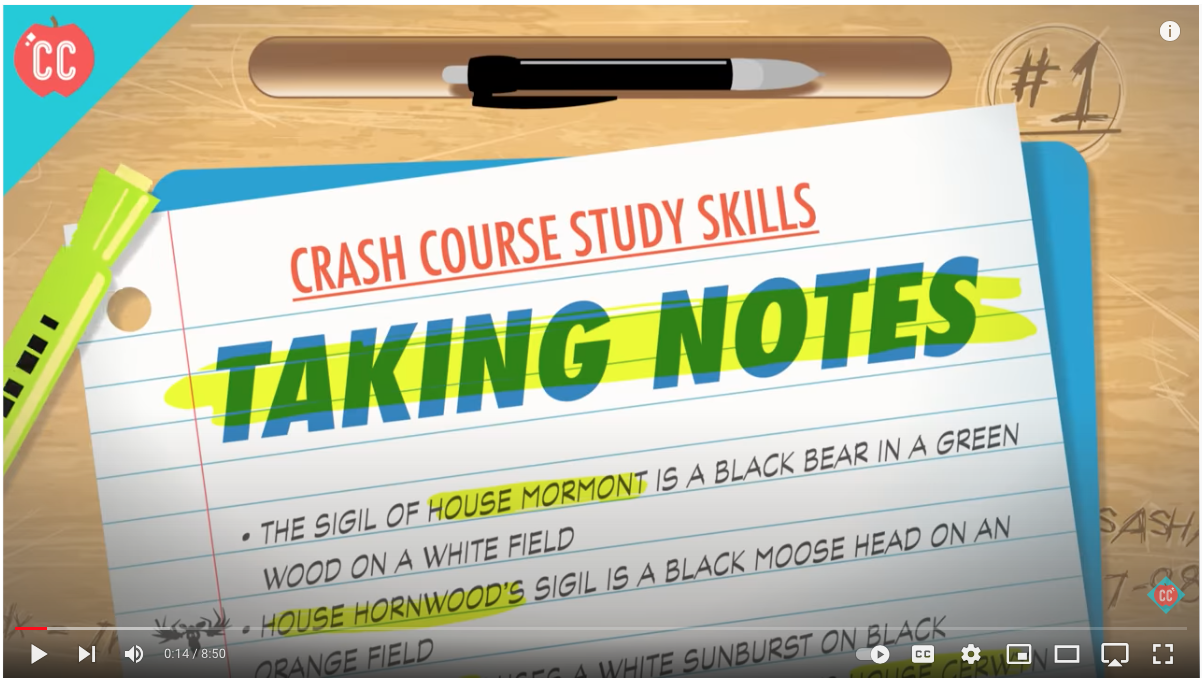
More Tips for Note-Taking:

To store information long-term in the brain, you can use additional elaboration strategies that make you THINK about the information. You can expand your knowledge and understanding of the material presented in a lecture or in a textbook by deepening your learning with these critical thinking prompts:

- Describe the topic overall;
- Define the relation between (one topic) and (a related topic from the material);
- List the various factors that impact (whatever you are studying);
- Recount the the effect of the topic or material on society at large;
- Outline the importance of the topic you studied;
- Compare and contrast the different ways the topic is regarded by different scholars or authors.

Thinking about information will help you store information in long-term memory so that you can retrieve it not just on the day of a test but at the end of the semester or for the next level of the course.

Video



- Taking Notes: Crash Course Study Skills #1
  This video covers everything you need to know– from the science to the techniques– to take better notes https://bit.ly/crashcoursenote;

- SMC's Library team put together an excellent presentation on how to conduct library research, https://bit.ly/libraryresearchtips, and write research papers that has tons of resources on evaluating sources, citing them, and how to conduct fruitful searches for your scholarly projects;

- They have also compiled some recordings and presentations on a variety of library and research topics, https://bit.ly/presentationonresearch, you might find helpful.

Test Taking and Anxiety

www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/testtaking

Learning Objectives

- Identify different types of tests and studying strategies for each;
- Learn anxiety-quelling strategies for before, during and after a test;
- Identify your study needs;
- Define cheating and academic integrity

"Of all the pitfalls in our paths and the tremendous delays and wanderings off the track I want to say that they are not what they seem to be. I want to say that all that seems like fantastic mistakes are not mistakes, all that seems like error is not error; and it all has to be done. That which seems like a false step is the next step."
– Agnes Martin, artist

Testing is a part of life. Have you ever participated in an athletic event? Or taken a driver's license test? A Math or English placement test? All of these common life situations are forms of tests because they measure how much we know about a specific subject at a single point in time. They alone do not measure your intelligence or potential. Rather, they only show how much you know or can do at that moment. We can learn from how we have performed, and we can think about how to apply what we have learned to do even better next time.

Many of our daily activities are measurements of progress toward mastery of skills or knowledge. We welcome these opportunities as both work and fun. Academic tests are similar to real-life tests in the following ways:

- They help us measure our progress toward mastery of a particular skill;
- They are not a representation of how smart, talented, or skilled we are but rather are a measurement only of what we know about a specific subject at a specific point in time.;

- They are extraordinary learning opportunities.

Academic tests in college are different from those you took in high school. College professors expect much more of you in an exam: your opinions, interpretations, thought processes, and conclusions. High school teachers usually test for your ability to repeat precisely what you read in your text or heard in your class.

Success on high school tests relies much more on memorization than on understanding the material. This is why you need to modify your study habits and your strategies for taking exams in college.

Video

How your brain's executive function works -- and how to improve it | Sabine Do...

You use your brain's executive function every day -- it's how you do things like pay attention, plan ahead and control impulses. Can you improve it to change for the better? With highlights from her research on child development, cognitive scientist Sabine Doebel explores the factors that affect executive function -- and how you can use it to break bad habits and achieve your goals.
https://bit.ly/executivefunctionandbrains

TYPES OF TESTS

All tests are designed to determine how much you know about a particular subject at a particular point in time. But you should be aware of differences in types of tests because this will help you prepare.

Tests can be grouped into various categories based on how they are delivered. Depending upon the type of test you have, your strategies will vary. For example:

- Paper tests
    - Require students to write answers on the test pages or in a separate test booklet. They are typically used for in-class tests. Neatness and good grammar count, even if it's not an English exam. Remember that the instructor will be reading dozens of test papers so make sure you write neatly;

- Open-book tests
    - Allow students to use their notes, textbook, or both while taking the exam. College professors often give this type of test when they are more interested in your ability to articulate your thoughts and critical thinking than your memory power. Be prepared to defend your own viewpoints. When preparing, know where key material is present in your book and notes, create an index for your notes and use sticky notes to flag key pages of your textbook before the exam. Be careful when copying information or formulas to your test answers;

- Take-home tests
    - Are similar to open-book tests except you have the luxury of time on your side. The professor will likely expect more detail and more complete work because you are not under a strict time limit and because you have access to reference materials. Be clear about when the test is due. Make sure you submit the exam on time. Also, find out if the professor allows or expects you to collaborate with classmates. Be sure to type your exam and don't forget to spell-check;

- Online tests
    - Are becoming more common. Since these tests are computer-graded, be aware that the professor's judgment may not be involved in the

grading. Your answers to objective questions will be either correct or incorrect; there may be no room for partially-correct responses;
    - With online tests, be sure you understand the testing format;
        - Are there practice questions? If so, make sure you use them;
        - Find out if you will be allowed to move freely between test sections to go back and check your work or to complete questions you might have skipped. Some online tests do not allow you to return to sections once they are "submitted";
        - Unless your exam needs to be taken during a specific window of time, do not wait until the last minute to take the test;
        - Should you have technical problems, you want to have time to resolve the issues. Keep your instructors contact information or the technical support website or phone number nearby in case you need tech support;
        - To minimize problems during the test, close all other applications before beginning the test;

- Presentations and oral exams
    - Are highly interactive. The professor can (and likely will) probe you on certain points, question your assumptions, or ask you to defend your point of view. Make sure you practice your presentation many times with and without an audience (your study group is good for this). Have a clear and concise point of view and keep to the allotted time. You don't want to miss some key points if your professor cuts you off because you have run out of time.

Special Strategies for Math and Science Exams

Math tests require some special strategies because they are often problem based rather than question based.

DO THE FOLLOWING BEFORE THE TEST:

- Attend all classes and complete all assignments. Pay special attention to working on all assigned problems. After reviewing problems in class, take careful notes about what you did incorrectly. Repeat the problem and do a similar one as soon as possible. It is important that the last solution to a problem in your mind is a correct solution;

- Think about how each problem solution can be applied in a real-world situation. This helps make even the most complex solutions relevant and easier to learn;

- In your study group, take turns presenting solutions to problems, observing, and correcting everyone's work;

- If you are having difficulty with a concept, get help right away. Remember that math especially builds new material on previous material. If you are having trouble with a concept now, you are likely to have trouble going forward. Make an appointment with your instructor, your teaching assistant, or a classmate.

Don't be shy about asking for a tutor—tutoring is not just for students needing remedial help; many successful students seek them out, too. As a student at Santa Monica College, you have access to free tutoring support throughout campus in a variety of subjects. Visit the SMC tutoring services website for more information: www.smc.edu/tutoring

If you are a Math, Engineering, or Science major you should research the SMC STEM program! At Santa Monica College, the Science and Research Initiative (SRI) serves to enrich the experience of students majoring in math, science and engineering. The program supports financially disadvantaged and/or historically underrepresented students by providing a variety of services including academic counseling, peer mentoring, tutoring, community building opportunities, research opportunities, and a variety of other resources. Their primary goal is to equip STEM students with the skills and attitudes necessary for their successful transfer to college. For more information about STEM and how to apply visit their website: www.smc.edu/stem

DO THE FOLLOWING DURING THE TEST:

- Review the entire test before you start and work the problems you feel most confident with first;

- Approach each problem following three steps:
    - Read the problem through twice: The first time to get the full concept of the question, and the second time to draw out pertinent information. After you read through the problem the first time, ask yourself, "What is this problem about?" and "What is the answer likely to be like?" The second time through, consider these questions: "What facts do I have available?" "What do I know?" "What measurable units must the answer be in?" Think about the operations and formulas you will need to use. Try to estimate a ballpark answer;

- Compute your answer. First, eliminate as many unknowns as possible. You may need to use a separate formula for each unknown. Use algebraic formulas as far as you can before plugging in actual numbers; that will make it easier to cancel and combine factors. Remember that you may need two or more tries before you come up with the answer;

- Check your work. Start by comparing your actual answer to the estimate you made when you first read the problem. Does your final answer sound likely? Check your arithmetic by opposite operations: use multiplication to check division and addition to check subtraction, and so on.

You should consider using these steps whenever you are working with any math problems, not just when you get problems on tests.

Science tests also are often problem based, but they also generally use the scientific method. This is why science tests may require some specific strategies.

- Before the test, review your lab notes as well as your class notes and assignments. Many exam questions build upon lab experience, so pay close attention to your notes, assignments, and labs. Practice describing the experimental process;

- Read the question carefully. What does the instructor expect you to do - prove a hypothesis, describe an experiment, summarize research? Underline the words that state the objective of the question;

- Carefully review all the diagrams given with the question. What do they illustrate? Why are they included with the question? Are there elements on the diagram you are expected to label;

- Many science questions are based on the scientific method and experimental model. When you read the test question, identify the hypothesis the problem is proposing; be prepared to describe an experimental structure to prove a hypothesis. When you check your work, make sure the hypothesis, experimental steps, and a summary of results (or expected results) are clear. Some of these elements may be part of the question, while others you may need to provide in your answer.

TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES: Before, During and After

Before you Take a Test

Q: When should you start preparing for the first test? (Select one.)

1. The night before;
2. The week prior;
3. The first day of classes;

If you answered "The first day of classes," you are correct. If you selected all three, you are also correct. Preparing to pass tests is something that begins when learning begins and continues all the way through to the final exam.

Many students, however, don't start thinking about test taking, whether weekly exams, mid-terms, or finals, until the day before when they engage in an all-nighter, or cramming. Additionally, a lot of students are unaware of the many strategies available to help with the test taking experience before, during, and after. Let's review what has helped you so far.

Your Turn: Activity

YOUR TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

- On a sheet of paper or document, write down the pre-test strategies you already use;
- Organize your notebook and other class materials the first week of class;
- Keep your materials organized throughout the term;
- Take notes on key points from lectures and other materials;
- Make sure you understand the information as you go along;
- Ask for your professor's or a study group member's help early and often;
- Organize and regularly attend a study group;
- Create study tools, such as flash cards and graphic organizers;
- Complete all homework assignments on time;
- Review possible test items several times beforehand;
- Ask your instructor what items are likely to be covered on the test;
- Ask your instructor if they can provide a study guide or practice questions;
- Ask your instructor if they give partial credit for test items;
- Maintain an active learner attitude;
- Schedule extra study time prior to the test;

- Gather and review all notes, handouts, and other materials needed before studying;
- Organize your study area for maximum concentration and efficiency;
- Create and use mnemonic or memory devices to help you encode the material into your long-term memory;
- Put key terms and formulas on a single study sheet that can be quickly reviewed;
- Schedule study times short enough (1-2 hours) so you do not get burnt out;
- Get plenty of consistent sleep throughout the semester since your brain needs it to learn;
- Set a back-up alarm in case the first alarm doesn't sound or you sleep through it on exam day;
- Have a good breakfast with complex carbs and protein to help you be fully energized;
- Show up 10 minutes early for your test to get completely settled before it starts;
- Use the restroom beforehand to minimize distractions.

Read the steps below on How to Create a Study Schedule to Prepare for Your Exams. Next, design a plan you know will work well for you when it comes to studying for any test – final, mid-term, State Boards, etc.

Exam Study Schedule

Studying for exams at any point in the semester can be stressful, but studying for finals can be extra stressful. Collecting all of the materials you need to create a schedule and assessing how much time you have to study before your finals start can help you create a study schedule. Carefully considering the restrictions on your time and sticking to your study schedule can help you create a useful schedule and be more productive when you study.

ASSESS YOUR STUDY NEEDS

- Pick a calendar for keeping track of your schedule. Before you can actually create a study schedule for finals week, you need to decide what exactly you'll use for scheduling. You might prefer paper calendars or planners, or you might want to use the calendar app on your phone, and download an actual study app. It doesn't matter which type you prefer, as long as you have something;[1]

- Exam schedule. Before you even begin crafting a schedule, make sure you have all of your exam dates in front of you. This will make creating your schedule a lot easier because you won't have to stop and search for

information or, even worse, have to start over because you forgot about an exam;

- Print out your school break schedule. If you have breaks between when you start drawing up your study schedule and finals week, you can use them to devote more time to studying since you won't have to attend class.
    - Depending on how long your classes usually are per day, consider adding extra study sessions for those courses during their regularly scheduled meeting times. This gives you some extra time to study without really disrupting your usual schedule;

- Calculate how much time you have. How much time you have to study for finals will depend on when in the semester you start drawing up your schedule. Once you're ready to set your study schedule, calculate how many days you have between now and when your exams are. This will obviously be a different number for every exam.
    - When you're calculating how much time you have, keep in mind that you probably won't be able to study every single day before finals. Subtract days that you have a lot going on and won't be able to study. This gives you a more realistic total number of days you have;[3]

- Prioritize your exams. Once you know how much time you have to study for each exam, prioritize them. List your exams in order, starting with the one you have to take the soonest, and ending with your last exam.
    - You might also want to consider prioritizing by how hard the exam is likely to be. Say, for example, you have a final for math after you have a final in English, but you know math is harder for you. You might want to move math up above English on your list so you know you have enough time to study for it.[4]

MAKE A SCHEDULE

Limit your study time per session. Research shows that after about two hours, we are less able to focus on a specific topic or task, and our concentration and ability to retain information declines. Scheduling your study time in two-hour blocks not only prevents you from setting unrealistic goals, it also helps you make the most productive schedule;

- This doesn't mean that you can only schedule one two-hour session per day. Depending on how much other time you have available to study, you can schedule one or two two-hour sessions in the morning and one or two two-hour sessions later in the day;

- If you're going to schedule multiple sessions per day, try to schedule them for the time when you work best. If you work better in the morning, try scheduling two sessions before noon - with a break in between them. If you work better in the evening, schedule one session before dinner and one after;[8]

- Focus on one topic at a time. In each study session, studying one subject at a time can help you focus on the material better and therefore retain more;[9]

- Splitting your time between multiple subjects per study session doesn't give you enough time to get deep enough in the material to really retain anything;

- Some change is good when you're studying. Studying one topic for one study session and then switching to something totally different for your next session can keep things fresh and keep up your efficiency and energy;

- Build a time for review. When you're setting up your times to study, make sure you build in ten or fifteen minutes to quickly review what you studied the day before. It keeps things fresh in your mind and will remind you of the connections between what you're doing and what you already did; [11]

- Build in breaks. While you're scheduling time to study, it's also important to build breaks into your schedule. Research suggests that you should take a break for 10 – 15 minutes every hour;

- You should also schedule larger breaks – like time to exercise or hang out with friends or stream your favorite show. Giving your brain and your body a chance to relax will make you more productive in the long run;

- Color code your schedule. As you're scheduling your existing appointments and obligations and your study time, color code each type of activity. This gives you a better visual representation of what your week will be like and can often help you determine how much time you really need to spend studying;

- Stay consistent. Try to study at the same time (and possibly the same place) every day. This can make studying become almost automatic.

During Your Test

Here is a list of the most common–and useful–strategies to apply during an exam.

- Scan the test, first, to get the big picture of how many test items there are, what types there are (multiple choice, matching, essay, etc.), and the point values of each item or group of items;

- Determine which way you want to approach the test:
    - Some students start with the easy questions first, that is, the ones they immediately know the answers to, saving the difficult ones for later, knowing they can spend the remaining time on them;
    - Some students begin with the biggest-point items first, to make sure they get the most points.
- Determine a schedule that takes into consideration how long you have to test, and the types of questions on the test. Essay questions, for example, will require more time than multiple choice, or matching questions;
- Keep your eye on the clock;
- If you can mark on the test, put a checkmark next to items you are not sure of just yet;
    - It is easy to go back and find them to answer later on;
    - You might just find some help in some other test items covering similar information.
- Sit where you are most comfortable, whether in your home, a library, or the classroom. If you happen to be taking your exam in a classroom, sitting near the front has a couple of advantages:
    - You may be less distracted by other students;
    - If a classmate comes up with a question for the instructor and there is an important clarification given, you will be better able to hear it and apply it, if needed.
- Wear earplugs if noise distracts you;
- You do NOT have to start with question number one on the exam, unless it is designed to only display one question at a time. Read through all the questions, if allowed, then start where you feel comfortable in the test. If you are unsure of a question, mark it or take a note to remember to come back to the question later;
- Bring water. This helps calm the nerves, for one, and water is also needed for optimum brain function;
- If permitted, get up and stretch (or stretch in your chair) from time to time to relieve tension and increase blood flow to the brain;
- Remember to employ strategies to reduce test taking anxiety (covered in the Test Anxiety section);
- If despite all of your best efforts to prepare for a test you just cannot remember the answer to a given item for multiple choice, matching, and/or true/false questions, employ one or more of the following educated guessing (also known as “educated selection”) techniques. By using these techniques, you have a better chance of selecting the correct answer;
    - It is usually best to avoid selecting an extreme or all-inclusive answer (also known as 100% modifiers) such as “always,” and “never”.

Choose, instead, words such as “usually,” “sometimes,” etc. (also known as in-between modifiers);
    - Although there is some dispute about this, it is still safe to say that choosing “C” is often correct;
    - If the answers are numbers, choose one of the middle numbers;
    - If you have options such as “all of the above,” or “both A and B,” make sure each item is true before selecting those options;
    - Choose the longest, or most inclusive, answer;
    - Make sure to match the grammar of question and answer. For example, if the question indicates a plural answer, search for responses with plural answers;
    - Regarding matching tests: count both sides to be matched. If there are more questions than answers, ask if you can use an answer more than once;
    - Pay close attention to items that ask you to choose the “best” answer. This means one answer is better or more inclusive than a similar answer;
    - Read all of the response options.

Visit the Learning Commons of University of British Columbia for more test taking toolkits for student success. https://bit.ly/ubctoolkits

After Your Test

In addition to sighing that big sigh of relief you may exhale after a test or exam, here are a few suggestions to help you use what you just learned taking the text and applying it to future experiences.

- If you don’t understand why you did not get an item right, ask the instructor. This is especially useful for quizzes that contain information that may be incorporated into more inclusive exams such as midterms and finals;
- Analyze your results to help you in the future; for example,
    - Determine if most of your incorrect answers were small things such as failing to include the last step in a math item, or neglecting to double-check for simple errors in a short- answer or essay item;
    - Figure out where in the test you made the most errors: beginning, middle, or end. This will help you pay closer attention to those sections in the future.

Your Turn: Activity

TEST-TAKING ADVICE FROM A FRIEND

Write a letter of advice to Mark, a new college student, incorporating 10 test taking tips and strategies you think will help him.

Mark believes he is good at organization. After the first two weeks of classes, however, he becomes overwhelmed with all of the handouts and materials. He then begins to fall behind and has to cram the night before. When it comes to tests, he worries that his notes might not have all the information.

During tests, he sometimes gets stuck on a question and spends too much time on it. He also tends to change his answers too often, only to find his original selection was correct. Mark is easily distracted by other students and noises, which makes it hard for him to concentrate.

What advice would you give Mark?

TYPES OF EXAM QUESTIONS

You can gain even more confidence in your test taking abilities by understanding the different kinds of questions an instructor may ask and applying the following proven strategies for answering them. Most instructors will likely use various conventional types of questions. Here are some tips for handling the most common types.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

- Read the instructions carefully to determine if there may be more than one right answer. If there are multiple right answers, does the instructor expect you to choose just one, or do you need to mark all correct options?
- Read each question carefully and try to answer it in your head before reading the answer options. Then consider all the options. Eliminate first the options that are clearly incorrect. Compare the remaining answers with your own answer before choosing one and marking your paper;
- Seek out clue words that hint that certain option answers might be correct or incorrect. Absolute words like “never,” “always,” “every,” or “none” are rarely found in a correct option. Less absolute words like “usually,” “often,” or “rarely” are regularly found in correct options;
- Be aware of the word “not” in the stem phrase and in the answer choice options; it is an easy word to miss if you are reading too quickly, but it completely changes the meaning of the possible statements.

Video

7 Tips and Strategies for Answering Multiple Choice Questions | Test Taking St...

This video has tips for multiple-choice test taking strategies. Have you ever used these techniques? Did they work for you? https://bit.ly/multiplechoicetips

TRUE-OR-FALSE QUESTIONS

- Most of the tips for multiple-choice questions apply here as well. Be particularly aware of the words “never,” “always,” “every,” “none,” and “not” because they can determine the correct answer;
- Answer the questions that are obvious to you first. Then go back to statements that require more thought;
- If the question is stated in the positive, restate it to yourself in the negative by adding the word “not” or “never.” Does the new statement sound truer or more false?
- If you still are unsure whether a statement is true or false and must guess, choose “true” because most tests include more true statements than false (but don’t guess if a wrong answer penalizes you more than one left blank).

MATCHING COLUMNS

- Start by examining the two columns to be matched. Are there an equal number of items in both columns? If they are not equal, do you have to match

some items in the shorter column to two or more items in the longer column, or can you leave some items unmatched? Read the directions to be sure;
- If one column has a series of single words to be matched to phrases in the other column, read all the phrases first, then all the single words before trying to make any matches. Now go back and read each phrase and find the word that best suits the phrase;
- If both columns have single words to be matched, reduce the number of potential matches by grouping them by parts of speech (nouns with nouns, verbs with verbs, etc.);
- As always, start by making the matches that are obvious to you, and then work on the ones that require more thought. Mark off all items you have already used so you can easily decide which words or phrases still remain to be matched.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

- Short answer questions are designed for you to recall and provide some very specific information (unlike essay questions, which also ask you to apply critical thinking to that information). When you read the question, ask yourself what exactly the instructor wants to know. Keep your answers short and specific.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

- Essay questions are used by instructors to evaluate your thinking and reasoning applied to the material covered in a course. Good essay answers are based on your thoughts, supported by examples from classes and reading assignments;
- Careful planning is critical to answering essay questions effectively. Note how many essay questions you have to answer and how difficult each question seems. Then allocate your time accordingly;
- Read the question carefully and underline or circle keywords. Be alert for words that describe the instructor's expectations for your response. This "Words to Watch for in Essay Questions", https://bit.ly/wordstowatchfor, article will help you learn key words in essay questions to help you succeed;
- If time allows, organize your thoughts by creating a quick outline for your essay. This helps ensure that you don't leave out key points, and if you run out of time, it may pick up a few points for your grade. Jot down specific information you might want to use, such as names, dates, and places;
- Introduce your essay answer, but get right to the point. Remember that the instructor will be grading dozens of papers and avoid "filler" text that does not add value to your answer. For example, rather than writing, "In our study of the Civil War, it is helpful to consider the many facets that lead to conflict,

especially the economic factors that help explain this important turning point in our nation's history," write a more direct and concise statement like this: "Economic factors help explain the start of the Civil War;"
- Write neatly and pay attention to your grammar and spelling. Allow time to proofread your essay. You want your instructor to want to read your essay, not dread it. Remember that grading essays is largely subjective, and a favorable impression can lead to more favorable grading;
- Be sure to answer all parts of the question. Essay questions often have more than one part. Remember, too, that essay questions often have multiple acceptable answers.

TEST ANXIETY

For some test takers, preparing for and taking a test can cause worry and anxiety. Most students report that they are more stressed by tests and schoolwork than by anything else in their lives, according to the American Test Anxiety Association, https://bit.ly/testanxietystrategies:

- Roughly 16–20% of students experience high test anxiety;
- Another 18% report moderately high test anxiety;
- Test anxiety is the most common academic impairment or struggle in grade school, high school, and college.

Test anxiety is "the set of phenomenological, physiological, and behavioral responses that accompany concern about possible negative consequences or failure on an exam or similar evaluative situation" (Zeidner, 1998). In other words, test anxiety is a combination of stress, tension, worry, dread, fear of failure, and thinking of worst case scenarios before or during test situations.

Below are some effects of moderate anxiety:

- Being distracted during a test;
- Having difficulty comprehending relatively simple instructions;
- Having trouble organizing or recalling relevant information;
- Crying;
- Illness;
- Eating disturbance;
- High blood pressure;
- Acting out;
- Toileting accidents;
- Sleep disturbance;
- Cheating;

- Negative attitudes towards self, school, and subjects.

Below are some effects of extreme test anxiety:
- Severe anxiety;
- Fear of being in the classroom or around others;
- Thoughts of suicide.

Poor test performance is also a significant outcome of test anxiety. Test-anxious students tend to have lower study skills and lower test taking skills. Research also suggests that high levels of emotional distress correlate with reduced academic performance overall. Highly test-anxious students score about 12 percentile points below their low-anxiety peers. Students with test anxiety also have higher overall dropout rates. Test anxiety can negatively affect a student's social, emotional, and behavioral development, as well feelings about themselves and school.

Why does test anxiety occur? Inferior performance arises not because of intellectual problems or poor academic preparation. It occurs because testing situations create a sense of threat for those who experience test anxiety. The sense of threat then disrupts the learner's attention and memory.[5]

Other factors can influence test anxiety too. Students with disabilities and students in gifted education classes tend to experience high rates of test anxiety.

Experiencing test anxiety doesn't mean that there's something wrong with you or that you aren't capable of performing well in college. In fact, some stress—a manageable amount of stress—can actually be motivating. The trick is to keep stress and anxiety at a level where it can help you do your best rather than get in your way.

Video

Test Taking Strategies - Study Tips - Test Anxiety

This video overviews the most common test taking strategies, https://bit.ly/testingtipsandstrats

How to Beat Test Anxiety and Take on Exams Without Stress

Take a moment to review this video on Test Anxiety and practice the tips to help you reduce your anxiety. Let us know if it helped you? How did you adapt the technique in your own way? https://bit.ly/franktestanxiety

Health and wellness cannot be overstated as factors in test anxiety. Studying and preparing for exams will be easier when you take care of your mental and physical health. The following are a few tips for better health, better focus, and better grades:

- Try a mini meditation to reduce stress and improve focus. Breathe in deeply, count to five, and exhale slowly. Observe as your lower abdomen expands and deflates. Repeat five times;
- Know when to stop. Although some students may stay up until 4 a.m. studying, it's not a healthy habit. Your mind is more efficient when you get enough quality sleep, so make sure to schedule enough time for rest;
- Don't try to be perfect. You'll alleviate a lot of anxiety by learning that just "doing your best" is something to be proud of. You don't have to be perfect;
- Reach out for help. If you feel you need assistance with your mental or physical health, talk to a counselor or visit a doctor.

If you experience test anxiety, connect with the Center for Wellness and Wellbeing on campus and schedule an appointment to meet with a mental health professional. This service is absolutely free to you as a student and is covered by the student health fee you paid at registration. The Center can help you gain tools to reduce your anxiety and make test taking more manageable. Additionally, the Center for Wellness and Wellbeing has workshops on a variety of topics including test anxiety and stress management. The Center for Wellness and Wellbeing has services on the Main Campus, Bundy and Center for Media and Design . Visit their website, www.smc.edu/wellness, for more information.

More Strategies for Reducing Test Taking Anxiety

- Be as well prepared for the test as you can;
- Visit with your professor during office hours in the days or weeks leading up to the test and share the ways you are preparing and ask for advice;
- Space out your studying over a few days or weeks, and continually review class material;
- Avoid cramming the night before and try to learn everything at one time;
- Keep a positive attitude while preparing for the test and during the test;
- Exercise regularly for a few days before the test will help reduce stress;
- Get a good night's sleep before the test;

- Show up to class as early as the room will be open, so you won't have to worry about being late;
- Stay relaxed. If you begin to get nervous, take a few deep breaths slowly to relax yourself so you can get back to work;
- Read the directions slowly and carefully;
- If you don't understand the directions on the test, ask the professor to explain it to you;
- Skim through the test so that you have a good idea how to pace yourself;
- Write down important formulas, facts, definitions and/or keywords in the margin first so you won't worry about forgetting them;
- Do the simple questions first to help build up your confidence for the harder questions;
- Don't worry about how fast other people finish their test; just concentrate on your own test;
- If you don't know a question, skip it for the time being (come back to it later if you have time).
- Remember that you don't have to always get every answer right in order to do well on the test;
- Focus on the question at hand. Don't let your mind wander to other things;
- If you still are experiencing extreme test anxiety after following these tips, seek help from your counselor.

Your Turn: Activity

HELP MONICA

Read the following case study, and respond to the questions below:

Monica has a Biology midterm exam on Thursday. On the night before the exam, Monica has a hard time falling asleep and when she does, she has various nightmares about taking tests. The day of the exam, Monica decides not to eat anything, as she is afraid it will make her stomach upset. By the time she arrives at class, Monica is irritable and negative about the exam. The slightest noise seems to bother her.

Monica notices that her palms are sweaty and she is feeling nauseous, even though she hasn’t eaten anything. She has to take the exam in order to pass the class so she begins to take the exam. Although she studied for the exam the previous week and spent the night before cramming, she can’t seem to recall any of the information. Monica is suddenly drawing a complete blank. The ticking of the clock, other

students shifting in their chairs is becoming distracting; and Monica's frustration level is quickly rising. Monica says to herself, "If you can't pass this exam, you might as well drop the course because you are no good at biology".

Monica continues with the test, checking the clock constantly as she fears she is going to run out of time because she arrived to class late. Other students are finishing their exams; she is the only student left.

- What strategies would you suggest for Monica to deal with her test anxiety?
- What study strategies could she try to help her better prepare for her exams?
- Can you relate to any of the symptoms that Monica is experiencing? If so, how do you combat test anxiety?
- How do you usually prepare for your exams?
- Thinking about errors you've made on exams in the past, what strategies in this unit might you now consider trying; and how do they relate to your learning style?

Be good to yourself and give yourself enough time to study in advance for your quizzes, tests and exams. The more studying you do ahead of time, the less stressed you'll feel before the exam.

CHEATING AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Colleges expect you to adhere to the highest standards of good citizenship, honesty, and integrity in their academic work and in their personal conduct. It is your responsibility as a student to behave honestly and professionally at all times. It is important to familiarize yourself with Santa Monica College's (SMC) Statement on Academic Conduct, https://bit.ly/c20SMCconduct, or the policies of your school if you do not attend SMC. Take a moment to read the responsibilities you have as an SMC student:

According to the Santa Monica College Honor Code and the Code of Academic Conduct all students are expected to behave themselves honorably in all endeavors they undertake as students at the College. At the time of enrollment in courses, students certify their commitment to the following statement:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Santa Monica College Honor Code, Code of Academic Conduct, and Student Conduct Code. I will conduct myself honorably as a responsible member of the SMC community in all endeavors I pursue.

Students also agree that in order to maintain an environment of academic integrity they will:

- Familiarize themselves with the Code of Academic Conduct, Honor Code, and Rules of Student Conduct;
- Behave in a manner that encourages learning and upholds the Code of Academic Conduct and Honor Code;
- Act with fairness (i.e., not seek undue advantage) towards other students in classroom interactions, completion of assignments, examinations, or any other academic activity;
- Make every attempt to prevent the unauthorized use of their work.

Examples of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty can take many forms, and you should be careful to avoid them. The following list is a sample of what most institutions will consider unacceptable academic behavior:

- Cheating: using unauthorized notes, study aids, or information on an examination; altering a graded assignment after it has been returned and submitting the work for re-grading; allowing another person to do one's work and submitting that work under one's own name; submitting identical or similar papers for credit in more than one course without prior permission from the course instructors;

- Plagiarism: submitting material that in part or whole is not entirely one's own work without properly citing the source;

- Fabrication: falsifying or inventing any information, data or citation; presenting data that was not gathered appropriately and failing to include an accurate account of the method by which the data was gathered or collected;

- Obtaining an Unfair Advantage: (a) stealing, reproducing, circulating or otherwise gaining access to examination materials prior to the time authorized by the instructor; (b) stealing, destroying, defacing or concealing library materials with the purpose of depriving others of their use; (c) unauthorized collaboration on an academic assignment; (d) retaining, possessing, using or circulating previously given examination materials, where those materials clearly indicate that they are to be returned to the instructor at the conclusion of the examination; (e) intentionally obstructing or interfering with another student's academic work; or (f)

otherwise undertaking activity with the purpose of creating or obtaining an unfair academic advantage over other students' academic work;

- Aiding and Abetting Academic Dishonesty: (a) providing material, information, or other assistance to another person with knowledge that such aid could be used in any of the violations stated above, or (b) providing false information in connection with any inquiry regarding academic integrity;

- Falsification of Records and Official Documents: altering documents affecting academic records; forging signatures of authorization or falsifying information on an official academic document, grade report, letter of permission, petition, drop/add form, ID card, or any other official academic record;

- Unauthorized Access to Computerized Academic or Administrative Records or Systems: viewing or altering computer records, modifying computer programs or systems, releasing or dispensing information gained via unauthorized access, or interfering with the use or availability of computer systems or information.

The attitude of some students that grades are the end-all in academics has led many students to resort to academic dishonesty to try to get the best possible grades or handle the pressure of an academic deadline. Although some students may say, "Everybody does it," or "It's no big deal," you should be mindful of the consequences of cheating:

- Failing the course or being expelled from school. The exact details of what is allowed or not allowed vary somewhat among different colleges and universities and instructors. Read your course syllabus to understand your instructor's guidelines. Ignorance of the rules is never a valid defense;

- Wasting your money and time. Getting a college education is a big investment of your money and time. If you fail a course due to academic dishonesty, you will have to spend more money and time to repeat that course;

- Cheating causes stress. Fear of getting caught will cause you stress and anxiety;
- Jeopardizing your integrity. Once you jeopardize your integrity by cheating, it is very difficult to regain the trust of others in order to establish a

respectable reputation. This can negatively impact your transfer and future career opportunities;

- Cheating lowers your self-esteem. If you cheat, you are telling yourself that you are simply not capable of learning. It also robs you of the feeling of satisfaction from genuine success;

- You don't learn as much. Cheating will hinder your ability to learn knowledge that you can apply in the real world or foundational knowledge necessary for understanding more advanced material. When you cheat, you cheat yourself out of opportunities.

Technology has made it easier to cheat, but it has also created ways for instructors to easily detect these forms of academic dishonesty. Most colleges and universities make these tools available to their instructors.

If you feel uneasy about doing something in your work, trust your instincts. Confirm with the instructor that your intended form of research or use of material is acceptable. Cheating just doesn't pay.

Key Takeaways

- Understanding the learning process can help you better manage your study skills;
- Understanding your learning style can help you identify ways to best study and retain information;
- Using active reading strategies helps you get the most out of your reading and retain information;
- The Information Processing System helps us better understand how we store and use information;
- Taking effective notes is an important part of active reading and should help you quickly recall information later;
- Test-taking strategies can help you minimize test anxiety;
- Being dishonest can have major consequences that can affect not only your college career but also your life overall;
- When you cheat, you are primarily cheating yourself.

Exploring Majors And Careers

www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/explorecareers

Learning Objectives

- Identify the four steps involved in career exploration and resources on campus to support each step;
- Recognize factors involved in choosing a major;
- Examine the My Academic Planning tool (MAP) and develop your individualized educational plan;
- Develop your vision of success through visualization exercises.

"You have to walk toward the things that make you alive."
— Leslie Odom Jr., writer and actor

CAREER EXPLORATION

A job: yes, it's something you would like to have, especially if you want to pay your bills. A job lets you enjoy a minimal level of financial security. A job requires you to show up and do what is required of you; in exchange, you get paid. A career involves holding jobs, but it is more a means of achieving personal fulfillment. In a career, your jobs follow a sequence that leads to increasing mastery, professional development, and personal and financial satisfaction. A career requires planning, knowledge, and skills. If it is to be a fulfilling career, it requires that you bring into play your full set of analytical, critical, and creative thinking skills to make informed decisions that will affect your life in both the short term and the long term.

YOUR WORK LIFE
Over the course of your life, you're probably going to spend a lot of time at work. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average work day is about 8.7 hours long. And that means if you work 5 days a week 50 weeks a year for 35 years, you'll spend a total of 76,125 hours of your life at work. If you weren't already convinced, that number should persuade you that it's pretty important to enjoy your career.

Think about this:
If you pursue a career, you'll constantly make decisions about it. Is this the right job for me? Am I feeling fulfilled and challenged? Does this job enable me to have the lifestyle I want? We want to set you up for success by asking you to consider these kinds of questions now, whether you're just graduating from high school or college, or returning to school after working for a while.

The US Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics defines over 800 occupations in its Standard Occupational Classification www.bls.gov/soc

system—and new occupations are being created at an ever-faster rate. Just ten years ago, would anyone have imagined the job of a social media marketing specialist? How about the concept of a competitive chef? As new careers develop and old careers morph into almost unrecognizable versions of their original, it's OK if you aren't able to pinpoint exactly what occupation or career will be your lifetime passion. However, it is important to define as best you can what field you will want to develop your career in, because that will help dictate your major and your course selections.

The process of career exploration can be a lot of fun, as it allows you to discover a world of possibilities. Even those students who have a pretty clear idea of what they want to do should go through this process because they will discover new options as backups and occasionally a new direction even more attractive than their original choice. The career exploration process involves four steps. These steps are outlined below:

Who am I?

Getting to know who you are—who you really are—is the first step to choosing a career.

Get to know yourself and the things you're truly passionate about.

- Gather information about your career related interests and values;
- Think about what skills and abilities come naturally to you and which ones you want to develop;
- Consider your personality type and how it you want it to play out in your role at work.

Be careful to base your self-discovery on what you think, not what Auntie Ethel always said about you or the hopes that Dad had for you to join in the family business. This is all about you. You are a unique individual with a distinct combination of likes, dislikes, personality traits, and skills. But you are not so different that you can't be identified with certain personality types, and those types may help you narrow your career choices. Visit the SMC Career Services Center, https://bit.ly/smccareer, on campus for guidance in this phase. You may schedule an appointment to meet with a career counselor to complete a series of different career assessments to help you gain a better understanding of your values, interests, skills, abilities, and personality preferences and how they tie into the world of work. Many of the career assessments are based on the career theory developed by Dr. John Holland. Holland defined six categories of people based on personality, interests, and skills[2]:

1. Realistic. These people describe themselves as honest, loyal, and practical. They are doers more than thinkers. They have strong mechanical, motor, and athletic abilities; like the outdoors; and prefer working with machines, tools, plants, and animals;
    - Qualities might include being: Structured, preferring Clear lines of authority, Work with things and tools, Casual dress, Focus on tangible results or well- thought-out goals;
    - Occupations might include: Contractor, Emergency medical technician (EMT), Mechanic, Military career, or Packaging Engineer.

2. Investigative. These people love problem solving and analytical skills. They are intellectually stimulated and often mathematically or scientifically inclined; like to observe, learn, and evaluate; prefer working alone; and are reserved;
    - Qualities might include being: Non-structured, Research oriented, Intellectual, Work with ideas and data;
    - Occupations might include: Pharmacist, Lab technician, Nanotechnologist, Geologist, University professor.

3. Artistic. These people are the "free spirits." They are creative, emotional, intuitive, and idealistic; have a flair for communicating ideas; dislike structure and prefer working independently; and like to sing, write, act, paint, and think creatively. They are similar to the investigative type but are interested in the artistic and aesthetic aspects of things more than the scientific;
    - Qualities might include being: Non-structured, Creative, Rewards unconventional and aesthetic approaches, Creation of products and ideas;
    - Occupations might include: Advertising career, Architect, Animator, Musician, Journalist.

4. Social. These are "people" people. They are friendly and outgoing; love to help others, make a difference, or both; have strong verbal and personal skills and teaching abilities; and are less likely to engage in intellectual or physical activity;
    - Qualities might include being: Collaborative, Collegial, Work with people and on people-related problems/issues, Work as a team or community;

- Occupations might include: Teacher, Geriatric counselor, Correctional officer, Coach, Nurse.

5. Enterprising. These people are confident, assertive risk takers. They are sociable; enjoy speaking and leadership; like to persuade rather than guide; like to use their influence; have strong interpersonal skills; and are status conscious;
    - Qualities might include being: Typical business environment, Results oriented, Driven, Work with people and data, Entrepreneurial, Power focused;
    - Occupations might include: Sales manager, Banker, Lawyer, Business owner, Restaurant manager.

6. Conventional. These people are dependable, detail oriented, disciplined, precise, persistent, and practical; value order; and are good at clerical and numerical tasks. They work well with people and data, so they are good organizers, schedulers, and project managers.
    - Qualities might include being: Orderly, clear rules and policies, consistent processes, work with systems to manipulate and organize data, control and handling of money;
    - Occupations might include: Auditor, Insurance underwriter, Bank Teller, Office Manager, Database Manager.

Your Turn: Activity

DISCOVERING YOUR TYPE

Step 1: What's my type?
Using the descriptions above, choose three types that most closely describe you and list them in order on a sheet of paper or document and number them 1 (your primary type), 2 (secondary type) and 3 (tertiary type). Most people are combinations of two or sometimes three types. List the specific words or attributes next to each of your types that made you think you fit in that type description.

Step 2: What's out there?
Once you have determined your occupational type, you can begin to explore what types of careers might be best suited to you. The exercise above is a rough beginning to find your occupational type, but you could still seek out more detailed results through the SMC Career Services Center, https://bit.ly/smccareer, or a career office near you.

Many of the career guidance tests are based on Holland's work. Holland studied people who were successful and happy in many occupations and matched their occupations to their occupational type, creating a description of the types of occupations that are best suited to each personality type. Just as many individuals are more than one personality type, many jobs show a strong correlation to more than one occupational type.

Use the occupational code you defined in the Your Turn section to identify careers you might want to consider. Your career guidance or placement office should be a good resource for this activity, or you can check out Gottfredson and Holland's Dictionary of Holland Occupational Codes in the reference section of your library.

Step 3: What will impact my choices?

You may now have a list of careers you want to explore. But there are other factors you will need to take into consideration as well. It is important to use your creative thinking skills to come up with alternative "right" answers to factors that may present an obstacle to pursuing the right career.

- Timing
    - How much time must I invest before I actually start making money in this career? Will I need to spend additional time in school? Is there a certification process that requires a specific amount of experience? If so, can I afford to wait?
- Finances
    - Will this career provide me with the kind of income I need in the short term and the security I'll want in the longer term? What investment will I need to make to be successful in this field (education, tools, franchise fees, etc.)?
- Location
    - Does this career require me to relocate? Is the ideal location for this career somewhere I would like to live? Is it somewhere my family would like to live?
- Family and Values
    - How will this career affect my personal and family life? Do friends and family members who know me well feel strongly (for or against) about this career choice? How important is their input?
    - How does this career align with my values? Is the industry I'm considering for myself one that I can feel good about being part of?

Step 4: Where do I go from here?

It may seem odd to be thinking about life after school if you are just getting started. But you will soon be making decisions about your future, and regardless of the direction you may choose, there is a lot you can do while still in college. You will need to focus your studies by choosing a major. You should find opportunities to explore the careers that interest you. You can ensure that you are building the right kind of experience on which to base a successful career. These steps will make your dreams come to life and make them achievable.

Now that you have an idea of who you are and where you might find a satisfying career, how do you start taking action toward achieving those goals? Some people talk to family, friends, or instructors in their chosen disciplines. Others have mentors in their lives with whom to process this decision. At Santa Monica College, we have general counselors, career counselors, and career advisors who can help you with both career decision-making and the educational planning process.

Start by developing a relationship with the counselors in the Career Services Center on campus. All too often students engage these counselors only near the end of their college days, when the pressure is just on getting a job—any job—after having completed a degree. But these counselors can be of great help in matching your interests to a career and in ensuring you are gathering the right kind of experience to put you at the top of the recruiting heap.

Keep in mind that deciding on and pursuing a career is an ongoing process. The more you learn about yourself and the career options that best suit you, the more you will need to fine-tune your career plan. Don’t be afraid to consider new ideas, but don’t make changes without careful consideration. Career planning is exciting: learning about yourself and about career opportunities, and considering the factors that can affect your decision, should be a core part of your thoughts while in college. You'll benefit from exploring the online career exploration tools listed below:

Get started by using California Career Zone, www.cacareerzone.org. This is a virtual career center designed for California Community College students. This site has a wealth of information and allows you to explore each step of the career exploration process we have addressed above and your options.

Now it's time to take concrete steps toward achieving your educational and career goals. This may be as simple as creating a preliminary educational plan for next semester or a comprehensive educational plan that maps out your Associate's degree. You may also want to search for internships, part time work, or volunteer opportunities that help you test and confirm your preliminary career choice. Your community college counselor can help you with this step as well.

Barbara Sher once wrote, "Find a career that you love and you will never work another day in your life." The Career Exploration steps highlighted above will help you find the career you love!

To help you engage in steps 1 - 4 above, let's explore Choices 360!

Choices 360 is a program the college has purchased designed to help students with career exploration and planning. The program consists of several career assessments including:

- Interest Profiler - this assessment allows you to connect your top interests with careers;
- Basic Skills Survey - this assessment allows you to find careers that require your basic skills;
- Work values - this assessment helps you learn what's most important to you in your work environment.

Your instructor will provide you with instructions on how to access Choices 360 or you can visit the Career Services Center, https://bit.ly/smccareer, website for more information. You will take these assessments to help you gain a better understanding of your interests, skills, confidence and work values and how they link to the world of work.

After completing the assessments, you will get a chance to research occupations that may be a good fit for you based on your preferences. From there you will then be able to explore the different majors that can prepare you for the career path you'd like to pursue. The more time and effort you invest in researching your options, the more informed decisions you'll be able to make!

It is important to understand that career exploration and planning is a process and does not take place overnight. Be patient with yourself throughout this process and don't get discouraged! You'll find your goals so much more tangible once you've set a preliminary career plan. Remember, you are not alone in this process. SMC provides many opportunities for you to engage in career exploration and planning! If you feel like you want more support in this area, be sure to connect with the resources below:

CAREER SERVICES CENTER
The Career Services Center is here to support students with career exploration and planning. The center provides workshops, job fairs, and one-on-one appointments for students to meet with a professional career counselor to learn more about:

- Resume Writing;

- Employment Searches and Advising;
- Internships;
- Interview Preparation;
- Writing Cover Letters and Job Applications, including making a Linkedin profile;
- Career Fairs and Workshops;
- Service Learning;
- Finding a Major and Career Path for you.

For more information on the Job & Career Center, visit: https://bit.ly/smccareer or go to a job center near you. If you don't have a career center or job center nearby, ask a mentor or trusted counselor where you can find help with the bulleted items listed above.

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

The Counseling Department is here to provide educational, career, and personal counseling and program advice. Their mission is to empower students by providing SMC program information and by counseling students to establish goals, evaluate options, develop an educational plan, and learn to study effectively so they may reach their educational and career goals. For more information on counseling services view their website at www.smc.edu/counseling.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Internships are short-term opportunities that allow students to gain valuable work experience in a particular career. Internships allow you to "test drive" your career of choice. The more you know and the more you experience, the more confident you will be with deciding on your career choice.

Santa Monica College offers internship assistance and classes through the Career Services Center. The goal of internships is to prepare students for the real world of work. College graduates are realizing that it takes more than a degree or certificate to get a good paying job. It takes work experience too. Engaging in an internship will help you gain experience. To learn more about Internships visit www.smc.edu/internship.

CAREER COUNSELING COURSES

Consider enrolling in Counseling 12 Career Planning: 1 unit – UC/CSU transferable (UC credit limit if you have taken Counseling 20)

This course is designed to inform and assist students in making appropriate and satisfying career choices. Using self-evaluation instruments, students identify interests, abilities, values, and goals. Skills necessary for future career investigation and decision-making are included.

Consider enrolling in Counseling 15 Job Search Techniques: 1 unit
The objective of this course is to teach the skills necessary for successful job-hunting by students. Skills identification, interviewing techniques, researching the job market, and resume writing is explored.

YOUR COLLEGE PROFESSORS
Your instructors serve as valuable resources when it comes to career exploration. Talk to your instructors about your career goals and share your interests with them. They can serve as great mentors and can help you learn more about different occupations and industry requirements within particular fields. Oftentimes they are directly connected to the industry and can help you get connected too!

Your work experiences and life circumstances will undoubtedly change throughout the course of your professional life, so you may need to go back and reassess where you are on this path in the future. But no matter if you feel like you were born knowing what you want to do professionally, or you feel totally unsure about what the future may hold for you, remember that with careful consideration, resolve, and strategic thought, you can find a career that feels rewarding.

How do I Choose a Career That's Right for me?

As the old saying goes, "find a job you love and you'll never work a day in your life." As the average person will spend about 100,000 hours of their life working (roughly 12 straight years), or more, it's important to find work that you enjoy, feel good about and that challenges you in a good way.

Here's an article that takes you through some initial steps toward finding such a career for yourself, https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/careerchoices

Worker's Rights

Young people are more susceptible to abuses and violations at work as they have limited experience advocating for themselves and navigating challenges that invariably arise at work. This article has more information and resources to help change that, https://nbcnews.to/3tqYA69

EXPLORING MAJORS

Choosing your college major can feel overwhelming and some students are concerned they will limit their options by committing to a major too soon. If you are

uncertain about your major, it is best to focus on your general education (GE) classes. One of the benefits of starting with your GE courses is this allows you to explore various disciplines which may end up grabbing your attention and leading to your major. If not, no problem, you have satisfied one of your GE requirements! If you are considering a particular major but aren't certain, you are strongly advised to take an introductory course in that discipline. For example, if you think you may like the idea of majoring in business, consider taking Business 1- Introduction to Business. Exploring this course sooner than later can help you make a decision sooner than later and some courses required for the major may also double dip and satisfy a GE requirement.

We discussed a step-by-step approach to career exploration. All 4 of those steps directly relate to choosing a major and you will greatly benefit from meeting with a career counselor and/or enrolling in a career planning course such as SMC's Counseling 12: Exploring Majors and Careers if you are undeclared and uncertain about where to start with selecting a major. The more time and effort you spend researching your options, the easier it will be for you to declare a major you feel is a good fit for you. If you don't attend SMC, ask your academic counselor how your school helps students choose a good major or academic goal when they are undecided.

Students sometimes start at SMC and want to focus on all their general education classes first then focus on selecting a major. However, the sooner you take time to explore your major the better you can plan your classes. Some of your major classes will have prerequisites and you don't want to leave them all for your final semester at SMC or else you won't be able to finish them in that final term. And you may benefit from knowing your major sooner than later because some of your major classes may also double dip and satisfy a GE or two and this will save you time and money.

Take time to explore the different majors offered at Santa Monica College. All majors are described in detail in the college catalog which is accessible online at www.smc.edu/catalog. Additionally, you can review your options on the SMC Areas of Interest page at https://www.smc.edu/academics/areas-of-interest/.

Although the selection of a major is important, try not to get too anxious about choosing a major or program of study. Working with a career counselor can help you select your studies to be as flexible as possible. Consider the following:

- Your choice of major or program will be important for your personal satisfaction and interest, and may POSSIBLY connect directly to your job opportunities after college; most people change careers (not just jobs, but

careers) several times throughout their lifetime, so there is no possible major that will cover that level of flexibility;

- Unless you are entering a highly technical field that requires your major, such as Engineering or Nursing or Computer Science, for example, your major does not necessarily have to line up or seem to connect directly to a job or a career cluster or industry. There are Dance majors who become doctors, and Marine Biologists who become politicians. Don't try to draw a direct line between a Major and a Career if it's not truly required by the field you wish to work in;

- Many majors and programs share foundation courses with other majors, so you can usually change your major without having wasted your time in courses that will be unrelated to your new major. Chances are that if you change your major, it will be to something similar, especially if you have completed career assessments as recommended earlier in this unit;

- If a change in major does cause a delay in completing your degree, it may be a good investment of time to study subjects that truly interest and inspire you to think more creatively, communicate well and solve problems in innovative ways;

- Take time to engage in activities on campus to help you further explore your major including meeting with a career counselor, attending workshops, join clubs, and attend events related to your interests.

The following tips may make it a little easier, and perhaps even fun to choose a major that's right for you:

- Follow your dreams
    - Your first instinct in choosing a field of study is probably based on your dreams and life experience. Make sure you base your choice on your own dreams and interests and not those of a parent, spouse, or friend to the exclusion of your own choice;
- Make it fun
    - What do you like to do for fun? What kinds of magazines do you read? Which Websites are bookmarked on your computer? What kinds of volunteer work have you done? What do the answers to these questions tell you about the kind of career you would enjoy;
- Build on your skills
    - A good choice of a program of study is not based exclusively on your likes; it should also consider your skills. What courses did you "ace"

in high school? Consider also courses that you found challenging in which you learned a lot (it's hard to keep a level of determination to tackle a tough subject if you don't enjoy it). What do these courses tell you about what you are skilled at studying;

- Ask around
    - Find people who are following the courses of studies you are considering. Ask them what they like and dislike about their majors. If you can find recent graduates with that major, ask them about the value of their major;
- Two is better than one
    - Talk to your counselor about a double major; that is an effective way of preparing yourself for the uncertainties and options of future employment. Think about declaring a minor, if your college allows it;
- Consider what makes you unique
    - If you have a major that you'd like to pursue that is not offered at your college, find out if you can design your own major or minor. This option is especially attractive if you want to combine two seemingly different disciplines into a major (Dance and athletics? Sociology and film? Women's studies and economics?);
- Be open to change
    - Once you have selected a major, don't panic if it turns out to be the wrong choice; consider it a step toward finding the right program for you. Repeat the major selection process, but carefully consider what you learned from your original major choice. Why was it not the right major? (Did it not match your interests? Was the workload too heavy? Were the courses too tough?) What do you know now that you didn't know when you made your first selection that you should consider in making a new choice?
- Ask for support navigating family systems or caretaking systems
    - If your decision or choice of a major is not supported by those closest to you, it can be very difficult to succeed or even to make the choice for yourself. Seek out an academic ally, counselor, professor, or peer who can help you talk to your family or your caretaking and decision-making circle about your choices. Several of our SMC programs have family-oriented events, workshops, and support to help you navigate college together;
- Take the time you need to make a decision you can live well with
    - The more time you take to explore your major and career options the sooner you'll be able to make a well-informed decision. Keep the following points in mind and enjoy the process and experience involved in choosing a college major;

    - You'll save money and effort in the long run if you take your time and make a good decision now and really enjoy the pursuit of your interests;
    - There is no need to panic over the choice of a major or program of studies;
    - Most students will change their major at least once during their college years;
    - Most people work and have successful careers in disciplines, industries, or occupations they did NOT major in.
- The University of North Carolina Wilmington has a resource called What Can I Do With A Major In, https://uncw.edu/career/whatcanidowithamajorin.html. This site links academic majors to career alternatives by providing information on career paths and sample job titles. A similar site is the University of Tennessee's What can I Do With This Major, https://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors/, where you can explore potential career paths related to different majors.

Video

Get comfortable with being uncomfortable | Luvvie Ajayi Jones

In this bright, uplifting talk, Ajayi Jones shares three questions to ask yourself if you're teetering on the edge of speaking up or quieting down -- and encourages all of us to get a little more comfortable with being uncomfortable, https://bit.ly/comfywithbeinguncomfy

Key Takeaways

- A career involves holding jobs, but it is more a means of achieving personal fulfillment;
- Career exploration involves four steps; Step 1 Getting to Know Who You Are, Step 2 Exploring Your Options, Step 3 Determining What Factors Affect Your Choice, and Step 4 Taking Next Steps;
- Choosing your major involves exploring your options and should include using resources provided by SMC.

Identify And Plan For Your Educational Goals

www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/educationalgoals

Learning Objectives

- The different educational goals you can achieve at SMC;
- The types of courses required for your degree;
- The resources you can use to assist you in transfer;
- The milestones you should reach based on the Counseling Roadmap.

"My life is mine."
— Tracee Ellis Ross, actress and entrepreneur

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Now that you have explored possible career options and majors, it is time to learn about the specific educational training required to help you pursue your career goal. The career you are considering may require specialized industry certification or licensing, an associate degree, bachelor's degree or a more advanced degree. Santa Monica College offers certificates, associate degree and transfer programs.

Certificates

Certificates are short term training programs that are industry specific. These programs are typically designed to prepare students for employment, job enhancement and/or job advancement. Certificate programs vary in length and generally require less than two years of full time study. The required coursework allows students to gain specialized entry level skills and training to prepare for industry certification and licensing.

For example, to become a Cosmetologist one must become certified by passing the State Board exam and 1600 hours. Completing the Cosmetology Certificate of Achievement at SMC prepares students to take the exam to become certified and gain employment as a Cosmetologist. For a list of certificates offered, visit the SMC Counseling webpage or type in bit.ly/c20certsanddegrees.

Associate Degrees

The associate degree is a program that requires 60 units. These units are comprised of general education courses and major courses. The AA/AS degree is designed to help students gain employment and or job advancement.
For a comprehensive list of associate degrees offered through SMC, view the counseling website bit.ly/c20certsanddegrees.

Associate Degrees for Transfer (AA-T/AS-T)

The AA-T/AS-T degrees are designed to help facilitate the transfer process for California Community College students to the CSU System. It is a 60-unit program comprising at least 18 units in a specific major and either the CSU GE breadth or the IGETC-CSU GE pattern. The benefit of an AA-T/AS-T is that students are guaranteed admission to one of the CSU schools (a non-impacted CSU) and are guaranteed to have 60 units remaining towards their bachelor's degree after transfer. For more information, visit the SMC General Education AA degrees page or https://bit.ly/C20smcAAs

Bachelor of Science in Interaction Design

SMC offers only one bachelor's degree, a BS in Interaction Design (IxD). The Interaction Design Bachelor of Science degree program blends the fields of design, user experience (UX), and technology. Interaction Designers ensure that products are appealing, effective and intuitive for their users. For admissions information, visit https://bit.ly/c20certsanddegrees.

What Can I Do After High School Besides College?

You have so many choices for what to do after high school, and we understand that can feel overwhelming. Here's an article with a list of some pathways you can explore that don't include "going to college."
https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/afterhighschool

TYPES OF CLASSES YOU'LL TAKE

Just as you have choices about your educational goals, you also have choices about where specific courses fit academically into your chosen degree program. For example, you can choose to take various combinations of major, general education and elective courses in a given term. Typical college degree programs include both required and elective courses.

- General education are courses required by your institution and every student must take it in order to obtain a degree such as English and math. General education courses are sometimes also called core courses. General education courses are always essential to an academic degree, but they are not necessarily foundational to your major;
- Major courses on the other hand, are essential to your specific field of study;
- For example, as an accounting student you would probably have to take classes like financial accounting and microeconomics. Your college counselor can help you learn which courses within your major are required;
- An elective course, in contrast to both general education courses and major courses, may be a variable component of your degree. You choose your electives from a number of optional subjects. Some degrees may require additional electives to be completed while other degrees may not require elective courses.

Most educational programs prefer that students take a combination of general education, especially math and English, and major preparation courses during the same term. This is a good way to meet the demands of your program and take interesting courses outside your focus area at the same time. Since your major courses will be clearly specified, you may not have many options about which ones to take or when to take them.

It is important to track and plan your major and general education courses from the outset. Follow up with a counselor to help you make sure you are on the best route to graduation and help plan out your courses to balance out your schedule.

TRANSFERRING TO A FOUR-YEAR SCHOOL

SMC has transfer agreements with four-year institutions that allow students to complete their freshman and sophomore general education courses and major preparation work at SMC and transfers as a junior. The transfer agreements may be found on the SMC counseling website , https://bit.ly/SMCtransfer. For specific

transfer articulation agreements between SMC and a UC/CSU school go to: www.assist.org

While at SMC you may work on multiple goals. You may earn a certificate, associate degree and/or transfer program.

Steps to Transfer

- Learn more about the transfer process. SMC has different transfer agreements with the UC/CSU and some private, out-of-state institutions and even international universities! Understanding the transfer requirements will make for a smooth transition;
- If you are considering transfer to a CSU school, you may wish to consider the AA-T/AS-T programs offered through SMC. These degrees are designed to help facilitate the transfer process for California Community College students to the CSU System;
- If you are considering transferring to a CSU school, learn more about the CSU GE breadth. The CSU GE breadth is the GE pattern all CSU schools will accept as satisfying the lower division GE coursework. The CSU GE can be found on the SMC counseling website, https://bit.ly/csuinfoforsmc;
- The IGETC is the GE pattern accepted by all UC and CSU schools as satisfying the lower division GE requirements. The IGETC GE can be found here https://bit.ly/ucatsmc;

    NOTE: The CSU GE and IGETC GE patterns are generally safe for most majors except liberal studies students and some high unit majors, especially STEM. Read the notes on the CSU GE and IGETC regarding which majors and schools do not honor CSU GE or IGETC.

- Explore www.assist.org to learn about specific major courses necessary for transfer. This site houses all the transfer agreements between all California Community Colleges, CSU and UC institutions;
- Meet with a counselor to learn more about the transfer process and create an educational plan based on your major and transfer institution;
- Visit the Transfer Center to learn about transfer related events and workshops. Oftentimes University Representatives come to campus to meet 1:1 with prospective transfer students. Each fall and spring semester the General Counseling and Transfer Services hosts a college fair where many college and university representatives are present to answer transfer admission questions. View the SMC Transfer Center for upcoming events and workshops.

How to Choose a Four-Year School

There are many factors to consider when choosing a four-year university. Below are just a few factors that you should consider:

- Major: Does that university offer your major?
- Size: How big is that university? How big are the class sizes? What is the student-faculty ratio?
- Student life: Do they offer clubs, campus activities, fraternities or sororities, sports, etc?
- Location: Do you want to stay local, go out-of-state, or even out of the US? Is it located in a city, suburbs or rural area?
- Public or private: Do you prefer a private or public college?
- Cost: How much is tuition? What is the cost of attendance? Keep in mind that many universities offer grants, scholarships, work-study, and other forms of financial aid to bring down the cost of attendance.

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Regardless of your goal at Santa Monica College, you will benefit from developing your MyEdPlan (the name of the software you will use to build your educational plan).

MYEDPLAN
SANTA MONICA COLLEGE

Once you determine the goal you wish to pursue at SMC, you are ready to declare your program of study and develop your educational plan. You may develop your **MyEdPlan**, an Online Academic Planning tool, through your *Corsair Connect* student portal. For a step-by- step tutorial on developing your **MyEdPlan** go to: www.smc.edu/myedplan.

Your **MyEdPlan** will allow you to track your progress and map out classes necessary to meet your goal. You are encouraged to discuss this plan with a counselor to ensure you have accounted for all necessary requirements!
If you are not yet certain about your major that's ok for now. Choose what program may best suit you: certificate, associate degree or transfer. If you have a

general idea of what program you wish to pursue, you can start focusing on your general education courses (if required) and consider taking some exploratory classes next semester to allow you to explore areas of interest. Undecided students should also take Counseling 12, Career Planning, and meet with a career counselor to help you choose your major.

Where are you on Your Educational map?

Are you at the start? Are you midway through your journey? Are you at the end of your journey? Your MyEdPlan will help you determine how far along you are on your journey and how much further you have to go. Consider connecting with resources and services on campus as recommended below based on where you are in your journey.

If you are at the START you will want to:

- Turn in transcripts from your high school and previous colleges/universities and schedule an appointment with an academic counselor to have them evaluate;
- Declare your major;
- If you are undecided, you should take Counseling 12 or meet with a career counselor to help you choose your major;
- Apply for financial aid;
- View your math and English placement if you have not yet done so;
- Meet with a counselor to develop at least a one-semester plan of what classes you'll take.

If you have Up to 15 units you will want to:

- Familiarize yourself with the Library, the Tutoring Labs and the Student Services Center;
- Consider joining a student club or organization;
- Meet with a counselor to discuss academic major and goals leading to the development of a comprehensive educational plan.

If you have 15 Units or more you will want to:

- Continue to network on campus and build relationships with faculty, staff and peers;
- Connect with the Career Center.

If you have 30 units or more you will want to:

- Review SMC transcripts with a counselor;
- Participate in an internship;
- Apply to transfer;

- Update your educational plan.

If you are at the FINISH LINE you will want to:
- Petition for graduation;
- Receive an associate degree and/or certificate;
- Enter the workforce or transfer to a four-year institution.

There is a lot of support on campus to help you each step of the way. Take advantage of the resources available to you and ask for help when necessary. SMC offers many campus resources and services, for a comprehensive list, visit the SMC website, www.smc.edu/StudentServices.

Remember, you are not alone on this journey. There are many folks on campus here to support your efforts. Do your part and get to know them!

Your Turn: Activity

WHAT IS MY PLAN AFTER GRADUATION?

It's easier to achieve a goal when you write it down, tell someone else about it, and have at least one helper to support you. For more on goals, check out our article Goals: Setting and Reaching Them, https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/settinggoals

My Two Goals for After Graduation are:
Goal 1: I will: _____.
- What date will you achieve your goal? _____.
- Who can help you reach your goal? _____.

Goal 2: I will: _____.
- What date will you achieve your goal? _____.
- Who can help you reach your goal? _____.

List Three Small Actions for Each Goal:

Goal #1	**Goal #2**
Action 1:	Action 1:
Action 2:	Action 2:

Action 3:	Action 3:

Follow Through with a Goal Buddy:
Choose a goal buddy from today's participants or someone you know, or a mentor/advisor who has already achieved similar goals. Tell them about your goals and how you would like to check back in with them for support.

You set two goals today, take action now! Use this checklist to keep you going:

- ☐ Set due dates for each of your goal actions;
- ☐ Make a plan to address the obstacles that may come up;
- ☐ Set up your next call or meeting with your goal buddy; and
- ☐ Decide how you'll celebrate or reward yourself when you reach your goal.

Key Takeaways

- Pursuing a higher education provides many options such as certificates, associate degrees, and bachelor's degrees;
- Typically, college degree programs include major, general education and elective courses;
- If you plan on transferring to a university, SMC has many resources to assist you;
- To ensure you are on the right path, make sure to create an Education Plan with a counselor.

Critical Thinking

www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/criticalthinking

Learning Objectives

- The role that logic plays in critical thinking;
- How critical thinking skills can be used to problem-solve;
- How critical thinking skills can be used to evaluate information;
- How to identify strategies for developing yourself as a critical thinker;
- How to identify technology tools that enhance learning and the importance of technology in the student experience.

"I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change; I am changing the things I cannot accept."
— Angela Davis, political activist, philosopher, scholar and author

Critical thinking is clear, reasonable, reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do. It means asking probing questions like, "How do we know?" or "Is this true in every case or just in this instance?" It involves being skeptical and challenging assumptions, rather than simply memorizing facts or blindly accepting what you hear or read.

Imagine, for example, that you're reading a history textbook. You wonder who wrote it and why, because you detect certain biases in the writing. You find that the author has a limited scope of research focused only on a particular group within a population. In this case, your critical thinking reveals that there are "other sides to the story."

Who are critical thinkers, and what characteristics do they have in common? Critical thinkers are usually curious and reflective people. They like to explore and probe new areas and seek knowledge, clarification, and new solutions. They ask pertinent questions, evaluate statements and arguments, and they distinguish between facts and opinion. They are also willing to examine their own beliefs, possessing a manner of humility that allows them to admit lack of knowledge or understanding when needed. They are open to changing their mind. Perhaps most of all, they actively enjoy learning, and seeking new knowledge is a lifelong pursuit.

This may well be you!

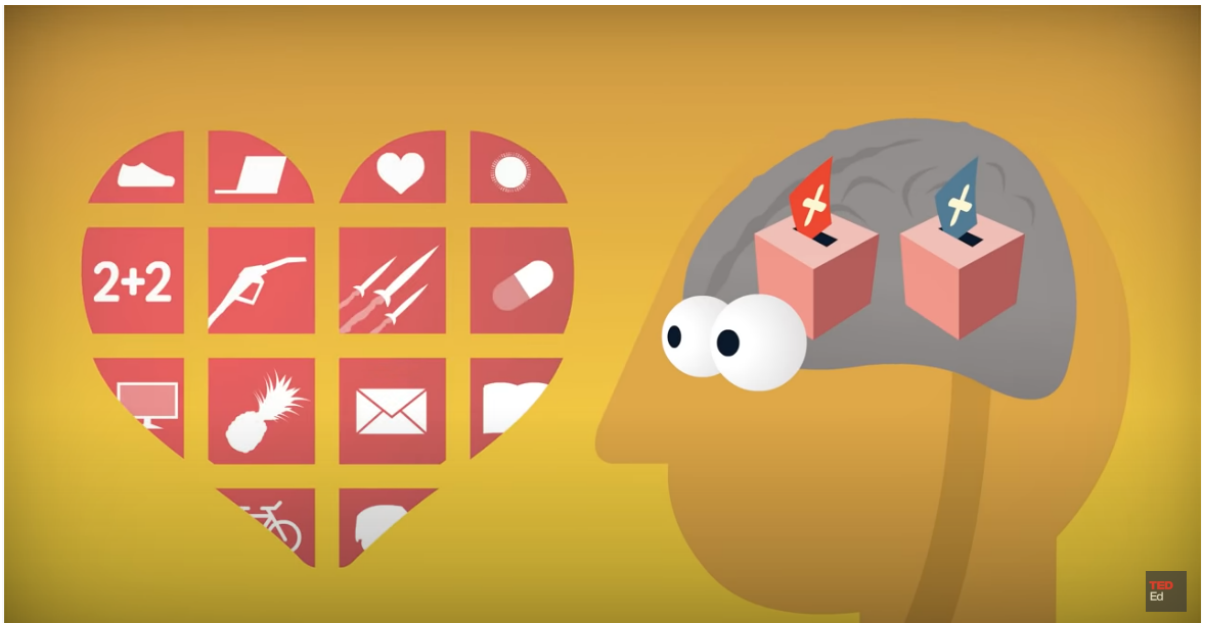
No matter where you are on the road to being a critical thinker, you can always more fully develop and finely tune your skills. Doing so will help you develop more balanced arguments, express yourself clearly, read critically, and glean important information efficiently. Critical thinking skills will help you in any profession or any circumstance of life, from science to art to business to teaching. With critical thinking, you become a clearer thinker and problem solver.

Critical thinking is skepticism, examining assumptions, challenging reasoning and uncovering biases. Critical thinking is not memorizing, group thinking, blind acceptance of authority.

Critical thinking is fundamentally a process of questioning information and data. You may question the information you read in a textbook, or you may question what a politician or a professor or a classmate says. You can also question a

commonly-held belief or a new idea. With critical thinking, anything and everything is subject to question and examination for the purpose of logically constructing reasoned perspectives.

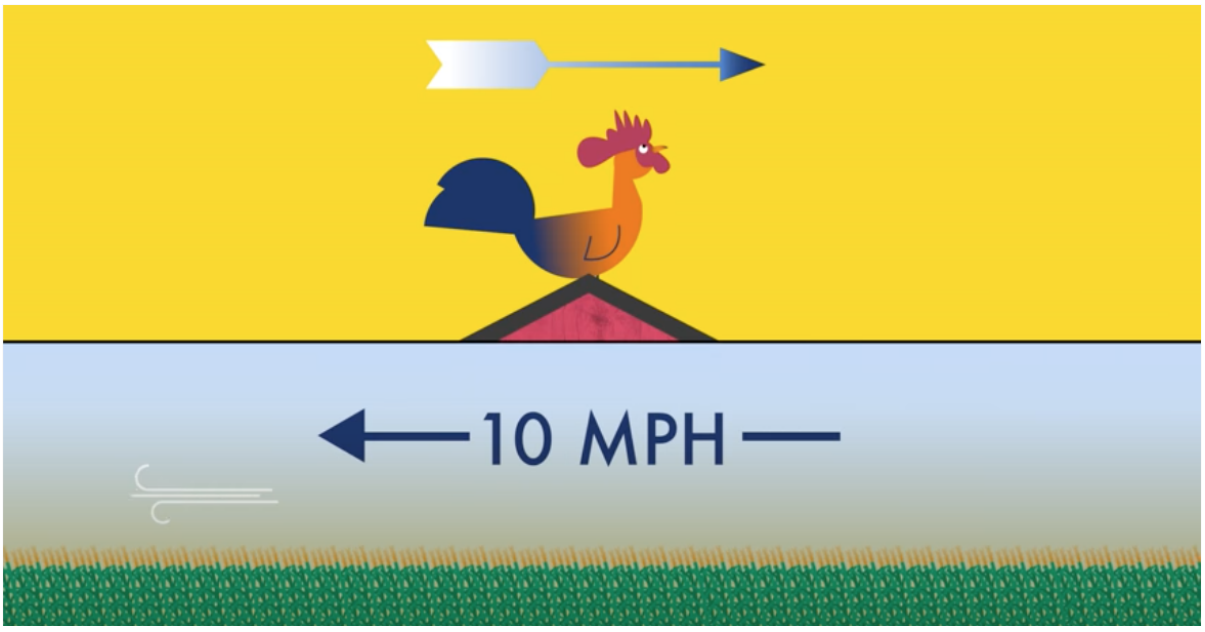
Video



5 tips to improve your critical thinking - Samantha Agoos
This short video offers five tips for improving your critical thinking, https://bit.ly/tipsforcriticalthinking

Why incompetent people think they're amazing - David Dunning

To explore more ideas on critical thinking, check out this video called Why Incompetent People Think They’re Amazing, https://bit.ly/dunningkrueger



Using Brain Teasers to Build Critical Thinking Skills

Expand your own critical thinking with this Critical Thinking Brain Teasers video, https://bit.ly/criticalbrainteasers

LOGIC

Thinking comes naturally. You don't have to make it happen—it just does. But you can make it happen in different ways. For example, you can think positively or negatively. You can think with "heart" and you can think with rational judgment. You can also think strategically and analytically, and mathematically and scientifically. These are a few of multiple ways in which the mind can process thought.

What are some forms of thinking you use? When do you use them, and why?

As a college student, you are tasked with engaging and expanding your thinking skills. One of the most important of these skills is critical thinking. Critical thinking is important because it relates to nearly all tasks, situations, topics, careers, environments, challenges, and opportunities. It's a "domain-general" thinking skill—not a thinking skill that's reserved for a one subject alone or restricted to a particular subject area.

Great leaders have highly attuned critical thinking skills, and you can, too. In fact, you probably have a lot of these skills already. Of all your thinking skills, critical thinking may have the greatest value.

The word logic comes from the Ancient Greek logike, referring to the science or art of reasoning. Using logic, a person evaluates arguments and reasoning and strives to distinguish between good and bad reasoning, or between truth and falsehood. Using logic, you can evaluate ideas or claims people make, make good decisions, and form sound beliefs about the world.

QUESTIONS TO EXPAND YOUR CRITICAL THINKING

Let's use a simple example of applying logic to a critical-thinking situation. In this hypothetical scenario, a person has a PhD in political science, and they work as a professor at a local college. Their partner works at the college, too. They have three young children in the local school system, and their family is well known in the community. This person is now running for political office. Are their credentials and experience sufficient for entering public office? Will they be effective in the political office? Some voters might believe that their personal life and current job, on the surface, suggest they will do well in the position, and they will vote for the professor. In truth, the characteristics described don't guarantee that this person will do a good

job. The information is somewhat irrelevant. What else might you want to know? How about whether this person has already held a political office and done a good job? In this case, we want to ask, how much information is adequate in order to make a decision based on logic instead of assumptions?

The following questions, presented in image below, are ones you may apply to formulating a logical, reasoned perspective in the above scenario or any other situation:

- What's happening? Gather the basic information and begin to think of questions;
- Why is it important? Ask yourself why it's significant and whether or not you agree;
- What don't I see? Is there anything important missing;
- How do I know? Ask yourself where the information came from and how it was constructed;
- Who is saying it? What's the position of the speaker and what is influencing them;
- What else? What if? What other ideas exist and are there other possibilities?

Questions a Critical Thinker Asks
What's Happening?
Gather the basic information and begin to think of questions
Why Is It Important?
Ask yourself why it's significant and whether or not you agree
What Don't I See?
Is there anything important missing?
Answers
How Do I Know?
Ask yourself where the information came from and how it was constructed
Who Is Saying It?
What's the position of the speaker and what is influencing them?
Pluto is not a planet
If only time were relative...
What Else? What If?
What other ideas exist and are there other possibilities?
UBC
a place of mind
learningcommons.ubc.ca

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Much of your college and professional life will be spent solving problems; some will be complex, such as deciding on a career, and require time and effort to come up with a solution. Others will be small, such as deciding what to eat for lunch, and will allow you to make a quick decision based entirely on your own experience. But, in either case, when coming up with the solution or deciding what to do, follow the same basic steps.

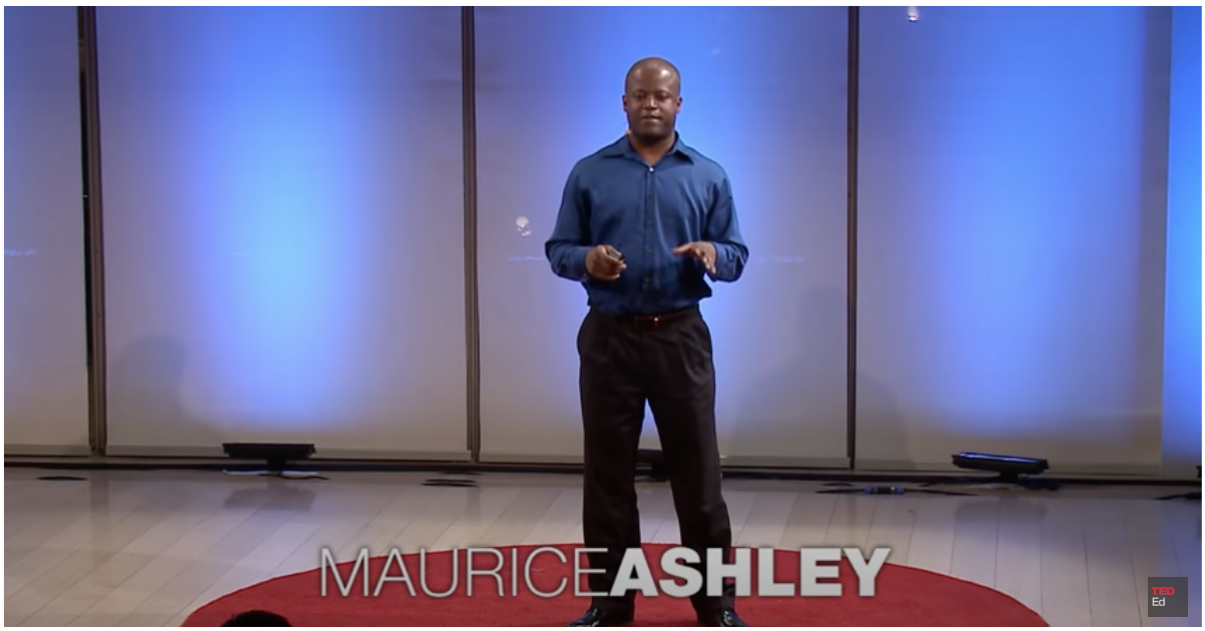
- Define the problem. Use your analytical skills. What is the real issue? Why is it a problem? What are the root causes? What kinds of outcomes or actions do you expect to generate to solve the problem? What are some of the key characteristics that will make a good choice: Timing? Resources? Availability of tools and materials? For more complex problems, it helps to actually write out the problem and the answers to these questions. Can you clarify your understanding of the problem by using metaphors to illustrate the issue;

- Narrow the problem. Many problems are made up of a series of smaller problems, each requiring its own solution. Can you break the problem into different facets? What aspects of the current issue are "noise" that should not be considered in the problem solution? (Use critical thinking to separate facts from opinion in this step);

- Generate possible solutions. List all your options. Use your creative thinking skills in this phase. Did you come up with the second "right" answer, and the third or the fourth? Can any of these answers be combined into a stronger solution? What past or existing solutions can be adapted or combined to solve this problem;

- Choose the best solution. Use your critical thinking skills to select the most likely choices. List the pros and cons for each of your selections. How do these lists compare with the requirements you identified when you defined the problem? If you still can't decide between options, you may want to seek further input from your brainstorming team.

Video



Working backward to solve problems - Maurice Ashley

Imagine where you want to be someday. Now, how did you get there? Retrograde analysis is a style of problem solving where you work backwards from the endgame you want. It can help you win at chess -- or solve a problem in real life, according to chess grandmaster Maurice Ashley. https://bit.ly/workbackward

Group Think: Effective Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a process of generating ideas for solutions in a group. This method is very effective because ideas from one person will trigger additional ideas from another. The following guidelines make for an effective brainstorming session:

- Decide who should moderate the session. That person may participate, but their main role is to keep the discussion flowing;
- Define the problem to be discussed and the time you will allow to consider it;
- Write all ideas down on a board or flip chart for all participants to see;
- Encourage everyone to speak;
- Do not allow criticism of ideas. All ideas are good during a brainstorm. Suspend disbelief until after the session. Remember a wildly impossible idea may trigger a creative and feasible solution to a problem.

Decisions, Decisions You will be called on to make many decisions in your life. Some will be personal, like what to major in, or whether or not to get married. Other times you will be making decisions on behalf of others at work or for a volunteer organization. Occasionally you will be asked for your opinion or experience for decisions others are making. To be effective in all of these circumstances, it is helpful to understand some principles about decision making.

First, define who is responsible for solving the problem or making the decision. In an organization, this may be someone above or below you on the organization chart but is usually the person who will be responsible for implementing the solution. Deciding on an academic major should be your decision, because you will have to follow the course of study. Deciding on the boundaries of a sales territory would most likely be the sales manager who supervises the territories, because they will be responsible for producing the results with the combined territories. Once you define who is responsible for making the decision, everyone else will fall into one of two roles: giving input, or in rare cases, approving the decision.

Understanding the role of input is very important for good decisions. Input is sought or given due to experience or expertise, but it is up to the decision maker to weigh the input and decide whether and how to use it. Input should be fact based, or if offering an opinion, it should be clearly stated as such. Finally, once input is given, the person giving the input must support the other's decision, whether or not the input is actually used.

Consider a team working on a project for a science course. The team assigns you the responsibility of analyzing and presenting a large set of complex data. Others on the team will set up the experiment to demonstrate the hypothesis, prepare the class presentation, and write the paper summarizing the results. As you face the data, you go to the team to seek input about the level of detail on the data you should consider for your analysis. The person doing the experiment setup thinks you should be very detailed, because then it will be easy to compare experiment results with the data. However, the person preparing the class presentation wants only high-level data to be considered because that will make for a clearer presentation. If there is not a clear understanding of the decision-making process, each of you may think the decision is yours to make because it influences the output of your work; there will be conflict and frustration on the team. If the decision maker is clearly defined upfront, however, and the input is thoughtfully given and considered, a good decision can be made (perhaps a creative compromise?) and the team can get behind the decision and work together to complete the project.

Finally, there is the approval role in decisions. This is very common in business decisions but often occurs in college work as well (the professor needs to approve the theme of the team project, for example). Approval decisions are usually based on availability of resources, legality, history, or policy.

Key Takeaways

- Effective problem solving involves critical and creative thinking;
- The four steps to effective problem solving are the following:
    - Define the problem;
    - Narrow the problem;
    - Generate solutions;
    - Choose the solution.
- Brainstorming is a good method for generating creative solutions.

Understanding the difference between the roles of deciding and providing input makes for better decisions.

Your Turn: Activity

BIG IDEAS WITH FRIENDS

On a sheet of paper or document, answer the following questions:

1. With three or four friends, conduct three short brainstorming sessions (ten minutes each) to generate ideas for alternate uses for peanut butter, paper clips, and pen caps. Compare the results of the group with your own ideas. Be sure to follow the brainstorming guidelines. Did you generate more ideas in the group? Did the quality of the ideas improve? Were the group ideas more innovative? Which was more fun? Write your conclusions here;

2. Using the steps outlined earlier for problem solving, write a plan for the following problem: You are in your second year of studies in computer animation at Santa Monica College. You and your wife both work, and you would like to start a family in the next year or two. You want to become a videogame designer and can benefit from more advanced work in programming. Should you go on to complete a four-year degree?

3. Define the problem: What is the core issue? What are the related issues? Are there any requirements to a successful solution? Can you come up with a metaphor to describe the issue?

4. Narrow the problem: Can you break down the problem into smaller manageable pieces? What would they be?

5. Generate solutions: What are at least two "right" answers to each of the problem pieces?

6. Choose the right approach: What do you already know about each solution? What do you still need to know? How can you get the information you need? Make a list of pros and cons for each solution.

THINKING WITH TECHNOLOGY

Why is there such a powerful thrust behind technology in education? How significantly is technology contributing to our ability to be critical and creative thinkers? After all, technology, by itself, cannot create critical or creative thinkers. But when it's used with the guidance of a teacher who understands how to use it, and by students who also have sufficient technology skills and resources, the teaching and learning process can be considerably enhanced. Consider the following:

- Apps and social media sites as well as learning platforms allow students to record, defend, and challenge their thinking;
- Video allow students to observe and analyze the world—to reimagine it in a way that appeals to them;
- Interactive whiteboards are helpful for class discussions; they facilitate whole-class display and hands-on participation;
- Student-response systems, like clickers, group quiz, or game apps allow students to respond to questions and then debate the answers;
- Blogs and social media threads can serve as personal journals, where students can record, share, and reflect on field experiences and research activities. Students can also use blogs as a pre-established environment for critically responding to assigned readings;
- Wikis can help students coordinate, compile, synthesize, and present individual or group projects or research, as well as build and share group resources and knowledge. Wikis can also help students provide peer review, feedback, and critiques;
- Discussion boards can help students establish a sense of community with their class and engage in ongoing threaded conversations on assigned readings and topics highlighting diverse points of view.

As we've just learned, one of the key skills every student needs is the ability to think critically. Once you've learned to critically examine the content you come into

contact with, you can then think creatively to come up with new—and potentially better—solutions to the problems we find in the classroom and, ultimately, in the world.

The following text is an essay by Dr. Andrew Robert Baker, "Thinking Critically and Creatively." In the first few paragraphs, Dr. Baker underscores how essential critical thinking is to improving as students, teachers, and researchers. Dr. Baker continues by illuminating some of the many ways that college students will be exposed to creative thinking and how it can enrich their learning experiences.

THINKING CRITICALLY AND CREATIVELY

Critical thinking skills are perhaps the most fundamental skills involved in making judgments and solving problems. You use them every day, and you can continue improving them. The ability to think critically about a matter—to analyze a question, situation, or problem down to its most basic parts—is what helps us evaluate the accuracy and truthfulness of statements, claims, and information we read and hear. It is the sharp knife that, when honed, separates fact from fiction, honesty from lies, and the accurate from the misleading. We all use this skill to one degree or another almost every day. For example, we use critical thinking every day as we consider the latest consumer products and why one particular product is the best among its peers. Is it a quality product because a celebrity endorses it? Because a lot of other people may have used it? Because it is made by one company versus another? Or perhaps because it is made in one country or another? These are questions representative of critical thinking.

The academic setting demands more of us in terms of critical thinking than everyday life. It demands that we evaluate information and analyze myriad issues. It is the environment where our critical thinking skills can be the difference between success and failure. In this environment we must consider information in an analytical, critical manner. We must ask questions— What is the source of this information? Is this source an expert one and what makes it so? Are there multiple perspectives to consider on an issue? Do multiple sources agree or disagree on an issue? Does quality research substantiate information or opinion? Do I have any personal biases that may affect my consideration of this information?

It is only through purposeful, frequent, intentional questioning such as this that we can sharpen our critical thinking skills and improve as students, learners and researchers.

While critical thinking analyzes information and roots out the true nature and facets of problems, it is creative thinking that drives progress forward when it comes to solving these problems. Exceptional creative thinkers are people that invent new solutions to existing

problems that do not rely on past or current solutions. They are the ones who invent solution C when everyone else is still arguing between A and B. Creative thinking skills involve using strategies to clear the mind so that our thoughts and ideas can transcend the current limitations of a problem and allow us to see beyond barriers that prevent new solutions from being found.

Brainstorming is the simplest example of intentional creative thinking that most people have tried at least once. With the quick generation of many ideas at once, we can block-out our brain's natural tendency to limit our solution-generating abilities so we can access and combine many possible solutions/thoughts and invent new ones. It is sort of like sprinting through a race's finish line only to find there is a new track on the other side and we can keep going, if we choose. As with critical thinking, higher education both demands creative thinking from us and is the perfect place to practice and develop the skill. Everything from word problems in a math class, to opinion or persuasive speeches and papers, call upon our creative thinking skills to generate new solutions and perspectives in response to our professor's demands. Creative thinking skills ask questions such as—What if? Why not? What else is out there? Can I combine perspectives/solutions? What is something no one else has brought-up? What is being forgotten/ignored? What about ? It is the opening of doors and options that follows problem-identification.

Consider an assignment that requires you to compare two different authors on the topic of education and select and defend one as better. Now add to this scenario that your professor clearly prefers one author over the other. While critical thinking can get you as far as identifying the similarities and differences between these authors and evaluating their merits, it is creative thinking that you must use if you wish to challenge your professor's opinion and invent new perspectives on the authors that have not previously been considered.

So, what can we do to develop our critical and creative thinking skills? Although many students may dislike it, group work is an excellent way to develop our thinking skills. Many times I have heard from students their disdain for working in groups based on scheduling, varied levels of commitment to the group or project, and personality conflicts too, of course. True—it's not always easy, but that is why it is so effective. When we work collaboratively on a project or problem we bring many brains to bear on a subject. These different brains will naturally develop varied ways of solving or explaining problems and examining information. To the observant individual we see that this places us in a constant state of back and forth critical/creative thinking modes.

For example, in group work we are simultaneously analyzing information and generating solutions on our own, while challenging other analyses/ideas and responding to challenges to our own analyses/ideas. This is part of why students tend to avoid group work—it challenges

us as thinkers and forces us to analyze others while defending ourselves, which is not something we are used to or comfortable with as most of our educational experiences involve solo work. Your professors know this—that's why we assign it—to help you grow as students, learners, and thinkers!

—Dr. Andrew Robert Baker, Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom

Your Turn: Activity

HOW CRITICALLY CAN YOU THINK NOW?

On a sheet of paper or document, answer the question(s) below to determine how well you understand the topics you've covered in this reading:

1. What is critical thinking?
2. Why is it important to pose some questions about the source of the material you read? What kinds of questions should you ask?
3. What is logic?
4. Why is brainstorming more effective at generating new ideas than individual work?
5. List the four steps of problem solving.
6. How do you use critical thinking in solving problems?

Diversity and Communication

www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/diversityandcommunication

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate surface diversity from deep diversity;
- Define your own identity and develop cultural competency;
- Practice effective communication strategies to develop beneficial relationships with peers and professors;

- List guidelines for successfully communicating individually with an instructor, such as doing so during office hours and via email messages that are polite, professional, and effective;
- Understand the value of having a mentor and how interactions with instructors, your counselor, and others may lead to a mentoring relationship.

"If you are always trying to be normal, you will never know how amazing you can be."
— Maya Angelou

Cultural diversity is found everywhere in college, and it should be respected, appreciated, and celebrated. To be successful as a college student, it is critical that you understand and can describe your own diverse background. Being self-aware allows you to identify what makes you who you are while recognizing the differences that exist between you, other students, your professors, and all the members of a campus community. This section will discuss the factors that make up a person's culture and how one can effectively communicate and work with people who may be different. You will also learn about aspects of a college culture in order to successfully navigate this new world.

"Diversity" means different things to different people, and it can be understood differently in different environments. In the context of your college experience, diversity generally refers to people around you who differ by race, culture, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, abilities, opinions, political views, and in other ways. When it comes to diversity on the college campus, we also think about how groups interact with one another, given their differences (even if they are just perceived differences.) How do diverse populations experience and explore their relationships?

Video

Universities Discuss the Importance of Diversity and Inclusion | University of ...
This video discusses the importance of diversity and inclusion on college campuses, https://bit.ly/collegediversity.

SURFACE DIVERSITY AND DEEP DIVERSITY

Surface diversity and deep diversity are categories of personal attributes—or differences in attributes— that people perceive to exist between people or groups of people.

- Surface-level diversity refers to differences you can generally observe in others, like ethnicity, race, gender, age, culture, language, disability, etc. You can quickly and easily observe these features in a person. And people often do just that, making subtle judgments at the same time, which can lead to bias or discrimination. For example, if a teacher believes that older students perform better than younger students, the teacher may give slightly higher grades to the older students than the younger students. This bias is based on perception of the attribute of age, which is surface-level diversity;

- Deep-level diversity, on the other hand, reflects differences that are less visible, like personality, attitude, beliefs, and values. These attributes are generally communicated verbally and nonverbally, so they are not easily noticeable or measurable. You may not detect deep-level diversity in a classmate, for example, until you get to know them, at which point you may find that you are either comfortable with these deeper character levels, or perhaps not. But once you gain this deeper level of awareness, you may focus less on surface diversity. For example: At the beginning of a term, a classmate belonging to a minority ethnic group, whose native language is not English (surface diversity), may be treated differently by fellow classmates in another ethnic group. But as the term gets under way, classmates begin discovering the person's values and beliefs (deep-level diversity), which they find they are comfortable with. The surface-level attributes of language and perhaps skin color become more "transparent" (less noticeable) as comfort is gained with deep-level attributes.

Differences

Ours is a very diverse society—and increasingly so. Already in many parts of the country, non-Hispanic whites comprise less than 50 percent of the population, and by 2020 an estimated one in three Americans will be a person of color, as will be about half of all college students. But "diversity" means much more than a variety of racial and ethnic differences. Santa Monica College boasts an extremely diverse community because it is located in one of the most racially and ethnically diverse counties in the United States.

As we'll use the term here, diversity refers to the great variety of human characteristics—ways that we are different even as we are all human and share more similarities than differences. These differences are an essential part of what enriches humanity. Aspects of diversity may be cultural, biological, or personal in nature. Diversity generally involves things that may significantly affect some people's perceptions of others—not just any way people happen to be different.

When discussing diversity, it is often difficult to avoid seeming to generalize about different types of people—and such generalizations can seem similar to dangerous stereotypes. The following descriptions are meant only to suggest that individuals are different from other individuals in many possible ways and that we can all learn things from people whose ideas, beliefs, attitudes, values, backgrounds, experiences, and behaviors are different from our own. This is a primary reason college admissions departments frequently seek diversity in the student body. Following are various aspects of diversity:

- Race: Race refers to what we generally think of as biological differences and is often defined by what some think of as skin color. Such perceptions are often at least as much social as they are biological;

- Ethnicity: Ethnicity is a cultural distinction that is different from race. Ethnic groups share a common identity and a perceived cultural heritage that often involves shared ways of speaking and behaving, religion, traditions, and other traits. The term "ethnic" also refers to such a group that is a minority within the larger society. Race and ethnicity are sometimes interrelated but not automatically so;

- Cultural background: Culture, like ethnicity, refers to shared characteristics, language, beliefs, behaviors, and identity. We are all influenced by our culture to some extent. While ethnic groups are typically smaller groups within a larger society, the larger society itself is often called the "dominant culture." The term is often used rather loosely to refer to any group with identifiable shared characteristics;

- Educational background: Colleges do not use a cookie-cutter approach to admit only students with identical academic skills. A diversity of educational background helps ensure a free flow of ideas and challenges those who might become set in their ways;
- Geography: People from different places within the United States or the world often have a range of differences in ideas, attitudes, and behaviors;

- Socioeconomic background: People's identities are influenced by how they grow up, and part of that background involves socioeconomic factors. Socioeconomic diversity can contribute to a wide variety of ideas and attitudes;

- Gender roles: Women hold virtually all professional and social roles, including those once dominated by men, and men have taken on many roles, such as raising a child, that were formerly occupied mostly by women. These changing roles have brought diverse new ideas and attitudes to college campuses;

- Gender identity: Gender identity is one's personal experience of one's own gender. Gender identity can correlate with the sex at birth – male or female, or can differ from it completely: males may identify as female or vice versa, or a person may identify as a third gender or as falling somewhere along the continuum between male and female;

- Age: While younger students attending college immediately after high school are generally within the same age range, older students returning to school bring a diversity of age. Because they often have broader life experiences, many older students bring different ideas and attitudes to the campus;

- Sexual orientation: Gays and lesbians make up a significant percentage of people in American society and students on college campuses. Exposure to this diversity helps others overcome stereotypes and become more accepting of human differences;

- Religion: For many people, religion is not just a Sunday morning practice but a larger spiritual force that infuses their lives. Religion helps shape different ways of thinking and behaving;

- Political views: A diversity of political views helps broaden the level of discourse on campuses concerning current events and the roles of government and leadership at all levels;

- Physical ability: Some students have athletic talents. Some students have physical disabilities. Physical differences among students bring yet another kind of diversity to colleges—a diversity that both widens opportunities for a college education and also helps all students better understand how people relate to the world in physical as well as intellectual ways.

The next activity is an opportunity to reflect on your own social identities, and the meanings they have for you.

Your Turn: Activity

YOUR IDENTITIES

How would you describe your identity or identities? What kind of words would you use to describe yourself in terms of:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Class

You may also want to describe other aspects of your identity that are important to you, such as nationality or regional identity, sexuality, religious or political beliefs,

occupation or voluntary roles, family roles, interests and abilities, and so on. Use as many or as few terms as you like.

When you have made some notes in answer to this question, think about the following questions.

- Which of these identities (one or more) is / are the most important to you at this point in your life and has this changed overtime?
- Would you have described your identity / identities differently 10 or 20 years ago? In what way?

Identity

Identities are plural

- Every person has a range of identities, according to how they perceive themselves (and how others perceive them) in terms of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age, and so on. Defining an individual as only one aspect of their identity (for example: race) is inevitably reductive and misleading;

Identities are dynamic

- The identities people assume change over time because of internal and external (societal) changes. Identity should not be seen as something 'fixed' within people;

Identities have different and changing meanings

- Aspects of identity may have different meanings at different stages of your life and may be different from the meaning it has for others (for example, being Black may be a source of pride for you, but the basis of someone else's negative stereotyping);

Identities are contextual and interactional

- Different identities play different roles in different contexts and settings, and in interactions with different people. One aspect of your identity may come to the fore in the workplace and a different aspect is dominant in the home, for example;

Identities are negotiated

- In constructing their identities, people can only draw on terms that are available in society at that time. People are always negotiating their identities and the context of the different meanings attached to those identities.

These examples point to the contextual nature of identities. Another example of this is how different identities become important for people in different settings. Stuart

Hall, a leading writer on issues of culture and identity, suggests that the word 'identifications' is preferable to the term 'identities', reflecting a view that identity is a process rather than something fixed and unchanging (Hall, 2000). Furthermore, assuming an identity takes place in a social context. As Hall makes clear, the identities that people take on always come with a history and are to some extent 'given' by society, although people may attribute different meanings to them.

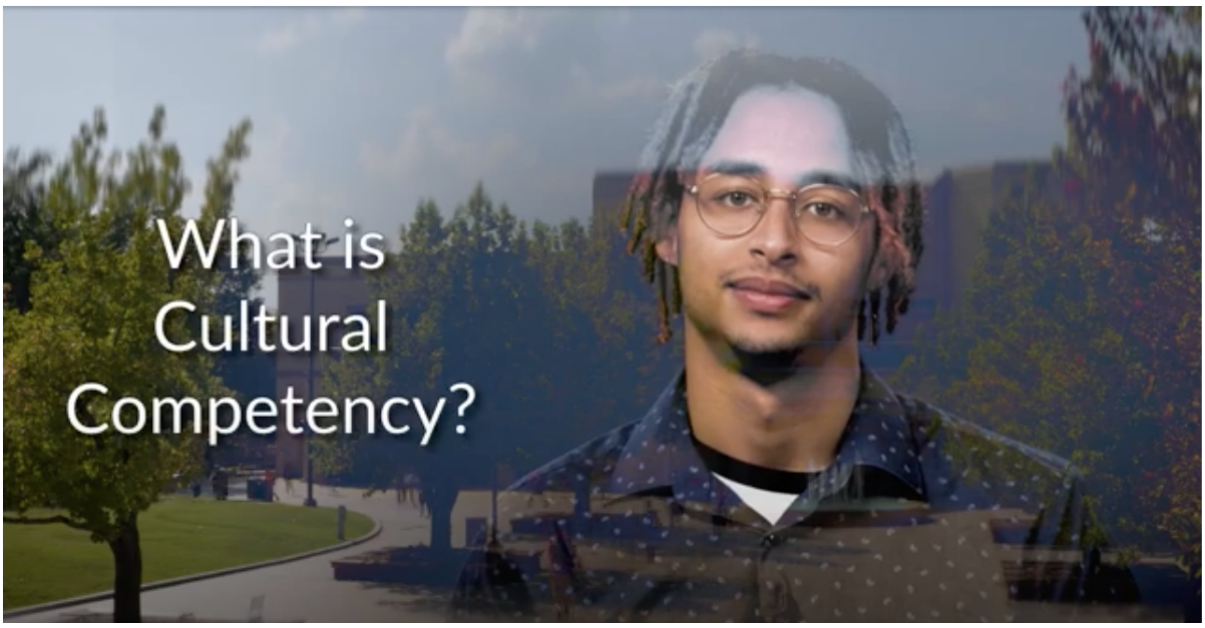
Taking this view of identity, as a social process that people engage in, rather than as a fixed essence inside them, is not to deny that particular identities are extremely important for certain groups and individuals. Being a Sikh, or a woman, or gay, may feel like the most important and 'deepest' part of you. However, a more dynamic and social model of identity is useful because it makes it difficult to reduce people to any one aspect of their identity, or to use social identity as a way of explaining every aspect of their behavior and needs, including their communication needs and behavior.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY

As a college student, you are likely to find yourself in diverse classrooms, organizations, and – eventually – workplaces. It is important to prepare yourself to be able to adapt to diverse environments. Cultural competency can be defined as the ability to recognize and adapt to cultural differences and similarities. It involves "(a) the cultivation of deep cultural self-awareness and understanding (i.e., how one's own beliefs, values, perceptions, interpretations, judgments, and behaviors are influenced by one's cultural community or communities) and (b) increased cultural other-understanding (i.e., comprehension of the different ways people from other cultural groups make sense of and respond to the presence of cultural differences)."[1]

In other words, cultural competency requires you to be aware of your own cultural practices, values, and experiences, and to be able to read, interpret, and respond to those of others. Such awareness will help you successfully navigate the cultural differences you will encounter in diverse environments. Cultural competency is critical to working and building relationships with people from different cultures; it is so critical, in fact, that it is now one of the most highly desired skills in the modern workforce.

Video



Video 1: What is Cultural Competence?

In this video, university students talk about what cultural competence is and what it means to them personally. *Creating Cultural Competence* was created by Jacquelyn Wiersma-Mosley and Margaret Miller Butcher and is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. https://bit.ly/culturalcompetenceuni

We don't automatically understand differences among people and celebrate the value of those differences. Cultural competency is a skill that you can learn and improve upon over time and with practice. What actions can you take to build your cultural competency skills?

Your Turn: Activity

YOUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

This activity will help you examine ways in which you can develop your awareness of and commitment to diversity on campus. Answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

- What are my plans for expanding myself personally and intellectually in college?
- What kind of community will help me expand most fully, with diversity as a factor in my expansion?

- What are my comfort zones, and how might I expand them to connect with more diverse groups?
- Do I want to be challenged by new viewpoints, or will I feel more comfortable connecting with people who are like me?
- What are my biggest questions about diversity?
- Submit this assignment according to directions from your instructor.

Consider the following strategies to help you answer the questions:

- Examine extracurricular activities. Can you get involved with clubs or organizations that promote and expand diversity?
- Review your college's curriculum. In what ways does it reflect diversity? Does it have departments and courses on historically unrepresented peoples, e.g., cultural and ethnic studies, and gender and sexuality studies. Search for study-abroad programs, as well;
- Read your college's mission statement. Read the mission statement of other colleges. How do they match up with your values and beliefs? How do they align with the value of diversity?
- Inquire with friends, faculty, colleagues, family. Be open about diversity. What does it mean to others? What positive effects has it had on them? Ask people about diversity;
- Research can help. You might consult college literature, Web sites, resource centers and organizations on campus, etc.

Prejudice

Unfortunately, prejudice and hate still exist in America, including on college campuses. Prejudice exists against racial and ethnic minorities, women, people with disabilities, older adults, gays and lesbians—virtually all groups that can be characterized as "different." All campuses have policies against all forms of prejudice and discriminatory behaviors. But it is not enough for only college administrators to fight prejudice and hate—this is a responsibility for all good citizens who take seriously the shared American value of equality for all people. So what can you as a college student do?

- Decide that it does matter. Prejudice threatens us all, not just the particular group being discriminated against in a specific incident. Don't stay on the sidelines or think it's up to the people who may be victimized by prejudice or hate to do something about it. We can all do something;

- Talk with others. Communication has great value on campuses. Let others know how you feel about any acts of prejudice or hatred that you witness. The more everyone openly condemns such behavior, the less likely it is to reappear in the future. This applies even if you hear another student telling a racist

joke or putting down the opposite sex—speak up and tell the person you find such statements offensive. You don't want that person to think you agree with them. Speaking up can be difficult to do, but it can be done tactfully. People can and do learn what is acceptable in a diverse environment;

- Report incidents you observe. If you happen to see someone spray-painting a hateful slogan, for example, be a good citizen and report it to the appropriate campus office or the police;

- Support student groups working for change. Show your support for groups and activities that celebrate diversity and condemn prejudice. Once you become aware of such student activities on campus, you'll find many ways you can help make a difference;

- Celebrate diversity. In many ways, you can learn more about diversity through campus programs and activities. The more all students participate, the closer the campus will come to being free of prejudice and hate. Be a role model in how you act and what you say in relation to diversity, and you may have more effect on others than you realize.

If you yourself experience prejudice or discrimination related to your race or ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or any other aspect of diversity, don't ignore it or accept it as something that cannot be changed. As discussed earlier, college students can do much to minimize intolerance on campus. Many overt forms of discrimination are illegal and against college policies. You owe it to yourself, first and foremost, to report it to the appropriate college authority. You can also attack prejudice in other ways:

- Join a campus organization that works to reduce prejudice or start a new group and discuss ways you can confront the problem and work for a solution;
- Seek solidarity with other groups;
- Organize positive celebrations and events to promote understanding;
- Write an article for a campus publication explaining the values of diversity and condemning intolerance.

What if you are directly confronted by an individual or group making racist or other discriminatory remarks? In an emotionally charged situation, rational dialogue may be difficult or impossible, and a shouting match or name-calling seldom is productive. If the person may have made an offensive remark inadvertently or because of a misunderstanding, then you may be able to calmly explain the problem with what they said or did. Hopefully, the person will apologize and learn from the experience. But if the person made the remark or acted that way intentionally,

confronting this negative person directly may be difficult and not have a positive outcome. Most importantly, take care that the situation does not escalate in the direction of violence. Reporting the incident instead to college authorities may better serve the larger purpose of working toward harmony and tolerance.

COMMUNICATION

Better Interactions

Socializing is generally considered a leisurely, enjoyable activity. But, depending on your personality and attitude, it can also feel like work or provoke anxiety. Whatever your natural inclinations are, you can learn how to communicate more effectively with others and foster supportive interactions. The "doors" of change to more effective interactions are threefold:

1. Examine your reservations;
2. Engage with others;
3. Expand your social circle.

1. EXAMINE YOUR RESERVATIONS

Everybody feels shy or insecure from time to time, but if you feel inhibited by your shyness, it may be because you have developed certain habits of thought that do not serve your best interests anymore. Below are some strategies to help you examine reservations you may have about engaging in social activities.

- Change ideas and thoughts: In our busy, high-octane lives, it is not always easy to be aware of our thoughts, especially habitual thoughts that sometimes lurk behind the others. But, if we make a point to listen to our thoughts, we may discover some we would like to change. Once you begin to recognize thoughts you would like to change, you can train yourself in new directions. To start, you can close your eyes and visualize the negative thoughts. Let it slowly dissolve until it disappears completely;

- Turn a negative thought into a constructive thought: If you find yourself thinking that you are not suited to joining a group that interests you, turn this thought into a positive one by saying, "I am an interesting person and I have a lot to offer and share." This affirmation is true! You might want to come up with three or more replacement thoughts;

- Acknowledge that everyone is unique: Everybody experiences high and low points in life. But even if we cannot change external circumstances, we can change our perceptions and attitudes. A happy attitude will always serve you well.

2. ENGAGE WITH OTHERS

- Smile: One of the easiest ways to compel yourself into socializing is to smile. Smiling can instantly make you feel more positive. It also draws other people to you;

- Use welcoming body language: If you are at a social gathering, be aware of your body language. Does it signal that you are approachable? Make eye contact with people, give them a small wave or a nod, and keep your eyes focused in front of you instead of at your feet or at the floor. When you appear happy and ready to talk, people are more likely to come up to you;

- Put your phone away: If you seem busy, people will not want to interrupt you. Your body language could reflect that you are open to a conversation;

- Be genuine: Whether you are talking to an old friend or somebody you have just met, show genuine interest in the conversation. Being fully engaged shows that you are compassionate and makes for more stimulating and fulfilling interactions with others;

- Keep conversations balanced: Ask people questions about themselves. Show that you care by asking others to share;

- Be open-minded: The old adage "Don't judge a book by its cover" is relevant here. Someone you're ambivalent about could end up being your best friend;

- Give yourself a chance to get to know others. What interests might you share?

3. EXPAND YOUR SOCIAL CIRCLE
    - Offer invitations: As you reach out to others, they will be more likely to reciprocate and reach out to you. Call old friends that you have not seen in a while and set up a time to get together. Invite a friend to the movies, a baseball game, a concert, or other activity. Consider having a party and telling your friends to bring guests;

    - Accept more invitations: Granted, there are only so many hours in the day for socializing. But if you are in the habit of turning down invitations, try to make a point to accept some—even if the invitation is to attend something out of your comfort zone. You might even want to make a habit of arbitrarily saying yes three times for every one time you say no;

    - Join a club or group with like-minded people: Making new friends and expanding one's social network can be accomplished by joining a club or

group. You may even want to consider joining a group focused on something different from what you are used to;

- Meet mutual friends: Meeting friends of friends is one of the easiest ways to meet new people. Try to view every person you meet in your life as a doorway into a new social circle;

- Seek out unique opportunities to be social: This can be as simple as starting a conversation with a checkout clerk—"Hey, how's your day going?"—instead of remaining quiet.

All in all, make your social life one of your top priorities. Everyone needs some alone time, too, but it is important to stay connected. Keeping those connections alive contributes to healthy interdependence and personal success.

Video

5 ways to listen better | Julian Treasure

In our louder and louder world, says sound expert Julian Treasure, "We are losing our listening." In this short, fascinating talk, Treasure shares five ways to re-tune your ears for conscious listening -- to other people and the world around you: 5 Ways to Listen Better, http://bit.ly/C20ListenBetter.

Nonverbal Communication

Recall a time when the things someone said to you did not match the tone in their voice or the way they were acting. Whether deliberate or not, humans communicate nonverbally and often deliver a clearer message using nonverbal cues as opposed to just words.

Like verbal communication, nonverbal communication is essential in our everyday interactions. While nonverbal and verbal communications have many similar functions, nonverbal communication has its own set of functions for helping us communicate with each other. For example, at school or your job, you usually do not pay attention to the way you give off nonverbal communication such as hand gestures and facial expressions. Even so, others can and do derive meaning from your nonverbal behaviors whether they are intentional or not. An example of this is how professors pay attention to their students' nonverbal communication in class (such as slouching, leaning back in the chair, or paying attention to their cell phones) and make assumptions about them (they are bored, tired, or not paying attention). These assumptions are often based on acts that are, typically, done unintentionally. How do you interpret these student's nonverbals?

Dr. Albert Mehrabian, author of Silent Messages, conducted several studies on nonverbal communication. He found that 7% of any message is conveyed through words, 38% through certain vocal elements, and 55% through nonverbal elements (facial expressions, gestures, posture, etc). Subtracting the 7% for actual vocal content leaves one with the 93% statistic that nonverbal communication accounts for most of your communication. Therefore, it is extremely important to not only focus on your verbal communication but you must always be aware of your nonverbal communication.

Social Conflict and Resolution Strategies

Now that you know more about communication strategies for interacting in college, you may find it helpful to identify common situations that can evoke anxiety or social problems and conflict.

CAMPUS PARTIES AND HOOK UPS

Many college students report that they have social limits not shared by some of their friends. For example, you may join a group of friends to attend a party off-campus where a lot of drinking is taking place, along with other activities you are not comfortable with. If this kind of situation clashes with your personal, cultural, or religious values, you may feel best leaving the event and seeking out other social

settings in the future. Angle your social interests toward people and situations that are compatible with your values and preferences.

ACADEMIC PROBLEMS

When you're in college, it's not unusual to hit a rough patch and find yourself struggling academically, and such challenges can have an impact on your social life. If you may find yourself in this situation—and especially if it includes other stressors, such as employment difficulties, responsibilities for family members, or financial problems—you may benefit from slowing down and getting help. Your college or university has support systems in place to help you. Take advantage of resources such as the tutoring center, counseling center, and academic advisers to help you restore your social life to a balanced state.

HOMESICKNESS

Homesickness is common among college freshmen, but it can persist in later college years, too. During this time, one may not feel up to being fully sociable or outgoing, especially if depression is involved. In fact, depression and social isolation tend to go together. As unappealing as it may feel, one of the best antidotes to homesickness (and depression, too,) is to try to make new social connections. Try to appreciate your new environment and know that you are not alone in feeling a bit out of place and alone. Many potential new friends may be sharing the same feeling and hoping to connect with someone just like you. Give yourself time to acclimate, but reach out as soon as possible and take an active role in building your new college life.

TOO MUCH SOCIAL MEDIA

It's pretty obvious that social media is an integral part of the social landscape in college. From tweeting about a football game, to posting your spring break on Snapchat, to beefing up your LinkedIn profile before a job hunt, to Instagramming pictures of party hijinks, social networking is everywhere in college, and it's likely to stay. The following video gives an insider's perspective at why college students use social media. Despite the many benefits, as you know, social networking can be a major distraction. If social networking is getting in the way of any part of your college success—whether it's social or academic success—take a break and disconnect for a while.

Here are ten reasons why you may wish to step away from social media, at least temporarily: When it's Time to Unplug—10 Reasons Why Too Much Social Media Is Bad for You, http://bit.ly/C20Unplug.

For now, keep in mind the many benefits of socializing in college. It's possible to have a healthy social life that's balanced with other responsibilities.

Words of Wisdom

With a Little Help From My Friends

We often hear about the importance of relationships: a necessary aspect of integration in society. Unfortunately, we rarely follow that advice. Perhaps we live an excessively busy life or we already have a close group of friends and do not feel compelled to meet new people. I have come to learn through my time in college that neglecting to cultivate new relationships is detrimental to living a happy and successful life. I would like to offer this piece of advice: no matter how difficult it seems at first, always try to make new friends. College is not always easy. However, having friends makes it much easier.

Friends are a vital part of your life that can expose you to new subjects, cultures, and experiences while giving you the opportunity to do the same for them At my college, there was a small space that the students called "the bat cave." It was by no means a first- class lounge, but it was a place where friends could help others better understand their course material. We gave it this peculiar nickname because it was our place to get together and conquer villains one after another. These were not your everyday super villains, however. Sometimes they were complicated homework assignments and other times they were difficult exams. No matter the challenge, someone was always willing to help. I went to the bat cave several times and every visit I learned something new. Professors and teaching assistants could not relate to us like our friends could. That made a difference, because nothing was better than being taught by a friend.

Friends are not only an essential support for your time in school, but also can be integral in helping realize post-college aspirations. During a visit to New York City, I visited the offices of the company Spotify. After touring their facilities I had the opportunity to talk to some of the employees. One man I talked with was a senior employee who worked at Microsoft prior to joining Spotify's team. Our conversation stuck in my head because he gave a very striking piece of advice: make friends. It never truly occurred to me that the friends you make in college could impact your future in the workforce. They could be partners in potential business ventures or help you land your dream job. In any case, having strong connections with friends can undoubtedly make a major difference in your career.

The best part of making new friends, however, is trading life experiences, skills, and interests with them. For a year and a half before my final semester of college, I studied abroad in the United States. My family was concerned because typically, students search for first jobs prior to graduation. I, on the other hand, had no trepidations about going because I knew that I would have countless exciting learning experiences. I can say today, without a doubt, that my trip was a great decision. I met incredible people, and through knowing them, I grew and changed. I also know that I was a positive feature in the lives of my new friends. The greatest

thing that I learned was that meeting different people with different backgrounds, histories, perspectives, or even different musical tastes, inevitably changes you and lets you see the world in an entirely different way. You no longer see the world as simply a big, blue sphere with freezing winters or sizzling summers (although that certainly seems to be the case up North!), but as a place in which people like you live, learn, and love.

Going to college may seem hard, but it does not need to be. I have learned that the way I perceive my life as a student completely relies upon my relationships with my friends. They are not only the people that I like to spend time with, but also are essential in my growth and development as a human being. The pages in this book include insights from others just like you and me. They want to help you get through the common struggles of college with confidence and perseverance. Consider them your most recent new friends. I truly hope that this inspires you in your quest for a great future.

—Paulo Fernandes (State University of New York), Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom

SOCIALIZING WITH FRIENDS

If you were to ask fellow students what they think are the greatest benefits of social interaction in college, you would probably get a wide and colorful range of responses. How would you answer?

Gaining good friends to "talk shop" with? Easing loneliness during difficult times? Having a group to join for Friday night fun? Indeed, there are many, many benefits personal to each of us. But you may find, too, that there are certain benefits that are recognizable to all. These are highlighted below.

- FORM DEEP AND LASTING RELATIONSHIPS
    - When you socialize regularly in college, you tend to develop deep and lasting relationships. Even if some of the connections are shorter term, they can support you in different ways. Maybe a college friend in your same major is interested in starting a business with you. Or, maybe a roommate helps you find a job. With a foundation of caring and concern, you are bound to find that your interdependent relationships fulfill you and others. It is unlikely that students without interdependent relationships will experience these kinds of benefits;

- DEVELOPING GOOD STUDY HABITS

    - Study habits vary from student to student, but you can usually tell when studying and social life are at odds. Creative, organized students can combine studying and socializing for maximum advantage. You might join a peer study group for a subject that you find difficult or even for a subject that you excel in. Either way, you and others gain from this relationship. There is mutual support not only for studying but for building social connections;

- MINIMIZE STRESS
    - When you feel stressed, what are your "go-to" behaviors? It can be hard to reach out to others during times of stress, but socializing can be a great stress reliever. When you connect with others, you may find that life is a little easier and burdens can be shared and lightened. Helping is mutual. The key is to balance social activities with responsibilities;

- SHARE INTERESTS
    - In college, there are opportunities not only to explore a wide spectrum of interests but also to share them. In the process of exploring and developing your personal interests, you may join a club or perhaps work in a campus location that fits your interests. By connecting with others in a context of shared interests, everyone could gain because you expand knowledge and experience through social interaction;

- DEVELOP SOCIAL SKILLS
    - As you engage in social activities in college, you have the opportunity to observe how other people act in these situations. You may observe behaviors you want to emulate or behaviors you wish to avoid.

Throughout these observations and experiences, you can learn new ways to handle yourself in social situations. These skills will benefit you as you pursue a career and engage with people who interest and inspire you.

Resolving Conflict

In any friendship or relationship, conflict will eventually happen. This is just natural because people are different. If a conflict is ignored, or the partners just argue without resolving it, it may simmer and continue to cause tension, eventually weakening the relationship. It's better to take steps to resolve it.

Conflict resolution is a process of understanding what's really going on and then finding a solution. The same general steps of conflict resolution can work to solve a relationship conflict or a conflict between any people or groups because of a

disagreement about anything. Following are the general principles of conflict resolution:

- Allow things to cool off. It's difficult to resolve a conflict while either party is still emotional. Wait a few minutes or agree to talk about it later;

- Using "I statements" rather than "you statements," each party explains what bothers them about the cause of the conflict. For example, don't say, "You're always playing loud music when I'm trying to study." Instead, say, "I have difficulty studying when you play loud music, and that makes me frustrated and irritable." "You statements" put the other person on the defensive and evoke emotions that make resolution more difficult;

- Listen carefully to what the other person says. Then restate the message in your own words to give the other a chance to clarify their thoughts and feelings. Each party should listen to the other and restate the other's message to ensure the real issue is out on the table for discussion;

- Accept responsibility for your role in the conflict, instead of blaming the other. A good example of accepting responsibility is to say, "I know I'm always studying and need the quiet. I guess that makes it hard for you to listen to your music";

- Brainstorm together to find a solution that satisfies both of you. Some compromise is usually needed, but that is usually not difficult to reach when you're calm and are working together on a solution. In this example, you might compromise by going elsewhere to study at selected times when the other has friends over and wants to listen to music, and the other may compromise by agreeing to use headphones at other times and never to play music aloud after 10 p.m.;

- Apologize, thank, and forgive. After reaching a resolution, emotional closure is needed to restore your relationship and end on a positive, affirming note. When appropriate, apologize for your past anger or arguing. Thank the other for being willing to compromise to resolve the conflict. In your mind, forgive the person for past misunderstandings and actions so that you do not carry any grudge into the future.

More Resources

- **What Do I Do If I Have A Problem Dealing With Roommates?**
  Starting a new school or training program may mean living with family you've never lived with before, living with roommates who were previously strangers or, at the very least, learning how to deal with neighbors. It takes a bit of work, good boundaries and possibly new communication skills to make living with others enjoyable and supportive for everyone involved. Here are some effective and simple tips on how to do just that.
  https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/roommates

- Positive Psychology put together a strong article on How To Set Healthy Boundaries. Check it out: https://bit.ly/healthyboundariesformentalhealth

- Lardbucket produced a solid chapter on communication, making new friends, understanding community diversity, and family dynamics, https://bit.ly/sociallifeincollege, and we hope it will amplify what you learned in this section.

COMMUNICATING WITH PROFESSORS

So far we've examined communication with peers, however, students gain very specific benefits from communicating directly with their instructors. Learn best practices for communicating with your instructors during office hours and through email.

Why Talk With Your Instructors?

College students are sometimes surprised to discover that instructors like students and enjoy getting to know them. After all, they want to feel they're doing something more meaningful than talking to an empty room. The human dimension of college really matters, and as a student you are an important part of your instructor's world. Most instructors are happy to talk to you during their office hours or to talk a few minutes after class.

In addition, talking with your instructors often leads to benefits beyond simply doing well in that class.

- Talking with instructors helps you feel more comfortable in college and more connected to the campus. Students who talk to their instructors are less likely to become disillusioned and drop out;

- Talking with instructors is a valuable way to learn about an academic field or a career. Don't know for sure what you want to major in, or what people with a degree in your chosen major actually do after college? Most instructors will share information and insights with you;

- You may need a reference or letter of recommendation for a job or internship application. Getting to know some of your instructors puts you in an ideal position to ask for a letter of recommendation or a reference in the future when you need one;

- Because instructors are often well connected within their field, they may know of a job, internship, or research possibility you otherwise may not learn about. An instructor who knows you is a valuable part of your network. Networking is very important for future job searches and other opportunities;

- In fact, most jobs are found through networking, not through classified ads or online job postings;

- Think about what it truly means to be "educated": how one thinks, understands society and the world, and responds to problems and new situations. Much of this learning occurs outside the classroom. Talking with your highly educated instructors can be among your most meaningful experiences in college.

Treat Others how You'd Like to be Treated

Getting along with instructors and communicating well begins with attitude. As experts in their field, they deserve your respect. Remember that a college education is a collaborative process that works best when students and instructors communicate freely in an exchange of ideas, information, and perspectives. So while you should respect your instructors, you shouldn't fear them. As you get to know them better, you'll learn their personalities and find appropriate ways to communicate. Here are some guidelines for getting along with and communicating with your instructors:

- Prepare before going to the instructor's office. Go over your notes on readings and lectures and write down your specific questions. You'll feel more comfortable, and the instructor will appreciate your being organized;

- Don't forget to introduce yourself. Especially near the beginning of the term, don't assume your instructor has learned everyone's names yet and don't make them have to ask you. Unless the instructor has already asked you to address them as "Dr. _____," "Ms. _____" or Mr. _____," or something similar, it's appropriate to say "Professor _____.";

- Respect the instructor's time. In addition to teaching, college instructors sit on committees, do research and other professional work, and have personal lives. Don't show up two minutes before the end of an office hour and expect the instructor to stay late to talk with you;

- Realize that the instructor will recognize you from class—even in a large lecture hall. If you spent a lecture class joking around with friends in the back row, don't think you can show up during office hours to find out what you missed while you weren't paying attention;

- Don't try to fool an instructor. Insincere praise or making excuses for not doing an assignment won't make it in college. Nor is it a good idea to show you're "too cool" to take all this seriously—another attitude sure to turn off an instructor. To earn your instructor's respect, come to class prepared, do the work, participate genuinely in class, and show respect—and the instructor will be happy to receive you when you come to office hours or need some extra help;

- Try to understand things from the instructor's point of view. Imagine that you spent a couple hours making PowerPoint slides and preparing a class lecture on something you find very stimulating and exciting. When in front of a full room, you are gratified at the heads nodding as people understand what you're saying—they really get it! And then a student after class asks, "Is this going to be on the test?" How would you feel?

- Be professional when talking to an instructor. You can be cordial and friendly, but keep it professional and on an adult level. Come to office hours prepared with your questions—not just to chat or joke around. (Don't wear sunglasses or earphones in the office or check your cell phone for messages.) Be prepared to accept criticism in a professional way, without taking it personally or complaining;

- Use your best communication skills. Learning the difference between assertive communication and passive or aggressive communication.

Part-Time and Returning Students

Students who are working and who have their own families and other responsibilities may have special issues interacting with instructors. Sometimes an older student feels a little out of place and may even feel "the system" is designed for younger students; this attitude can lead to a hesitation to participate in class or talk to an instructor during office hours.

But participation and communication with instructors is very important for all students—and may be even more important for "nontraditional" students. Getting to know your instructors is particularly crucial for feeling at home in college. Instructors enjoy talking with older and other nontraditional students—even when, as sometimes happens, a student is older than the instructor. Nontraditional students are often highly motivated and eager to learn. If you can't make the instructor's office hours because of your work schedule, ask for an appointment at a different time—your needs will be respected and accommodated whenever possible.

Part-time students, who may be taking evening courses, often have greater difficulty meeting with instructors. In addition, many part-time students taking evening and weekend classes are taught by part- time faculty who, like them, may be on campus only for small amounts of time. Yet it is just as critical for part-time students to engage in the learning process and have a sense of belonging on campus. With effort, you can usually find a way to talk with your instructors.

Assert yourself: You are in college for reasons just as good as those of other students, and you have the same rights. Avoid the temptation to give up or feel defeated; talk with your instructor to arrange a time to meet, and make the most of your time interacting together. Use email to communicate when you need to and contact your instructor when you have any question you can't raise in person.

The Best Emails get the Best Replies

Just as email has become a primary form of communication in business and society, email has a growing role in education and has become an important and valuable means of communicating with instructors. Virtually all younger college students have grown up using email and have a computer or computer access in college, although some have developed poor habits from using email principally with friends in the past. Some older college students may not yet understand the importance of email and other computer skills in college; if you are not now using email, it's time to learn how (refer to "Getting Started with email"). Especially when it is difficult to talk to an instructor in person during office hours, email can be an effective form of

communication and interaction with instructors. email is also an increasingly effective way to collaborate with other students on group projects or while studying with other students.

MYTH: "Email is basically instant, and I know my teacher checks their email all of the time. So, if I don't understand something or have a last-minute question about an assignment, I can email them and they should respond right away. They're definitely up at 10 PM, and it would only take them 2 minutes to write back with the answer."

THE FACTS: this is a misconception that we're sure all instructors would like to be cleared up from the outset. Most of your instructors provide a maximum email turnaround time, typically between 24-48 hours. As a student, you need to plan ahead as much as possible, and be sure to have an alternate solution if you don't hear back from your instructor before an assignment is due (remember, your assignments are your responsibility, not theirs). Some instructors include a "Questions About the Course" discussion thread where they encourage students to answer one another's questions. This could be immensely helpful for you, and might be a way for you to help other students in turn. (Remember what we said about building classroom relationships?) Another approach would be to reach out to another member of the class and exchange private emails to support each other throughout the semester. Because you're not meeting with each other once or more times every week, it's easy to feel isolated in an online course. Try some of these tactics so you can connect with others - you will get a lot more out of your classes if you do.

Building supportive online relationships and friendships requires skill and practice. The good news is, students who develop good communication skills, learn to be assertive, and are able to cooperate and collaborate well in a virtual environment will find these skills highly transferable (and valued) in their personal and professional lives long after their course is over.

GETTING STARTED WITH EMAIL

- If you don't have your own computer, find out where on-campus computers are available for student use, such as at the library or your local;

- Many students have a Gmail or Hotmail account they use for personal communications. As a college student you will be provided with an email account hosted by the college. This is the email you should use to communicate with your faculty. Other email accounts may be blocked as SPAM. You can go in and personalize your email account and forward items to other accounts;

- If you don't have enough computer experience to know how to do this, ask a friend for help getting started or check at your library or student services office for a publication explaining how email works;

- Once you have your account set up, give your email address to instructors who request it and to other students with whom you study or maintain contact. Email is a good way to contact another student if you miss a class;

- Once you begin using email, remember to check it regularly for messages. Most people view e- mail like a telephone message and expect you to respond fairly soon;

- Be sure to use good email etiquette when writing to instructors.

If your instructor gives you their email addresses, use email rather than the telephone for non-urgent matters. Using email respects other people's time, allowing them to answer at a time of their choosing, rather than being interrupted by a telephone call.

But email is a written form of communication that is different from telephone voice messages and text messages. Students who text with friends have often adopted shortcuts, such as not spelling out full words, ignoring capitalization and punctuation, and not bothering with grammar or full sentence constructions. This is inappropriate in an email message to an instructor, who expects a more professional quality of writing. Most instructors expect your communications to be in full sentences with correctly spelled words and reasonable grammar. Follow these guidelines:

- Use a professional email name. If you have a funny name you use with friends, create a different account with a professional name you use with instructors, work supervisors, and others;
- Use the subject line to label your message effectively at a glance. "May I make an appointment?" says something; "In your office?" doesn't;
- Address email messages as you do a letter, beginning "Dear Professor ." Include your full name if it's not easily recognizable in your email account;
- Get to your point quickly and concisely. Don't make the reader scroll down a long email to find out what it is you want to say;
- Because email is a written communication, it does not express emotion the way a voice message does;
- Don't attempt to be funny, ironic, or sarcastic, Write as you would in a paper for class. In a large lecture class or an online course, your email voice may be

the primary way your instructor knows you, and emotionally charged messages can be confusing or give a poor impression;
- Don't use capital letters to emphasize. All caps come across as SHOUTING;
- Avoid abbreviations, nonstandard spelling, slang, and emoticons like smiley faces. These do not convey a professional tone;
- Don't make demands or state expectations such as "I'll expect to hear from you soon" or "If I haven't heard by 4 p.m., I'll assume you'll accept my paper late";
- When you reply to a message, leave the original message within yours. Your reader may need to recall what they said in the original message;
- Be polite. End the message with a "Thank you" or something similar;
- Proofread your message before sending it;
- With any important message to a work supervisor or instructor, it's a good idea to wait and review the message later before sending it. You may have expressed an emotion or thought that you will think better about later. Many problems result when people send messages too quickly without thinking.

Resolving a Conflict With an Instructor

The most common issue students feel with an instructor involves earning a grade lower than they think they deserve. It can be surprising or upsetting to earn a low grade, but it's not the end of the world. Don't be too hard on yourself—or on the instructor. Be honest with yourself about what happened on the test or paper and make sure you know what to do better next time. Always review the requirements of the assignment (sometimes a rubric is included). Review the earlier section on studying habits, time management, and taking tests.

If you believe you earned a higher grade than is marked in your grade book, talk with your instructor. How you communicate in that conversation, however, is very important. Instructors are obligated to explain their standards for grading, and will share them with you.

Follow these guidelines to talk about a grade or resolve any other problem or disagreement with an instructor:

- First go over the requirements and/or the rubric for the assignment or test as well as the instructor's annotations, feedback and comments. Be sure you are prepared to discuss how your work has met the requirements;
- Make an appointment with your instructor during office hours or another time. Unless it's how your particular class works, avoid raising the issue if time is limited before or after class. If your instructor prefers email, use it and be brief and specific. If your instructor prefers the telephone, do your best to accommodate that method;

- Allow the instructor to explain their comments on the assignment or grading of the test, and take notes. Raise any specific questions or make comments at this time. For example, you might say, "I understand (paraphrase the requirement), and I thought I met that requirement when I (describe the element of your work that you feel was completed) . . .";
- Use good listening skills. Try to avoid debate (in the sense of trying to prove your professor's standards are unreasonable if they were stated in the assignment). You may always ask for clarification or more information;
- Ask what you can do to improve your grade, if possible. Can you rewrite the paper or do any extra-credit work to help make up for a test score? If you are truly available to do so, make it clear you're willing to put in the effort;
- If there is no opportunity to improve on this specific project, ask the instructor for advice on what you might do on the next assignment or when preparing for the next test. You may be offered some individual help or receive good study advice, and your instructor will respect your willingness to get as much knowledge as possible out of the course.

TIPS FOR TALKING WITH YOUR INSTRUCTORS

- When you have a question, ask it sooner rather than later;
- Be prepared and plan your questions and comments in advance;
- Be respectful and communicate professionally;
- Be open minded and ready to learn from the conversation;
- There is no such thing as a "stupid question." Ask until you understand;
- You may not always be happy with the result of a grade review, but we do want you to get the most out of our classes.

CHECK IN WITH YOUR EMOTIONS, THEN TALK

If you're going to talk with an instructor about your grade or any other problem, please be aware of any heightened emotions, such as disappointment or sadness or anger you may be feeling. Here are a few tips to help you become aware of and responsible for your emotional state before you do or say something that you might later regret:

- Being upset about a grade is good because it shows you care and that you have passion about your education. But extreme emotion, such as anger, may prevent clear thinking or get in the way of a productive conversation;

- Since anger involves bodily reactions and usually does not last a long time, take a pause before you confront someone. Try some deep breathing to bring the emotion into a more reasonable range;

- Try putting yourself in your instructor's shoes and understanding the situation from their point of view. Try to understand how grading is not a personal issue of "liking" you—that they are really doing something for your educational benefit;

- It's not your life or your person that's being graded. Things outside your control could affect your performance on a test or assignment. The instructor can grade only on what you turned in, not what you could have done or are capable of doing. Understanding this distinction will help you accept what happened, not take a grade personally, and do something to change the situation for the better.

FIND A MENTOR

A mentor is someone who is usually older and more experienced than you who becomes your trusted guide, advisor, and role model. A mentor is someone you may want to be like in your future career or profession— someone you admire and whose advice and guidance you respect. Some universities have formal systems to help you find an appropriate mentor. Ask at our student services office to find out if there is a program available to you.

Finding a mentor can be one of the most fulfilling aspects of college. As a student, you think about many things and make many decisions, large and small, almost daily: What do you want to do in the future? How can you best balance your studies with your job? What should you major in? Should you take this course or that one? What should you do if you feel like you're failing a course? Where should you put your priorities as you prepare for a future career? How can you be a better student? The questions go on and on. We talk about things like this with our friends and often family members, but often they don't have the same experience or background to help us as a mentor can.

Most importantly, a mentor is someone who is willing to help you, to talk with you about decisions you face, to support you when things become difficult, and to guide you when you're feeling lost. A mentor can become a valuable part of your future network but also can help you in the here and now.

Many different people can become mentors: other students, family members, people you know through work, your boss. As a college student, however, your best mentor likely is someone involved in education: your advisor, a more experienced student, or an instructor. Finding a mentor is another reason to develop good relationships with

your instructors, starting with class participation and communication outside of class.

A mentor is not like a good friend, exactly—you're not going to invite your instructor to a movie—but it does involve a form of friendship. Nor is a mentor a formal relationship: you don't ask an instructor to become your mentor. The mentor relationship is more informal and develops slowly, often without actively trying to find a mentor. Here's an example of how one student "found" a mentor:

As a freshman taking several classes, Miguel particularly liked and admired one of his instructors, Professor Canton. Miguel spoke up more in Canton's class and talked with him sometimes during office hours. When it was time to register for the next term, Miguel learned that Canton was teaching another course he was interested in, so he asked him about that course one day during office hours. Miguel was pleased when Professor Canton said he'd like to have him in his class next term.

By the end of his first year of college, Miguel seemed to know Canton better than any of his other instructors and felt very comfortable talking with him outside of class. One day after talking about a reading assignment, Miguel said he was enjoying this class so much that he was thinking about majoring in this subject and asked Professor Canton what he thought about it. Canton suggested that he take a few more classes before making a decision, and he invited Miguel to sit in on a seminar of upper-level students he was holding.

In his second year, Miguel's interests turned in another direction as he began to think about his future job possibilities, but by then he felt comfortable enough talking with Canton that he occasionally stopped by the professor's office even though he was not taking a class with him. Sometimes he was surprised how much Professor Canton knew about other departments and other faculty, and Canton often shared insights about other courses he might be interested in that his advisor had not directed him to. When Miguel learned about a summer internship in his field and was considering applying, Canton not only volunteered to write him a letter of recommendation but even offered to help Miguel with the essay part of the application if he wanted.

Some universities have more formal mentoring programs, and you should become involved in one if you have this opportunity, but often a mentoring relationship occurs informally as you get to know an instructor or another person over time. In your first year, you don't go searching frantically for a mentor, but you should begin interacting with your instructors and other students in ways that may lead, over time, to developing that kind of relationship.

Similarly, your academic advisor or a college counselor might become a mentor for you if you share interests and you admire that person as a role model and trusted guide. Your advisor is so important for your college success that if you feel you are not getting along well, you should ask the advising department to switch you to a different advisor. Take the time to build a good relationship with your counselor and instructors. Use the guidelines for communication and interaction to help you get the support you need.

How Do I Talk To Professors When I Need Help?

A good way to get better at asking for help is to ASK EARLY AND ASK OFTEN. We are mainly focussed on asking for help at school in this article, but you can easily adapt some of these resources to other environments as well.

We know; sometimes it's awkward or difficult to talk to professors, bosses or people who are in positions of power in our lives. Check out these approaches for how to approach a professor or other helper about common concerns like requesting an extension on homework, clearing up a misunderstanding, or requesting an appointment (and what to do once you're there!)
https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/askforhelp

Key Takeaways

- Diversity refers to a great variety of human characteristics and ways in which people differ;
- Social identities, whether based on ethnicity, gender, ability or other factors, should be seen as: plural, dynamic, contextual, negotiated and produced in social and interactional contexts;
- Stereotypes of people based on their social identities tend to be negative and to define them in relation to their difference from an imaginary 'norm';
- Stereotypes can lead to prejudice and discrimination, which themselves reflect and perpetuate wider processes of oppression, such as sexism and racism;
- Make your social life one of your top priorities. Keeping those connections alive contributes to healthy interdependence and personal success;
- Active listening is a key to great conversations;
- 93% nonverbal communication accounts for most of your communication. Be aware of your nonverbal communication;
- Additional benefits of getting to know and networking with instructors include receiving references and academic advice;

- Interacting with college instructors contributes to the growth and intellectual maturity that are part of what it means to be “educated”;
- Prepare in advance before meeting with an instructor and communicate respectfully, honestly, and sincerely your efforts will be repaid;
- It is especially important for part-time and nontraditional students to make the effort to interact with instructors;
- Follow accepted guidelines for professional use of email with instructors;
- It is worthwhile speaking with an instructor when you disagree about a grade because of what you will learn in this interaction;
- Finding a mentor can be one of the most fulfilling experiences in college.

Online courses involve special issues for effective learning, but you must make the effort to interact with the instructor and other students in a way that encourages your success.

Mental, Physical and Emotional Health

www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/healthandwellness

Learning Objectives

- The importance of nutrition, exercise, sleep and emotional wellbeing to your overall well being;
- Stress reduction methods;
- The importance of relationships to your wellbeing;
- The consequences of substance abuse.

“When I dare to be powerful — to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.”

— Audre Lorde

Your Turn: Activity

ASSESS YOUR PRESENT KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES

Where are you now?
On a sheet of paper or separate document, assess your present knowledge and attitudes by responding Yes, Unsure or No to the following statements:

- I get enough regular exercise to consider myself healthy;
- I get enough restful sleep and feel alert throughout the day;
- My attitudes and habits involving smoking, alcohol, and drugs are beneficial to my health;
- I am coping in a healthy way with the everyday stresses of being a student;
- I am generally a happy person;
- I am comfortable with my sexual values and my knowledge of safe sex practices;
- I understand how all of these different health factors interrelate and affect my academic success as a student.

Where do you want to go?
Think about how you answered the questions above. Be honest with yourself. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your level of personal health at this time? 1 would indicate not very healthy and 10 would indicate very healthy.

In the following list, choose the three most important areas of health in which you think you can improve:

- Nutrition
- Exercise
- Sleep
- Smoking
- Alcohol use
- Drug use
- Stress reduction
- Emotional health
- Romantic relationships
- Sexual health

Are there other areas in which you can improve your physical, emotional, and mental health and become happier? Write down other things you feel you need to work on.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Health and wellness are important for everyone—students included. Not only will you do better in school when your health is good, but you'll be happier as a person. And the habits you develop now will likely persist for years to come. That means that what you're doing now in terms of personal health will have a huge influence on your health throughout life and can help you avoid many serious diseases.

Wellness is more than just avoiding disease. Wellness involves feeling good in every respect, in mind and spirit as well as in body. Good health habits also offer these benefits for your college career:

- More energy;
- Better ability to focus on your studies;
- Less stress, feeling more resilient and able to handle day-to-day stress;
- Less time lost to colds, flu, infections, and other illnesses;
- More restful sleep.

Everyone knows about stress, but not everyone knows how to control it. Stress is the great enemy of college success. But once you've learned how to reduce it where you can and cope with unavoidable stress, you'll be well on the road to becoming the best student you can be.

NUTRITION

Malnutrition is an Epidemic

The prevalence of malnutrition, and associated illness, impairment, and negative consequence in the United States is dramatically higher now than it was a few decades ago. It is crucial to understand, without any question, obesity is malnutrition. So too is extreme thinness, fitness, or even a person who has been socially codified as "within a normal range" of size and shape. A person may weigh something a doctor, counselor, well-meaning relative has determined as a "normal" weight and be malnourished. Read that again, this is not a value judgment, it's a clarification that when we discuss nutrition, we are not discussing the shape, size, ability, or externalized and commodified standards of form.

This textbook will not be body-, poor health, poverty, or otherwise blaming or shaming anyone for being malnourished. Many physical, emotional, relational, and other capacity-limiting ailments are directly caused by malnutrition.

We are all different, and the range of wellness in a human being is vast. A person's shape and size may not tell you about whether they are healthy or not. When we speak of malnutrition, we are addressing illness caused by not having access to or understanding about how we fuel our bodies, not socially constructed dimensions, clothing size or visual beauty or presentation of "standards."

Our main point for including this information is to raise awareness, invite you to ask for support, increase your access to resources, and most of all to:

Find Ways to Feed and Care for Your Body so Your Mind can Learn.

The epidemic of malnutrition is present for all age groups, including children, adolescents, and adults. One of the largest changes has been an increase in the number of Americans in these various categories of disease and suffering every year for the past several decades.

The high prevalence of malnutrition across our communities is of concern because we are at increasing risk for many serious diseases and health conditions, including the following:

- All-causes of death (mortality);
- High blood pressure (hypertension);
- High LDL cholesterol, low HDL cholesterol, or high levels of triglycerides (Dyslipidemia);
- Type 2 diabetes;
- Low school performance;
- Heart disease;
- Stroke;
- Gallbladder disease;
- Decreased satisfaction in life, work, and relationships;
- Osteoarthritis (a breakdown of cartilage and bone within a joint);
- Sleep apnea and breathing problems;
- Some cancers (endometrial, breast, colon, kidney, gallbladder, and liver);
- Low quality, joy and general satisfaction with life;
- Depression, anxiety, and other emotional and relational difficulties;
- Body pain and difficulty with physical activities one wants to do.

What you eat affects how you feel and how well you function mentally and physically. Food affects how well you study and how you do on tests. Donuts for breakfast can actually lower your grades!

Why do Students Find it so Tough?

It seems like food is everywhere, and students are always snacking between classes. Fast food restaurants abound. There may not be time to get back to your home for lunch, and it's just so easy to grab a quick pastry at the coffee spot as you pass by between classes. For many of us, we may skip meals, avoid eating when away from home, for financial reasons, or to prioritize feeding others in our lives before ourselves. For others, eating by habit, or mindlessly, might lead us to living in a way that doesn't nourish us consistently. If we're mindful instead, however, it's easy to

develop better habits, access better resources, and ask for help with our well being as it relates to feeding ourselves.

Eating Well: It's not Difficult to Learn, but Food Insecurity is Real

The key to a good diet is to eat a variety of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains and to minimize fats, sugar, and salt. The exact amounts depend on your calorie requirements and activity levels, but you don't have to count calories or measure and weigh your food to eat well. Many of us experience food insecurity in our lives right now. It's real, and it's everywhere.

Please, ask for help.

We have an amazing Food Security program at SMC, and we all do our absolute best to get your regular, nutritious foods (some even delivered to your home). Check it out, and know that we want the best for you. Please ask for help. If you don't have a food security program at your school, start one.

No one can Learn When They are Hungry

ChooseMyPlate.gov provides extensive online resources for planning a nutritious and sustainable wellness lifestyle including offering education and recommendations for physical wellbeing.

Tips for Feeling Good by Eating Well

- Eat a variety of whole foods (foods that are as close to their original form as possible before they were packaged and processed) every day;
- Take a daily multivitamin;
- Reach out for help to address food insecurity in your neighborhood and at school;
- Drink as much clean water as you can (careful, you can overdo water consumption--ask your nurse practitioner or other licensed health or medical professional to help you find your level of adequate hydration), and use a reusable bottle to limit microplastics from plastic water bottles;
- Take fruit with you for a snack in case you get hungry between meals;
- TRY to avoid highly processed foods and foods with a lot of things added, like sugar, flavorings and unnaturally occurring colors;
- If you love pops, sodas, teas, and energy drinks, experiment with flavored waters or even try to drink twice as much water as you do your favorite sugary or caffeinated beverage;

- Be mindful, try an experiment to eat when you're hungry, not when you're bored or just because others are eating;
- Plan ahead when you cook a meal, and make extra so you can set aside extra servings for your next meals;
- If you are choosing not to eat so someone else in your family can be fed, please ask us for help. We want you all to eat well and to be more food secure;
- If you find yourself in a fast food restaurant, do your best to tune in to what food you would both enjoy and would make you feel good in your body after eating it;
- Ask a grandma or neighborhood elder to teach you how to cook well for less money;
- Start or volunteer to help at a community garden in exchange for fresh foods;
- Supersize your meal if it's the only meal you will have for a bit, and you need to economize, otherwise, try for the regular meal size, and decide if you are still hungry after eating.

Eating Disorders Versus Disordered Eating

You are not alone. You are not a burden. Our relationship to our bodies is complicated. You may not be able to think clearly and find solutions on your own. The most common eating disorders are anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating. Please visit the National Eating Disorders Association, https://bit.ly/C20_EatingDisorders, website for more detailed clinical definitions of disordered eating. Anorexia is characterized by excessive weight loss and self-starvation, but doesn't always "look" like the media version of an extreme consequence. Bulimia is generally characterized by frequent binge eating followed by an attempt to compensate for or "undo" the disordered eating. Binge eating disorder is characterized by frequent binge eating without compensatory behavior to "undo" the overeating.

According to the National Eating Disorder Association, there is no specific body type to fit any kind of eating disorder — people of all genders, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations and body types are affected by disordered eating (behavior) or eating disorders (diagnosis).

The National Eating Disorder Association has a helpline you can call at (800)-931-2237.

The causes of disordered eating are complex, and the individual usually needs help to overcome their obsession. These coping mechanisms can become life threatening. These are a few situations that could indicate a need to reach for some support:

- Eating secretly when others can't see;

- Having a strong fear of being overweight or gaining weight;
- Only eating a limited number, color, shape, or type of foods;
- Rigid routines around eating and exercising;
- Feeling of guilt or shame while or around eating;
- Lacking a monthly menstrual period, fluctuation of weight, heart palpitations, low heart rate, social isolation, depression.

Getting Help With Disordered eating

If you obsess over food or your weight, it might be really difficult or not possible to shift your perspective on your own. If your relationship to eating, exercise, and your image of your body are affecting your life, work, relationships, school performance, and idea of who you are as a person, it's time to seek help.

As with any other health problem, professionals can provide help and treatment. Talk to your doctor or visit your campus student health center. If you feel frustrated or that you aren't getting help that works for you from the first person you ask, ask someone else. Ask until you find someone who hears you and who you can hear in return. We are out here, and we care.

Additional Resources

- Meal planning, https://www.choosemyplate.gov/. Find more information on how to make healthy choices when choosing meals;
- Eating disorders, https://bit.ly/C20_EatingDisorders. For information about causes and treatment of eating disorders, as well as additional resources.

Key Takeaways

- Good nutrition and a peaceful relationship with our own bodies are important for physical health, emotional and spiritual wellness, and to achieve our goals;
- Feeling well in your body does not require counting calories, obsessing about what you eat, weighing a specific amount, or having a particular body composition, ability, or silhouette;
- For fueling your body, focus on whole foods that help your brain and body do what you want to do and to stay well. Minimize highly processed foods as the brain science and studies on overall mental and physical health clearly find these foods harmful;
- We are all different, all are welcome and cared for in our classroom. Please know we care about you and want to help you be well and enjoy your life, including school;

- If you need help finding access to healthy foods or support shifting your relationship to exercise and eating, please refer to our Wellness Center, https://bit.ly/smcwellnesscenter, and Food Security programs, https://bit.ly/foodsecuritysmc, and ask us to help.

Your Turn: Activity

HEALTH AND NUTRITION INVENTORY

Check your knowledge and answer the following questions:

- What health problems may result from obesity;
- List three or more snacks that are healthier than cookies, chips, ice cream, and doughnuts;
- How many cups of fruit and vegetables should you eat every day?

MOVE THAT BODY

If your body is one of many that is surviving illness, chronic or episodic, or your movements are limited by other circumstances, please take care of yourself and note that all recommendations cannot be implemented by all community members. Take what is useful of all of these recommendations and leave the rest. Exercise is good for both your body and mind, if you are well enough to do it. Physical activity, at any level appropriate for you, can be essential for good health and amplifies our ability to learn and relate to other people. The physical benefits of regular exercise, https://bit.ly/exerciseanduni, include the following:

- Improved fitness for the whole body;
- Greater cardiovascular fitness and reduced risk of some disease;
- Increased endurance;
- Stronger immune system, providing more resistance to disease;
- Lower cholesterol levels, reducing the risks of cardiovascular disease;
- Lowered risk of developing diabetes.

Perhaps more important to students are the mental and psychological benefits such as:

- Stress reduction;
- Improved mood, with less anxiety and depression;
- Improved ability to focus mentally;
- Better sleep;
- Feeling better about oneself.

For all of these reasons, it's important for college students to regularly exercise or engage in physical activity. Like good nutrition and getting enough sleep, exercise is a key habit that contributes to overall wellness that promotes college success. First, use the Exercise and Activity Self-Assessment to consider your current habits and attitudes.

Your Turn: Activity

EXERCISE AND ACTIVITY SELF-ASSESSMENT

On a separate sheet of paper or document, indicate Usually, Sometimes or Seldom to the statements below:

- I enjoy and am able to do physical activity;
- I have physical restrictions, but have movement that I enjoy and makes me feel good;
- Joyful movement is a regular part of my life;
- I get my heart rate up for twenty to thirty minutes several times a week;
- I enjoy activities, sports, or joyful movement with others in my life.

Write your answers to the following questions:

1. What activities do you enjoy?
2. How often each week do you engage in a physical activity?
3. If you feel you're not moving around the way you'd like to, what help do you need?
4. Overall, do you get the kind of movement and exercise that you want?
5. Do you feel a lot of stress in your life?
6. Do you frequently have trouble falling or staying asleep?

Enjoy it!

Most important, find a type of exercise or activity that you enjoy—or else you won't stick with it. This can be as simple and easy as getting outside and making your way across campus. Swimming is excellent exercise, but so is dancing. Think about what you like to do and explore activities that provide exercise while you're having fun. If you have limitations to activities you can try or participate in and we can help you access resources, please seek us out at the Center for Wellness at SMC, https://bit.ly/smcwellbeing, and/or the Center for Students with Disabilities, https://bit.ly/disabilityresourcescenter. We will do what we can to support you.

Do whatever you need to make your chosen activity enjoyable. Many people listen to music and some even read when using workout equipment. Try different activities to

prevent boredom. Build joyful movement into your weekly schedule on specific days, as you are able to do so. Eventually you'll find that regular movement actually saves you time because you're sleeping better and concentrating better. Time you used to fritter away is now used for activity that provides many benefits.

Key Takeaways

- You cannot learn if you are hungry or sick. We want you well and happy, and are here to help.

SLEEP

Like good nutrition and exercise, adequate sleep is crucial for wellness and success. Sleep is particularly important for students because there seem to be so many time pressures—to attend class, study, maintain a social life, and perhaps work—that most college students have difficulty getting enough. Yet sleep is critical in order to focus effectively at school. First, use the Sleep Self-Assessment to consider your current habits and attitudes.

Your Turn: Activity

SLEEP SELF-ASSESSMENT

On a sheet of paper or document, answer Usually, Sometimes, or Seldom to the following statements.

- I usually get enough sleep;
- I feel drowsy or unfocused during the day;
- I take a nap when I need more sleep;
- I have fallen asleep in class or had trouble staying awake;
- I have fallen asleep while studying;
- I have pulled an "all-nighter" when studying for a test or writing a class paper.

Write your answers to the following questions:

1. How many hours of sleep do you usually get on weeknights?
2. How many hours of sleep do you usually get on weekends?
3. How would you rank the importance of sleep in relation to studying, working, spending time with friends, and other activities?
4. How many hours of sleep do you think you ideally need?
5. Generally, do you believe you are getting as much sleep as you think you need?

The Importance of a Good Night's Sleep

You may not realize the benefits of sleep, or the problems associated with being sleep deprived, because most likely you've had the same sleep habits for a long time. Or maybe you know you're getting less sleep now, but with all the changes in your life, how can you tell if some of your stress or problems studying are related to not enough sleep?

A healthy amount of sleep has the following benefits[1]:

- Improves your mood during the day;
- Improves your memory and learning abilities;
- Gives you more energy;
- Strengthens your immune system.

In contrast, not getting enough sleep over time can lead to a wide range of health issues and student problems. Sleep deprivation can have the following consequences:

- Affects mental health and contributes to stress and feelings of anxiety, depression, and general unhappiness;
- Causes sleepiness, difficulty paying attention in class, and ineffective studying;
- Weakens the immune system, making it more likely to catch colds and other infections;
- Increases the risk of accidents (such as while driving).

How Much Sleep is Enough?

Most adults need around eight hours of sleep per night[2]. Some say they need much less than that, but often their behavior during the day shows they are actually sleep deprived. Some genuinely need only about six hours a night. New research indicates there may be a "sleep gene" that determines how much sleep a person needs [3]. So how much sleep do you actually need?

There is no simple answer, in part because the quality of sleep is just as important as the number of hours a person sleeps. Sleeping fitfully for nine hours and waking during the night is usually worse than seven or eight hours of good sleep, so you can't simply count the hours.

- Do you usually feel rested and alert all day long?
- Do you rise from bed easily in the morning without struggling with the alarm clock?

- Do you have no trouble paying attention to your instructors and never feel sleepy in a lecture class?
- Are you not continually driven to drink more coffee or caffeine-heavy "power drinks" to stay attentive?
- Are you able to get through work without feeling exhausted?

If you answered yes to all of these, you likely are in that 10 percent to 15 percent of college students who consistently get enough sleep.

How to get More and Better Sleep

You have to allow yourself enough time for a good night's sleep. Using the time management strategies discussed in "Time Management," schedule at least eight hours for sleeping every night. If you still don't feel alert and energetic during the day, try increasing this to nine hours. Keep a sleep journal, and within a couple weeks you'll know how much sleep you need and will be on the road to making new habits to ensure you get it.

Myths About Sleep

- Having a drink or two helps me get to sleep better. False: Although you may seem to fall asleep more quickly, alcohol makes sleep less restful, and you're more likely to awake in the night;
- Exercise before bedtime is good for sleeping. False: Exercise wakes up your body, and it may be some time before you unwind and relax. Exercise earlier in the day, however, is beneficial for sleep;
- It helps to fall asleep by relaxing with your favorite shows or surfing the Web in bed. False: Rather than helping you unwind, these activities can engage your mind and make it more difficult to get to sleep.

Tips for Success: Sleep

- Avoid nicotine, which can keep you awake—yet another reason to stop smoking;
- Avoid caffeine for six to eight hours before bed. Caffeine remains in the body for three to five hours on the average, much longer for some people. Remember that many soft drinks contain caffeine;
- Avoid screens at least 30 minutes before bed;
- Don't eat in the two to three hours before bed. Avoid alcohol before bedtime;
- Exercise earlier in the day (at least several hours before bedtime);
- Try to get to bed and wake about the same time every day—your body likes a routine;

- Make sure the environment is conducive to sleep: dark, quiet, comfortable, and cool;
- Use your bed only for sleeping, not for studying, streaming shows, or other activities. Going to bed will become associated with going to sleep;
- Establish a pre-sleep winding-down routine, such as taking a hot bath, listening to soothing music, or reading (not a textbook).

If you can't fall asleep after ten to fifteen minutes in bed, it's better to get up and do something else rather than lie there fitfully for hours. Do something you find restful (or boring). Read, or listen to a recorded book or podcast. Go back to bed when you're sleepy.

If you frequently cannot get to sleep or are often awake for a long time during the night, you may be suffering from insomnia, a medical condition. Resist the temptation to try over-the-counter sleep aids. If you have tried the tips listed here and still cannot sleep, talk with your health-care provider or visit the student health clinic. Many remedies are available for those with a true sleep problem.

The Nap Ministry

Founded by Tricia Hersey in 2016, The Nap Ministry advocates for the liberating power of naps. The Nap Ministry believes rest is a form of resistance and that sleep deprivation is a racial and social justice issue. Learn more about how "Rest is Resistance" at https://thenapministry.wordpress.com

Key Takeaways

- Getting enough sleep is very important for wellness and success in college. It's easy to determine if you're getting enough sleep;
- Don't fall for popular myths about sleep. It's worthwhile to get enough sleep, which gives you an improved ability to focus and apply yourself more efficiently in your studies and work.

Your Turn: Activity

IMPROVING YOUR SLEEP HYGIENE

On a sheet of paper or document, answer the following questions:

1. List at least three things you should not be before going to bed in order to get a good night's sleep;

2. Identify one or two things you can do as a regular pre-sleep routine to help you relax and wind down;
3. "Social smoking"—having a cigarette just every now and then with a friend—may not have significant health effects, but why is this still a problem?
4. If smoking marijuana relaxes you, can it minimize the stress you may feel over time in your life? Why or why not?

For each of the following statements, indicate True or False:

- After a few drinks, you can sober up more quickly by eating or drinking coffee;
- A fourth of college students experience academic consequences from their drinking;
- A 12-ounce beer has about half the alcohol of a standard shot of 80-proof liquor;
- Moderate drinking is defined as no more than four drinks a day for men or two drinks a day for women;
- A night of heavy drinking affects your thinking ability for up to two weeks afterward.

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Your emotional health is just as important as your physical health—and maybe more so. If you're unhappy much of the time, you will not do as well as in college—or life—as you can if you're happy. You will feel more stress, and your health will suffer.

Still, most of us are neither happy nor unhappy all the time. Life is constantly changing, and our emotions change with it. But sometimes we experience more negative emotions than usual and our emotional health may suffer. Use the Emotional Self-Assessment on the next page to evaluate your emotional health.

Your Turn: Activity

EMOTIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

On a sheet of paper or document, indicate Daily, Sometimes or Never to the following statements:

- I sometimes feel anxious or depressed—without disruption of my everyday life;

- I sometimes feel so anxious or depressed that I have trouble with routine activities;
- I sometimes feel lonely;
- I sometimes feel that I have little control over my life;
- I have sometimes just wanted to give up;
- Negative emotions have sometimes kept me from studying or getting my work done;
- Negative emotions have affected my relationships with others.

Write your answers:

- Describe your emotional mood on most days;
- Describe what you'd ideally like to feel like all the time;
- What specific things are keeping you from feeling what you'd ideally like to feel like most of the time?
- Are you happy with your relationships with others?
- What do you think you can do to be a happier person?

When Emotions get BIG

When is an emotion problematic? Is it bad to feel anxious about a big test coming up or to feel sad after breaking up a romantic relationship?

It is okay to experience negative emotions. College students face so many demands and stressful situations that many naturally report often feeling anxious, depressed, or lonely. These emotions become problematic only when they persist and begin to affect your life in negative ways. That's when it's time to work on your emotional health—just as you'd work on your physical health when illness strikes.

Anxiety

Anxiety is one of the most common emotions college students experience, often as a result of the demands of college, work, and family and friends. It's difficult to juggle everything, and you may end up feeling not in control, stressed, and anxious.

Anxiety typically results from stress. Some anxiety is often a good thing if it leads to studying for a test, focusing on a problem that needs to be resolved, better managing your time and money, and so on. But if anxiety disrupts your focus and makes you freeze up rather than take action, then it may become problematic. Using stress-reduction techniques often helps reduce anxiety to a manageable level.

Anxiety is easier to deal with when you know its cause. Then you can take steps to gain control over the part of your life causing the anxiety. But anxiety can become

excessive and lead to a dread of everyday situations. There are five types of more serious anxiety[1] [2]:

1. Generalized anxiety disorder is characterized by chronic anxiety, exaggerated worry and tension, even when there is little or nothing to provoke it. The person may have physical symptoms, especially fatigue, headaches, muscle tension, muscle aches, difficulty swallowing, trembling, twitching, irritability, sweating, and hot flashes;

2. Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is characterized by recurrent, unwanted thoughts (obsessions), repetitive behaviors (compulsions), or both. Repetitive behaviors such as hand washing, counting, checking, or cleaning are often performed with the hope of preventing obsessive thoughts or making them go away;

3. Panic disorder is characterized by unexpected and repeated episodes of intense fear accompanied by physical symptoms that may include chest pain, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, dizziness, or abdominal distress;

4. Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can develop after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal in which grave physical harm occurred or was threatened. Traumatic events that may trigger PTSD include violent personal assaults, natural or human-caused disasters, accidents, or military combat;

5. Social phobia (or social anxiety disorder) is a persistent, intense, and chronic fear of being judged by others and being embarrassed or humiliated by one's own actions. Their fear may be so severe that it interferes with work or school, and other ordinary activities. Physical symptoms often accompany the intense anxiety of social phobia and include blushing, profuse sweating, trembling, nausea, and difficulty talking.

These five types of anxiety go beyond the typical anxiety everyone feels at some times. If you feel your anxiety is like any of these, talk to your health-care provider. Effective treatments are available to help you regain control.

Loneliness

Loneliness is a typical feeling that most people experience at some time. College students away from home for the first time are likely to feel lonely at first. Older students may also feel lonely if they no longer hang out with their old friends.

Loneliness involves not feeling connected with others. One person may need only one friend to not feel lonely; others need to feel more connected with a group. There's no set pattern for feeling lonely.

If you are feeling lonely, there are many things you can do to meet others and feel connected. Don't sit alone in your room lamenting the absence of friends. That will only cause more stress and emotional distress. You will likely start making new friends through going to classes, working, studying, and living in the community. But you can jump-start that process by taking active steps such as these:

- Realize you don't have to be physically with friends in order to stay connected. Many students use social Web sites to stay connected with friends at other universities or in other locations. Telephone calls, instant messaging, and email work for many;

- Understand that you're not alone in feeling lonely. Many others like you are just waiting for the opportunity to connect, and you will meet them and form new friendships fast once you start reaching out;

- Become involved in campus opportunities to meet others. Every college has a wide range of clubs for students with different interests. If you're not the "joiner" type, seek out individuals in your classes with whom you think you may have something in common and ask them if they'd like to study for a test together or work together on a class project;

- Remember that loneliness is a temporary thing—it's only a matter of time until you make new friends.

If your loneliness persists and you seem unable to make friends, then it's a good idea to talk with your counselor or someone at the student health center. They can help.

Depression

Depression, like anxiety and loneliness, is commonly experienced by college students. It may be a mild sadness resulting from specific circumstances or be intense feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. Many people feel depressed from time to time because of common situations:

- Feeling overwhelmed by pressures to study, work, and meet other obligations;
- Not having enough time (or money) to do the things you want to do;
- Experiencing problems in a relationship, friendship, or work situation;
- Feeling that your new life as a student lacks some of the positive dimensions of your former life;
- Not having enough excitement in your life.

Depression, like stress, can lead to unhealthy consequences such as poor sleep, overeating or loss of appetite, substance abuse, relationship problems, or withdrawal from activities that formerly brought joy. For most people, depression is a temporary state. But severe depression can have crippling effects. Not everyone experiences the same symptoms, but the following are most common[3]:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" feelings;
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism;
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness;
- Irritability or restlessness;
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex;
- Fatigue and decreased energy;
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions;
- Insomnia, early morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping;
- Overeating or appetite loss;
- Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts;
- Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems.

If you have feelings like this that last for weeks at a time and affect your daily life, your depression is more severe than a "temporary depression." It's time to consult your health-care provider and get treatment as you would for any other illness.

Suicidal Feelings

Severe depression often makes a person feel there is no hope—and therefore many people with depression do not seek help. In reality, depression can be successfully treated, but only if the person seeks help.

Suicidal feelings, which can result from severe depression, are more common in college students than in the past. In most cases, the person had severe depression and was not receiving treatment.
Recognizing severe depression and seeking treatment is crucial.

Depression can strike almost anyone at any age at any kind of college. It is a myth that high-pressure universities have higher suicide rates or that students who feel compelled to excel because of college pressures are more likely to commit suicide. In reality, anyone can be ill with severe depression and, if not treated, become suicidal.

Following are a few of the known risk factors for suicide. For a full list, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, http://bit.ly/C20CDCRiskFactors. You can also find additional information on Best Colleges' website on Understanding Suicide Prevention, https://bit.ly/suicidepreventioncollegeresources.

- Depression and other mental disorders or a substance-abuse disorder (more than 90 percent of people who die by suicide have these risk factors);
- Prior suicide attempt;
- Family history of mental disorder, substance abuse, or suicide;
- Family violence, including physical or sexual abuse;
- Exposure to the suicidal behavior of others, such as family members, peers, or media figures.

WARNING SIGNS FOR SUICIDAL THINKING

- Being depressed or sad most of the time. Having feelings of worthlessness, shame, or hopelessness about the future;
- Withdrawing from friends and family members;
- Talking about suicide or death;
- Being unable to get over a recent loss (broken relationship, loss of job, etc.);
- Experiencing changes in behavior, sleep patterns, or eating habits.

If you or a friend is in a crisis and needs help at any time:

Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Call for yourself or for someone you care about. All calls are confidential.

If you think someone is suicidal, do not leave them alone. Try to get the person to seek immediate help by calling the hotline number. The Center for Wellness and Wellbeing has walk-in hours available for crisis counseling. In an emergency, call 911. Try to ensure that the person does not have access to a firearm or other potential tool for suicide, including medications.

Video

Suicide Attempt Survivors Bust Myths About Suicide | Truth or Myth
Suicide attempt survivors talk about their experiences and the myths around suicide and suicidal thoughts. There's a thorough awareness statement/trigger warning at the beginning of the video so that observers will not be surprised by the content.
https://bit.ly/suicidesurvivorsbustmyths

Getting Help With Family And Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate Partner and/or Family Violence does not need to be tolerated, excused or endured.
You are not alone.

If you find yourself in an abusive relationship or situation, do everything you can do to protect yourself and get out.

You are worthy of support and can get help to break the cycle.

HERE'S an article with resources and encouragement to break the cycle.
https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/domesticviolence

Emotional Balance is Possible

Emotional balance is an essential element of wellness—and for succeeding in college. Emotional balance doesn't mean that you never experience a negative emotion, because these emotions are usually natural. Emotional balance means we balance the negative with the positive, that we can be generally happy even if we're saddened by some things.

Emotional balance starts with being aware of our emotions and understanding them. If you're feeling angry, stop and think about the real cause of your anger. Are you really angry because your friend said something about one of your bad habits, or are you angry because you haven't been able to break that habit? Are you feeling anxious because you're worried you might not be cut out for college, or are you just anxious about that test tomorrow?

Refer to the "Tips for Success" for other ways you can achieve and maintain a healthy emotional balance.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS: EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- Accept that most emotions can't be directly controlled. However, getting exercise, using a relaxation technique, and experimenting with stress-reduction methods do improve your emotional state;
- Connect with others. Your emotional state is less likely to change when you keep to yourself and "stew over" the feeling;
- Develop your empathy for others. Empathy involves recognizing the emotions that others are feeling. You'll find yourself in better emotional balance as a result, and your relationships will improve;
- Be honest in your relationships. If you try to hide your feelings, the other person will know something is wrong and may react the wrong way;
- Understand that negative emotions are temporary. You may be feeling bad now, but it will pass in time. But if a negative feeling does last a long time, recognize that you likely need help resolving it—and that help is available;
- If you've just become a college student, know that the first term is usually the hardest. Hang in there. Once you've developed effective study habits and time management skills, each term will be easier and happier than the one before.

You can find more information on this topic by visiting SMC's Center for Wellness and Wellbeing webpage, https://bit.ly/smcwellbeing.

Video

How to Process Your Emotions

In order to be calm and at ease with ourselves, we need regular periods where we process our emotions. This video guides you through the steps to begin an emotional processing routine. https://bit.ly/howtoprocessemotions

All my relations -- a traditional Lakota approach to health equity | Dr. Donald ...

It's very important to acknowledge how those before us paved the way for the health we experience now, and how we will affect future generations. What are your cultural practices? Do you feel there is health equity in your community? In this discussion, Dr. Warne shares how Lakota community values and traditional ways can be used to approach wellness. https://bit.ly/lakotahealth

Stress Management

www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/stressmanagement

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the causes of stress;
- Learn how to live with/manage your stress;
- Learn how and where to ask for help or support.

"Rest is a form of resistance."
— The Nap Ministry, an artistic practice and community organization that focuses on the radical power of letting your body rest.

We all live with occasional stress. Since college students often feel even more stress than most people, it's important to understand it and learn ways to deal with it so that it doesn't disrupt your life.

Stress is a natural response of the body and mind to a demand or challenge. The thing that causes stress, called a stressor, captures our attention and causes a physical and emotional reaction. Stressors include physical threats, such as a car we suddenly see coming at us too fast, and the stress reaction likely includes jumping out of the way—with our heart beating fast and other physical changes. Most of our stressors are not physical threats but situations or events like an upcoming test or an emotional break-up. Stressors also include long-lasting emotional and mental concerns such as worries about money or finding a job. Take the Stress Self-Assessment.

Your Turn: Activity

STRESS SELF-ASSESSMENT

On a sheet of paper or document, please indicate Daily, Sometimes or Never to the following statements:

- I feel mild stress that does not disrupt my everyday life;
- I am sometimes so stressed out that I have trouble with my routine activities;
- I find myself eating or drinking just because I'm feeling stressed;
- I have lain awake at night unable to sleep because I was feeling stressed;
- Stress has affected my relationships with other people;

Write your answers to the following questions:

1. What is the number one cause of stress in your life?

2. What else causes you stress?

3. What effect does stress have on your studies and academic performance?

4. Regardless of the sources of your own stress, what do you think you can do to better cope with the stress you can't avoid?

WHAT CAUSES STRESS?

Not all stressors are bad things. Exciting, positive things also cause a type of stress, called eustress[2]. Falling in love, getting an unexpected sum of money, acing an exam you'd worried about—all of these are positive things that affect the body and mind in ways similar to negative stress: you can't help thinking about it, you may lose your appetite and lie awake at night, and your routine life may be momentarily disrupted.

But the kind of stress that causes most trouble results from negative stressors. Life events that usually cause significant stress include the following:

- Serious illness or injury;
- Serious illness, injury, or death of a family member or loved one;
- Losing a job or sudden financial catastrophe;
- Unwanted pregnancy;
- Divorce or ending a long-term relationship (including parents' divorce);
- Being arrested or convicted of a crime;
- Being put on academic probation or suspended.

Life events like these usually cause a lot of stress that may begin suddenly and disrupt one's life in many ways. Fortunately, these stressors do not occur every day

and eventually end—though they can be very severe and disruptive when experienced. Some major life stresses, such as having a parent or family member with a serious illness, can last a long time and may require professional help to cope with them.

Everyday kinds of stressors are far more common but can add up and produce as much stress as a major life event:

- Anxiety about not having enough time for classes, job, studies, and social life;
- Worries about grades, an upcoming test, or an assignment;
- Money concerns;
- Conflict with a roommate, someone at work, or family member;
- Anxiety or doubts about one's future or difficulty choosing a major or career;
- Frequent colds, allergy attacks, other continuing health issues;
- Relationship tensions, poor social life, loneliness;
- Time-consuming hassles such as a broken-down car or the need to find a new apartment.

Take a moment and reflect on the list above. How many of these stressors have you experienced in the last month? In the last year? Write down the ones that you have experienced. Now go back to your Stress Self-Assessment and revisit what you wrote there as the causes of your stress. Write any additional things that cause you stress that are not listed above.

How many stressors have indicated? There is no magic number of stressors that an average college student experiences—because everyone is unique. In addition, stressors come and go: the stress caused by a midterm exam tomorrow morning may be gone by noon, replaced by feeling good about how you did. Still, most college students are likely to circle about half the items on this list.

But it's not the number of stressors that counts. You might have identified with only one item on that list—but it could produce so much stress for you that you're just as stressed out as someone else who circled all of them. The point of this exercise is to start by understanding what causes your own stress as a base for learning what to do about it.

Video

How stress affects your brain - Madhumita Murgia
Stress is a real danger to our bodies and minds. This video explores How Chronic Stress Can Affect Your Brain. https://bit.ly/yourbrainonstress

IS STRESS BAD?

Physically, stress prepares us for action: the classic "fight-or-flight" reaction when confronted with a danger. Our heart is pumping fast, and we're breathing faster to supply the muscles with energy to fight or flee. Many physical effects in the body prepare us for whatever actions we may need to take to survive a threat.
But what about nonphysical stressors, like worrying about grades? Are there any positive effects there? Imagine what life would feel like if you never had worries, never felt any stress at all. If you never worried about grades or doing well on a test, how much studying would you do for it? If you never thought at all about money, would you make any effort to save it or make it? Obviously, stress can be a good thing when it motivates us to do something, whether it's study, work, resolving a conflict with another, and so on. So it's not stress itself that's negative—it's unresolved or persistent stress that starts to have unhealthy effects. Chronic (long-term) stress is associated with many physical changes and illnesses, including the following[3]:

- Weakened immune system, making you more likely to catch a cold and to suffer from any illness longer;
- More frequent digestive system problems, including constipation or diarrhea, ulcers, and indigestion;
- Elevated blood pressure;
- Increased risk of diabetes;
- Muscle and back pain;
- More frequent headaches, fatigue, and insomnia;
- Greater risk of heart attack and other cardiovascular problems over the long term.

Chronic or acute (intense short-term) stress also affects our minds and emotions in many ways[4]:

- Difficulty thinking clearly or concentrating;
- More frequent negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, frustration, powerlessness, resentment, or nervousness—and a general negative outlook on life;
- Greater difficulty dealing with others because of irritability, anger, or avoidance.

No wonder we view stress as such a negative thing! As much as we'd like to eliminate all stressors, however, it just can't happen. Too many things in the real world cause stress and always will.

Unhealthy Responses to Stress

Since many stressors are unavoidable, the question is what to do about the resulting stress. A person can try to ignore or deny stress for a while, but then it keeps building and starts causing all those problems. So we have to do something.

Consider first what you have typically done in the past when you felt most stressed; use the Stress Habits and Stories Exercise below.

Your Turn: Activity

STRESS HABITS AND STORIES

On a sheet of paper or document, rate, on a scale of 1 to 5 each of the following behaviors for how often you have experienced it because of high stress levels.
(0 = Never, 1 = Seldom, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Usually, 5 = Always)

1. Drinking alcohol

2. Drinking lots of coffee
3. Sleeping a lot
4. Eating too much
5. Eating too little
6. Smoking or drugs
7. Having arguments
8. Sitting around depressed
9. Streaming television or surfing the Web
10. Complaining to friends
11. Exercising, jogging, biking
12. Practicing yoga or tai chi
13. Meditating
14. Using relaxation techniques
15. Talking with an instructor or counselor

Total your scores for questions 1–10:
Total your scores for questions 11–15:
Subtract the second number from the first:

Interpretation: If the subtraction of the score for questions 11 to 15 from the first score is a positive number, then your past coping methods for dealing with stress have not been as healthy and productive as they could be. Items 1 to 10 are generally not effective ways of dealing with stress, while items 11 to 15 usually are. If your final score is over 20, you're probably like most beginning college students—feeling a lot of stress and not yet sure how best to deal with it.

What's wrong with those stress-reduction behaviors listed first? Why not stream your favorite shows or get a lot of sleep when you're feeling stressed, if that makes you feel better? While it may feel better temporarily to escape feelings of stress in those ways, ultimately they may cause more stress themselves. If you're worried about grades and being too busy to study as much as you need to, then letting an hour or two slip by streaming television will make you even more worried later because then you have even less time. Eating too much may make you sluggish and less able to focus. Alcohol, caffeine, smoking, and drugs all generally increase one's stress over time. Complaining to friends? Over time, your friends will tire of hearing it or tire of arguing with you because a complaining person isn't much fun to be around. So eventually you may find yourself even more alone and stressed.

Yet there is a bright side: there are lots of very positive ways to cope with stress that will also improve your health, make it easier to concentrate on your studies, and make you a happier person overall.

LEARNING TO LIVE WITH STRESS

Review your list of stressors that you circled earlier. For each, consider whether it is external (like bad job hours or not having enough money) or internal, originating in your attitudes and thoughts. Mark each item with an E (external) or an I (internal).

You may be able to eliminate many external stressors. Talk to your boss about changing your work hours. If you have money problems, work on a budget you can live with, search for a new job, or reduce your expenses by finding a cheaper apartment, selling your car, and using public transportation.

What about other external stressors? Taking so many classes that you don't have the time to study for all of them? Keep working on your time management skills. Schedule your days carefully and stick to the schedule. Take fewer classes next term if necessary. What else can you do to eliminate external stressors? Change apartments, get a new roommate, find better childcare—consider all your options. And don't hesitate to talk things over with a college counselor, who may offer other solutions.

Internal stressors, however, are often not easily resolved. We can't make all stressors go away, but we can learn how to cope so that we don't feel so stressed out most of the time. We can take control of our lives. We can find healthy coping strategies.

All the topics in this section involve stress one way or another. Many of the healthy habits that contribute to our wellness and happiness also reduce stress and minimize its effects:

- GET SOME EXERCISE
    - Exercise, especially aerobic exercise, is a great way to help reduce stress. Exercise increases the production of certain hormones, which leads to a better mood and helps counter depression and anxiety. Exercise helps you feel more energetic and focused so that you are more productive in your work and studies and thus less likely to feel stressed. Regular exercise also helps you sleep better, which further reduces stress;

- GET MORE SLEEP
    - When sleep deprived, you feel more stress and are less able to concentrate on your work or studies. Many people drink more coffee or

other caffeinated beverages when feeling sleepy, and caffeine contributes further to stress related emotions such as anxiety and nervousness;

- MANAGE YOUR MONEY
    - Worrying about money is one of the leading causes of stress;

- ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE
    - You know the saying about the optimist who sees the glass as half full and the pessimist who sees the same glass as half empty. Guess which one feels more stress?

- GO OUTSIDE
    - Try forest bathing. Never heard of it? Check it out! It's called Shinrin-Yoku.

Video

Forest Bathing | Shinrin-Yoku | Healing in Nature | Short Documentary
Learn how to create healing experiences in nature for yourself and your loved ones by enjoying Forest Bathing, https://bit.ly/forestsheal

Much of the stress you feel may be rooted in your attitudes toward school, your work—your whole life. If you don't feel good about these things, how do you change? To begin with, you really need to think about yourself. What makes you happy? Are

you expecting your college career to be perfect and always exciting, with never a dull class or reading assignment? Or can you be happy that you are in fact succeeding in college and foresee a great life and career ahead?

Maybe you just need to take a fun elective course to balance that "serious" course that you're not enjoying so much. Maybe you just need to play an intramural sport to feel as good as you did playing in high school. Maybe you just need to get outside every morning to feel more alert and stimulated. Maybe listening to some great music on the way to work will brighten your day. Maybe calling up a friend to study together for that big test will make studying more fun.

No one answer works for everyone—you have to examine your life, be honest with yourself about what affects your daily attitude, and then seek ways to make changes. The good news is that although old negative habits can be hard to break, once you've turned positive changes into new habits, they will last into a brighter future.

Relaxation Techniques

Different relaxation techniques can be used to help minimize stress. Following are a few tried-and- tested ways to relax when stress seems overwhelming. You can learn most of these through books, online exercises, CDs or MP3s, and DVDs available at your public or college library. Practicing one of them can have dramatic effects. The SMC Center for Wellness and Wellbeing, https://bit.ly/smcwellbeing, has workshops on many of these relaxation techniques.

- Deep breathing. Sit in a comfortable position with your back straight. Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose, filling your lungs completely. Exhale slowly and smoothly through your mouth. Concentrate on your breathing and feel your chest expanding and relaxing. After five to ten minutes, you will feel more relaxed and focused;

- Progressive muscle relaxation. With this technique, you slowly tense and then relax the body's major muscle groups. The sensations and mental concentration produce a calming state;

- Meditation. Taking many forms, meditation may involve focusing on your breathing, a specific visual image, or a certain thought, while clearing the mind of negative energy. Many podcasts are available to help you find a form of meditation that works best for you. UCLA Health has several great, free guided meditations, https://bit.ly/meditationsforucla;

- Yoga or tai chi. Yoga, tai chi, and other exercises that focus on body position and slow, gradual movements are popular techniques for

relaxation and stress reduction. You can learn these techniques through a class or from a DVD;

- Music and relaxation. Many different relaxation techniques have been developed for audio training. Simply play the recording and relax as you are guided through the techniques;

- Massage. Regular massages are a way to relax both body and mind. If you can't afford a weekly massage but enjoy its effects, a local massage therapy school may offer more affordable massage from students and beginning practitioners.

Ask for Support

If stress is seriously disrupting your studies or your life regardless of what you do to try to reduce it, you may need help. There's no shame in admitting that you need help, and college counselors and health professionals are there to help. The Center for Wellness and Wellbeing, https://bit.ly/smcwellbeing, is a great resource for help.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS: STRESS

- Pay attention to, rather than ignore, things that cause you stress and change what you can;
- Accept what you can't change and resolve to make new habits that will help you cope;
- Get regular exercise and enough sleep;
- Evaluate your priorities, work on managing your time, and schedule restful activities in your daily life. Students who feel in control of their lives report feeling much less stress than those who feel that circumstances control them;
- Slow down and focus on one thing at a time—don't check for email or text messages every few minutes! Know when to say no to distractions;
- Break old habits involving caffeine, alcohol, and other substances;
- Remember your long-range goals and don't obsess over short-term difficulties. Make time to enjoy being with friends;
- Explore new activities and hobbies that you enjoy;
- Find a relaxation technique that works for you and practice regularly;
- Get help if you're having a hard time coping with emotional stress.

Your Turn: Activity

STRESS REFLECTION

All college students feel some stress. The amount of stress you feel depends on many factors, including your sleeping habits, your exercise and activity levels, your use of substances, your time management and study skills, your attitude, and other factors.

As you examine your present life and how much stress you may be feeling, what short-term changes can you start making in the next week or two to feel less stressed and more in control? By the end of the semester or term, how would you ideally like your life to be different—and how can you best accomplish that? Write your thoughts here on a sheet of paper or document.

Video

Why students should have mental health days | Hailey Hardcastle

This TEDx Talk by Hailey Hardcastle contains advice for advocating for yourself when you need mental health rest days. Bear in mind, this video discusses mental illness, thoughts of suicide, and various personal stories of the speaker.
https://bit.ly/healthforstudentminds

Key Takeaways

- Everyone feels stress, and many of the things that cause stress won't go away regardless of what we do. But we can examine our lives, figure out what causes most of our stress, and learn to do something about it;
- Stress leads to a lot of different unhealthy responses that actually increase our stress over the long term. But once we understand how stress affects us, we can begin to take steps to cope in healthier ways.

Your Turn: Activity

STRESS INVENTORY

On a sheet of paper or document, answer the following:

- Why should it not be your goal to try to eliminate stress from your life completely?
- List three or more unhealthful effects of stress;
- Name at least two common external stressors you may be able to eliminate from your life;
- Name at least two common internal stressors you may feel that you need to learn to cope with because you can't eliminate them;
- List at least three ways you can minimize the stress you feel.

Substance Abuse, Use and Dependence

www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/substanceabuse

Learning Objectives:

- Discern if you have a substance abuse issue;
- How to deal with pressure to party;
- Identify if a friend or roommate has a substance use problem and learn how to help.

"I can't be there for other people unless I'm there for myself. I can't really work to push our movement without really investing in myself. By investing in yourself you're also investing in your community."

—Dior Vargas, queer Latina mental health advocate and activist

Substance is the word health professionals use for most things you might take into your body besides food. When people talk about substances, they often mean drugs—but alcohol and nicotine are also drugs and are considered substances. Substances—any kind of drug—have effects on the body and mind. People use these substances for their effects. But many substances have negative effects, including being physically or psychologically addictive. What is important with any substance is to be aware of its effects on your health and on your life as a student, and to make smart choices. Use of any substance to the extent that it has negative effects is generally considered abuse.

First, consider your own habits and attitudes with the Substance Use Self-Assessment.

Your Turn: Activity

SUBSTANCE USE SELF-ASSESSMENT

On a sheet of paper or document, indicate Daily, Sometimes or Never to the following statements:

1. I smoke cigarettes or use smokeless tobacco;
2. I drink beer or other alcohol;
3. I have missed a class because I was hung over from drinking the night before;
4. I have taken a medication that was not prescribed for me;
5. I have used an illegal drug.

Answer the following questions:

- If you smoke cigarettes, how many a day do you usually smoke?
- If you drink alcohol (including beer), on how many days in a typical week do you have at least one drink?
- If you drink at parties or when out with friends, how many drinks (or beers) do you typically have at one time?
- If you use a pharmaceutical or illegal drug, how often do you take it?
- Are your habits of smoking, drinking, or using other drugs affecting your studies or grades?

SMOKING & TOBACCO: WHY IS IT SO HARD TO STOP?

Everyone knows smoking is harmful to one's health, and that smoking causes cancer and lung and heart disease. Most adult smokers continue smoking not because they really think it won't harm them but because it's very difficult to stop.

Many young smokers think there is plenty of time to quit later. Social smokers, who may have a cigarette only occasionally with a friend, usually thinking they won't develop a habit. Nicotine is a very addictive drug. Admitting this to yourself is the first step toward becoming smoke free.

First, the good news. Stopping smoking brings immediate health benefits, and the benefits get better over time. Just twenty minutes after quitting, your heart rate drops. After two weeks to three months, your heart attack risk begins to drop and your lung function begins to improve. After one year, your added risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's. And every year your health continues to improve[1].

Just Keep Quitting

Stopping isn't easy. Many ex-smokers say it was the hardest thing they ever did. However, you know it's worth the effort. And it's easier if you think it through and make a good plan. There's lots of help available. Before you quit, the National Cancer Institute suggests you START with these five important steps:

1. S = Set a quit date;
2. T = Tell family, friends, and coworkers that you plan to quit;
3. A = Anticipate and plan for the challenges you'll face while quitting;
4. R = Remove cigarettes and other tobacco products from your home, car, and work;
5. T = Talk to your doctor about getting help to quit.

To get ready, download this booklet to help you quit smoking: On the Road to Quitting, http://bit.ly/C20QuittingGuide

GET HELP TO STOP SMOKING
A lot of people are not able to stop smoking by themselves, so don't feel bad if you aren't successful on the first try. Ask your doctor about other ways to stop. Maybe nicotine-replacement therapy is what you need. Maybe you need prescription medication. Stop by the Center for Wellness and Wellbeing, https://bit.ly/smcwellbeing, at Santa Monica College. Your doctor and other health

professionals at your school have a lot of experience helping people—they can help you find what works for you.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT ALCOHOL?

Of all the issues that can affect a student's health and success in college, drinking causes more problems than anything else. Everyone knows what happens when you drink too much. Your judgment is impaired and you may behave in risky ways. Your health and studies are likely to be affected.

Most college students report drinking at least some alcohol at some point in time—and even those who do not drink are often affected by others who do. Here are a few facts about alcohol use among college students[3].

- Assault. 10% of surveyed undergraduate students indicated that had experienced alcohol- related violence;
- Sexual abuse. Over 14% of those surveyed indicated that they had unplanned sexual relations due to alcohol;
- Alcohol abuse and dependence. 32% of undergraduates aged 18-24, reported drinking at a dangerous level in the past year;
- Academic problems. Negative consequences were reported by the students who drank: 31.6% reported being unable to perform daily activities, 18.8% reported missing class, and 32.9% reported study interruptions.

So why is drinking so popular if it causes so many problems? You probably already know the answer to that: most college students would say they have more fun when drinking. It is unlikely that they're going to stop drinking just because someone lectures them about it.

Like everything else that affects your health and happiness—eating, exercise, use of other substances— drinking is a matter of personal choice. Like most decisions we all face, there are trade-offs. The most that anyone can reasonably ask of you is to be smart in your decisions. That means understanding the effects of alcohol and deciding to take control.

Myths About Alcohol

Myth: I can drink and still be in control.
FACT: Drinking impairs your judgment, which increases the likelihood that you will do something you'll later regret such as having unprotected sex, being involved in date rape, damaging property, or being victimized by others.

Myth: I can sober up quickly if I have to.
FACT: It takes about two hours to eliminate the alcohol content of one drink. Nothing can speed up this process—not even coffee or cold showers.

Myth: I can manage to drive well enough after a few drinks.
FACT: The effects of alcohol start sooner than people realize, with mild impairment (up to .05 Blood Alcohol Content) starting to affect speech, memory, attention, coordination, and balance.

Myth: Beer doesn't have as much alcohol as hard liquor.
FACT: A 12-ounce bottle of beer has the same amount of alcohol as a standard shot of 80-proof liquor (either straight or in a mixed drink) or 5 ounces of wine.

Video

Addiction is a disease. We should treat it like one | Michael Botticelli

Only one in nine people in the United States gets the care and treatment they need for addiction and substance abuse. A former Director of National Drug Control Policy, Michael Botticelli is working to end this epidemic and treat people with addictions with kindness, compassion and fairness. In a personal, thoughtful talk, he encourages the millions of Americans in recovery today to make their voices heard and confront the stigma associated with substance use disorders.
https://bit.ly/addictionisadisease

How Much Is Too Much Alcohol?

There's no magic number for how many drinks a person can have and how often. If you're of legal drinking age, you may not experience any problems if you have one or two drinks from time to time. According to Health Canada, 'heavy drinking' occurs when a male consumes 5 or more drinks (4 for females) per occasion, at least once a month during the past year[5].

As with most things that can affect your health and your well-being as a student, what's important is being honest with yourself. You're likely drinking too much or too often if you:

- Missed classes or work because you were hung over or overslept after drinking;
- Have friends or family members who have hinted that you drink too much, or you've hidden your drinking from others;
- And your drinking habits are causing trouble in a relationship;
- Can't remember what you did or said while drinking;
- Need to drink to have a good time at a party or with friends;
- Have driven a car when you know you shouldn't have after drinking;
- Binge drink (consume five or more drinks at a time).

PRESSURED TO PARTY

Most of us can remember times when we were influenced by our friends and others around us to behave in some way we might not have otherwise. Say, for example, I have a big test tomorrow, and I've been studying for hours, and just when I knock off to relax for a while, a friend stops by with a six-pack of beer. I'd planned to get to bed early, but my friend pops open a beer and sticks it in my hand, saying it will help me relax. So I tell myself just one, or maybe two—after all, that's not really drinking. And let's say I stop after two (or three) and get to bed. Maybe I don't sleep quite as well, but I still pass the test in the morning. So—was that peer pressure or my decision?

There are no easy answers! What matters is that you think about your own habits and choices and how to take control of your own life.

Read this case study about a student who joins a college club and feels pressured to drink. You may be very different from him—maybe you're older and work full time and are taking night courses—but you still should be able to relate to his issues. As

you answer the questions about his situation, think about how the same questions might also apply to someone in your own situation.

Your Turn: Activity

IDENTIFYING SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Read the scenario below and answer the following questions.

Pressured To Drink
When John decided to stay at the college residences', he knew there would likely be drinking in his hall. He had had a few beers at parties through high school but had never binged and felt there was nothing wrong with that as long as he kept it under control. But he was surprised how much alcohol flowed through the residence, and not just at parties—and the house advisor just seemed to ignore what was going on. He wanted to fit in, so he usually had a few whenever his roommate or others called him away from studying.

One night he definitely drank too much. He slept late, missed his first two classes, and felt rotten most of the day. He told himself he'd drink only on weekends and only in moderation. Being underage didn't bother him, but his grades hadn't been all that great in high school, and he didn't want to screw up his first year in college. But it was only one day before some of the older students from his residence interrupted his studying again and stuck a beer in his hand. He didn't know what to do.

- Is John at risk for developing any problems if he tries to fit in with the drinkers while promising himself he would drink only moderately? Why or why not?
- If John decides to hold firm and drink only on weekends when he doesn't have to study, is he still at any risk for developing a problem? Why or why not, depending on what circumstances?
- If John decides to tell his friends he does not want to drink, what should he say or do if they continue to pressure him?

What to do

If you think you may be drinking too much, then you probably are. Can you stop—or drink moderately if you are of age—and still have fun with your friends? Of course. Here are some tips for enjoying yourself in social situations when others are drinking:

- Drink only moderately (if above legal age) and slowly. Your body processes alcohol at a rate of about one drink an hour—drinking faster than that leads to problems. Sip slowly. Set yourself a limit and stick to it;

- Drink a mixer without the alcohol. It tastes just as good or better. Alternate alcoholic drinks with nonalcoholic ones to slow down the pace;
- Rather than just lounging around with others who are drinking, stay active: move about and mingle with different people, dance, and so on;
- If someone tries to make you uncomfortable because you're not drinking, go talk to someone else.

Because drinking is a serious issue in many places, it's a good idea to know what to do if you find yourself with a friend who has had too much to drink:

- Stay with the person if there is any risk of them hurting themselves (driving, biking) or passing out. Take away their keys if necessary;
- If he passes out after drinking a great deal of alcohol fast and cannot be awakened, get medical help;
- An intoxicated person who falls asleep or passes out on their back is at risk of choking on vomit— roll them on their side or face down;
- Do not try to give him food or other substances in an effort to sober him up;
- Don't put him in a cold shower, which could cause unconsciousness.

When you Need Help

- Visit the Student Health Services Center or talk with your college counselor. They understand how you feel and have a lot of experience with students feeling the same way. They can help;
- Be sure someone always knows where you are and you have a safety plan, https://bit.ly/partysafeplan, in place;
- Use the buddy system, https://bit.ly/buddysystemforparties, when partying, and never leave a buddy behind.

Off-Prescription and Illegal or Unregulated Drugs

People use drugs for the same reasons people use alcohol. They say they enjoy getting high. They may say a drug helps them relax or unwind, have fun, enjoy the company of others, or escape the pressures of being a student. While alcohol is a legal drug for those above the drinking age, most other drugs— including the use of many prescription drugs not prescribed for the person taking them—are illegal. They usually involve more serious legal consequences if the user is caught. Some people may feel there's safety in numbers: if a lot of people are using a drug, or drinking, then how can it be too bad? But other drugs carry the same risks as alcohol for health problems, a risk of death or injury, and a serious impact on your ability to do well as a student.

As with alcohol, the choice is yours. What's important is to understand what you're doing and make smart choices. What's the gain, and what are the risks and costs?

While society may seem to condone drinking, and the laws regarding underage drinking or being drunk in public may not seem too harsh, the legal reality of being caught with an illegal drug can impact the rest of your life. Arrest and conviction may result in being expelled from college—even with a first offense. A conviction is a permanent legal record that can keep you from getting the job you may be going to college for.

Although the effects of different drugs vary widely, a single use of a drug can have serious effects and consequences. Even if you're told that a pill is a prescription medication whose effects are mild or safe, can you really be sure of the exact ingredients and strength of that pill? Do you fully understand how it can affect you with repeated use? Can it be addictive? Could it show up on an unexpected random drug test at work?

Read through these: Common Drugs on College Campuses, https://bit.ly/campusdruguse, lists some of the possible effects of drugs used by college students. Good decisions also involve being honest with oneself. Why do I use (or am thinking about using) this drug? Am I trying to escape some aspect of my life (stress, a bad job, a boring class)? Could the effects of using this drug be worse than what I'm trying to escape?

Keep Asking for Help Until you get Some

If you have questions or concerns related to drug use, your doctor or Santa Monica College's Student Health and Wellness Center, https://bit.ly/smcwellnesscenter, can help

Check these Websites for additional information:

- Drug Information Online, http://bit.ly/C20DrugInfo;
- Drug and Alcohol Helpline: 1-800-565-8603;
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, https://www.samhsa.gov/;
- National Harm Reduction Coalition, https://harmreduction.org.

Key Takeaways

- Excessive drinking or substance abuse is a common—but unhealthy—response to the stresses of college life. While the decisions are

yours, it's important to understand the effects of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs and how they impact your life;

- Quitting smoking is hard, but it's clearly worth it—and lots of help is available. If you're a smoker, make this the year you become proud of yourself for quitting;

- If you like to drink, be honest with yourself. How much does drinking enrich your life, and how much do the effects of drinking interfere with your life? Make smart decisions so that you live your life to its fullest without regrets about losing control;

- Avoiding drugs can be a complicated issue, certainly not as simple as simply deciding to say no. But you've already made the decision to attend college, and that's a smart decision. Make smart choices in other areas of your life as well.

Relationships and Health

https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/relationshipsandhealth

Learning Objectives:

- Identify signs of a healthy relationship;
- Discern if a relationship is emotionally manipulative or abusive;
- Take responsibility for your sexual health.

"I am grateful to have been loved, and to be loved now and to be able to love. Because love liberates."

— Maya Angelou

Romantic relationships are often as much a part of a rich emotional life for college students as for anyone else. But the added challenges of college, especially while also working and maintaining a family life, often stress these relationships. You may have to give extra attention to a relationship to keep it healthy and avoid conflicts that lead to unhappiness and other problems.

IT STARTS WITH YOU, AND YOU, AND YOU

Healthy relationship often have many of these characteristics:

- Partners should respect each other as individuals with unique interests and personality traits;
    - Don't expect your partner(s) to be just like you;
    - Embrace rather than reject differences;
    - All partners can be supportive of each other.
- Partners can learn to practice trusting each other and be honest;
    - Opening up emotionally to others without fear of rejection takes time and experimentation;
    - Relationships that begin based on or with frequent deceptions may suffer perpetual problems.
- Participants and partners can develop and cultivate understanding and have empathy for each other;
- Good communication is essential;
- Many relationship problems are rooted in misunderstandings, such as when a partner or partners don't make consistent and earnest effort to understand what the other(s) want or need.

These positive characteristics of a good relationship don't happen overnight. The relationship may begin with romantic attraction and only slowly develop into a trusting, mutually supportive friendship as well. The relationship you are thinking about right now might not be romantic. It doesn't have to be. These principles apply to many types of relationships and participants. The following signs may indicate that a dating relationship is not developing well:

- Your partner(s) is/are pressuring you for sex when you're not ready, or interested;
- Your partner(s) seems angry or abusive when you disagree;
- Your partner(s), friends, or acquaintance(s) seems possessive when others want to spend time with you or you spend time with yourself or others;
- Your partner(s) treats you unequally in any way;
- Your partner(s) is/are emotionally or physically abusive (one time is too many, FYI).

If you recognize that any of these things are happening with someone you're dating, closely-relating-to or even don't know very well, please seek out a counselor, advisor, or unrelated or associated trusted person to talk through your concerns. Many relationships, acquaintances, or friendships that can be described by the situations

mentioned above continue to escalate and get worse over time. Interrupt the cycle and if you cannot grow together with those you want to be in relationship with, trust and respect boundaries, and have consistent consent confirmation, move on (and if you need help doing that--ask for help).

ONLINE AND LONG-DISTANCE RELATIONSHIPS

Can your relationship survive if you and your partner are living at a distance? This is a common issue for young people going off to college at different schools—and for older college students, too, who may move because of work or school. Sometimes the relationship survives, and sometimes it doesn't. It's important, if you're making an effort to stay together, for both partners to accept that being apart will add new pressures on the relationship. Accept also that both of you will be changing in many ways. You may naturally grow apart and decide to break up.

Yet often long-distance relationships do survive successfully. If you do decide to work to keep your relationship alive and vibrant, there are things you can do:

- Acknowledge that you are both changing, and accept and celebrate your new lives;
- Don't feel guilty about being excited by your new life, and don't try to pretend to your partner that you're always miserable because you're separated;
- Don't be upset or jealous when your partner tells you about new friends and activities—be happy that they seem happy. Talk about these changes and be happy for each other;
- If your relationship is solid, it is already based on trust and mutual support, which should continue to give you strength when apart.

Your Turn: Activity

MY HEALTH, RIGHT NOW

On a sheet of paper or document, complete the following sentences and answer the questions:

- What I think most needs change in my diet is:
- The main reason I don't get enough exercise is:
- When I feel stressed, I often ((How healthy is that? Should you choose healthier activities instead?):
- The first step in resolving a conflict you are having with someone else is to:
- How do you know if you're drinking too much or too often?

- As a college student, why should you care about how much stress you feel and what you do about it?
- If you have a friend who has seemed very depressed lately, what signs should you beaware of that might indicate they are becoming suicidal?
- If you do suspect signs of suicide in your friend, what should you do?
- If you are sexually active, can you be certain you are at zero risk for acquiring HIV? If so, when? If not, why not?

MY RELATIONSHIPS, RIGHT NOW

- Choose a friend you enjoy spending time with and ask if they will help you with an "experiment." Together, make a list of fun things to do together in the next week that will help minimize your stress. Choose activities that are different from your usual habits. Following are some ideas, but be creative and try to include your own healthy ideas:
    - Cook a healthy meal together (if you have a kitchen) or shop together for snacks you can carry with you for when you're hungry between classes;
    - Get outside at least three times during the week;
    - Study together early in the evening, with snacks and drinks that won't slow you down or keep you up, and then get to bed on time;
    - At the end of the week, talk about the experiment and how you felt during and afterward. Did you have fun? Did you get some ideas for other or better things to do? Plan to keep doing some of these activities;
    - Spend twenty to thirty minutes online getting more ideas about healthy ways to minimize the stress you feel as a student. Search the phrase "stress reduction" into your search engine and share the new ideas you find with your instructor and fellow students.

Video

What Is Consent? Consent is as easy as FRIES! | Planned Parenthood Video

Here's a great video about how to define and learn more about consent: https://bit.ly/consentfriespp

How Do You Know if Someone Wants to Have Sex with You? | Planned Parenth...

Sexual Assault and Harrassment prevention starts with a real discussion about consent in sensual relationships: https://bit.ly/consentandrelationships

Getting Help With Family And Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate Partner and/or Family Violence does not need to be tolerated, excused or endured.
You are not alone.

If you find yourself in an abusive relationship or situation, do everything you can do to protect yourself and get out.

You are worthy of support and can get help to break the cycle.

HERE'S an article with resources and encouragement to break the cycle.
https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/domesticviolence

Key Takeaways

- Emotional health is just as important as physical health. We can take steps to reduce the negative emotions that plague us from time to time and gain control over our emotional health;
- Emotional balance results from a variety of things in our lives. We need to connect with others, to be honest and empathetic in our relationships, and to resolve conflicts that can cause bad feelings and threaten our daily happiness. We can learn skills in these areas just as in other areas of our lives;
- Good health helps you be more successful in college;
- For good nutrition, eat a varied diet with lots of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains and minimize fats, sugar, and salt;
- Regular exercise is not only important for good health but is a great way to reduce stress in your life;
- Sleep is one of the first areas where college students cut back when they find themselves too busy with classes, work, and other activities. Taking the time to get enough sleep, however, makes you so much more efficient when studying that it can actually save you time;
- Substance use and abuse not only takes its toll on the body but also contributes to problems in college, at work, and in the future. You may need to make a smart decision between short-term pleasures and long-term success;

- Since many stressors are unavoidable in life, we all need to find good ways to minimize their effects. The best stress-reducers over time become good habits that will increase our wellness and help us succeed in college and careers;
- If you are having an emotional or relationship problem that persists and affects your life, don't hesitate to seek help. Most universities have counselors and health professionals trained to help you get through any crisis;
- Sexual health is your own business—however, sexuality usually affects and is affected by others. Smart choices focus on protecting yourself from potential problems, regardless of your choices about sexual activity.

Personal Finance And Paying For College

www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/payingforcollege

Learning Objectives

- How to set financial goals;
- Consider jobs and making money;
- Learn how to spend less, budget, and avoid credit card debt;
- Determine how best to finance your college expenses.

"What if JOY is my only metric for success?"
— Sarah Jones, Magic Lessons podcast

Start Here: Where are you now and Where do you Want to go?

On a sheet of paper or document, assess your present knowledge and attitudes by answering Yes, Unsure or No to the following statements:

- I am confident I will make it through university without any financial hardships;
- I realize that while in university I won't have as much money to spend on things as in the past;
- I plan to avoid debt as much as possible while in university so I don't have large loans to pay back after university;
- I am willing to make sacrifices and spend less on some things while in university;
- I keep track of all my expenditures and maintain a budget so that I know when I am spending too much;

- I believe I can have a happy and fulfilling life as a student without having a lot of money;
- I know the best kinds of jobs to seek while in university;
- I always pay off the full balance on my credit cards when the statement arrives;
- I have applied for every possible form of financial aid to help pay for university.

Think about how you answered the questions above. Be honest with yourself. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = in financial trouble, 10 = Very financially secure), how would you rate your financial health at this time?

In the following list, which three are the most important financial areas in which you need to improve:

- Making more money;
- Finding the best job;
- Spending less money;
- Living more cheaply;
- Paying bills on time;
- Avoiding overdraft and late-payment fees;
- Making a budget;
- Sticking to a budget;
- Controlling credit card spending;
- Getting help with personal finances;
- Saving money;
- Keeping good financial records;
- Building a good credit history;
- Applying for financial aid.

Are there other areas in which you can improve your financial well-being and avoid potential money problems while in university? Write down other things you feel you need to work on.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

If you're a new student you may not yet have money problems or issues—but most students soon do. It doesn't matter whether you're a "traditional" college student enrolled in just after high school or a "nontraditional" student returning to school.

Younger students are likely to confront money issues for several reasons:

- If you are living away from home for the first time, you may have less experience setting and sticking to a budget and handling money in general;
- Because you need more time for studying and other aspects of college life, you may have less time to work and make money;
- Even if you receive financial support from your family, your funds are not unlimited, and you'll need to learn to live within a budget;
- You will have many new expenses including tuition and fees, room and board or housing and food bills, books and supplies, and so on;
- Nontraditional students who have worked or started a family before attending college may have already learned to manage their money well but usually still confront some financial issues:
    - Because you need more time for studying and college, you likely have less time to work and make money;
    - You will have many new expenses including tuition and fees, books and supplies, and so on;
    - You are more likely to have to juggle a budget that may include a family, mortgage, and other established expenses.

Almost everyone eventually has money issues at college, and they can impact your academic success. Money problems are stressful and can keep you from concentrating on your studies. Spending too much may lead you to work more hours than you might otherwise, giving you less time to study. Or you might take fewer classes and thus spend more years in college than needed. Worse yet, money problems cause many students to drop out of college entirely.

But it doesn't have to be this hard. Like other skills, financial skills can be learned, and they have lifelong value.

What are Your Financial Goals?

Whatever it is you plan to do in your future, whether work or other activities, your financial goals in the present should be realistic to enable you to fulfill your plan. Consider these scenarios:

Keri entered college planning to eventually major in business. Her family was not able to give her much financial support, but she chose to attend college because she thought it would help her get into a good graduate business school. She had to take large loans to pay her tuition, but she wasn't concerned about a budget because she assumed she'd make a lot later on and be able to easily pay off the loans. Yet when she graduated and had to begin making payments on her private bank loans, she

discovered she couldn't afford to go straight to graduate business school after all. She put her dream on hold for a few years and took a job she didn't much like.

John had worked a few years after high school but finally decided that he needed a college degree to get the kind of job he wanted. He was happy with his life otherwise and kept his nice apartment and car and enrolled in a couple night classes while continuing to work full time during the day. He was surprised how much he had to study, however, and after a couple months he felt he was struggling. He just didn't have enough time to do it all—so he dropped first one class and then, a couple weeks later, the other. He told himself that he'd try it again in a year or two, but part of him wondered how anyone could ever get through college while working.

What Keri and John have in common is a conflict between their financial goals and realities. Both were motivated to succeed in college, and both had a vision for their future. But both were unsuccessful in finding ways to make their dreams come true—because of money issues.

Could they have done things differently? Maybe Keri could have avoided such heavy student loans by working summers and part time during the school year. Maybe John could have reduced his living expenses and cut back his work hours to ensure he could balance school and work better. Maybe both were spending thousands of dollars a year on things they could have done without if only they'd thought through their goals and learned to live within a budget.

Taking control of your personal finances begins with thinking about your goals and deciding what really matters to you. Here are some things to think about:

- Is it important for you to graduate from college without debt? Is it acceptable to you, or necessary, to take some student loans?
- What are your priorities for summers and other "free time"? Working to earn money? Taking non-paying internships or volunteering to gain experience in your field? Enjoying social activities and time with friends?
- How important is it to take a full load of classes so that your college education does not take longer than necessary?
- How important is it to you to live in a nice place, or drive a nice car, or wear nice clothes, or eat in nice restaurants? How important in comparison to your educational goals?

There are no easy answers to such questions. Most people would like enough money to have and do what they want, low enough expenses that they don't have to work too much to stay on budget, and enough financial freedom to choose activities without being swayed by financial concerns. Few college students live in that world,

however. Since you will have to make choices, it's important first to think about what really matters to you—and what you're willing to sacrifice for a while in order to reach your goals.

A job can Help, or it can Hurt

In addition to helping pay the bills, a job or internship while in school has other benefits:

- Experience for your résumé;
- Contacts for your later job search network;
- Employment references for your résumé.

Work or internship experience related to your future career has significant value. Not all students can find such opportunities in their community, however. But even a job or volunteering outside your field can have value and say something about you to future employers. Your job may demonstrate that you have initiative, are responsible, are a team player or can work independently, and can take on financial responsibility.

Potential future employers will check your work references. Having an employer from your college years say you did a good job, were always on time to work, and were honest and responsible in doing your job definitely gives you an advantage over students who graduate without having worked at all.

At the same time, some jobs contribute more to your overall college experience. Remember, you're in college for an education and to gain a wide range of skills—not just for the degree. The best student jobs help you engage more deeply in the college experience, while the wrong kind of job gets in the way of that experience. Here are some factors to consider as you search for a job:

- What kinds of people will you be interacting with? Other students, instructors, researchers? Interacting with others in the world of college can broaden your college experience, help motivate you to study, and help you feel part of a shared experience. You may work with or meet people who in the future can refer you to employers in your field. On the other hand, working in a business far from campus, for example, may offer a steady paycheck but can separate you from the academic community and detract from a positive college experience;

- Is the job flexible enough to meet a college student's needs? Will you be able to change your work hours during final exam week or when a special project is due? A rigid work schedule may cause difficulty at times when you really need to focus on your classes;

- What will you be able to say about your work in your future résumé? Does it involve any skills—including people skills or financial or managerial responsibilities—that your employer can someday praise you for? Will working this job help you get a different, better job next year?

These factors can make a job ideal for college students, but in the real world many students will have to work less than-ideal jobs. Working at a fast food restaurant or overnight shipping company may not seem very glamorous or offer the benefits described previously, but it may be the only job available at present.

Don't despair—things can always change. Make the money you need to get by in college but don't become complacent and stop searching for more meaningful work. Keep your eyes and ears open for other possibilities. Visit the campus student employment office frequently (or check online) for new postings. Talk to other students.

At the same time, even with a dull job, do your best and keep a good attitude. Remember that your boss or supervisor may someday be a work reference who can help (or hurt) your chances of getting a job you really want.

The number of hours college students work per week varies considerably, from five to ten hours a week to full time and everywhere in between. Before deciding how much you need to work, first make a detailed budget as described later. Your goal should be to make as much as you need, and hopefully a little more to save, but first you need to know your true need. Remember your goals in college and stay focused on your education. Cut back on your optional spending so that you don't have to work so many hours that your studies are impacted.

Where can you Find a job?

Start at your campus financial aid office or student employment office. If they don't have anything right for you at first, check back frequently for new job postings. For off-campus jobs, check the classified ads in your local newspaper. Many jobs are never advertised, however, so ask friends, family members, and other students. Visit appropriate companies in your area and ask if they have openings. Many government agencies also have summer jobs or internships for college students. This work may be an ideal way to gain experience related to your chosen field.

Do you Want to Work for Yourself?

If you have energy and initiative, you can create your own work. While it may take some time to get started, flexibility and being your own boss can make up for this drawback. Students often make money in ways like these:

- Tutor classmates in a subject you are good in;
- Sell your technical skills to help others set up new computer hardware, teach software skills such as PowerPoint or Excel, or design Websites. Sell things you no longer need (video games, DVDs, textbooks) on eBay;
- Earn a commission by helping others sell their stuff online;
- Provide services to faculty members and residents in the nearby community: lawn mowing, snow shoveling, housecleaning, babysitting, pet sitting, dog walking, and so on.

Balance the job you Have With Your Dream job

A growing percentage of students are working full time when they return to school, and many continue in the same jobs. If you're in this situation, you know that balancing work and college is one of the most difficult things you've ever done. You're used to working—but not used to finding time for class and studying at the same time. You likely feel harried and frustrated at times, and you may even start to wonder if you're cut out for college. The time may come when you start thinking about dropping classes or leaving college altogether. It may be hard to stay motivated.

If you start feeling this way, focus on your big goals and don't let the day-to-day time stresses get you down. As difficult as it may be, try to keep your priorities, and remember that while you face temporary difficulties now, a college degree is forever.

- Acknowledge that sacrifice and compromise may be needed;
- Reduce your expenses, if you can, so you can cut back on the number of hours you work. This may mean temporarily giving up some things you enjoy in order to reach your goals.

If you cannot cut your expenses and work hours and simply do not have the time to do well in your classes, you may have to cut back on how many classes you take per term. Try everything else first, but know that it's better to succeed a little at a time than to push too hard and risk not succeeding. If you do have to cut back, keep a positive attitude: you're still working toward your future ideal.

If you ever feel the temptation to quit, talk to your college counselor to explore all your options. Resources may be available that you don't know about.

How Do I Get And Keep A Job?

The goal of this post is to make it a lot easier for you to complete job applications by helping answer some of your biggest questions and get job-ready. We hope this will help you get organized, apply for, get and KEEP the jobs you want.
https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/keepingyourjob

What Documents Do I Need To Have?

Here's an article that goes through exactly which documents you'll need and how to get a copy of them if you don't have them.

You will need to keep copies of various documents such as birth certificates, identification (ID) and social security cards, transcripts, diplomas, certificates, etc. as part of your job application preparation. If you don't currently have a copy of one or more of these, don't worry, it's usually a straightforward process to request a copy.
https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/documents

How Do I Ask For A Recommendation Letter?

This article takes you through the process of asking for a recommendation letter–including figuring out who to ask, how to ask them, when to ask, what information to include when you ask, and what to do with the letter once you get it.

Recommendation letters can help you get better jobs, scholarships, even get into schools and training programs. You might need a letter to get into housing or a recovery program, or reenter your community after justice-related experiences.
https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/recommendationletter

How Do I Write A Professional Bio?

A well-written bio should tell the reader who you are, summarize your skills, boost your credibility, and make it clear how you add value to any team, position or experience. While that might sound like a tough order to fill, this tutorial may help you break the process down into simple steps.

A professional biographical statement (bio) is an important part of applying for a job. You can use your bio in cover letters, as part of a portfolio, on your personal blog or website, as well as on professional networks like LinkedIn, http://linkedin.com/.
https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/professionalbio

What Is A Resume And How Do I Make One?

It is important to understand the components of a resume, the role it plays in the job application process and the steps to creating your first one.

The purpose of a resume is to:

- Market yourself to employers;
- Show off what you have to offer (skills, experience, education, training);
- And, most importantly: To land a job interview!

https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/resume

How Do I Get Ready For A Job Interview?

Here's an article with tips and resources to help you make a great impression with your potential employer. There are a few steps you can take to ensure the interview process goes as smoothly as possible. Pro tip: the more preparation you do to prepare for the interview, the less nervous you will be.
https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/interviewprep

Key Takeaways

- The best student jobs have value for your college experience and future résumé and network, while the wrong kinds of jobs may detract from your college experience;
- How much you work should be based on a realistic budget and your financial goals and needs;
- To find the best job for you, use all the resources available.

SPENDING LESS

Most people aren't really sure where a lot of their money goes. Complete Activity 2 to determine how much you remember about how you have spent money recently.

Your Turn: Activity

HOW HAVE YOU SPENT YOUR MONEY IN THE LAST 30 DAYS?

On a separate sheet of paper or document, do your best to remember how much you have spent in the last thirty days in each of the following categories and write down the amount in dollars:

- Coffee, soft drinks, bottled water
- Clothes, shoes, other apparel
- Movies, music concerts, sports events, night life
- Fast food lunches, snacks, gum, candy, cookies, and so on
- Social dining out with friends (lunch, dinner)
- Music, DVDs, other personal entertainment
- Cellphone
- Bank account fees, ATM withdrawal fees
- Credit card finance charges
- Lottery tickets
- Cigarettes, smokeless tobacco
- Beer, wine, liquor
- Gadgets, video or computer games, and so on
- Gifts
- Hobbies
- Travel, day trips

TOTAL:

Now be honest with yourself: is this really all you spent on these items? Most of us forget small, daily kinds of purchases or underestimate how much we spend on them—especially when we pay with cash. You'll notice also that this list does not include essential spending for things like room and board or an apartment and groceries, utilities, college tuition and books, and so on. The greatest potential for cutting back on spending is in the area of optional things.

What's Optional Spending?

More people get into financial trouble because they're spending too much, rather than because they're making too little. While spending may seem a simple matter—"I need to buy this, I'd like to buy that"— it's actually very complex. The United States is a consumer society, and we're deluged by advertisements promising that we'll be happier, more successful, better liked by more people, sexier, and everything else if only we buy this. Companies have spent billions of dollars researching how to manipulate our buying behavior. No wonder it's so tough to resist these pressures!

Why does a person feel compelled to buy fast food for lunch, or a new CD with a song they just heard on the radio, or a new video game a friend says is so good, or a new article of clothing? We owe it to ourselves to try to understand our own attitudes about money and spending. Here's a good place to start:

- Having money or not having money doesn't define who you are. Your real friends will think no less of you if you make your own lunch and eat it

between classes or take the bus to campus rather than drive a new car. You are valued more by others for who you are as a person, not for what things you have;

- You don't have to spend as much as your friends to be one of the group. Some people always have more money than others and spend more. Resist any feeling that your friends who are big spenders are the norm. Don't feel you have to go along with whatever expensive activities they propose just so you fit in;
- A positive attitude leads to success. Learn to relax and not get stressed out about money. If you need to make changes in how you spend money, view this as an exciting accomplishment, not a depressing fact. Feel good about staying on a budget and being smart about how you spend your money;

- Be realistic about what you can accomplish. Most students have financial problems, and they don't just go away by waving a magic wand of good intentions. If your budget reveals you don't have enough money even while working and carefully controlling your spending, you may still need a student loan or larger changes in your lifestyle to get by. That's OK—there are ways to deal with that. But if you unrealistically set your sights so high about spending less and saving a lot, you may become depressed or discouraged if you don't meet your goals.

Before you can make an effective budget, you need to know what you're spending money on now and consider what's essential and what's optional. Essential costs are the big things:

- Room and board or rent/mortgage, utilities, and groceries;
- College tuition, fees, textbooks, supplies;
- Transportation, Insurance (health insurance, car insurance, etc.);
- Dependent care if needed;
- Essential personal items (some clothing, hygiene items, etc.).

These things are sometimes called fixed costs, but that term can be misleading. If you have the option to move to a less expensive apartment that is smaller or a few blocks farther away, you can partly control that cost, so it's not really "fixed." Still, for most people, the real savings come from spending less on optional things.

Go over the amounts you wrote in the earlier exercise "Where Does the Money Go?" These things are "optional" expenses—you can spend more or less on them as you choose. Most people spend by habit, not really thinking about where their money

goes or how quickly their spending adds up. If you knew you were spending more than a thousand dollars a year on coffee you buy every day between classes, would that make you think twice? Or another thousand on fast food lunches rather than taking a couple minutes in the morning to make your lunch? When people actually start paying attention to where their money goes, most are shocked to discover how the totals grow. If you can save a few thousand dollars a year by cutting back on just the little things, how far would that go to making you feel much better about your finances?

Following are some general principles for learning to spend less. The "Tips for Success" then lists specific ways you can try to follow these principles in your daily life. Remember, spending money doesn't define who you are!

- Be aware of what you're spending. Carry a small notebook and write down everything— everything—you spend for a month. You'll be able to track your habits and be able to make a better budget to take control;
- Search out alternatives. If you buy a lot of bottled water, for example, you may feel healthier than people who drink soft drinks or coffee, but you may be spending hundreds of dollars a year on something that is virtually free! Carry your own refillable water bottle and save the money;
- Plan ahead to avoid impulse spending. If you have a healthy snack in your backpack, it's much easier to not put a dollar in a vending machine when you're hungry on the way to class. Make a list before going grocery shopping and stick to it. Shopping without a list usually results in buying all sorts of unneeded (and expensive) things that catch your eye in the store;
- Be smart. Shop around, compare prices, and buy in bulk. Stopping to think a minute before spending is often all it takes;
- Make your own lunches and snacks;
- Read newspapers and magazines online or in the library;
- Cancel cable television and stream programs online for free;
- Buy generic products instead of name brands;
- Shop at thrift stores and yard sales;
- Pay with cash instead of a credit card;
- Cancel your health club membership and take PE courses instead;
- Compare prices online;
- Avoid ATM fees by finding a machine on your card's network (or change banks); avoid checking account monthly fees by finding a bank with free checking;
- Get cash from an ATM in small amounts so you never feel "rich";
- With larger purchases, postpone buying for a couple days (you may find you don't "need" it after all);

- Seek out free fun instead of movies and concerts—most colleges have frequent free events. If you pay your own utility bills, make it a habit to conserve: don't leave lights burning or your computer on all night.;
- Use good study skills to avoid failing a class—paying to retake a course is one of the quickest ways to get in financial trouble!

How to Create a Budget That Works for you

Budgeting involves analyzing your income and expenses so you can track where your money is going and making adjustments when needed to avoid debt. At first budgeting can seem complex or time consuming, but once you've gone through the basics, you'll find it easy and a very valuable tool for controlling your personal finances.

Why create and manage a budget? Going to college changes your financial situation. There are many new expenses, and you likely don't know yet how your spending needs and habits will work out over the long term. Without a budget, it's just human nature to spend more than you have coming in, as evidenced by the fact that most Americans today are in debt. Debt is a major reason many students dropout of college. So it's worth it to go to the trouble to create and manage a budget.

Managing a budget involves three steps:

1. Listing all your sources of income on a monthly basis;
2. Calculating all your expenditures on a monthly basis;
3. Making adjustments in your budget (and lifestyle if needed) to ensure the money isn't going out faster than it's coming in.

Track Your Income

Many college students receive money or financial assistance from a number of sources. To track income in a monthly budget, consider all your sources of funds and convert them to a monthly number. For example, you may receive a student loan once during the year or you may work more in the summer and save up money then. To calculate your monthly projected income, add up your income sources and divide that number by the number of months you will be using the income. For example, if you have saved $4,800 that you can spend over two years of college, divide the $4,800 by twenty-four months to arrive at a monthly income of $200 from those savings. Do the same with scholarship grants, student loans, monetary gifts, and so on.

If some of your college costs are being paid directly by parents or others, do not include that money in your budget as either income or an expense. Base your monthly budget on just those funds and expenses that involve you directly.

Use Activity 3: Monthly Income and Funds to record and total all your income on a monthly basis. If you must estimate some sources, estimate low rather than high; it's a bad trap to assume you'll have more money coming in than you actually do—that's a real budget buster.

Your Turn: Activity

MONTHLY INCOME AND OTHER FUNDS

On a separate sheet of paper or document, write down the amount in dollars you may have in sources of income or funds:

- Job income/salary (take-home amount);
- Funds from parents/family/others;
- Monthly draw from savings;
- Monthly draw from financial aid;
- Monthly draw from student/other loans;
- Other income source:
- Other income source:
- Other income source:
- Total Monthly Incoming:

TRACKING EXPENSES

Tracking expenditures is more difficult than tracking income. Some fixed expenses (tuition, rent, etc.) you should already know, but until you've actually written down everything you spend in a typical month, it's hard to estimate how much you're really spending on cups of coffee or smoothies between class, groceries, entertainment, and the like. The best way to itemize this side of your budget is to write down everything you spend—everything, every bottle of water and cookie, coins into parking meters, and so forth—for a full month. Then you can total up the different categories of expenses more realistically. We urge you to immediately start writing everything down in a small notebook you carry with you. You may be astonished how small purchases add up.

While you're writing this down for a month, go ahead and work through the expenditure half of your budget, using Activity 3. Set aside an hour or two to revisit your past financial records, checkbook register and debit card transactions, past utility bills, credit card statements, and so on to get the numbers to put in your expenses budget. Make estimates when you have to, but be honest with yourself and

don't underestimate your usual spending. There will be plenty of time down the road to adjust your budget—but don't start out with an unrealistic plan. Write "est" (for estimated") next to numbers in your budget that you're guessing at.

Once you have listed your routine expenditures using Activity 3, write out your own budget categories that fit how you actually spend money. Everyone is unique, and you want your budget to be easy to use for your own life and habits.

As noted previously with income, if some of your expenses are paid directly by others, do not include them here.

Base your monthly budget on just those funds and expenses that involve you directly.

Your Turn: Activity

MONTHLY EXPENDITURES

On a separate sheet of paper or document, write down the amount in dollars you may have monthly expenditures:

- Tuition and fees (1/12 of annual);
- Textbooks and supplies (1/12 of annual);
- Housing: monthly mortgage, rent, or room and board;
- Home repairs;
- Renter's insurance;
- Property tax;
- Average monthly utilities (electricity, water, gas, oil);
- Optional utilities (cell phone, Internet service, cable television);
- Dependent care, babysitting;
- Child support, alimony;
- Groceries;
- Meals and snacks out (including coffee, water, etc.);
- Personal expenses (toiletries, cosmetics, haircuts, etc.);
- Auto expenses (payments, gas, tolls) plus 1/12 of annual insurance premium—or public transportation costs;
- Loan repayments, credit card pay-off payments;
- Health insurance (1/12 of annual);
- Prescriptions, medical expenses;
- Entertainment (movies, concerts, nightlife, sporting events, purchases of CDs, DVDs, video games, etc.);
- Bank account fees, ATM withdrawal fees, credit card finance charges;
- Newspapers, magazines, subscriptions;

- Travel, day trips;
- Cigarettes, smokeless tobacco;
- Beer, wine, liquor;
- Gifts;
- Hobbies;
- Major purchases (computer, home furnishings) (1/12 of annual)
- Clothing, dry cleaning;
- Memberships (health clubs, etc.);
- Pet food, veterinary bills, and so on;
- Other expenditure:
- Other expenditure:
- Other expenditure:
- Other expenditure:
- Other expenditure:
- Total Monthly Outgoing:

BALANCING YOUR BUDGET

Now comes the moment of truth: compare your total monthly incoming with your total monthly outgoing. How balanced is your budget at this point? Remember that you estimated some of your expenditures. You can't know for sure until you actually track your expenses for at least a month and have real numbers to work with.

What if your spending total is higher than your income total? The first step is to make your budget work on paper. Go back through your expenditure list and decide where you can cut. Remember, college students shouldn't try to live like working professionals. Maybe you are used to a nice haircut every month or two—but maybe you can go to a cheaper place or cut it yourself. There are dozens of ways to spend less, as suggested earlier. The essential first step is to make your budget balance on paper.

Then your job is to live within the budget. It's expected that you'll have to make adjustments at first. Just be sure to keep the overall budget balanced as you make adjustments. For example, if you find you must spend more for textbooks, you may decide you can spend less on eating out—and subtract the amount from that category that you add to the textbook category. Get in the habit of thinking this way instead of reaching for a credit card when you don't have enough in your budget for something you want or need.

Don't be surprised if it takes several months to make the budget process work. Be flexible, but stay committed to the process and don't give up because it feels like too much work to keep track of your money. Without a budget, you may have difficulty reaching your larger goal: taking control of your life while in college

WHAT IF YOUR BUDGET DOESN'T WORK?

Your budget may be unbalanced by a small amount that you can correct by reducing spending, or it may have a serious imbalance. If your best efforts fail to cut your expenditures to match your income, you may have a more serious problem, unless you plan in advance to manage this with student loans or other funds.

First, think about how this situation occurred.

- When you decided to go to college, how did you plan to finance it?
- Were you off in your calculations of what it would cost, or did you just hope for the best?
- Are you still committed to finding a way to continue in college?

If you are motivated to reach your college goal, good! Now closely examine your budget to determine what's needed. If you can't solve the budget shortfall by cutting back on "optional" expenses, then you need more dramatic changes. Are you paying a high rent because your apartment is spacious or near campus? Can you move a little farther away and get by temporarily in a smaller place, if the difference in rent makes a big difference in your overall finances? If you're spending a lot on your car, can you sell it and get by with public transportation for a year or two? Play with the numbers for such items in your budget and determine how you can cut expenses to stay in college without getting deeply in debt. If you worry you won't be as happy if you change your lifestyle, remember that money problems are a key source of stress for many college students and that stress affects your happiness as well as how well you do in college. It's worth the effort to work on your budget and prevent this stress.

If all else fails, consult with a financial aid counselor at your college. Don't wait until you're in real financial trouble before talking to someone who may be able to offer help.

WHY PEOPLE SPEND TOO MUCH, EVEN ON A BUDGET

Old habits die hard. Keep monitoring your spending habits and track things you're spending money on without really thinking about it.

- Credit cards. Never use them if at all possible. They make it easy to spend too much or be unaware of how much you're spending. Save them for emergencies;

- Easy access to cash. Just put your card in an ATM and get some cash! It's so easy to do, and an automatic habit for so many, that it's easy to bust your budget with small amounts daily;
- Temptations are everywhere. Even when we're careful, we're often easily influenced by friends to go out or spend time in other ways. Remember why you made your budget in the first place and keep your priorities in mind. The guilt you'll feel tomorrow about spending a whole week's food budget on one expensive dinner out probably isn't worth the pleasure of it;
- We buy things to feel good. If that's been a longtime habit for you, it will be hard to break. Often, it's better to find small things that make you feel good rather than trying to go without everything. Rewarding yourself with an ice cream treat for a week's budgeting success won't break your budget.

Video

3 psychological tricks to help you save money | The Way We Work, a TED series

This video offers three psychological tricks to help you save money, https://bit.ly/savingmoneymindhacks.

What if I get in Financial Trouble?

People often don't admit to themselves that they have a problem until it becomes unmanageable. We human beings are very good at rationalizing and making excuses to ourselves! Here are some warning signs of sliding into financial trouble:

- For two or three months in a row, your budget is unbalanced because you're spending more than you are bringing in;
- You've begun using your savings for routine expenses you should be able to handle with your regular budget;
- You've missed a deadline for a bill or are taking credit card cash advances or overdrawing your checking account;
- You have a big balance on your credit card and have paid only the required minimum payment for the last two months;
- You have nothing in the bank in case of an emergency need;
- You don't even know how much total debt you have;
- You're trying to cut expenses by eliminating something important, such as dropping health insurance or not buying required textbooks.

If you are experiencing any of these warning signs, first acknowledge the problem. It's not going to solve itself—you need to take active steps before it gets worse and affects your college career.

Second, if you just cannot budget your balance, admit that you need help. There's no shame in that. Start by speaking with a counselor or the financial aid office; if they can't help you directly, they can refer you to someone who can.

Take your budget and other financial records with you so that they can get a complete picture about what's really involved. Additionally, SMC offers free workshops on personal finance, http://bit.ly/C20_SMCPF, and classes such as Bus 45 Individual Financial Planning and Bus 47 Personal Finance for Students.

Remember that they're there to help—their goal is to ensure you succeed in college.

SAVING FOR THE FUTURE

If you're having problems just getting by on your budget, it may seem pointless to even think about saving for the future. Still, if you can possibly put aside some money every month into a savings plan, it's worth the effort:

- An emergency or unexpected situation may occur suddenly. Having the savings to cope with it is much less stressful than having to find a loan or run up your credit cards. Saving is a good habit to develop. Saving for the future will prepare you well for the increasing financial complexities of life after graduation;
- You may need your savings to help launch your career after graduation. If you're broke when you graduate, you may feel you have to take the first job

that comes along, but with some savings you may have time to find the job that's perfect for you;
- You may change your mind about future plans. Maybe you now think that you'll go to work at a good job right after graduation, so you're not concerned about saving—but maybe in a couple years you'll decide to go to graduate school, law school, or business school—or to start your own business, or to join a volunteer program. Your savings may allow you to pursue a new goal.

Start by saving in a savings account at your bank or credit union. You can have a certain amount transferred from your checking account every month into a savings account—that makes it easier and more routine. A savings account allows withdrawal anytime but pays lower interest than other accounts. Ask at your bank about money market accounts and certificates of deposit (CDs), which generally pay higher interest but have restrictions on minimum balances and withdrawals. Savings bonds are another option. All of these options are federally insured, so your money stays safe. Risky investments like the stock market are generally not appropriate for college students on a budget.

How Can I Learn About Money And Budgeting?

Many college students have financial struggles at some point or another and for a variety of reasons such as being poor, living away from home without support for rent, utilities and transport, new responsibilities and time obligations of school, and new expenses such as tuition, books, technology and learning supplies.

Whatever your challenges, it's important to educate yourself on financial strategies and systems that will help you support yourself, your family, and achieve your goals. Here's an article with tips and resources for becoming more financially savvy as a college student. https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/finances

Key Takeaways

- Financial success while in college depends on understanding and controlling your expenditures;
- There are many ways you can spend less on optional expenses, and even essentials, and still have a full life and enjoy your college experience;
- A detailed monthly budget that lists all income sources and expenditures makes it easier to track expenses and avoid sliding into financial trouble;
- Spending too much can quickly lead to financial problems. If you notice the signs that you're starting to have money problems, take steps quickly to prevent trouble before it snowballs out of control;

- While it may seem difficult just to make ends meet, make it a goal also to attempt to save something for future needs.

Your Turn: Activity

MONEY BELIEFS

On a sheet of paper or in a document, do the following:

- List the top three optional expenditures you usually make every week;
- List three tips for spending less that you feel you will be able to use routinely to avoid running out of money while in university;

For each of the following statements, decide which ones are true or false for you:

- It's OK to miss a deadline for paying your phone bill as long as you pay on time at least half of the time;
- There's really nothing wrong with not having any money in the bank as long as you have a credit card for emergencies and major purchases;
- You should balance your checkbook every month when you receive your bank statement;
- A good way to save money is to try to get by without buying expensive textbooks;
- You only need to write up a budget if you've gotten deeply into debt and need to consult with a financial advisor to get out of debt.

CREDIT

Credit cards are such a big issue because they are easy to get, easy to use—and for many people, addictive.

Credit cards do have legitimate purposes:

- In an emergency, you may need funds you cannot obtain otherwise;
- You generally need a credit card for travel, for hotels, and other needs;
- Often, it's less expensive to make significant purchases online, and to do that you usually need a credit card. (Many ATM debit cards also function like a credit card for online purchases);
- If you are young, responsible use of a credit card is a good way to start building a credit rating-but only if you use the credit card responsibly and always make sufficient payments on time.

Even though federal regulations require banks to disclose all fees and make it more difficult to increase fees or rates without warning credit card holders in advance, many people overuse credit cards and pay high interest rates and fees for making late payments. Currently, 46% of American credit card holders are carrying credit card

debt. The proportion is almost certainly higher among college students with credit cards.

Your first goal with a credit card is to understand what you're getting into and how you are charged. Read the fine print on your monthly statements. You should understand about rate increases and know what happens if you miss a payment, pay less than the minimum, or pay late. It also pays to shop around.

Set a Limit

All credit cards come with a limit, the maximum total amount you can charge, but this is not the same as the limit you should set for how you use the card based on your budget. If you bought something that cost $400, for example, would your monthly budget let you pay it off when the bill comes? If it will take you two or three months to have that much available in your budget, are you also including the interest you'll be paying? What if an unexpected need then arises and you need to charge more?

Set your personal use limit by calculating how much your budget allows you to charge. If you are using the card just for convenience, such as to pay for meals or regular purchases, be sure you have enough in those categories in your budget left at the end of the month to make the payment. If tempted to buy a significant item with your credit card, do the calculations in advance. You avoid slipping into credit card debt.

Credit History and Reports

Many younger college students are just beginning to develop a credit history. Older students likely have had credit cards for years, as well as automobile and other types of loans, possibly a mortgage, and other financial transactions that add up to a credit history. But everyone needs to understand what a credit history is and how your monetary habits now can affect your future financial well-being and your future options. For example, frequent overdrafts on a debit card can prevent you from being approved for a credit card, or late credit card payments can prevent you in the future from obtaining a car loan.

Credit bureaus collect financial data on everyone. The credit report they issue is a detailed history of many years of your financial habits. It includes the following:

- Current and past credit accounts (credit cards and store charge cards);
- History of balances and credit payments;
- History of late or missed payments;

- Inquiries into your credit status (e.g., if you've applied for a number of credit cards, this is recorded even if you did not receive the cards);
- Bankruptcy or mortgage foreclosure proceedings.

All this information remains in your credit report for up to seven to ten years. What you do today can really come back to haunt you!

YOUR FICO SCORE

To sum up your creditworthiness, credit bureaus analyze all your data to come up with a single number, called your credit score or FICO score. (FICO is short for the Fair Isaac Credit Organization, which created this method analyzing data.) The calculations of each credit bureau differ somewhat. The score may be anywhere between 250 and 336 (poor credit risk) and 843 and 900 (excellent credit risk). The score is based on the following:

- The length of your credit history;
- The total amount you owe;
- Your payment history;
- The types of credit you have.

Credit bureaus are not required to tell you the FICO score that they report to a lender who inquires about your credit history. Check with any of the individual credit bureaus listed earlier, if you need to know your score. Or you may be able to get this information from a lender with whom you have a loan. Most students have no need to know their credit score, except to understand how banks and other lenders make their decisions if you are applying for any type of loan.

PROTECTING YOUR IDENTITY

Identity theft is a serious and growing problem. Identity theft is someone else's use of your personal information—usually financial information—to make an illegal gain. A criminal who has your credit card number or bank account information may be able to make purchases or transfer funds from your accounts. Someone with the right information about you, such as your social security number along with birth date and other data, can even pretend to be you and open new credit accounts that you don't know about—until the bank or collection agency tries to recover amounts from you. Although innocent, you would spend a lot of time and effort dealing with the problem.

Your Turn: Activity

MONEY, A CASE STUDY

Read the following case study and reply to the questions below.

Maria's Financial Dilemma

> *When Maria decided to attend university after working full time a few years, she was confident she could afford it. She had saved enough money to pay tuition for two years, and she cut back to part-time work that paid enough, she calculated, to live on. With great enthusiasm she registered for the fall term.*
>
> *Her money problems began in November when her car broke down on the way to her job. The mechanic said her transmission had to be rebuilt and her car also really needed new rear shocks. The bill was well over a thousand dollars. She paid with her Visa card. At the end of the month, she didn't have enough in her checking account to pay the credit card bill in full. She almost decided just to pay the minimum, but then she checked her statement and saw the 18 percent interest rate and decided to pay the full balance from her savings. She wouldn't need that money for tuition until next year anyway, and that gave her a long time to save it up.*
>
> *The first week in December, she slipped on an icy sidewalk and sprained her ankle. Unfortunately, she couldn't do her job on crutches and had no sick time built up, so she lost two weeks' pay.*
>
> *Still, "that's life," she thought, although she was so worried about money now that she almost decided to register for just two courses the next term. But university was her priority, so she took a full load and increased her work hours for a couple months to help her get caught up financially. But then as midterm exams grew closer, she felt unprepared because she hadn't had enough time for studying. Because of the stress she wasn't sleeping well, and one day she fell asleep in class . .. She found herself daydreaming about the coming summer and being free of classes. To feel better, she took long drives in her car on the weekends.*
>
> *She did pass her midterms, though she did not do as well as she'd hoped. She still hadn't been able to save enough for next year's tuition but felt that she had the summer to work full time and make up for it.*

In April, her boss told her that business was too slow to be able to increase her hours to full time for the summer. He was very sorry, but she could keep working part time if she wanted.

Now Maria really doubted if she'd be able to make it. Her family could spare no money to help her out. She had enough for rent, food, and her car, but that was about it. If she didn't figure something out, she couldn't afford tuition in the fall. Even with an installment plan to break up tuition payments, she just wasn't making enough to cover it. She didn't know what to do.

1. What is the first step Maria should take to start sorting out her financial situation and learn about her options?

2. Maria's financial planning was based on making enough to cover what she spends and using her savings for tuition. If she were to make a monthly budget and analyze every expenditure, might she be able to cut back and save more for unexpected expenses that come up? List areas in which she would likely be able to spend less if she used a budget;

3. Maria's attitude toward her credit card is a healthy indicator that she wants to avoid debt. If this proved to be the only solution, however, should she consider a student loan to cover the tuition for her second year? Why or why not?

4. If Maria was considering not attending university the second year but instead finding a new full-time job that would allow her to save up tuition money again, what advice might you give her?

Key Takeaways

- Credit cards have several important benefits when used carefully, including building a credit history and having emergency funds available;
- Don't charge purchases up to the credit card's limit but set your own personal limit that allows you to pay the balance in full every month;
- Avoid high credit card balances by using the card minimally, paying cash when you can, and avoiding cash advances;
- How you manage your credit and finances now affects your credit history and creditworthiness in the future.

FINANCIAL AID

Follow these general guides to ensure you receive any aid for which you are qualified:

1. Apply to your college for financial aid every year, even if you do not qualify in your first year. Your situation may change, and you want to remain eligible depending on the awards or loans that may become available;
2. Talk to the financial office immediately if you (or your family) have any change in your circumstances;
3. Complete applications accurately, fully, and honestly. Financial records are required to verify your data. Pay attention to the deadlines for all applications;
4. Research possible outside financial aid based on other criteria. Many private scholarships or grants are available, for example, for the dependents of employees of certain companies, students pursuing a degree in a certain field, or students of a certain ethnic status or from a certain religious or geographical background, and the like;
5. Do not pay for financial aid resource information. Some online companies try to profit from the anxieties of students about financial aid by promising to find financial aid for you for a fee. Legitimate sources of financial aid information are free.

The Santa Monica College Financial Aid and Scholarship office, www.smc.edu/financialaid, website has a ton of resources to help you learn about and navigate your financial aid options! The SMC Financial Aid office also has a handbook, http://bit.ly/C20_SMCFAhandbook, to assist you with more information on financial aid including eligibility, applying, deadlines and more!

Scholarships and Grants

Scholarships and grants are "free" money—you do not have to pay them back, unlike student loans. A scholarship is generally based on merit rather than demonstrated financial need—based on past grades, test scores, achievements, or experiences, including personal qualifications such as athletic ability, skills in the arts, community or volunteer experiences, and so on. Don't make the mistake of thinking scholarships go only to students with high grades. Many scholarships, for example, honor those with past leadership or community experience or the promise of future activities. Even the grades and test scores needed for academic scholarships are relative: a grade that does not qualify for a scholarship at one college may earn a scholarship at another. Never assume that you're not qualified for any kind of scholarship or grant.

A grant also does not need to be paid back. Most grants are based on demonstrated financial need. A grant may be offered by the college, a federal or provincial program, or a private organization or civic group. Oftentimes, grants are provided with student loans to those with demonstrable financial needs.

Every year, the SMC Financial Aid and Scholarship Office, www.smc.edu/financialaid, awards many scholarships to SMC students. For more information on how to apply, deadlines and for a list of scholarships, visit the SMC Scholarships website, www.smc.edu/scholarships.

Student Loans

Because many universities do not have sufficient funds to offer full grants to students with financial need, financial aid packages often include a combination of grant and loan money. Ideally, one would like to graduate without having loan balances to repay later on. However, many full-time college students will need student loans to pay for college.

Unfortunately, this is a necessary reality for many students. For most, graduating from college owing some money is preferable to not going to college at all. With smart choices about the type of loan and a structured repayment program for your working years after graduation, there's no reason to fear a loan. Just remember that the money eventually has to be repaid—it's not "free" money even though it may feel that way while you're in school.

Student loans provided through the government do not begin accruing interest until after graduation. If you borrowed $20,000 over four years and interest accrued during this time, you could owe as much as $25,000 upon graduation, so this can be a substantial saving over the course of your degree.

Cooperative Education Programs

Co-operative education programs are another type of financial aid. They are administered by universities and are becoming increasingly common in the areas of business, economics and engineering. They allow students to earn money while gaining valuable work experience prior to graduation. Because they are run by college staff, students receive recognition of program completion on their transcripts and they have access to additional support and preparatory services prior to, during and after their co-op placements.

How Do I Get Paid To Go To College?

This is a common concern for anyone thinking about going to college: *But how am I going to pay for it?* The good news is that there are many resources available for any person looking to go to any college, usually in the form of loans, grants, scholarships or fellowships.

Here's an article that breaks it all down, complete with resources.https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/moneyforcollege

Key Takeaways

- Many forms of financial aid are available for college students. Apply every year and notify the college financial aid office if you have a significant change in circumstances;
- Consider all forms of financial aid—not just the aid managed by your college. Research private scholarships and grants;
- Carefully consider how much to borrow in student loans;
- Controlling your finances while in college is important both for your future well-being and for eliminating stress that can impede your academic success;
- Meeting your financial goals while in college may require some financial sacrifice but need not result in hardship;
- The best student jobs offer benefits beyond just the money;
- There are many ways to reduce expenditures while in college. Tracking your spending with an effective budget is the first step toward taking control of your finances;
- Understanding your own spending habits and practicing a few simple principles for spending less help prevent unnecessary debt. Make and use a budget to take control of your financial life;
- Credit card spending can lead to out-of-control debt. Use credit cards minimally and wisely;
- Protect your financial identity by maintaining good records and preventing criminals from obtaining your personal or financial information;
- Research all forms of financial aid and apply for all aid for which you may be qualified. Do not take more in student loans than you really need.

Your Turn: Activity

CHOOSE YOUR OWN MONEY ADVENTURE

- Make a résumé, https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/resume, or update one you already made. Make a list of your experiences, qualifications, and references that you will put on your future résumé;
    - What areas seem weak to you?
    - What kind of job, internship, or other experience could you potentially have now in your college years that will strengthen your résumé?

- Choose a friend you enjoy spending time with and ask if they will help you with a "freexperience." Make a list of five fun free things to do over the next two weeks. Make it your goal to spend as little as possible for two weeks, cooking meals together if practical, taking lunches and snacks to classes, and finding new ways to enjoy your free time inexpensively. At the end of this experiment, compare what you spent with the two weeks prior to your "freexperience;"

- Make a budget based on realistic estimates for your monthly expenditures and income sources and amounts. Compare your prospective (estimated monthly money out and in) to your retrospective (what actually happens next month), and write a paragraph or two about your experience. Would you do it again? What did you learn?

Make an action list for each category below:

Spending
- I spend too much money every week on:
- My action plan to spend less includes the following:

Lifestyle
- The area of my lifestyle where I know I spend more than most other university students is:
- I can make these adjustments in my lifestyle to reduce this expenditure:

Job in College
- Ideally, I'd like to work no more than this many hours a week:
- What I'd most enjoy doing is:
- I can learn more about possible jobs close to my ideal by:

Saving Money
- I believe I can realistically save this amount of money a month if I track my spending:
- This is where I will put my savings:

- I will allow myself to spend this money only for something major like:

Budgeting and Tracking Spending

- Here's how I have kept track of what I spent in the past:
    - So that I can maintain a budget now and in the future, I know I need to record every expenditure. I will do this by:

Credit Card Use

- In the past, I usually used my credit card to buy things like:
- If you have not always been able to pay off your balance every month: I will try to avoid using my credit card as much by taking these steps:

Now What?

www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/nowwhat

Learning Objectives

- What you found most helpful in this course;
- How you have been applying the techniques you have learned in this course in your everyday life;
- What you plan on doing now that you have completed this course.

"You're in competition with one person only and that is the individual you know you can become."
— Martha Graham, dancer and choreographer

You are now at the end of the course and this section is designed to help you reflect on yourself and what you have learned in this course and figure out how you will apply what you have learned in your everyday life.

TAKE IT TO THE STREETS: APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED

1. You learned several strategies in this course: time management, critical thinking, note-taking, etc.;
    - Which strategies did you find the most useful for you and why?
    - Did your confidence in that area improve? How?
    - What specifically about these strategies did you like?
    - What would you change about the Student Success Library? Why?

2. Compare your skills in two areas covered in the library from when you started to now;
    - Did your skills in these areas improve? How?
    - Do you feel more confident in this area? How and why?
3. What will you use in your life going forward?
    - How will you be sure that the strategies are still working for you a year from now?
    - What will you do if they are not? Be specific.
4. If you were to choose one of these additional resources to read, which would you choose first? Even if you notice a topic we may have covered in the Student Success Library, the following articles are shorter and more action-oriented, so you might learn something new:

    How Can I Set And Achieve My Goals?,
    How Can I Learn About Money And Budgeting?
    How Do I Choose A Career That's Right For Me?
    How Do I Talk To Professors When I Need Help?
    What Can I Do If I Have A Problem Dealing With Roommates?
    What Documents Do I Need To Have?
    How Do I Ask For A Recommendation Letter?
    How Do I Write A Professional Bio?
    How Can I Get Help With Intimate Partner Or Family Violence?
    How Do I Get Paid To Go To College
    How Do I Get Ready For A Job Interview?
    What's a Resume and How Do I Make One?
    How Do I Get and Keep a Job?
    What Can I Do After High School Besides College?

Thank You

I truly hope you enjoyed this course and have found this book helpful and encouraging.

I wish you continued success as you pursue your personal, academic and career goals beyond Santa Monica College.

All of these resources are free of charge to all, and you may use and share as you wish under the Creative Commons license indicated below.

Please let me know if I can help you get the most out of school as a student, develop materials or skill sets as an educator, or lift up your community in any way.

I'm Here for You And I Appreciate You.

If you'd like me to come and speak at your school, offer a teacher training, or help you develop your own customized student success curricula, please get in touch with me.

Link Library

Student Success Library Table of Contents and featured post which links to every Online Educational Resource (OER) textbook topic, the PDF downloadable textbook, and other resources for use by students, faculty, and communities helping students achieve their goals, in and out of the classroom.
How Can I Set And Achieve My Goals?, dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/goals
How Can I Learn About Money And Budgeting?, dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/finances
How Do I Choose A Career That's Right For Me?, dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/careerchoices
How Do I Talk To Professors When I Need Help?, dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/askforhelp
What Can I Do If I Have A Problem Dealing With Roommates?, dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/roommates
What Documents Do I Need To Have?, dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/documents
How Do I Ask For A Recommendation Letter?, dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/recommendationletter
How Do I Write A Professional Bio?, dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/professionalbio
How Can I Get Help With Intimate Partner Or Family Violence?, dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/domesticviolence
How Do I Get Paid To Go To College?, dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/moneyforcollege
How Do I Get Ready For A Job Interview?, dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/interviewprep
What's a Resume and How Do I Make One?, dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/resume
How Do I Get and Keep a Job?, dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/keepingyourjob
What Can I Do After High School Besides College?, dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/afterhighschool

Explore Your Personal Values and Motivation

Articles and Websites:
Career Cluster Interest Survey, https://bit.ly/npcareerclustersurvey
Career Bridge Survey, https://bit.ly/npcareerbridgesurvey
Life Stages and Values, https://bit.ly/lumenlifestages

Videos:
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, https://bit.ly/maslowandneeds
How about a little pep talk from Kid President? https://bit.ly/kpsppeptalk

Goals: Setting and Reaching Them

Articles and Websites:
How can I set and Achieve my Goals?,
https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/goals

Videos:
How to Write SMART Goals Effectively, https://bit.ly/smartgoalshowto
7 Steps to Cure Procrastination, https://bit.ly/beatprocrastination7steps
How President Obama Solves Problems, www.bit.ly/C20_PresidentObama
7 Habits of Highly Effective People, www.bit.ly/C20_7Habits

What Does Success Mean To You?

Articles and Websites:
Are You a Positive or Negative Thinker?, www.bit.ly/C20_MindToolsThinking
Carol Dweck, https://bit.ly/caroldweckwiki
Mindset Wikipedia, https://bit.ly/mindsetwiki
Ombuds office, www.smc.edu/ombuds

Videos:
The Scientific Power of Thought, www.bit.ly/C20_Powerofthought
Emotions and the Brain, www.bit.ly/C20_Emotions

Time Management, Including Battling Procrastination

Articles and Websites:
How to Beat Procrastination, https://bit.ly/waitbutwhyprocrastination

Videos:
Inside the Mind of a Master Procrastinator, www.bit.ly/C20_BeatProcrastination
How to use the Pomodoro Technique, https://bit.ly/studentsuccesspomodoro

Activities:
Daily Schedule Calculator, www.bit.ly/C20_DailySchedCalc
CCC Online Education Initiative Study Schedule webpage,
http://bit.ly/C20StudySchedule

Learning How To Learn

Articles and Websites:
The Learning Process, https://bit.ly/lumenlearningprocess
The Information Processing System, https://bit.ly/C20IPS
Focus, Focus, Focus, https://bit.ly/focuslearningnetwork
Tutoring Services, www.smc.edu/tutoring
The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Online Education Initiative, www.bit.ly/C20_OnlineLearningResources
Online Reading Strategies, http://bit.ly/C20_OnlineReadStrat
How to Conduct Library Research, https://bit.ly/libraryresearchtips
Library and Research Tips, https://bit.ly/presentationonresearch

Videos:
How to use VARK to Find Your Learning Style, https://bit.ly/learningwithvark
5 Active Reading Strategies, https://bit.ly/activereadingFrank
9 Best Scientific Study Tips, https://bit.ly/9tipsforstudying
How to Tame Your Wandering Mind, https://bit.ly/wanderingattention
Crash Course Study Skills: Taking Notes, https://bit.ly/crashcoursenote

Activities:
Take the VARK Questionnaire, www.bit.ly/C20_VARK

Test Taking And Anxiety

Articles and Websites:
Tutoring Services, www.smc.edu/tutoring
SMC STEM Program, www.smc.edu/stem
Learning Commons Test Taking Toolkit, https://bit.ly/ubctoolkits
Words to Watch for, https://bit.ly/wordstowatchfor
American Test Anxiety Association, https://bit.ly/testanxietystrategies
SMC Wellness, www.smc.edu/wellness
SMC Academic Conduct, https://bit.ly/c20SMCconduct

Videos:
How Your Brain's Executive Function Works, https://bit.ly/executivefunctionandbrains
Multiple Choice Test Strategies, https://bit.ly/multiplechoicetips
Test Taking Strategies, https://bit.ly/testingtipsandstrats
How to Beat Test Anxiety, https://bit.ly/franktestanxiety

Exploring Majors and Careers

Articles and Websites:
Standard Occupational Classification, www.bls.gov/soc
SMC Career Services Center, https://bit.ly/smccareer
California Career Zone, www.cacareerzone.org
SMC Counseling Department, http://www.smc.edu/counseling
SMC Internships, http://www.smc.edu/internship
How do I Choose a Career That's Right for me?
https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/careerchoices
Worker's Rights, https://nbcnews.to/3tqYA69
SMC Course Catalog, www.smc.edu/catalog
SMC Areas of Interest, https://www.smc.edu/academics/areas-of-interest/
What can I do With a Major in,
https://uncw.edu/career/whatcanidowithamajorin.html
What can I do With This Major, https://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors/

Videos:
Get Comfortable With Being Uncomfortable, https://bit.ly/comfywithbeinguncomfy

Identify and Plan for Your Educational Goals

Articles and Websites:
SMC Counseling Webpage, bit.ly/c20certsanddegrees
SMC General Education AA degrees page, https://bit.ly/C20smcAAs
What can I do After High School Besides College?,
https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/afterhighschool
SMC counseling website for transfer info, https://bit.ly/SMCtransfer
Assist.org, www.assist.org
SMC counseling website for GE info, https://bit.ly/csuinfoforsmc
IGETC GE info, https://bit.ly/ucatsmc
MyEdPlan, www.smc.edu/myedplan
SMC website, www.smc.edu/StudentServices

Critical Thinking

Articles and Websites:
Online Reading Strategies, http://bit.ly/C203CMedia
SMC Library, https://bit.ly/libraryatSMC

Videos:

5 tips for improving your critical thinking, https://bit.ly/tipsforcriticalthinking
Why Incompetent People Think They're Amazing, https://bit.ly/dunningkrueger
Critical Thinking Brain Teasers, https://bit.ly/criticalbrainteasers
Working Backwards to Solve Problems, https://bit.ly/workbackward

Diversity And Communication

Articles and Websites:
10 Reasons Why Too Much Social Media Is Bad for You, http://bit.ly/C20Unplug
What do I do if I Have a Problem Dealing With Roommates?, https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/roommates
How To Set Healthy Boundaries, https://bit.ly/healthyboundariesformentalhealth
Social Life in College, https://bit.ly/sociallifeincollege
How do I Talk to Professors When I Need Help?, https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/askforhelp

Videos:
Universities Discuss Diversity, https://bit.ly/collegediversity
What is Cultural Competence?, https://bit.ly/culturalcompetenceuni
5 Ways to Listen Better, http://bit.ly/C20ListenBetter

Mental, Physical and Emotional Health

Articles and Websites:
Food Security, https://bit.ly/foodsecuritysmc
Choose My Plate, http://www.choosemyplate.gov/
National Eating Disorders Association, https://bit.ly/C20_EatingDisorders
SMC Wellness Center, https://bit.ly/smcwellnesscenter
SMC Student Wellbeing, https://bit.ly/smcwellbeing
Center for Students with Disabilities, https://bit.ly/disabilityresourcescenter
The Nap Ministry, https://thenapministry.wordpress.com
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, http://bit.ly/C20CDCRiskFactors
Understanding Suicide Prevention, https://bit.ly/suicidepreventioncollegeresources
Getting Help with Family and Intimate Partner Violence, https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/domesticviolence
Free Guided-Meditations, https://bit.ly/meditationsforucla
On the Road to Quitting, http://bit.ly/C20QuittingGuide
How to Stay Safe at a College Party, https://bit.ly/partysafeplan
The Buddy System for Parties, https://bit.ly/buddysystemforparties
Common Drugs on College Campuses, https://bit.ly/campusdruguse
Drug Information Online, http://bit.ly/C20DrugInfo

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, https://www.samhsa.gov/
National Harm Reduction Coalition, https://harmreduction.org

Videos:
Suicide-Attempt Survivors Bust Myths About Suicide, https://bit.ly/suicidesurvivorsbustmyths
How to Process Your Emotions, https://bit.ly/howtoprocessemotions
All my Relations: A Traditional Lakota Approach to Health Equity, https://bit.ly/lakotahealth
How Stress Affects Your Brain, https://bit.ly/yourbrainonstress
Forest Bathing, https://bit.ly/forestsheal
Why Students Should Have Mental Health Days, https://bit.ly/healthforstudentminds
Addiction is a Disease, https://bit.ly/addictionisadisease
What is Consent?, https://bit.ly/consentfriespp
How do you Know if Someone Wants to Have sex With you: https://bit.ly/consentandrelationships

Activities:
Activity and Exercise Self-Assessment, https://bit.ly/exerciseanduni

Personal Finance and Paying for College

Articles and Websites:
How do I get and Keep a job?, https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/keepingyourjob
What Documents do I Need to Have?, https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/documents
How do I ask for a Recommendation Letter?, https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/recommendationletter
How do I Write a Professional bio?, https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/professionalbio
What is a Resume and how do I Make one?, https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/resume
How do I get Ready for a job Interview?, https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/interviewprep
How can I Learn About Money and Budgeting?, https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/finances
How do I get Paid to go to College?, https://www.dyanavalentine.com/studentsuccess/moneyforcollege
LinkedIn, http://linkedin.com/
Personal Finance Resources, http://bit.ly/C20_SMCPF

SMC Financial Aid and Scholarship Office, www.smc.edu/financialaid
SMC Scholarships, www.smc.edu/scholarships

Videos:
3 Psychological Tricks to Help you Save Money, https://bit.ly/savingmoneymindhacks

STUDENT SUCCESS LIBRARY

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