Redefining Success

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CHAPTER 1 - WHO ARE YOU?

1. Understanding Yourself

Success: "the accomplishment of an aim or purpose"[1]. Such a simple definition for an often complex and fraught idea. What is success for you? Are you striving for a goal or achievement based on external measures of success or for the internal gratification of the process of learning something new and navigating a new challenge? These are not easy questions to answer, but are essential to think about when considering what college will mean to you. As advisors we encourage students to look beyond just the grades and external feedback (while certainly important) and examine their interests, preferences, values and long term goals as they consider a broader definition for personal success. What path will bring you the most JOY, the most SATISFACTION? How can you create a life that you don't want to escape from? Is the path that you are on, one that is in alignment with your likes and dislikes? Will you be qualified to get a job or start off on a career that is fulfilling? In this first chapter, we will challenge you to assess your current path and consider your answers to these questions with the goal of helping you define, or redefine how you will measure your success in college and in life.

1.1 Purpose & Identity

Earning a college degree is often considered the ultimate step in learning and pursuing a career. Questions about college and your future adult life were probably sprinkled throughout your adolescence: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" "What is your plan for after high school?" "What will you major in?" Preparing for college in high school through Advanced Placement and dual credit college classes is becoming more and more popular, and attending college directly following high school graduation is seen

as the only path to take. The reality is that there are many different definitions of success and paths to reaching out goals. Most require us to overcome obstacles or make unexpected, tough decisions.

Transitioning from high school to college can be a much bigger step for students than they expect. They may consider that moving away from their hometown, living on their own, or making new friends will be the biggest changes and obstacles to overcome. By the time a student reaches college, they have attended many years of school, and therefore may expect to keep operating on the same beliefs and habits about learning and succeeding academically as they had before. But coming to college presents opportunities and challenges that many students do not anticipate and feel unprepared to handle.

Who am I? What are my values and beliefs? My strengths and weaknesses? Do I really want to be here at this school? In college at all? Am I excited about working in fields that coincide with my major after graduation, or did I choose it because that's what other people thought I would be good at? I want to earn my degree, but why can I not seem to get myself to class, or to do the homework? Most of us are faced with these questions throughout our higher education experience. It can be stressful to grapple with these questions, but ultimately it can help us examine our intentions and motivations for attending college and getting the most out of our time there.

If you, too, have struggled to stay diligent in courses and committed to your college experience, take some time to consider your Why. Why are you here? Why are you choosing to pursue a college degree? You may have never considered your why beyond, "because that's what people do after high school" or "successful people have college degrees." If your answers to those questions are, "to get a college degree, to get a better job, to make more money," challenge yourself to think deeper about the question. Some of the barriers to academic success you could be encountering may be due to the fact that you have not considered what YOU are doing in college.

It's easy to compare your own college experience with the

experiences of those around you, of your parents or older family members, even the experiences of characters in our favorite movies and television shows. When considering your why, think only about you and your motivations and goals. Examining your intrinsic motivations, the things you're curious about, passionate about, that you get a great deal of enjoyment and personal growth from, are most likely the things you should be pursuing long term. Keeping the why in the forefront of your decision making process and long term planning can make a huge difference in maintaining motivation and connection to course material.
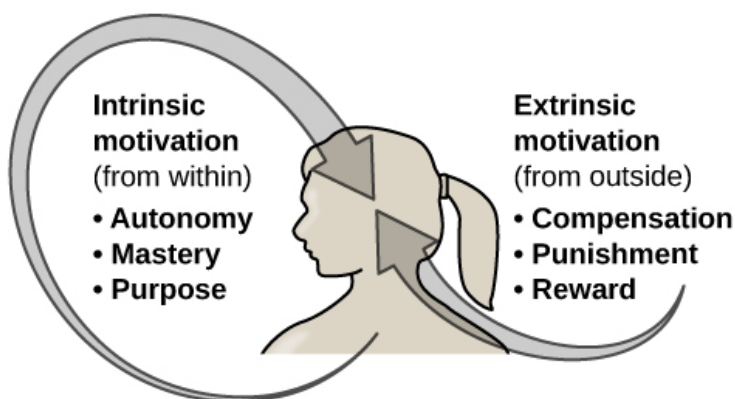
Recognizing your Why is an important step in identifying your path to success[2]. The road to getting there may be different than you initially anticipated. It could veer very far from the version of success you were introduced to in your younger years. It could also take you longer to get there than you hoped. What matters in the end is that you reached the destination, even if the journey did not align perfectly with what others may define as "successful."

1.2 Values

When observed closely, values can shape multiple aspects of your life, from everyday decisions to long-term goals and ambitions. Even

when not practiced actively, values can have a passive role, triggering aspirations and impacting motivation. Just as they may affect various areas of your life, they also play an important role in your college education. Have you ever wondered how your decision to pursue a college education aligns with your values?

Below you will find a general list of values. It is by no means comprehensive and exclusive. You may recognize other ideals you hold dear and prioritize above others. Many of these may align directly with your current effort. If you praise 'accomplishment', 'independence', or 'expertise', the college experience may provide you the environment to focus on these. But there are additional values that may conflict or divide your attention from academic success. Areas such as 'leisure', 'family', and 'travel' may end up competing for your time and attention in the middle of a semester.

Accomplishment/Achievement	Accountability/Responsibility
Autonomy/Independence	Balance/Stability
Service/Helping Others	Nature/Environment
Creativity/Self-Expression	Fairness/Equality/Diversity
Entrepreneurship/Innovation	Religion
Family	Friendship
Knowledge/Learning/Education	Honesty/Trust
Leadership	Spirituality
Fitness/Health	Wisdom
Safety/Security	Wealth
Competence	Loyalty
Travel/Adventure	Authority/Power/Control

Your values will impact your college experience and, to a point, may dictate some of the environments and encounters you will be exposed to. One of the common reasons students enroll in college is to actively experience new things. Whether it is creating a new social group, trying new activities, living on their own, or beginning to develop their professional career, values will dictate many of the

decisions students make on a regular basis. Recognizing what your values are and which one you will want to uphold can help make decisions a bit simpler down the road. You are constantly making decisions revolving around your college experience. Your major, whether to attend full time or part time, living on campus, taking student loans, all of these decisions may be centered around your values. Fully understanding them can help you make decisions that serve YOU. Particularly those that may have a long-term impact.

1.3 Strengths/Weakness

Our level of self-awareness and past experiences shape our personal view, particularly when thinking of our performances in school. When students struggle academically, they tend to shape their situation into a duality – these are my strengths and these are my weaknesses. While it is important to understand areas of improvement and areas of academic success, observing the world in such a black and white reality can be counterproductive too. We will spend time discussing the role of mindset in academics in a future chapter. For the time being, it is worth noting that putting limits to your abilities can make it difficult to improve on them. Weaknesses are often thought as negative or they can bring shame to individuals to the point we prefer not to think about them and ignore them completely. Additionally, if you believe a weakness is insurmountable or cannot be developed, you are less likely to attempt and improve in that area.

Reframing weaknesses is a common strategy to try and implement. At times, we can over-focus on our deficiencies that we do not realize all the good traits that we have and the growth we experienced. As previously mentioned, most people consider weaknesses to be negative. When analyzing yours, consider why these are negative and evaluate on whether there are positive aspects to it. Let's consider an example. An area that many people

struggle with is public speaking. In turn, we can reframe such challenge as an ability to be an intimate communicator, being able to work with small groups, and have the opportunity to connect with your audience at a more personal level. Reframing your weaknesses serves two purposes. First, it is a form of self-awareness. It allows you to better understand things about yourself. Second, it can lead to the discovery of other aspects of your life and recognize ways to cope or overcome your weakness. Consider 2-3 of your so-called weaknesses and think about ways in which you can evaluate them differently.

Personal Preferences

In considering "who you are" it is also important to think about your personal preferences. Personal preferences–your likes and dislikes–can have a profound impact on the way you make decisions and how you behave in certain environments.

In the context of higher education, personal preferences impact the decisions you make about the courses that you take, your choice of study environment, your living situation, even your motivation to seek out help from campus resources.

Think about what kind of classes you like to take:

- Do you prefer a large lecture hall with many students, or a small discussion group?
- Do you prefer to read textbooks or PowerPoint slides?
- Do you learn when you do or perform in a way that is hands on, or you prefer to learn through visual examples?
- Do you prefer individual assignments or group work?

Taking time to reflect and identify your personal academic preferences can help you make choices that will have an impact on academic outcomes.

Understanding your preferences is also important when you consider your long term goals, particularly in identifying possible jobs or career paths. Some of your preferences related to your academic career will be relevant in choosing a job, but there are many others to consider:

- Do you like to work on a team or work independently?
- Do you prefer a set work schedule or flexible hours?
- Do you like to travel or stay close to home?[3]

While you may prefer one approach, it does not mean that the other alternatives are not useful or effective. There will be times in your education and professional life when you will not have the luxury of options. Having preferences can impact our ability to improve. They can become a crutch or an excuse not to attempt improving your skills. Revisiting the previous example, you may be a wonderful communicator in a small group setting. However, that doesn't mean you cannot practice and improve your public speaking skills. As you evaluate your strengths, weaknesses, and preferences, do you recognize areas of improvement or situations in which you can experience growth?

As you consider what "achieving success" means to you, creating opportunities and making choices that are in alignment with your likes and dislikes can lead to greater satisfaction and enjoyment. As you reflect on your "ideal future" consider the ways in which your academic choices, including pursuing a 2 or 4 year degree, your major or plan of study, even the cost of your education are in support of your preferences and overall life satisfaction.[4]

Career Development

Career development describes a range of different practices. According to Watts (n.d.), career development is the lifelong process

of managing progression in learning and work. The quality of this process significantly determines the nature and quality of individuals' lives: the person they become, the sense of purpose they have and the income at their disposal. It also determines the social and economic contribution they make to the communities and societies of which they are part. Career Development begins when we are very young and are exposed to many different jobs and professions in our everyday life. It is being discussed within the context of this chapter because it is directly linked to your educational goals and objectives.

The choice to pursue higher education often comes with questions posed by well meaning friends and relatives: "What do you want to do when you graduate?" or "What are you going to do with your degree?" Identifying a career path can be an important source of external motivation during your college career. Career development starts with self-actualization and self-assessment of one's interests and capabilities[5]. When you allow your understanding of yourself to influence your approach to learning and your choices as a student, it will necessarily help inform your career path.

An essential aspect of career development is the identification of personal preferences (discussed above) and acquired skills. Throughout your education, it is very likely that you will encounter courses or subject matter that are just not that interesting to you. As a result, you may sense your motivation waning and fail to see the value in that particular area of study. This challenge presents many opportunities for growth. It is important to reflect on why you aren't enjoying the class and then make a decision in light of that awareness. You may decide to change your major as a result, you may decide you need to develop increased skills in order to master the material or you may develop a further understanding about how you learn and what aspects of learning are most enjoyable to you. This is all essential in the career development process.

Additionally, when you sense your motivation waning consider this: employers are looking for job applicants who have transferable

or "soft skills" which will enable them to be successful in a variety of fields. So while you may not feel as if specific course material is applicable to your future job or major or area of interest, the soft skills that you are developing will always be relevant.

Soft skills include, but are by no means limited to:

- Dependable, punctual and self-motivated (showing up on time, ready to work, not being a liability)
- Strong time management
- Enthusiastic and positive attitude
- Committed
- Willing to learn (lifelong learner)
- Able to accept constructive criticism
- Strong problem solving skills
- Adaptable (willing to change and take on new challenges)
- A team player
- Strong communication and writing skills
- Critical Thinking
- Ethical and honest

These skills are invaluable. Matthew Sanders in "Becoming a Learner"[6] notes how employers often hire college students outside of their respective disciplines, putting emphasis on critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and personal capacity. When you develop them through all of your academic experiences you will take them with you wherever your career path may lead. Hopefully this understanding of the continuous development of soft skills can help you identify motivation in your coursework.

As you consider the jobs or career that may be fulfilling to you and match your skills and interests, you may find it helpful to review some of the resources in the appendix of this book. There you will find information on key differences between a "job" and a "career," along with a "Five Step Process for Choosing a Career."

As a final note, please remember that if you have no idea what job, profession or career resonates with you, that is ok, too. While

college is a place to build both hard (tangible and specific) and soft (transferable) skills, it is also a place for self discovery. A place where you can assess your values, your interests and the life you want to create for yourself. Experiment, learn from your mistakes and continue to reflect on your experience. Use every opportunity and every misstep as a chance for growth.

General Self Assessment and Reflection

This chapter has offered many reflection questions, tools and opportunities to assess your values, interests, skills. While taking these self-assessments can be valuable, it is also important to reflect upon the results of these surveys. As this section comes to a close, we urge you to engage in the following activity:

- Choose one of the assessments highlighted in this chapter or available in the resource section of this book. Many students find value in completing the MBTI or LASSI as a first assessment.
- Review your results and then spend some time writing about the following:
  - What aspect(s) of your results stand out to your most? Why?
  - What are your areas of strength that will help you succeed in college?
  - What are your areas of growth/opportunity that you can focus on?
  - Do you think this assessment accurately represents you as a student? Why or why not?

1.4 Non-Traditional Paths to Success

Now that you've spent some time reflecting on your values, interests, preferences and personal attributes, what to do you do with that information? How do you integrate this knowledge and self awareness into your life? First, consider where you are right now–what path are you on and consider if that path is in agreement with the life you WANT and WHO you are. If you believe you are currently on the path to success, whatever that means for you–great! If not, and you are feeling unfulfilled or unsuccessful in your current trajectory–great! Now is the time to make a change.

Change could mean many different things. Perhaps you are a full time student in a traditional four year program–maybe you take some time away from school or you scale back your academic studies to part time and focus on work, or an internship, or volunteer activities, or family or anything that is in line with your values and interests. Maybe you realize your current major isn't actually what you are truly interested in–so make a change. Maybe through this process you acknowledge that you are ok taking out loans to pay for full-time school because your career goals after graduation will allow you to comfortably pay back those loans. Perhaps considering that success may simply mean acknowledging what obstacles you are currently facing and determining a path to overcome them–no matter how small or large those challenges may be[7].

All this is to say that we hope, through this process, and by reading the subsequent chapters, you are able to honestly assess what success means for YOU and make changes to live in accordance with your definition of success.

One additional word of advice–prior to making any changes, connect with a campus resource, whether that be a faculty member or academic advisor, to talk through your ideas, understand all of your options and help outline next steps. We are all here to help you on your path to success.

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PART II
CHAPTER 2 - MINDSET

2. How Mindset Impacts Your Education

"Your beliefs become your thoughts, your thoughts become your words, your words become your actions, your actions become your habits, your habits become your values, your values become your destiny."

-Mahatma Gandhi

In the previous chapter we touched on your individual characteristics that frame and shape your educational experience. One area we glossed over, however, was your mindset. Your attitude towards education plays a significant role on how you approach college. It shapes your image, your overall experience, and your actions. Yogi Berra framed it in terms of baseball, saying "Baseball is 90 percent mental. The other half is physical." However, education is not that much different. While your actions and results may be at the forefront, examining your beliefs and attitudes towards education matters significantly. In the following sections, we will introduce the role of mindset, how your own perception of education influences your approach to your academics and introduce some psychological practices that can influence your behaviors.

2.1 Learner vs. Student

One of the most significant changes that many students experience when they transition from high school to college is a shift in the expectation of you as a "student" to that of a "learner" and the resulting adjustment in mindset about the process of acquiring

knowledge. A "student," in the most basic sense, acquires information from the teacher, completes assignments under the oversight of an instructor and success is determined by grades. A "learner", on the other hand, acquires information both inside and outside of the classroom. Learning is often self directed but also happens through collaboration with the instructor and peers. Success is identified not just by grades but by the process of learning, mastery of the subject and the ability to make connections across subjects and ideas.[1]

In short, as a "learner" you take greater ownership of your educational experience. Information is provided by an instructor in lectures or discussions, but you are also responsible for generating new information, asking questions and thinking critically and engaging your previous knowledge. By examining the differences between what it means to be a "student" versus a "learner", you can see how the definition of "success" changes when your mindset about the learning process shifts. Focusing less on just the outcome, i.e.-grades, and more on the process of learning and mastery of material, can lead to deeper understanding and greater success in the long term.

Liberal Arts Education

If your goal in attending college is to "just get a job", then why bother engaging in a diverse liberal arts education versus focusing on vocational or pre-professional training? Many higher education institutions, including Boise State, require students to take several classes across a variety of disciplines, with the vast majority of these courses being outside your declared major. You may initially view these "requirements" as being worthless or irrelevant. You may make statements like, "this class doesn't matter...when am I EVER going to use this information."

Boise State describes its liberal arts offering as "foundational

requirements" and are part of the curriculum to "ensure that students are repeatedly exposed to the essential soft skills sought in college graduates as well as the disciplinary outcomes important for breadth of learning. These outcomes were developed by the faculty to provide undergraduates with a common experience aimed at unifying the university's diverse student body and expanding students' awareness of themselves and their world."[2]

The goal of helping students develop a mastery of content to increase understanding of the diverse ways of thinking and knowing the world are essential for long term success after college.

If you think about higher education as solely job employment, consider this: employers overwhelmingly endorse broad learning and cross-cutting skills as the best preparation for long-term career success. The college learning outcomes they rate as most important are oral communication, critical thinking, ethical judgment, working effectively in teams, written communication, and the real-world application of skills and knowledge.[3]

Developing an appreciation for the long term value of diverse learning opportunities is at the heart of a liberal arts education. We urge you to consider the value you place on courses outside of your major area of study–think about your motivation and level of engagement in that material. With a deeper understanding of the inherent value in learning across disciplines and the value that employers place on the skills cultivated through a liberal arts curriculum, perhaps you will find your mindset shifting in a way that will increase motivation and shift your understanding of success.

2.2 Growth vs Fixed Mindset

The idea of mindset is not a novel concept. Nevertheless, it can have a significant impact on your experience as a college student. In simple terms, mindset is the attitudes you hold regarding any aspect of your life. Think about your perceptions regarding your preferred

class, your ideal work environment, your relationships. All of those combined create your overall mindset.

Carol Dweck[4], a pioneer psychologist that focuses on motivation, identified two types of mindset when it comes to evaluating our own abilities, growth and fixed mindset. These self-conceptions guide behavior, actions, and impact motivation. A person with a fixed mindset has a very static perception of their abilities. They believe that their intelligence, character, or skills cannot be easily improved or that significant changes cannot be made. One common example of a fixed mindset relates to math. Have you thought or heard "I'm not good at math", "I'm not a math person", or "I hate math and math hates me back"? A fixed mindset positions the student to believe that challenges cannot be overcome or that their skills cannot get better in a significant way. A person with a growth mindset, on the other hand, sees progression in a much different light. With effort, abilities improve. They embrace criticism, feedback, and challenges. They see them as an opportunity for development.

Since mindset is the combination of attitudes, you might observe different types of mindset around various aspects of your life. Maybe you have a growth mindset around sports, seeing your improvement in the basketball court each time you practice. But you might have a fixed mindset in regards to your dancing skills and believe that no matter how much you try, your moves on the dance floor will not improve. Consider your education for a moment. Think about your experience in college so far. What is your mindset regarding school? Do you notice having a fixed mindset in some areas and a growth mindset in others?

Mindset and Fear of Failure

In the movie Apollo 13, Ed Harris portrays NASA flight director Gene Kranz as he successfully guides the crew of a damaged spacecraft

to safety. In a famous scene during which Kranz and his staff are attempting to overcome some extremely daunting challenges, Harris shouts, "Failure, though never the intended outcome, can and sometimes does happen." Consider how you respond to failure–do you shy away from opportunities that pose the risk of failure? Do you consider failure to define who you are or your abilities?

Believing that your qualities are carved in stone–a fixed mindset–creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over. If you have only a certain amount of intelligence, a certain personality, and a certain moral character–well, then you'd better prove that you have a healthy dose of them. It simply wouldn't do to look or feel deficient in these most basic characteristics.[4]

One might think that having confidence in your intelligence is a whole lot better than thinking that you're stupid, but the result was the same. A fixed mindset can hold you back because it can lead to a paralyzing fear of failure. Have you ever had a teacher, parent or peer tell you how smart you are? Did you believe them? If so, great, but that confidence in your intelligence can be a double-edged sword. High school and college offer many occasions when self-confidence in innate intelligence can be threatened. Perhaps you believe that if you fail on a test or in a course it means that you are not the smart person you believed yourself to be. If you fail, family and friends will find out that they were wrong.

However, there is a way to avoid all of the risks of academic rigor. You could just not try. You might think, "If I don't try I'll get bad marks on my report card, but those won't be true indicators of my intelligence." By not putting forth any effort, your intelligence would never be disproven. With this kind of self talk, it is fear, not logic, which is guiding your behavior. This is a form of avoidance behavior that is common in education. Students avoid participating on specific tasks that might disprove their own image of themselves or might shine a light on areas of improvements the student is not ready to tackle.

In contrast, Dweck writes that, "growth mindset is based on the

belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts"[4]. Dweck goes on to explain that we can choose to have a growth mindset about any type of ability, whether it's math, art, athletics, or any other skill that one wishes to cultivate.

Nevertheless, when it comes to academic success and success in all phases of life, failure is always an option. Though it can be painful, failure can lead to great learning and progress when analyzed through the lens of a growth mindset. By focusing more on effort than on outcomes anyone can learn and grow, regardless of their skill level. Therefore, to make the most of their time in college, seek out challenges that will stretch your abilities. These challenges can take many forms and occur in a variety of settings, both inside and outside of the classroom. When seeking out challenges there is always the possibility of agonizing defeat, but out of that defeat can be the seeds of great success in the future.[5]

Locus of Control

Locus of control is a psychological concept that refers to how strongly people believe they have control over the situations and experiences that affect their lives. In education, locus of control typically refers to how students perceive the causes of their academic success or failure.

Students with an "internal locus of control" generally believe that their success or failure is a result of the effort and hard work they invest in their education. Students with an "external locus of control" generally believe that successes or failures result from external factors beyond their control, such as luck, fate, circumstance, injustice, bias, or teachers who are unfair, prejudiced, or unskilled. For example, students with an internal locus of control might blame poor grades on their failure to study, whereas students with an external locus of control may blame an unfair teacher or test for their poor performance.

Whether internal or external, locus of control is believed to have a powerful effect on academic motivation, persistence, and achievement in school. In education, "internals" are considered more likely to work hard in order to learn, progress, and succeed, while "externals" are more likely to believe that working hard is "pointless" because someone or something else is treating them unfairly or holding them back. Students with an external locus of control may also believe that their accomplishments will not be acknowledged or their effort will not result in success.

For some students, an external locus of control can become a coping mechanism to comprehend or justify their past experiences. Negative exposures, exceptionally difficult challenges, or encountering failure regularly can lead to the aforementioned behavior. Blaming other people or external factors is a process to rationalize their experience and subsequent behavior.

Several questionnaires have been developed to help identify whether students tend toward an internal or external locus of control. Julian B. Rotter, the psychologist who originally developed the locus-of-control concept, created a widely used question-based assessment and a corresponding scale designed to identify where students are on the internal-external spectrum. The questionnaire offers a series of choices between two statements. For example, the respondent would choose between "I have often found that what is going to happen will happen" or "Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action." Rotter's assessment is one of a number of diagnostic tools and scales that may be used by psychologists and educators.

Locus of control is directly linked to mindset. Take a moment and see the similarities between a fixed mindset and an external locus of control and growth mindset and an internal locus of control. These characteristics play a role on how students perceive education and their own progress in their educational careers. These are psychological factors that must be fostered, as in the case of growth mindset and internal locus of control, or overcome, as in the case of fixed mindset and external locus of control.

Thinking about your experience, are mindset and locus of control areas that you should consider improving?

2.3 Stereotype Threat & Imposter Syndrome

There are multiple psychological phenomena that may be impacting your mindset toward school without your awareness. Two that we'll focus on are stereotype threat and imposter syndrome.

Stereotype threat[6] refers to the risk of confirming negative stereotypes about an individual's racial, ethnic, gender, or cultural group. The term was coined by the researchers Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson[7], who demonstrated that black college students performed worse on standardized tests than their white peers when they were reminded before taking the tests that their racial group stereotypically does poorly on such exams. When their race was not emphasized, however, black students performed similarly to their white peers.

Many studies have looked at both race- and gender-based stereotypes, including one that found that women performed less well in a chess match when they were told they would be playing against a male. When they were reminded that women tend to be worse at chess than men, their performance also declined.

Steele and Aronson found that situational factors—more than individual personality or other characteristics—can strengthen or weaken the stereotype-threat effect. For example, student performance was influenced by the way a test was described. When students were told that the test measured their intelligence, black students performed significantly worse than their white peers, but when they were told that the test diagnosed their ability to solve problems, the race-based performance gap disappeared[7]. Other influential factors include the difficulty of the task and the

relevance of the negative stereotype to the task. In addition, the stereotype-threat effect appeared to be stronger among students who wanted to perform well and who more strongly identified with the stereotyped group.

Imposter syndrome refers to a pattern of behavior where individuals doubt their accomplishments, attributing them to luck or chance, and have a persistent issue with accepting their successes as a result of their hard work[8]. It was first studied in the 1970s by researchers Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes who recognized the behaviors in high achievers who fail to acknowledge their abilities and instead fear they will be found out as a fraud[9][10].

Consider how you speak about yourself and your academic successes. After doing well on an assignment or exam, do you say you just got lucky or it was easier than you expected? When you do well in a course, do you attribute it to the chance that you got an instructor that was not too hard of a grader? Upon getting offered a job, do you think the only reason you got it was because there must have been little to no other applicants? Have you sat in a class and assumed everyone else knows exactly what is going on and only you are lost?

These are typical thoughts of people who struggle with imposter syndrome. Though not an actual diagnosable disorder, imposter syndrome impacts most people in some way regardless of their identities or past performance in a given area. You may even see it come up only in specific times, like in academic settings, but not in others, such as competing in athletic events.

Both stereotype threat and imposter syndrome can develop as a result of overt or subtle messaging from parents, peers and teachers. Teachers may have given subtle signals that they perceive girls to be less capable in math and science, while suggesting—implicitly or explicitly—that boys are expected to excel in math and science. If the girls internalize these messages, they may shy away from challenging math problems or learning opportunities such as math-team competitions. If stereotype threat then causes them to perform below their real ability on tests, it

may confirm their feelings and perceptions of inferiority. It is also important to acknowledge the role that social norms play in the development of negative stereotypes and the impact of stereotype threat. Many of us accept the social status quo and take for granted the assumptions we make about others. We will encourage you to reflect on and check your ingrained beliefs about others (and yourself) because our judgements and expectations of others have a real impact. Those who experience stereotype threat in evaluative situations often leads to underperformance[7].

Imposter syndrome can show up in students who were high achieving children, but face struggles academically as teens or young adults. It also commonly appears in students with tendencies toward perfectionism or who have difficulties asking for or accepting help. People are taught to deflect in situations where they are being complimented to appear humble, but doing so regularly can cause a person to internalize those messages and begin to believe they lack the abilities necessary to achieve[11].

Overcoming either stereotype threat or imposter syndrome takes time and effort. The first step is to recognize and acknowledge these thoughts of yourself or others when you have them, then begin challenging your own thinking. This is easier said than done. These thoughts and feelings of inferiority have most likely been deeply ingrained in you over many years. Challenging your internalized beliefs about abilities can over time lead you to viewing past failures as learning opportunities and successes as achievements that you worked hard for and deserved.

Finally, when evaluating your thought process it's important to reflect on the people you surround yourself with and the messages you regularly receive from others. Examine the social media accounts you follow and the impact they are having on you mentally. Replace the negative accounts with ones that can provide encouragement and spark positive personal reflection. It may be necessary to adjust your social circle to spend less time with the people who reinforce these negative feelings and more time with trusted mentors and friends who provide encouragement. If you

feel like you are in need of an unbiased, confidential source to help you work through this, we recommend meeting with a professional counselor at Health Services.

Concluding

Many of us have heard the adage, "speak to yourself the way you would speak to someone you love." This sentiment is particularly important when examining your mindset and patterns of thought that may be impacting your ability to reach your goals. Perhaps your first goal on this journey is to notice patterns of negativity in your thinking or discouraging self talk and find ways to "flip the script" and see opportunities in challenges. Establishing relationships with those who support the development of a positive mindset is equally important. Advisors, faculty, teaching assistants, coaches, friends, teammates and family can all support you in identifying your strengths and we urge you to write them down as daily reminders.

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CHAPTER 3 - HOW WE LEARN

3. Learning

How We Learn and How Our Brain Works

In Chapter 2, we discussed key differences between being a "student" and being a "learner" and how the college model requires students to do a great deal of learning outside of the classroom. As such, it is important to understand how we learn in order to make the most effective use of your study time. This chapter will cover three areas of learning and comprehension. The first section will elucidate the process of memorizing information. Understanding this process can assist you in recognizing better ways to study and absorb information. The second section will discuss Bloom's taxonomy, highlighting different aspects of knowledge and the process of mastering information. This area particularly assists in recognizing gaps in knowledge and actions you can complete to fully comprehend material and master a subject. The final segment will discuss metacognition, or the exercise of thinking about your own thinking. As a college student, you have a unique opportunity to reflect on your own thinking and learning and adjust your learning strategies to best suit your personal preferences.

3.1 An Information Processing Model

Let's begin by discussing memory and the manner in which we absorb information.You are constantly processing information. Your senses are constantly relaying new information to your brain. Consider sitting in a lecture or lab, your eyes and ears are relaying the content of a class to your brain, your sense of smell or touch

may give you new information revealed through a scientific experiment. This new information goes into your short term memory. Additionally, as college students, new information often builds upon older, stored information. How can you ensure you retain what you learn for future use? The Information Processing Theory argues that learners need to DO something with newly learned information in order to store this new material in long term memory[1].

The process of DOING something with new material is called encoding. The encoding process can include active engagement with material in a lab-like environment, it may require you to think critically about the new information and connect newly learned concepts to previous information. During encoding a learner may watch, listen, repeat, or recall while trying to establish a neurological pathway from the new information to "long term storage" in the brain[1].

In order for information to go into long term storage, it has to pass through three distinct stages: Sensory Memory, Short-Term Memory, and Long-Term Memory. These stages were first proposed by Richard Atkinson and Richard Shiffrin[2]. Their model of human memory is based on the belief that we process memories in the same way that a computer processes information.
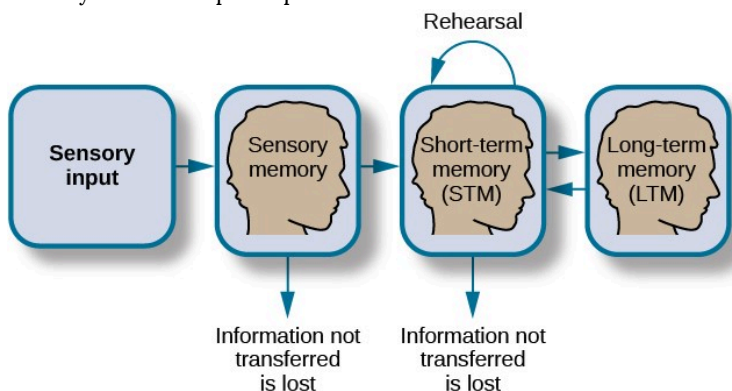
Learning, Remembering, and Retrieving Information Is Important for Academic Success

The first thing your brain does is take in information from your senses. In many instructional settings, students primarily use hearing for lectures and seeing for reading textbooks. Information perceived from senses is stored in short-term memory.

It is useful to then be able to do multiple things with information in the short-term memory. You want to: 1) decide if that information is important; 2) be able to save the information that is important in your brain on a longer-term basis (long-term memory); 3) retrieve that information when you need to.

Moving Information from the Short-term Memory To the Long-term Memory

This is something that takes a lot of time: there is no shortcut for it. Students who skip putting in the time and work often end up cramming at the end. Cramming can be an effective method in the short-term. However, due to the stress of cramming and the amount of information processed by the brain over a short period of time, that information is rarely transferred to long-term memory. It is very common to not recall what you study a few days after the exam.

Previewing the information you are trying to memorize is an important first step in transferring information to long term memory. The more familiar you are with what you are learning, the more likely you are to remember it. Another important way to encode information is to try and understand the information and relate it to something you already know[3]. Creating context and connection helps with recall.

For memorizing tedious lists, creating acronyms such as "SCUBA"

or "ROY G BIV," can be helpful because the acronym is a cue for what you need to remember. With practice and repetition, the acronym can trigger the brain to recall the entire piece of information. Additionally, flash cards are a valuable tool for memorization because they allow you to self-test through repetition. They are convenient to bring with you anywhere, and can be used effectively whether you have one minute or an hour. Additionally, flash cards can trigger multiple senses for easier memorization, including visual and kinetic efforts. Using multiple senses in the learning process has been shown to increase information processing[1].

The last step in transferring information to long term memory is to apply it. Ask yourself: In what real world scenarios could you apply this information? Connecting the information to specific instances or examples further assists your brain in organizing information and recalling it when needed. Lastly, for mastery, try to teach the information to someone else. Being able to explain a topic in your own words to someone else demonstrates full understanding of the material. Recruit a parent, roommate, or uninterested pet. If you are able to recite a topic in a clear and concise manner for others to understand, it is a good sign you have fully absorbed the material.

3.2 Bloom's Taxonomy

Very few people have the capacity to listen to a lecture and are able to comprehend, remember, and implement the information received right away. The same applies to skills and hobbies. It is impossible to master a pastime after a single demonstration. Learning is a process. That's where Bloom's Taxonomy comes in. Although it is primarily used by educators, it elucidates the undertaking of learning, breaking down various steps and traits to fully comprehend material, and clarify various levels of mastery.

Bloom's Taxonomy was created in 1956 under the leadership of

educational psychologist Dr. Benjamin Bloom in order to promote higher forms of thinking in education, such as analyzing and evaluating concepts, processes, procedures, and principles, rather than just remembering facts (rote learning). It is most often used when designing educational, training, and learning processes.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Level	Description	Verbs
create	Produce new or original work	Design, assemble, construct, conjecture, develop, formulate, author, investigate
evaluate	Justify a stand or decision	appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, critique, weigh
analyze	Draw connections among ideas	differentiate, organize, relate, compare, contrast, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test
apply	Use information in new situations	execute, implement, solve, use, demonstrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch
understand	Explain ideas or concepts	classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate
remember	Recall facts and basic concepts	define, duplicate, list, memorize, repeat, state

Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching

The Three Domains of Learning

The committee identified three domains or categories of educational activities or learning[4]:

- Cognitive: mental skills (knowledge)
- Affective: growth in feelings or emotional areas (attitude or self)
- Psychomotor: manual or physical skills (skills)

This taxonomy of learning behaviors may be thought of as "the goals of the learning process." That is, after a learning opportunity, the learner should have acquired a new skill, knowledge, and/or attitude.

Bloom et al[4] further reduces the three domains into subdivisions, starting from the simplest cognitive process or behavior to the most

complex. The divisions outlined are not absolutes and there are other systems or hierarchies that have been devised, such as the Structure of Observed Learning Outcome (SOLO). However, Bloom's Taxonomy is easily understood and is probably the most widely applied one in use today.

Cognitive Domain

The cognitive domain involves knowledge and the development of intellectual skills[4]. This includes the recall or recognition of specific facts, procedural patterns, and concepts that serve in the development of intellectual abilities and skills. There are six major categories of cognitive and processes, starting from the simplest to the most complex:

- Knowledge
- Comprehension
- Application
- Analysis
- Synthesis
- Evaluation

The categories can be thought of as degrees of difficulties. That is, the first ones must normally be mastered before the next one can take place.

- Knowledge "involves the recall of specifics and universals, the recall of methods and processes, or the recall of a pattern, structure, or setting."

- Comprehension "refers to a type of understanding or apprehension such that the individual knows what is being communicated and can make use of the material or idea being communicated without necessarily relating it to other material

or seeing its fullest implications."

- Application refers to the "use of abstractions in particular and concrete situations."

- Analysis represents the "breakdown of a communication into its constituent elements or parts such that the relative hierarchy of ideas is made clear and/or the relations between ideas expressed are made explicit."

- Synthesis involves the "putting together of elements and parts so as to form a whole."

- Evaluation engenders "judgments about the value of material and methods for given purposes."

The Revised Taxonomy

In 2001, a group of specialists published "A Taxonomy for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment", a revision of Bloom's Taxonomy. This title draws attention away from the somewhat static notion of "educational objectives" (in Bloom's original title) and points to a more dynamic conception of classification.

   The authors of the revised taxonomy underscore this dynamism, using verbs and gerunds to label their categories and subcategories (rather than the nouns of the original taxonomy)[5]. These "action words" describe the cognitive processes by which thinkers encounter and work with knowledge:

- Remembering
- Understanding
- Applying
- Analyzing
- Evaluating

- Creating

    Bloom's Revised Taxonomy improved the usability of it by using action words.

    The following table[6] describes the six main skill sets within the cognitive domain and gives you information on the level of learning expected for each. Read each description closely for details of what college-level work looks like in each domain (note that the table begins with remembering, the lowest level of the taxonomy).

MAIN SKILL LEVELS WITHIN THE COGNITIVE DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES OF RELATED LEARNING SKILLS (specific actions related to the skill set)
Remembering	When you are skilled in remembering, you can recognize or recall knowledge you've already gained, and you can use it to produce or retrieve definitions, facts, and lists. Remembering may be how you studied in grade school or high school, but college will require you to do more with the information.	identify · relate · list · define · recall · memorize · repeat · record · name
Understanding	Understanding is the ability to grasp or construct meaning from oral, written, and graphic messages. Each college course will introduce you to new concepts, terms, processes, and functions. Once you gain a firm understanding of new information, you'll find it easier to comprehend how or why something works.	restate · locate · report · recognize · explain · express · identify · discuss · describe · review · infer · illustrate · interpret · draw · represent · differentiate · conclude
Applying	When you apply, you use or implement learned material in new and concrete situations. In college you will be tested or assessed on what you've learned in the previous levels. You will be asked to solve problems in new situations by applying knowledge and skills in new ways. You may need to relate abstract ideas to practical situations.	apply · relate · develop · translate · use · operate · organize · employ · restructure · interpret · demonstrate · illustrate · practice · calculate · show · exhibit · dramatize

Analyzing	When you analyze, you have the ability to break down or distinguish the parts of material into its components, so that its organizational structure may be better understood. At this level, you will have a clearer sense that you comprehend the content well. You will be able to answer questions such as what if, or why, or how something would work.	analyze · compare · probe · inquire · examine · contrast · categorize · differentiate · contrast · investigate · detect · survey · classify · deduce · experiment · scrutinize · discover · inspect · dissect · discriminate · separate
Evaluating	With skills in evaluating, you are able to judge, check, and even critique the value of material for a given purpose. At this level in college you will be able to think critically, Your understanding of a concept or discipline will be profound. You may need to present and defend opinions.	judge · assess · compare · evaluate · conclude · measure · deduce · argue · decide · choose · rate · select · estimate · validate · consider · appraise · value · criticize · infer
Creating	With skills in creating, you are able to put parts together to form a coherent or unique new whole. You can reorganize elements into a new pattern or structure through generating, planning, or producing. Creating requires originality and inventiveness. It brings together all levels of learning to theorize, design, and test new products, concepts, or functions.	compose · produce · design · assemble · create · prepare · predict · modify · plan · invent · formulate · collect · generalize · document combine · relate · propose · develop · arrange · construct · organize · originate · derive · write

While Bloom's original cognitive taxonomy did mention three levels of knowledge or products that could be processed, they were not discussed in great detail and remained one-dimensional:

- Factual – The basic elements students must know to be acquainted with a discipline or solve problems.
- Conceptual – The interrelationships among the basic elements within a larger structure that enable them to function

together.

- Procedural – How to do something, methods of inquiry, and criteria for using skills, algorithms, techniques, and methods.

In Krathwohl and Anderson's revised version, the authors combine the cognitive processes with the above three levels of knowledge to form a matrix. In addition, they added another level of knowledge – metacognition:

- Metacognitive – Knowledge of cognition in general, as well as awareness and knowledge of one's own cognition.

3.3 Metacognition

Metacognition is, put simply, thinking about one's thinking. More precisely, it refers to the processes used to plan, monitor, and assess one's understanding and performance. Metacognition includes a critical awareness of a) one's thinking and learning and b) oneself as a thinker and learner.

Initially studied for its development in young children,[7] [8] researchers began to look at how experts display metacognitive thinking and how these thought processes can be taught to novices to improve their learning[9]. In "How People Learn", the National Academy of Sciences' synthesis of decades of research on the science of learning, one of the three key findings of this work is the effectiveness of a "'metacognitive' approach to instruction" (p.18)[10].

Metacognitive practices help students become aware of their strengths and weaknesses as learners, writers, readers, test-takers, and group members. A key element is recognizing the limit of one's knowledge or ability and then figuring out how to expand that knowledge or extend the ability. Those who know their strengths and weaknesses in these areas will be more likely to "actively

monitor their learning strategies and resources and assess their readiness for particular tasks and performances" (p.67) [10].

Practicing metacognition is easier to do than you might think. It simply involves reflecting on what you have done in a class or on an assignment to check your own understanding and learning, as well as see what you could do differently. Growing up, your parents may have asked you when you got home from school, "what did you learn today?" Thinking back on your classes that day and the main takeaways you got from the lessons is a form of metacognition. If an instructor has ever had you write a short reflection in class on a prompt, or pair up with another classmate to reflect on a topic in class, they had you practice a metacognitive strategy. Utilizing metacognition regularly can help you differentiate between the topics you are familiar with and the topics that you deeply understand[11]. It can also help develop your growth mindset as discussed in chapter two of this book.

The absence of metacognition connects to the research by Dunning, Johnson, Ehrlinger, and Kruger on "Why People Fail to Recognize Their Own Incompetence"[12]. The Dunning-Kruger effect is a psychological phenomenon in which individuals perceive they know more than they actually do about certain subjects. They found that "people tend to be blissfully unaware of their incompetence," lacking "insight about deficiencies in their intellectual and social skills." If you've ever felt really confident after taking an exam or turning in an assignment but received a grade much lower than you expected, you may have fallen victim to this effect. Typical study methods like re-reading notes or highlighting your textbook can give you the false confidence that you have learned the material because you spent time doing the activity. In reality, these strategies are some of the least effective for retaining information.

As a student, you have ultimate control over your learning. Yes, your instructors may present material in class and assign homework, but it is up to you to learn that material. Practicing metacognition can assist in learning that information deeply, instead of having a surface-level knowledge of a subject. Try

reflecting on your learning before, during, or after class. Ask yourself, "What do I totally understand about today's lesson? What am I still confused about? Where can I go to get my questions answered?"

When preparing for an exam, make a plan for your studying that includes a reflection on what will be on the test, and within that, what subject matter you know and what you do not know. Decide where and how much time you will spend studying, and what active strategies you will use to learn. After the test is over, keep reflecting. Instead of putting the exam away and hoping for a better outcome on the next one, think about what you did well and what you could have done differently. Consider what study strategies worked for you and if there was anything on the exam that you did not anticipate. Following up with your instructor one on one during office hours may help to provide you feedback and clarify any remaining questions you have about the material. Practicing these metacognitive strategies regularly will help with long-term retention, leading to increased learning and, hopefully, higher grades.

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CHAPTER 4 - TIME MANAGEMENT

4. Time Management and Productivity

4.1 Time Management[1]

If you had a bank that credited your account each morning with $86,400, but carried no balance from day to day and allowed you to keep no cash in your account, and every evening cancelled whatever part of the amount you had failed to use during the day, what would you do? Draw out every cent, of course! Well, you have such a bank, and its name is Time. Every morning it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off as lost whatever you have failed to invest with purpose. It carries no balance; it allows no overdrafts. Each day it opens a new account with you. Each night it burns the record of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposit, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no borrowing from tomorrow. It is critical to use the time you have to our advantage to reach your goals and live the life you desire.

Technically, time cannot be managed, but we label it time management when we talk about how people use their time. We often bring up efficiency and effectiveness when discussing how people spend their time, but we cannot literally manage time. What we can do is find better ways to spend our time, allowing us to accomplish our most important tasks and spend time with the people most important to us.

What is your relationship with time? Are you usually early, right on time or late? Do you find yourself often saying, "I wish I had more time?" Are you satisfied with your relationship with time or would you like to change it?

The Value of Time

If someone were to negotiate for an hour of your time, how much would that be worth to you? We often equate time with money. Many of us work in positions where we are paid by the hour; this gives us some gauge of what we are worth to our employers. Some items we purchase because we think they are of good value for their price. Others we pass on. Are some hours of your day more important or more valuable than others? Why? Are you more productive in the morning or in the evening? Once people realize how valuable time is, they often go to great lengths to protect it because they understand its importance. How much would you pay for an additional hour in a day? What would you do with that time? Why? Identifying your answers to these questions is an important first step if understanding your time management strategy and how to prioritize your time.

Allocating Time

There are 168 hours in a week. It is helpful to acknowledge how much time we have available to us in any given week, particularly when we start to reflect on the difference between how we want to spend our time versus how we actually spend our time.

One challenge for many students is the transition from the structure of high school to the freedom of college. In high school, students spend a large portion of their time in class, approximately 30 hours in class per week, while full-time college students may spend only one-third of that time in class, approximately 12 hours in class per week. Further, college students are assigned much more out of class work than high school students. Think about how many times one of your high school teachers gave you something to read

during class. In college, students are given more material to read with the expectation that it is done outside of class.

This can create challenges for students who are unable to set aside proper study time for each of their courses. Keep in mind, for full-time students: your college day should not be shorter than your high school day.

Hourly Recommendations (per Week)

Work	Credits	Study Time	Total
40	6	12	58
30	9	18	57
20	12	24	56

The above table illustrates a recommended balance between work and school hours. Generally speaking, if you are working full-time, a part-time credit load may allow a student to better manage their time and corresponding coursework. The Total is also a very important category. Students often start to see difficulty when their total number of hours between work and school exceeds 60 per week. The amount of sleep decreases, stress increases, grades suffer, job performance decreases and students are often unhappy.

Weekly Planning

We always suggest that you spend time at the start of each week laying out an ideal schedule for the next seven days. This schedule should, ideally, be VERY specific–each hour should be accounted

for. Block out time for sleeping, eating, grocery shopping, work, childcare, household chores, socializing and, of course, school work.

Work and in-class time are easy to place on a weekly schedule because they are predetermined. We often call this "fixed time". But study time is one area that is consistently more difficult to prioritize on a calendar. It takes initiative to include it in a student's busy week and self-discipline to stick to it.

Here's a tip: Write your study time into your schedule or calendar. It's important to do this because it's easy to skip a study session or say to yourself, "I'll do it later." While there would likely be an immediate consequence if you do not show up for work, there is not one if you fail to study on Tuesday from 3pm-4pm. Often the consequence of not making time for coursework reveals itself at a later date, by poor performance on exams, projects, papers and ultimately final course grades.

It is widely suggested that students need to study approximately two hours for every hour that they spend in class in order to be successful[2]. Thus, if you are taking a class that meets on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4pm-5:30pm (three hours per week), you should plan for six hours of out of class study time per week. You might need to spend more time than what is recommended if you are taking a subject you find challenging, have fallen behind in or if you are taking short-term classes. Conversely, you might need to spend less time if the subject comes easily to you or if there is not a lot of assigned homework. Regardless, it is important to budget this time and include it in your weekly calendar in order to keep up on assignments and course material.

In addition to identifying all of your "fixed" time, identify time when you have no fixed obligation—"free time". This time can be used however you want; it's time you have available for activities you enjoy. Take a look at a typical week for yourself. How much fixed time do you have? How much free time? How much fixed and free time would you like to have? Finding a balance between fixed and free time will help decrease stress, maintain motivation and allow

yourself to enjoy other habits and activities that contribute to your overall well being.

Identifying, Organizing and Prioritizing Goals

The universal challenge of time is that there are more things that we want to do and not enough time to do them.

Students have aspirations, dreams, and goals they want to accomplish, and they often are discouraged by the length of time it is taking them to complete a goal. Every semester there are students that drop classes because they have taken on too much or they are unable to keep up with their class work because they have other commitments and interests. There is nothing wrong with other commitments or interests. On the contrary, they may bring joy and fulfillment, but do they get in the way of your educational goal(s)? For instance, if you were to drop a class because you required surgery, needed to take care of a sick family member or your boss increased your work hours, those may be important and valid reasons to do so. If you were to drop a class because you wanted to binge watch Grey's Anatomy, play more Minecraft, or spend more time on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, you may have more difficulty justifying that decision, but it is still your decision to make. Sometimes students do not realize the power they have over the decisions they make and how those decisions can affect their ability to accomplish the goals they set for themselves.

Prioritizing Goals

Why is it important to prioritize? Let's look back at a sample list.

- Social media

- Work
- Text friends
- Watch TV
- Exercise
- Go to grocery store
- Eat lunch with friend
- Study
- Pay bills
- Go to class

If I spent all my time completing the first seven things on the list, but the last three were the most important, then I would not have prioritized very well.

It would have been better to prioritize the list after creating it and then work on the items that are most important first. You might be surprised at how many students fail to prioritize.

After prioritizing, the sample list now looks like this:

- Go to class
- Work
- Study
- Pay bills
- Exercise
- Eat lunch with friend
- Go to grocery store
- Text friends
- Social media
- Watch TV

One way to prioritize is to give each task a value. A = Task related to goals; B = Important–Have to do; C = Could postpone. Then, map out your day so that with the time available to you you are focused on your "A" value items first. You'll now see below our list has the ABC labels. You will also notice a few items have changed positions based on their label. Keep in mind that we all have different goals

and different things that are important to us. There is no right or wrong here, but it is paramount to know what is important to you, and to know how you will spend the majority of your time with the things that are the most important to you.

A: Go to class, Study, Exercise
B: Work, Pay bills, Go to grocery store
C: Eat lunch with friend, Text friends, Social media, Watch TV

Do the Most Important Things First

Spending the majority of your time on "C" tasks instead of "A" tasks won't allow you make much progress towards your goals. The easiest things to do and the ones that take the least amount of time are often what people do first. Checking Facebook or texting might only take a few minutes but doing it prior to studying means your spending time with a "C" activity before an "A" activity.

People like to check things off that they have done. It feels good. But don't confuse productivity with accomplishment of tasks that aren't important. You could have a long list of things that you completed, but if they aren't important to you, it probably wasn't the best use of your time.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Crying baby Kitchen fire Some calls 1	Exercise Vocation Planning 2
Not Important	3 Interruptions Distractions Other calls	4 Trivia Busy work Time wasters

Quadrant dividing areas in Important/Not Important and Urgent/Not Urgent

The image you see above is the Eisenhower Matrix, named after former President Dwight D. Eisenhower who used it to prioritize his to do list. The matrix shows how to categorize your tasks and will help prioritize your goals, tasks, and assignments. Take a look at the matrix and quadrants and identify which quadrant your activities fall into.

Quadrant I (The quadrant of necessity): Important and Urgent

Only crisis activities should be here. If you have included exams and papers here, you are probably not allowing yourself enough time to fully prepare. If you continue at this pace you could burn out!

Quadrant II (The quadrant of quality and personal leadership): Important but Not Urgent

This is where you define your priorities. What's important in your life? What will keep you balanced? For example, you may know that good nutrition, sleep, recreation and maintaining healthy social relationships are important but do you consciously make time for them in your daily or weekly routine? Quadrant II includes your "A" goals. Managing your life and the lifestyle will help you manage your time.

Quadrant III (The quadrant of deception): Not Important but Urgent

While you may feel that activities, such as texting, need your attention right away, too much time spent on Quadrant III activities can seriously reduce valuable study time. This may leave you feeling pulled in too many directions at once.

Quadrant IV (The quadrant of waste): Not Important and Not Urgent

Quadrants three and four include your "C" goals. If you're spending many hours on Quadrant IV activities, you're either having a great deal of fun or spending a lot of time procrastinating! Remember, the objective is balance. You may notice social media and texting are placed into this category. You could make a case that social media, texting, Netflix, and Youtube are important, but how often are they urgent? Ultimately, it is up to you to decide what is important and urgent for yourself, but for the context of this textbook, your classes, assignments, preparation, and studying should almost universally be more urgent and important than social media and texting.

Managing time well comes down to two things. One is identifying (and then prioritizing) goals and the other is having the discipline to be able to work towards accomplishing them. We all have the same amount of time in a day, week, month and year, yet some people are able to accomplish more than others. Why is this? Often, it is because they are able to set goals, prioritize them and then work on them relentlessly and effectively until they are complete.

Citations

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5. Procrastination

4.2 Procrastination

One of the challenges many students face is being over committed. Some are working full-time, going to school full-time, and have other responsibilities as well. Students may be taking care of children, siblings, parents or have engaging social lives. It can be difficult to take action to complete goals when there are so many areas competing for our time and attention. Sometimes we cannot "do it all." In those instances, we need to prioritize, let something go, adjust and reevaluate what the most important things are to us.

Students may struggle because college does not have as much structure as what they may have been used to in high school. Why should I start a homework assignment now when I don't have anything I have to do for the next three days? This mindset usually leads to the student waiting until the last minute to start the assignment and as a result, the quality of work is not high.

Either a homework assignment gets done on time or it doesn't. Think about this: If someone were to give you $500 to complete the assignment on time, would you complete it sooner than you ordinarily would have? What level is your internal motivation? How important is the assignment to you? How important is your grade? How important is your class?

Procrastination is the act of putting something off. It's doing something that's a low priority instead of doing something that is a high priority. We all procrastinate sometimes. But when we procrastinate on an assignment or studying for an exam until there is little or no time left, our grades suffer and it can be stressful. Learning about why we procrastinate can help us overcome it.

Reasons We Procrastinate

We don't feel like it. There are times when we have to complete tasks that may not be enjoyable or we might not be in the mood to do them. Examples of this type of activity depend on the person, it might be folding your laundry, doing dishes, or an assignment for a class you do not particularly enjoy.. The problem is, you might never feel like starting it. It becomes increasingly important to understand that whether we like it or not, there are things that need to get done whether we are in the mood or not.

Perfectionism. We want to do it perfectly and there is not enough time to do it, so we are not going to do it at all. While it is important to have high standards for work, it is also worth noting that earning zeros on assignments is probably not the goal either. When students struggle with perfectionist tendencies they must be more mindful of how long tasks will take and make sure to start them earlier to meet expectations. However, in those instances in which meeting your standards will be difficult, it is worth completing the work to the best of our abilities and keeping this experience in our mind to be more prepared the next time.

Fear of success. If you study your tail off and earn an A on an exam, people will start to have such expectations from you all of the time. Fear of success is real and it can result in avoiding opportunities that might lead to new and better things. It is a form of self-sabotage and prevents change. When considering our own fear of success, it is important to understand that past performances, whether good or bad, do not dictate our future endeavors. Additionally, having clear goals for our performance and what we would like to see happen can shape how much effort we place on a task.

Fear of failure. For some students, confidence is tightly linked to academic success. High achievement increases confidence and poor performance results in feelings of insecurity. For these individuals, anxiety created by academic tasks can lead to avoiding

the task altogether[1]. Fear of failure can be a crutch to rationalize our effort. It helps justify failure. We failed not because we are not capable. We failed because we did not complete the work.

Whatever the reason, procrastination will undermine academic success. It can be a difficult cycle to escape from and it can carry some serious consequences. The stress created through procrastination can be compounding– it can be stressful to complete something if you left it to the last minute. It can further be stressful to know that you didn't submit work that was your best. High levels of stress can further take a toll on physical and mental health, which often also contributes to poor academic performance.

These reasons have been keeping some students from completing assignments and studying for exams. Do you procrastinate? Why?

So, how do we avoid procrastination?

Tell yourself to do your best all of the time. Ask yourself what is important NOW. Other peoples' expectations of you shouldn't matter. Be confident in yourself and in your abilities. Do the best you can and be satisfied with your effort. Realize that no one is perfect. Make your goal to do your best and understand you don't need to be perfect. Also, realize that you may never "feel like" doing an assignment or studying for an exam.

Get Started. It is the hardest part to do and will have the biggest effect on defeating procrastination. It can be simple: skim the chapter you have to read, think of a title for your paper or schedule an hour for when you will study. The rest of it will be easier once you get started.

Establish and rely on a process. Figure out what works best for you. Take some time to make a plan, list, or outline that allows you to see what you will do and when to complete your assignment or goal. It might be setting aside time early in the morning or waiting

to watch a movie until after you've finished an assignment. Set your priorities and stick to them.

Set Imaginary Deadlines. If the paper is due in six days, tell yourself it is due in two days. Knock it out early and then enjoy not having it over your head. Fake deadlines are less stressful. And if you do end up needing more time, you have a cushion.

Don't Break the Chain. Jerry Seinfeld developed a system to help prevent procrastination. He wanted to be a better comedian and believed that writing better jokes would help. To write better jokes, he thought he should write every day. His system, called Don't Break the Chain, was used to motivate himself to write every day. He started with a big wall calendar with a whole year on a page and a red marker. For each day he wrote, he would place a big red X on that day of the calendar. After a few consecutive days, he had a chain. And then the task became not breaking the chain.

Video: Inside the Mind of a Master Procrastinator, Tim Urban TED Talk

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/acad/?p=118

Estimating Task Time

One of the biggest challenges students have is accurately estimating how much time it will take to complete a task. You might think you're going to be able to read an assigned chapter in an hour. But what if it takes three hours to read and understand the chapter? Having the skill to know how long a homework assignment will take is something that can be developed. But until you can anticipate it

accurately, it is best to leave some time in your schedule in case it takes longer than anticipated.

We hear people say, "I wish there was more time" or "If there was more time, I would have done this." We have enough time to do many of the things we wish to do. People run into difficulty when they spend time on things that are not the most important things for them.

Video: How to Gain Control of Your Free Time, Laura Vanderkam TED Talk

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/acad/?p=118

You must make time for the things that are most important to

you. In order to make time, you may need to decide you will not do something else.

The ability to say "no" cannot be underestimated. It isn't easy to say "no," especially to family, friends and people that like you and whom you like. Most of us don't want to say "no," especially when we want to help. But if we always do what others want, we won't accomplish the things that we want—the things that are most important to us.

Ask yourself:

- What am I doing that doesn't need to be done?
- What can I do more efficiently?

Have you ever ordered an appetizer, salad, beverage or bread, then felt full halfway through your entree? In situations like this many people claim, "my eyes were bigger than my stomach." This is also true with planning and goal setting. It may be that your plan is bigger than the day. Experiment with what you want to accomplish and what is realistic. The better you can accurately predict what you can and will accomplish and how long it will take, the better you can plan, and the more successful you will be.

Why You Procrastinate[2]

Before diving into some tactics to stop procrastinating, you should know why you procrastinate in the first place.

According to Timothy Pychyl, procrastination is fundamentally a visceral, emotional reaction to what you have to do.

When you put pressure on yourself to accomplish certain tasks, you "have this strong reaction to the task at hand, and so the story of procrastination begins there with what psychologists call task aversiveness" (Pychyl). The more aversive a task is to you, the more you'll resist it, and the more likely you are to procrastinate.

Pychyl, in his research, identified a number of task characteristics that make you more likely to procrastinate. Tasks that are aversive tend to:

- Be boring
- Be frustrating
- Be difficult
- Lack personal meaning and intrinsic rewards
- Be ambiguous (you don't know how to do it)
- Be unstructured

The more negative emotions you show toward a certain task, the more likely you are to procrastinate, and according to Pychyl, "any of these [characteristics] can do it".[2]

As Pychyl wrote in Solving the Procrastination Puzzle[3], "[t]he key issue is that for chronic procrastinators, short-term mood repair takes precedence. Chronic procrastinators want to eliminate the negative mood or emotions now, so they give in to feel good. They give in to the impulse to put off the task until another time." Then, "not faced with the task, they feel better."

10 Tactics That Will Help You Stop Procrastinating[2]

Even though there is no magical cure, there are numerous tactics that you can use to quit procrastinating and get more done. Below you'll find 10 tactics for limiting procrastination from Timothy Pychyl and his book Solving the Procrastination Puzzle.

1. ## Flip a task's characteristics to make it less aversive

When you notice yourself procrastinating, use your procrastination as a trigger to examine a task's characteristics and think about what you should change. Tasks that are aversive are usually a combination of boring, frustrating, difficult, meaningless, ambiguous, and unstructured. But by breaking down exactly which of these attributes an aversive task has, you can take those qualities and turn them around to make the task more appealing to you.

Tim gave the example of a task that is boring and frustrating. "You're able to look at it and assess it and say, 'Oh, this is so boring and I find it so frustrating', so you make a little game out of it. How can you make it interesting? So I might play a game of, 'How many of these could I get done in 20 minutes?'. And you find something to do–some competition within it, and so all of a sudden you make it interesting", and much less boring and frustrating in the process.

2. Know the ways your brain responds to "cognitive dissonance"

Whenever you realize that you should be doing something but that you aren't (psychologists call this separation between your actions and beliefs cognitive dissonance), you can respond in one of several ways to feel better about yourself. In his book, Pychyl identifies a number of unproductive responses people have when they procrastinate:

1. Distracting yourself, and thinking about other things
2. Forgetting what you have to do, either actively or passively (usually for unimportant tasks)
3. Downplaying the importance of what you have to do
4. Giving yourself affirmations, focusing on other your values and qualities that will solidify your sense of self
5. Denying responsibility to distance yourself from what you have to do

6. Seeking out new information that supports your procrastination (e.g. when you tell yourself you need to have more information before you get started on something)

Of course, the best possible response to cognitive dissonance is to change your behavior and get started on whatever you're procrastinating on, but that's often much easier said than done.

To push back against these biases, recognizing them is key. Then, Tim recommends that you "list the things that you commonly say or do to justify your procrastination", and use these biases as triggers that you should respond to your behavior differently.

3. Limit how much time you spend on something

Limiting how much time you spend on a task makes the task more fun, more structured, and less frustrating and difficult because you'll always be able to see an end in sight. There are some huge productivity benefits to the idea as well. When you limit how much time you spend on something instead of throwing more time at the problem, you force yourself to exert more energy over less time to get it done, which will make you a lot more productive.

4. Be kind to yourself

According to Tim, when you procrastinate "negative self-talk comes out in spades", which is completely counterproductive. Be mindful of how kind you are to yourself, and watch out for times when you try to deceive yourself. The reason you deceive yourself when you procrastinate is simple: at the same time that you know you should be doing something, a different part of you is very much aware

that you're not actually doing it, so you make up a story about why you're not getting that thing done. This is the cognitive dissonance mentioned in tactic #2. Negative self-talk is not going to help you accomplish a task. Remember to acknowledge that negativity when you notice it and then find a more productive way to move forward.

5. Just get started

People, as a rule, overestimate how much motivation they need to do something. After all, usually you just need enough motivation to get started. For example, to work out, you don't need to be motivated for an entire hour to finish a workout; you just need to be motivated for the 10 minutes it takes you to pack up and drive to the gym. Once you're at the gym, you'll always work out.

One of the biggest recommendations Tim had was to simply get started. "Once we start a task, it is rarely as bad as we think." In fact, once you get started on something, your "attributions of the task change", and what you think about yourself changes, too.

6. List the costs of procrastinating

The costs of procrastinating can be enormous; as Tim put it in his book, "[w]hen we procrastinate on our goals, we are basically putting off our lives." Since procrastination is very much an emotional reaction to what you have to do, activating the rational part of your brain to identify the costs of procrastinating is a great strategy to get unstuck.

Tim recommends that you make a list of the tasks you're procrastinating on, and then "[n]ext to each of these tasks or goals, note how your procrastination has affected you in terms of things such as your happiness, stress, health, finances, relationships, and

so on. You may even want to discuss this with a confidante or a significant other in your life who knows you well." At the end of the day, "you may be surprised by what they may have to say about the costs of procrastination in your life."

7. Become better friends with future-you

Research has shown that we have the tendency to treat our future-selves like a complete stranger, and according to Pychyl, that's why we "give future-self the same kind of load that we'd give a stranger".[3](This is also the reason you have 10 food documentaries in your Netflix queue.)

   The solution to this? Become better friends with future-you. Here are a few of my favorite ways:

1. Create a future memory. Interestingly, research has shown that all it takes to delay gratification is to imagine your future. This is easy to do–for example, if you're debating between doing an assignment today or next week, create a future memory by imagining all you will be able to get done next week if you start it now.[1]
2. Imagine your future self. Research has shown that all it takes to increase your future-self continuity is to imagine yourself in the future. The more vivid the future feels, the better.[2]
3. Send an email to your future self. Seriously, do it. FutureMe.org lets you send an email to yourself in the future at a date you specify. A great way to bridge the gap between your present and future selves is to tell your future self how your current actions will make your future self better.

8. Disconnect from the Internet when you have to get something done

One of Pychyl's studies found that 47% of people's time online is spent procrastinating, which he calls a "conservative estimate" since that study was conducted before social networks like Facebook and Twitter became popular. "There is little doubt that our best tools for productivity–computer technologies–are potentially also one of our greatest time wasters."[3]

"To stay really connected to our goal pursuit, we need to disconnect from potential distractions like social-networking tools. This means that we should not have Facebook, Twitter, email, or whatever your favorite suite of tools is running in the background on your computer or phone while you are working. Shut them off."[3]

That might sound harsh, but according to Tim, "if you are committed to reducing your procrastination, this is something you really need to do."

9. Form "implementation intentions"

Tasks that aren't clearly defined are ambiguous and often unstructured, which makes you a lot more likely to procrastinate with them. The cure? Form implementation intentions for those tasks.

That's basically just a fancy way of saying that you should make your tasks more concrete, by thinking about when, where, and how you're going to do them. Tim is a big fan of implementation intentions. "I have to make sure that I'm not lying to myself right off the top with making a broad goal intention. 'Yeah, I'll do that writing on the weekend.' Well, both the time-frame and the task are defined too broadly to be meaningful at all[3].

"So, one of the very first things is start making a more concrete and start tying it to something in the environment. And so, these are called implementation intentions. Move from broad goal intentions to specific implementation intentions. So that's a cognitive

technique, where you're going to do some thinking around: "What am I going to do when?" And that pre-decision is really important."[2]

10. Use procrastination as a sign you should seek out more meaningful work

You procrastinate a lot less with meaningful tasks that are intrinsically rewarding. For that reason, Tim recommends reexamining your work if you find yourself constantly procrastinating with what you have to do.

"Sometimes I would say procrastination is just a symptom that your life just doesn't match what you're interested in and you're putting everything off because all of your goals are kind of falsely internalized and you've got no intrinsic motivation in any of this, and so maybe you should do something else."

In every course there are going to tasks you find aversive, but when you constantly find yourself procrastinating because the work is aversive, there may be other majors or career paths that are more aligned to your passions, which you will be much more motivated and productive in.

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6. Distractions

4.3 Distractions

Every distraction or interruption that derails your productivity can be sorted into one of four categories, depending on whether the distraction is annoying or fun, and whether or not you have control over it. In stepping back from my own distractions and interruptions, I've come up with different tactics for how to deal with these four types of productivity hijackers.

Here are the four types of distractions that derail your productivity, and how to deal with them![1]

Distractions We Can't Control

It's helpful to realize there are distractions we can't control–ones that are both annoying (office visitors, loud colleagues, required

meetings), and those that are fun (your coworker asking if you'd like to join the team for lunch).

The key to dealing with these derailments isn't to prevent them from happening–their very nature prevents you from doing so. Instead, it's up to you to change how you respond–quickly getting back on track after annoying interruptions, and enjoying any fun interruptions that happen to arise.

FOUR TYPES OF DISTRACTIONS / INTERRUPTIONS

	ANNOYING	FUN
NO CONTROL	DEAL WITH, GET BACK ON TRACK	ENJOY!
CONTROL		

Distractions We Can Control

Thankfully, the list of distractions we can control is much longer–it includes emails, phone calls, audible and vibrating alerts, text messages, social media, news websites, and the internet.

The solution to dealing with these distractions is simple: eliminate the interruptions ahead of time. If you frequently stumble into productivity potholes while on the internet, disconnect while doing your most important work. If checking email is eating away at your productivity, or email alerts are preventing you from focusing on your work, disable those beeps and bloops, and turn off the new message notifications that pop into the corner of your screen as you're working. Schedule a few windows throughout the day to intentionally check your email, instead checking it habitually.

Most distractions are easier to deal with in advance than they are to resist as they come up. The reason we often fall victim to fun (or stimulating) distractions is simple: in the moment, we see distractions as more alluring (albeit less productive) compared to what we ought to be doing. Clearing these distractions ahead of time gives us the focus needed to stay on track.

The next time you get distracted or interrupted in your work, ask this question: was the interruption within or outside your control? Next time, can you deal with the interruption ahead of time in order to reclaim some productivity? Can you change how you deal with the distraction the next time around, or get back on track quicker?

Not all workplace distractions and interruptions are within your control–but many are. It's worth dealing with them accordingly.

FOUR TYPES OF DISTRACTIONS / INTERRUPTIONS

	ANNOYING	FUN
NO CONTROL	DEAL WITH, GET BACK ON TRACK	ENJOY!
CONTROL	DEAL WITH AHEAD OF TIME	

Citations

1. Bailey, Chris. 2016. 4 Types of Distractions that Derail Your Productivity. A Life of Productivity. https://alifeofproductivity.com/4-types-of-distractions-that-derail-your-productivity/. CC BY 3.0.

7. Productivity

4.4 Productivity

It's human nature to resist getting things done every once in a while. Over the course of a week, as your energy levels ebb and flow relative to everything from how much sleep you get, to how much caffeine you consume, to how much time you spend with people, there will inevitably be some periods of time when you're simply not feeling it–despite doing everything right–and when you have to fight the urge to waste time to get work done. You could get a solid eight hours of sleep, hit the gym early, plan out your entire day, and eat a healthy breakfast, but despite doing all you could to cultivate your energy levels, you might not have enough energy in the tank to do good work.

Zoom out

When you zoom out from a task you're working on and think about how it fits into the bigger picture of your life, you can see at a higher vantage point why it's important that you get it done.

Studying for a boring school midterm? Acing that exam will help you get your degree, graduate with better grades, and get that job you want. Writing a tedious work report? That report will help you grow your business and get you one step closer to world domination. Writing an article for your productivity blog? That article will hopefully help your readers become more productive so they can free up time for their most meaningful tasks.

Zooming out to see how a task fits into the bigger picture of your life will help you understand its purpose and see how important the

task actually is. (And if it turns out a task has no purpose or doesn't make an impact in your life, you should probably eliminate, delegate, or shrink it instead.)

According to Tim Pychyl[1], who has been researching procrastination for more than 20 years, tasks that lead to procrastination often share the following six characteristics:

- Boring
- Frustrating
- Difficult
- Ambiguous
- Unstructured
- Lacking in personal meaning or intrinsic rewards

When you zoom out from a task you're struggling with and ask yourself which of these attributes the task has, you can then make a plan to flip these characteristics (e.g., make the task more fun, clear, or easy) to warm up to completing it.

Mind your self-talk

If most people talked to their friends the way they talk to themselves, they wouldn't have a lot of friends left. Unfortunately, when you put pressure on yourself to get stuff done when you're just not feeling it, your negative self-talk can go through the roof.

As an experiment, the next time you find yourself putting off work, pay attention to what you say to yourself in your head. If you find yourself saying a lot of things like, "I can't do this," "I'm no good at this," and "Why can't I just stop wasting time," you're probably only making things worse.

Some studies have shown that upwards of 80% of your self-talk is negative[2], and when that number only goes up as you put pressure

on yourself to get more done, it's important to be mindful of how kind you're being to yourself in the process.

Give yourself permission to do a bad job

Whenever you feel stuck with an article, idea, or project, simply give yourself permission to do the worst job imaginable. You're the only person who will ever see the original version of whatever you're working on. Giving yourself permission to do a bad job can help you come up with better ideas than if you had waited for a good idea to come along. You can always remove the bad ones you had at the beginning after good ideas inevitably begin to flow. Everyone's work is different, but if you're responsible for completing a lot of challenging solo tasks, try giving yourself permission to do a terrible job. Don't let perfection get in the way of successfully completing a task.

Shrink Your Work

Trying to work too hard or too much when you're not feeling it will only serve to discourage you further. To combat this, shrink how long you'll work a task until you feel more comfortable with how much time you'll spend on it.

For example, if you need to work on a report but you're simply not feeling it, shrink how long you'll work on the report[3] until you no longer feel resistance to it.

As you consider shrinking your work, ask yourself the following questions: "Can I work on this report for two hours? Nope, too long. Can I work on the report for one hour? A bit better, but still too much—the thought of it puts me off. Can I work on the report for

45 minutes? You know what? That sounds perfect. I'll work on the report for 45 minutes."

This is a great way to get started on something you're not in the mood for. Plus, once you get the ball rolling, you may end up working for longer than you originally intended. Additionally, an benefit of setting a time limit on how long you will focus on a task, creates a sense of urgency for yourself, and can push you to work harder over that hour to get an assignment or reading done. When you set a hard limit for how long you'll work on a task, you motivate yourself to expend more energy over a shorter period of time to get a task done faster. This tactic also shrinks your work, but in a totally different way than what was described in the previous section.

Get a change of scenery

We're creatures of habit, and as such, we behave differently depending on what environment we're in.

Often a change of scenery is all you need to get out of a rut and start working again. For example, if you work in an office, try exposing yourself to a change of scenery by arriving at work early when fewer people are in the office, or by working from home or out of a coffee shop if you have that flexibility.

The environment you choose to study in can have a profound impact on your productivity and motivation. You want to ensure that your environment is comfortable and free from distractions, however, you don't want to be TOO comfortable. We generally discourage students from studying laying in bed or on a couch. Our minds have natural associations with those environments–think sleep and it can be easy to doze off and lose valuable study time. Equally as important, you don't want to be TOO uncomfortable–constantly needing to readjust or focusing on aches and pains. You must find a place to "get your body right so you can get your mind right"

Disconnect from the Internet

Disconnecting from the Internet is one of the most underrated ways to become more productive.

According to research[4], about half of your time on the Internet is spent procrastinating, and when you're not in the right mindset to work, that number can go through the roof. Disconnecting from the Internet–even for just an hour or two–will help you hunker down, waste less time, and become more productive when you just don't feel like it. Especially when the switch to turn the Internet off on your computer, phone, and tablet is just a couple of taps or clicks away, do so if you want to waste less time and get more done.

Bribe yourself

When all else fails, try bribing yourself to meet your productivity goals by rewarding yourself when you meet them.

A reward can be anything from a coffee, to 15 minutes on Facebook, to a 30-minute break, but as Charles Duhigg (the author of The Power of Habit[5]) made clear, for the reward to be truly motivating it has to be genuinely rewarding to you.

Bribing yourself isn't the best strategy on this list (since it involves tricking yourself), but it serves as a good motivator every once in a while. Especially when food is involved.

Embrace Unproductivity

Productivity is one of the most powerful ideas in the world: the more productive you become and the more you can get done in less time, the more time you free up to do things that are the most

important to you. But it's totally unrealistic to expect yourself to be productive 24/7.

Often "not feeling it" is a great sign that you should step back from your work to recharge and be unproductive for a while. Completely separating yourself from your work may not always feel like the best course of action, but when you're not in the mood to work, it's worth asking yourself whether you're simply procrastinating, or whether you're genuinely in need of a break.

Breaks help you recharge, reduce your negative self-talk, and warm up to tasks that you're resistant to completing. Taking a break from productivity every once in a while will help you become much more productive at the end of the day—and when you're mindful of your energy levels as you detach yourself from work, you can pick the perfect time to end your break and start working again.

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CHAPTER 5 - ACADEMIC SKILLS

8. Preparing Tips and Strategies

5.1 Preparing for Classes

Everyone likes to earn an A; it feels good, and it's validation for the work you put into a class. College students are often aware of the skills and habits required to achieve good grades, many do not know how to approach or execute these specific skills. This chapter will spend time reviewing the habits of successful students and strategies for approaching your academic tasks. Let's jump straight into it and look at a variety of tips.

In this first section of the chapter, we will focus on tips and habits to implement in order to be successful in the classroom. We will divide these into three different approaches to promote better preparation; things to do before class, during class, and after class. As you read through this chapter, consider the following list of approaches. How many of them do you do regularly? How might you be able to incorporate them into your life this semester?

Before the Semester

Read and Retain Your Syllabus

In addition to acting as a contract between the instructor and you, the syllabus is also often the source of information for faculty contact information, textbook information, classroom behavior

expectations, attendance policy, course objectives and most importantly required readings, assignments and key dates and deadlines. Some students make the mistake of stuffing the syllabus in their backpack when they receive it on the first day of class and never take a look at it again, instead relying on reminders from Blackboard or the instructor. Those who clearly read it, review it frequently, and keep it for reference find themselves more prepared for class. If there is something in the syllabus you don't understand, ask your instructor about it before or after class or during their office hours.

Place Your Assignments on Your Master Calendar and Create Plans for Completing Them Before They Are Due

After reviewing your course syllabi, place all of your assignments for all of your classes with their due dates in your calendar, planner, smart-phone or whatever you use for organization at the beginning of the semester. Successful students will also schedule when to start those assignments and have an idea of how long it will take to complete them. This "set it and forget it" method will make it impossible for you to forget upcoming assignments, tests, or important events.

   Below is an example calendar you can use, the Semester at a Glance. The document breaks down 16 weeks (the general length of a semester) so you can see it all on one page. You can use it to highlight the biggest or most time consuming assignments for the semester. Then, you can have a holistic view of your semester, determine weeks that will be the busiest, and plan accordingly.

<div align="center">Semester at a Glance</div>

Schedule Time for Studying

After you have entered all of your major assignments on your calendar, set aside specific times and days for studying each week. It's easy to put off studying if it's not something you schedule. The solution is simple, but not easy. Create your schedule and stick to it. Plan ahead for what you will be doing during your scheduled study time each day to ensure you are prepared (this is when having your syllabus handy is important). Treat your study times as fixed time where you are required to be present and focused on those tasks. This tactic helps limit procrastination and create structure in your routine.

Study In a Location and At a Time That Is Best for You

Some students study best in the morning and some at night. Some excel at a coffee shop, and others at the library. The place and time in which students often study is usually the most convenient for them, but that could be at a time when you are exhausted or a place full of distractions. Consider when and where you are most energized and focused, and distractions are limited.

Elements conducive to a more effective study experience include such things as good lighting, ample supplies, comfortable seating, adequate space, and personalizing the study area to add a touch of inspiration and motivation. If this is available in your home, that's great! If not, consider where on campus or near your home you can find a good study space. While an "ideal" study space will be based on your individual preferences and what is available to you given your location and schedule. At a minimum, it can be helpful to mute the notifications on your cell phone, turn off the TV and close social media pages.

Complete All Assigned Reading at the Time It Is Assigned

College courses have much more assigned reading than what most high school students are accustomed to, and it can take a while to become comfortable with the workload. Some students see reading as optional, fall behind early with the reading requirements, or fail to read at all. You will be most prepared for your class and for learning if you complete the reading assigned before your class. It will also save you time and increase your retention to read throughout the semester instead of trying to catch up before an exam or big assignment.

Remember back in Chapter 3, when we talked about the process of learning. One strategy for retaining information is to connect new information with foundation information you already know. Pre-reading before lecture can help with this process because you will become familiar with new terms and concepts ahead of time, lectures can reinforce concepts that you are already familiar with and you have the opportunity to formulate questions in advance. If you are in a discussion based class, reading ahead of time is even more important because you are required to participate and give feedback on your reading.

Reviewing your syllabus and course calendar regularly will help you be aware of your reading assignment deadlines.

Take Notes When You Are Reading

For the same reason as above, it is helpful to take notes while you are reading to maximize memory. The goal of active notetaking during reading, is to help you stay focused on the material and to be able to refer back to notes made while reading to improve retention and study efficiency. Don't make the mistake of expecting

to remember everything you are reading. Reading takes a great deal of time. Taking notes when reading requires effort and energy, but saves you time in the long run. Be willing to do it and you'll reap the benefits later.

Be Prepared for Each Class

Completing your assigned reading and taking notes ahead of class are great first steps to prepare for class. Follow the syllabus so that you'll have familiarity with what the instructor is speaking about. Bring your course syllabus, notebook and any handouts or other important information for each particular class along with materials to take notes. Be eager to learn, even on days where it's tough to be present. Sleep adequately the night before class and ensure you do not arrive to class on an empty stomach. Ensure you're checking your email and Blackboard announcements regularly to be aware of last minute updates.

Making the Most of Your Time in Class

Attend Every Class

Missing class is a major factor in students dropping courses or receiving poor grades. In addition, students attempting to make up the work from missing class often find it overwhelming. It's challenging to catch up if you get behind.

Attending each and every class requires a lot of self-discipline and motivation. Doing so will help you remain engaged and involved in course topics, provide insight into what your instructor deems most important, build relationships with peers and instructors, submit

work and receive your graded assignments, take quizzes or exams that cannot be made up, and ask questions when you have them. There is no downside to being present in class. Sit Front and Center

Humans are creatures of habit. We tend to find "our seat" in each class where we feel most comfortable and return to that spot class after class. Where in the room does that seat tend to be for you? If you tend to sit in the back of the room, consider why. If you're sitting in the back so that you can send text messages without being seen, work on something else or so that you can disengage, then you're sitting in the back for the wrong reasons. Sitting in the front or center sections of the classroom forces you to be more engaged and pay more attention in class, minimizes distractions, and keeps your focus on the instructor and the material they are teaching you.

Take Appropriate Notes in Class

Taking notes throughout a lecture helps you stay engaged in what's being taught and also have information to refer back to once class is over. Common issues students face is taking too many or too few notes, and knowing which note taking style will work best for them. Taking notes is not a one size fits all approach. It will take some trial and error to discover the right balance for each of your classes. Don't be afraid to experiment!

Ask Questions

Asking questions is a good exercise during class to stay engaged and to recognize gaps in knowledge that you are trying to improve on. Many students feel like they are the only one that has a question or the only one that doesn't understand something in class. If you have a question, ask! Many times there are multiple students in

the class with the same question, so asking your question can help your peers, too. If you're uncomfortable with asking questions in class, write down your questions when you have them so you do not forget them and make the effort to ask your questions before or after class or during your instructors' office hours.

Following Up After Class

Complete All of Your Assignments

This may seem like a no-brainer, but earning a 0% on an assignment because it was not submitted can severely impact your grade in a course. Unexpected life events may arise that keep you from being able to complete assignments as planned. That's why doing all assignments when you have the opportunity to do so is imperative to your success. If something comes up that limits your ability to turn something in on time, refer to the syllabus to check on the instructors late work policy. In most instances, there is a grace period to turn things in for fewer points. Earning some points is better than earning no points at all. It is always worth it to submit an assignment late for reduced points, both for the learning that comes from that assignment and for the points you can earn.

Form a Study Group

Study groups can allow for shared resources, new perspectives, answers for questions, faster learning, increased confidence, and increased motivation. Being able to verbally communicate your learning by teaching someone else is one of the best ways to confirm you have learned the material for a course. Students should

study in the environment that works best for them, but it could be beneficial to try a study group, especially if you are taking a class in a subject in which you do not feel confident.

Review for Exams

Preparation for an exam should begin on the first day of class, not when the exam is announced nor the night before an exam. Review your notes frequently to keep material fresh in your head. Find creative ways to review material instead of relying on simply rereading notes over and over. Quiz yourself through flashcards or practice exams. Consider studying 1 hour for 5 days rather than 5 hours in one day. We will get to the science of it soon, but these approaches are more efficient and result in higher levels of learning.

Know Campus Resources and Use Them

There are many campus resources at Boise State, most of which are free and easily accessible to all students. There are many staff members across campus who's full time job is to help students. Students typically think of tutoring as the most common resource on campus, but there is a wide variety of help available. If you are experiencing barriers to your success, such as an overloaded schedule, personal or family issues, or financial or health-related challenges, there are people here to help. Some students don't know these resources exist. Others do, but are apprehensive about using them. There is no shame in asking for help and utilizing services across campus in order to reach your goals. These resources exist solely to help students so make sure you are getting the most out of them!

Don't Do Anything Academically "Half-assed"

Half-assed is defined as doing things poorly or with little effort or care. Think of it this way: You've made the decision to come to college. You're investing time, energy and money into your commitment. Why would you want to give it less than your full effort? Students who miss class, turn in work late or not at all, or procrastinate regularly are half-assing it. If you would describe your academic habits this way, it's important to figure out why. With some self-reflection, you may be able to determine adjustments you can make to your life to get that motivation and follow through back.

   Apply these basic principles and you will be giving yourself the best opportunity to achieve success, not just in school, but in life.

Getting the Important Stuff

Textbook chapters can be long and dense; classroom lectures can move quickly and be hard to follow, especially if students are asking questions or the instructor moves off topic. Developing reading and notetaking skills that allow you to discern key information takes practice and patience but there are some general guidelines to help you get started. Active Listening

   In previous units, we covered ways that students can actively engage in the learning process in order to get the most out of their education. There are ways to actively listen as well, in order to get the most out of lectures and, more importantly, take all of the notes that might be required. The video in the next exercise covers several active listening strategies along with why we sometimes have difficulty listening.

Video: 5 Ways to Listen Better, Julian Treasure at

TED Global 2011

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/acad/?p=109

Perhaps the most useful learning tools of all are notes taken from both lectures and course materials. By annotating for key information, then condensing it, students create personalized summaries helpful for studying.

Often, students are unsure about what constitutes "key information." Here is a list of items to highlight or annotate for in textbooks and a list of items to listen for in lectures.

Resources

- Semester at a Glance

9. Note-taking

5.2 Taking Notes

If for no other reason, you should take notes during class so that you do not forget valuable and important information. We've become accustomed to searching for information on demand to find what we need when we need it. The consequence is that we don't often commit information to memory because we know it will be there tomorrow if we wish to search for it again. Thus, there is an importance of taking notes. "Note-taking facilitates both recall of factual material and the synthesis and application of new knowledge, particularly when notes are reviewed prior to exams."[1]

Hermann Ebbinghaus, a German psychologist, studied the rate of forgetting and formulated his "forgetting curve" theory. The "forgetting curve" shows that after one month, only 20 percent of information is retained after initial memorization. Without review, 47 percent of learned information is lost after only 20 minutes. After one day, 62 percent of learned information is lost without review.

As discussed Chapter 3, in order to try to retain information over time, you must move it from short-term memory to long-term memory. One of the best ways to do this is through repetition. The more you review information, and the sooner you review it after you initially learn it, the more information is transferred into long-term memory.

The first step in being able to review is to take notes when you are first learning information. Students who do not take notes in class will often struggle to recall all of the information covered. Taking notes during lectures is a skill, just like riding a bike. If you have never taken notes while someone else is speaking before, it's important to know that you will not be an expert at it right away. It is challenging to listen to someone speak and then make a note

about what they said, while at the same time continuing to listen to their next thought.

With practice and concentration, you can gain confidence and improve your note taking skills. In his book Outliers, Malcolm Gladwell refers to the "10,000-hour rule." Based on research by Anders Ericsson, the rule states that 10,000 hours of dedicated practice in your particular field will allow for the greatest potential of mastery. We do not expect you to practice taking notes for 10,000 hours, but the point is that practice, just like many things, is necessary to become more skilled.[1]

Some instructors will give you cues to let you know something is important. If you hear or see one of these cues, it's something you should write down. This might include an instructor saying, "this is important," or "this will be covered on the exam." If you notice an instructor giving multiple examples, repeating information or spending a lot of time with one idea, these may be cues. Writing on the board or presenting a handout or visual information may also be a cue. Cue's fall into two categories–nonverbal and verbal.

Non-Verbal Cues[2]

A speaker will often have unique facial and body nonverbal cues that alert you to several things, as you learn to "read" your professor. An instructor may exaggerate their facial expressions or body movement to indicate important information. A few of the most important, but often overlooked nonverbal cues are when an instructor writes material on the board, or lectures directly from notes, which indicate they are discussing key information. This is in contrast to a professor putting down their notes and talking more informally, which may indicate nonessential information. Pointing, nodding, shrugging are all nonverbal cues that can help important information from less relevant material.

Verbal Cues

Paying attention to and understanding verbal cues will help you differentiate between essential and non essential information. Verbal cues help understand the difference between defining and term and giving examples, or outlining the lecture information versus sharing less important information. Verbal and nonverbal cues are often unique to individual instructors so it's important to pay attention and notice patterns in body language and speech.

Tips for Taking Notes During the Lecture

Arrive early and find a good seat. Seats in the front and center are best for being able to see and hear information. A seat at the 50-yard line for the Super Bowl is more expensive for a reason: it gives the spectator the greatest experience.

Do not try to write down everything the instructor talks about. It's impossible and inefficient. Instead, try to distinguish between the most important topics and ideas and write those down. This is a skill that students can improve upon. You may wish to ask your instructor during office hours if you have identified the main topics in your notes, or compare your notes to one of your classmates.

Use shorthand and/or abbreviations. So long as you will be able to decipher what you are writing, the least amount of pen or pencil strokes, the better. It will free you up so you can pay more attention to the lecture and help you be able to determine what is most important.

Write down what your instructor writes. Anything on a dry erase board, chalkboard, overhead projector and in some cases in presentations; these are cues for important information.

Leave space to add information to your notes. You can use this space during or after lectures to elaborate on ideas. You may choose

to include information from your text, outside research, conversations with classmates, tutors or instructors. Adding information outside of class is an excellent way to review lecture notes and help retain information.

Do not write in complete sentences. Do not worry about spelling or punctuation. Getting the important information, concepts and main ideas is much more important. You can always revise your notes later and correct spelling.

Often, the most important information is delivered at the beginning and/or the end of a lecture. Many students arrive late or pack up their belongings and mentally check out a few minutes before the lecture ends. They are missing out on the opportunity to write down valuable information. Keep taking notes until the lecture is complete.

The Cornell System

Cornell System is a note-taking method created in the 1950s by Walter Pauk at Cornell University. This system is helpful for both in class and textbook note taking. The method requires you to divide your paper into three sections: Notes, Cue and Summary.

The Notes column is for you to use to record notes during lectures. The Cue column is where you can create study questions, identify main ideas or include diagrams. This section should be completed after class and it is a great tool for quizzing yourself. The notes you took should answer the questions you create. Finally, the Summary column is just that, a place to outline the main ideas and answer the question, "Why is this important?".

After the lecture, consolidate notes as soon as possible and identify the main ideas by underlining or highlighting them. Test yourself by looking only at the questions on the left. If you can provide most of the information on the notes side without looking at it, you're in good shape. If you cannot, keep studying until you

improve your retention. Review periodically as needed to keep the information fresh in your mind.

Students use the bottom area for summarizing information. Practice summarizing information – it's a great study skill. It allows you to determine how information fits together. It should be written in your own words. Don't use the chapter summary in the textbook to write your summary, but check the chapter summary after you write yours for accuracy.

The Outline Method

Another way to take notes is the outline method. Students use an outline to show the relationship between ideas in the lecture. Outlines can help students separate main ideas from supporting details and show how one topic connects to another. Outlines are a great tool when learning about topics that have many supporting details and need to be neatly organized.

Mind Maps

Visual learners may want to experiment with mind maps (also called clustering). Invented by Tony Buzan, an English author and educational consultant, in the 1960s, mind maps are another way of organizing information during lectures. Start with the main idea in the center of the paper; landscape orientation is recommended in order to have enough room. Using branches, like a tree, identify supporting ideas that supplement the main idea. These branches help to identify relationships between topics and understand the hierarchy of ideas. Write down everything you can as the lecture is happening. Reorganization and editing can be done later.

Preview and Review

Keep in mind that students who know what their instructor is going to lecture on before the lecture are at an advantage. Why? Because the more they understand what the instructor will be talking about, the easier it is to take notes. Take a look at the syllabus before the lecture. It won't take much time, but it can make a world of difference. You will also be more prepared and be able to see important connections if you read your assigned reading before the lecture.

For maximum efficiency and retention of memory, it's best to review within 20 minutes of when the lecture ends. For this reason, we do not advise students to take back-to-back classes without 30 minutes in between. It is important to have adequate review time and to give your brain a break. Reviewing shortly after the lecture will allow you to best highlight or underline main points as well as fill in any missing portions of your notes. Students who take lecture notes on a Monday and then review them for the first time a week later often have challenges recalling information that help make the notes coherent.

You may consider discussing your notes in a study group with your classmates, which can give you a different perspective on main points and deepen your understanding of the material. You may also want to make flashcards for yourself with vocabulary terms, formulas, important dates, people, places, etc. Online flashcards are another option. Students can make them for free using Quizlet and test themselves online or on their phone.

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10. Reading

5.3 Reading Strategies[1]

If you want to be a better swimmer, you practice. If you want to be a better reader, you practice. Read, read, read. Read about history, politics, world leaders, current events, sports, art, music–whatever interests you. Why? Because the more you read, the better reader you become. And because the more you read, the more knowledge you will have. Developing a foundation of background knowledge makes learning new knowledge easier.

In the book, Content Area Reading: Literacy and Learning Across the Curriculum, Vacca and Vacca postulate that a student's prior knowledge is "the single most important resource in learning with texts."[2] Reading and learning are processes that work together. Students draw on prior knowledge and experiences to make sense of new information. "Research shows that if learners have advanced knowledge of how the information they're about to learn is organized – if they see how the parts relate to the whole before they attempt to start learning the specifics – they're better able to comprehend and retain the material.[3]

For example, you are studying astronomy and the lecture is about Mars. Students with knowledge of what Mars looks like, or how it compares in size to other planets or any information about Mars will help students digest new information and connect it to prior knowledge. The more you read, the more background knowledge you have, and the better you will be able to connect information and learn. "Content overlap between text and knowledge appears to be a necessary condition for learning from text."[4]

There are a lot of recent advances in technology that have made information more accessible to us. If you are going to read a chemistry textbook, experiment with listening or watching a

podcast or a YouTube video on the subject you are studying. Ask your instructor if they recommend specific websites for further understanding.

The Seven Reading Principles

Read the assigned material. This sounds like a no-brainer, but you might be surprised to learn how many students don't read the assigned material. Often, it takes longer to read the material than had been anticipated. Sometimes it is not interesting and it causes you to procrastinate in reading it. Sometimes you are busy with other commitments and it is just not a priority. It makes it difficult to learn the information your instructor wants you to learn if you do not read about it before coming to class.

Read material when it is assigned. You will benefit exponentially from reading assignments when they are assigned, which usually means reading them before the instructor lectures on them. If there is a date for a reading on your syllabus, finish reading it before that date. The background knowledge you will attain from reading the information will help you learn and connect information when your instructor lectures on it, and it will leave you better prepared for class discussions. Further, if your instructor assigns you 70 pages to read by next week, don't wait until the night before to read it all. Break it down into chunks. Try scheduling time each day to read 10 or so pages. It takes discipline and self-control but doing it this way will make understanding and remembering what you read much easier.

Take notes when you read. You may recall Hermann Ebbinghaus' research from a previous chapter. He determined that 42% of information we take in is lost after only 20 minutes without review. For the same reasons that it's important to take notes during lectures, it's important to take notes when you are reading because

the process of note-taking will help you concentrate, remember and review.

Relate the information to your experiences. This strategy is focused on making what you are studying important to you. Find a way to directly relate what you are studying to something in your life. If your attitude is "I will never use this information" and "it's not important," chances are good that you will not remember it.

Read with a dictionary or use an online dictionary. Especially with information that is new, you may not always recognize all the words in a textbook or know their meanings. If you read without a dictionary and you don't know what a word means, you probably still won't know what it means when you finish reading. Students who read with a dictionary (or who look the word up online) expand their vocabulary and have a better understanding of the text. Take the time to look up words you do not know. Another strategy is to try to determine definitions of unknown words by context, thus eliminating the interruption to look up words.

Ask your instructor when you have questions or if there are concepts you do not understand. Visiting an instructor's office hours is one of the most underutilized college resources. Some students are shy about going, which is understandable, but ultimately, it's your experience, and it's up to you if you want to make the most of it. If you go, you will get answers to your questions; at the same time, you'll demonstrate to your instructor that their course is important to you. Find out when your professor's office hours are, they are often listed in the syllabus, and enjoy the opportunity to connect with your instructor.

Read it again. Some students will benefit from reading the material a second or third time as it allows them to better understand and retain the material. The students who understand the material the best usually score the highest on exams. It may be especially helpful to reread the chapter just after the instructor has lectured on it.

Strategies To Think About When You Open Your Textbook

In general, there are specific elements of a textbook chapter that are especially important in helping you discern key information. Start by reading the introduction and end of chapter or section summaries. These will help you understand what the main ideas and goals of the chapter are. Look at what you are reading and how it is connected with other areas of the class. How does it connect with the lecture? How does it connect with the course description? How does it connect with the syllabus or with a specific assignment? What piece of the puzzle are you looking at and how does it fit into the whole picture?

While reading, focus on topic sentences. Topic sentences are where the author outlines the most important aspects of that paragraph. It probably goes without saying but anything that is bolded or set off from default print size and style, demands your attention. "Side bars", which are boxes of related information will also highlight interesting and related information. Side bars can include statistics, brief biographies of authors or persons of note related to the chapter content, price points on brochures for businesses, charts, graphs, photographs, and/or illustrations. The end of each section or chapter may also contain study questions and/or glossary terms. Study questions are particularly important tools for self testing. While they usually appear at the end of a section, a good rule of thumb is to revise the study questions before you begin reading. Try and answer the questions as you move through the chapter–this will help keep your attention and aid you in identifying key information.

Highlighting is not recommended while reading because there is not evidence supporting it helps students with reading comprehension or higher test scores.[5] Highlighting can be a passive way of engaging with readings and often students have a tendency to highlight significantly more information than they need

to, making it difficult to review important information in advance of an exam or quiz.

Finally, one of the biggest challenges we see students have with reading is accurately assessing how long it will take to read what is assigned. In many cases, it's important to break the information up in chunks rather than to try and read it all at once. If you procrastinate and leave it until the day before it needs to be read, and then find out it will take you longer than you anticipate, it causes problems. One strategy that works well for many students is to break the information up equally per day and adjust accordingly if it takes longer than you had thought. Accurately estimating how much time it will take to practice the seven reading principles applied to your reading assignments is a skill that takes practice.

It's Not All Equal

Keep in mind that the best students develop reading skills that are different for different subjects. The main question you want to ask yourself is: Who are you reading for? And what are the questions that drive the discipline? Reading texts, blogs, leisure books and academic articles are all different experiences, and we read them with different mindsets and different strategies. The same is true for textbooks. Reading a mathematics textbook is going to be different than reading a history textbook. Further, students may be assigned to read scientific journals or academic articles. Scholarly articles require a different kind of reading and librarians are a resource for how to find and read this kind of information. Applying the principles in this chapter will help with your reading comprehension, but it's important to remember that you will need to develop specific reading skills most helpful to the particular subject you are studying.

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11. Studying

5.4 Studying and Attention[1]

Where To Study

In order to study successfully, it is important to know where you study best. Some students study well at home. Other students study well at a library or coffee shop. There is no best for all. Your best environment is based on you and your preferences.

When To Study

Many students are most efficient studying in the morning when they are fresh, have had a good night's sleep and a nutritious breakfast. When your brain is more alert it is easier to recall and retain information. Studying late in the day may be the only option for you but often students are tired at the end of the day, and this can have a major effect on study efficiency. However, some research has shown that studying late in the day can be effective because "sleeping after studying helps to improve recall and consolidating information.[2] Figuring out where and when you study best is personal and may take some trial and error.

Internal Distractions

An internal distraction includes thought processes, self-esteem, or confidence and it interrupts you from what you're doing. Managing these thought patterns while you study can be important to limit distractions. You can try writing down distracting thoughts or outside tasks that you will need to accomplish so you don't forget them later.[3] Internal distractions also include a computer or cell phone – something that is controlled by you. Many students intend to study but easily get distracted with surfing the Internet, checking social media, watching YouTube videos, or receiving a text message. If you don't absolutely need your computer or cell phone for studying, turn them off. If you do study with your phone or computer, it is best to have all potential alerts turned off. Notifications of text messages, emails, or social media updates all can serve as a major distraction to your studying.

External Distractions

External distractions originate outside of you. They might be your roommates, family or friends. Even if they are supportive of your studying, it may be challenging to concentrate when they are around. Pick a setting that limits distractions and assess the noise level and its impact on your productivity. Saying "no" is an important skill that may need to be utilized in order for you to have your study time without interruption.

Keep in mind that it may take 20 minutes to reach a high level of concentration. When we are interrupted, it takes on average another 23 minutes to get back to the level of concentration that we were at prior to the disruption.[4] If a student is studying for an hour and is interrupted twice, the consequence to study efficiency is devastating.

One way to try to monitor how many interruptions you incur and how well you maintain your level of concentration is to keep track of it. Take a blank piece of paper when you are studying and mark down each time you were interrupted. Over time, with practice, you should be able to decrease the number of interruptions you incur. This will allow you to be most efficient when studying.

Multitasking

Millennials are considered extraordinary multitaskers, though brain science tells us that multitasking is a myth[5]. More likely, they are apt to switch tasks quickly enough to appear to be doing them simultaneously. When it comes to heavy media multitasking, studies show greater vulnerability to interference, leading to decreased performance[6].

Trying to do multiple things at the same time may seem like it may allow you to accomplish more but when studying it often leads to accomplishing less. A study from Carnegie Mellon University found that driving while listening to a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37 percent[7]. Why would anyone choose to use less brain activity when they study?

Watch this selective attention test video and see if you come up with the correct answer.

Video: Selective Attention Test, Daniel Simmons

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/acad/?p=130

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12. Test Prep

5.5 Test Taking

Test taking (with few exceptions) comes down to discipline, preparation and execution. Students wanting to be successful have to have the self-discipline to schedule time to study well in advance of the exam. They have to actually do the work: the preparation needed in order to have the best opportunity for success on the exam. Then they must execute: they have to be able to apply their preparation accordingly and perform well on the exam.

Preparation for an exam is not glamorous. It's easy to find other things to do that are more interesting and fun. Students need to keep themselves motivated with their "eyes on the prize." Think of it like this: if the most important event of your life was coming up and you wanted to perform to the best of your ability in that event, you would likely spend some time preparing for it, rehearsing for it, and practicing it. A student may argue that an exam is not the most important event of their life, but think back to the chapter on motivation and passion. If you're already spending the time, effort, energy and money to attend college, why not do it to the best of your ability?

It is beneficial to spread exam preparation and practice out over time and prepare periodically rather than to wait until the last minute and binge study or cram. Your preparation would not be the same and this may affect your test score. Binge studying and cramming also are not healthy. Staying up late puts stress on our brain and body, and not getting adequate sleep places our bodies at risk for getting sick.

Studying the right thing is a process and a skill. As you gain more experience, you will learn how to become better at knowing what to study. It can be very frustrating to spend a lot of time preparing

and studying and then finding out that what you studied was not on the exam. You will see a lot of variance with exams due to different instructors, classes and types of tests. The better you become at predicting what will be on the exam and study accordingly, the better you will perform on your exams. Try placing yourself in your instructor's shoes and design questions you think your instructor would ask. It's often an eye-opening experience for students and a great study strategy.

Preparation for Exam Strategies[1]

While exams can be intimidating, preparation can help you assess the situation, understand what will be expected of you, and come up with a plan that suits you and your learning style. The following section will provide guidance on how to prepare for any of your upcoming exams.

Find out as much about the exam in advance as you can.

Some professors will tell you how many questions there will be, the exam format, and how much time you will have, while others will not. Ask questions about the exam if there is not information given, preferably before class, after class, in professors' office hours or via email rather than during class.

Know the test

If you know how many questions, what the format is, and how much

time you will have, you can start to mentally prepare for the exam. There are two more important aspects that you may or may not know: a) what will be covered or asked on the exam; b) how the exam will be scored. Obviously, the more you know about what will be covered, the easier it is for you to be able to prepare for the exam. Most exam scoring is standardized, but not always.

Look for opportunities where some areas of the exam are worth more points than others. For example: An exam consists of 21 questions, with 10 being True/False, 10 being multiple choice, and one essay question. The T/F questions are worth 1 point each (10 points), the multiple-choice questions are worth 2 points each (20 points), and the essay question is worth 30 points. You know that the essay question is the most valuable (it is worth half of the value of the exam), and you should allocate time accordingly. Starting with the essay question is the correct approach. Do a quick analysis of time to be able to spend your time on the exam wisely. You want to spend some time with the essay question since it is so valuable, without sacrificing adequate time to ensure the T/F and multiple-choice questions are answered.

Often, the order of the exam in this scenario will be: T/F first, multiple choice second and essay third. Most students will go in the chronological order of the exam, but a savvy student would start with the essay. If an exam were to last for 30 minutes with this format of questions, a student should spend 15 minutes on the essay question, ten minutes on the multiple choice, three minutes on the T/F and two minutes reviewing their answer.

Also, look for situations where exams penalize students for incorrectly answering a question. This does not occur very often, but it is the case with some exams. With the SAT for example, students are awarded one point for a correct answer and ¼ of a point subtracted for an incorrect answer. Points are not awarded nor subtracted for leaving a question blank. Thus, the strategy for a multiple-choice question is: if you can narrow down the potentially correct answer to two rather than four or five, it is statistically advantageous to answer the question and guess between the two

answers; however, if a student had no idea if any of the answers were correct or incorrect, it would be best to leave the answer blank. Remember, this is rare, but it is important to understand the strategy when students take these exams.

In conclusion, the more information you have about the exam, the better you can prepare for content, allocation of time spent on aspects of the exam, and the more confident you will be in knowing how and when to attempt to answer questions.

Take care of your body

Before the exam, it is important to prepare your brain and body for optimal performance for your exam. Do not cram the night before. Get a good night's sleep. Make sure you eat (nutritiously) before the exam. Exercising the day before and, if possible, a few hours before the exam can also help with your focus and energy levels.

Pre-Test Strategies

Q: When should you start preparing for the first test? Circle…

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

If you answered "3. The first day of classes," you are correct. If you circled 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. From the previous unit on memory, you might recall that the brain can only process an average of 5-7 new pieces of information at a time. Additionally, unless memory devices are used to aid memory and to cement information into long term memory (or at least until the test is over tomorrow!) chances are slim that students who cram will effectively learn and remember the information.

Mid-Test Strategies

Here is a list of the most common–and useful–strategies to survive this ubiquitous college experience.

- 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 check mark 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 help in other test questions covering similar information.
- Sit where you are most comfortable. That said, 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 ear plugs if noise distracts you.
- You do NOT have to start with #1! If you are unsure of it, mark it to come back to later on.
- 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 assist the blood to the brain!
- Remember to employ strategies to reduce test-taking anxiety (covered in the next lesson)
- 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). 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, look for the plural answer. 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.

Post-Test Strategies

In addition to taking a big sigh of relief, there are advantages in continuing thinking about your exam and taking a couple of approaches after you receive your results. One of the biggest mistakes that students make after they take an exam in a course is that they do not use the exam for the future. The exam contains a lot of information that can be helpful in studying for future exams. Students that perform well on an exam often put it away thinking they do not need it anymore. Students who do poorly on an exam often put it away, not wanting to think about it any further.

In both cases, students are missing out on the value of reviewing their exams. It is wise to review exams for three reasons: 1) students should review the answers that were correct because they may see those questions on future exams and it is important to reinforce learning; 2) students should review the answers that were incorrect in order to learn what the correct answer was and why. For example, 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, you can take steps to address these issues or prepare if these questions appear on a future exam. In addition, occasionally an answer is marked incorrect, when it should have been marked correct. The student would never know this if they didn't review their exam; and 3) there is value in reviewing the exam to try to predict what questions or what format will be used by a professor for a future exam in the same course.

Strategies for Specific Exam Formats

Each exam is unique, not to mention the environment or the expectations surrounding it. However, specific types of exams will have some commonalities. Think about these approaches when you come across one of these common types of exams.

True or False Questions

Look for qualifiers. A qualifier is a word that is absolute. Examples are: all, never, no, always, none, every, only, entirely. They are often seen in false statements. This is because it is more difficult to create a true statement using a qualifier like never, no, always, etc. For example, "All cats chase mice." Cats may be known for chasing mice, but not all of them do so. The answer here is false and the qualifier "all" gave us a tip. Qualifiers such as: sometimes, many, some, most, often, and usually are commonly found in true statements. For example: "Most cats chase mice." This is true and the qualifier "most" gave us a tip.

Make sure to read the entire statement. All parts of a sentence must be true if the whole statement is to be true. If one part of it is false, the whole sentence is false. Long sentences are often false for this reason.

Students should guess on True or False questions they do not know the answer to unless there is a penalty for an incorrect answer.

Multiple Choice Questions

Think of multiple choice questions as four (or five) true or false statements in one. One of the statements is true (the correct answer) and the others will be false. Apply the same strategy toward

qualifiers. If you see an absolute qualifier in one of the answer choices, it is probably false and not the correct answer. Try to identify the true statement. If you can do this, you have the answer as there is only one. If you cannot do this at first, try eliminating answers you know to be false.

If there is no penalty for incorrect answers, a good suggestion is to guess if you are not certain of the answer. If there is a penalty for incorrect answers, common logic is to guess if you can eliminate two of the answers as incorrect (pending what the penalty is). If there's a penalty and you cannot narrow down the answers, it's best to leave it blank. You may wish to ask your instructor for clarification.

Answers that are strange and unrelated to the question are usually false. If two answers have a word that looks or sounds similar, one of those is usually correct. For example: abductor/adductor. If you see these as two of the four or five choices, one of them is usually correct. Also look for answers that are grammatically incorrect. These are usually incorrect answers. If you have to completely guess, choose B or C. It is statistically proven to be correct more than 25 percent of the time. If there are four answers for each question, and an exam has standardized the answers, each answer on the exam A, B, C and D would be equal. But most instructors do not standardize their answers, and more correct answers are found in the middle (B and C then the extremes A and D or E). "People writing isolated four-choice questions hide the correct answer in the two middle positions about 70% of the time."[2] There are 20 percent more correct answers found in B or C than a standardized exam with equal correct answers for each letter.

Matching Questions

Although less common than the other types of exams, you will likely see some matching exams during your time in college. First, read the instructions and take a look at both lists to determine what

the items are and their relationship. It is especially important to determine if both lists have the same number of items and if all items are to be used, and used only once.

Matching exams become much more difficult if one list has more items than the other or if items either might not be used or could be used more than once. If your exam instructions do not discern this, you may wish to ask your instructor for further clarification. Good advice for students is to take a look at the whole list before selecting an answer because a more correct answer may be found further into the list. Mark items when you are sure you have a match (pending the number of items in the list this may eliminate answers for the future). Guessing (if needed) should take place once you have selected answers you are certain about.

Short-Answer Questions

Read all of the instructions first. Budget your time and then read all of the questions. Answer the ones you know best or feel the most confident with. Then go back to the other ones. If you do not know the answer and there is no penalty for incorrect answers, guess. Use common sense. Sometimes instructors will award partial credit for a logical answer that is related even if it is not the correct answer.

Essay Questions

Keep in mind that knowing the format of the exam can help you determine how to study. If you know that you will be taking a True-False exam, you will need to discern whether a statement is True or False. You will need to know subject content for the course. But if you are studying for short answers and especially for essay questions, you must know a lot more. For essay questions, you must have much greater content knowledge and be able to make

a coherent argument that answers the question using information from textbooks, lectures or other course materials. You have to put a lot more time and thought into studying for an essay exam than for True-False or Multiple-Choice exams.

Read the essay question(s) and the instructions first. Plan your time wisely and organize your answer before you start to write. Address the answer to the question in your first or second sentence. It may help to restate the original question. Write clearly and legibly. Instructors have difficulty grading essays that they cannot read. Save some time for review when you have finished writing to check spelling, grammar and coherent thought in your answer. Make sure you have addressed all parts of the essay question.

Anxiety on College Campuses

Anxiety is prevalent on college campuses. In 2018, the American College Health Association published the National College Health Assessment. In it, the organization stated that 63% of college students in the United States experienced overwhelming anxiety in the previous 12 months. Additionally, 23% of students reported being diagnosed or receiving treatment for anxiety over that time period.[3] While anxiety and stress are serious concerns, it helps to use resources and practices to make them manageable. We will spend time in future chapters discussing the link between health and academic success, emphasizing the importance of self-care to overcome some of these challenges.

However, one facet of anxiety that we will discuss in this chapter is testing anxiety. Almost everyone experiences some level of nervousness or tension before tests. The term "test anxiety" refers to the emotional, physical, and cognitive reactions that some students have to exams. These students have an adverse reaction preparing or taking an exam, not performing to their potential and their scores not reflecting their knowledge or capability. The fear

of exams is not an irrational fear – after all, how you perform on college exams can shape the course of your academic career. Dealing with testing anxiety is not rare. It is estimated that 20-35% of college students suffer from testing anxiety.[4]

Addressing Test Anxiety

Some students experience physical symptoms of anxiety before and during exams (an upset stomach, sweaty palms, etc.). Many of these students have trouble recalling information that they actually know and become so nervous about preparing for or taking a test that they have difficulty planning, thinking, concentrating, and relaxing. A little nervousness can actually help motivate us; however, excessive fear of exams is a problem when it interferes with your ability to be successful in college.

Anxiety is created by expectations or thoughts about what is likely to happen. If you think negative things to yourself about your abilities, you produce a corresponding negative emotional reaction: anxiety. If you believe you are not smart, you don't know the information well enough, or you aren't capable of performing well on exams, then your expectations will be for failure. Negative expectations then create anxiety, and anxiety can disable you from actually doing well. Therefore, if you believe in yourself and your abilities and have positive expectations for how you will perform on the exam, you will be better able to cope with the anxiety (a small amount of anxiety can be helpful for performing well.).

Students may blame poor exam performance on test anxiety. This poor performance may actually be a lack of preparedness for a test (which causes anxiety), rather than classic test anxiety. Be well prepared. If your anxiety is a direct result of lack of preparation, consider anxiety a normal, rational reaction. Lack of preparation is indicated by the following:

- Cramming the night before the exam
- Poor time management
- Failure to organize course information
- Poor study habits
- Worrying about past performance on exams and how friends and other students are doing in comparison to yourself

However, if you are adequately prepared but still panic, "blank out," and/or overreact, your reaction is not rational. In either case, it is helpful to know how to overcome the effects of test anxiety.

Coping with Test Anxiety

Addressing testing anxiety can be a daunting task. It is an irrational fear brought up by a high stress situation. However, we do have control over many aspects of it. When discussing coping mechanisms to deal with anxiety we have to address things we can do to prevent it from happening in the first place and things we can do to lower the impact when it happens.

Mental preparation is a primary concern when dealing with test anxiety. Preparing for an exam appropriately can help lower the stress around it and increase confidence. First and foremost, start by having a study plan, implementing various approaches from the previous chapters. Then, you can start focusing on your mental preparedness.

Make sure to develop a positive mindset and outlook. Remind yourself that your entire future doesn't depend on this exam. Don't give a test the power to define you. An exam won't tell you whether you're brilliant or stupid. As you anticipate the exam, think positively (e.g., "I can do okay on this exam. I've studied and I know my stuff."). Remember that the most reasonable expectation is to try to show as much of what you know as you can. Then, remind yourself of past successes. Think of a tough course in which you struggled but

eventually succeeded. Tell yourself that if you did well on that past exam, you can do well on the upcoming exam.

If you find yourself worrying a lot when studying, engage in "thought stopping", mentally comparing yourself to your peers, or thinking about what others may say about your performance in a course. Alternatively, you can practice anxiety control strategies. As you study, deliberately induce anxiety by saying to yourself the negative thoughts you typically have during an exam (i.e., "I'm going to fail"). Remind yourself that you will probably experience some anxiety during tests, but the anxiety won't hamper your performance because you've practiced controlling it. Additionally, try not to study right before an exam. Frantic reviews are often more confusing than helpful. Lastly, get a good night's sleep. Don't go without sleep the night before an exam. Being fully rested lowers stress levels and prevents stress from building up as you take your exam.

It is possible that anxiety might spike once the exam begins. There are two approaches to consider. First, minor stretching exercises on your seat can help. Change positions to help you relax. Stretch your arms and legs and then relax them again. Tense and relax muscles in several parts of your body, then take several deep breaths with your eyes still closed. These breathing exercises are the second technique to try. Breathe in slowly to the count of seven and exhale to the count of seven. While it might seem counter-intuitive, taking a couple of minutes to steady your breathing can make the remainder of the exam more productive.

You can control test anxiety so that your performance on a test reflects your real standing in that course. However, if levels of test anxiety that interfere with your academic success persist, talk to a counselor for some specialized help. Health Services can assist with diagnosis and provide short or long-term counseling services to aid with the problem. Additionally, the Educational Access Center (EAC) provides accommodations for students with disabilities.

Citations

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13. Working with Instructors

5.6 Working with Instructors[1]

Of all the teachers you've had in your life, which one do you remember most fondly? If you're lucky, you've got someone in mind—a teacher who encouraged and inspired you and perhaps played a role in shaping the person you are today. That same teacher could well be thinking similar thoughts about you! For every favorite teacher, there is also a favorite student. The satisfaction often goes both ways.

In this section, we look at ways in which you can cultivate rich and rewarding relationships with your instructors, and also resolve conflicts, should any arise. Solid student-faculty relationships are foundational to a successful college experience.

The following video, from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, looks at the value teachers and students place on connecting with one another.

Benefits of Communicating with Instructors

College students are sometimes surprised to discover that instructors enjoy getting to know students. 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 work with you during their office hours, talk for a few minutes after class, respond to emails, or engage in online discussion boards. Instructors want to see you succeed in the course they teach and beyond.

The following video, from the University of British Columbia,

shares faculty perspectives on some of the many reasons why students might want to talk to their faculty or to teaching assistants (TAs).

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/acad/?p=132

Communicating with your instructors can be among your most meaningful experiences in college. One of the many benefits is that it can help you feel more comfortable in the course they are teaching. When you and your instructor know one another, it is easier to ask questions and inform them of difficulties you are facing in and out of the classroom. There will also be a few instructors that teach multiple of the courses you are required to take for your degree.

Communicating with instructors is also a valuable way to learn about an academic field or a career you are interested in. Maybe

you 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. Because instructors are often well connected within their field, they may know of a job, internship, or research opportunity that you wouldn't otherwise know about. You may also need a reference or a letter of recommendation for a job or internship application one day. Getting to know some of your instructors puts you in an ideal position to ask for a letter of recommendation or a reference later on.

An instructor who knows you is a valuable part of your network. Developing a trusting relationship with them early in your college career will help you for years to come.

Guidelines for Communicating with Instructors

Getting along with instructors and communicating well begins with attitude. 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. There is no need to fear them. As you get to know them better, you'll learn their personalities and find appropriate ways to talk to them.

It's good practice to communicate early and often. Introduce yourself on the first day of class. Ask questions about an assignment at least 48 hours before the due date to give them time to respond. Let them know when you will miss class or if you have extenuating circumstances that require an extension on an assignment. Students regularly assume this type of communication is unnecessary or bothersome to an instructor, but it actually shows that you are invested in your learning, which your instructor will appreciate.

When communicating verbally or through writing, always be professional and respectful. Being overly formal may feel unnatural

at first, but it can demonstrate respect to your instructor when you are first getting to know them. Unless the instructor has already asked you to address them as "Dr. _____," "Ms. _____," or Mr. _____," or their first name, it's appropriate to say "Professor _____." Once an instructor informs you how they'd like to be addressed, address them as such moving forward. Your interactions with your instructor may become more informal as the semester progresses and you develop a relationship with them, but it's always good to play it safe and communicate in a formal, professional manner.

Remember to respect your instructor's time, as well. In addition to teaching, college instructors participate in committees, conduct research and other professional work, and have personal lives. It's not appropriate to arrive a couple minutes before the end of office hours and expect the instructor to stay late to talk with you. Understand that the instructor will recognize you from class. If you spent a lecture hour not paying attention or if you skip class, they will most likely remember that.

Prepare before meeting with your instructor. Go over your notes on readings and lectures and write down your specific questions. You'll feel more comfortable, and the instructor will appreciate you being organized. It will also decrease the chance that you leave your professor's office without getting the answer to an important question. Be prepared to accept constructive criticism in a professional way, without taking it personally or complaining.

Don't try to fool an instructor. Insincere praise or making excuses for not doing an assignment will rarely play in your favor (they've heard it all before!). Nor is it a good idea to act like you're "too cool" to take your classwork seriously—another attitude that's sure to put off an instructor. To earn your instructor's respect, come to class prepared, do the work, genuinely participate in class, and show respect—and the instructor will be happy to reciprocate that respect and courtesy to you.

Effective Email Communication with Instructors

Just as digital messaging has become a primary form of communication in business and society, it has a growing role in education. Email has become an important and valuable means of communicating with instructors.

Most college students are familiar with digital messaging, such as email, texting, and messages via the online-course learning-management systems like Blackboard. Using digital messaging respects other people's time, allowing them to answer at a time of their choosing. However, digital communication with instructors is a written form of communication that differs from communicating with friends.

Your instructors expect you to use a professional, respectful tone and fairly formal style. Writing emails to professors should follow the same format and styling as if you were writing a letter. The language you use should be similar to that for a course paper, avoiding sarcasm, criticism, or negative language. Abbreviating words, slang, ignoring capitalization and punctuation, and not focusing on grammar or using full words or sentences is common in texting. This is not an appropriate style for communicating with instructors. Be concise in your writing. If your email is multiple paragraphs, it may be best to meet in person instead of emailing.
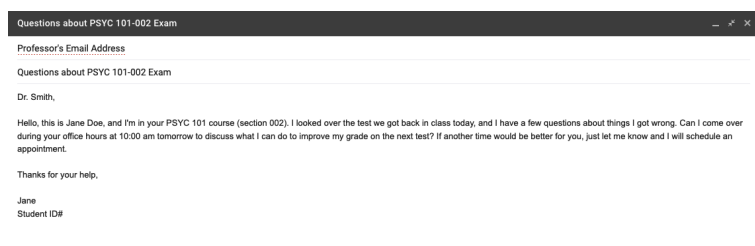
It's recommended to use your university email address instead of a personal email address if possible. This will make it easier for the instructor to identify you or look up information if necessary. Include something in the subject line that readily communicates the purpose of your email. "ACAD 102 Questions" says something that "No Subject" does not. Address digital messages as you do a letter, beginning with "Hello ____," and ending with a "Thank you" or something similar, along with your name and student ID number Don't forget to proofread your message before sending it. If you need to send multiple emails back and forth with your instructor use the "Reply" function instead of starting a new email. This will

keep your conversation in one thread, making it easier to refer to at a later date. Following these technical steps will help eliminate confusion and increase the likelihood of getting your message answered.
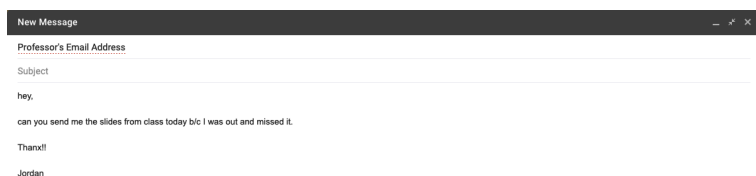
Another recommendation for written communication that applies in many settings is to be cautious about sending emails when you are angry. It's easy to fire off an email when you are in a heightened emotional state that can come across as rude or threatening. If you are upset about a grade, written feedback, or an experience with a classmate or instructor, give yourself a few hours before sending an email. A good night's sleep may even help. After some time to calm down and collect your thoughts, you will most likely write a better message that still expresses your feelings, but in a more constructive way.

Below you will find an example of an email that does an excellent job of communicating with a professor, as well as an example of an email that would need some edits before sending.

Example of an A+ Email

Questions about PSYC 101-002 Exam

Professor's Email Address

Questions about PSYC 101-002 Exam

Dr. Smith,

Hello, this is Jane Doe, and I'm in your PSYC 101 course (section 002). I looked over the test we got back in class today, and I have a few questions about things I got wrong. Can I come over during your office hours at 10:00 am tomorrow to discuss what I can do to improve my grade on the next test? If another time would be better for you, just let me know and I will schedule an appointment.

Thanks for your help,

Jane
Student ID#

Example of a D- Email

Conflict-Resolution Strategies

The most common "conflict" that students experience with instructors is feeling that they've received a lower grade than they deserve. It can be disappointing to get a low grade, but try not to be too hard on yourself or your instructor. Take a good look at what happened on the test or paper and make sure you take the time to gain clarity from the instructor so you can do better next time.

If you genuinely believe you should have a higher grade, you can talk with your instructor. How you communicate in that conversation, however, is very important. Instructors are used to hearing students complain about grades, and they will likely patiently explain their standards for grading. In general, instructors seldom change grades, but having the conversation can still be a worthwhile experience.

Before you meet with your instructor, go over the requirements for the paper or test, as well as any comments they provided. Be sure you actually have a reason to evaluate the grade—not just that you want the grade to be higher. This is a situation where setting up a one on one meeting with your instructor is most appropriate. For face-to-face classes, don't try to talk about your concern before or after class. You will most likely want ample time to state your case and fewer people around while you do so. You should also

be prepared with specific talking points to explain why you believe your assignment should have earned a higher grade.

Begin your time together by stating that you thought you did better on the assignment or test (not simply that you think you deserve a better grade) and that you'd like to go over it to better understand the result. Allow the instructor to explain their comments on the assignment or grading of the test. Raise any specific questions, or make comments at this time. For example, you might say, "I really thought I was being clear here when I wrote . . ." Use good listening skills while your instructor provides feedback. It can be hard to not take it as criticism of you personally, but try to remain positive and see their notes as ways to improve your performance and skills in the future.

Ask what you can do to improve the grade, if possible. Can you rewrite the paper or do any extra-credit work to help make up for a test score? While you are showing that you would like to earn a higher grade in the course, also make it clear that you're willing to put in the effort and that you want to learn more, not just get the higher grade. 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 make the effort—as long as it's clear that you're just as interested in learning as you are getting a good grade.

When it comes to communicating with instructors, practice makes perfect. It can be scary to connect with an instructor for the first time, but it will get easier over time. If you don't click with one instructor, don't let it affect your perception of all instructors. Limiting communication with an instructor rarely benefits you. Regular, professional interactions with your instructors will help you develop rapport, enhance your learning, and may even benefit you long term in getting into your preferred career field.

Citations

1. College Success. **Authored by**: Linda Bruce. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: CC BY: *Attribution.* *https://courses.lumenlearning.com/lumencollegesuccessxtraining2/chapter/working-with-instructors/#return-footnote-1170-1*

14. Presentations and Public Speaking

5. 7 Presentation Strategies[1]

Imagine you are walking across your campus. As you pass the student center, you see a couple of people who have set up at a table outside, and they're passing out information about the student honor society. Open windows in the music building share the sounds of someone practicing the piano in the art studio. Upon entering your class building, you are greeted by student-made posters illustrating various phases of the process of cell division. An open class door allows you to watch a young man in a lab coat and protective gear pour liquid nitrogen over items in a tray while the rest of his classmates look on with great interest. Your own instructor is setting up the computer screen at the front of your class when you walk in, loading up the PowerPoint that he plans to use for the day.

All of these are examples of presentations, and it's very likely that you'll be asked to participate in similar activities during your college career. Presenting, whether face-to-face or online, is a skill you will hone as a college student in preparation for your future career.

Presentation Types

Presentations can take many forms and serve many purposes. When reading the definitions below, keep in mind that many presentations often combine several elements into a hybrid form. You may have to pick and choose what will work best for you depending on the

instructor and the course. Let's start with the different genres or types of presentations.

Informative

Some presentation assignments will ask you simply to deliver information about a topic. Often these presentations involve research, which you will shape and present to your instructor and classmates. Typically, informative presentations ask that you NOT share your opinion about the subject at hand (which can be more challenging than it seems). With an informative presentation, your goal is to educate your audience by presenting a summary of your research and "sticking to the facts."

Lesson Delivery

You may be asked to do a "Teaching Presentation," which will require you to specialize in one topic of the course and give your fellow classmates instruction about it. In short, you become the teacher of a subject. Often your presentation will be the only time that this subject is covered in the class, so you will be responsible for making sure that you provide clear, detailed, and relevant information about it. You may also be asked to provide questions on the subject to be included in a quiz or test. This is a type of informative presentation. You will want to become an expert on this topic and think about your delivery method, as you want to communicate well in order for your audience to fully grasp the information.

Persuasive

Unlike informative presentations, persuasive presentations ask that you not only form an opinion about your subject, but also convince your audience to come around to your point of view. These presentations often involve research, too, and the findings of your research will be used to bolster the persuasive case you're making.

Demonstration

These action-based presentations typically model some behavior or subject matter that has been introduced previously in the class. Unlike the Lesson Delivery presentation, a demonstration adds a level of performance in which you show and tell the audience what you know. You might perform the demonstration yourself, as a way of illustrating the concept or procedure, or you might provide classmates with instructions and guidance as they do it themselves.

Poster

Poster presentations should convey all the information on a subject necessary for a viewer to consider on her own. They often consist of short, punchy wording accompanied by strong visuals–graphs, charts, images, and/or illustrations. Posters frequently require research to prepare, and they allow for some creativity in design. Depending on the assignment, your poster may be part of a gallery of poster presentations with your classmates. Your poster has to communicate everything that is important without you being there to explain it to your audience.

Online

Similar to poster presentations, online presentations are generally asynchronous—meaning they don't require you to be present at the same time as your viewer. They often serve similar purposes as poster presentations, but due to the online format, they allow for more interactive possibilities, such as sharing a pertinent video or animated graph. Your online presentation must stand alone to teach your audience everything they need to know.

Solo and Group Presentations

You may be asked to present as an individual or as part of a group.

Individual presentations put all of the responsibility for preparation, research, and delivery on you. You rightfully take all the credit for the final product you produce.

Group presentations, in contrast, often involve more complicated tasks and therefore require more participants to make them. Your instructor may make suggestions about how the work should be divided, or the group may delegate tasks internally. Grades may be assigned equally to everyone in the group, though many instructors assign individual grades based on some participation-level factor to inspire each member to pull his or her own weight.

Presentation assignments are often open to creative interpretation, which gives you a lot of room to explore new techniques and add a personal touch to the task.

Think About Audience

Now that you've learned a bit about the various types of presentations, it's helpful to turn to another important part of

presenting: the audience. Like reading and writing, presenting is a form of communication. Whether you're presenting information, giving a demonstration, creating a poster, or trying to change people's minds, your goal is to get your message across to your audience. For that reason, it's important to remember that they may not interpret the information you are presenting exactly as you have. It's your job as a presenter to explain your ideas using specific details, succinct and clear wording (avoid jargon), vivid descriptions, and meaningful images. As you organize your presentation, keeping this imaginary audience in mind can help you gauge how much background information and context to provide.

Choosing Media and Format for Visual Aids

Perhaps you've heard the phrase "Death by PowerPoint" to explain that all-too-familiar feeling of being slowly bored to death by a thoughtless presenter who's droning on and on about boring slide after boring slide. If you'd like to know what the experience is about, and you have time for a laugh, watch the following video, starring stand-up comedian Don McMillan. McMillan pokes fun at bad presentations, but he has some very sound advice about what not to do.

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/acad/?p=137

You may consider using PowerPoint for your presentation, and that's perfectly fine. PowerPoint can be a very effective tool with the right organization, layout, and design. Below is a list of five common pitfalls that you can and should avoid, and doing so will go a long way toward making your PowerPoint presentation successful:

1. Choosing a font that is too small. The person in the very back of the room should be able to see the same thing as the person in the front of the room.
2. Putting too many words on a slide. Remember it's called PowerPoint, not PowerParagraph! Keep your bullet points clear and succinct.
3. Having spelling errors. Have someone proofread your slides. Any typos will detract from your presentation.
4. Choosing distracting colors that make it hard to read the

information. PowerPoint gives you a lot of color choices in their design templates. The ideas in your brilliant presentation will be lost if your audience is struggling to read the content.

5. Selecting images or visuals that do not clearly align with the content. For instance, a cute photo of your cat may look lovely up on the screen, but if it doesn't connect to your topic, it's just fluff that detracts from your message. Every slide counts, so make sure the visuals support your message.

Practicing for the Presentation

Once you've put together your presentation and have an idea of your audience, it's time to deal with the "nerves" that can accompany the performance part of the presentation. Let's consider some strategies for reducing anxiety about the presentation. You've worked hard as the owner of this presentation, so have confidence in your work. It's tough to remember this when you're nervous, but you're the person who knows the most about your presentation.

Then, you will want to practice your presentation. This will help you visualize the material and build a routine for it. Additionally, it can help you notice any mistakes, points that you may want to add, or some that you may want to eliminate altogether. If possible, make sure to practice with an audience so you can get comfortable with people listening and watching you. These individuals can also provide feedback, including some mannerisms that you may not realize that you are doing. What if you don't have anyone available to practice your presentation? Record yourself using your phone or your laptop. It can be very difficult to listen to yourself, but it's always enlightening to watch and/or listen to yourself present.

Practicing your presentation will help you build confidence and reduce anxiety prior to and during your presentation. Remember the sage advice of Oscar Wilde: "Be yourself. Everyone else is taken." Good luck!

Citations

1. Presentation Strategies. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: CC BY: *Attribution*. *https://courses.lumenlearning.com/sacsandbox-collegesuccess/ chapter/presentation-strategies/*

15. Academic Writing

5.8 Academic Writing[1]

Obviously you can write. And in the age of Facebook and smartphones, you might be writing all the time, perhaps more often than speaking. So why spend yet more time and attention on writing skills? Research shows that deliberate practice–that is, close focus on improving one's skills–makes all the difference in how one performs. Revisiting the craft of writing will improve your writing much more than simply producing page after page in the same old way. Becoming an excellent communicator will save you a lot of time and hassle in your studies, advance your career, and promote better relationships and a higher quality of life off the job. Honing your writing is a good use of your scarce time.

Writing Process

The reality is you will be writing–a lot–during your college career. Suppose you complete about 40 classes for a 120-credit bachelors' degree, and–averaging across writing-intensive and non-writing-intensive courses–you produce about 2500 words of formal writing per class. Even with that low estimate, you'll write 100,000 words over your college career. That's about equivalent to a 330-page book. Spending a few hours sharpening your writing skills will make those 100,000 words much easier and more rewarding to write.

By the end of high school you probably mastered many of the key conventions of standard academic English such as paragraphing, sentence-level mechanics, and the use of thesis statements. However, college writing assignments require you to apply those

skills to new intellectual challenges. Professors assign papers because they want you to think rigorously and deeply about important questions in their fields. This kind of scholarly approach usually entails writing a rough draft, through which you work out a thesis and the scope of your argument. Then working on a second draft containing a mostly complete argument anchored by a refined thesis. In that second round, you'll discover holes in the argument that should be remedied, counter-arguments that should be acknowledged and addressed, and important implications that should be noted. When the paper is substantially complete, you'll go through it again to tighten up the writing and ensure clarity.

Many students have a powerful distaste for truly revising (i.e., actually rewriting) a paper because it feels like throwing away hard-won text. Consequently, when students are invited or required to revise an essay, they tend to focus on correcting mechanical errors, making a few superficial changes that do not entail any rethinking or major changes. Revision is essential if you want to put forth your best effort. As such, time management will play a large role in working through the writing process as you will need to allow substantial time for drafting, revising and editing for grammar and clarity.

Where Do You Start

Know your audience and understand the assignment. In most cases you are writing for your instructor, but that may feel intimidating. You may do well to imagine yourself writing for a group of peers who have some basic knowledge of the field but are unfamiliar with the specific topic or argument. Writing assignments can vary dramatically and can include but are not limited to argumentative papers, reflection essays, reaction papers, lab reports, blog posts or project proposals. As a starting point, identify the verb(s) that your instructor uses in the prompt: "compare", "contrast", "explain",

"reflect" are just a few common examples that are used to indicate the kind of thinking and writing you are supposed to do.

If your instructor provides a grading rubric with the assignment, use that to get you started. The rubric will answer questions about their expectations. Does your instructor expect you to outline a clear thesis, use 5 outside resources, articulate various viewpoints and keep your paper to under five pages? Then follow those guidelines in order to maximize points.

Formal Versus Informal Writing

Regardless of the writing assignment, all of your writing assignments should be crafted using formal language. Formal writing tends to include complex sentences, diverse and subject specific vocabulary and unless dictated by the assignment is written in the third person. When engaged in formal writing, you should avoid using contractions and slang. Informal writing, on the other hand tends to include short, simple sentences, can be written in first or second person and tends to include more slang or colloquial language.

As a general rule, err on the side of more formal in all of your assignments and communication in the academic setting unless told otherwise. Formal writing conveys respect for your audience. And no matter what style of writing you are using–reread your work and check for typos or mistakes–this ensures that whatever you have to say can be understood.

Citations

1. Guptill, Amy. Writing in College: from Competence to Excellence. OER Commons.

https://milnepublishing.geneseo.edu/writing-in-college-from-competence-to-excellence/. CC BY 4.0.

CHAPTER 6 - PERSONAL WELLBEING

16. Goal Setting

In previous units we discussed the value of time management. How planning and preparing for the short term can help us organize facets of our lives, account for the unexpected, and assess items we wish to prioritize. In this section, we will review the value of goal setting, evaluating the benefits of long-term planning. Recognizing goals, whether for next week (as in time management) or for 10 years from now allows us to determine steps to complete and can help motivate us in order to implement the right choices to accomplish them.

We will also touch on a variety of health related topics, including physical, mental, financial, and professional wellbeing. While these areas may seem disconnected, they address several important components of our lives that when jeopardized, can impact us deeply. These areas also benefit heavily from goal-setting. People decide frequently on a fitness goal (physical), being better partners (emotional and mental), a budget (financial), or a career (professional). These are all examples of goal-setting. Having a clear vision on what you want and need is the first step in accomplishing them.

6. 1 Identifying Goals[1]

Recently, there has been a lot of attention given to the importance of college students identifying their educational objectives and their major as soon as possible. Some high schools are working with students to identify these goals earlier. Goal identification is a way to allow us to keep track of what we would like to accomplish as well as a mechanism to measure how successful we are at achieving our goals. This chapter will focus on examining our academic goals and

discovering better and more structured approaches to develop our goals, hopefully leading to a much higher achievement rate. After all, we are aiming for the stars!

Educational Planning

Let's begin the conversation about goals discussing educational planning. Education plans developed with a counselor help students determine and explore a program of study and have proven to facilitate student success.[2] Your probably began working on your educational plan during orientation before your first semester in school or when meeting with an academic advisor. Students then can follow educational plans like a road map so they can see how to complete required classes in the most efficient and logical order based on their educational goals.

Educational planning may appear to be simple: identifying the program of study and then figuring out which courses are required to complete it.

Graphics courtesy of Greg Stoup, Rob Johnstone, and
Priyadarshini Chaplot of The RP Group

However, it can often be extremely complex. Many students have multiple goals. One student might be interested in more than one of these goals: earn multiple degrees, transfer to a four-year college or university, prepare for graduate school, start a minor, or complete requirements for several transfer schools.

Students also have different strengths. Some might be strong in English. Some students excel in Math. Others might be strong in Science, Arts and Humanities, or Social Sciences. Educational planning takes these strengths (and weaknesses) into consideration.

Students are encouraged to take English and Math early[3], as statistics show that those students will be more successful. But the order of courses taken for students with different strengths could vary even if the students have the same goal. There is not a one-size-fits-all solution.

Educational planning may be further complicated by availability of courses a college or university offers, the process in which a student may be able to register for those courses, and which sections fit into students' schedules. Transcript evaluations (if students have attended previous colleges or universities), assessment of appropriate English or Math levels and prerequisite clearance procedures may also contribute to the challenge of efficient educational planning.

Further, students have different priorities. Some students want to complete their goals in a certain amount of time. Other students may have to work full-time and take fewer units each semester. Educational planning might also consider student interests, skills, values, personality, or student support referrals. Grade point average requirements for a student's degree, transfer or specific programs are also considered in educational planning.[4]

While some students may know what they want to do for their career, and have known since they were five years old, many students are unsure of what they want to do. Often, students aren't sure how to choose their major. It is OK to not know what major you want to pursue when you start college. But it is important to actively work in identifying areas of interested and, ultimately, a major that you will want to pursue. Seventy percent of students change their major at least once while in college and most will change their major at least three times. It is important for students to find the best major for them, but these changes may make previous educational plans obsolete.

The simple concept and road map often ends up looking more like this:
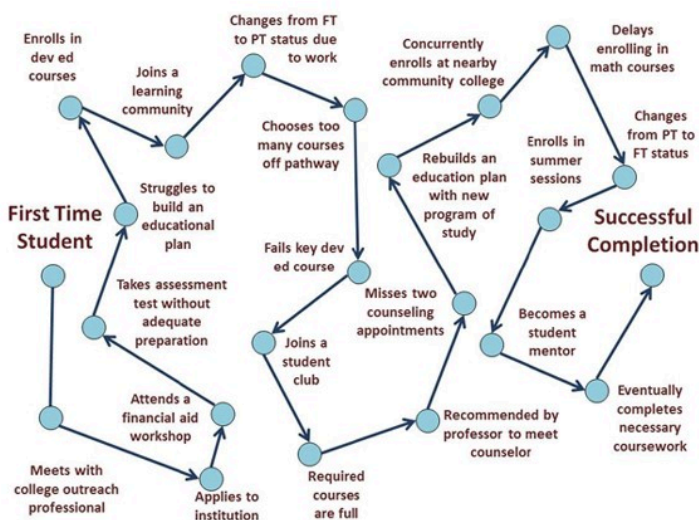
Graphics courtesy of Greg Stoup, Rob Johnstone, and
Priyadarshini Chaplot of The RP Group

Due to the complicated nature of educational planning, an advisor or counselor can provide great value for students with assistance in creating an educational plan, specifically for each individual student. If you have not done so already, we highly recommend you meet with a counselor and continue to do so on a frequent basis (once per semester if possible). During these meetings, expressing your ideas, wishes, and concerns is encouraged. It's an opportunity to take ownership and be an active participant of your educational plan.

How To Start Reaching Your Goals

Without goals, we aren't sure what we are trying to accomplish, and there is little way of knowing if we are accomplishing anything. If you already have a goal-setting plan that works well for you, keep it.

If you don't have goals, or have difficulty working towards them, try this.

Make a list of all the things you want to accomplish for the next day. Here is a sample to do list:

- Go to grocery store
- Go to class
- Pay bills
- Exercise
- Social media
- Study
- Eat lunch with friend
- Work
- Watch TV
- Text friends

Your list may be similar to this one or it may be completely different. It is yours, so you can make it however you want. Do not be concerned about the length of your list or the number of items on it. You now have the framework for what you want to accomplish the next day. Hang on to that list. We will use it again.

Now, take a look at the upcoming week, the next month and the next year. Make a list of what you would like to accomplish in each of those time frames. If you want to go jet skiing, travel to Europe or get a bachelor's degree, write it down. Pay attention to detail. The more detail within your goals the better. Ask yourself, what is necessary to complete your goals?

With those lists completed, take into consideration how the best goals are created. Commonly called "SMART" goals, it is often helpful to apply criteria to your goals. SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely. Are your goals SMART goals? For example, a general goal would be, "Achieve an 'A' in my anatomy class." But a specific goal would say, "I will schedule and study for one hour each day at the library from 2pm-3pm for my

anatomy class in order to achieve an 'A' and help me gain admission to nursing school."

Now revise your lists for the things you want to accomplish in the next week, month and year by applying the SMART goal techniques. The best goals are usually created over time and through the process of more than one attempt, so spend some time completing this. Do not expect to have "perfect" goals on your first attempt. Also, keep in mind that your goals do not have to be set in stone. They can change. Since your environment and situations will change around you over time, your goals should also change.

Another important aspect of goal setting is accountability. Someone could have great intentions and set up SMART goals for all of the things they want to accomplish. But if they don't work towards those goals and complete them, they likely won't be successful. It is easy to see if we are accountable in short-term goals. Take the daily to-do list for example. How many of the things that you set out to accomplish, did you accomplish? How many were the most important things on that list? Were you satisfied? Were you successful? Did you learn anything for future planning or time management? Would you do anything differently? The answers to these questions help determine accountability.

Long-term goals are more difficult to create and are more challenging for us to stay accountable. Think of New Year's Resolutions. Gyms are packed and mass dieting begins in January. By March, many gyms are empty and diets have failed. Why? Because it is easier to crash diet and exercise regularly for short periods of time than it is to make long-term lifestyle and habitual changes.

Organizing Goals

Place all of your goals, plans, projects and ideas in one place. Why? It prevents confusion. We often have more than one thing going on

at a time and it may be easy to become distracted and lose sight of one or more of our goals if we cannot easily access them. Create a goal notebook, goal poster, goal computer file—organize it any way you want—just make sure it is organized and that your goals stay in one place.

Break Goals into Small Steps

I ask this question of students in my classes: If we decided today that our goal was to run a marathon and then went out tomorrow and tried to run one, what would happen? Students respond with: (jokingly) "I would die," or "I couldn't do it." How come? Because we might need training, running shoes, support, knowledge, experience and confidence—often this cannot be done overnight. But instead of giving up and thinking it's impossible because the task is too big for which to prepare, it's important to develop smaller steps or tasks that can be started and worked on immediately. Once all of the small steps are completed, you'll be on your way to accomplishing your big goals.

What steps would you need to complete the following big goals?

- Buying a house
- Getting married
- Attaining a bachelor's degree
- Destroying the Death Star
- Losing weight

Citations

1. Dillon, Dave. Blueprint for Success in College and Career. OER Commons. https://press.rebus.community/blueprint2/. CC BY

4.0.

2. "Advancing Student Success in the California Community Colleges," California Community Colleges (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office: Recommendations of the California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force, 2012), http://www.californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/portals/ 0/executive/studentsuccesstaskforce/ sstf_final_report_1-17-12_print.pdf.

3. J. Weissman, C. Bulakowski, and M.K. Jumisko, "Using Research to Evaluate Developmental Education Programs and Policies," in *Implementing Effective Policies for Remedial and Developmental Education: New Directions for Community Colleges*, ed. J. M. Ignash (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 100, 73-80.

4. Beth Smith et al., "The Role of Counseling Faculty and Delivery of Counseling Services in the California Community Colleges," (California: The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges).

17. Finances

6.2 Financing Your Education[1]

Paying for college is an undeniable component of the educational process. Understanding the factors that combine to create the overall cost of a college education can help a student make decisions about how to achieve the goal of obtaining a college degree.

Today's colleges are in a competitive market for students. Thinking about the services you as a student need or want from a college environment can help define what is personally important and what you are willing to pay for.

- What is college worth to you?
- How much is the degree or certificate you want to earn going to cost?
- What costs are included in tuition?
- What costs are not included in tuition?
- How much money can you afford to spend on college?
- Where can you get financing for college if you need help paying for it?
- What is the current interest rate on student loans?
- Are interest rates all the same?
- How much money do you think you could afford on a monthly basis to pay back a loan related to financing college?

There are many costs to consider when deciding the right college or program for you. The most common cost people consider is tuition. This is the price you pay for taking college classes. Tuition differs for in-state students and out of state students. If you choose to attend a college in the state where you or your family live, you will usually

pay a lower rate than someone who moves to a different state or country to attend the school. Tuition is also impacted by whether the school is public, private, for-profit, or non-profit.

Academic programs may have additional fees beyond tuition costs. For example, a student majoring in culinary arts will need specialized tools to participate in that program. Services the college provides to students can have associated fees. For example, a recreation center or transportation system may have a basic fee that all students must pay whether they use the service or not. Students cannot opt out of required fees. It is important for students to examine a college's fee structure and maximize their use of those services they have already paid for.

The cost of books and the supplies students will need to complete a program can vary greatly, even from semester to semester. Books and supplies can add $1000 or more to the annual tuition cost. This is an important factor that is easily overlooked by students. Finding classes that offer low cost book options, open educational resources (OER), or zero textbook cost (ZTC) sections can help reduce the overall cost of college. Students can also check online or with their bookstore for used books or rental options, and/or use reserve books in the library, if available. Sometimes finding a required textbook from Amazon or Chegg or other online sources will be less expensive than purchasing a new textbook from the college bookstore.

Where you live while attending college is a major factor in the overall cost of attendance. Living with family may be less expensive for some, but many times is not an option for students. It is important to examine all your housing options and pick the one that best suits you. On-campus living can be a great option. You will usually be able to live very close to campus, have a furnished room, and meal options available to you. Choosing to live off campus may give you more options to choose from with price, amenities, and location. Before finalizing your living arrangements, consider all the costs associated with each option: rent, utilities, food, fees (like parking), and conveniences.

The cost of getting to and from your college can vary significantly based on how close a student lives to the college campus and the transportation method selected. Some colleges may have a transportation fee as part of the student fees that might provide mass transit options for getting to school. Colleges may also have parking fees for those students who drive to the campus. Seasonal weather conditions are another factor in transportation choices. As a student estimating the cost of college, remember to think about the entire school year. An apartment near campus may have a higher rent than living 10+ miles away, but it may save you time and money to not have to drive and park daily.

Students tend to underestimate how much money will be needed for personal expenses. For example, many students today cannot survive without smartphones, computers, and data plans. You will also need basic health care and hygiene products, clothing, and funds for occasional social events and family commitments. You may also spend money here and there on conveniences like food delivery or online shopping. These amounts add up fast, especially if you are not cognizant of what you are spending. Track your spending for a few weeks to have an accurate estimate of what you spend in this category.

Choosing to spend time and money going to college has an opportunity cost. If you are spending time and money on your education, you will not be spending that same time and money elsewhere. One example of this relationship is employment. Attending classes and doing homework may mean you can't work at a job as much as you want to. It may also mean you will have less time to spend with friends and family. Pursuing a college degree comes with many delayed rewards – graduating, working in a field you enjoy, and earning more money – and those rewards are not guaranteed. It is important to consider this when choosing your next steps in life and if going to college right now is the best option for you to reach your goals.

Financial Aid Basics

Most students will need some form of financial aid to help pay for college. Before accepting an offer of assistance, it is important for a student to understand what each possible offer means and what the student's responsibility will be after accepting the offer. The Office of US Department of Education offers financial assistance to students in the forms of grants, loans, and work-study programs. Filling out the FAFSA application is the first start towards receiving financial aid for college. Your school will send you an award letter a few months after the FAFSA deadline that explains what types of funding you are eligible for.

Grants are seen as the best type of funding as it is money you receive that you do not need to repay. Grants are usually based on your financial need as determined on the FAFSA, so you do not need to fill out applications like you would with a scholarship. Work Study funding can also be really helpful to students. By opting into work study funding, you make yourself eligible for many on campus jobs. On-campus jobs are more convenient for students as your employer is required to work around your class schedule and you cannot work more than part-time hours. Your wages are also not taxed as much as they would be at an off-campus job.

Scholarships are also funds that the student does not need to pay back. Thinking about applying for scholarships can seem like an overwhelming prospect, and students have many excuses for not applying. There are so many scholarships available for college that knowing where to start is the first obstacle to the process. Scholarships are not limited to people entering college straight from high school. In fact, every college has a scholarships website where students can apply for scholarships up until their senior year.

Scholarships are offered to students who meet a specific requirement established by the sponsor, who may be an individual or an organization. Scholarships can be offered through local, state, or national sponsors. Each scholarship will have its own

requirements based on the purpose of the scholarship. Scholarships are a good way to help pay for college without increasing student debt. Students may apply for multiple scholarships. Receiving a scholarship will affect a student's overall financial aid award because all the student aid added together cannot be more than the cost of attending college. However, it is important to realize that scholarships are gifts and do not have to be repaid, so trying to include a scholarship in your overall financial aid package is a good idea. It is always worth it to apply for scholarships, so make sure you are doing so regularly!

You may still need funding once you have accepted work study, grants, and scholarships. That is where student loans come in. It is crucial to understand the terms of your loans before taking them out. Loans offered through the Federal government will be subsidized or unsubsidized loans. The key difference between unsubsidized and subsidized loans is the amount of debt a student will leave college owing. Unsubsidized loans charge students interest while they are attending college, so the interest is growing on the loan during that time. A student might think they are borrowing $4,000.00, but unsubsidized loans add interest to the amount borrowed which adds up over time. Subsidized loans do not add interest for the student until after they have left school, so $4000.00 really is $4,000.00, no extras added.

Understanding interest rates and how they impact student loans is essential. Many students shy away from doing the math to understand what their responsibility will be in repaying a loan. It is also essential that students understand the difference between a subsidized and an unsubsidized loan. Your financial aid award letter from your university will specify if you qualify for subsidized or unsubsidized loans and the maximum amount you can borrow for each.

Occasionally, students will need to borrow more money than the FAFSA can offer them and choose to take out a private student loan from a bank. These loans should be used as a last resort. Private student loans are not regulated the same way federal student loans

are, meaning they can have higher interest rates and stricter timelines for repayment. If you must take out a private student loan, it is in your best interest to take out a small amount and prioritize paying off the loan as quickly as you can.

Another important thing to remember when borrowing money for college is that if you add the cost of books and supplies or other needs onto the loan you have taken on for tuition, and you have unsubsidized loans, that extra money also grows over time with interest. Be watchful when adding even small amounts of money to your loan balances. It can add up quickly!

Video: Voices of Debt: The Student Loan Crisis – Don't Major in Debt
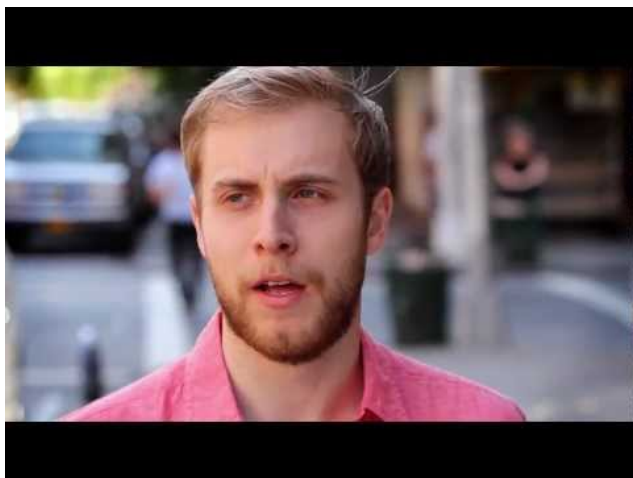
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Video: Student Loan Crisis | Natalia Abrams | TEDxHartford

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https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/acad/?p=148

Loan Calculator

Remember, you are a consumer when it comes to taking on loans for college. Not thinking about what the debt means after college only compounds the issues. It is important to think about how much you could afford to pay monthly on a student loan once you have completed college. It's easy to do the math on loan costs. The Smart Student's Guide to Financial Aid has a free loan calculator that will do the work for you. All you have to do is plug in the numbers. The

loan calculator will also give you an estimate of what your annual salary will need to be able to repay the loan. Of course, the loan calculator will not know your other financial commitments, so be sure to look at the monthly payment and decide if you afford that additional expense.

It is also important to realize that even if you don't finish college, you will have to repay a loan taken out for college. According to an article titled The Feds Don't Care If You Dropped Out of College. They Want Their Money, students who dropped out of college and ultimately didn't obtain a degree or certificate, generally don't earn higher wages after leaving school. Statistics show that students who start college but don't finish struggle with student debt.

The US government backs loans that are taken out through FAFSA/Federal Student Aid. Repayment is expected. The government has the authority to garnish wages and withhold tax returns as part of repayment of loans that are not paid. Government-backed debt cannot be forgiven in bankruptcy, except under rare circumstances. There are government programs in place to help with loan repayment like Public Service Loan Forgiveness or Teacher Loan Forgiveness. These programs require a graduate to work in a specific area or public sector job for an extended period of time while making their loan payments. Once that length of time has passed, some or all of their federal loans will be forgiven. It is worth it to look into programs like this that you may be eligible to participate in after you graduate.

It's understandable to be concerned about student loan debt and want to borrow as little money is possible, if any at all. This aversion to debt can help you make healthy financial decisions but also influence you to prioritize working over attending class and keeping up with assignments. It's important to strike a balance between work and school to make sure you are succeeding in both without being overwhelmingly stressed.

Consider both long and short term pros and cons of working while attending college and taking on student loan debt. Working and being a student simultaneously can be done, but it's necessary

to figure out how much of your time per week you are willing to devote to each. Students regularly withdraw from courses or repeat courses because their schedules were too hectic and they needed to change course. The costs of paying for courses you do not complete or taking a course multiple times can be thousands of extra dollars spent. If you are noticing this pattern in your own college experience, reflect on why and what changes you can make.

Students often want to do it all: work full time to earn money, take classes full time, have an active social life, and maintain their physical and mental health, and do it all perfectly. This is an impossible standard to meet. Working fewer hours and taking on a little more debt may be the best course of action for you to succeed in courses and graduate in a timely manner. Taking fewer classes each semester so you can financially support yourself and your family can be the path that works for you. The cost of going to college seems to be constantly increasing. Understanding the opportunity cost both now and in the future needs to be an important part of a student's decision process when selecting a college and a major. Do the math! There are plenty of resources to help you. Follow your dreams, but be informed.

Citations

1. Lamoreaux, Alise. A Different Road to College. OER Commons. https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/collegetransition/chapter/chapter-8/. CC BY 4.0.

18. Health and Wellbeing

6.3 Healthy Living [1]

Many students have goals that are related to their overall health and well-being. These can include sleeping more, eliminating junk food, integrating more exercise or finding ways to reduce stress and anxiety. This section will help you think about ways to set goals around your health and well being to hopefully create long term practices that enable you to live a more balanced life. Healthy Eating in College

College offers many temptations for students trying to create or maintain healthy eating habits. You may be on your own for the first time, and you're free to eat whatever you want, whenever you want. Cafeterias, all-you-can-eat dining facilities, vending machines, and easy access to food twenty-four hours a day make it tempting to overeat or choose foods loaded with calories, saturated fat, sugar, and salt. You may not be in the habit of shopping or cooking for yourself yet, and, when you find yourself short on time or money, it may seem easier to fuel yourself on sugary, caffeinated drinks and meals at the nearest fast-food place. Additionally, your exercise routine might not be as structured or active as in the past. There are other priorities in your life now.

On top of that, it's common for people to overeat (or not eat enough) when they feel anxious, lonely, sad, stressed, or bored, and college students are no exception. It's incredibly important, though, to develop healthy ways of coping and relaxing that don't involve reaching for food, drink, or other substances. It's also important to eat regular healthy meals to keep up your energy.

Having a healthy diet means making food choices that contribute to short- and long-term health. The right mix can help you be healthier now and in the future. Developing healthy eating habits

doesn't require you to sign up for a gimmicky health-food diet or lifestyle: you don't have to become vegan, gluten-free, "paleo," or go on regular juice fasts. The simplest way to create a healthy eating style is by learning to make wise food choices that you can enjoy, one small step at a time. See the ChooseMyPlate website for more guidelines. Additionally, the following current USDA Healthy Eating Guidelines replace the old "food pyramid."

USDA Healthy Eating Guidelines
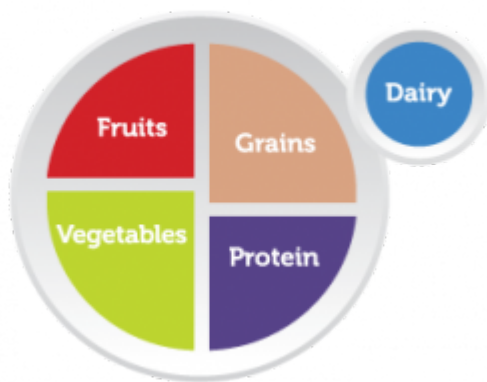
Make half your plate fruits and vegetables:

- Choose whole fruits—fresh, frozen, dried, or canned in 100% juice.
- Enjoy fruit with meals, as snacks, or for a dessert.
- Try adding fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables to salads, side dishes, and recipes.
- Choose a variety of colorful veggies prepared in healthful ways: steamed, sautéed, roasted, or raw.

Make half your grains whole grains

- Look for whole grains listed first or second on the ingredients list—try oatmeal, popcorn, whole-grain bread, and brown rice.
- Limit grain desserts and snacks, such as cakes, cookies, and pastries.

Vary your protein routine

- Mix up your protein foods to include a variety—seafood, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, soy products, eggs, and lean meats and poultry.
- Try main dishes made with beans and seafood, like tuna salad or bean chili.

Move to low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt

- Choose fat-free milk, yogurt, and soy beverages (soy milk) to cut back on your saturated fat.
- Replace sour cream, cream, and regular cheese in recipes and dishes with low-fat yogurt, milk, and cheese.

Drink and eat less sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars

- Eating fewer calories from foods high in saturated fat and added sugars can help you manage your calories and prevent obesity.
- Eating foods with less sodium can reduce your risk of high blood pressure.
- Use the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list to compare foods and drinks. Limit items high in sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars.
- Use vegetable oils instead of butter, and choose oil-based sauces and dips instead of those with butter, cream, or cheese.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

Eat the right amount

- Eat the right amount of calories for you based on your age, sex, height, weight, and physical activity level. Visit the VeryWellFit nutrition calculator, which can help you plan, analyze, and track your diet. There are additional apps, such as MyFitnessPal, to keep track of your activities and exercise.

Regular Exercise: Health for Life [2]

The importance of getting regular exercise is probably nothing new to you. The health benefits are well known: regular physical activity can produce long-term health benefits by reducing your risk of many health problems, such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, and it can also increase your chances of living longer, help you control your weight, and even help you sleep better.

   As a busy college student, you may be thinking, I know this, but I don't have time! I have classes and work and a full life! What you may not know is that—precisely because you have such a demanding, possibly stressful schedule—now is the perfect time to make exercise a regular part of your life. Getting into an effective exercise routine now will not only make it easier to build healthy habits that you can take with you into your life after college, but it can actually help you be a more successful student, too. As you'll see in the section on brain health below, exercise is a powerful tool for improving one's mental health and memory—both of which are especially important when you're in school.

   The good news is that most people can improve their health and quality of life through a modest increase in daily activity. You don't have to join a gym, spend a lot of money, or even do the same activity every time—just going for a walk or choosing to take the stairs (instead of the elevator) can make a difference. The following video describes how much activity you need.
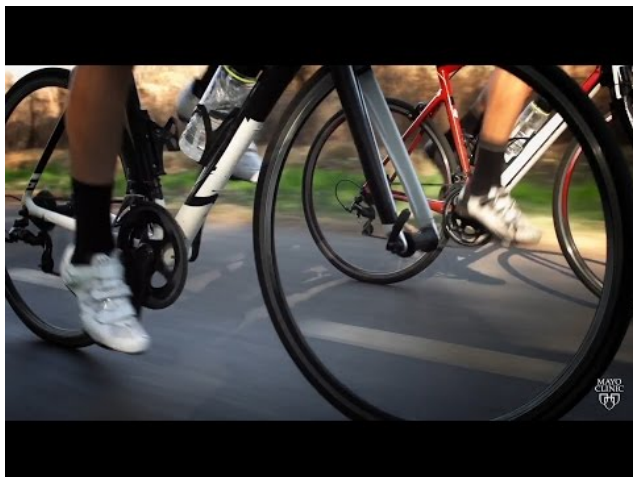
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Physical Fitness and Types of Exercise

Physical fitness is a state of well-being that gives you sufficient energy to perform daily physical activities without getting overly tired or winded. It also means being in good enough shape to handle unexpected emergencies involving physical demands–that is, if someone said, "Run for your life!" or you had to rush over and prevent a child from falling, you'd be able to do it.

There are many forms of exercise–dancing, rock climbing, walking, jogging, yoga, bike riding, you name it–that can help you become physically fit. The major types are described below.

Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic exercise increases your heart rate, works your muscles, and raises your breathing rate. For most people, it's best to aim for a total of about thirty minutes a day, four or five days a week. If you haven't been very active recently, you can start out with five or ten minutes a day and work up to more time each week. Or, split up your activity for the day: try a brisk ten-minute walk after each meal. If you are trying to lose weight, you may want to exercise more than thirty minutes a day. The following are some examples of aerobic exercise:

- A brisk walk (outside or inside on a treadmill)
- Dancing
- A low-impact aerobics class
- Swimming or water aerobic exercises
- Ice-skating or roller-skating
- Playing tennis
- Riding a stationary bicycle indoors

Strength Training

Strength training, done several times a week, helps build strong bones and muscles and makes everyday chores like carrying heavy backpacks (or grocery bags) easier. When you have more muscle mass, you burn more calories, even at rest. Here are some ways to do it:

- Join a class to do strength training with weights, elastic bands, or plastic tubes (take advantage of the Rec Center)
- Lift light weights at home

Flexibility Exercises

Flexibility exercises, also called stretching, help keep your joints flexible and reduce your risk of injury during other activities. Gentle stretching for 5 to 10 minutes helps your body warm up and get ready for aerobic activities such as walking or swimming.

Being Active Throughout the Day

In addition to formal exercise, there are many opportunities to be active throughout the day. Being active helps burn calories. The more you move around, the more energy you will have. The following strategies can help you increase your activity level:

- Walk instead of driving whenever possible
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Work in the garden, rake leaves, or do some house cleaning every day
- Park at the far end of the campus lot and walk to class

Benefits of Exercise and Physical Fitness

In addition to keeping your heart healthy and helping you live longer, regular exercise can also improve your mood and help keep depression and anxiety at bay.

Exercise has many physical and mental benefits in addition to lowering stress. Regular physical activity is one of the best things you can do to be healthy. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, its benefits include: controlling weight, reducing risk of cardiovascular disease, reducing risk for type two diabetes, reducing risk of cancer, strengthening bones and muscles,

improving mental health and mood, increasing chances of living longer.

Citations

1. College Success. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: CC BY: *Attribution*
2. Dillon, Dave. Blueprint for Success in College and Career. OER Commons. https://press.rebus.community/blueprint2/. CC BY 4.0.

19. Sleep

6.4 Sleep[1]

The Benefits of Slumber

We have so many demands on our time—school, jobs, family, errands, not to mention finding some time to relax. To fit everything in, we often sacrifice sleep. But sleep affects both mental and physical health. Like exercise and a healthy diet, it's vital to your well-being.

Of course, sleep helps you feel rested each day. But while you're sleeping, your brain and body don't just shut down. Internal organs and processes are hard at work throughout the night. Sleep can help you "lock in" everything you're studying and trying to remember.

"Sleep services all aspects of our body in one way or another: molecular, energy balance, as well as intellectual function, alertness and mood," says Dr. Merrill Mitler, a sleep expert and neuroscientist at the National Institute of Health (NIH).

When you're tired, you can't function at your best. Sleep helps you think more clearly, have quicker reflexes, and focus better. "The fact is, when we look at well-rested people, they're operating at a different level than people trying to get by on one or two hours less nightly sleep," says Mitler.

"Loss of sleep impairs your higher levels of reasoning, problem-solving, and attention to detail," Mitler explains. Tired people tend to be less productive at work and school. They're at a much higher risk for traffic accidents. Lack of sleep also influences your mood, which can affect how you interact with others. A sleep deficit over time can even put you at greater risk for developing depression.

But sleep isn't just essential for the brain. "Sleep affects almost every tissue in our bodies," says Dr. Michael Twery, a sleep expert at NIH. "It affects growth and stress hormones, our immune system, appetite, breathing, blood pressure and cardiovascular health."

Research shows that lack of sleep increases the risk for obesity, heart disease, and infections. Throughout the night, your heart rate, breathing rate, and blood pressure rise and fall, a process that may be important for cardiovascular health. Your body releases hormones during sleep that help repair cells and control the body's use of energy. These hormone changes can affect your body weight.

"Ongoing research shows a lack of sleep can produce diabetic-like conditions in otherwise healthy people," says Mitler.

Recent studies also reveal that sleep can affect the efficiency of vaccinations. Twery described research showing that well-rested people who received the flu vaccine developed stronger protection against the illness.

A good night's sleep consists of four to five sleep cycles. Each cycle includes periods of deep sleep and rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, when we dream. "As the night goes on, the portion of that cycle that is in REM sleep increases. It turns out that this pattern of cycling and progression is critical to the biology of sleep," Twery says.

Sleep can be disrupted by many things. Stimulants such as caffeine or certain medications can keep you up. Distractions such as electronics—especially the light from TVs, cell phones, tablets and e-readers—can prevent you from falling asleep.

Fatigue

In 1989, 11 million gallons of oil were spilled when the Exxon Valdez ran aground. "The National Transportation Safety Board investigation attributed the accident to the fact that [Third Mate Gregory] Cousins, [filling in for the captain], had been awake for

18 hours prior to taking the helm of the Valdez, failed to 'properly maneuver the vessel because of the fatigue and excessive workload.' Given what science can tell us about the deleterious effects of sleep deprivation on decision-making, alertness and coordination, a case can be made that had Cousins simply lain down for a brief sleep, one of the greatest environmental catastrophes in recent memory – and $2.5 billion cost for cleanup – might've been averted."[2]

"Fatigue has been cited as at least a contributing factor in many of the worst disasters in recent history – the Union Carbide chemical explosion that killed thousands of people in Bhopal, India, and the nuclear catastrophe at Chernobyl, to name just two."[2]

Dr. Sara Mednick is a sleep researcher at UC Riverside. Dr. Mednick's Ted Talk entitled, "Give it Up for the Down State – Sleep: Sarah Mednick at TEDxUCRSalon," is a resource for more information.

Video: Give it up for the down state – sleep, Sara Mednick, TEDxUCR Salon

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Dr. Mednick's "Authors@Google: Sara Mednick" video is a longer lecture on sleep.

Video: Take a Nap! Change Your Life, Sara Mednick Authors@Google 2007

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https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/acad/?p=202

It's difficult to do anything well when we're tired. Studying, concentrating, writing, and taking an exam are all difficult. This is a link to an article of a National Public Radio interview with Charles Czeisler, the director of the Division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School. This article, an interview with Czeisler and Scott Huettel, associate professor of psychology and neuroscience at Duke University, links media with sleep interruption. These articles chronicle the benefits of getting adequate sleep and the consequences of not doing that, along with questions and answers from the sleep specialists. It's easy to say that you will perform

better in your studies if you are getting enough sleep, but here is some proof from experts on the value of sleep.

How Much Sleep Do We Need?

The amount of sleep a person needs depends on many factors, including age, and getting a full night of quality sleep is important. For most adults, seven to eight hours a night is an optimal amount of sleep. The amount of sleep a person needs also increases if he or she has been deprived of sleep in previous days. Getting too little sleep creates a "sleep debt," which is a lot like being overdrawn at a bank. Eventually, your body will demand that the debt be repaid. We don't seem to adapt to getting less sleep than we need; while we may get used to a sleep-depriving schedule, our judgment, reaction time, and other functions are still impaired. As a student,, that means that sleep-deprivation may prevent you from studying, learning, and performing as well as you can.

Experts say that if you feel drowsy during the day, even during boring activities, you haven't had enough sleep. If you routinely fall asleep within five minutes of lying down, you probably have severe sleep deprivation, possibly even a sleep disorder. "Microsleeps," or very brief episodes of sleep in an otherwise awake person, are another mark of sleep deprivation. In many cases, people are not aware that they are experiencing microsleeps. The widespread practice of "burning the candle at both ends" has created so much sleep deprivation that what is really abnormal sleepiness is now almost the norm.

Many studies make it clear that sleep deprivation is dangerous. Sleep-deprived people who are tested by using a driving simulator or by performing a hand-eye coordination task perform as badly as or worse than those who are intoxicated. Sleep deprivation also magnifies alcohol's effects on the body, so a fatigued person who drinks will become much more impaired than someone who is well

rested. Driver fatigue is responsible for an estimated 100,000 motor vehicle accidents and 1,500 deaths each year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Since drowsiness is the brain's last step before falling asleep, driving while drowsy can—and often does—lead to disaster. Caffeine and other stimulants cannot overcome the effects of severe sleep deprivation. The National Sleep Foundation says that if you have trouble keeping your eyes focused, if you can't stop yawning, or if you can't remember driving the last few miles, you are probably too drowsy to drive safely.

Falling Asleep and Getting a Good Night's Rest

Many people, especially those who feel stressed, anxious, or overworked, have a hard time falling asleep and/or staying asleep, and this can shorten the amount of time and the quality of sleep when it actually comes. The following tips can help you get to sleep, stay asleep, and wake up feeling well rested:

- Set a schedule: Go to bed at a set time each night and get up at the same time each morning. Disrupting this schedule may lead to insomnia. "Sleeping in" on weekends also makes it harder to wake up early on Monday morning because it resets your sleep cycles for a later wakening.
- Exercise: Try to exercise 20 to 30 minutes a day. Daily exercise often helps people sleep, although a workout soon before bedtime may interfere with sleep. For maximum benefit, try to get your exercise about 5 to 6 hours before going to bed.
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol before bed: Avoid drinks that contain caffeine, which acts as a stimulant and keeps people awake. Sources of caffeine include coffee, chocolate, soft drinks, non-herbal teas, diet drugs, and some pain relievers. Smokers tend to sleep very lightly and often wake up

in the early morning due to nicotine withdrawal. Alcohol robs people of deep sleep and REM sleep and keeps them in the lighter stages of sleep.

- Relax before bed: A warm bath, reading, or another relaxing routine can make it easier to fall asleep. It's also a good idea to put away books, homework, and screens (computer and phone) at least 30 minutes before bed. You can train yourself to associate certain restful activities with sleep and make them part of your bedtime ritual.

- Sleep until sunlight: If possible, wake up with the sun, or use very bright lights in the morning. Sunlight helps the body's internal biological clock reset itself each day. Sleep experts recommend exposure to an hour of morning sunlight for people having problems falling asleep.

- Don't lie in bed awake: If you can't get to sleep, don't just lie in bed. Do something else, like reading or listening to music, until you feel tired. (Avoid digital screens, though: watching TV, and being on the computer or a smartphone are too stimulating and will actually make you more awake.) The anxiety of being unable to fall asleep can actually contribute to insomnia.

- Control your room temperature: Maintain a comfortable temperature in the bedroom. Extreme temperatures may disrupt sleep or prevent you from falling asleep.

- Screen out noise and light: Sleep with earplugs and use an eye pillow to drown out any bright lights and noise of loud roommates, etc.

- See a doctor if your sleeping problem continues: If you have trouble falling asleep night after night, or if you always feel tired the next day, then you may have a sleep disorder and should see a physician. Your primary care physician may be able to help you; if not, you can probably find a sleep specialist at a major hospital near you. Most sleep disorders can be treated effectively, so you can finally get that good night's sleep you need.

Improving Your Health Habits

One way to analyze your current nutrition and activity habits is to record all food and drinks consumed in one week, along with keeping records of how much exercise and how many hours of sleep take place. Some students know exactly what they are putting into their body and how they are treating it, but most are surprised at how little one or more of these important aspects are sufficient. Try it. Think of it as an opportunity to see what you actually put into your body, how much exercise and rest you give it.

Our bodies are more prone to getting sick if they are not well taken care of. Getting sick in the middle of an academic term can have devastating effects on the academic performance.

A much better way to go is to make a schedule, stick to it, prepare and review periodically, get adequate sleep, eat well, and have an exercise plan.

Citations

1. Dillon, Dave. Blueprint for Success in College and Career. OER Commons. https://press.rebus.community/blueprint2/. CC BY 4.0
2. Sleep. Provided by: Lumen Learning. Located at: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-collegesuccess-lumen1/chapter/sleep/ License: CC BY: Attribution

20. Stress

6.5 Stress [1]

As a student, you're probably plenty familiar with the experience of stress, a condition characterized by symptoms of physical or emotional tension. Stress can hit you when you least expect it. If you're a college student, it may feel like stress is a persistent fact of life. While everyone experiences stress at times, a prolonged bout of it can affect your health and ability to cope with life. That's why social support and self-care are important. They can help you keep your problems in perspective and work through them in a healthy way.

Sometimes stress can be good. Stress gives us motivation to get our to do lists done and put in effort on activities and assignments. It can also help you develop skills needed to manage potentially challenging situations in life. Stress becomes harmful when it is severe enough to make you feel overwhelmed and out of control. Strong emotions like fear, sadness, or anger are normal, as long as they are temporary and don't interfere with daily activities. If these emotions last for weeks or cause other problems in your life, it may be necessary to seek advice from a professional for assistance.

Signs and Effects of Stress

Physical or emotional tension are often signs of stress. They can be reactions to a situation that causes you to feel threatened or anxious. The following are all common symptoms of stress:

- Disbelief and shock
- Tension and irritability
- Fear and anxiety about the future
- Difficulty making decisions
- Being numb to one's feelings
- Loss of interest in normal activities
- Loss of or increased appetite
- Nightmares and recurring thoughts about an event
- Anger
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs
- Sadness and other symptoms of depression
- Feeling powerless
- Crying
- Sleep problems
- Headaches, back pains, and stomach problems
- Trouble concentrating

It's not only unpleasant to live with the tension and symptoms of ongoing stress; it's actually harmful to your body.. Chronic stress can impair your immune system and disrupt almost all of your body's processes, leading to increased risk of numerous health problems, including anxiety and depression, digestive problems, heart disease, sleep problems, weight gain, and memory and concentration impairments. It's vital for your physical and mental wellbeing to learn healthy ways of coping with stressors.

Ways of Managing Stress

The best strategy for managing stress is by taking care of yourself. Take some time to identify all the things causing you stress, then see if you notice patterns. It can be easy to say that you are stressed because you are busy or that you have a big deadline looming. But what about that is stressful? Is it a fear of failure? Or that you have overcommitted yourself and don't want to cancel on a friend who needs you? Understanding the exact cause of your stress, especially if you experience it often, is crucial for working through it.

Feeling overwhelmed and short on time is a common experience for college students. Time management and organization can be

very helpful in mitigating stress. Work on prioritizing and scheduling your commitments. This will help you feel in better control of your life, which, in turn, will mean less stress. Sitting down and creating a plan can also help you realize that accomplishing everything is more possible than you assumed.

Slow down and cut out distractions for a while. Take a break from your phone and the mindless activities you can get sucked into on the internet. When you feel stressed, it's easy to isolate yourself and spend hours watching Netflix or scrolling through social media. Instead, practice a healthy self-care activity, like cooking, crafting, or playing an instrument or sport you enjoy.

There are times when processing your emotions with a trusted individual can ease your stress. Seek help from a friend, family member, partner, counselor, doctor, or clergy person. Having a sympathetic listening ear and talking about your problems and stress really can lighten the burden. Resist the impulse to bottle up your emotions because you believe you will be a bother. Stay connected, make time to enjoy being with classmates, friends, and family, and try to schedule study breaks that you can take with other people.

Taking care of your physical health has an enormous impact on your stress level. Maintaining a healthy routine that involves prioritizing yourself is not selfish but necessary to live your best life. Make sure you are eating a healthy, well-balanced diet, exercising regularly, and getting plenty of sleep. Try a relaxation technique, such as meditation, yoga, or treating yourself to a massage. Avoid unhealthy coping mechanisms, like drugs, alcohol, fast food, retail therapy, or spending time with people who are negative influences. They may seem to be a temporary fix to feel better, but in the long run they can create more problems and add to your stress—instead of taking it away.

The following video features a progressive muscle relaxation meditation for you to try. There are many many others available on YouTube and elsewhere.

Video: Progressive Muscle Relaxation Meditation

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/acad/?p=200

If the self-care techniques listed above aren't enough and stress is seriously interfering with your studies or life, don't be afraid to get help. The student health center and counselors are both good resources.

Citations

1. Stress. Provided by: Lumen Learning. Located at: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-collegesuccess-lumen1/chapter/stress/. License: CC BY: Attribution.

2. Dillon, Dave. Blueprint for Success in College and Career. OER Commons. https://press.rebus.community/blueprint2/. CC BY 4.0.

21. Mental Health and Well-being

6.6 Mental Health[1]

Knowing how to take care of your mental health when you're in college is just as important as maintaining your physical health. In fact, there's a strong link between the two: doctors are finding that positive mental health can actually improve your physical health.

So, what is "mental health?" Mental health can be defined as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community. Having good mental health doesn't necessarily mean being happy or successful all the time. Most people feel depressed, lonely, or anxious now and then. When such feelings or moods persist and interfere with a person's ability to function normally, though, it may be a sign of a more serious mental health problem and time to seek help.

Evidence has shown that mental disorders, especially depressive disorders, are strongly linked to the occurrence and course of many chronic diseases—including diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, asthma, and obesity and many risk behaviors for chronic disease, such as physical inactivity, smoking, excessive drinking, and insufficient sleep. In other words, if your mental health is poor, you may be at greater risk for disease and poor physical health.

It's important to remember that instances of anxiety and depression are normal for college students to experience and there are resources to support you while you experience them. Depression is a common but serious mood disorder that's more than

just a feeling of "being down in the dumps" or "blue" for a few days. It causes severe symptoms that affect how you feel, think, and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, or working. To be diagnosed with depression, the symptoms must be present for at least two weeks.

If you have been experiencing some of the following signs and symptoms most of the day, nearly every day, for at least two weeks, you may be suffering from depression:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, or pessimism
- Irritability
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Moving or talking more slowly
- Feeling restless or having trouble sitting still
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems without a clear physical cause and/or that do not ease even with treatment

People with anxiety disorders respond to certain objects or situations with fear and dread. They have physical reactions to those events, such as a rapid heartbeat and sweating. Anxiety is more than feeling overwhelmed occasionally or nervous about an upcoming exam. It can even manifest in panic attacks or social phobias. Symptoms of anxiety can include:

- Feeling nervous, restless or tense
- Having a sense of impending danger, panic or doom
- Having an increased heart rate
- Breathing rapidly (hyperventilation)
- Sweating
- Trembling
- Feeling weak or tired
- Trouble concentrating or thinking about anything other than the present worry
- Having trouble sleeping
- Experiencing gastrointestinal (GI) problems
- Having difficulty controlling worry
- Having the urge to avoid things that trigger anxiety

Depression and anxiety are some of the most common mental disorders in the United States. They can be caused by a combination of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors. Depression and anxiety, even the most severe cases, can be treated. The earlier that treatment can begin, the more effective it is. They are usually treated with medications, psychotherapy, or a combination of the two. If you feel depressed or anxious for two weeks, or the feelings keep coming back, you should talk to a counselor in the health services/center. They see lots of students who are anxious, stressed, or depressed at college.

Get Help

If you or someone you know needs help, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1.800.273.TALK (8255). Trained crisis workers are available to talk 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you think someone is in immediate danger, do not leave them alone—stay there and call 911.

Citations

1. Stress. Provided by: Lumen Learning. Located at: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-collegesuccess-lumen1/chapter/mental-health/. License: CC BY: Attribution.
2. Dillon, Dave. Blueprint for Success in College and Career. OER Commons. https://press.rebus.community/blueprint2/. CC BY 4.0.

22. Career and Job Searching

6.7 Stages of Career Development[1]

Identifying a career or potential career path is an important part of goal setting for college students. Even if you may not know the specific job or career you want, integrating career exploration into your goal setting process can be helpful in thinking about course selection, and longer term financial planning and decision making.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that the average worker currently holds ten different jobs before age forty. This number is projected to grow. A prediction from Forrester Research is that today's youngest workers will hold twelve to fifteen jobs in their lifetime and it is estimated that people will change their career an average of 5-7 times over their lifetime.

Career development is a journey. It is the life long process of solidifying your work identity and it begins in childhood when you first identify the various occupations that people have in order to make a living, and spans, for most people well into adulthood as you encounter challenges or make decisions about your career and job opportunities.

Employment counselor Donald Super identified five main stages of career development:

#	STAGE	DESCRIPTION
1	GROWING	This is a time in early years (4–13 years old) when you begin to have a sense about the future. You begin to realize that your participation in the world is related to being able to do certain tasks and accomplish certain goals.
2	EXPLORING	This period begins when you are a teenager, extends into your mid-twenties, and may extend later. In this stage you find that you have specific interests and aptitudes. You are aware of your inclinations to perform and learn about some subjects more than others. You may try out jobs in your community or at your school. You may begin to explore a specific career. At this stage, you have some detailed "data points" about careers, which will guide you in certain directions.
3	ESTABLISHING	This period covers your mid-twenties through mid-forties. By now you are selecting or entering a field you consider suitable, and you are exploring job opportunities that will be stable. You are also looking for upward growth, so you may be thinking about an advanced degree.
4	MAINTAINING	This stage is typical for people in their mid-forties to mid-sixties. You may be in an upward pattern of learning new skills and staying engaged. But you might also be merely "coasting and cruising" or even feeling stagnant. You may be taking stock of what you've accomplished and where you still want to go.
5	REINVENTING	In your mid-sixties, you are likely transitioning into retirement. But retirement in our technologically advanced world can be just the beginning of a new career or pursuit—a time when you can reinvent yourself. There are many new interests to pursue, including teaching others what you've learned, volunteering, starting online businesses, consulting, etc.

Keep in mind that your career development path is personal to you, and you may not fit neatly into the categories described above. It's more common than it has been in the past for people to change careers in their thirties, forties, fifties, and even sixties. Your identities and abilities also play a role in the career development process and there are factors of chance that can't be predicted

or anticipated. You are unique, and your career path can only be developed by you.

Career Development Resources in Your College, Community, and Beyond

Career experts say that people will change careers (not to mention jobs) five to seven times in a lifetime. So your career will likely not be a straight and narrow path. Be sure to set goals and assess your interests, skills and values often. Seek opportunities for career growth and enrichment. And take advantage of the rich set of resources available to you. Below are just a few.

Career Development Office on Campus

Whether you are a student, a graduate, or even an employer, you can obtain invaluable career development assistance at your college or university. Campus career centers can support, guide, and empower you in every step of the career development process, from initial planning to achieving lifelong career satisfaction.

Books on Career Development

Going to college is one of the best steps you can take to prepare for a career. But soon-to-be or recently graduated students are not necessarily guaranteed jobs. Staying educated about strategies for developing your career and finding new jobs will help you manage ongoing transitions. The book The Secret to Getting a Job After College: Marketing Tactics to Turn Degrees into Dollars, by Larry

Chiagouris, was written specifically to help recent grads increase their chances of finding a job right after college. It speaks to students in all majors and provides tips and tactics to attract the attention of an employer and successfully compete with other candidates to get the job you want.

The following video provides an introduction to the book. You can download a transcript of the video here.

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/acad/?p=150

Career Roadmap

You can use the Career Roadmap, from DePaul University, to evaluate where you are and where you want to be in your career.

It can help you decide if you want to change career paths and can guide you in searching for a new job. The road map identifies the following four cyclical steps:

1. Know yourself
2. Explore and choose options
3. Gain knowledge and experience
4. Put it all together: the job search process

Plan, Do, Check, Act

PDCA (plan–do–check–act) is a four-step strategy for carrying out change. You can use it to evaluate where you are in the career development process and to identify your next steps. The strategy is typically used in the business arena as a framework for improving processes and services. But you can think of your career as a personal product you are offering or selling.

1. PLAN: What are your goals and objectives? What process will you use to get to your targets? You might want to plan smaller to begin with and test out possible effects. For instance, if you are thinking of getting into a certain career, you might plan to try it out first as an intern or volunteer or on a part-time basis. When you start on a small scale, you can test possible outcomes.
2. DO: Implement your plan. Sell your product—which is YOU and your skills, talents, energy, and enthusiasm. Collect data as you go along; you will need it for charting and analyzing in the Check and Act steps ahead.
3. CHECK: Look at your results so far. Are you happy with your job or wherever you are in the career development process? How is your actual accomplishment measuring up next to your intentions and wishes? Look for where you may have deviated

in your intended steps. For example, did you take a job in another city when your initial plans were for working closer to friends and family? What are the pros and cons? If you like, create a chart that shows you all the factors. With a chart, it will be easier to see trends over several PDCA cycles.

4. ACT: How should you act going forward? What changes in planning, doing, and checking do you want to take? The PDCA framework is an ongoing process. Keep planning, doing, checking, and acting. The goal is continuous improvement.

Resumes & Cover Letters[2]

A resume is a "selfie" for business purposes. It is a written picture of who you are—it's a marketing tool, a selling tool, and a promotion of you as an ideal candidate for any job you may be interested in.

The word "resume" comes from the French word résumé, which means "a summary." Leonardo da Vinci is credited with writing one of the first known resumes, although it was more of a letter that outlined his credentials for a potential employer, Ludovico Sforza. The résumé got da Vinci the job, though, and Sforza became a longtime patron of da Vinci and later commissioned him to paint The Last Supper.

Resumes and cover letters work together to represent you in the most positive light to prospective employers. With a well-composed résumé and cover letter, you stand out—which may get you an interview and then a good shot at landing a job.

Your Resume: Purpose and Contents

Your resume is an inventory of your education, work experience, job-related skills, accomplishments, volunteer history, internships,

residencies, and more. It's a professional autobiography in outline form to give the person who reads it a quick, general idea of who you are, and what skills, abilities, and experiences you have to offer. With a better idea of who you are, prospective employers can see how well you might contribute to their workplace.

As a college student or recent graduate, you may be unsure about what to put on your résumé, especially if you don't have much employment history. Employers don't expect recent grads to have significant work experience. And even with little work experience, you may still have a host of worthy accomplishments to include. It's all in how you present yourself.

Resume Formats

Perhaps the hardest part of writing a resume is figuring out what format to use to organize and present your information in the most effective way. There is no correct format, per se, but most resume follow one of the four formats below. Which format do you think will best represent your qualifications?

1. Reverse chronological: A reverse chronological resume (sometimes also simply called a chronological resume) lists your job experiences in reverse chronological order—that is, starting with the most recent job and working backward toward your first job. It includes starting and ending dates. Also included is a brief description of the work duties you performed for each job, and highlights of your formal education. The reverse chronological résumé may be the most common and perhaps the most conservative résumé format. It is most suitable for demonstrating a solid work history, and growth and development in your skills. It may not suit you if you are light on skills in the area you are applying to, or if you've changed employers frequently, or if you are looking for

your first job. Reverse Chronological Resume Examples

2. Functional: A functional resume is organized around your talents, skills, and abilities (more so than work duties and job titles, as with the reverse chronological resume). It emphasizes specific professional capabilities, like what you have done or what you can do. Specific dates may be included but are not as important. So if you are a new graduate entering your field with little or no actual work experience, the functional résumé may be a good format for you. It can also be useful when you are seeking work in a field that differs from what you have done in the past. Additionally, it's well suited for people in unconventional careers. Functional Resume Examples

3. Hybrid: The hybrid resume is a format reflecting both the functional and chronological approaches. It's also called a combination resume. It highlights relevant skills, but it still provides information about your work experience. With a hybrid resume, you may list your job skills as most prominent and then follow with a chronological (or reverse chronological) list of employers. This resume format is most effective when your specific skills and job experience need to be emphasized. Hybrid Resume Examples

4. Video, infographic, and website: Other formats you may wish to consider are the video, the infographic, or even a website résumé. These formats may be most suitable for people in multimedia and creative careers. Certainly with the expansive use of technology today, a job seeker might at least try to create a media-enhanced resume. But the paper-based, traditional resume is by far the most commonly used—in fact, some human resource departments may not permit submission of any format other than paper based. Video Resume Examples; Infographic Resume Examples; Website Resume Examples

An important note about formatting is that, initially, employers may spend only a few seconds reviewing each resume—especially if there

is a big stack of them or they seem tedious to read. That's why it's important to choose your format carefully so it will stand out and make the first cut.

Resume Contents and Structure

For many people, the process of writing a resume is daunting. After all, you are taking a lot of information and condensing it into a very concise form that needs to be both eye-catching and easy to read. Don't be scared off, though! Developing a good resume can be fun, rewarding, and easier than you think if you follow a few basic guidelines. In the following video, a resume-writing expert describes some keys to success.

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Contents and Components To Include

1. Your contact information: name, address (note that some recommend not sharing for security purposes, others recommend sharing to be complete), phone number, professional email address
2. A summary of your skills: 5–10 skills you have gained in your field
3. Work experience: depending on the résumé format you choose, you may list your most recent job first; include the title of the position, employer's name, location, employment dates (beginning, ending); Working for a family business is valid work experience and should definitely be on a resume.
4. Volunteer experience: can be listed in terms of hours completed or months/years involved. Use the same format as that used to list work experience.
5. Education and training: formal and informal experiences matter; include academic degrees, professional development, certificates, internships, etc.
6. Other sections: may include a job objective, a brief profile, a branding statement, a summary statement, additional accomplishments, and any other related experiences

Caution

Resumes resemble snowflakes in as much as no two are alike.

Although you can benefit from giving yours a stamp of individuality, you will do well to steer clear of personal details that might elicit a negative response. It is advisable to omit any confidential information or details that could make you vulnerable to discrimination, for instance. Your resume will likely be viewed by a number of employees in an organization, including human resource personnel, managers, and administrative staff. By aiming to please all reviewers, you gain maximum advantage.

- Do not mention your age, gender, height or weight.
- Do not include your social security number.
- Do not mention religious beliefs or political affiliations, unless they are relevant to the position.
- Do not include a photograph of yourself or a physical description.
- Do not mention health issues.
- Do not use first-person references (I, me).
- Do not include wage/ salary expectations.
- Do not use abbreviations.
- Proofread carefully–absolutely no spelling mistakes are acceptable.

Remember that your resume is your professional profile. It will hold you in the most professional and positive light, and it's designed to be a quick and easy way for a prospective employer to evaluate what you might bring to a job. As such, aim to keep your resume to 1-2 pages. When written and formatted attractively, creatively, and legibly, your resume is what will get your foot in the door. You can be proud of your accomplishments, even if they don't seem numerous. Let your resume reflect your enthusiasm, personal pride, and professionalism. A resume is a "living document" and will change as your experiences and skills change.

Cover Letters

A cover letter is a letter of introduction, usually 3–4 paragraphs in

length, that you attach to your resume. It's a way of articulating to a potential employer why you are well suited for a position. Employers may look for individualized and thoughtfully written cover letters as an initial method of screening out applicants who may lack necessary basic skills, or who may not be sufficiently interested in the position.

Often an employer will request or require that a cover letter be included in the materials an applicant submits. There are also occasions when you might submit a cover letter uninvited (also called a letter of interest). For example, if you are initiating an inquiry about possible work or asking someone to send you information or provide other assistance.

With each resume you send out, always include a cover letter which describes WHO you are, WHY you are the best fit for the organization and ASKS for an interview.

Characteristics of an Effective Cover Letter

Your cover letter should first clearly state the position you are applying for and how you learned about the job. From there, you want to demonstrate who you are by identifying your successes and what you have accomplished that is in line with the company's needs. This may require you to do some research about the organization and the position. The more you can speak specifically to the job the more you demonstrate your interest.

It's also important to remember that you don't want your cover letter to reiterate everything that is included on your resume. Instead, highlight two or three of your skills/accomplishments that are relevant to the job and how you will be effective in that role.

Finally, ask for an interview. You can say something as straightforward as, "I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about my qualifications and experience." This "ask" conveys your enthusiasm and confidence.

Job Interviews[3]

Job Interview Types and Techniques

Every interview you participate in will be unique: The people you meet with, the interview setting, and the questions you'll be asked will all be different from interview to interview.

The various factors that characterize any given interview can contribute to the sense of adventure and excitement you feel. But it's also normal to feel a little nervous about what lies ahead. With so many unknowns, how can you plan to "nail the interview" no matter what comes up?

A good strategy for planning is to anticipate the type of interview you may find yourself in. There are common formats for job interviews, described in detail, below. By knowing a bit more about each type and being aware of techniques that work for each, you can plan to be on your game no matter what form your interview takes.

Screening Interviews

Screening interviews might best be characterized as "weeding-out" interviews. They ordinarily take place over the phone or in another low-stakes environment in which the interviewer has maximum control over the amount of time the interview takes. Screening interviews are generally short because they glean only basic information about you. If you are scheduled to participate in a screening interview, you might safely assume that you have some competition for the job and that the company is using this strategy to whittle down the applicant pool. With this kind of interview, your goal is to win a face-to-face interview. For this first shot, though, prepare well and challenge yourself to shine. This type of interview should be treated like a real interview. This may mean dressing

for the interview and having a resume in front of you so that it can be referred to. Make sure you are in a location that is free of distractions. Try to stand out from the competition and be sure to follow up with a thank-you note, email or phone call.

One-on-One Interviews

The majority of job interviews are conducted in this format—just you and a single interviewer—likely with the manager you would report to and work with. The one-on-one format gives you both a chance to see how well you connect and how your talents, skills, and personalities mesh. You can expect to be asked questions like "Why would you be good for this job?" and "Tell me about yourself." Many interviewees prefer the one-on-one format because it allows them to spend in-depth time with the interviewer. Rapport can be built. As always, be very courteous and professional. Have handy your resume and a portfolio of your best work to reference. Always come prepared with thoughtful questions to ask your interviewer. These can allow you to demonstrate that you have researched the organization and are taking the interview seriously.

Panel Interviews

An efficient format for meeting a candidate is a panel interview, in which perhaps four to five coworkers meet at the same time with a single interviewee. The coworkers may comprise the "search committee" or "search panel," which often consists of different company representatives such as human resources, management, and staff. In a panel interview, listen carefully to questions from each panelist, and try to connect fully with each individual. Be sure to write down names and titles, so you can send personalized thank-yous after the interview.

Serial Interviews

Serial interviews are a combination of one-on-one meetings with a group of interviewers, typically conducted as a series of meetings staggered throughout the day. Ordinarily this type of interview is for higher-level jobs, when it's important to meet at length with major stakeholders. If your interview process is designed this way you will be answering many in-depth questions. Be prepared.

Lunch Interviews

In some higher-level positions, candidates are taken to lunch or dinner, especially if this is a second interview (a "call back" interview). Interviews that take place over a meal are typically more conversational and less formal than the previously discussed interview formats. Prepare accordingly. Brainstorm conversation points and be prepared for a bit more small talk.

During the meal, take your interviewers lead when it comes to ordering food and beverage and also consider ordering foods that will be easy to eat while making conversation. In general its best not to order an alcoholic beverage. Try to prioritize keeping a clear head and maintaining professionalism throughout. A lunch interview, while more informal, is an opportunity to showcase your personality and demonstrate why you may be the best candidate for the position. You are not expected to pay or even to offer to pay. But, as always, you should send a thank-you note/email.

Group Interviews

Group interviews consist of several interviewees and perhaps only one or two interviewers who may make a presentation to the assembled group. This format allows an organization to quickly pre

screen candidates. It also gives candidates a chance to quickly learn about the company. As with all interview formats, you are being observed. How do you behave with your group? Do you assume a leadership role? Are you quiet but attentive? What kind of personality is the company looking for? A group interview may reveal this.

Interview Preparation

Review the Job Description

When you prepare for an interview, your first step will be to carefully read and reread the job posting or job description. Use the job description to identify personal and professional qualities and experiences that will enable you to be successful in the job. Use the job description to also formulate questions. This will help you develop a clearer idea of how you meet the skills and attributes the company seeks.

Research the Company or Organization

Researching the company will give you a wider view of what the company is looking for and how well you might fit in. Your prospective employer may ask you what you know about the company. Being prepared to answer this question shows that you took time and effort to prepare for the interview and that you have a genuine interest in the organization. It shows good care and good planning—soft skills you will surely need on the job.

Practice Answering Common Questions

Most interviewees find that practicing for the interview in advance

with a family member, a friend, or a colleague eases possible nerves during the actual interview. It also creates greater confidence when you walk through the interview door.

Audit Your Social Media

Employers are increasingly screening applicants' social media accounts to gain greater insight into someone's personality and interests. It's good practice to assume that a potential employer will check for any public social media accounts you have. As such, take a look at your social media and if there is content that you wouldn't want an employer to see, delete it or change your privacy settings. Additionally, LinkedIn can be a great supplement to your resume and cover letter so take some time to create an account and establish some professional connections. For more information on creating and maintaining your LinkedIn profile check out Boise State's LinkedIn for Students page.

Plan to Dress Appropriately

Interviewees are generally most properly dressed for an interview in business attire, with the goal of looking highly professional in the eyes of the interviewer.

Come Prepared

Plan to bring your résumé, cover letter, and a list of references to the interview. You may also want to bring a portfolio of representative work. Leave behind coffee, chewing gum, and any other items that could be distractions.

Be Confident

Above all, interviewees should be confident and "courageous." By doing so you make a strong first impression. As the saying goes, "There is never a second chance to make a first impression."

Internet Sites for Career Planning

Visit the Internet Sites for Career Planning website at the National Career Development Association's site. You will find extensive, definitive, and frequently updated information.

Citations

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23. Networking

6.8 Strategies for Networking[1]

In the context of career development, networking is the process by which people build relationships with one another for the purpose of helping one another achieve professional goals. Networking is a powerful tool in the job search process; experts estimate that 70-85% of jobs are filled through networking.[2]

When you "network," you exchange and learn key information about the field and jobs you are interested in. Examples of information gleaned from networking include:

- business cards, résumés, cover letters, job-seeking strategies, leads about open jobs, information about companies and organizations, and information about a specific field.
- meet-up groups, conferences, special events, technology tools, and social media.
- job "headhunters," career counselors, career centers, career coaches, an alumni association, family members, friends, acquaintances, and vendors.

Networking can occur anywhere and at any time. In fact, your network expands with each new relationship you establish. And the networking strategies you can employ are nearly limitless. With imagination and ingenuity, your networking can be highly successful.

Once you acknowledge the value of networking, the challenge is figuring out how to do it. What is your first step? Whom do you contact? What do you say? How long will it take? Where do you concentrate your efforts? How do you know if your investments will pay off?

Begin exploring your possibilities by viewing the following energizing video, Networking Tips for College Students and Young People, by Hank Blank. He recommends the following modern and no-nonsense strategies:

1. Hope is not a plan. You need a plan of action to achieve your networking goals.
2. Keenly focus your activities on getting a job. Use all tools available to you.
3. You need business cards. No ifs, ands, or buts.
4. Attend networking events. Most of them offer student rates.
5. Master Linkedin because that is what human resource departments use. Post updates.
6. Think of your parents' friends as databases. Leverage their knowledge and their willingness to help you.
7. Create the world you want to live in in the future by creating it today through your networking activity. These are the times to live in a world of "this is how I can help."

For additional ideas and inspiration about networking for career development, watch the following video, Hustle 101: Networking For College Students and Recent Grads. The speaker, Emily Miethner, is a recent college graduate and the founder and president of NYCreative Interns, "dedicated to helping young creatives discover and then follow their dream careers."

. . . And More Strategies

Strategies at College

Your college or university offers many opportunities for career development and exploring job opportunities starting with your

classroom experience. Getting to know your professors and communicating with instructors is a valuable way to learn about a career and also get letters of reference if and when needed for a job. Professors can also give you leads on job openings, internships, and research possibilities. Most instructors will readily share information and insights with you.

In addition to faculty and instructors, classmates and alumni are valuable parts of your network. Classmates may or may not share your major, but many of them may have leads that could help you. Joining an on campus club can be a way to connect with others who have similar personal and career interests. If you don't find an existing club, consider starting one. You could be just one conversation away from a good lead. Reach out to your alumni office. You may find that some alumni are affiliated with your field of interest and can give you the "inside scoop."

Strategies at Work

If you are currently employed and interested in exploring and expanding future job opportunities consider joining professional organizations. You can meet many influential people at local and national meetings and events of professional and volunteer organizations. Learn about these organizations. See if they have membership discounts for students, or student chapters. Once you are a member, you may have access to membership lists, which can give you prospective access to many new people to network with.

If you don't currently have a job or do not have a job in a field that you would like to have a long term career in consider volunteering or finding an internship. Volunteering is an excellent way to meet new people who can help you develop your career, even if the organization you are volunteering with is not in your field. Just by working alongside others and working toward common goals, you build relationships that may later serve you in unforeseen and helpful ways. Many organizations offer internship positions to college students. Some of these positions are paid, but often they are not. Paid or not, you gain experience relevant to your career,

and you potentially make many new contacts. Check CollegeRecruiter.com and internships.com for key resources.

Working full-time may be your ultimate goal, but you may want to fill in some cracks or crevices by working in a part-time job. Invariably you will meet people who can feasibly help with your networking goals. And you can gain good experience along the way, which can also be noted on your résumé. Check your college career center website. Many have online job boards for full and part-time employment.

Finally, don't underestimate the power of informational interviews. Informational interviews are a way to initiate contact with people in your chosen field who can tell you about their experiences of entering the field and thriving in it. Many websites have guidance on how to plan and conduct these interviews.

Strategies at Home and Beyond

Participate in online social media: An explosion of career opportunities await you with social media, including LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and many more. You will find an extensive list of suggested sites at CareerOneStop. Keep your communication ultra-professional at these sites. Peruse magazine articles, and if you find one that's relevant to your field and it contains names of professionals, you can reach out to them to learn more and get job leads. Realize that social media is public and posting pictures of yourself at parties or commenting in an unbecoming way could cost you an opportunity.

Ask family members and friends, coworkers, and acquaintances for referrals: Do they know others who might help you? You can start with the question "Who else should I be talking to?"

Finally, consider printing some business or networking cards. A printed business card can be an essential tool to help your contacts remember you. Creativity can help in this regard, too. Students

often design cards themselves and either hand print them or print them on a home printer.

Activity: Networking for Career Development

Objectives

- Examine five strategies for obtaining and engaging with networking contacts
- Develop relationships with new contacts to enhance your career

Instructions

- Find information about five companies or people in your field of interest and follow them on Twitter.
- Research which social media platform is most popular within your current field of interest, and find leaders and experts in that field who are good models for how to interact with the audience of that platform. Be thoughtful about creating an account. Remember that these accounts will be highly searchable for a long time. What you post and how and when you post matters. That may enhance (or hurt) your career.
- Find names of three people who interest you (peruse magazine articles, online sites, or other resources), and write an email to them explaining your interests and any requests you may have for information.
- Sign up for newsletters from two professional organizations in a field you want to know more about.
- Find and attend one in-person or online event within a month.
- Now write about this experience on one of your social media

sites.

- Keep your communication on social media positive. It's poor form to attack or bully someone and may have regretful consequences. If you disagree with someone, do so respectfully.

Citations

1. Networking. Provided by: Lumen Learning. Located at: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/collegesuccess-lumen/ chapter/networking-2/. License: CC BY: Attribution.
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CHAPTER 7 - CAMPUS RESOURCES

24. Campus Resources

Chapter 7: Embracing Support in College

Moving Forward

In the first chapter we encouraged you to reflect on your experiences, goals, preferences and attitudes and urged you to consider or reconsider what your definition of success is. This is a very personal process with no right answer, but we are hopeful that you have, through the course of the semester, given some thought to who you are, where you want to be and what habits or actions will be supportive of those goals. You have engaged in numerous activities, been supported and held accountable by classmates, instructors and advisors. Now, as this course wraps up, the hard work begins–how will you continue to hold yourself accountable to meeting your goals and implement ongoing academic strategies and personal actions that will keep you on track?

Plan Your Next Steps

Think about what you have learned in this course, assess how far you have come and where you want to be and devise an action plan. Reflect on your goals and think about how you may want to STRETCH yourself and what SMART goals you need to put in place to get there. Now think about your "tool kit"–what skills do you possess to put you on the path to success and what challenges do you anticipate? This book and the activities you have engaged in

during this course will continue to be a resource that you can return to if you feel yourself getting off track. What specific academic skills do you want to continue to practice and refine and what resources do you plan to use?

Accountability

How will you hold yourself accountable to maintaining the momentum you generated during this course? What measures will you put in place to keep yourself moving forward? Will you benefit from regular meetings with an advisor or engaging in ongoing academic coaching sessions? Do you need to schedule time each week to attend tutoring sessions or office hours? How can your friends and family help keep you on track and what rewards can you put in place to keep you motivated? These answers will differ for each student, but the key is to identify what will work for you

The remainder of this final chapter is dedicated to outlining the variety of resources that are available to support your continued success and help you meet your personal goals. While these resources and respective contact information are specific to Boise State University, similar resources exist on most college campuses and we encourage you to explore what support systems exist at your particular institution.

Boise State Academic Resources

The Advising and Academic Support Center (AASC) is a great resource for students who want to schedule an appointment with an advisor. The AASC staff can assist students in developing educational plans that are compatible with their career and life goals. AASC offers academic skill building workshops and course

specific tutoring through the Learning Assistant (LA) program. LAs are peers that provide academic support in traditionally difficult courses and students that engage the support of LAs experience a higher rate of success and overall better grades. AASC also offers academic advising with the Academic Development and Recovery Team (ADR), for students who are struggling academically and also assist students that are on academic probation or need a hold to be removed from their account in order to be reinstated to Boise State.

https://www.boisestate.edu/aasc/

The Educational Access Center (EAC) is a resource for students needing academic accommodations for temporary or permanent disabilities. If a student is unsure of whether they have a learning disability, the EAC maintains a list of qualified professionals who can work with the student to determine if they have a learning disability, at the students expense. Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis by meeting with a coordinator in their office. Documentation may be necessary to support the student's need for accommodations.

https://www.boisestate.edu/eac/

TRIO Rising Scholars offers academic assistance and encouragement for eligible scholars who wish to earn their four-year degree and prepare for future careers or graduate programs. TRIO also helps motivate and support students who are first-generation, low-income, or have a disability to pursue and attain a college degree. TRIO provides individual academic advising, one-on-one tutoring for any freshman or sophomore level courses, and offers social and cultural opportunities.

https://education.boisestate.edu/trs/

The Writing Center offers free, guided support for all writers, in person and online, through active and collaborative conversations. They help writers of all levels and abilities, at any stage of the writing process. The Writing Center can also help students work on resumes, cover letters, graduate applications, personal statements, and much more.

https://www.boisestate.edu/writingcenter/

The Math Learning Center (MLC) is a free service that offers assistance for math courses up to Math 175, with free in-person and on-line tutoring. The MLC focuses on improving student success along with the ability to build mathematical reasoning and problem solving skills. https://math.boisestate.edu/mlc/

Health and Wellness Resources

University Health Services is a great resource to utilize for a range of primary care, urgent care, wellness, and counseling services. They provide convenient, accessible, and high quality health care to students, faulty, staff, and their dependents. Health Services will bill most insurance carriers, excluding Medicaid and Medicare. They also offer student health insurance plans (SHIP) to ensure all students can have access to health insurance that adequately meets their needs. https://www.boisestate.edu/healthservices/

Dean of Students offers services to currently enrolled students. They staff a Campus Food Pantry and offer financial assistance to students who are experiencing unanticipated, temporary financial hardships. If a student has experienced foster care or homelessness, the Dean of Students also offers a program that supports students success by offering individual support, connections to campus and community resources, and access to scholarships. The Dean of Students also offers free attorney consultations with a local, private lawyer for most legal problems. This service is available to all full-fee/activity-fee paying students. The student relaxation room is another resource offered and is designed to be technology-free to increase sense of peace, promote physical relaxation, and enhance overall well-being. https://www.boisestate.edu/deanofstudents/

Gender Equity Center is a friendly, supportive environment for people of all gender identities to explore, celebrate, and educate the campus community about gender equity. They provide brief, no-cost, confidential support for campus members affected by

identity-related harassment, sexual harassment, sexual assault, unhealthy relationships and stalking. The Gender Equity Center also offers guidance if a student is interested in reporting to campus officials or police. https://www.boisestate.edu/genderequity/

General Student Success Resources

Office of the Registrar provides support and personalized services to the academic community regarding academic records, registration, enrollment data, course administration, policy enforcement, and graduation. The Office of the Registrar also maintains the University academic calendar which includes special session deadlines, final exam schedules and religious observances. https://www.boisestate.edu/registrar/

    Student Financial Services helps students with understanding their costs and making smart financial decisions. They offer payment plans, financial wellness education, 1098t tax forms, and short term emergency loans. They also assist the campus community by processing deposits, uploads to students accounts, waivers, class fee setup, item type creation and maintenance, and Marketplace UPay and UStores. https://vpfa.boisestate.edu/student-financial-services/

    Career Services offers assistance with internships, resumes, interviewing, and major exploration. They offer thirty minute virtual workshops that help students learn what employers are looking for, how to use that information to plan and prepare for their career,and how to conduct a successful job search. They also offer events that allow students to connect with employers and jobs. Additionally, the Career Center maintains the Handshake database for students and alumni, which allows them to search for part-time jobs on and off campus, internships, and post-graduation career positions. https://www.boisestate.edu/career/

    Veteran Services provides information and procedures relevant

to all education benefits provided through the Department of Veteran Affairs. They also assist in the transition from military life to university life and the use any GI Bill ®VA educational benefits for which a student is eligible. https://veterans.boisestate.edu/

Student Involvement and Leadership Center (SILC) encourages students to get involved on campus by supporting 200 student clubs including the Aerospace Club, Bronco Dogs Organization, and Bronco Tournament Gaming Club. SIL also offers 22 different fraternities and sororities. Students can also get involved in leadership, service, and volunteer programs which provide the opportunity to make a difference and change the world.

https://www.boisestate.edu/getinvolved/

International Student and Scholar Services (ISS) proudly serves international students in bachelors, masters and doctoral programs from over 65 countries. They assist students with questions about their immigration status, visa and work permits, and scholarships. https://www.boisestate.edu/globaleducation-iss/

Student Diversity and Inclusion promotes and advances diversity and inclusion on campus. They support programs that are designed to benefit minorities, refugees, and first generation students. They host campus events and support student groups with the goal of connecting students, faculty and staff with the diversity found on Boise State's campus. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion also staffs the Student Diversity Center designed for studying or meeting new people. https://www.boisestate.edu/admissions/nextsteps/diversity/

Multicultural Student Services is committed to raising awareness and understanding about marginalized and oppressed groups in both non-dominant and dominant cultures. They work with students who are interested in equity and social justice, as well as students from different cultures, countries, and ethics. They provide student liaisons that can help with connections to services and resources for support/ guidance planning cultural festivals and events. They offer in-center tutoring with different hours of availability in the Student Diversity Center. They also have

opportunities for volunteering in the many programs offered such as "The Tunnel of Oppression", and the Song and Dance Festival. https://www.boisestate.edu/mss/