

# Understanding Motivation

## Learning Objectives

Read to answer these key questions:

- What do I want from college?
- What is the value of a college education?
- How do I choose my major and career?
- How can I motivate myself to be successful?
- How can I begin habits that lead to success?
- How can I be persistent in achieving my goal of a college education?

Most students attend college with dreams of earning a college degree and improving their lives. Some students are there to explore interests and possibilities while others have more defined career goals. Although college students enter college with good intentions, about half of them (or less) graduate within 6 years.

Here are the graduation rates within 6 years for various types of colleges:<sup>1</sup>

- 50% of four-year public college students
- 60% of four-year private college students
- 26% of public two-year college students

Being successful in college and attaining your dreams begins with motivation. It provides the energy or drive to find your direction and reach your goals. It is easier to be motivated if you have chosen a major and career that matches your interests and personal strengths. Motivation can also be increased by having a positive mindset and exploring strategies to increase perseverance. Use the tools in this chapter to become one of the successful college students.

## What Do I Want from College?

Succeeding in college requires time and effort. You will have to give up some of your time spent on leisure activities and working. You will give up some time spent with your friends and families. Making sacrifices and working hard are easier if you know what you want to achieve through your efforts. One of the first steps in motivating yourself to be successful in college is to have a clear and specific understanding of your reasons for attending college. Are you attending college as a way to obtain a satisfying career? Is financial security one of your goals? Will you feel more satisfied if you are living up to your potential? What are your hopes and dreams, and how will college help you to achieve your goals?

When you are having difficulties or doubts about your ability to finish your college education, remember your hopes and dreams and your plans for the future. It is a good idea to write these ideas down, think about them, and revise them from time to time.

## What Is the Value of a College Education?

Many college students say that getting a satisfying job that pays well and achieving financial security are important motivators for attending college. As a result of the rising cost of higher education, students have started to question whether a college education is still a good investment. Recent analyses by the Federal Reserve Bank have shown that the benefits still outweigh the cost for both an associate's and a bachelor's degree. These degrees have a 15% return, which is considered a good investment.<sup>2</sup> By getting a degree, you can get a job that pays more per hour, work fewer hours to earn a living, and have more time for leisure activities. In addition, you can spend your time at work doing something that you enjoy. A report issued by the Census Bureau in 2016 listed the following education and income statistics for all races and both genders throughout the United States.<sup>3</sup> Lifetime income assumes that a person works 30 years before retirement.

### Average Earnings Based on Education Level

| Education               | Yearly Income | Lifetime Income |
|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| High school graduate    | 35,984        | 1,079,520       |
| Some college, no degree | 39,312        | 1,179,360       |
| Associate's degree      | 42,588        | 1,277,640       |
| Bachelor's degree       | 60,112        | 1,803,360       |
| Professional degree     | 90,740        | 2,722,200       |



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Notice that income rises with educational level. Over a lifetime, a person with a bachelor's degree earns about 60% more than a high school graduate. Of course, these are average figures across the nation and some individuals earn higher or lower salaries. People fantasize about winning the lottery, but the reality is that the probability of winning the lottery is very low. In the long run, you have a better chance of increasing your income by going to college.

Let's do some further comparisons. A high-school graduate earns an average of \$1,079,520 over a lifetime. A college graduate with a bachelor's degree earns \$1,803,360 over a lifetime. A college graduate earns \$723,840 more than a high-school graduate does over a lifetime. So how much is a college degree worth? It is worth \$723,840 over a lifetime. Would you go to college and finish your degree if someone offered to pay you \$723,840? Here are some more interesting figures we can derive from the above table:

Completing one college course is worth \$18,096.  
(723,840 divided by 40 courses in a bachelor's degree)

Going to class for one hour is worth \$377.  
(\$18,096 divided by 48 hours in a semester class)

Would you take a college course if someone offered you \$18,096? Would you go to class today for one hour if someone offered you \$377? Of course, if this sounds too good to be true, remember that you will receive these payments over a working lifetime of 30 years.

While college graduation does not guarantee employment, it increases your chances of finding a job. In 2016, high-school graduates had an unemployment rate of 5.2% as compared to college graduates who had an unemployment rate of 2.7%. Increase your chances of employment by continuing your education.

Employment and earnings are only some of the values of going to college. College helps develop your potential and increase your confidence, self-esteem, self-respect, and happiness. It increases your understanding of the world and prepares you to be an informed citizen.

## Journal Entry #1

What are your dreams for the future? Write a paragraph about what you hope to accomplish by going to college.



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## Choosing a Major and Career

Having a definite major and career choice is a good motivation for completing your college education. It is difficult to put in the work necessary to be successful if you do not have a clear picture of your future career; however, three out of four college students are undecided about their major. For students who have chosen a major, 30 to 75 percent of a graduating class will change that major two or more times.<sup>4</sup> Unclear or indefinite career goals are some of the most significant factors that identify students at risk of dropping out of college.<sup>5</sup> Choosing an appropriate college major is one of the most difficult and important decisions that college students can make.

How can you choose the major that is best for you? The best way is to first understand yourself: become aware of your personality traits, interests, preferred lifestyle, values, gifts, and talents. The next step is to do career research to determine the career that best matches your personal characteristics. Then, plan your education to prepare for your career. By following these steps, you can find the major that is best for you and minimize the time you spend in college. This textbook helps you to move through the process of self-understanding and find the major and career that is the best match for you.

“The purpose of our lives is to give birth to the best which is within us.”

Marianne Williamson

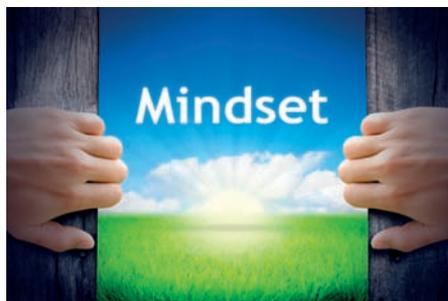
## How to Be Motivated

There are many ways to be motivated to be successful in college and in your future career. Set the stage with a positive mindset, increase your perseverance, think positively about the future, and find something interesting in your studies. Apply some concepts from psychology including intrinsic motivation, locus of control, affiliation, achievement, and simply using a reward. We will examine each of these concepts in more detail. As you read through them, think about how you can apply them to your personal life.

## Your Mindset Makes a Difference

Did you know that your mindset has a powerful effect on learning and college success? Mindset is related to your self-image as a learner. It affects the effort you put into your studies and how you deal with challenges and setbacks. A positive mindset can even make you smarter as you learn new material and exercise your brain. Scientists have identified a **growth mindset** that leads to success.<sup>6</sup> It includes the belief that

- Intelligence is increased as you learn new knowledge.
- Through practice and effort, skills can be improved.
- Learning and self-improvement continue over a lifetime.
- Challenges are a way to be tested and improve performance.
- Failure is an opportunity to learn.



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- Constructive criticism improves performance.
- The success of others is an inspiration.

In contrast, the **fixed mindset** is an obstacle to success. It includes these beliefs:

- Intelligence is fixed at birth.
- Increased effort does not lead to success.
- There is a limit to what we can accomplish.
- Roadblocks or obstacles are an excuse to be absent.
- It is best to take on only easy tasks in which success is guaranteed.
- Constructive criticism is a personal attack.
- The success of others makes me look bad.
- Hard work is unpleasant.
- The amount of work needed to be successful is underestimated.

The good news is that you can learn to identify and change your mindset so that you can be successful in college, in your career, and in your personal life. If you believe that effort can produce rewards, you are on your way to success.

### Activity: What is Your Mindset?

Circle the number that best describes your mindset.

|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| People are born with a certain amount of intelligence that cannot be changed.                  | 0              | 1     | 2        | 3                 |
| I appreciate feedback on my performance and use it to improve my skills.                       | 3              | 2     | 1        | 0                 |
| I avoid challenges and prefer to complete school work that is easy.                            | 0              | 1     | 2        | 3                 |
| The more you learn, the more intelligent you become.   | 3              | 2     | 1        | 0                 |
| Completing challenging work is worth the effort because it gives me a sense of accomplishment. | 3              | 2     | 1        | 0                 |
| When the work is difficult, I feel like I am not very smart.                                   | 0              | 1     | 2        | 3                 |
| When I receive a failing grade, I feel discouraged and feel like giving up.                    | 0              | 1     | 2        | 3                 |
| When I receive a failing grade, I look at what I did wrong and try to do better next time.     | 3              | 2     | 1        | 0                 |
| I get angry when teachers or coaches tell me how to improve my performance.                    | 0              | 1     | 2        | 3                 |
| The more work you put into learning a new skill, the better you will get at doing it.          | 3              | 2     | 1        | 0                 |

Write your total points here: \_\_\_\_\_

- 25–30 You have a growth mindset that will help you to be successful in college.
- 20–24 You have many qualities of a positive mindset, but could benefit from thinking more positively about learning.
- 15–19 You have some qualities of a growth mindset, but would benefit from re-reading the information about growth mindset and thinking about how you can use this material to increase your success.
- 14 or less Re-read the material on growth mindset and think about how you can apply it to improve your success in college.

## Grit: A Powerful Tool for Student Success

Psychologists have found that one of the most important factors related to success in college is grit. What is grit? Grit is defined as a combination of perseverance and passion. Psychologist Angela Duckworth studied students who were successful at the United States Military Academy at West Point, one of the most selective colleges in the country.<sup>7</sup> Even though only the top students are admitted, 20% of these students drop out before graduation. Most of the dropouts leave during the first two months of college. What is the difference between those who are successful and those who drop out? **Those who are successful have a “never give up” attitude, or grit.** They are constantly tested with tasks that challenge their skills and are successful because they have grit, and not because of superior academic or athletic ability. The successful students can keep going through challenges and even failure.

Grit includes the element of passion, or the drive to constantly improve. Successful students have a goal or vision of the future and they strive to achieve it. Their goals are achievable because they match their interests and personal strengths. For this reason, having goals that match your personal strengths and interests is essential to your success. These goals give you the motivation and grit to continue when the going gets tough. Some of you have clear goals for the future while others are re-evaluating or beginning to work on them. The material in the following chapters helps you to think about your interests and personal strengths to set goals for the future and increase the motivation to complete your education.

**What is more important, talent or grit?** We have traditionally assumed that talent or intelligence is the key to success. In fact, there is a bias in society in which people assume that success is the result of talent. We look at successful people, admire their talent, and assume that their unusual talent made them successful. However, “our talent is one thing. What we do with it is quite another.”<sup>8</sup> The most talented individuals are not always the most successful. The great philosopher Nietzsche proposed that we think of gifted individuals as people who worked hard to become geniuses.

**How do famous people achieve excellence?** Psychologists have studied famous musicians, athletes, scientists, and others to find out what makes them successful. Rather than talent, the characteristic connected to success is **effortful training.** Effortful training involves identifying a goal that challenges your skills, finding your weaknesses, and working to improve them one small step at a time. Life is easier if you can establish a habit or daily ritual of effortful practice. For example, you can make it a habit of exercising first thing in the morning. You can make a habit of studying at a certain time and place each day. If you are in the habit of doing something, you don't have to think about it; you just do it.

It is estimated that it takes about 10,000 hours to learn a complex skill.<sup>9</sup> The practice is often difficult and boring, but motivated individuals persist by keeping in mind what they want to accomplish. Here are some examples of effortful practice:

- Do you want to become an NBA superstar? Superstars such as Kobe Bryant, LeBron James, and James Hardin spend at least five hours a day for seven days a week practicing.<sup>10</sup>
- Do you want to be an all pro football player? Tom Brady spends 16 hours a day practicing, viewing films, and preparing for meetings before a Super Bowl game.<sup>11</sup>
- Do you want to become an Olympic gold medalist swimmer? Michael Phelps swims 50 miles a week. He also trains for five to six hours a day for six days a week.<sup>12</sup>
- Do you want to become a world-famous violinist? Itzhak Perlman suggests that students spend from four to five hours of effortful practicing each day.<sup>13</sup>

These successful musicians and athletes have true grit and practice until their performance becomes a habit. The key idea is that learning complex skills is challenging, takes time, and is accomplished through effortful practice one small step at a time.



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**How does grit apply to college students?** To be successful in college, it is important to spend a significant amount of time on your studies. A common rule is to spend two hours a week for each unit enrolled. For example, a three-unit course would require three hours a week in class and six hours outside of class reading and studying. Of course, the time required varies with the difficulty of the subject and your prior knowledge. In math courses, students may need to spend 10 hours per week studying and practicing problems to be successful. Start spending time studying from the very beginning. Remember that most dropouts happen early in the semester as students quickly realize that they are too behind to catch up.

Most importantly, don't give up! It is important to understand that college is challenging and requires a great deal of effort to be successful. Because college is difficult, there may be times that you may struggle or even receive a failing grade. Maintain a positive attitude, spend more time on the subject, and ask for help. Seek out tutoring or see your college professor during office hours if you need extra help. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness. College professors generally respect students who are interested enough in their field of expertise to ask for help. Colleges set up programs such as tutoring to help students be successful.

**Are there times when it is better to give up?** Don't give up your important goals just because you think they are difficult. However, if you realize that the goals you have set for yourself do not match your interests, it is better to set new goals and follow a different path. Prioritize how you spend your time so that you are spending it on what is most important. If you realize that the time spent on your current goal is a distraction to accomplishing more important goals, then it is better to change directions. There may be times when you must take courses that you don't consider interesting to complete your long-term goal of a college degree. In this case, it is best to think about your long-term goal of graduating from college, be gritty, and persevere.

**How can you develop grit?** The good news is that grit is related to the growth mindset and can be learned. Here are three steps for learning grit:

1. The first step in learning grit is finding interest. Become aware of what you enjoy doing and follow your interests. Chapter 3 in this textbook helps you to explore your interests and values.
2. Invest your time in practice. Find your weaknesses and strive to improve them. Practice frequently and work one small step at a time.
3. Find your purpose. One of the most difficult questions you may ask yourself is, "What is my purpose in life?" To answer this important question, ask yourself why your work is important and how it will help others. Knowing about your purpose helps you to maintain interest, invest your time in practice, and become passionate about your work.<sup>14</sup>

## Activity: How Gritty Are You?

|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| I have a "never give up" attitude.   | 3              | 2     | 1        | 0                 |
| I spend a significant amount of time studying each week.                                 | 3              | 2     | 1        | 0                 |
| A failing grade shows a lack of intelligence.  | 0              | 1     | 2        | 3                 |
| Failure is an opportunity to figure out what went wrong and fix it.                      | 3              | 2     | 1        | 0                 |
| I believe that the most talented and intelligent people will become the most successful. | 0              | 1     | 2        | 3                 |
| When work is challenging, I tend to get discouraged and lose interest.                   | 0              | 1     | 2        | 3                 |
| I have a good awareness of my interests and what I enjoy doing.                          | 3              | 2     | 1        | 0                 |
| I can write a statement about what is my purpose in life.                                | 3              | 2     | 1        | 0                 |
| I have goals in life and spend my time on what is most important.                        | 3              | 2     | 1        | 0                 |
| I would describe myself as a person who has grit.  | 3              | 2     | 1        | 0                 |

Write your total points here: \_\_\_\_\_

- 25–30 Your grittiness will help you to be successful in college, careers, and life.
- 20–24 You have many qualities of a gritty person, but could benefit from thinking more about how to increase your grit.
- 15–19 You have some qualities of a gritty person, but would benefit from re-reading the information about grit and thinking about how you can use this material to increase your success.
- 14 or less Re-read the material on grit and think about how you can apply it to improve your success in college.

### Journal Entry #2

In how many units are you enrolled this term? Approximately how many hours per week will you have to study to be successful? Write five intention statements about improving your mindset and grit.

I am enrolled in \_\_\_ units. I will need to study approximately \_\_\_ hours per week to be successful. To improve my mindset and grit, I intend to . . .

### Thinking Positively about the Future

Developing a growth mindset and grit both depend on positive thinking. You can motivate yourself to complete your education by thinking positively about the future. If you believe that your chances of graduating from college are good, you can be motivated to take the steps necessary to achieve your goals. Conversely, if you think that your chances of graduating are poor, it is difficult to motivate yourself to continue. The degree of optimism that you possess is greatly influenced by past experiences. For example, if you were a good student



## ACTIVITY

Are you generally an optimist or pessimist about the future? Read the following items and rate your level of agreement or disagreement:

Rate the following items using this scale:

- 5 I definitely agree
- 4 I agree
- 3 I neither agree or disagree (neutral)
- 2 I disagree
- 1 I strongly disagree

- \_\_\_\_\_ My chances of graduating from college are good.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am confident that I can overcome any obstacles to my success.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Things generally turn out well for me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I believe that positive results will eventually come from most problem situations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If I work hard enough, I will eventually achieve my goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Although I have faced some problems in the past, the future will be better.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I expect that most things will go as planned.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Good things will happen to me in the future.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am generally persistent in reaching my goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am good at finding solutions to the problems I face in life.

Add up your total points and multiply by two. My total points ( $\times 2$ ) are \_\_\_\_\_.

- 90–100 You are an excellent positive thinker.
- 80–89 You are a good positive thinker.
- 70–79 Sometimes you think positively, and sometimes not. Can you re-evaluate your thinking?
- 60 and below Work on positive thinking.

## Journal Entry #3

Write five positive statements about your college education and your future.

"No pessimist ever discovered the secrets of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit."  
Helen Keller

## Find Something Interesting in Your Studies

Finding something interesting in your studies helps you to maintain a growth mindset and improve grit. If you can think positively about what you are studying, it makes the job easier and more satisfying. Begin your studies by finding something interesting in the course and your textbook. Contrast these two ideas:

*I have to take economics. It is going to be difficult and boring. What do I need economics for anyway? I'll just need to get through it so I can get my degree.*

*I have to take economics. I wonder about the course content. I often hear about it on the news. How can I use this information in my future? What can I find that is interesting?*

Make sure to attend the first class meeting. Remember that the professor is very knowledgeable about the subject and finds the content interesting and exciting. At the first class meeting, the professor will give you an overview of the course and should provide some motivation for studying the material in the course. Look at the course syllabus to find what the course is about and to begin to look for something that could be interesting or useful to you.

Skimming a textbook before you begin a course is a good way to find something interesting and to prepare for learning. Skimming will give you an organized preview of what's ahead. Here are the steps to skimming a new text:

1. **Quickly read the preface or introduction.** Read as if you were having a conversation with the author of the text. In the preface or introduction, you will find out how the author has organized the material, the key ideas, and his or her purpose in writing the text.
2. **Look at the major topics in the table of contents.** You can use the table of contents as a window into the book. It gives a quick outline of every topic in the text. As you read the table of contents, look for topics of special interest to you.
3. **Spend five to 15 minutes quickly looking over the book.** Turn the pages quickly, noticing boldfaced topics, pictures, and anything else that catches your attention. Again, look for important or interesting topics. Do not spend too much time on this step. If your textbook is online, skim through the website.
4. **What resources are included?** Is there an index, glossary of terms, answers to quiz questions, or solutions to math problems? These sections will be of use to you as you read. If your book is online, explore the website to find useful features and content.

Skimming a text or website before you begin to read has several important benefits. The first benefit is that it gets you started in the learning process. It is an easy and quick step that can help you avoid procrastination. It increases motivation by helping you notice items that have appeal to you. Previewing the content will help you to relax as you study and remember the information. Early in the course, this step will help you verify that you have chosen the correct course and that you have the prerequisites to be successful in the class.

## Avoid Multi-Tasking

Multi-tasking is trying to study while talking on the cell phone, checking social media, and thinking about something else. It is difficult to focus and be motivated if you are multi-tasking. It is a common myth that the brain can multi-task and pay attention to several inputs at once.

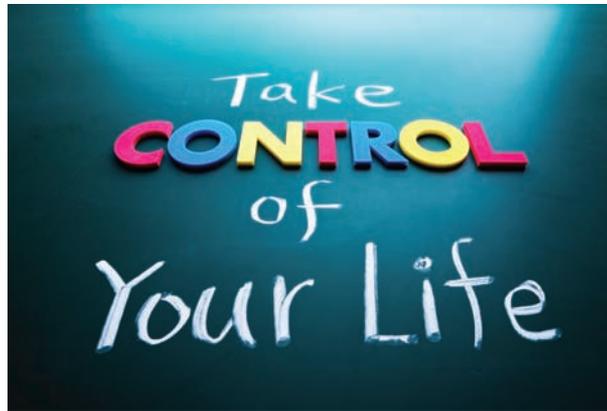
However, the brain cannot multi-task; it pays attention to one input at a time. Research shows the following:<sup>16</sup>

- A person who is interrupted takes 50% longer to complete a task.
- The interruptions results in 50% more errors.

A good example of the problems with multi-tasking is driving while talking on the phone. The brain constantly switches between paying attention to the phone and driving. If you are talking on a cell phone, you are half a second slower in stepping on the brake. At 70 mph, the car travels 51 feet in half a second. In addition, drivers miss 50% of the visual clues noticed by drivers who are not trying to multi-task. Driving while using a cell phone is like driving drunk.<sup>17</sup> While studying, cell phones and other distractions reduce productivity and increase the chance for errors. Focusing on one task at a time saves time, improves the quality of work, and improves motivation.

"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

Winston Churchill



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## Intrinsic or Extrinsic Motivation

**Intrinsic motivation** comes from within. It means that you do an activity because you enjoy it or find personal meaning in it. With intrinsic motivation, the nature of the activity itself or the consequences of the activity motivate you. For example, let's say that I am interested in learning to play the piano. I am motivated to practice playing the piano because I like the sound of the piano and feel very satisfied when I can play music that I enjoy. I practice because I like to practice, not because I have to practice. When I get tired or frustrated, I work through it or put it aside and come back to it because I want to learn to play the piano well.

You can be intrinsically motivated to continue in college because you enjoy learning and find the college experience satisfying. Look for ways to enjoy college and to find some personal satisfaction in it. If you enjoy college, it becomes easier to do the work required to be successful. Think about what you say to yourself about college. If you are saying negative things such as "I don't want to be here," it will be difficult to continue.

**Extrinsic motivation** comes as a result of an external reward from someone else. Examples of extrinsic rewards are certificates, bonuses, money, praise, and recognition. Taking the piano example again, let's say that I want my child to play the piano. The child does not know if he or she would like to play the piano. I give the child a reward for practicing the piano. I could pay the child for practicing or give praise for doing a good job. There are two possible outcomes of the extrinsic reward. After a while, the child may gain skills and confidence and come to enjoy playing the piano. The extrinsic reward is no longer necessary because the child is now intrinsically motivated. Or the child may decide that he or she does not like to play the piano. The extrinsic reward is no longer effective in motivating the child to play the piano.

You can use extrinsic rewards to motivate yourself to be successful in college. Remind yourself of the payoff for getting a college degree: earning more money, having a satisfying career, being able to purchase a car and a house. Extrinsic rewards can be a first step in motivating yourself to attend college. With experience and achievement, you may come to like going to college and may become intrinsically motivated to continue your college education.

**If you use intrinsic motivation to achieve your goal, you will be happier and more successful.** If you do something like playing the piano because you enjoy it, you are more likely to spend the time necessary to practice to achieve your goal. If you view college as something that you enjoy and as valuable to you, it is easier to spend the time to do the required studying. When you get tired or frustrated, tell yourself that you are doing a good job (praise yourself) and think of the positive reasons that you want to get a college education.

## Locus of Control

Being aware of the concept of locus of control is another way of understanding motivation. The word **locus** means place. The locus of control is where you place the responsibility for control over your life. In other words, who is in charge? If you place the responsibility on

yourself and believe that you have control over your life, you have an internal locus of control. If you place the responsibility on others and think that luck or fate determines your future, you have an external locus of control. Some people use the internal and external locus of control in combination or favor one type in certain situations. If you favor an internal locus of control, you believe that to a great extent your actions determine your future. **Studies have shown that students who use an internal locus of control are likely to have higher achievement in college.**<sup>18</sup> The characteristics of students with internal and external locus of control are listed below.

Students with an internal locus of control:

- Believe that they are in control of their lives.
- Understand that grades are directly related to the amount of study invested.
- Are self-motivated.
- Learn from their mistakes by figuring out what went wrong and how to fix the problem.
- Think positively and try to make the best of each situation.
- Rely on themselves to find something interesting in the class and learn the material.

Students with an external locus of control:

- Believe that their lives are largely a result of luck, fate, or chance.
- Think that teachers give grades rather than students earning grades.
- Rely on external motivation from teachers or others.
- Look for someone to blame when they make a mistake.
- Think negatively and believe they are victims of circumstance.
- Rely on the teacher to make the class interesting and to teach the material.

“Ability is what you’re capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it.”  
Lou Holtz

## ACTIVITY

### Internal or External Locus of Control

Decide whether the statement represents an internal or external locus of control and put a checkmark in the appropriate column.

| Internal | External |  |
|----------|----------|--|
| _____    | _____    | <b>1.</b> Much of what happens to us is due to fate, chance, or luck.                                |
| _____    | _____    | <b>2.</b> Grades depend on how much work you put into it.  |
| _____    | _____    | <b>3.</b> If I do badly on the test, it is usually because the teacher is unfair.                    |
| _____    | _____    | <b>4.</b> If I do badly on the test, it is because I didn’t study or didn’t understand the material. |
| _____    | _____    | <b>5.</b> I often get blamed for things that are not my fault.                                       |
| _____    | _____    | <b>6.</b> I try to make the best of the situation.   |
| _____    | _____    | <b>7.</b> It is impossible to get a good grade if you have a bad instructor.                         |
| _____    | _____    | <b>8.</b> I can be successful through hard work.   |

*(Continued)*

**Internal****External**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**9.** If the teacher is not there telling me what to do, I have a hard time doing my work.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**10.** I can motivate myself to study.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**11.** If the teacher is boring, I probably won't do well in class.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**12.** I can find something interesting about each class.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**13.** When bad things are going to happen, there is not much you can do about it.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**14.** I create my own destiny.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**15.** Teachers should motivate the students to study.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**16.** I have a lot of choice about what happens in my life.

As you probably noticed, the even-numbered statements represent internal locus of control. The odd-numbered statements represent external locus of control. Remember that students with an internal locus of control have a greater chance of success in college. It is important to see yourself as responsible for your own success and achievement and to believe that with effort you can achieve your goals.

"I am a great believer in luck, and I find that the harder I work, the more I have of it."

Thomas Jefferson

## Other Ways to Improve Motivation

Here are some additional ideas for improving your motivation and success:

- Participate in extra-curricular activities. When you join a club, participate in athletics, or involve yourself in student government, you gain new friends and develop a sense of belonging. You also get to explore some of your interests and gain future employment skills.
- Some students are achievement motivated, especially students interested in business, sales, law, engineering, or architecture. Strive to be the best that you can be so that you can be proud of your accomplishments.
- If a behavior is followed by a reward, it is likely to be increased. Do your studying first and follow it with a reward such as watching TV, playing your favorite video game, using social media, participating in athletics, or enjoying your favorite music. Just remember to do the work first and then follow it by a reward. If you have the reward first, you will not get around to studying.



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## QUIZ

### Motivation, Part I

1. The following statement is an example of grit:
  - a. I have a “never give up” attitude.
  - b. I believe that the most talented people are the most successful in life.
  - c. I think that a failing grade shows a lack of intelligence
2. You can increase your motivation for studying by
  - a. taking the required courses.
  - b. reminding yourself that you have to do it.
  - c. finding something interesting in your studies.
3. Intrinsic motivation
  - a. comes from within.
  - b. is the result of an external reward.
  - c. involves higher pay or recognition for a job well done.
4. To be successful in college, it is best to use
  - a. an external locus of control.
  - b. extrinsic motivation.
  - c. intrinsic motivation.
5. A person who is multitasking:
  - a. Uses time efficiently.
  - b. Takes 50% longer to complete a task.
  - c. Minimizes errors.

How did you do on the quiz? Check your answers: 1. a, 2. c, 3. a, 4. c, 5. b

### Journal Entry #4

Write a paragraph with at least three ideas about how you can motivate yourself to be successful in college. Include any of these ideas: mindset, grit, positive thinking, finding interest, concentration, attention, intrinsic motivation, locus of control, affiliation, achievement, and using rewards.

“Habits are first cobwebs,  
then cables.”  
Spanish Proverb

“We are what we  
repeatedly do. Excellence,  
then, is not an act but a  
habit.”  
Aristotle

## Success Is a Habit

We establish habits by taking small actions each day. Through repetition, these individual actions become habits. I once visited the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco and saw a cross section of the cable used to support the bridge. It was made of small metal strands twisted with other strands; then those cables were twisted together to make a stronger cable. Habits are a lot like cables. We start with one small action, and each successive action makes the habit stronger. Have you ever stopped to think that success can be a habit? We all have learned patterns of behavior that either help us to be successful or interfere with our success. With some effort and some basic understanding of behavior modification, you can choose to establish some new behaviors that lead to success or to get rid of behaviors that interfere with it.

## Eight Steps to Change a Habit

You can establish new habits that lead to your success. Once a habit is established, it can become a pattern of behavior that you do not need to think about very much. For example, new students often need to get into the habit of studying. Following is an outline of steps that can be helpful to establish new behaviors.

**1. State the problem.** What new habit would you like to start? What are your roadblocks or obstacles? What bad habit would you like to change? Be truthful about it. This is sometimes the most difficult step. Here are two different examples:

- I need to study to be successful in college. I am not in the habit of studying. I easily get distracted by work, family, friends, and other things I need to do. At the end of the day, I am too tired to study.
- I need to improve my diet. I am overweight. I eat too much fast food and am not careful about what I eat. I have no time for exercise.

**2. Change one small behavior at a time.** If you think about climbing a mountain, the task can seem overwhelming. However, you can take the first step. If you can change one small behavior, you can gain the confidence to change another. For example:

- I plan to study at least two hours each day on Mondays through Fridays.
- I plan to eat more fruits and vegetables each day.

State the behavior you would like to change. Make it small.

**3. State in a positive way the behavior you wish to establish.** For example, instead of the negative statements “I will not waste my time” or “I will not eat junk food,” say, “I plan to study each day” or “I plan to eat fruits and vegetables each day.”

**4. Count the behavior.** How often do you do this behavior? If you are trying to establish a pattern of studying, write down how much time you spend studying each day. If you are trying to improve your diet, write down everything that you eat each day. Sometimes just getting an awareness of your habit is enough to begin to make some changes.

**5. Picture in your mind the actions you might take.** For example:

- I picture myself finding time to study in the library. I see myself walking to the library. I can see myself in the library studying.
- I see myself in the grocery store buying fruits and vegetables. I see myself packing these fruits and vegetables in my lunch. I see myself putting these foods in a place where I will notice them.

**6. Practice the behavior for 10 days.** In 10 days, you can get started on a new pattern of behavior. Once you have started, keep practicing the behavior for about a month to firmly establish your new pattern of behavior. The first three days are the most difficult.

### Seven Steps to Change a Habit

1. State the problem
2. Change one small behavior at a time
3. Be positive
4. Count the behavior
5. Picture the change
6. Practice the behavior
7. Reward yourself

“The difference in winning  
and losing is most often . . .  
not quitting.”  
Walt Disney

“It’s not that I’m so smart;  
it’s just that I stay with  
problems longer.”  
Albert Einstein

If you fail, don't give up. Just realize that you are human and keep trying for 10 days. Think positively that you can be successful. Write a journal entry or note on your calendar about what you have accomplished each day.

- 7. Find a reward for your behavior.** Remember that we tend to repeat behaviors that are rewarded. Find rewards that do not involve too many calories, don't cost too much money, and don't involve alcohol or drugs. Also, rewards are most effective if they directly follow the behavior you wish to reinforce.
- 8. Ask yourself,** "What am I going to do to maintain the change?" In the long run, the new behavior has to become part of your lifestyle.

## Ten Habits of Successful College Students

Starting your college education will require you to establish some new habits to be successful.

### 1. Attend class.

College lectures supplement the material in the text, so it is important to attend class. Many college instructors will drop you if you miss three hours of class. After three absences, most students do not return to class. If your class is online, log in frequently.

### 2. Read the textbook.

Start early and read a little at a time. If you have a text with 400 pages, read 25 pages a week rather than trying to read it all at once.

### 3. Have an educational plan.

Counselors or advisors can assist you in making an educational plan so that you take the right classes and accomplish your educational goal as soon as possible.

### 4. Use college services.

Colleges offer valuable free services that help you to be successful. Take advantage of tutoring, counseling, health services, financial aid, the learning resources center (library) and many other services.

### 5. Get to know the faculty.

You can get to know the faculty by asking questions in class or meeting with your instructors during office hours. Your instructors can provide extra assistance and write letters of recommendation for scholarships, future employment, or graduate school.

### 6. Don't work too much.

Research has shown that full-time students should have no more than 20 hours of outside employment a week to be successful in college. If you have to work more than 20 hours a week, reduce your college load. If you are working 40 hours a week or more, take only one or two classes.

### 7. Take one step at a time.

If you are anxious about going to college, remember that each class you attend takes you another step toward your goal. If you take too many classes, especially in the beginning, you may become overwhelmed.

### 8. Have a goal for the future.

Know why you are in college and what you hope to accomplish. What career will you have in the future? Imagine your future lifestyle.

### 9. Visualize your success.

See yourself walking across the stage and receiving your college diploma. See yourself working at a job you enjoy.

### 10. Ask questions if you don't understand.

Asking questions not only helps you to find the answers, but it shows you are motivated to be successful.

## QUIZ

### Motivation, Part II

1. When you participate in student activities in campus such as athletics, student government, or a club, you will be
  - a. distracted from your studies.
  - b. using affiliation motivation.
  - c. decreasing your chances of success in college.
2. If the behavior is followed by a reward
  - a. it is likely to be increased.
  - b. it is likely to be decreased.
  - c. there will probably be no effect.
3. For rewards to be effective, they must occur
  - a. before the behavior.
  - b. immediately after the behavior.
  - c. either before or after the behavior.
4. If you plan to increase time spent studying, the following statement is most likely to help you to achieve your goal.
  - a. I will increase the time I spend studying.
  - b. I plan to study for at least two hours each day on Mondays through Fridays.
  - c. I will study for five hours on Monday to prepare for the test on Tuesday.
5. To change a habit,
  - a. set high goals.
  - b. focus on negative behavior.
  - c. begin with a concrete behavior that can be counted.

How did you do on the quiz? Check your answers: 1. b, 2. a, 3. b, 4. b, 5. c

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

### Persistence

There is an old saying that persistence will get you almost anything eventually. This saying applies to your success in life as well as in college. The first two to six weeks of college are a critical time in which many students drop out. Realize that college is a new experience and that you will face new challenges and growth experiences. Make plans to persist, especially in the first few weeks. Get to know a college counselor or advisor. These professionals can help you to get started in the right classes and answer any questions you might have. It is important to make a connection with a counselor or faculty member so that you feel comfortable in college and have the resources to obtain needed help. Plan to enroll on time so that you do not have to register late. It is crucial to attend the first class. In the first class, the professor explains the class requirements and expectations and sets

the tone for the class. You may even get dropped from the class if you are not there on the first day. Get into the habit of studying right away. Make studying a habit that you start immediately at the beginning of the semester or quarter. If you can make it through the first six weeks, it is likely that you can finish the semester and complete your college education.

It has been said that 90 percent of success is just showing up. Any faculty member will tell you that the number one reason for students dropping out of college is lack of attendance. They know that when students miss three classes in a row, they are not likely to return. Even very capable students who miss class may find that they are lost when they come back. Many students are simply afraid to return. Classes such as math and foreign languages are sequential, and it is very

difficult to make up work after an absence. One of the most important ways you can be successful is to make a habit of consistently showing up for class.

You will also need commitment to be successful. Commitment is a promise to yourself to follow through with something. In athletics, it is not necessarily the one with the best physical skills who makes the best athlete. Commitment and practice make a great athlete. Commitment means doing whatever is necessary to succeed. Like the good athlete, make a commitment to accomplishing your goals. Spend the time necessary to be successful in your studies.

When you face difficulties, persistence and commitment are especially important. History is full of famous people who contributed to society through persistence and commitment. Consider the following facts about Abraham Lincoln, for example.

- Failed in business at age 21.
- Was defeated in a legislative race at age 22.
- Failed again in business at age 24.
- Overcame the death of his sweetheart at age 26.
- Had a nervous breakdown at age 27.
- Lost a congressional race at age 34.
- Lost a congressional race at age 36.

- Lost a senatorial race at age 45.
- Failed in an effort to become vice president at age 47.
- Lost a senatorial race at age 49.
- Was elected president of the United States at age 52.<sup>19</sup>



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The goal of getting a college education may seem like a mountain that is difficult to climb. Break it into smaller steps that you can accomplish. See your college counselor or advisor, register for classes, attend the first class, read the first chapter, do the first assignment, and you will be on the road to your success. Then continue to break tasks into small, achievable steps and continue from one step to the next. And remember, persistence will get you almost anything eventually.

## Journal Entry #5

What will you do if you are tempted to drop out of college? What steps can you take to be persistent in achieving your college goals? Are there times when it is best to change goals rather than to be persistent if your efforts are not working? Write a paragraph about how you will be persistent in reaching your college goals.



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## College Success 1

The College Success 1 website is continually updated with supplementary material for each chapter including Word documents of the journal entries, classroom activities, handouts, videos, links to related materials, and much more. See <http://www.collegesuccess1.com/>.

## Notes

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# Begin with Self-Assessment

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

A good way to begin your success in college is to assess your present skills to determine your strengths and areas that need improvement. Complete the following assessment to get an overview of the topics presented in the textbook and to measure your present skills.

## Measure Your Success

The following statements represent major topics included in the textbook. Read the following statements and rate how true they are for you at the present time. At the end of the course, you will have the opportunity to complete this assessment again to measure your progress.

- 5 Definitely true
- 4 Mostly true
- 3 Somewhat true
- 2 Seldom true
- 1 Never true



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- \_\_\_\_\_ I am motivated to be successful in college.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know the value of a college education.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to establish successful patterns of behavior.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I avoid multi-tasking while studying.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am attending college to accomplish my own personal goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I believe to a great extent that my actions determine my future.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am persistent in achieving my goals.

### \_\_\_\_\_ Total points for Motivation

- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand the steps in making a good decision about a major and career.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can describe my personality type and matching careers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can describe my personal strengths and matching careers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can list my vocational interests and matching careers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can list my five most important values and tell how they are useful in deciding on a career.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand career outlook and what careers will be in demand in the future.

### \_\_\_\_\_ Total Points for Choosing a Major

- \_\_\_\_\_ I have a list or mental picture of my lifetime goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know what I would like to accomplish in the next four years.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I spend my time on activities that help me accomplish my lifetime goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I effectively use priorities in managing my time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can balance study, work, and recreation time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I generally avoid procrastination on important tasks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am good at managing my money.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Managing Time and Money**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand the difference between short-term and long-term memory.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I use effective study techniques for storing information in long-term memory.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can apply memory techniques to remember what I am studying.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to minimize forgetting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to use mnemonics and other memory tricks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to keep my brain healthy throughout life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I use positive thinking to be successful in my studies.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Brain Science and Memory**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand the latest findings in brain science and can apply them to studying.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I use a reading study system based on memory strategies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am familiar with e-learning strategies for reading and learning online.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to effectively mark my textbook.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand how math is different from studying other subjects.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have the math study skills needed to be successful in my math courses.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I take responsibility for my own success in college and in life.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Brain Science and Study Skills**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to listen for the main points in a college lecture.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am familiar with note-taking systems for college lectures.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to review my lecture notes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I feel comfortable with writing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know the steps in writing a college term paper.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to prepare a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am comfortable with public speaking.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Taking Notes, Writing, and Speaking**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to adequately prepare for a test.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can predict the questions that are likely to be on the test.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to deal with test anxiety.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am successful on math exams.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to make a reasonable guess if I am uncertain about the answer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am confident of my ability to take objective tests.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can write a good essay answer.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Test Taking**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I expect good things to happen in the future and work to make them happen.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Despite challenges, I always remain hopeful about the future.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have self-confidence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I use positive self-talk and affirmations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have a visual picture of my future success.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have a clear idea of what happiness means to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I usually practice positive thinking.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Future**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I am confident of my ability to succeed in college.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am confident that my choice of a major is the best one for me.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total additional points**

**Total your points:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Motivation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Personality and Major
- \_\_\_\_\_ Managing Time and Money
- \_\_\_\_\_ Brain Science and Memory
- \_\_\_\_\_ Brain Science and Study Skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ Taking Notes, Writing, and Speaking
- \_\_\_\_\_ Test Taking
- \_\_\_\_\_ Future
- \_\_\_\_\_ Additional Points

\_\_\_\_\_ **Grand total points**



**If you scored**

290–261 You are very confident of your skills for success in college. Maybe you do not need this class?

260–232 You have good skills for success in college. You can always improve.

231–203 You have average skills for success in college. You will definitely benefit from taking this course.

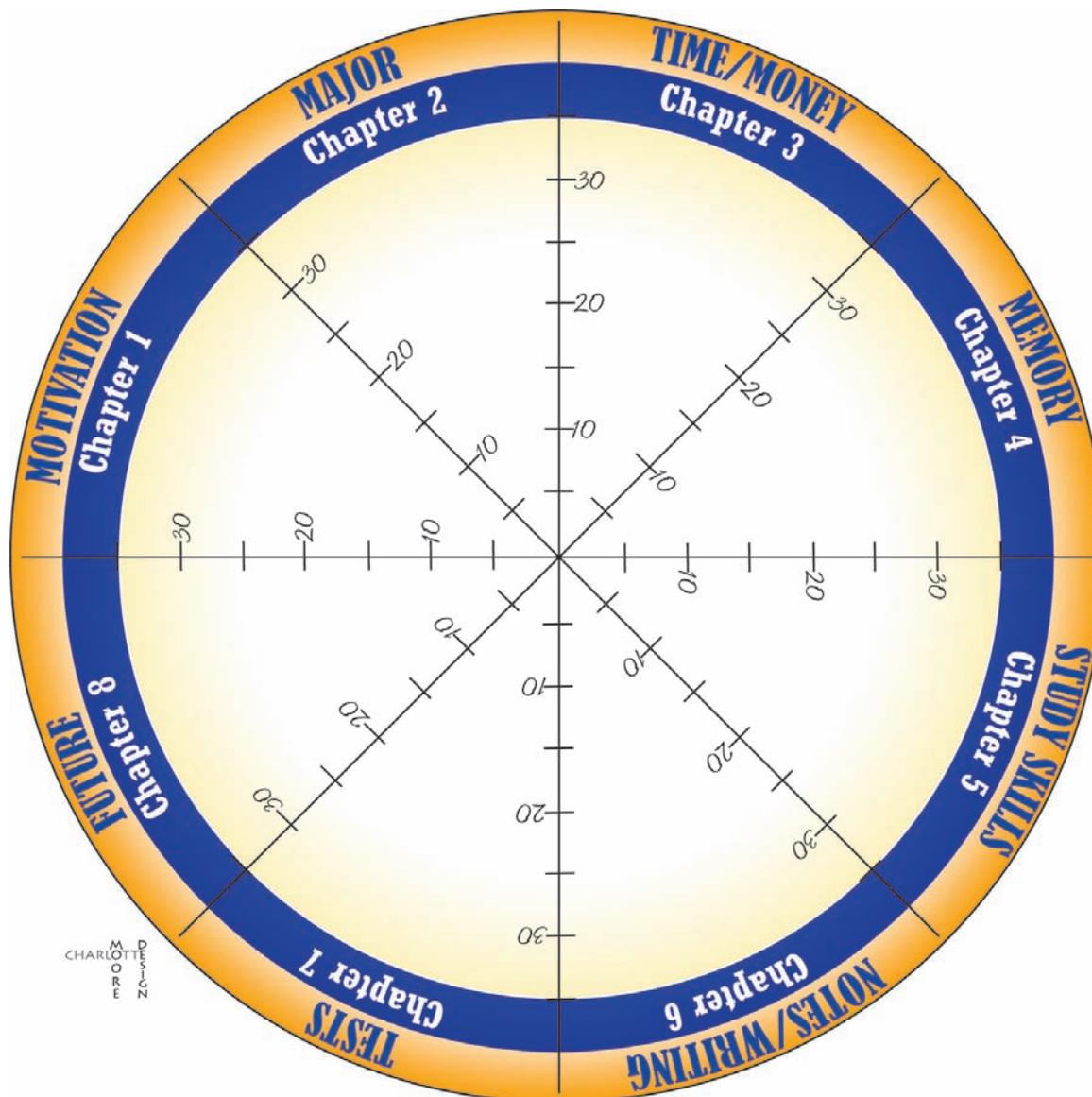
Below 202 You need some help to survive in college. You are in the right place to begin.

Use these scores to complete the Success Wheel that follows this assessment. Note that the additional points are not used in the chart.

# Success Wheel

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Use your scores from the Measure Your Success assessment to complete the following Success Wheel. Use different colored markers to shade in each section of the wheel.





1. What are your best areas?

2. What are areas that need improvement?

## What Do I Want from College?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read the following list and place checkmarks next to your reasons for attending college. Think about why you are attending college and add your own personal reasons to the list.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. To have financial security
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. To find a satisfying career
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. To explore possibilities provided by college
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. To expand my options
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. To become an educated person
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. To figure out what I want to do with my life
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. To develop my potential
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. To become a role model for my children
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. To make my parents happy
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. To respect myself
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. To feel good about myself
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. To see if I can do it
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. To meet interesting people
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. To have something to do and prevent boredom
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. To become the best I can be
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. To have better job opportunities
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. To have no regrets later on
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. To prepare for a good job or profession
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. To have job security
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. To gain confidence in myself
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. To get a degree
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. To gain a greater understanding of the world
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. To have fun



- \_\_\_\_\_ **24.** To understand myself
- \_\_\_\_\_ **25.** To learn how to think
- \_\_\_\_\_ **26.** To enjoy what I do for a living
- \_\_\_\_\_ **27.** To reach my potential
- \_\_\_\_\_ **28.** Because my parents want me to get a degree
- \_\_\_\_\_ **29.** For my own personal satisfaction
- \_\_\_\_\_ **30.** To make a difference in other people's lives
- \_\_\_\_\_ **31.** To have a position of power
- \_\_\_\_\_ **32.** To have respect
- \_\_\_\_\_ **33.** To have prestige
- \_\_\_\_\_ **34.** To have time and money for travel
- \_\_\_\_\_ **35.** To acquire knowledge
- \_\_\_\_\_ **36.** \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ **37.** \_\_\_\_\_

What are your top six reasons for attending college? You may include reasons not listed above. If you are tempted to give up on your college education, read this list and think about the reasons you have listed below.

- 1.** \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.** \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.** \_\_\_\_\_
- 4.** \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.** \_\_\_\_\_
- 6.** \_\_\_\_\_

# Roadblocks and Pathways to Success

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

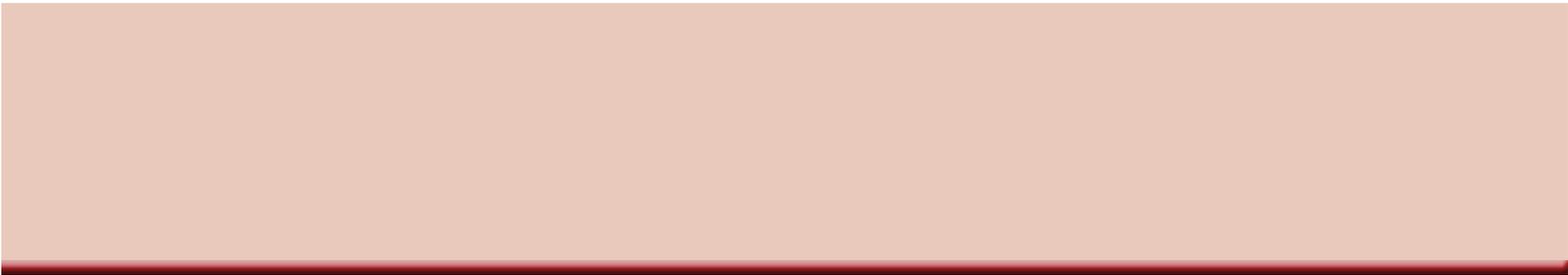


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Students come to college with a dream of making a better future for themselves. What is your dream? Your instructor may have you share your ideas with other students in the course.

Place a checkmark next to any item that could be a roadblock to your success in college.

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too much work           | <input type="checkbox"/> Family obligations    | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of study skills  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial difficulties  | <input type="checkbox"/> Social life           | <input type="checkbox"/> Using time wisely     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of confidence      | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer games        | <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking in class     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty with reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Social media          | <input type="checkbox"/> Negative thinking     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty with writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone use and texting | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of motivation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty with math    | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of career goals  | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning disabilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty with tests   | <input type="checkbox"/> Dislike of homework   | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of persistence   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty with memory  | <input type="checkbox"/> Dislike of school     | <input type="checkbox"/> Health problems       |



List any other roadblocks in addition to the items checked above:

What are your top three roadblocks?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Spend 5 minutes skimming through the table of contents in your textbook and looking quickly through the chapters to find ideas that will help you overcome any roadblocks to your success. List 5 topics from the textbook that can help you to be successful in college.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

What are other resources that can help you to overcome your roadblocks? (tutoring, financial aid, advising, family support, self-motivation)

Your instructor will help the class brainstorm ideas for overcoming roadblocks. What is your plan for overcoming the roadblocks to achieve your hopes and dreams for the future?

## Textbook Skimming

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Use this text or any new text to answer the following questions. Challenge yourself to do this exercise quickly. Remember that a textbook survey should take no longer than five to 15 minutes. Try to complete this exercise in 15 minutes to allow time for writing. Notice the time when you start and finish.

1. Write two key ideas found in the introduction or preface to the book.
2. Looking at the table of contents, list the first five main ideas covered in the text.
3. Write down five interesting topics that you found in the book.
4. What did you find at the back of the book (e.g., index, glossary, appendixes)?
5. How long did it take you to do this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Briefly, what did you think of this textbook skimming exercise?

