Getting Started

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?

• How does health affect learning?
Most students attend college with dreams of making their lives better. Some students are there to explore interests and possibilities, and others have more defined career goals. Being successful in college and attaining your dreams begin with motivation. It provides the energy or drive to find your direction and to reach your goals. Without motivation, it is difficult to accomplish anything.

Not everyone is successful in college. Unfortunately, about one-third of college students drop out in the first year. Forty percent of students who start college do not finish their degrees. Having a good understanding of your gifts and talents, reasons for attending college, career goals, and how to motivate yourself will help you to reach your dreams.

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 reasons for attending college. By going to college you can get a job that pays more per hour. You can work fewer hours to earn a living and have more time for leisure activities. You can spend your time at work doing something that you like to do. A report issued by the Census Bureau in 2012 listed the following education and income statistics for all races and both genders throughout the United States. Lifetime income assumes that a person works thirty years before retirement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Yearly Income</th>
<th>Lifetime Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>$33,904</td>
<td>$1,017,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
<td>$37,804</td>
<td>$1,134,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>$40,820</td>
<td>$1,224,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>$55,432</td>
<td>$1,662,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>$67,600</td>
<td>$2,028,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional degree</td>
<td>$90,220</td>
<td>$2,706,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice that income rises with educational level. Over a lifetime, a person with a bachelor’s degree earns 66% 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. The reality is that the probability of winning the lottery is very low. In the long run, you have a better chance of improving your financial status by going to college.
Let’s do some further comparisons. A high school graduate earns an average of $1,017,120 over a lifetime. A college graduate with a bachelor’s degree earns $1,662,960 over a lifetime. A college graduate earns $645,840 more than a high school graduate does over a lifetime. So how much is a college degree worth? It is worth $645,840 over a lifetime. Would you go to college if someone offered to pay you $645,840? Here are some more interesting figures we can derive from the above table:

Completing one college course is worth $16,146. ($645,840 divided by 40 courses in a bachelor’s degree)

Going to class for one hour is worth $336. ($16,146 divided by 48 hours in a semester class)

Would you take a college class if someone offered to pay you $16,146? Would you go to class today for one hour if someone offered to pay you $336? Of course, if this sounds too good to be true, remember that you will receive these “payments” over a working lifetime of thirty years.

Education beyond high school will become increasingly important. It will take place in a variety of forms: community college courses, training on the job, private training sessions, and learning on your own. Those who do not keep up with the new technology will find that their skills quickly become obsolete. Those who do keep up will find their skills in demand.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, occupations that require a postsecondary degree will account for nearly half of all new jobs from 2008 to 2018, with the fastest growth in jobs requiring an associate’s degree or higher. In addition, higher education will result in higher earnings and lower unemployment. While college graduation does not guarantee employment, it increases your chances of finding a job. In 2012, high school graduates had an unemployment rate of 12.4% as compared to college graduates who had an unemployment rate of 4.5%. Increase your chances of employment by continuing your education.

Young people who do not continue their education are likely to be stuck in lower-paying jobs, while those who continue their education will have higher-paying jobs. Author Joyce Lain Kennedy believes that the middle class is becoming an endangered species. She states that many jobs traditionally held by the middle class have been “dumbed down,” making them so simple that anyone can do them. These jobs pay very little and offer no benefits, no employment stability, and little opportunity for advancement. Young people often hold these jobs in their teens and twenties. At the other end of the job continuum are jobs requiring a college education or training beyond high school. These high-end jobs often require technical or computer skills. These are the jobs that pay better and offer benefits. It seems that we are becoming a nation of haves and have-nots who are separated by their education and technical skills.
Money is only one of the values of going to college. Can you think of other reasons to attend college? Here are some less tangible reasons.

- College helps you to develop your potential.
- College opens the door to many satisfying careers.
- College prepares you to be an informed citizen and fully participate in the democratic process.
- College increases your understanding and widens your view of the world.
- College allows you to participate in a conversation with the great minds of all times and places. For example, reading the work of Plato is like having a conversation with that famous philosopher. You can continue great conversations with your faculty and fellow students.
- College helps to increase your confidence, self-esteem, and self-respect.
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. Unclear or indefinite career goals are some of the most significant factors that identify students at risk of dropping out of college. Students often drop out or extend their stay in college because they are uncertain about their major or want to change their major. 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, learning style, 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. Here are some questions to answer to help you understand yourself and what career and major would be best for you.

To learn about yourself, explore these areas:

- **What is my personality type?** Assessing your personality type will help you to become more aware of your individual gifts and talents and some careers that will give you satisfaction.
- **What is my learning style?** Being aware of your learning style will help you identify learning strategies that work best for you and increase your productivity in college, on the job, and in your personal life.
- **What are my aptitudes?** Focus on your strengths by identifying your multiple intelligences.
- **What are my interests?** Knowing about your interests is important in choosing a satisfying career.
- **What kind of lifestyle do I prefer?** Think about how you want to balance work, leisure, and family.
- **What are my values?** Knowing what you value (what is most important to you) will help you make good decisions about your life.

To learn about career possibilities, research the following:

- **What careers match my personality, learning style, aptitudes, interests, lifestyle, and values?** Learn how to do career research to find the best career for you. Find a career that has a good outlook for the future.
**How can I plan my education to get the career I want?** Once you have identified a career that matches your personal strengths and interests, consult your college catalog or advisor to make an educational plan that matches your career goals.

By following the above steps, you can find the major that is best for you and minimize the time you spend in college.

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**Journal Entry #2**

Write a paragraph about deciding on your ideal major and career. Use any of these questions to guide your thinking: If you have chosen a major, why is it the best major for you? How does it match your interests, aptitudes, and values (what is most important to you)? Does this major help you to live your preferred lifestyle? If you have not chosen a major, what are some steps in choosing the right major and career? What qualities would you look for in an ideal career? Can you describe some of your interests, aptitudes, and values? What is your preferred lifestyle?

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**How to Be Motivated**

There are many ways to be motivated.

- You can **think positively about the future** and take the steps necessary to accomplish your goals.
- You can begin your studies by **looking for what is interesting** to you.
- You can **improve your concentration** and motivation for studying by managing your external and internal distractions.
- You can be motivated by internal or external factors called **intrinsic or extrinsic motivation**.
- You can become aware of your **locus of control**, or where you place the responsibility for control over your life. If you are in control, you are more likely to be motivated to succeed.
- You can join a club, organization, or athletic team. **Affiliation motivation** involves taking part in school activities that increase your motivation to stay in college.
- **Achievement** and competition are motivating to some students.
- You can **use rewards** as a motivation to establish desirable behaviors.

Let’s examine each type of motivation in more detail and see if some of these ideas can be useful to you.
Thinking Positively about the Future

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 in the past, you are likely to be optimistic about the future. If you struggled with your education, you may have some negative experiences that you will need to overcome. Negative thoughts can often become a self-fulfilling prophecy: what we think becomes true.

How can you train yourself to think more optimistically? First, become aware of your thought patterns. Are they mostly negative or positive? If they are negative, rewind the tape and make them more positive. Here is an example.

_Pessimism_

_I failed the test. I guess I am just not college material. I feel really stupid. I just can’t do this. College is too hard for me. My (teacher, father, mother, friend, boss) told me I would never make it. Maybe I should just drop out of college and do something else._

_Optimism_

_I failed the test. Let’s take a look at what went wrong, so I can do better next time. Did I study enough? Did I study the right material? Maybe I should take this a little slower. How can I get help so that I can understand? I plan to do better next time._

Can a person be too optimistic? In some circumstances, this is true. There is a difference between optimism and wishful thinking, for example. Wishful thinking does not include plans for accomplishing goals and can be a distraction from achieving them. Working toward unattainable goals can be exhausting and demoralizing, especially when the resources for attaining them are lacking. Goals must be realistic and achievable. Psychologists recommend that “people should be optimistic when the future can be changed by positive thinking, but not otherwise.” Using optimism requires some judgment about possible outcomes in the future.

There are some good reasons to think more positively. Psychologists have done long-term studies showing that people who use positive thinking have many benefits over a lifetime, including good health, longevity, happiness, perseverance, improved problem
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 (× 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.
Find Something Interesting in Your Studies

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.

Improving Your Concentration

Have you ever watched lion tamers concentrate? If their attention wanders, they are likely to become the lion’s dinner. Skilled athletes, musicians, and artists don’t have any trouble concentrating. They are motivated to concentrate. Think about a time when you were totally focused on what you were doing. You were motivated to continue. You can improve your concentration and motivation for studying by managing your external and internal distractions.

Manage your external environment. Your environment will either help you to study or distract you from studying. We are all creatures of habit. If you try to study in
front of the TV, you will watch TV because that is what you are accustomed to doing in front of the TV. If you study in bed, you will fall asleep because your body associates the bed with sleeping. If you study in the kitchen, you will eat. Find an environment that minimizes distractions. One idea is to study in the library. In the library, there are many cues that tell you to study. There are books and learning resources and other people studying. It will be easier to concentrate in that environment. You may be able to set up a learning environment in your home. Find a place where you can place a desk or table, your computer, and your materials for learning. When you are in this place, use it for learning and studying only.

Increase your concentration and motivation as well as your retention by varying the places where you study and the content of what you are studying. Study at home, in the library, outside, in a coffee shop or any place where you can focus your attention on your studies. You can also increase learning effectiveness by varying the content and subjects that you are studying. Athletes maintain concentration and motivation by including strength, speed and skill practice in each workout. Musicians practice scales, different musical pieces and rhythm exercises in one practice session. In your studies you can do the same. For example, when studying a foreign language, spend some time on reading, some time on learning vocabulary and some practice in speaking the language. Then do some problems for your math class.

**Manage your internal distractions.** Many of our distractions come from within. Here are some techniques for managing these internal distractions:

1. **Be here now.** Choose where you will place your attention. As I’m sure you have experienced, your body can be attending a lecture or at the desk reading, but your mind can be in lots of different and exciting places. You can tell yourself, “Be here now.” You cannot force yourself to pay attention. When your mind wanders, notice that you have drifted off and gently return your attention to your lecture or reading. This will take some practice, since attention tends to wander often.

2. **The spider technique.** If you hold a tuning fork to a spider web, the web vibrates and the spider senses that it has caught a tasty morsel and goes seeking the food. After a while, the spider discovers that there is no food and learns to ignore the vibrations caused by the tuning fork. When you are sitting in the library studying and someone walks in talking and laughing, you can choose to pay attention either to the distraction or to studying. Decide to continue to pay attention to studying.
3. **Set up a worry time.** Many times worries interfere with concentration. Some people have been successful in setting up a worry time. Here’s how it works:
   a. Set a specific time each day for worrying.
   b. When worries distract you from your studies, remind yourself that you have set aside time for worrying.
   c. Tell yourself, “Be here now.”
   d. Keep your worry appointment.
   e. During your worry time, try to find some solutions or take some steps to resolve the things that cause you to worry.

4. **Take steps to solve personal problems.** If you are bothered by personal problems, take steps to solve them. See your college counselor for assistance. Another strategy is to make a plan to deal with the problem later so that you can study now.

5. **Use the checkmark technique.** When you find yourself distracted from a lecture or from studying, place a checkmark on a piece of paper and refocus your attention on the task at hand. You will find that your checkmarks decrease over time.

6. **Increase your activity.** Take a break. Stretch and move. Read and listen actively by asking questions about the material and answering them as you read or listen.

7. **Find an incentive or reward.** Tell yourself that when you finish, you will do something enjoyable.

8. **Change topics.** Changing study topics may help you to concentrate and avoid fatigue.

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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.

The characteristics of students with internal and external loci 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.

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

Lou Holtz
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.

### 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>External</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Much of what happens to us is due to fate, chance, or luck.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Grades depend on how much work you put into it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. If I do badly on the test, it is usually because the teacher is unfair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. If I do badly on the test, it is because I didn't study or didn't understand the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. I often get blamed for things that are not my fault.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. I try to make the best of the situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. It is impossible to get a good grade if you have a bad instructor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. I can be successful through hard work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. If the teacher is not there telling me what to do, I have a hard time doing my work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. I can motivate myself to study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. If the teacher is boring, I probably won’t do well in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. I can find something interesting about each class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. When bad things are going to happen, there is not much you can do about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15. Teachers should motivate the students to study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16. I have a lot of choice about what happens in my life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
Affiliation

Human beings are social creatures who generally feel the need to be part of a group. This tendency is called affiliation motivation. People like to be part of a community, family, organization, or culture. You can apply this motivation technique in college by participating in student activities on campus. Join an athletic team, participate in a club, or join the student government. In this way, you will feel like you are part of a group and will have a sense of belonging. College is more than going to class: it is participating in social activities, making new friends, and sharing new ideas. Twenty years after you graduate from college, you are more likely to remember the conversations held with college friends than the detailed content of classes. College provides the opportunity to become part of a new group and to start lifelong friendships.

Achievement

Some students are motivated by achievement. Individuals who are achievement-motivated have a need for success in school, sports, careers, and other competitive situations. These individuals enjoy getting recognition for their success. They are often known as the best student, the outstanding athlete, or the employee of the year. These people are attracted to careers that provide rewards for individual achievement, such as sales, law, architecture, engineering, and business. They work hard in order to enjoy the rewards of their efforts. In college, some students work very hard to achieve high grades and then take pride in their accomplishments. One disadvantage of using this type of motivation is that it can lead to excess stress. These students often need to remember to balance their time between work, school, family, and leisure so that they do not become too stressed by the need to achieve.

Using a Reward

You can use rewards to manage your own behavior. If you want to increase your studying behavior, follow it by a positive consequence or a reward. Think about what is rewarding to you (watching TV, playing sports, enjoying your favorite music). You could study (your behavior) and then watch a TV program (the reward). The timing of your reward is important. To be effective, it must immediately follow the behavior. If you watch TV and then study, you may not get around to studying. If you watch the TV program tomorrow or next week, it is not a strong reinforcement because it is not an immediate reward.

Be careful about the kinds of rewards you use so that you do not get into habits that are detrimental to your health. If you use food as a reward for studying, you may increase...
Motivation

Test what you have learned by selecting the correct answers to the following questions:

1. 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.

2. For rewards to be effective, they must occur
   a. before the behavior.
   b. immediately after the behavior.
   c. either before or after the behavior.

3. Manage your internal distractions by
   a. forcing yourself to concentrate.
   b. telling yourself not to worry about your problems.
   c. noticing when your attention has wandered and choosing where you want to focus your attention.

4. To be successful in college, it is best to use
   a. intrinsic motivation.
   b. extrinsic motivation.
   c. an external locus of control.

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. a, 2. b, 3. c, 4. a, 5. c
Get Started, Get Healthy!

Being in good health is important for your success in learning as well as your quality of life. You can learn better if you get enough sleep, exercise, eat well and learn to relax. Getting a college education is also an investment in the quality of your life in the future. Enjoying this increased quality of life depends on maintaining your good health. Get started on your education by adopting some healthy patterns of living.

Get the Right Amount of Sleep

Getting the proper amount of sleep helps you to pay attention in class and remember what you have studied. College students often miss out on sleep while cramming for exams, enjoying an active social life, and trying to balance work and school. If you are sleep-deprived, it is more difficult to read, perform arithmetic tasks, study, store information in long-term memory and reason logically. Drinking caffeinated beverages will make you feel less sleepy, but your ability to pay attention and remember what you have studied is still reduced with lack of sleep.

Getting enough sleep is important for optimal brain function. Nobel Laureate Francis Crick, who studies the brain at the Salk Institute in California, has proposed that the purpose of sleep is to allow the brain to “take out the trash.” Sleep gives the brain time to process the day’s events, store what is needed, and delete irrelevant material. Sleep is necessary to properly store the experiences of each day in the brain. Without sleep, your ability to remember what you have studied is decreased. It is believed that sleeping helps the brain store needed information and to replenish its energy supplies.

Not getting enough sleep results in a decline in mental performance. Colonel Gregory Belenky of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research studied the effects of sleeplessness on military personnel. He found that mental performance declined by 25 percent in every 24-hour sleepless period. Another researcher found that being awake for 24 hours causes the same mental impairment as being drunk. After 24 hours of continuous simulated combat, artillery teams lost track of where they were and what they were firing at. During the Persian Gulf War, sleep-deprived soldiers lost a sense of where they were and began firing on their own tanks, destroying two of them. Lack of sleep impairs higher cognitive functions such as critical thinking. It becomes more difficult to make decisions, pay attention to detail, and react to new information. College students who stay up all night studying for exams suffer from the same declines in mental performance.

Depriving yourself of sleep also has negative impacts on your health. Lack of sleep can harm brain cells, weaken the immune system, and decrease muscle-building growth hormones.
It can lead to diabetes, hypertension and obesity. Blood levels of the stress hormone cortisol are increased. Sleep deprivation can cause increased stress and risk of illness as well as the growth of fat instead of muscle. Researchers are now finding evidence that lack of sleep hastens the aging process. Lack of sleep can make you less energetic, increase your irritability, cause depression, and make you accident-prone. It is estimated that sleepy drivers cause about 100,000 car accidents each year.

So, how much sleep do you need? Everyone has different needs for sleep. One way to determine your personal need for sleep is to think about how much sleep you get at the end of a long vacation when you do not have to get up at a certain time. At first you may sleep longer to make up for any sleep deficits. Toward the end of the vacation, you will probably be getting the amount of sleep your body needs for optimum performance. Gregory Belenky recommends, “If you simply want to put one foot in front of the other, five hours will do. But if you want to be doing things where you’re required to think, plan, or anticipate, then you probably need eight or eight and a half hours of sleep.” It is interesting to note that current research shows that it is not healthy to sleep more than eight hours because too much sleep can alter sleep patterns and lead to sluggishness, fatigue, and other health problems.

Get Some Exercise
Getting enough exercise has many benefits related to education and general health. It can help you to pay attention and improve memory. Improving your cardiovascular fitness increases the supply of oxygen and energy to the brain and keeps it healthy. Aerobic exercise even reduces your chances of getting Alzheimer’s disease by 60%. There are many additional benefits to regular physical activity:

- Increases your fitness, endurance, and strength
- Maintains healthy bones, muscles, and joints
- Helps in managing weight
- Lowers risk of cardiovascular disease, colon cancer, and Type 2 diabetes
- Promotes psychological well-being
- Reduces depression and anxiety

Two kinds of physical activity are recommended. Aerobic activity speeds up your heart rate and breathing and increases cardiovascular fitness. Strength and flexibility exercises such as lifting weights and stretching help to maintain strong bones. Choose activities that you enjoy and include them in your daily routine. It is important to remain active throughout your life. New federal guidelines suggest the need for 30 to 60 minutes of moderately intense physical activity each day. These activities could include an hour of walking, slow
swimming, leisurely bicycle riding, or golfing without a cart. More intense exercise such as jogging can provide needed exercise in a shorter time. Regular exercise is one of the most important factors in living a long and healthy life.

Eating Healthy

A good diet helps you to enjoy life and feel your best. Use the government dietary guidelines at http://www.choosemyplate.gov to make good nutritional choices. At this site you can enter your personal information for a customized recommendation of the types and amounts of food to eat for optimal health. The plate icon below provides a visual of the five different food groups with half of the plate filled with fruits and vegetables and the other half filled with whole grains and proteins.

Here are some suggestions for making healthy food choices:

- Eat a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains. Whole grains include brown rice, cracked wheat, graham flour, whole-grain corn, oatmeal, popcorn, barley, whole rye, and whole wheat. Whole grains provide vitamins, minerals, and fiber, which helps you to feel full with fewer calories.
- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables daily. Eating many kinds and colors of fruits and vegetables provides important vitamins and minerals. Enjoy five servings of fruits and vegetables each day with at least two servings of fruit and three servings of vegetables.
- Limit the use of solid fats such as butter, lard, margarines, and partially hydrogenated shortenings. Solid fats raise blood cholesterol and increase your chances of coronary heart disease. Use vegetable oils instead. Aim for a fat intake of no more that 30 percent of your calories.
- Moderate your intake of sugar. Foods containing added sugars have added calories and little nutritional value. The number one source of added sugar is soft drinks. Drink water instead of or in addition to soft drinks. Sweets, candies, pies, cakes, cookies, and fruit drinks are also major sources of added sugars. Eating too many foods with added sugar contributes to weight gain or eating less of the nutritious foods. Added sugar also contributes to tooth decay.
- Choose and prepare foods with less salt. Eating too much salt can increase your chances of having high blood pressure. High salt intake causes the body to secrete calcium, which is necessary for healthy bones. Only small amounts of salt occur naturally in foods. Most salt is added during food processing. Eat fresh fruits and vegetables to avoid eating too much salt.

Maintaining a healthy weight is one of the keys to a long and healthy life. Being overweight increases the risk of high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, arthritis, and breathing problems. The problem of overweight children and adults is a major health concern today. The best way to lose weight is by establishing patterns of healthy eating and exercise.
Body Mass Index

The Body Mass Index (BMI) is a commonly used method of evaluating a person’s weight. It is based on the ratio of weight to height. To calculate your BMI, first answer these two questions:

1. What is your height in inches? ________________________________

2. What is your weight in pounds? ______________________________

Calculate your BMI using the following formula:

\[ \text{BMI} = \frac{(705 \times \text{body weight})}{(\text{height} \times \text{height})} \]

Example: A person who is 66 inches tall and weighs 155 pounds:

\[ \text{BMI} = \frac{(705 \times 155)}{(66 \times 66)} = 25 \]

Calculate your BMI here. To evaluate your weight, locate your BMI in the chart below.

My BMI = \( \frac{(705 \times \text{my weight }\_\_\_)}{(\text{my height in inches }\_\_\_ \times \text{my height in inches }\_\_\_)} = \_\_\_ \)

Body Mass Index Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BMI</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 18.5</td>
<td>Underweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.5–24.9</td>
<td>Normal weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–29.9</td>
<td>Overweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 and above</td>
<td>Obese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are some exceptions to consider when using BMI to evaluate weight:

• Bodybuilders and other athletes may have a higher BMI because muscle weighs more than fat.
• For the elderly, a BMI between 25 and 27 may be healthier and protect against osteoporosis.
• The BMI is not designed to be used with children.

Another way to evaluate your weight is to simply measure around your waist. A measurement of over 35 inches for women or 40 inches for men places a person at greater risk of health problems. If your BMI is over 25 or your waist measurement increases, reduce calories and increase activity.

If you need to lose weight, you are not alone! Increasing numbers of adults in the United States are struggling with being overweight or obese. The Centers for Disease Control report that approximately 33 percent of adults are overweight and another 33 percent are obese. Being overweight is defined as having a BMI between 25 and 29.9. Obesity is defined as having a BMI of 30 or above. For example, a woman who is five feet four inches tall and weighs 180 pounds is considered obese. Maintaining your ideal weight is a matter of balancing calories in from food and beverages with calories expended through physical activity.
Here are some practical suggestions for losing weight if your BMI is over 25 and you are not an athlete:

- Stop drinking sodas. One out of every five calories consumed in the United States is from sodas, and they are the biggest contributors to obesity. Instead of drinking sodas, substitute water or unsweetened tea. Flavor your water with lemons, oranges, limes, strawberries, or mint. Be careful not to substitute sugary fruit juice, coffee, or tea for the sodas, since these drinks are often higher in calories.

- Exercise at least an hour to an hour and a half daily. Exercise is needed to burn the excess calories.

- Use the food pyramid to determine the number of calories needed to maintain your ideal weight. For example, the average 18-year-old female needs 2,000 calories a day. To lose weight, subtract 300 to 500 calories a day from this total.

- Eat five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Use these fruits and vegetables as snacks.

- To control hunger, eat several small meals of 300 to 400 calories each.

- Make sure to eat breakfast. Eating breakfast helps to provide energy and avoid hunger, which leads to overeating.

- Eat smaller portions. Use a salad plate instead of a dinner plate. When you eat out, save half of your food for another meal.

- Minimize eating out at fast-food restaurants, since it is difficult to make good food choices there.

- If you are sad or anxious, try exercise instead of eating to relieve these symptoms. Practice stress reduction techniques.

Learn to Relax

Too much stress interferes with learning and memory. Practice some physical and mental relaxation techniques to deal with stress. Here are a few suggestions:

- Listen to soothing music. Choose music that has a beat that is slower than your heart rate. Classical or New Age music can be very relaxing.

- Take a few deep breaths.

- Focus on your breathing. If you are thinking about breathing, it is difficult to think about your worries.

- Lie down in a comfortable place and tense and relax your muscles. Start with the muscles in your head and work your way down to your toes. Tense each muscle for five to 10 seconds and then release the tension completely.
• Imagine yourself in a pleasant place. When you are actually in a beautiful place, take the time to make a mental photograph. Memorize each detail and then close your eyes to see if you can still recall the scene. Return to this place in your mind when you feel stressed. Some people visualize the mountains, the beach, the ocean, a mountain stream, waterfalls, a tropical garden, or a desert scene. Choose a scene that works for you.
• Use positive thinking. Look for the good things in life and take the time to appreciate them.
• Maintain a healthy diet and get enough exercise.
• Practice yoga or tai chi.
• Keep things in perspective. Ask yourself, “Will it be important in 10 years?” If so, do something about it. If not, just relax.
• Focus on the positives. What have you learned from dealing with this problem? Has the problem provided an opportunity for personal growth?
• Discuss your feelings with a friend who is a good listener or get professional counseling.
• Keep your sense of humor. Laughter actually reduces the stress hormones.
• Maintain a support network of friends and loved ones.
• Practice meditation. It is a way of calming the mind.
• Get a massage or give one to someone else.
• Visit Health Services at your college for more help in dealing with excessive stress.

**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.

“Habits are first cobwebs, then cables.”

Spanish Proverb

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

Aristotle
Journal Entry #4

Write a paragraph with at least three ideas about how you can motivate yourself to be successful in college. Use any of the following questions to think about your answer: How can you use positive thinking to be successful? How can you find something interesting in your studies? How can you improve your concentration? What are your intrinsic motivators for attending college? Remember that intrinsic motivators are those activities that you do because you enjoy them or they are personally meaningful to you. What are some extrinsic motivators? Are you motivated by money or achievement? How can you use the concept of locus of control to improve your chances of success in college? Do you believe that you create your own success? What are some rewards you can use to increase your positive behavior? How can being healthy improve attention and memory?

Health

Test what you have learned by selecting the correct answers to the following questions.

1. If you do not sleep for 24 hours, your mental performance decreases by:
   a. 50%
   b. 25%
   c. 10%

2. Exercise is important because:
   a. It increases the supply of oxygen and energy to the brain
   b. It helps you to relax
   c. All of the above

3. If you are not an athlete and your BMI is over 25, it is probably a good idea to:
   a. Severely limit caloric intake.
   b. Go on a diet that limits food choices.
   c. Reduce calories and increase activities.

4. It is suggested that two-thirds of the dinner plate be covered with:
   a. Potatoes
   b. Plant foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans
   c. Meats, fish, or poultry

5. Learn to relax by:
   a. Focusing on the negatives so you can improve
   b. Imagining the worst
   c. Asking yourself, “Will it be important in 10 years?”

How did you do on the quiz? Check your answers: 1. b, 2. c, 3. c, 4. b, 5. c
Seven 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 one hour 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. 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.
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. Starting your college education will require you to establish some new habits to be successful.
Getting Started

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.

You will face difficulties along the way in any worthwhile venture. The successful person keeps on trying. There are some precautions about persistence, however. Make sure that the goal you are trying to reach is attainable and valuable to you. As you learn more about yourself, you may want to change your goals. Also, persistence can be misguided if it involves other people. For example, if you decide that you want to marry someone and this someone does not want to marry you, it is better to focus your energy and attention on a different goal.

One of the best ways to be persistent is to accomplish your goals one step at a time. If you look at a mountain, it may seem too high to climb, but you can do it one step at a time. Araceli Segarra became the first Spanish woman to climb Mount Everest. At 29,028 feet, Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world. It is so high that you need an oxygen tank to breathe at the top. So how did Araceli climb the mountain? She says that it took strength and concentration. She put one foot...
in front of the other. When she was near the top of the mountain, she was more tired than she had ever been in her life. She told herself that she would take 10 more steps. When she had taken 10 steps, she said, “I’m OK. I made it.” Then she took 10 more steps until she reached the top of the mountain.

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.

**JOURNAL ENTRIES**

**Understanding Motivation**


**Success over the Internet**

Visit the College Success Website at http://www.collegesuccess1.com/

The College Success Website is continually updated with new topics and links to the material presented in this chapter. Topics include:

- How to improve concentration
- Motivation
- Positive attitude
- Balancing work, school, and social life
- Success factors for new college students
- How to change a habit
- Dealing with cravings and urges

Contact your instructor if you have any problems accessing the College Success Website.
Notes

19. Ibid.
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

____  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 understand how my health impacts attention and learning.
____  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 Getting Started

____  I can describe my personality type.
____  I can list careers that match my personality type.
____  I can describe my personal strengths and talents based on my personality type.
____  I understand how my personality type affects how I manage my time and money.
____  I know what college majors are most in demand.
____  I am confident that I have chosen the best major for myself.
____  Courses related to my major are interesting and exciting to me.

____  Total points for Personality and Major
I can describe my learning style.
I can list study techniques that match my learning style.
I understand how my personality affects my learning style.
I understand the connection between learning and teaching style.
I understand the concept of multiple intelligences.
I can list my multiple intelligences.
I create my own success.

Total points for Learning Style and Intelligence

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 know memory techniques and can apply them to my college studies.
I can read a college textbook and remember the important points.
I know how to effectively mark a college textbook.
I can quickly survey a college text and select the main ideas.
I generally have good reading comprehension.
I can concentrate on the material I am reading.
I am confident in my ability to read and remember college-level material.

Total points for Memory and Reading

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

Chapter 1
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 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.

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 points for Future**

**Total your points:**

- Getting Started
- Personality and Major
- Learning Style and Intelligence
- Managing Time and Money
- Memory and Reading
- Taking Notes, Writing, and Speaking
- Test Taking

**Grand total points**
If you scored

253–280  You are very confident of your skills for success in college. Maybe you do not need this class?

225–252  You have good skills for success in college. You can always improve.

197–224  You have average skills for success in college. You will definitely benefit from taking this course.

Below 196  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.
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?
Justin
It is the first day of class in the college success course. Justin is feeling excited and a little apprehensive as he walks into the class on the first day. He wonders if this is the right course for him. He managed to be successful in high school without much effort and thinks that college should be the same. His college advisor has recommended the course for all new students. He thinks that this course should be at least an easy A grade and it is not too important to attend every class. Justin has just graduated from high school and is looking forward to more freedom and independence. Justin has just been employed at a local sporting goods store. He is enjoying the job and the extra spending money. He started out working on Saturday only, but has now agreed to work 30 hours a week so that he can buy a new truck. School is not one of his top priorities, but his parents are insisting that he attend college so that he can get a better job in the future. How can Justin motivate himself to be successful in this course?
Anna

Anna walks into the classroom on the first day with a great deal of anxiety. She is returning to school 15 years after her high school graduation. Her children are getting a little older and she has decided to return to school to finish that degree that she has always wanted. Although having a college degree has been a lifelong dream of hers, she is uncertain about which major would be best. She is hoping to choose a major that leads to a well-paying job so that she can help her children with college expenses in the near future. She has a busy family life and is not sure how to add all the college activities to her schedule. The college success course seems like a good place to start. She looks around the classroom, notices that she is one of the older students in class, and hopes she can keep up with the younger students who have just graduated from high school. What steps can Anna take to be successful in this course?
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
To understand myself
To learn how to think
To enjoy what I do for a living
To reach my potential
Because my parents want me to get a degree
For my own personal satisfaction
To make a difference in other people's lives
To have a position of power
To have respect
To have prestige
To have time and money for travel
To acquire knowledge
To travel
To have knowledge

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. ________________________________  4. ________________________________
2. ________________________________  5. ________________________________
3. ________________________________  6. ________________________________
Roadblocks and Pathways to Success

Name ________________________________ Date ____________

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.

_____ Too much work       _____ Family obligations       _____ Lack of study skills
_____ Financial difficulties       _____ Social life       _____ Using time wisely
_____ Lack of confidence       _____ Computer games       _____ Speaking in class
_____ Difficulty with reading       _____ Social media       _____ Negative thinking
_____ Difficulty with writing       _____ Phone use and texting       _____ Lack of motivation
_____ Difficulty with math       _____ Lack of career goals       _____ Learning disabilities
_____ Difficulty with tests       _____ Dislike of homework       _____ Lack of persistence
_____ Difficulty with memory       _____ Dislike of school       _____ 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?
### How Healthy Is Your Diet?

Name ___________________________________________ Date _____________

Use the following worksheet to analyze your diet. This plan is based on 2,000 calories. Go to www.choosemyplate.gov/ to find your individualized recommendations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Groups</th>
<th>Recommended</th>
<th>List Actual Food Choices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grains</td>
<td>6 ounce equivalents (1 ounce equivalent is about 1 slice of bread, 1 cup dry cereal, or ½ cup rice or pasta)</td>
<td>How many ounces?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>2½ cups (Includes dark green, orange, starchy, dry beans and peas, and other veggies)</td>
<td>How many cups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>2 cups</td>
<td>How many cups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oils</td>
<td>6 teaspoons</td>
<td>How many teaspoons?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>3 cups (1½ ounces of cheese = 1 cup milk, a large pizza contains 16 ounces of cheese)</td>
<td>How many cups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat and Beans</td>
<td>5.5 ounces (1 ounce equivalent is 1 ounce of meat, poultry or fish, 1 tablespoon peanut butter, ½ ounce nuts, ¼ ounce dry beans or peas)</td>
<td>How many ounces?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discretionary Calories</td>
<td>100–300 calories</td>
<td>List foods high in fat or sugar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. How much do you exercise daily outside of your daily routine?
2. Compare your results to the recommended dietary guidelines. What did you discover?

3. What changes will you make as a result of this exercise?
What Is Your Stress Index?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Do you frequently:

1. Neglect your diet?  
2. Try to do everything yourself?  
3. Blow up easily?  
4. Seek unrealistic goals?  
5. Fail to see the humor in situations others find funny?  
6. Act rude?  
7. Make a big deal out of everything?  
8. Look to other people to make things happen?  
9. Have difficulty making decisions?  
10. Complain you are disorganized?  
11. Avoid people whose ideas are different from your own?  
12. Keep everything inside?  
13. Neglect exercise?  
14. Have only a few supportive relationships?  
15. Use psychoactive drugs, such as sleeping pills and tranquilizers, without physician approval?  
16. Get too little rest?  
17. Get angry when you are kept waiting?  
18. Ignore stress symptoms?  
19. Procrastinate?  
20. Think there is only one right way to do something?  
21. Fail to build in relaxation time?  
22. Gossip?  
23. Race through the day?  
24. Spend a lot of time lamenting the past?  
25. Fail to get a break from noise and crowds?

*From Andrew Slaby, *Sixty Ways to Make Stress Work for You.*
Score 1 for each yes answer and 0 for each no. Total score: ____________

1–6  There are a few hassles in your life. Make sure, though, that you aren’t trying so hard to avoid problems that you shy away from challenges.

7–13  You’ve got your life in pretty good control. Work on the choices and habits that could still be causing some unnecessary stress in your life.

14–20  You’re approaching the danger zone. You may well be suffering stress-related symptoms and your relationships could be strained. Think carefully about choices you’ve made and take relaxation breaks each day.

Above 20  Emergency! You must stop now, rethink how you are living, change your attitudes, and pay scrupulous attention to your diet, exercise, and relaxation programs.
How to Change a Habit

Name __________________________________________ Date ____________

The following exercise will help you to practice the process of beginning successful new habits. Choose one of these simple 10-day projects:

• Monitor how many minutes you study each day.
• Monitor how many minutes you exercise each day.
• Monitor how you spend your money each day. Write down all your expenditures.
• Make a goal of eating breakfast. Write down what you eat for breakfast each day.
• Keep a list of the fruits and vegetables you eat each day.
• Count how many sodas you drink each day.
• Keep a log of time you sleep each night and make a note of how rested you feel the next day.
• Make a goal of making your bed or picking up your clothes. Record your progress each day.
• You can choose another behavior as long as it is realistic and achievable. You must be able to count it or describe the outcome. Consult with your instructor if you choose this option.

1. First, state the problem. Describe the behavior you want to change. What are your roadblocks or obstacles?

For example: I get stressed when I run out of money before my next paycheck. I would like to manage my money better. One obstacle is my attitude that if I have money, I can spend it.

2. Choose one small behavior at a time. If you can change one small behavior, you can gain the confidence to change another.

For example: A goal like improving money management is broad and vague. A good way to begin is to choose a small first step. A good first step is to keep track of expenditures so that you can begin to understand how you spend your money. The projects listed earlier are examples of small behaviors. If you are working on a different project, is it a small behavior that can be counted and one that can realistically be accomplished? List the small behavior that you will use for this project.
3. State in a positive way the behavior you wish to establish.

*For example:* Instead of saying, “I will not spend all of my money before payday,” say, “I will keep a money monitor for 10 days.” Of course, the next step would be to work on a budget. If necessary, rewrite your goal in a positive way.

4. Count the behavior. Sometimes just becoming aware of your habit is enough to begin making some changes.

*For example:* For the next 10 days, I will write down all my expenditures.

5. Picture in your mind the actions you might take to accomplish your goal and write them down in the following space.

*For example:* I see myself writing down all my expenses on a sheet of paper. I will do this each day so that I can find out where I spend my money and begin to manage my money better. I see myself less stressed because I will have money for the things I need.

6. What reward will you use to reinforce the behavior? Rewards are most effective if they directly follow the behavior you wish to reinforce. Remember that good rewards do not have too many calories, cost too much money, or involve alcohol or drugs. List your rewards.

7. Practice the behavior for 10 days. The first three days are the most difficult. 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. Use the space below or a separate sheet of paper to count how many times you did the behavior each day and what happened. Remember, you can get started on a new habit in 10 days, but you will need to continue for about a month to firmly establish your new pattern of behavior.
How did this project work for you?
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?