

CHRISTINE HARRINGTON

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# Student SUCCESS

IN COLLEGE



*Doing What Works!*

RESEARCH-BASED STRATEGIES FOR YOUR  
ACADEMIC AND CAREER SUCCESS

Moving beyond advice, *Student Success in College: Doing What Works!* provides effective student success strategies that are based on learning and motivational theories and original research studies. While learning about how to read and use scholarly sources, students build the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to be successful in college.

### **Moving Beyond Advice: Student Success Strategies Based in Research**

Success strategies are based on research, with citations included.

Exploring the Research in Summary feature provides summaries of student success research studies.



### **Practicing Process Skills: How to Read and Use Scholarly Sources**

Chapter 1 introduces and provides strategies for the process of reading peer-reviewed journal articles.

Exploring the Research in Depth feature in every chapter provides original peer-reviewed journal articles to work through.



### **Developing High-Level Skills: Reading, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy Skills**

Exploring the Research in Depth feature walks students through the steps to build these skills.

Peer-reviewed journal articles provide an opportunity to practice building reading, critical thinking, and information literacy skills.



### **Increasing Self-Efficacy and Motivation: Support to Do What Works!**

Extensive practice retrieval options via Quick Quizzes and MindTap.

Chapter Summary Note-Taking Models and Exploring the Research with the Author walkthroughs support students' understanding.

THIRD EDITION

# Student Success in College

DOING WHAT WORKS!

CHRISTINE HARRINGTON

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# Preface

## What Makes Student Success in College: Doing What Works! Unique?

### An Academically Rigorous, Research-Based Approach

- Research-Based Strategies
- Original Research Studies: Students Learn How to Read Scholarly Sources



### Just Seven Chapters Allows for Meaningful Exploration of Success Strategies

- More Time to Dive Deep into the Content
- Build Essential Information Literacy and Critical Thinking Skills



### A Guided Pathways Framework That Helps Students Choose a Career Pathway

- Extensive Coverage of Career Theories and Exploration Process
- Academic, Financial, and Career Planning



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Christine Harrington is serving as the executive director of the New Jersey Center for Student Success at the New Jersey Council of County Colleges on a two-year term. In this position, she uses a guided pathways framework to increase successful experiences and outcomes at all 19 community colleges in New Jersey. Previously, Dr. Harrington has worked at Middlesex County College for 16 years as a professor of psychology, student success course coordinator, director of the Center for the Enrichment of Learning and Teaching, counselor, and disability service provider. Dr. Harrington was the 2016 recipient of the Excellence in Teaching First-Year Seminars award that was presented at the annual First-Year Experience conference. She also teaches graduate courses on teaching and learning at Rutgers University. Dr. Harrington frequently shares her expertise and passion about teaching, learning, and student success at national and local conferences as well as at colleges and universities across the United States. She is also the author of *Dynamic Lecturing: Research-based Strategies to Enhance Lecture Effectiveness*.



Tom Peterson

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Thanks to Tom Peterson and Suzanne LoPorto for their incredible photographs in this text, and to the many students who appear in them. I would also like to thank Ryan Harrington and Aditya Shah for developing the index.

My students have always been, and will continue to be, a source of inspiration, but it is difficult to describe the positive feeling I experience when students share how this book has helped them achieve their goals. I am tremendously grateful for the positive feedback about the book as well as their suggestions about how to improve it. I am also thankful to the many reviewers whose feedback was incredibly valuable and helped strengthen this text.



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## An Academically Rigorous, Research-Based Approach

### ● Research-Based Strategies

- Moving beyond advice, *Student Success in College: Doing What Works!* provides students with research-based strategies so that they can “Do What Works!” and successfully achieve their goals.
- There are nearly 400 references, most from original research studies.

### ● Exploring the Research in Summary

- Every chapter begins with a summary of a research study on a related chapter topic.
- This research article serves as a visual reminder that the strategies shared are based on research.
- Research article summaries can also be a great way to engage students with the chapter content.

### ● Learning How to Read and Use Peer-Reviewed Research

- In Chapter 1, students will learn about peer-reviewed research, the different parts or elements of research studies, and how professionals read peer-reviewed research so that students feel confident in their ability to use and apply research.

### ● Original Research Studies: Exploring the Research in Depth

In the appendix, students will find numerous original research studies. Prior to each study, students will be guided through a four-step process:

- Engaging via prediction
- Reading for key points
- Critically thinking about the research
- Building information literacy skills

## Just Seven Chapters Allows for Meaningful Exploration of Success Strategies

### ● No Need to Rush

- Instead of rushing through a chapter or more each week during a 15- to 16-week term, instructors can spend up to two weeks on each chapter.
- In a seven- to eight-week term, instructors can still spend a full week on each chapter.
- Research shows that learning is more likely when we really engage with the content, which is achievable with the seven-chapter approach used in *Student Success in College: Doing What Works!*



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### ● In-Depth Coverage of Content

- Rather than bringing just surface-level coverage of every possible success topic, the seven-chapter approach in *Student Success in College: Doing What Works!* allows instructors and students to deeply explore the most essential success strategies:
  - Chapter 1: Value of education, decision-making, information literacy, and critical thinking
  - Chapter 2: Goals and career exploration
  - Chapter 3: Academic skills: Memory, reading, note-taking, and study strategies
  - Chapter 4: Soft skills: Professionalism, time and project management, interpersonal skills, and leadership
  - Chapter 5: Academic integrity, papers, presentations, and tests
  - Chapter 6: Academic, career, and financial planning
  - Chapter 7: Reflecting on progress, staying motivated, managing stress, and being resilient and developing grit

- **Flexibility**
  - Having only seven chapters allows time for instructors and students to introduce other topics, especially institution-specific content, that are deemed important without sacrificing learning of key success strategies.
- **Increased Opportunity for Critical Thinking and Information Literacy**
  - There's more time to deeply explore the research on success strategies using the original studies provided at the end of the book or students can search the library databases for additional research on topics of interest.



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## A Guided Pathways Framework That Helps Students Choose a Career Pathway

- **Setting Effective Career and Academic Goals Using the ABCS Goal-Setting Framework**
  - A research-based alternative to SMART goals, the ABCS approach to goal setting helps students set and monitor progress toward goals.
    - Aim high
    - Believe in yourself
    - Care and commit
    - Specify and self-reflect
- **Mapping Your Path to Success: Academic, Financial, and Career Plans**
  - While engaging in self-assessment and finding career information are important parts of the career planning process, *Student Success in College: Doing What Works!* goes above and beyond, bringing theory and research related to the career exploration process into practice. For example, students also learn how to:
    - Expand and strengthen their network
    - Create a professional presence
    - Choose courses and academic experiences that help them achieve their goal in a timely fashion
    - Understand the long-term financial implications of their choices today
    - Develop the following soft skills that are needed in most, if not all, careers: professionalism, time and project management, interpersonal skills, and leadership skills
- **Staying on Track**
  - Recognizing that life can sometimes get us off track, *Student Success in College: Doing What Works!* focuses on how to reflect on progress and make changes as needed, stay motivated, manage stress, be resilient, and develop grit.

## How This Text Benefits Students

### Choose a career pathway and related major

- Learn about ways to set goals, drive decision-making, and choose a path.
- Create an academic and career plan and get on track to a successful future early.

### Practice success strategies

- Discover and practice key strategies that will be useful to get a degree, land a position aligned to your interests, and advance in your career.
- Use the end-of-chapter note-taking methods to focus on most important concepts and learn success strategies.
- Hone numerous soft skills that transfer to work, school, and life.
- Test knowledge with Quick Quizzes as a powerful way to study and learn.
- Author and student videos in MindTap help improve reading comprehension.
- Build information literacy skills by learning how to read and analyze peer-reviewed research articles and determine credible sources.
- Build critical thinking skills to use in conversation, courses, and meetings.

### Monitor your progress

- With MindTap, easily see grades and track progress over the term.
- Assignments and assessments build knowledge and help you determine how well you are learning the course content.

## How This Text Benefits Instructors

### Keep students engaged in class and online with author-created resources

- The Instructor Manual contains assignments, in-person activities, and online discussion boards that align to learning outcomes.
- Visually effective PowerPoint slides can be modified to fit your needs.
- Multimedia integration and customizability of MindTap offer endless possibilities for enriching learning with informative and engaging activities.

### Test student knowledge

- A robust test bank of 100 questions for each chapter can be used within MindTap, your LMS, or be printed for in-class use.
- Quick Quizzes are placed throughout the text.



## Track student progress

- The MindTap Progress App, or gradebook, offers tools to track student progress on assignments, grade activities, and map student engagement in the course.
- Offers individualized support to students based on their assessment results and engagement level.

## Train faculty to achieve course learning outcomes

- Recognizing faculty development needs, *Student Success in College: Doing What Works!* comes with numerous teaching demonstration videos that can be used to train new faculty.
- Sample syllabi can be customized to match course goals.

## What's New in the Third Edition?

- Improved organization and flow focuses first on helping students with determining their path to success, then building skills and strategies for success, and finally on developing plans and perseverance
- Revised organization aligned to guided pathways
- Increased career, academic, and financial planning coverage
- New chapter on soft skills
  - Professionalism
  - Time and project management
  - Interpersonal skills including communication, conflict management, emotional intelligence, teamwork and collaboration, and diversity and cultural competence
  - Leadership
- Increased focus on information literacy
- More Quick Quizzes to maximize student learning via the testing effect
- Updated research—Over 125 new references, mostly from original research studies
- Each chapter now begins with the Exploring the Research in Summary feature, keeping the research behind the strategies front and center for students
- Exploring the Research in Depth articles have been moved to an appendix, so they're centrally located and improve the flow within each chapter
- MindTap for *Student Success in College: Doing What Works!* has additional enhancements
  - Activities, known as Time for Actions in the previous edition, are now exclusively in MindTap to provide a consistent experience for students, who can then save and print their responses
  - Assessments have been digitized and moved exclusively into MindTap for ease of scoring and interpretation
  - An instructor resource center has been added, which includes content such as additional videos

## Side-by-Side Comparison of Second and Third Editions

Second Edition	Third Edition
	<p>Introduction: Getting Started</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College Expectations: Getting a Strong Start (moved from Chapter 1 plus new content on campus and community resources)</li> <li>• Value of the First-Year Seminar Course (moved from Chapter 1; 7 Smart Success Strategies now called Success Strategies at a Glance)</li> </ul>
<p>Chapter 1: College Expectations: Being a Critical Thinker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You've Made the Right Decision (still in Chapter 1)</li> <li>• Faculty Expectations (moved to Introduction)</li> <li>• Critical Thinking (still in Chapter 1)</li> <li>• Active Reading (moved to Chapter 3)</li> <li>• Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles (still in Chapter 1)</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 1: Discovering the Value of Education and Sharpening Key Thinking Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value of College Education (new focus on purpose and societal value)</li> <li>• Decision-Making (moved from Chapter 7)</li> <li>• Information Literacy (new section with some content from Chapter 4; includes Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles)</li> <li>• Critical Thinking</li> </ul>
<p>Chapter 2: Skills You Need: Memory, Note-Taking, and Studying Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Memory Works (moved to Chapter 3)</li> <li>• Note-Taking: Our Only Hope (moved to Chapter 3)</li> <li>• Studying Approaches That Work (moved to Chapter 3)</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 2: Setting Goals and Choosing a Career Path</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting Goals (moved from Chapter 3)</li> <li>• Career Exploration and Decision-Making (moved from Chapter 7 with new content on career indecision and how we make career decisions)</li> </ul>
<p>Chapter 3: Setting Effective Goals and Making the Most of Your Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power of Long- and Short-Term Goals (moved to Chapter 2)</li> <li>• The ABCS of Setting and Implementing Effective Goals (moved to Chapter 2)</li> <li>• Celebrating Progress and Achievement (moved to Chapter 7)</li> <li>• Time Management (moved to Chapter 4)</li> <li>• Organizational Tools (moved to Chapter 4)</li> <li>• Avoid Multitasking: Single-Task It! (moved to Chapter 4)</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 3: Building Academic Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Memory Works (moved from Chapter 2)</li> <li>• Active Reading Strategies (moved from Chapter 1 plus new content on prior knowledge)</li> <li>• Note-Taking (moved from Chapter 2)</li> <li>• Study Strategies (moved from Chapter 2 plus an increased focus on teaching to learn)</li> </ul>
<p>Chapter 4: It's Show Time: Papers, Presentations, and Tests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Integrity (moved to Chapter 5)</li> <li>• Papers and Presentations (moved to Chapter 5)</li> <li>• Test-Taking Strategies (moved to Chapter 5)</li> <li>• Group Projects (still in Chapter 4)</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 4: Strengthening Soft Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New chapter</li> <li>• What Are Soft Skills? (new content)</li> <li>• Professionalism (new content)</li> <li>• Time and Project Management (moved from Chapter 3 plus new content)</li> <li>• Interpersonal Skills (moved from Chapter 4 plus new content on communication, conflict management, teamwork and collaboration, and diversity and cultural competence)</li> <li>• Leadership (new content)</li> </ul>

Second Edition	Third Edition
<p>Chapter 5: Motivation, Resilience, and Stress Management: Strategies for When College and Life Get Challenging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation (moved to Chapter 7)</li> <li>• Resilience (moved to Chapter 7)</li> <li>• Stress Management (moved to Chapter 7)</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 5: Demonstrating Knowledge and Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose of Academic Tasks (new content)</li> <li>• Academic Integrity (moved from Chapters 1 and 4)</li> <li>• Papers and Presentations (moved from Chapter 4)</li> <li>• Tests (moved from Chapter 4)</li> </ul>
<p>Chapter 6: How Are You Doing? Maximizing Learning via Self-Reflection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Academic Self-Regulation Process (moved to Chapter 7)</li> <li>• The Accuracy of Self-Assessments (moved to Chapter 7)</li> <li>• Making Mistakes: The Role of Attribution Theory (moved to Chapter 7)</li> <li>• Self-Reflection Techniques (moved to chapter 7)</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 6: Mapping Your Path to Success: Plans and Action Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating an Academic Plan (moved from Chapter 7 plus new content on double majors and connecting with your advisor)</li> <li>• Career Planning: Discovering the Power of Networking (new content on networking, elevator speech, expanding and strengthening your network and job search tips; plus creating a professional presence content moved from Chapter 7)</li> <li>• Financial Planning (new content on financing your education, return on investment, and financial planning and budgeting; plus establishing good credit moved from Chapter 7)</li> </ul>
<p>Chapter 7: Making Good Academic, Career, and Financial Decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Decision-Making Process (moved to Chapter 1)</li> <li>• Academic Options (moved to Chapter 6)</li> <li>• Career Decision-Making (moved to Chapter 2)</li> <li>• Financial Decisions (moved to Chapter 6)</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 7: Staying on Track and Celebrating Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflecting on Progress (moved from Chapter 6)</li> <li>• Staying Motivated (moved from Chapter 5)</li> <li>• Managing Stress (moved from Chapter 5)</li> <li>• Being Resilient and Developing Grit (moved from Chapter 5 plus new content on grit)</li> <li>• Celebrating Success (moved from Chapter 3)</li> </ul>
	<p>Research in Depth Appendix</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research in Depth articles moved to an appendix at the end of the text</li> <li>• New Research Articles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travis, T. (2011). From the classroom to the boardroom: The impact of information literacy instruction on workplace research skills. <i>Education Libraries</i>, 34(2), 19–31. Retrieved from ERIC database.</li> <li>• Deepa, S., &amp; Seth, M. (2013). Do soft skills matter? Implications for educators based on recruiters' perspective. <i>IUP Journal of Soft Skills</i>, 7(1), 7–20. Retrieved from Business Source Elite.</li> <li>• Oliver, J., &amp; Kowalczyk, C. (2013). Improving student group marketing presentations: A modified Pecha Kucha approach. <i>Marketing Education Review</i>, 23(1), 55–58. doi:10.2753/MER1052-8008230109</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



Tom Peterson

# PART 1

## DETERMINING YOUR PATH TO SUCCESS:

**Introduction:** Getting Started

**Chapter 1:** Discovering the Value of Education and  
Sharpening Key Thinking Skills

**Chapter 2:** Setting Goals and Choosing a Career Path



# Introduction: Getting Started



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- 1** What are some of the differences between high school and college?
- 2** Why is the syllabus so important?
- 3** How can you find out what resources are available to you as a college student?
- 4** What does the research say about the first-year seminar course?
- 5** Why is it important to learn about research-based success strategies?

## College Expectations: Getting a Strong Start



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Learning about what is expected of college students, the differences between high school and college, and the importance of resources such as the syllabus will help you get off to the right start in college. As you know, college is quite different than high school. For starters, the schedule is significantly different, with some courses meeting only once or twice per week and classes often being longer in duration. A typical full-time college student is in class only for approximately 15–20 hours per week. However, college students are expected to engage in significant learning outside of the classroom. Most student success professionals and faculty recommend spending approximately 2–3 hours outside of class learning and studying for every hour you spend in class. Thus, if you are a full-time college student, a general rule of thumb is to plan to spend at least 30 hours per week engaged in studying behaviors outside of class. Keep in mind that the actual time needed for studying may vary from student to student and perhaps even from semester to semester based on factors such as how much you already know about a subject, the difficulty of the subject, and the nature of the assignments and tasks.


In college, you will have the opportunity to deeply engage with the content and complete tasks that will help you further develop high-level skills such as critical thinking. Take full advantage of these learning opportunities by:

- Taking time to fully understand what is expected of you
- Using research-based success strategies
- Putting high levels of effort into these tasks
- Knowing what resources are available to you and using these resources as needed

### The Syllabus


The syllabus is an important resource that will help you understand what is expected of you (see Sample Syllabus Figure). The syllabus is typically posted in the course's learning management system or distributed on the first day of class. It provides you with an overview of the course, including a course description, contact information for your professor, resources you'll need, and the course learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are what your professors expect you to be able to know, think, or do as a result of taking the course. The learning outcomes are incredibly important because they capture the purpose of the course. When you look at your course learning outcomes, you'll discover that your professors are going to expect you to do much more than just memorize information; you will also need to think critically about different disciplines and create a variety of high-level academic products. Focusing on what you will be learning will help you meet with success.

## Welcome to Pathways to Success!



**FYS 100**

This course is designated to help you explore career options, set meaningful academic and career goals, develop essential skills such as information literacy and critical thinking skills, and engage in academic behaviors and study strategies that will help you meet with success.




**Please reach out to me!**

You are on the road to success! I am here to support your journey. In addition to getting to know one another during class, we will also have individual meetings outside of class. Please visit me often

**Dr. Christine Harrington**  
charrington@njccc.org

What book and other materials do I need?



**Texts:** *Student Success in College: Doing What Works!* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Cengage Learning

**Articles and Websites:** Several additional resources will be used. These will be posted in the Learning Management System.

### What is this course all about?


**Learning Outcomes:**

You will develop a higher sense of self-efficacy by:

1. Identifying and utilizing strategies and resources that promote academic success, personal growth, and resilience.
2. Demonstrating critical thinking, information literacy, and technological skills.
3. Practicing interpersonal and leadership skills essential in a diverse, global society.
4. Reflecting on values, goals, decisions, and actions in relation to their impact on self and others.
5. Creating academic, career and financial plans.

**Course Content Areas**

- Career exploration and academic planning
- Purpose and structure of higher education
- Goal setting
- Decision making, critical thinking and information literacy
- Grit and resilience
- Self-reflection
- Study strategies
- Financial literacy



What can I expect to happen during class?

In order to learn, you'll need to be actively involved and engaged with the course content so you can expect this semester to be filled with lively discussions, activities, and challenging assignments. Because we learn best when engaged with others, you will work with a partner or small group almost every class period.

## SAMPLE SYLLABUS FIGURE

### EXAMPLE OF A COURSE SYLLABUS

The syllabus also contains information about assignments and learning activities. Completing these tasks will help you achieve the course learning goals. To help you better understand expectations for assignments, your professors will often include detailed information about the assignment or rubrics in the syllabus. Rubrics are tools used to provide students with specific information about expectations related to the assignment, showing what you will need to do in order to earn a high grade and successfully accomplish the task. Rubrics are also used by professors during the grading process.

The syllabus will also provide you with information about how much each assignment counts toward the final grade. This refers to weighting. Different assignments are often weighted differently. For example, exams are typically weighted more heavily than quizzes, meaning exams count more than quizzes toward your final grade. To calculate your final grade, you will need to know the weighting for each category of assignments (i.e., quizzes, lab reports, exams, etc.) and how many of each type of assignment you will need to do throughout the semester. Many learning management systems automatically calculate your grade, but if this is not the case, you can use a grade calculator app for this purpose. Take a look at Grade Calculation Examples Table to see how weighting can impact your final grade.

Another key feature of the syllabus is the course outline; the course outline will provide you with a calendar for the course. It will include information about when topics will be addressed and due dates for assignments. As soon as you get copies



### GRADE CALCULATION EXAMPLES TABLE

#### Grade Calculation Example 1

Assignment	Grade Earned	Percentage toward Final Grade	<b>Final Grade in Course: 87% B+</b>
Research paper	90	60	
Quizzes	70 70 70 70	10	
Final exam	86	30	

#### Grade Calculation Example 2

Assignment	Grade Earned	Percentage toward Final Grade	<b>Final Grade in Course: 79% C+</b>
Research paper	90	15	
Quizzes	70 70 70 70	45	
Final exam	86	40	

This table provides two grade calculation examples, demonstrating how the weighting of different assignment types results in different final grades.

of all of your syllabi, transfer the course calendar information, especially due dates, into a master calendar that you will use throughout the semester. Having important due dates on your calendar will help you keep track of what you need to do each week. The next step is planning when you will work on the assignments. In other words, schedule time to work on these activities in your calendar. Planning will help you complete assignments on schedule. The importance of the syllabus cannot be overstated—be sure to keep your syllabi in a safe place and regularly refer to them to stay on top of course requirements.

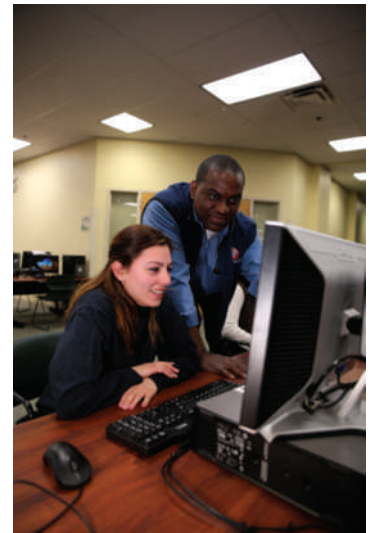
## THE SYLLABUS: INFORMATION YOU NEED

- Overview of the course—course description, professor contact information, resources needed
- Learning outcomes—what you will learn
- Assignment and grading information
- Course outline and due dates

## Campus and Community Resources

As you begin your first semester, it is important to know about the resources that are available to you as a college student. Successful individuals reach out for help when needed and it will be easier for you to reach out for assistance if you know about the different types of support services available on your campus. Check out your college website or ask your professor to learn about the various offices and departments on campus that can support you during college. For example, most colleges and universities offer a variety of support with academic tasks. Professional or peer tutors are typically available as are librarians and your college professors when you need assistance with completing academic assignments. Academic advisors and career counselors are available to help you develop an academic and career plan and develop networking skills. If you are struggling with personal issues, many colleges and universities offer confidential counseling on campus or can refer you to services in the local community. There are also a variety of specialized services such as Disability Services, Veteran Services, and Minority Student Affairs Services. If you are living on campus, you will also have access to a resident advisor who can help you find the support you are looking for. If you are a first-generation college student, it may be particularly important for you to connect with campus supports. By doing so, you can more quickly learn about how to transition to college effectively and develop a support system that will help you with this process.

During the first few weeks of college, investigate what services exist on your campus or in your local community. In addition to learning about the services provided, it is helpful to know where the services are located and their hours of operation. Knowing this information early on in the semester will make it easier for you to take advantage of these resources when needed.



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## Value of the First-Year Seminar Course

Research has consistently indicated that first-year seminar courses contribute to student success in college (Boudreau & Kromrey, 1994; Derby & Smith, 2004; Potts & Shultz, 2008). Studies have shown that this course is beneficial for students of all ability levels (Howard, 2000; Miller, Janz, & Chen, 2007). For example, researchers have found that students who took a first-year seminar course had higher grades and earned more credits early on, as compared to those who did not take the first-year seminar course, and that these academic advantages were long-lasting (Karp, Raufman, Efthimiou, & Ritze, 2015). Based on a review of research studies investigating the effectiveness of first-year seminars, Jaijairam (2016) noted the following benefits of the course:

- Better grades
- More likely to graduate on schedule



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- More likely to reflect on academic performance and progress
- More likely to think critically
- More likely to participate in class
- Increased self-confidence
- Better sense of career options

Given this long list of benefits, it is not surprising that most colleges offer this type of course and many even require it. In fact, in a national survey, approximately 90% of the colleges that responded indicated that they offered a first-year seminar course at their institutions (Young & Hopp, 2014). The first-year seminar course helps students transition successfully to college.

As you are getting ready to embark on this challenging, yet exciting, journey called college, think about the topic of this text for a moment: student success. You probably already have an opinion about why some students are successful in college while others are not. Others do, too. You could walk up to 10 different people on the street and ask them what it takes to be successful in college, and you'll probably get 10 different answers. Our views, and personal advice, are often based on individual experiences. Unfortunately, just because a technique worked for someone else doesn't mean it will work for you. Research, on the other hand, is more powerful than advice. Information gathered from thousands of students makes it more likely that the techniques shown to be effective will also work for you. In other words, findings from research are typically more accurate and meaningful than advice from one person.

This text takes you beyond advice and into the science of success. It is filled with research-based information to help you succeed. In addition to learning about topics such as time management, goal setting, motivation, and study strategies, you will also learn about how to read and extract key information from scholarly sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles. Although this activity can definitely be a challenging one for new students, learning this skill early will serve you well in college. College professors will expect you to be able to read and use scholarly sources in your work, but there is often not much, if any, class time devoted to teaching you how to read research articles and extract the key information. This text will teach you strategies for reading these challenging articles, give you practice at summarizing the key points, and prompt you to think critically about the findings and their value. You will also build your information literacy skills by searching library databases to find additional research on student success topics. After this course, you'll be ready to include information from these sources in your papers and presentations, which will help you create successful academic products for your other classes.

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## WHY LEARNING ABOUT RESEARCH-BASED SUCCESS STRATEGIES IS IMPORTANT

- Sometimes well-intentioned advice is not accurate and therefore won't support your success.
- Research findings are often based on hundreds or thousands of students, making it more likely that the results will apply to you.

- Because researchers often carefully control and assess for many factors, it is more likely that the results are accurate.
- As you are learning about strategies that work, you are also increasing your skills related to being able to read and use scholarly sources. You will be able to use this new skill set as you prepare for papers and presentations in your other classes.
- Research-based student success studies will help you build your reading, critical thinking, and information literacy skills.
- Using strategies that really work will help you achieve your academic goals.

Taking this course will give you the skills and confidence you need to reach your goal. Specifically, you will learn that a variety of factors, such as using supports and resources, being motivated, making good decisions, managing time well, setting goals, thinking positively, and using effective study strategies, have been found to be connected to academic success (DeBerard, Speilmans, & Julka, 2004; Johnson, 1997; Lammers, Onwuegbuzie, & State, 2001; Murray & Wren, 2003). More good news—these factors are within your control. Once you are armed with solid, accurate information about how these factors contribute to success, you will be able to use this information to achieve your goals. In essence, you will be ready to “Do What Works!” Let’s start by checking your current knowledge about what works.

## Student Success Myths or Facts? Test Your Knowledge!

Myth or Fact? Decide whether you believe the following statements are true or false.

1. Because the world is an ever-changing place, memorizing information is not that important.
2. Highlighting is one of the most effective reading strategies.
3. Reading skills are the best predictor of how well you will comprehend what you read.
4. Students who study alone are more productive and learn more than students who study with others.
5. The best way to study is to review and reread your notes.
6. Students today are much better at multitasking.
7. When taking a multiple-choice test, it is always best to “go with your gut” and stick with your first answer.
8. Professors expect you to use numerous quotations in your research papers.
9. Students are generally pretty accurate when predicting their grades in a course.
10. Being focused on grades will help you learn a lot and achieve at high levels.

Some of the information you learn from this text and your course will not be new to you—you have after all been a student for a long time. However, you might be surprised to find that you are using strategies that are only minimally effective. In fact, all of the Myth or Fact statements are false. For a sneak peek at strategies that work, check out the Success Strategies at a Glance for each chapter.



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