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COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS



INTRODUCTION TO COLLEGE AND STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

INTRODUCTION TO COLLEGE AND STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

An Open Educational Resources Publication by College of the
Canyons

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CHAPTER 1: YOU AND YOUR COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Assess your present knowledge and attitudes about college
2. Identify values that matter to you
3. Develop positive attitudes about yourself and those around you
4. Assess strategies for accepting responsibility for your life decisions

WELCOME TO COLLEGE!

Congratulations on your decision to attend college! For the great majority of college students, it really is your decision—not just an automatic choice to make. If you happen to be one of the few students who just sort of end up in college for want of anything better to do, the benefits of college will soon become obvious.



Figure 1.1 College Students.¹

¹ [Image](#) by [Naassom Azevedo](#) on Unsplash

Like everything else in life that leads to meaningful results, success in college is not automatic. But when you apply yourself to your studies using the skills you will learn in this book, you will find you can succeed.

However, it is important to recognize that some students do not succeed in college and drop out within the first year. Sometimes it is due to an unsolvable financial problem or a personal or family crisis, but most of the time students drop out because they are having problems passing their courses. The two biggest causes of this problem are a lack of motivation and not having learned the skills needed to succeed in college.

A college education is correlated with greater success in many areas, even though most students are usually more concerned with making it through the next class or test than the rest of their lives. But sometimes it helps to recall what a truly great step forward you are taking! Special skills are needed because college is not the same as high school.

Throughout this book, we will be looking at the many ways college is different from high school. To name just a few, college is different in study skills needed, in personal skills related to being independent, in social skills for getting along with instructors and others on campus, in financial realities, in matters of personal health, and more.

Succeeding in college is rather like succeeding in life. It is really much more about you than it is about college. The most important place to start is to consider why you're here, what matters to you, and what you expect to get out of it. Even if you have already thought about these questions, it is good to reaffirm your commitment to your plan as we begin to consider what is really involved in being a college student.

Job and career is another concern for students when they enter college. A college education results in many personal benefits and they should also be part of your motivation for doing well and continuing with your college plans. Here are a few additional, less tangible benefits of a college education:

- You will have a fuller life and a better understanding of the world around you.
- You will gain decision-making and problem-solving skills.
- You will meet many interesting and diverse people and have a richer social life.
- You will gain self-confidence.
- You will gain learning skills that can continue for a lifetime.
- You will make wiser decisions about lifestyle issues and live healthier.
- You will make wiser economic decisions for the rest of your life.
- You will be better equipped to deal with other people, instructors, bosses, and all of the hassles of daily life.
- You will feel more fully a part of your community, the larger culture, and history.

Along with understanding the benefits of college, it is important to recognize that some students do not succeed in college and drop out within the first year. Sometimes it is due to an

unsolvable financial problem or a personal or family crisis, but most of the time students drop out because they are having problems passing their courses

Let’s take a moment to assess where you currently are in relation to starting your journey in this course:

Activity 1.1: Where Are You Now?

Assess your present knowledge and attitudes.

Knowledge/Attitude	Yes	Unsure	No
I understand all the benefits of a college education for my future life.			
I have clear-cut career interests and have already planned my college program to prepare me best for my future work.			
I am aware of how my previous educational background has prepared me for college work.			
I have all the personal traits of a successful college student.			
I know how the learning process functions and make an effort to maximize my learning at each step in this process.			
I know my personal learning style and use it to my advantage when learning new things.			
I know how to pay attention to gain the most from my classes.			
I am aware of my college’s policies for academic honesty and behavior on campus.			
I know where to find all the resources of my college that can help me succeed both academically and personally.			
I am confident I can earn the grades I need to achieve success in my college courses.			
I know the first year of college will be the most difficult, but I am fully prepared and take responsibility for my own success.			
I am taking steps every day to ensure I am successful in every aspect of the college experience.			

Activity 1.2: Where Are You Now?

Think about how you answered the questions above. Be honest with yourself.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your present skills for succeeding in college?

In the following list, circle the three most important areas in which you think you can improve:

- Relating my personal values to education
- Choosing a program or degree major
- Finding the best career for my interests and skills
- Being prepared for college-level work
- Developing a positive attitude for college
- Successfully using each step of the learning process

- Adapting and broadening my personal learning style
- Getting the most out of classes large and small
- Following all college policies
- Taking advantage of all college resources
- Getting the best grades I can get
- Successfully transitioning to college and completing the first year
- Doing everything I can every day to ensure I succeed in college

Are there other areas or skills that need more attention in order for you to succeed in college? Write down other things you feel you need to work on.

1.1 WHO ARE YOU, REALLY?

Many students enter college thinking they have a good grasp on who they are, what they like, what they value, what they might want to major in, and possible career choices. College can change all that by adding experiences, classes that challenge what you thought you knew, and developing critical thinking skills which brings a shift in values, identify, likes, dislikes, morals, etc.

Activity 1.3: Action Plan

Take a few minutes to create a small plan of action to determine your baseline of who you are. Be honest with yourself, and write down what you really feel. You are not writing for an instructor here—not what you think someone expects to hear—and you are not being graded on your answers!

How long do you anticipate being in college?

How many courses will you need to take per term to finish college in your planned time period?

What do you anticipate will be the most difficult part of completing college?

Are you confident you will be able to overcome any possible difficulties in completing college?

Were you able to easily answer the questions above? How confident do you feel about your plan? These are important questions to think about for the simple reason that students who have a clear plan and who are prepared to overcome possible obstacles that may arise along the

way are much more likely to succeed in college. In other words, *just thinking in a positive way about your future can help that future come true!*

What Matters to You?

The word **values** refers to things that matter to a person. What makes you feel good? What things would you be doing if you had all the time, money, and opportunities in the world? Questions like these help us define our own values. Every individual has his or her own values. Thinking about your own values can help you know what you want from life and from college.

Take a moment and consider the list of values in Activity 1.4 that are important to some people. For each value, rate how important it is to you.

Activity 1.4: Your Values

Following is a list of things that different people say they value. For each item on this list, indicate how important it is to you yourself by ranking it as very important (5), not important (0), or somewhere in between.

Value	Not important (0)	1	2	3	4	Very important (5)
Making a good income	0	1	2	3	4	5
Having good friends	0	1	2	3	4	5
Learning new things about your interests	0	1	2	3	4	5
Having a nice car	0	1	2	3	4	5
Having intelligent conversations	0	1	2	3	4	5
Staying current with the news	0	1	2	3	4	5
Playing sports	0	1	2	3	4	5
Hanging out with friends	0	1	2	3	4	5
Playing computer or video games	0	1	2	3	4	5
Cooking	0	1	2	3	4	5
Online social networking	0	1	2	3	4	5
Sleeping	0	1	2	3	4	5
Reading a good book	0	1	2	3	4	5
Traveling to new places	0	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping	0	1	2	3	4	5
Being liked by others	0	1	2	3	4	5
Studying and reading textbooks	0	1	2	3	4	5
Having nice clothing	0	1	2	3	4	5
Watching television	0	1	2	3	4	5
Enjoying time alone	0	1	2	3	4	5
Getting out in nature	0	1	2	3	4	5
Working your job	0	1	2	3	4	5

Value	Not important (0)	1	2	3	4	Very important (5)
Looking good, personal hygiene	0	1	2	3	4	5
Meeting new people	0	1	2	3	4	5
Going to movies or entertainments	0	1	2	3	4	5
Eating nice meals out	0	1	2	3	4	5
Exercising, being physically active	0	1	2	3	4	5
Being your own boss	0	1	2	3	4	5
Having a positive romantic relationship	0	1	2	3	4	5
Engaging in your hobbies	0	1	2	3	4	5
Setting your own schedule	0	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteering your time for a good cause	0	1	2	3	4	5
Cleaning house	0	1	2	3	4	5
Attending classes	0	1	2	3	4	5
Going to religious services	0	1	2	3	4	5
Talking on the telephone, texting, e-mail	0	1	2	3	4	5
Going to parties	0	1	2	3	4	5
Participating in clubs, organized activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	0	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	0	1	2	3	4	5

Look back on the values you rated highly (4 or 5), which will probably give you a good indication of how you enjoy spending your time. How do these values relate to how you think you need to manage your time effectively while in college? Most college students feel they do not have enough time for everything they want and like to do. Are some of the activities you value most contributing to your college experience, or will they distract you from being a good student? Students who enter college with their eyes open and who think about their own values and motivations will be more successful.

Your Past Educational Experience

It is important to understand how college is different from high school and how well your own past educational experiences have prepared you for what you will find in college. This is another way in which entering college “with your eyes wide open” will prove beneficial. Generally speaking, however, the college experience is usually different from high school in these ways:

- Time management is more important in college because of varying class and work schedules and other time commitments.
- College instructors seldom seek you out to offer extra help if you are falling behind. You are on your own and expected to do the work, meet deadlines, and so on, without someone looking over your shoulder.
- There may be no attendance policy for classes. You are expected to be mature enough to come to class without fear of penalties.

- Many instructors teach by lecture—which can be difficult for those whose high school teachers interacted a great deal with students.
- College courses require more study time and require you to work on your own.
- Your social and personal life in college may be less supervised. Younger students may experience a sudden increase in freedom to do what they want.
- You will meet more people from more diverse backgrounds in college.

Self-Management

To succeed in college, you need to take control of your life. Gone are the days when you could just “cruise” through school, or life, or let others motivate you or establish schedules to manage your time. This change presents an exciting opportunity. It’s your first step in your new life and the key to your future. Here are a few thoughts to get you started in the right direction:

1. **Accept responsibility for your life.** When you have made a mistake or missed a deadline admit you are wrong, apologize if you need to, and take steps to do better next time.
2. **Decide what you want to do.** Don’t let things just happen—*make* them happen by deciding that they should happen.
3. **Realize you can change.** You can change your habits to become a better student. You can change your attitudes and become a more positive, motivated student.
4. **Develop a personal ethical code.** Do what is right for you and for others. The college world demands ethical standards and rewards responsible, ethical behavior. Be proud of who you are and your good decisions.
5. **Enjoy your life!** Going to college might seem overwhelming at times, but no one is asking you to “give up your life” to succeed in college. Enjoy meeting new people, learning new things, and experiencing the diversity of the college experience.

Thinking Ahead to a Major and Career

Some students say they have known from a very early age what they want to do after college, chose the college that is best for that plan, never wavered from the plan and chose each course with one goal in mind, and then entered their chosen career after college or graduate school. At the other extreme, some students have only a vague sense of direction before beginning college, take a wide variety of courses, select a major only when they reach a point that they must major in something (or perhaps change majors multiple times), and then after college choose to work in an entirely different field. So where are *you* in this great variety of attitudes about career and major choices?

Chances are, as you take courses in a variety of subjects and meet people in many different fields, you will naturally discover something about what you really enjoy doing and what career options you may choose to pursue. Additional help is also available for discovering your interests, strengths, and personality factors related to careers through a variety of career assessments. You can learn a lot about potential career and job options by understanding how your interests and personality preferences intertwine. You can stop by the Counseling Office in Canyons Hall at the Valencia Campus or Building 1A at the Canyon Country Campus to inquire

about our career assessments. We will briefly discuss career exploration routes later on in this book.

Activity 1.5: College Success

1. Which of the following are benefits of a college education?
 - a. A better understanding of the world
 - b. Developing problem-solving skills
 - c. Meeting interesting people
 - d. Making wiser financial decisions in the future
 - e. All of the above

2. What do you value that will be richer in your future life because you will have a college education?

3. What do you value that will you likely have less time or money to spend on while in college?

4. Life in college usually differs in many ways from one's previous life in high school or in the workforce. What are the biggest changes you are experiencing now or anticipate experiencing this term?

5. For each of the following statements, circle T for true or F for false:

T F Attitude is one of the most important factors affecting college success.

T F If you sit back, wait patiently, and stick it out long enough, success in college will inevitably come to you.

T F To do well in college, you basically have to give up everything else in life for a while.

T F Most college graduates later look back on their college years as one of the best times in their lives.

1.2 THE STUDENTS AROUND YOU

When thinking about different “types” of students, be careful to avoid stereotyping. While there are genuine differences among individual students, we must never assume an individual person has certain characteristics simply because he or she is a certain “type” of student. The word traditional is used simply because, in the past, this group of students formed the majority of

college students (first time in college, direct from high school, aged 18-19 yrs old) —even though, at many colleges, these students are now the minority. On the other hand, if you are older and have worked for some years before returning to school, or if you are an international student or are working and attending classes part time, you might be considered a nontraditional student. This term comes from past statistical reports when it was more common for traditional students to enter college, but this has changed dramatically in the last several years with more colleges reporting they have more nontraditional students than traditional students enrolled.



Figure 1.2 “Types” of Students.²

First-Generation Students

The phrase first-generation student refers to students who are the first in their families to attend college. These students may be traditional students enrolled right after high school or may be returning students. Students whose parents did not attend college may be less familiar with some or all aspects of the college experience.

Returning Students

Students returning to college may be older, may have worked for a number of years, and may be used to living on their own and being financially and psychologically independent. They are often more mature and have a stronger sense of what they want from college; they may be more goal driven. They may be paying their own way through college and want to get their money’s worth. They may be full-time students but frequently are still working and can take only a part-time course load. Because they have made a very deliberate decision to go to college, returning students are often serious students and are motivated to do the work. Having spent time in the work world, they may also have developed good problem-solving and decision-making skills as a result of their “real world” experience.

² [Image by Alexis Brown](#) on Unsplash

Recent Immigrant and International Students

Many colleges have a significant percentage of students who have recently **immigrated** to the United States or who are attending college here. What both groups may have in common is coming from a different culture and possibly speaking English as a second language. They may have to make cultural adjustments and accommodations. Language issues are often the most serious obstacle to overcome, especially since so much of college education is based on reading and writing in English.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits colleges and universities from discriminating on the basis of disabilities and forces them to ensure that both classes and extracurricular activities are accessible to students with disabilities. Accessibility includes both physical accessibility to campus buildings and housing and accessibility to services and aids necessary for effective communication. Students with disabilities have the right to request any accommodations needed to allow them to succeed in college. For more information or to receive answers to any specific questions, contact the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) at <http://www.ahead.org>

Working Students

The key issue for working students often is time—how to find enough time for studying enough to do well in classes. Since it is very difficult to maintain two full-time schedules—work and school—one or the other may suffer. For those working long hours, Chapter 2 “Staying Motivated, Organized, and On Track” presents many tips for managing your time when you have less of it.

Students with Families

Typically it is returning students who have families of their own, although younger students may also have families to care for. Having children of your own means you have different priorities from most some students, but a family should not be viewed as an obstacle to college success. Time may be short and you will have to manage it carefully to avoid falling behind in your studies.

1.3 HOW DOES COLLEGE REALLY WORK?

While most high school classes are fairly small with 25-30 students, many college classes can be large, with up to several hundred students in a large lecture class. Other classes you might take will be as small as high school classes. In large lecture classes, you may feel totally anonymous even invisible. This feeling can get some students in trouble, however. Here are some common mistaken assumptions and attitudes about large classes:

- The instructor will not notice me sitting here, so I can check e-mail or read for a different class if I get bored.
- The instructor does not know my name or recognize me, so I do not even need to go to class as long as I can borrow someone’s notes to find out what happens.
- I hate listening to lectures, so I might as well think about something else because I am not going to learn anything this way anyway.

At College of the Canyons, there are only a couple of large lecture halls students *might* take a class in, and even these rooms only hold about 75-100 people. Most courses you will take with us will be in smaller classrooms which hold about 25-35 students. Your instructors will be more apt to notice when you are not in class and if you are not paying attention. Even if you decide to transfer to a four-year college later on, you will more likely have smaller classes because you will be focusing on finishing your junior and senior-level college coursework. If you find yourself taking a course where the instructor does not seem to take notice of the students in their course, it does not mean that all instructors will be this way. You will need to remember that *in college, you take responsibility for your own learning*. Sure, a student is free to try to sleep in a lecture class, or not attend the class at all—the same way a student is “free” to fail any class he or she chooses!



Figure 1.3 Lecture³

Class Attendance and Promptness

In some classes at some colleges, attendance is required and absences can affect one’s grade in the course. But even when attendance is not required, missing classes will inevitably affect your grade as well. You are not learning if you are not there. Reading another student’s notes is not the same as sitting in class yourself, taking notes on what *you* think is important. Arriving to class promptly is also important. Walking into a class that has already begun is rude and

³ [Image](#) by [Sam Balve](#) on Unsplash

disruptive to the instructor and to other students. A mature student respects the instructor and other students and in turn, receives respect back.

College Policies

A college campus is almost like a small town – or country - unto itself. The campus has its own police force, its own government, its own stores, its own ID cards, its own parking rules, and so on. College of the Canyons has all these things, and much more! Colleges also have their own policies regarding many types of activities and behaviors. Students who do not understand the rules can sometimes find themselves in trouble. The most important academic policy is academic honesty. Cheating is taken very seriously. Some high school students may have only received a slap on the wrist if caught looking at another student’s paper during a test or turning in a paper containing sentences or paragraphs found online or “borrowed” from a fellow student. In many colleges, academic dishonesty like this may result in automatic failure of the course—or even expulsion from college. The principle of academic honesty is simple: every student must do his or her own work. If you have any doubt of what this means for a paper you are writing, a project you are doing with other students, or anything else, check [the College of the Canyons college catalog](#) for its policy statements or talk with your instructor.

Colleges also have policies about alcohol and drug use, sexual harassment, hazing, hate crimes, and other potential problems. The Admissions and Records Office and the Student Business Office have policies about course add and drop dates, payment schedules and refunds, and the like. Such policies are designed to ensure that all students have the same right to a quality education—one not unfairly interrupted by the actions of others. You can find this information on the [College of the Canyons Student Services website](#).

College Resources

To be successful in college, you need to be fully informed and make wise decisions about the courses you register for, college policies, and additional resources. Always remember that your college *wants* you to succeed! That means that if you are having any difficulties or have any questions whose answers you are unsure about, there are college resources available to help you get assistance or find answers. This is true of both academic and personal issues that could potentially disrupt your college experience. *Never* hesitate to go looking for help or information - but realize that usually **you have to take the first step**. The [College of the Canyons college catalog](#) has already been mentioned as a great source of many kinds of information.

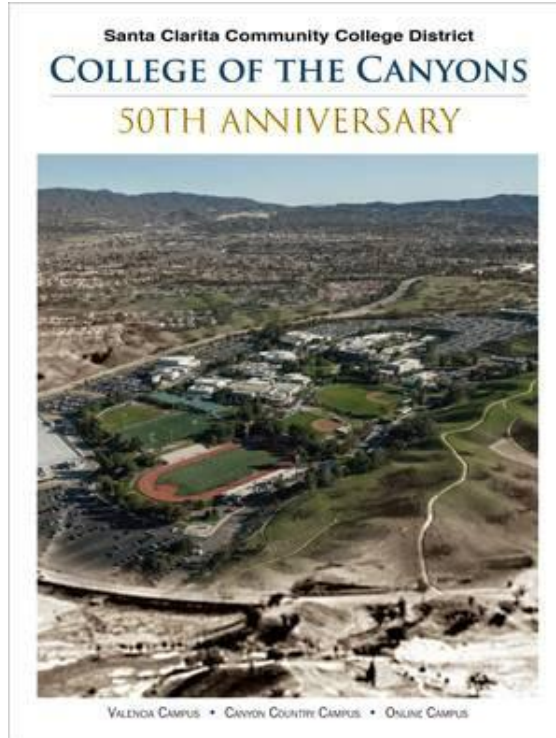


Figure 1.4 College of the Canyons Catalogue.⁴

The college catalog is available online for students and it will list the most recent edition of the catalog, along with previous editions. Students are often surprised to see how much information is available at the college when they search online, including information about college programs, offices, special assistance programs, and so on, as well as helpful information such as studying tips, personal health, financial help, and other resources.

Take some time to explore the [College of the Canyons website](#) and learn what is available and this can in the future if you have an issues that come up, but are unsure where to go. The [Students Services website](#) is a great place to start searching for support services, offices, locations, and contact information. The following are some of the resources we have, with most of the services offered for free or at a low cost to students:

- [Counseling Office](#). They help you choose courses and plan your program or degree. Students are encouraged to see a counselor every 6-12 months to ensure you are staying on track for your academic, career, and personal goals. Counselors can also help with study skills/strategies, stress management, concerns with a class, and can be a guide for navigating college.
 - **Available at Valencia & Canyon Country campuses, and online**
- [Admissions & Records Office](#). If you are needing to add/drop a course, need to order a transcript, or repeat a course, Admissions can help you! They also assist students with registration, applying to the college, and process courses from other colleges.
 - **Available at Valencia & Canyon Country campuses**

⁴ Image by College of the Canyons used with permission.

- [Financial Aid Office](#). If you are presently receiving financial aid or are not sure if you qualify, stop by their office today! They can help walk you through the California College Promise Grant (formerly the BOG Waiver), Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), Cal Grant and Pell Grant information, along with providing you will information on scholarships available.
 - **Available at Valencia & Canyon Country campuses**
- [The Learning Center \(TLC\)](#). The Learning Center has tutoring available in many different subjects, computers to use, group study rooms, and guided learning activities to help with study skills, test anxiety, along with English and math specific topics.
 - **Available at Valencia & Canyon Country campuses**
- [Computer labs](#). We have computer labs around campus to help support students and their busy schedules. Computers are free for students to use and just require that students how their student ID card. Depending on the location, there may be free printing up to 10 pages or a small fee. Here are some of the labs on campus:
 - Library – next to The Learning Center (both campuses)
 - The Learning Center
 - College Life & Student Engagement (formerly ASG lab)
 - Building 1B @ the Canyon Country Campus
- [Student Health & Wellness Center](#). In addition to providing some basic medical care and making referrals, the Student Health Center can also help with mental health counseling, diet/exercise counseling, birth control services, and preventive health care.
 - **Available at Valencia & Canyon Country campuses**
- [Career Counseling](#). Career counselors can assist with career exploration, identify careers beyond graduation, administer career assessments, and discuss internship/job shadowing options.
 - **Available at Valencia & Canyon Country campuses**

Ask your instructor about additional student service programs on campus, even if you may not access the services at this time. It is always good to know what your choices are and each program on campus is meant to help students be successful.

We have talked a lot about some of the primary elements of starting college on the right path and the additional chapters will help further explore how you can expand your understanding of yourself, how you want to approach college, and what you want to get out of college. Each student will take a slightly different path in completing their academic, career, and personal goals at College of the Canyons and take this time to identify, clarify, and plan your future!

CHAPTER TAKEAWAYS

- The first year of college is the most critical. Make the commitment to overcome any obstacles to a successful transition and stay committed and motivated to succeed.
- Although college students differ in many ways, all successful students share certain common traits, including a positive attitude, effective critical thinking skills, good time management skills, effective study skills, interactions with instructors and other students, and good habits for personal health and financial stability.
- You can learn to maximize your learning by attending to each step of the learning process: preparing, absorbing, capturing, and reviewing.
- Working with your academic counselor and taking advantage of the many resources available at College of the Canyons.
- While it may take a few weeks to develop all the skills needed for success in college, there are many steps you can begin taking today to get moving in the right direction.

CHAPTER 2: STAYING MOTIVATED, ORGANIZED, AND ON TRACK

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Setting and focusing on goals that are specific, realistic, and attainable
2. Setting priorities for managing your time
3. Developing and practicing strategies for staying focused
4. Preventing or solving problems that might threaten your success in college

2.1 SETTING GOALS AND MOTIVATION

Before starting college, even before you fill out the college application, you have already established a tentative goal for yourself – to get a college education – and that you have been motivated to get this far. You should feel good about this small step because a lot of people do not make it this far. You are off to a great first step!

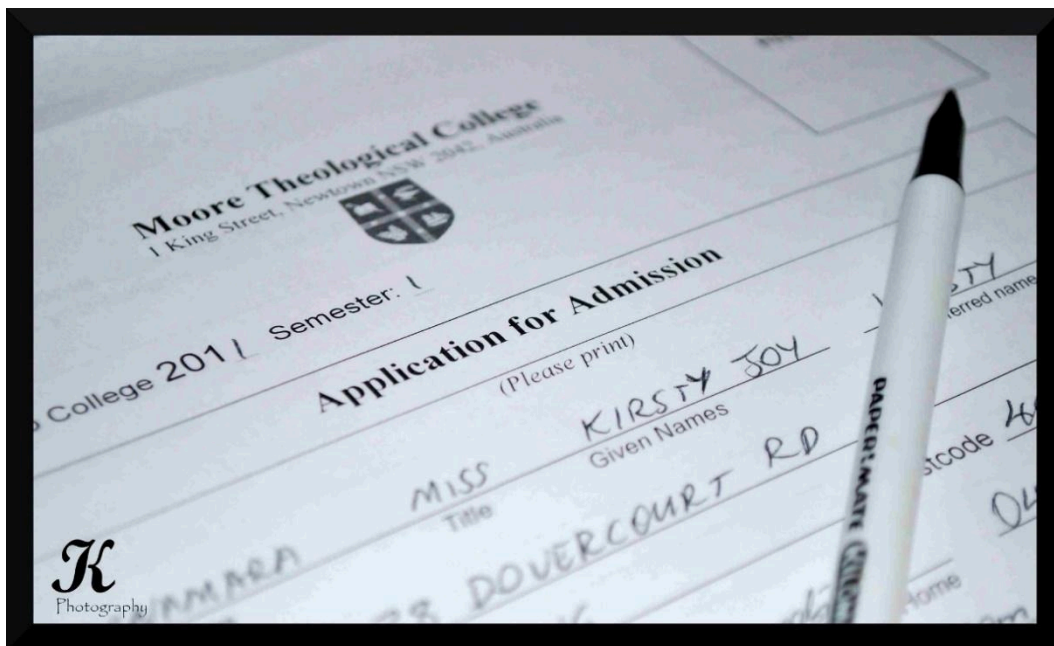


Figure 2.1 College Application.⁵

But, did you know that in many colleges in the United States, almost half of first-year college students will not make it to graduation? This varies widely among different colleges. Ask your instructor if he or she knows the graduation rate at College of the Canyons or you can research this topic on your own. Knowing this can be important, yet peer pressure (whether to succeed

⁵ Image by [kirst19](#) is licensed under [Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic \(CC BY-NC-SA 2.0\)](#).

or to be lax and possibly drop out later) can be an important factor in your success. If you want to be among the students who do succeed, it is important to accept that college is not easy for most students. The evidence shows that the huge majority of those who really want to finish college can do so successfully, if they stay motivated and learn how to succeed. It may take some effort to change old habits and establish new habits that foster a growth mindset. Succeeding in college involves paying attention to your studies in ways you may not have had to previously.

You have been motivated to start college – now you need to keep that motivation going as you target specific goals for success in your classes. Much of this has to do with attitude. Success also requires managing your time effectively. In fact, time management skills can make the difference between those who graduate from college and those who drop out.



Figure 2.1 Time Management.⁶

Time management is actually all about managing yourself: knowing what you want, deciding how to get what you want, and then efficiently and effectively getting it. That applies to fun things, too. In fact, you may want to think of the goal of this chapter as not just managing your time for studying but ensuring that even as you do well in your classes, you are still enjoying your life while in college!

Some people are goal oriented and seem to easily make decisions that lead to achieving their goals, while others seem just to “go with the flow” and accept what life gives them. While the latter may sound pleasantly relaxed, moving through life without goals may not lead anywhere at all. The fact that you are in college now shows you already have the primary goal to complete your academic and/or career objectives. A goal is a result we intend to reach mostly through our own actions. Things we do may move us closer to or farther away from that result. Studying

⁶ [Image](#) by [Ocean Ng](#) on Unsplash

moves us closer to success in a difficult course, while sleeping through the final examination may completely prevent reaching that goal. That is fairly obvious in an extreme case, yet still a lot of college students do not reach their goal of graduating. The problem may be a lack of commitment to the goal, but often students have conflicting goals. One way to prevent problems from arising, is to think about all your goals and priorities and to learn ways to manage your time, your course load, and your social life to best reach your goals. Consider these four students scenarios:

To help his widowed mother, Juan went to work full time after high school but now, a few years later, he's dissatisfied with the kinds of jobs he has been able to get and has begun taking computer programming courses in the evening. He is often tired after work, however, and his mother would like him to spend more time at home. Sometimes he cuts class to stay home and spend time with her.

In her senior year of college, Becky has just been elected president of her sorority and is excited about planning a major community service project. She knows she should be spending more time on her senior thesis, but she feels her community project may gain her contacts that can help her find a better job after graduation. Besides, the sorority project is a lot more fun, and she is enjoying the esteem of her position. Even if she does not do well on her thesis, she is sure she will pass.

After an easy time in high school, James is surprised his college classes are so hard. He has enough time to study for his first year courses, but he also has a lot of friends and fun things to do. Sometimes he is surprised to look up from his computer to see it is midnight already, and he has not started reading that chapter yet. Where does the time go? When he is stressed, however, he cannot study well, so he tells himself he will get up early and read the chapter before class, and then he turns back to his computer to see who is online.

Ivy was successful in cutting back her hours at work to give her more time for her engineering classes, but it is difficult for her to get much studying done at home. Her husband has been wonderful about taking care of their young daughter, but he cannot do everything, and lately he has been hinting more about asking her sister to babysit so that the two of them can go out in the evening the way they used to. Lately, when she has to study on a weekend, he leaves with his friends, and Ivy ends up spending the day with her daughter – and not getting much studying done.

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

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

Before starting on your goals, you will want to consider a few factors such as:

- **Goals should be SPECIFIC:** Do not write, *“I will become a great musician;”* instead, write, *“I will finish my music degree and be employed in a symphony orchestra.”*
- Goals should be **MEASURABLE:** To help keep you motivated, you will want your goals to be measured, to track your progress and accomplish your goal one step at a time.
- Goals should be **ACHIEVABLE:** You will want to keep your goals
- **Goals should be REALISTIC:** It is good to dream and to challenge yourself, but your goals should relate to your personal strengths and abilities.
- **Goals should have a TIME FRAME:** You will not feel very motivated if your goal is vague, *“to finish college someday.”* If you are realistic and specific in your goals, you should also be able to project a time frame for reaching them.



Figure 2.2 SMART Goals.⁷

We are willing to work hard to reach goals we really care about, but we are likely to give up when we encounter obstacles if we do not feel strongly about a goal. If you are doing something only because your parents or someone else wants you to, then it is not your own personal goal – and you may have some more thinking to do about your life. Lastly, goals are meant to be fluid and to be adjusted as you get closer to accomplishing your goal(s). You may find that some goals are easier to reach than others and that sometimes, you need to go in a different direction.

⁷ Image by [Dungdm93](#) is licensed under [Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International](#).

With all this talk about goals, take a moment to think about a short, mid, and long-term goal you want to start working towards.

Activity 2.1 – Personal Goals

Write your goals in the following blanks. Be sure to consider all areas of your life—consider everything important that you want to do between this moment and old age. (While you might aim for three to eight goals in each section, remember that everyone is unique, and you may be just as passionate about just one or two goals or more than eight.)

Short-term goals (today, this week, and this month):

Midterm goals (this year and while in college):

Long-term goals (from college on):

Stay Focused and Motivated

You have got your goals written out, you have a positive attitude and you are ready to move forward! But, you have got a lot of reading for classes to do tonight, a test tomorrow, and a paper due the next day. Maybe you are a little bored with one of your reading assignments.

Maybe you would rather play a computer game. Uh oh – where did your motivation go to reach your goals? Attitude can change at almost any moment. One minute you are enthusiastically starting a class project, and then maybe a friend drops by and suddenly all you want to do is close the books, relax a while, and hang out with friends. One of the characteristics of successful people is accepting that life is full of interruptions and change—and planning for it. Staying focused does not mean you become a boring person who does nothing but go to class and study all the time.



Figure 2.3 Bored.⁸

Remember how good it feels to succeed. Know you can succeed again. If you just cannot focus in on what you should be doing because the task seems too big and daunting, break the task into smaller, manageable pieces. Do not start out thinking, *“I need to study for the next four hours,”* but think, *“I’ll spend the next thirty minutes going through my class notes from the last three weeks and figure out what topics I need to spend more time on.”* It is a lot easier to stay focused when you are sitting down for thirty minutes at a time. This is also known as the [Pomodoro Time-Management strategy](#). Also, never multitask while studying! You may think that you can check social media and text message your friends while studying, but in reality, these other activities lower the quality of your studying and increase the amount of studying you need.

Here are some tips for staying motivated:

- Keep your eye on your long-term goals while working toward immediate goals.
- Keep your priorities straight—but also save some time for fun.
- Work on keeping your attitude positive.
- Keep the company of positive people; imitate successful people.
- Do not let past habits drag you down.

⁸ [Image](#) by [Siavash Ghanbari](#) on Unsplash

- Plan ahead to avoid last-minute pressures.
- Focus on your successes.
- Break large projects down into smaller tasks or stages.
- Reward yourself for completing significant tasks.
- Avoid multitasking.
- Network with other students; form a study group.

Let's put some action behind your goals and create an Action Plan to identify any obstacles that may get in the way of achieving some of your goals in Activity 2.2

Activity 2.2: Make an Action List

Goals

I have not yet set realistic, specific, and time-oriented goals for the following:

In the coming weeks and months, I will think about and clarify these goals:

Planning Ahead

Too often in the past, I have not started early enough on these kinds of school assignments and studying:

To ensure I successfully plan ahead to complete all work on time in the future, I will do the following:

Attitude

I have most difficulty maintaining a positive attitude at the following times:

I can do the following things to "adjust" my attitude at these times to help ensure my success:

Focus and Motivation

When I'm not feeling motivated to work on my studies, I often do these things instead:

I will try to use these strategies to keep motivated and focused on my studies in the future:

Study Space

I have the following problems with the places where I usually study now:

I will make the following changes in my study space (or I will try these new places) to help prevent distractions:

Time Management

I often feel I don't have enough time for my college work for the following reasons:

I will start using these techniques to make sure I use my available time well:

2.2 BATTLING PROCRASTINATION

You have identified your goals and are motivated to start working on them. The first couple of days are going great and you are able to start chipping away at some short-term goals and then it happens...you want to spend more time with your friends or you have convinced yourself that you can put off studying or other priorities for another day, what is the worst that will happen? This routine continues for another day or two, or it may extend to several days. You are exhibiting procrastination behaviors!



Pin It! Procrastination

Watch this Ted Talk by Tim Urban, [Inside the mind of a master procrastinator](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arj7oStGLkU): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arj7oStGLkU> to learn about the procrastination monkey, the panic monster, and how to take control of your time.

Procrastination is a way of thinking that lets one put off doing something that should be done now. This can happen to anyone at any time. It is like a voice inside your head keeps coming up

with these brilliant ideas for things to do right now other than studying: *“I really ought to get this room cleaned up before I study”* or *“I can study anytime, but tonight’s the only chance I have to do X.”* That voice is also very good at rationalizing: *“I really don’t need to read that chapter now; I’ll have plenty of time tomorrow at lunch. . . .”*

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

People procrastinate for different reasons. Some people are too relaxed in their priorities, seldom worry, and easily put off responsibilities. Others worry constantly, and that stress keeps them from focusing on the task at hand. Some procrastinate because they fear failure; others procrastinate because they fear success or are so perfectionistic that they do not want to let themselves down. Some are dreamers.

Many different factors are involved, and there are different styles of procrastinating. Just as there are different causes, there are different possible solutions for procrastination. Different strategies work for different people. The time management strategies described earlier can help you avoid procrastination.

To help combat procrastination tendencies, here are steps you can take to help redirect your attention toward what you need to get done:

1. Schedule times for studying using a daily or weekly planner. Carry it with you and look at it often. Just being aware of the time and what you need to do today can help you get organized and stay on track.
2. If you keep thinking of something else you might forget to do later (making you feel like you “must” do it now), write yourself a note about it for later and get it out of your mind.
3. Study with a motivated friend. Form a study group with other students who are motivated and will not procrastinate along with you. You will learn good habits from them while getting the work done now.
4. Think about how much better you will feel if your studying was done, even if it was just spending 30 minutes reviewing your notes.
5. Look into changing the location of where you study – instead of studying at home, think about studying at the library or at The Learning Center. Set a time limit for yourself and identify 1-2 times you would like to get accomplished during that time.
6. If you find yourself procrastinating on all your classes, it may be a sign of other things such as stress and/or anxiety outside of school, or possibly an unbalanced schedule and feeling overwhelmed with your schedule in general. If you find yourself in this situation, stop by the Counseling Office in Canyons Hall, 2nd Floor (Valencia Campus) or Building 1A (Canyon Country Campus) to talk with a counselor.

There can also be a funny side to procrastination and here are a couple of videos which show how other people handle their procrastination!

- Tim Urban – [Inside the Mind of a Master Procrastinator](#)
- Ellen Degeneres – [Procrastination Help](#)

2.3 TIME-MANAGEMENT

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

Planning is mostly a matter of managing your time well, as we will see later. If you are not feeling motivated, think about the results of your goals - not just the goals themselves. If just thinking about finishing college does not sound all that exciting, then think instead about the great, high paying career that comes afterward and the things you can do with that income. Remember your successes, even small successes. As you begin a project or approach studying for a test, think about your past success on a different project or test.



***Pin It!* Homework Management**

Visit [My Homework App: https://myhomeworkapp.com/](https://myhomeworkapp.com/) for a great resource on starting a homework plan.

Time and Your Personality

Time management is not actually difficult, but you do need to learn how to do it well. Learning how to manage your time is similar to creating a new habit, you will need to try out different time-management methods, adjust areas of your schedule that you know are time-wasters and where you need to prioritize more of your energy. People’s attitudes toward the concept of time vary widely. Take a moment to think about your friends and family - one person seems to be always rushing around but actually gets less done than another person who seems unconcerned about time and calmly goes about the day. Since there are many different time-management “personalities” it is important to realize how you approach time. Start by identifying how you spend your time during a typical week, using Activity 2.3.

Activity 2.3: Where Does the Time Go?

See if you can account for a week's worth of time. For each of the activity categories listed, make your best estimate of how many hours you spend in a week. (For categories that are about the same every day, just estimate for one day and multiply by seven for that line.)

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

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

Think about your time analysis in Activity 2.3 - people who estimate too high often feel they do not have enough time. They may experience anxiety and frustration when feeling pressed for time. People at the other extreme, who often cannot account for how they use all their time, may have a more relaxed attitude. They may not actually have any more free time, but they may be wasting more time than they want to admit with less important things.

If you have work and family responsibilities, you may already know where many of your hours go. Although we all wish we had "more time," the important thing is what we do with the time we have. Time-management strategies can help us better use the time we do have by creating a schedule that works for our own time personality.

While you may not be able to change your "time personality," you can learn to manage your time more successfully. The key is to be realistic. The best way to know how you spend your

time is to record what you do all day in a time log, every day for a week, and then add that up. Make copies of the time log in Figure 1 “Daily Time Log” and carry it with you. Every so often, fill in what you have been doing. Do this for a week before adding up the times; then enter the total hours in the categories in Activity 2.3. You might be surprised that you spend a lot more time than you thought just hanging out with friends—or gaming online or scrolling through Instagram or Twitter or any of the many other things people do. You might find that you study well early in the morning even though you thought you are a night person, or vice versa. You might learn how long you can continue at a specific task before needing a break.

AM			PM	
5:00	_____		5:00	_____
5:15	_____		5:15	_____
5:30	_____		5:30	_____
5:45	_____		5:45	_____
6:00	_____		6:00	_____
6:15	_____		6:15	_____
6:30	_____		6:30	_____
6:45	_____		6:45	_____
7:00	_____		7:00	_____
7:15	_____		7:15	_____
7:30	_____		7:30	_____
7:45	_____		7:45	_____
8:00	_____		8:00	_____
8:15	_____		8:15	_____
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8:45	_____		8:45	_____
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10:45	_____		10:45	_____
11:00	_____		11:00	_____
11:15	_____		11:15	_____
11:30	_____		11:30	_____
11:45	_____		11:45	_____
PM			AM	
12:00	_____		12:00	_____
12:15	_____		12:15	_____
12:30	_____		12:30	_____
12:45	_____		12:45	_____
1:00	_____		1:00	_____
1:15	_____		1:15	_____
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3:15	_____		3:15	_____
3:30	_____		3:30	_____
3:45	_____		3:45	_____
4:00	_____		4:00	_____
4:15	_____		4:15	_____
4:30	_____		4:30	_____
4:45	_____		4:45	_____

Figure 2.3 Time management strategies can help us better use the time we do have by creating a schedule that works for our own time personality.⁹

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For **every hour in the classroom**, college students should spend, on average, about **two hours outside** of class reading, studying, writing papers, and so on. This is called the [Carnegie Hour 1:2 ratio](#) and it can help bring into perspective the amount of studying that is a minimum and then adjusted by the work load you experience. If you are a full-time student taking twelve units for this semester, then you need another 24 hours each week for the rest of your academic work:

12 unit class hrs/wk × 2 hrs outside of class = 24 hrs each week just for studying!

If you add up the 24 hours of studying outside of class, plus the 12 hours in class each week, you are spending at least 36 hours each week to School!!!! That is a big time commitment and almost a full-time job! If you work part time, time management skills are even more essential. These skills are still more important for part-time college students who work full time and commute or have a family. To succeed in college, virtually everyone has to develop effective strategies for dealing with time.

Look back at the number of hours you wrote in Activity 2.2 for a week of studying. Do you have two hours of study time for every hour you are in class? Many students begin college not knowing this much time is needed, so do not be surprised if you underestimated this number of hours. Remember, this is just an average amount of study time; you may need more or less for your own courses. If you feel overwhelmed to add in 24 hours into your week for studying, start by slowly adding in five to ten hours extra a week for studying and spread these hours throughout the week, so you feel that you still have time for fun!

Let's take a moment to reflect on time spent in and out of the classroom and identify some small changes you would like to make to ensure you are prioritizing your coursework, while balancing jobs, and family/friend obligations. Activity 2.4 will help you plan out what a typical week **should** look like:

Activity 2.4: Where Should Your Time Go?

1. Hours attending class
2. Study hours (2 times the number of class hours plus 5 or more hours extra)
3. Work, internships, and fixed volunteer time
4. Fixed life activities (sleeping, eating, hygiene, chores, transportation, etc.)
5. Now subtotal your hours so far and subtract that number from 168. How many hours are left? _____ Then portion out the remaining hours for "discretionary activities" (things you don't have to do for school, work, or a healthy life).
6. Discretionary activities

Category of activity & number of hours per week

Attending class _____

Studying, reading, and researching (outside of class) _____

Working (employment) _____

Volunteer service or internship _____

Sleeping _____
Eating (including preparing food) _____
Personal hygiene (i.e., bathing, etc.) _____
Chores, cleaning, errands, shopping, etc. _____
Transportation to work or school _____
Getting to classes (walking, biking, etc.) _____

Subtotal: _____

Discretionary activities:

Organized group activities (clubs, church services, etc.) _____
Time with friends (include television, video games, etc.) _____
Attending events (movies, parties, etc.) _____
Time alone (include television, video games, surfing the Web, etc.) _____
Exercise or sports activities _____
Reading for fun or other interests done alone _____
Talking on phone, e-mail, Facebook, etc. _____
Other—specify: _____
Other—specify: _____

Note: If you find you have almost no time left for discretionary activities, you may be overestimating how much time you need for eating, errands, and the like.

Activity 2.4 shows most college students that they do actually have plenty of time for their studies without losing sleep or giving up their social life. But you may have less time for discretionary activities than in the past. *Something, somewhere has to give.* That’s part of time management—and why it’s important to keep your goals and priorities in mind.

Strategies for Success

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

- **Prepare to be successful.** When planning ahead for studying, think yourself into the right mood. Focus on the positive. “When I get these chapters read tonight, I’ll be ahead in studying for the next test, and I’ll also have plenty of time tomorrow to do X.” Visualize yourself studying well!
- **Use your best—and most appropriate—time of day.** Different tasks require different mental skills. Some kinds of studying you may be able to start first thing in the morning as you wake, while others need your most alert moments at another time.
- **Break up large projects into small pieces.** Whether it is writing a paper for class, studying for a final exam, or reading a long assignment or full book, students often feel daunted at the beginning of a large project. It is easier to get going if you break it up into stages that you schedule at separate times—and then begin with the first section that requires only an hour or two.

- **Do the most important studying first.** When two or more things require your attention, do the more crucial one first. If something happens and you can't complete everything, you will suffer less if the most crucial work is done.
- **If you have trouble getting started, do an easier task first.** Like large tasks, complex or difficult ones can be daunting. If you cannot get going, switch to an easier task you can accomplish quickly. That will give you momentum, and often you feel more confident tackling the difficult task after being successful in the first one.
- **Take a break.** We all need breaks to help us concentrate without becoming fatigued and burned out. As a general rule, a short break every hour or so is effective in helping recharge your study energy. Get up and move around to get your blood flowing, clear your thoughts, and work off stress.
- **Use unscheduled times to work ahead.** You have scheduled to read a hundred pages later today for Sociology, but you have the textbook with you as you are waiting for the bus. Start reading now, or flip through the chapter to get a sense of what you will be reading later. Either way, you will save time later. You may be amazed how much studying you can get done during downtimes throughout the day.
- **Just say no.** Always tell others nearby when you are studying, to reduce the chances of being interrupted. Still, interruptions happen, and if you are in a situation where you are frequently interrupted by a family member, spouse, roommate, or friend, it helps to have your "no" prepared in advance: "No, I really have to be ready for this test" or "That's a great idea, but let's do it tomorrow—I just can't today." You should not feel bad about saying no and prioritizing your study time.

Time-Management Tools

Planners/Calendars

Planners are an effective way to organize your time. Many types of year-long calendar planners are commercially available and College of the Canyons has their own academic planner that is **FREE** for students through the Counseling Office. Our academic planner includes important dates/deadlines for the current year-long semester, information about student services on campus, and other helpful hints to help you succeed.

There are other planners designed for goal-setting and journaling. You can find these through Pinterest and Etsy accounts, social media account links, or just by Googling. Some people like a page for each day, and some like a week at a time. You can also use the calendar on your phone or download a calendar/planner app. Almost any system will work well if you use it consistently.

Some students will use an academic planner for school and then set reminders on their phones for other things such as appointments, errands, etc. If using a planner only for your classes, it will be important when starting new classes to check the syllabus for each of your courses and write important dates. If your planner has pages for the whole semester, write in all exams and deadlines. Use red ink or a highlighter for these key dates.

If you do not want to go to all the trouble of purchasing a planner, you can also use the **“Weekly Planner”** in **Figure 2.4** and write any deadlines for the week. You will need to remember to print a blank copy for each week, but it can be a great way try out scheduling your time if you are not accustomed to doing so.

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

Figure 2.4 Blank Weekly Planner Template.¹⁰

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HOURS	Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
6-7 AM	[Wavy line]						
9-10		Math		Math		Math	
10-11	Bike ride??		History		History		Work
11-12 PM		English	lunch	English	lunch	English	
12-1	Work	lunch	start English paper	lunch		lunch	
		A&P	Gym	A&P	Gym	A&P test today	
		study A&P	do math problems	study A&P	do math problems		
	cat	Work	cat	Work	cat	cat	
	History					movie tonight?	
9-10	Math Problems	read English ↓	study for A&P test	read history ↓	study for A&P test		Party at JP's ↓
10-11							
11-12 AM							
12-1	[Wavy line]						

Figure 2.5 Filled in Weekly Planner.¹¹

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When using a weekly planner like in Figure 2.4, remember that for every hour spent in class, plan an average of two hours studying outside of class. These are the time periods you now want to schedule in your planner (remember the [Carnegie Hour 1:2 ratio](#)). These times change from week to week, with one course requiring more time in one week because of a paper due at the end of the week and a different course requiring more the next week because of a major exam. Make sure you block out enough hours in the week to accomplish what you need to do. As you choose your study times, consider what times of day you are at your best and what times you prefer to use for social or other activities.

Once you have your weekly calendar filled out, similar to **Figure 2.5**, you will want to consider the following for successful schedule planning:

- Studying is often most effective immediately after a class meeting with the material still fresh in your mind. If your schedule allows, block out appropriate study time after class periods.
- Do not overdo it. Few people can study four or five hours nonstop, and scheduling extended time periods like that may just set you up for failure.
- Schedule social events that occur at set times, but just leave holes in your schedule for other activities. Enjoy those open times and recharge your energies!
- Plan to use your time between classes wisely. If three days a week you have the same hour free between two classes, what should you do with those three hours? Maybe you need to eat, walk around to stretch your legs, or run an errand. But say you have an average forty minutes free at that time on each day. Instead of just frittering the time away, use it to review your notes from the previous class or for the coming class or to read a short assignment. Over the whole term, that forty minutes three times a week adds up to a lot of study time.
- If a study activity is taking longer than you had scheduled, look ahead and adjust your weekly planner to prevent the stress of feeling behind.
- If you are not paying close attention to everything in your planner, use a colored highlighter to mark the times blocked out for really important things.

Reminders and Task Lists

Many students have mentioned that setting reminders on their phones, based on what has been scheduled into their calendars, has really helped them manage their time. Some students will use the standard alerts/reminders already incorporated into their phone calendars or they will download a reminder app. Both of these options are very popular with our students.

Another add-on to calendars and planners are task lists. These can be used for daily use or to highlight what is a priority for the week. In Figure 2.6, you will see two different task lists based on what the students' need is.

Do — Weds

Read A+P Ch 4 before class
 Math 9-10 —then do probs.
 for next class
 Eng 11-12
 History Study group at **meet**
 lunch — Coramons? **12:15**

A+P 1-2 today!!

Need new parking sticker!
 Start Eng. paper —
 brainstorm topic
 Gym for an hour?
 Bookstore — printer cartridge
ATM — cash
 answer Dad's e-mail
 Work at 4 — call Pat after

Weds to do

9-10 math
 11-12 Eng
 1-2 A&P
 read A&P ch 4 before class (A)
 12:15-1 History study group
 4- go to work

(A)

do math problems after class
 go to gym to workout (C)
 need new parking sticker (A)
 brainstorm Eng. paper (A)
 topic
 get printer cart. — bookstore
 answer Dad's e-mail (B)
 ATM cash (C)
 Call Pat after work (A)

Figure 2.6 Student's To Do List.¹²

Here are some more tips for effectively using your daily task list:

- Be specific: “*Read history chapter 2 (30 pages)*”—not “*History homework.*”
- Put important things high on your list where you will see them every time you check the list.
- Make your list at the same time every day so that it becomes a habit.
- Do not make your list overwhelming. If you add *everything* you eventually need to do, you could end up with so many things on the list that you would never read through them all.
 - o **Author's note:** I usually stick with only adding up to five items to my task lists, to keep it manageable and realistic, depending on how busy my schedule gets.
- Use your list. Lists often include little things that may take only a few minutes to do, so check your list any time during the day you have a moment free
- Cross out or check off things after you have done them—doing this becomes rewarding.

¹² Image is licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

- Do not use your to-do list to procrastinate. Do not pull it out to find something else you just “have” to do instead of studying!

CHAPTER TAKEAWAYS

- People “use” time very differently. To develop strategies for managing your time, discover your time personality and observe how much time you spend in different activities in the course of a week.
- Plan your schedule with two hours of study time for each hour in class. Use your most alert times of day, break up large tasks into smaller pieces and stages, take breaks to help you stay focused, avoid distractions, and reward yourself for successful accomplishments.
- Procrastination has many different causes for different people but is a problem for most students.
- Different techniques can help you battle procrastination so you can get the job done.
- Use a weekly calendar planner to block out study times and plan well ahead for examinations and key assignments to achieve success in school.
- Use a daily task list along with your weekly planner to avoid overlooking even smaller tasks and to make the most of your time throughout the day.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW

- It is important to have SMART goals that are specific, measureable, attainable, realistic, time oriented. Goals help you set priorities and remain motivated and committed to your college success.
- Procrastination is normal and happens to many students, especially when taking courses you may not like. Identifying the reasons for procrastinating and building in time-management steps can help reduce avoiding coursework and keep you on track.
- Time-management is an essential skill for college and in life. Similar to learning a new skill or hobby, good time-management is continuously practiced to fit your needs and can help you accomplish your goals quicker.
- Using time-management success strategies and tools will assist you in every semester you are in college, can help reduce stress and anxiety for homework and exams, and allow you to have more balance in your busy life.

CHAPTER 3: STUDY SKILLS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understanding the role of learning styles and the learning cycle
2. Assessing your habits around study strategies
3. Analyzing reading, note-taking, and test-taking strategies

Ah, study habits...it is a topic that many students have mixed feelings about. Some will state that they have great habits while other students will complain that they study, but they cannot pass their classes with more than a “C” grade. I was told once that building good study skills was like playing chess – it takes some time, some patience, and a lot of strategy! I did not learn good study habits until I entered my bachelor’s program where it became glaringly apparent how weak I was in certain areas such as note-taking and test-taking.



Figure 3.1 Lecture Hall.¹³

3.1 LEARNING STYLES

Before we go further, let’s take a moment to assess your learning style. How you learn or how you process information, is critical for you in mastering and incorporating study strategies that

¹³ [Image](#) by [Mikael Kristenson](#) on Unsplash.

match your needs. Students may prefer hearing a lecture (auditory learners), others may prefer written lecture notes, handouts, and reading from a textbook (verbal learners), while others may prefer to take in information by walking around and/or using their hands to learn (kinesthetic and tactile learners). Or, you may prefer a combination of several learning styles depending on which classes you are taking.

College instructors also have different teaching styles, which may or may not match up well with your learning style. Although you may personally learn best from a certain style of teaching, you cannot expect that your instructors will use exactly the style that is best for you. Therefore, it is important to know how to adapt to teaching styles used in college.

There are different approaches to learning styles, and one of them is called the VARK approach, which focuses on learning through different senses (**V**isual, **A**ural, **R**eading/**W**riting, and **K**inesthetic):

- Visual learners prefer images, charts, and the like.
- Aural learners learn better by listening, such as through lectures or talking with others.
- Reading/writing learners learn better through written language, such as handouts, articles and textbooks.
- Kinesthetic learners learn through physically walking through a process, practicing, and doing through action.



Pin It! VARK Learning Style

You can take a free, self-scored online assessment of your VARK learning style at: http://www.businessballs.com/freepdfmaterials/vak_learning_styles_questionnaire.pdf.

Just knowing your learning style, however, does not automatically provide a solution for how to do your best in your college courses. For example, although you may be a kinesthetic learner, you will likely still have textbook reading assignments (verbal learning) as well as lecture classes (aural). All students need to adapt to other ways of learning course material, and this will help transition us into understanding the *Learning Cycle*.

3.2 LEARNING CYCLE

Learning an academic subject means really understanding it, being able to think about it in meaningful ways and to apply that understanding in new situations. This is very different from simply memorizing concepts from notecards and repeating it back on a test. Academic learning occurs most effectively in a cycle of four steps:

1. Preparing
2. Absorbing
3. Capturing
4. Reviewing

First, think about the different situations in which you learn. Obviously you learn during class, whether by listening to the instructor speak or in class discussions in which you participate. But, you also learn while reading your textbooks and other materials outside of class. You learn when you talk with an instructor during office hours. You learn by talking with other students informally in study groups. You learn when you study your class notes before an exam. All of these different learning situations involve the same four-step process.

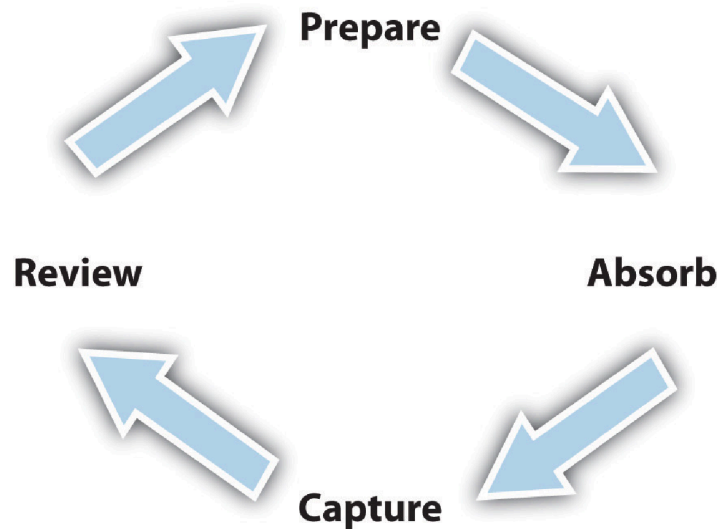


Figure 3.2 The Learning Cycle.¹⁴

Prepare

Alex rolls out of bed, quickly rushes to class and slides into an empty seat just as the instructor begins their lecture; it takes him a few minutes to find the right notebook in his backpack, and then he cannot find a pencil. He is thinking about how he should have set his alarm a little earlier so he would have had time to grab a cup of coffee, since he is having trouble waking up. Finally he settles in his seat and starts listening to the lecture, but now he cannot figure out what the instructor is talking about. He starts jotting down phrases in his notes anyway, thinking he will figure it out later.

Serena is in the same class as Alex, and has been rereading notes from the previous class and quickly reviewing passages she had highlighted in the textbook reading the night before. She arrives to class a few minutes early, sits up front where she can hear well, and has her notebook open and pencil out. While waiting for the instructor to arrive, she talks to another student about her ideas for the paper due next week in this class.

It is obvious which of these students will learn more during today's class lecture. One has prepared and the other has not, and they will experience a huge difference in their understanding of today's topic. **Preparing to learn** is the first step for learning. The same is true

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when you sit down to read your textbook, to study for an exam, or to work on an out-of-class project. Partly you are putting yourself in the right mind-set to learn. But when you review yesterday's notes to prepare for today's class, you are also solidifying yesterday's learning.

Absorb

Absorbing refers to the actual taking in of new ideas, information, or experience. This is what happens at the moment a student listens to a class lecture or reads a textbook. They listened to what the instructor said and “regurgitated” it back on the test. This has been how many students believe how studying is done and do not know otherwise. But, this method of learning will not work in college because learning now requires *understanding* the topic, not just repeating facts or information.

Capturing

Capturing refers to taking notes. No matter how good your memory is, you need to take good notes in college simply because there is so much to learn. Just hearing something once is seldom enough. You have to go back over the material again, sometimes several times again, thinking about it and seeing how it all fits together. The more effective your note-taking skills are, the better your learning abilities will be. Take notes also when reading your textbooks. We will discuss note-taking strategies within this chapter.

Reviewing

The step of *reviewing*, which entails your class notes, your textbook reading and notes, and any other course materials such as videos, online news articles/journals, podcasts, blogs and so on – is the next step for solidifying your learning and reaching a real understanding of the topic. Reviewing is also a way to prepare for learning new information and ideas. That is why this is a learning cycle: the end of the process loops back to the beginning as you prepare for additional learning. Reviewing is also the step in which you discover whether you really understand the material or if you need to fill in some missing pieces of information. If you do not understand a topic or concept fully, you may need to reread a section of the book, talk it over with a friend in the class, or go see your instructor.

Activity 3.1: Learning Styles

1. Number each the following actions to put them in the correct order of the four steps of the learning cycle:
 Review your class notes to make sure you understand.
 Listen carefully to what your instructor says.
 Prepare for today's class by looking over your notes on the reading you did for today.
 Take effective notes.
2. How would you describe your personal learning style?

Name an activity from which you generally learn very well.

Name a type of learning experience you may have difficulty with.

For the activity above, list at least two strategies you can use to improve your learning effectiveness when in that situation next time.

3. If you experience a situation in which your personal learning style seems to clash hopelessly with an instructor's teaching style, what is your best course of action?
 - a. Ask the instructor to teach in a different way.
 - b. Drop the class.
 - c. Adapt your style or study with other students.
 - d. Complain to the dean.

3.3 ACTIVE LISTENING

You listen to others in many situations: to interact with friends, to get instructions for a task, or to learn new material. There are two general types of listening situations: where you will be able to interact freely with the speaker (everyday conversations, small discussion classes, work meetings) and where interaction is limited (lectures, podcasts, vlogs). In interactive situations, you should apply the basic principles of active listening. These are not hard concepts to understand, but they are hard to implement and require practice to use them effectively.



Pin It! Principles of Active Listening

1. Focus on what is being said. Give the speaker your undivided attention. Clear your mind of anything else. Do not prejudge. You want to understand what the person is saying; you do not need to agree with it.
2. Repeat what you just heard. Confirm with the speaker that what you heard is what he or she said.
3. Ask the speaker to expand or clarify. If you are unsure you understand, ask questions; do not assume.
4. Look for nonverbal signals as well as the words used. Nonverbal messages come from facial expressions, body positioning, arm gestures, and tone of voice. Confirm these body language messages just as you would verbal messages by saying, for example, *"You seem very excited about this idea."*
5. Listen for requests. A speaker will often hide a request as a statement of a problem. If a friend says, *"I hate math!"* this may mean, *"Can you help me figure out a solution to this problem?"*

Activity 3.2 Listening With Your Whole Body

Take out a piece of paper and create two columns – a left and right column

Think of a person you consider an excellent listener. Picture that person clearly in your mind. Focus on what they do, not what they are saying. Describe what actions and postures they use to show how they are listening. Put this list on the left-hand side of the page.

Think of a person you consider a poor listener. Picture that person clearly in your mind. Focus on what they do, not what they are saying. Describe what actions and postures they use to show they are not listening. Put this list on the right-hand side of the page.

Now compare these lists with your own behavior. How many of the body language signals from each side do you think you exhibit? How can you add more of the left column's attitudes and actions to your own behaviors? How can you control those behaviors you recognize in yourself from the right column?

Listening in a classroom or lecture hall to learn can be challenging because you are limited by how – and how much – you can interact with an instructor during the class. The following strategies help make listening at lectures more effective and learning more fun:

1. **Get your mind in the right space.** Prepare yourself mentally to receive the information the speaker is presenting by following the previous prep questions and by doing your assignments (instructors build upon work presented earlier).
2. **Get yourself in the right space.** Sit toward the front of the room where you can make eye contact with the instructor easily. Most instructors read the body language of the students in the front rows to gauge how they are doing and if they are losing the class. Instructors also believe students who sit near the front of the room take their subject more seriously and are more willing to give them help when needed or to give them the benefit of the doubt when making a judgment call while assigning grades.
3. **Focus on what is being said.** Eliminate distractions. Turn your cell phone off and pack it away in your backpack. If you are using your laptop for notes, close all applications except the one that you use to take notes. Clear your mind and keep quiet. Listen for new ideas. Think like an investigative reporter: you don't just want to accept what is being said passively—you want to question the material and be convinced that it makes sense.
4. **Look for signals.** Each instructor has a different way of telling you what is important. Some will repeat or paraphrase an idea; others will raise (or lower) their voices; still others will write related words on the board. Learn what signals your instructors tend to use and be on the lookout for them. When they use that tactic, the idea they are presenting needs to go in your notes and in your mind—and don't be surprised if it appears on a test or quiz!
5. **Listen for what is not being said.** If an instructor doesn't cover a subject, or covers it only minimally, this signals that that material is not as important as other ideas covered in greater length.

6. **Sort the information.** Decide what is important and what is not, what is clear and what is confusing, and what is new material and what is review. This mental organizing will help you remember the information, take better notes, and ask better questions.
7. **Take notes.** We cover taking notes in much greater detail later in this chapter, but for now think about how taking notes can help recall what your instructor said and how notes can help you organize your thoughts for asking questions.
8. **Ask questions.** Asking questions is one of the most important things you can do in class. Most obviously it allows you to clear up any doubts you may have about the material, but it also helps you take ownership of (and therefore remember) the material. Good questions often help instructors expand upon their ideas and make the material more relevant to students. Thinking through the material critically in order to prepare your questions helps you organize your new knowledge and sort it into mental categories that will help you remember it.

3.4 ACTIVE READING

Your first step in any reading assignment is to understand the context of what you are about to read. Think of your reading assignment in relation to the large themes or goals for your course. You are not merely reading just to read – you are reading for a purpose. Based on what instructions you have been given about what to read, start thinking about some questions you want answered such as what parts of a reading assignment should you pay special attention to and what parts can you browse through? You will be expected to do a considerable amount of reading in college even for classes you may have thought had little reading in them. You will not be able to get through all your reading material by reading each and every word with a high level of focus and mental intensity. This is why it is so important to learn where to invest your reading efforts.

Before starting to read for one of your classes, begin by surveying the amount of reading you will need to do such as how many pages and is the material easy to read or more dense in theoretical, academic language? Then, identify some other pieces of information:

- Chapter headings
- Subheadings
- Graphs/pictures
- Activities, case studies, or any other boxed text
- Bolded words, underlined concepts, videos/links, words you are unsure about

Taking in all this information before you start reading can help you identify what you will be reading about and how to possibly organize your note-taking strategies. Also, it will help determine how much time you should spend on the reading. You may discover that you only need to cover a couple of concepts and could be done with the reading very quickly. Or, you may find that you have several chapters or concepts to cover and should dedicate more time to finish all the reading.

One strategy that can be helpful is reading in chunks of information. **Chunking** is a way to break up the reading you need to do into more manageable parts then check your understanding before reading some more. You can look at your textbook or paperback and chunk material into paragraphs or pages. If your reading material is easy to understand, you might decide that at every 5-10 pages, you will review what you covered, take notes on concepts or ideas you are not sure about, and then move onto the next 5-10 pages of material. If your reading is more dense, similar to what you will find in textbooks, you may decide to chunk information into 1-2 paragraphs, take notes on concepts or ideas, before moving onto the next few paragraphs.

By breaking your reading into chunks of information, you will more likely stay actively engaged in the reading. Another active reading strategy is called **SQ3R – Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Recall**.

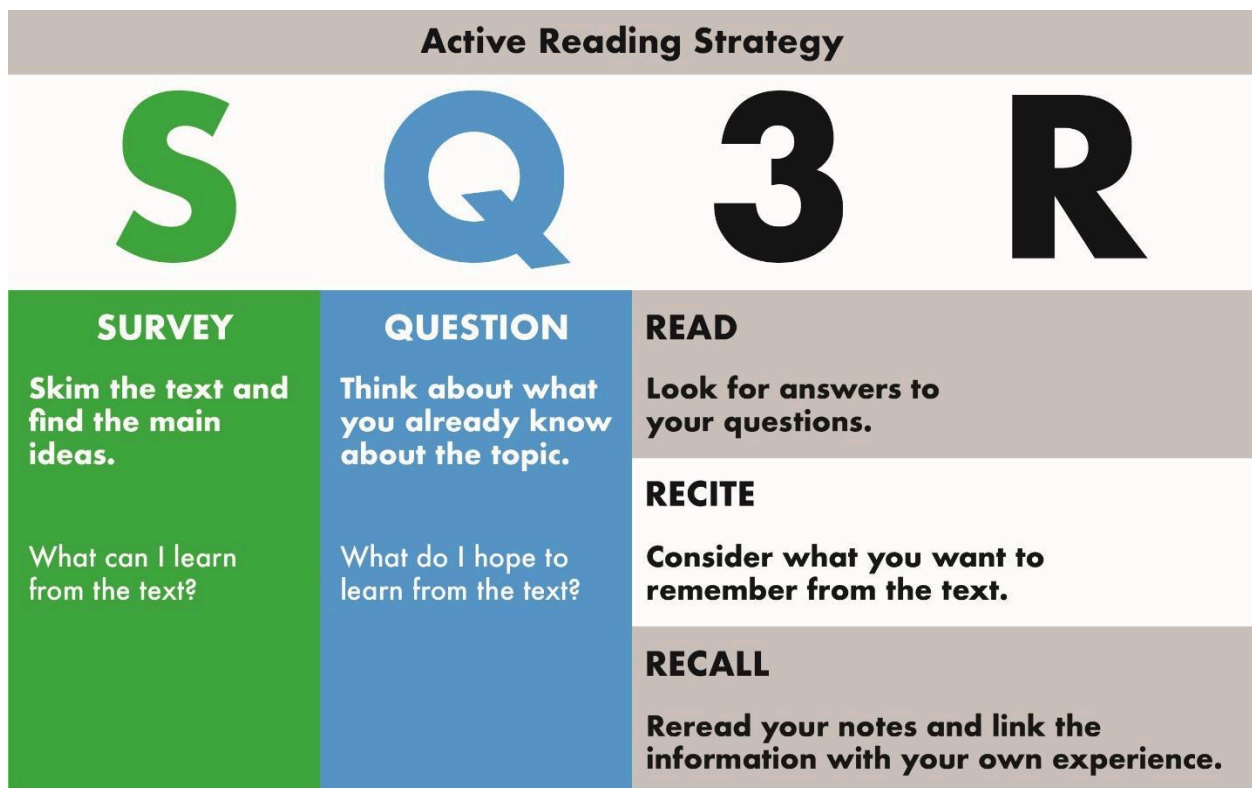


Figure 3.3 SQ3R.¹⁵

Step 1: Survey – What Can I Learn From The Text?

Before reading, skim the material...

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

¹⁵ Image by [Ian Joslin](#) is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)

Step 2: Question – What Do I Hope To Learn From The Text?

Before reading a section, formulate questions and the do following...

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

Step 3: Read – What Are The Answers To Your Questions?

- Read captions under images and diagrams, and look for highlighted information
- Stop and reread difficult and unclear parts.
- Not all the underlined, italicized, bold printed words or phrases.
- Study tables, graphs, and charts
- Read one section at a time

Step 4: Recite – What Do You Want To Remember From The Information Obtained?

- Think about what you’ve read and summarize the main ideas expressed in the text
- If you do not understand something, reread that section
- Take notes, expressing ideas in your own words
- Reciting:
 - The more you use your five senses, the more likely you are to remember what you read.
 - Work with the information you are learning through seeing, hearing, saying (reciting), and writing

Step 5: Recall – How Can You Link the Information To Your Own Experiences?

- After reading the whole text, reread your own notes and pay attention to the main ideas and connections between ideas.
- Connect what you have learned to your own experiences and other sources of information from other classes and other areas of your life.
 - The Recall process is ongoing as you take in more reading material.

3.5 NOTE-TAKING

Everybody takes notes...or at least everybody claims to. But, if you take a closer look, many who are claiming to take notes on their laptops are actually surfing the internet, and paper notebooks are filled with doodles interrupted by a couple of random words with an asterisk next to them reminding you that “This is important!”

In college, these approaches will not work. In college, your instructors expect *you* to make connections between class lectures and reading assignments; they expect *you* to create an

opinion about the material presented; they expect *you* to make connections between the material and life beyond college. Your notes are your road maps for these thoughts. Do you take good notes? After learning to listen, note taking is the most important skill to ensure your success in a class.

Effective note taking is important because it

- supports your listening efforts,
- allows you to test your understanding of the material,
- helps you remember the material better when you write key ideas down,
- gives you a sense of what the instructor thinks is important,
- Create your “ultimate study guide.”

There are various forms of note-taking strategies and which one you choose depends on both your personal style and the instructor’s approach to the material. Each strategy can be used in a notebook, index cards, or typed formats. No specific type is good for all students and all situations, so we recommend that you develop your own style, but you should also be ready to modify it to fit the needs of a specific class or instructor. To be effective, all of these methods require you to listen actively and to think; merely jotting down words the instructor is saying will be of little use to you.

Table 3.3 Note-Taking Strategies

Method	Description	When to Use
Lists	A sequential listing of ideas as they are presented. Lists may be short phrases or complete paragraphs describing ideas in more detail.	This method is what most students use as a fallback if they haven’t learned other methods. This method typically requires a lot of writing, and you may find that you are not keeping up with the professor. It is not easy for students to prioritize ideas in this method.
Harvard Outline Method	The Harvard Outline Method places most important ideas along the left margin, which are numbered with roman numerals. Supporting ideas to these main concepts are indented and are noted with capital letters. Under each of these ideas, further detail can be added, designated with an Arabic number, a lowercase letter, and so forth.	A good method to use when material presented by the instructor is well organized. Easy to use when taking notes on your computer.
Concept Maps	When designing a concept map, place a central idea in the center of the page and then add lines and new circles in the page for	Great method to show relationships among ideas. Also good if the instructor tends to

Method	Description	When to Use
	new ideas. Use arrows and lines to connect the various ideas.	hop from one idea to another and back.
Cornell Method	The Cornell method uses a two-column approach. The left column takes up no more than a third of the page and is often referred to as the “cue” or “recall” column. The right column (about two-thirds of the page) is used for taking notes using any of the methods described above or a combination of them. After class or completing the reading, review your notes and write the key ideas and concepts or questions in the left column. You may also include a summary box at the bottom of the page, in which to write a summary of the class or reading in your own words.	The Cornell method can include any of the methods above and provides a useful format for calling out key concepts, prioritizing ideas, and organizing review work. Most colleges recommend using some form of the Cornell method.

The List Method

The **List Method** is usually not the best choice because it is focused exclusively on capturing as much of what the instructor says as possible, without fully processing the information. Even if you are skilled in some form of shorthand, you should probably also learn one of the other methods described here, because they are all better at helping you process and remember the material. You may want to take notes in class using the list method, but transcribe your notes to an outline or concept map method after class as a part of your review process. It is always important to review your notes as soon as possible after class, make notes of missing information or what you need clarified, and try to summarize the lecture in your own words.

Learning Cycle

9/05

Prof. Jones

p. 1

students

The learning cycle is an approach to gathering and retaining info that can help ^{students} be successful in Col. The cycle consists of 4 steps which should all be app'd. They are preparing, which sets the foundation for learning, absorbing, which exposes us to new knowledge, capturing, which sets the information into our knowledge base and finally reviewing and applying which lets us set the know. into our memory and use it.

Preparing for learning can involve mental preparation, physical preps and oper. prep. Mental prep includes setting learning goals for self based on what we know the class w/ cover (see syllabus). Also it is very important to do any assignments for the class to be able to learn w/ confidence and

Physical Prep means having enough rest and eating well. Its hard to study when you are hungry and you won't listen well in class if you doze off.

Operation Prep means bringing all supplies to class, or having them at hand when studying...this includes pens, paper, computer, text book, etc. Also means getting to school on time and getting a good seat (near the front).

Absorbing new knowledge is a combination of listening and reading. These are two of the most important learning skills you can have



Figure 3.4 The List Method.¹⁶

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The Harvard Outline Method

The **Harvard Outline Method** allows you to prioritize the material as you listen to lectures:

- I. Key ideas are written to the left of the page
 - A. supporting ideas are then indented
 - i. and details of the supporting ideas can be indented further.
- II. To further organize your ideas, you can use the typical outlining numbering scheme starting with roman numerals for key ideas,
 - A. moving to capital letters on the first supporting level,
 - i. Arabic numbers for the next level,
 - a) and lowercase letters following
- III. At first you may have trouble identifying when the instructor moves from one idea to another.
 - A. This takes practice and experience with each instructor, so do not give up!
 - i. In the early stages you should use your syllabus to determine what key ideas the instructor plans to present in class that day.
 - a) Your reading assignments before class can also give you guidance in identifying the key ideas.

Learning is a Cycle made up of 4 steps

- I. Preparing: Setting the Foundation for Learning
- II. Absorbing: (Data Input) Exposure to new knowledge
- III. Capturing: Taking ownership of the knowledge
- IV. Review & Apply: Putting new knowledge to work

I. Preparing:

A-Mental Prep -

- 1- Do Assignments - New knowledge is built on prior knowledge
 - a) Assignments from prior classes
 - b) Readings! (May not have been assigned in class - see Syllabus!)
- 2- Review Syllabus
 - a) Know what instructor expects to cover
 - b) Know what assignments you need to do
 - c) Set yr. own obj.

~~B~~
B-Physical Prep

- 1- Get right amount of rest - Don't zzz in class.
- 2- ~~Eat~~ Eat right - Hard to focus when you are hungry.
- 3- Arrive on time.

C-Practical Prep: (Organizational Prep)

- 1- Bring right supplies - (Notebooks, Texts, Pens, etc.)
- 3- Sit in the front of class
- 2- Arrive on time
 - a) Get organized and ready to listen
 - b) Don't interrupt the focus of others
 - c) Get a good seat

Figure 3.5 The Harvard Outline Method.¹⁷

¹⁷ Image licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

The Concept Map Method

To develop a **Concept Map**, you can use the topic your instructor will be lecturing on, to rank the ideas you will listen to by level of detail (from high-level/abstract ideas to detailed facts). Start your concept map by choosing the main idea (high level or abstract) from the instructor's lecture and place it in the middle of the page with a circle around it.

Then create branches off the circle to record the more detailed information, creating additional limbs as you need them. Arrange the branches with others that interrelate closely. When a new high-level idea is presented, create a new circle somewhere on your page with its own branches. Link together circles or concepts that are related by using arrows and symbols to capture the relationship between the ideas. For example, an arrow may be used to illustrate cause/effect, a double-pointed arrow to illustrate dependence, or a dotted arrow to illustrate impact or effect.

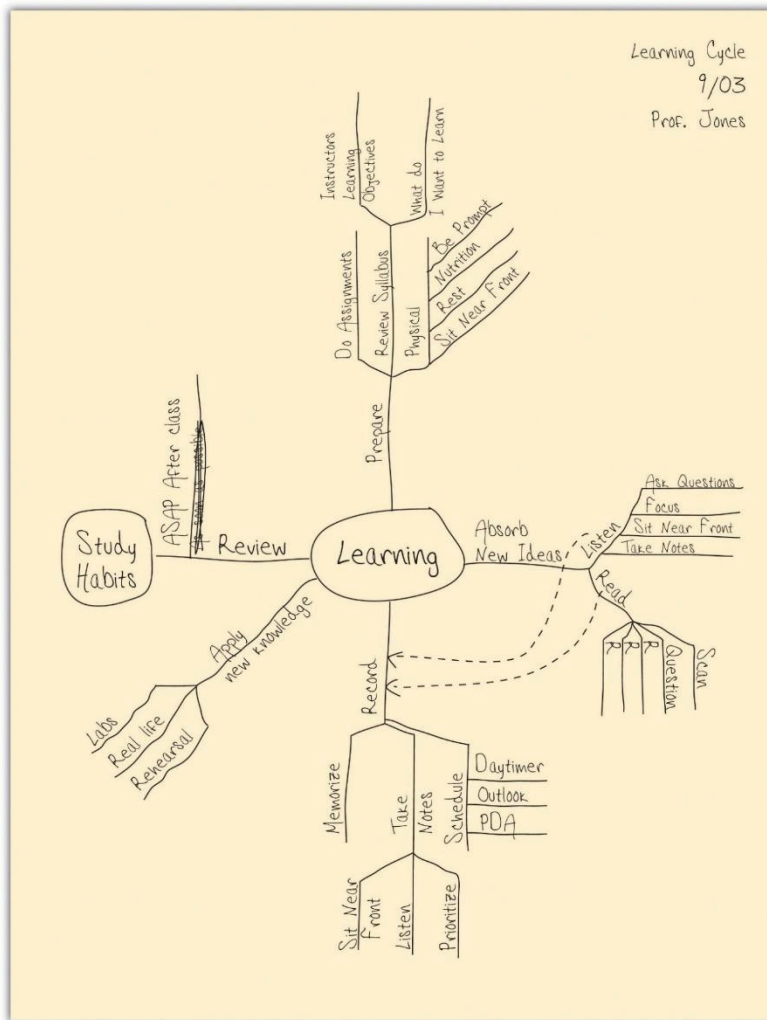


Figure 3.6 The Concept Map Method.¹⁸

¹⁸ [Image](#) licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike](#).

The Cornell Method

The **Cornell Method** was developed in the 1950s by Professor Walter Pauk at Cornell University. It is recommended by most colleges because of its usefulness and flexibility. This method is simple to use for capturing notes, is helpful for defining priorities, and is a very helpful study tool. The Cornell Method follows a very specific format that consists of three boxes: A-Notes; B-Questions, and C-Summary – see picture below.

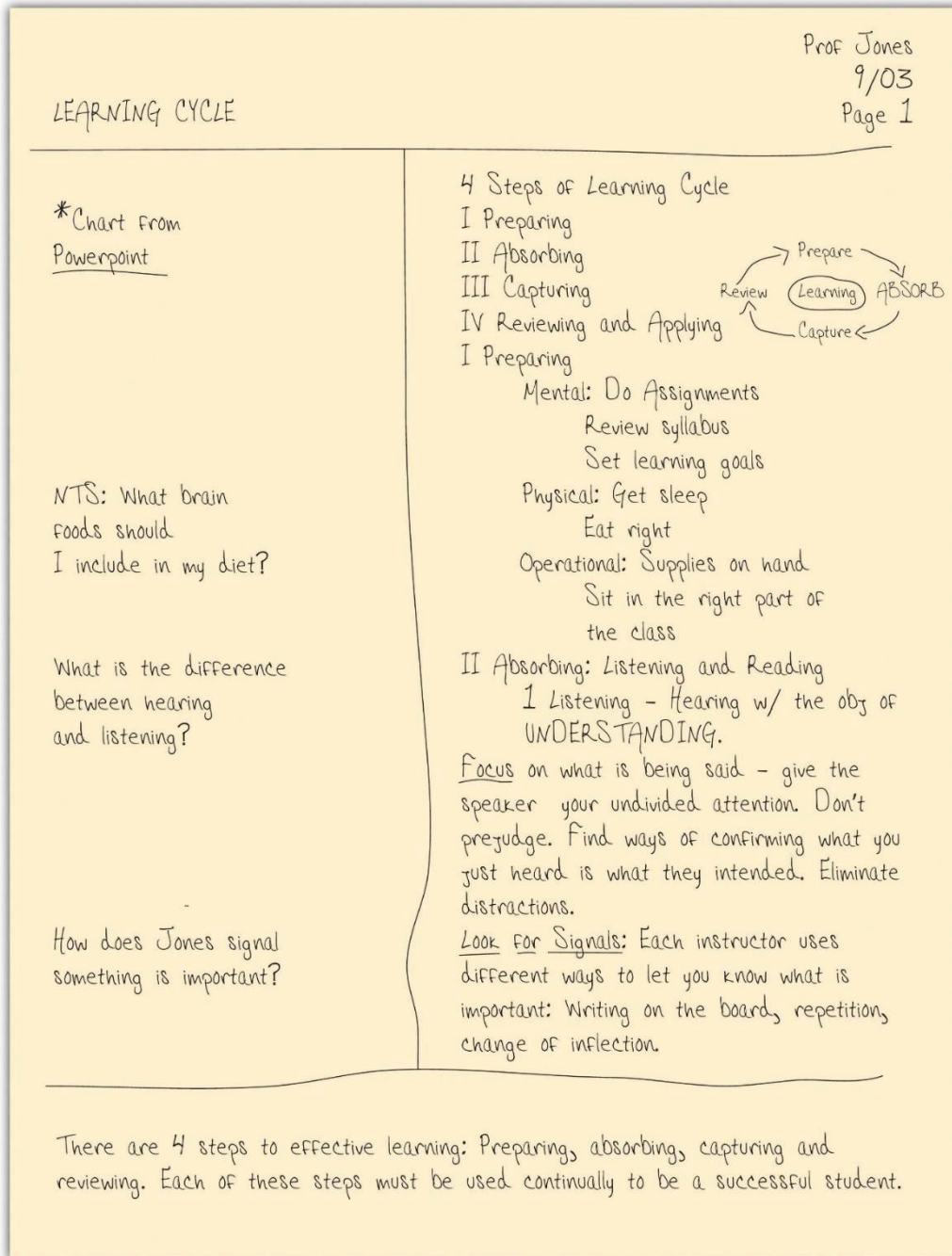


Figure 3.7 The Cornell Method.¹⁹

¹⁹ [Image](#) licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike](#).

Column A will be where you take your notes from the lecture, using one of the note-taking methods mentioned earlier. You will want to underline keywords or possibly highlight main ideas. **Column B** will be where you will formulate questions based on your notes. These questions can be used to test your knowledge on the topic, possible questions the instructor might use for a quiz or exam, where you need to clarify information, or where you got stuck. **Column C** will be a summary of the lecture, which you will try to write without looking at your notes. This can help quickly test your memory on what you understood of the lecture material.

Activity 3.4: Taking Note

Choose one of your classes where you normally take notes. Make a conscious effort to use the Cornell method with either the outline or concept map method for taking your notes. Follow as many steps listed previously as possible. Now compare these notes with those you took in the previous class. Are your new notes more useful? What did you like about taking notes this way? What are some of the things you need to work on improving? (Remember this will get much easier with more practice.) Write your thoughts here.

3.6 TEST-TAKING

Have you ever participated in an athletic event? Completed a crossword puzzle? Acted in a play? Cooked dinner? Taken a driver’s test or licensing exam? Prepared a budget or your taxes? All of these common life situations are forms of tests because they measure how much we know about a specific subject at a single point in time. They alone are not good measurements about how smart or gifted you are. We can learn from how we have performed and we can think about how to apply what we have learned to do even better next time. We can have fun measuring our progress.

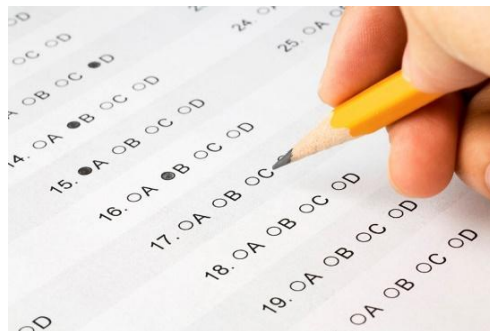


Figure 3.8 Fill in the Bubble.²⁰

Many of our daily activities are measurements of progress toward mastery of skills or knowledge. We welcome these opportunities as both work and fun. But, when these opportunities are part of our academic life, we often dread them and rarely feel any sense of fun. In reality, however, academic tests are similar to real-life tests in the following ways:

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

Academic tests in college are different from those you took in high school. College instructors expect to see much more of *you* in an exam: your thoughts, your interpretations, your thinking process, your conclusions. This is why you need to modify your study habits and your strategies for taking exams in college.

Pre-Test Behaviors

Before even taking a test, you should already be preparing through daily review and study sessions for your classes, either by yourself or with classmates. Every time you look over your notes, read some additional material, and make connects with information from lectures, you are preparing yourself for the next exam.

- **Gather your learning materials.** Take time to merge your class notes with your reading notes. How do your class notes complement each other or tell you about the material?
- **Ask questions based on class notes.** Can you start to identify keywords or concepts that might be on a test?
- **What is missing?** Do you need to reread a part of your text to fill in gaps from your notes? What aspects of the material do you have additional questions about or need clarification? Are there videos, handouts, or other books that can help expand your understanding of the lecture?
- **Note-taking.** Try to build in one of the note-taking strategies to capture more of the lecture. Are you able to summarize the most recent lecture or did you find that you zoned out during several parts of the lecture.
- **Working with the material.** Memorizing certain pieces of information for an exam will not help you imprint the knowledge into **long-term memory**. When students state they could not remember what they studied when they took a test, it was most likely due to ineffective study strategies and not working with the material. Find ways to make connections with the material through **mnemonics**, concept maps, creating your own mock test, or teach the material to your friends to determine areas you are still unclear on.

²⁰ Image by [Alberto G.](#) is licensed under [Attribution 2.0 Generic \(CC BY 2.0\)](#).

Test Day Behaviors

Trying to be mentally prepared for an exam can be stressful and if you are taking a full course-load of 12 units or more, you can anticipate taking a test several times throughout a semester or back-to-back during midterms or finals week. Think of each test as a chance to experiment on how well your study strategies are going. If you score a few points higher on your next exam, your study strategies are taking you in the right direction.

Let's pause for a moment to have an honest conversation about tests...students will have different perceptions of taking a test versus why the instructor wants students to take a test.

For students, the interpretation can be:

- To scare students or weed them out of a class
- The instructor was too lazy to lecture
- The instructor was bored and needed to fill up time in the schedule

For instructors, the interpretation can be:

- Checking for understanding that students are learning the material
- Identify areas in the curriculum that need to be clarified, adjusted, or taught differently
- Determine if the student learning outcomes for the course are being met

To help prepare yourself leading up to a test, there are a few things you want to accomplish such as getting a good night sleep several days before an exam and eating breakfast the day of your test. Getting enough sleep, not just the night before a test, but a few days before can really help you with feeling less stressed, well-rested, and a little more prepared for the exam. It is also good to eat a little breakfast the day of a test, to keep you sharp and not thinking about your growling stomach when you are trying to remember important dates for your History exam!

Try to get to your class earlier than you normally do, if possible, to help mentally prepare for your test. You can get situated in your usual seat and review your notes in a relaxed manner. If you notice that you are starting to get anxious about the test when other students start arriving and talking about possible test questions, feel free to step out of the classroom to take a few deep breaths to calm yourself. I could feel the anxiety levels skyrocket in some of my classes, and to help keep me balanced and focused on the exam, I would step out of the classroom, breath, give myself a little pep talk and then return to my seat.

As your instructor is giving you the instructions for the exam, listen for key details such as how much time you have to finish, if points will be given for partial answers, and if you can leave once you have turned in your test. Also, repeat this to yourself – multiple times if you have to...students who are finished with their test first *DOES NOT* mean that they have all the correct answers!! Students who earn high grades will take their time on tests, to ensure every question is answered, double-check that essay questions were answered with enough detail, and do not

worry about when other students complete their tests. Who cares which student is done with their test first; you focus on you and doing the best job you can on each exam.

On the last page, it was mentioned that tests are about strategy and here is some additional hints, tips, and tricks to help give you an extra boost for your next exam:

Table 3.4 Test Taking Strategy - LAB B2OWL

LAB B2OWL	DESCRIPTION
L	LOOK: Look over the entire exam before you start. Take care to read the directions, underline test words, and circle questions you don't fully understand.
A	ASK: If you have any questions at all, ask. For example, if the exam doesn't indicate total point allocation, be sure to ask your instructor.
B	BUDGET: Budget your time based on the point allocation for each question. For instance, let's say your exam has one essay question worth 50 percent, and 5 identifications worth 10 percent each. If you have two hours to take the test, this gives you one hour to complete the essay, and 10 minutes for each of the five short-answer questions. You will have 10 minutes in reserve to review your work before turning it in.
B2	BEGIN X 2: Begin with an easy question in order to build your confidence and get warmed up for the rest of the exam. Begin each answer with a thesis topic sentence. Restate the question in a single sentence to help you focus your answer.
O	OUTLINE: Be careful to write a quick outline for your essay on a separate page before you begin. This will help you organize your facts and focus your ideas. It might also serve to show your professor where you were going if you don't have time to finish.
W	WATCH: Watch for key testing words like <i>analyze</i> , <i>define</i> , <i>evaluate</i> , and <i>illustrate</i> . These help you understand what your professor will be looking for in an answer.
L	LOOK: Finally, look over your exam before turning it in to make sure you haven't missed anything important.

3.7 TEST ANXIETY

Activity 3.5 – Testing Your Test Anxiety

- T F I have a hard time starting to study for a test.
- T F When studying for an exam, I feel desperate or lost.
- T F When studying for an exam, I often feel bored and tired.
- T F I don't sleep well the night before an exam.

- T F My appetite changes the day of the exam. (I'm not hungry and skip meals or I overeat—especially high-sugar items like candy or ice cream.)
- T F When taking an exam, I am often confused or suffer mental blocks.
- T F When taking an exam, I feel panicky and my palms get sweaty.
- T F I'm usually in a bad mood after taking an exam.
- T F I usually score lower on exams than on papers, assignments, and projects.
- T F After an exam, I can remember things I couldn't recall during the exam.

If you answered **True** to any of the statements above, you have suffered some of the symptoms related to test anxiety. It is normal to feel stress before an exam, and in fact, that may be a good thing. Stress motivates you to study and review, generates adrenaline to help sharpen your reflexes and focus while taking the exam, and may even help you remember some of the material you need. But, suffering too many stress symptoms or suffering any of them severely will impede your ability to show what you have learned.

Test anxiety is a psychological condition in which a person feels distress before, during, or after a test or exam to the point where stress causes poor performance. Anxiety during a test interferes with your ability to recall knowledge from memory as well as your ability to use higher-level thinking skills effectively. Many students will report that when they started a test, they could not remember any information that was studied and their mind went blank.

Here are some steps you should take if you find that stress is getting in your way:

- **Be prepared.** A primary cause of test anxiety is not knowing the material. If you take good class notes, notes while you read and review both regularly, this stressor should be greatly reduced if not eliminated. You should be confident going into your exam (but not overconfident).
- **#Nobadvibes.** Your own negative thoughts—*“I’ll never pass this exam”* or *“I can’t figure this out, I must be really stupid!”*— may move you into a spiraling stress cycle that in itself, causes enough anxiety to block your best efforts. When you feel you are brewing a storm of negative thoughts, stop what you are doing and clear your mind. Take a few deep breaths, and tell your negative thoughts to leave you alone. Remind yourself that you have studied for this test, to take the exam one question at a time, and that you know your material. When you feel calm again, then proceed with your test. You may need to repeat this process a couple of times during a test, and that is okay!!
- **Have a plan and follow it.** As soon as you know that an exam is coming, you can develop a plan for studying. Start to review the study skill strategies from earlier in this chapter, and start building your success plan. Build in additional study times leading up to an exam and this could be studying an additional 15-20 minutes per day. Remember to space out your study sessions and refrain from cramming the night before.

Activity 3.6: Talking back to Negative Thoughts

You’ve learned how negative thoughts contribute to test anxiety and keep you from doing as well as you can. Take some time to disarm your most frequent offenders. From the following

list, select three negative thoughts that you have experienced (or write your own). Then fill in the second and third columns for each statement, as shown in the example.

- I don't know anything....What's the matter with me?
- If I fail this test, I'll flunk the course.
- I should have studied more....I'll never make it through.
- I just can't think....Why did I ever take this course?
- I know everyone's doing better than I am.
- If I fail this test, my dad (or husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend, teacher) will be mad. I don't know how I can face them again.
- I'm going to be the last one done again....I must really be stupid.
- I'm getting really tense again; my hands are shaking....I can't even hold the pen.
- I can't remember a thing....This always happens to me....I never do well on anything.

My negative thoughts	How rational is this thought? Do you have any evidence that it is true?	Reasonable reinforcing or affirmation statements you can use to replace it.
Example: I'm drawing a blank....I'll never get the answer....I must really be stupid.	I've missed questions on things that I studied and knew before.	I studied this and know it. I'll visualize where it's written in my notes to help me trigger my memory.

CHAPTER 3 REVIEW

- Your learning style can impact your success in your courses and it is important to understand the style that works best for you
- The Learning Cycle of preparing, absorbing, capturing, and reviewing can assist in the process of learning and how it relates to active listening, reading, note-taking, and test-taking
- Study strategies such as active reading, note-taking, and test-taking can increase your success in the classroom and in your online courses. Take the time to assess the strategies that are right for you and hone those skills to improve your grades. Also look into researching additional strategies that are not listed, through *Google* or *Pinterest*.
- Test-anxiety can get in the way of learning for many students and addressing the root cause of test-anxiety can make all the difference in grades and confidence.

CHAPTER 4: CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Benefits of cultural diversity.
2. How different aspects of identity come together to create a worldview.

We live in an ever diverse society that is filled with a variety of culture, literature, history, music, food, and many other events and experiences that foster connection and community. The meaning of diversity has many definitions, meanings, and contexts based on the experiences of a person's life. For this book, we will use the following definition: **Diversity** refers to the great variety of human characteristics – ways that we are different even as we are all human and share more similarities than differences. These differences are an essential part of what enriches humanity.



Figure 4.1 Celebrate!²¹

²¹ [Image](#) by [Ruben Hutabarat](#) on Unsplash

4.1 THE MANY MEANINGS OF DIVERSITY

Differences among people may involve where a person was born and raised, the person's family and cultural group, factual differences in personal identity, and chosen differences in significant beliefs. Some diversity is primarily **cultural** (involving shared beliefs and behaviors), other diversity may be **biological** (race, age, gender), and some diversity is defined in **personal** terms (sexual orientation, religion). Diversity generally involves things that may significantly affect some people's perceptions of others—not just any way people happen to be different. For example, having different tastes in music, movies, or books is not what we usually refer to as diversity.

When discussing diversity, it is often difficult to avoid seeming to generalize about different types of people—and such generalizations can seem similar to stereotyping. Many students can have a hard time defining the many aspects of diversity and may not have provided a foundation to build the vocabulary of understanding. The following descriptions are some key words and general definitions to help provide context and awareness. Being inclusive with our peers helps to learn things from people whose ideas, beliefs, attitudes, values, backgrounds, experiences, and behaviors are different from our own.

- **Race.** Race refers to what we generally think of as biological differences we are born with such as skin color and facial features.
- **Ethnicity.** Cultural distinction such as an ethnic group is a group of people who share a common identity and a perceived cultural heritage that often involves shared ways of speaking and behaving, religion, traditions, and other traits.
- **Cultural background.** Like ethnicity, refers to shared characteristics, language, beliefs, behaviors, and identity. We are all influenced by our culture to some extent.
- **Geography.** Whether it is people from different places within the United States or the world, often have a range of differences in ideas, attitudes, and behaviors.
- **Socioeconomic background.** People's identities are influenced by how they grow up such as where they live, family financial status, education, opportunities, etc. These experiences shape individuals as they grow up and often times, will be their foundational ideals, morals, and values.
- **Gender roles.** Women have virtually all professional and social roles, including those once dominated by men, and men have taken on many roles, such as raising a child, that were formerly occupied mostly by women. These changing roles have brought diverse new ideas and attitudes to college and work environments.
- **Sexual orientation.** The LGBTQ+ community make up a significant percentage of people in American society and students on college campuses. Exposure to this diversity helps others overcome stereotypes and become more accepting of human differences. (need a better definition to this)
- **Age.** There are varying age ranges of students on our campus which helps bring richer and broader experiences, ideas and attitudes to the campus.

- **Religion.** For many people, religion is a daily or weekly practice and part of a larger spiritual force that infuses their lives. Religion helps shape different ways of thinking and behaving, and thus diversity of religion brings a wider benefit of diversity to college.
- **Physical ability.** Physical differences among students brings another kind of diversity to colleges and the awareness of how groups of students may experience campus. Regardless of physical limits, all ability levels are welcome at our college.

4.2 BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY ON CAMPUS

One of the advantages to attending college is meeting diverse students from a broad range of backgrounds involving different cultural, socioeconomic, age, and other factors. There are many benefits to students attending college within a diverse community setting:

Experiencing diversity at college prepares students for the diversity they will encounter the rest of their lives. Learning to understand and accept people different from ourselves is very important in our world. While many high school students may not have met or gotten to know many people with different backgrounds, this often changes in college. Success in one’s career and future social life also requires understanding people in new ways and interacting with new skills. Experiencing diversity in college assists in this process.

Students learn better in a diverse educational setting. Encountering new concepts, values, and behaviors leads to thinking in deeper, more complex, and more creative ways, rather than furthering past ideas and attitudes. Students who experience the most racial and ethnic diversity in their classes are more engaged in active thinking processes and develop more intellectual and academic skills (and have higher grade point averages) than others with limited experience of diversity.

Attention to diversity leads to a broader range of teaching methods, which benefits the learning process for all students. Just as people are different in diverse ways, people from different backgrounds and experiences learn in different ways. College teaching has expanded to include many new teaching techniques. All students gain when instructors make the effort to address the diverse learning needs of all students.

Experiencing diversity on campus is beneficial for both minority and majority students. Students have more fulfilling social relationships and report more satisfaction and involvement with their college experience. Studies show *all* students on campus gain from diversity programs. All the social and intellectual benefits of diversity cited in this list hold true for all students.

Diversity experiences help break the patterns of segregation and prejudice that have characterized American history. Discrimination against others – whether by race, gender, age, sexual orientation, or anything else – is rooted in fear of people who are different. Getting to know people who are different is the first step in accepting those differences, furthering the goal of a society free of all forms of prejudice and the unfair treatment of people.

Experiencing diversity makes us all better citizens in our democracy. When people can better understand and consider the ideas and perspectives of others, they are better equipped to participate meaningfully in our society. Democratic government depends on shared values of equality and the public good. An attitude of “us versus them,” in contrast, does not further the public good or advance democratic government. Studies have shown that college graduates with a good experience of diversity generally maintain patterns of openness and inclusivity in their future lives.

Diversity enhances self-awareness. We gain insights into our own thought processes, life experiences, and values as we learn from people whose backgrounds and experiences are different from our own.

Activity 4.1: Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity in Practice

Objective

- Identify ways in which you can make diversity more personal

Instructions

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

- What are my plans for expanding myself personally and intellectually in college?
- What kind of community will help me expand most fully, with diversity as a factor in my expansion?
- What are my comfort zones, and how might I expand them to connect more diversely?
- Do I want to be challenged by new viewpoints, or will I feel more comfortable connecting with people who are like me?
- What are my biggest questions about diversity?
- Write several paragraphs reflecting on the questions above.
- Submit this assignment according to directions from your instructor.

Consider the following strategies to help you answer the questions:

- Examine extracurricular activities. Can you get involved with clubs or organizations that promote and expand diversity?
- Review your college’s curriculum. In what ways does it reflect diversity? Does it have departments and courses on historically underrepresented, e.g., cultural and ethnic studies, and gender and sexuality studies. Look for study-abroad programs, as well.
- Read your college’s mission statement ([College of the Canyons Mission Statement](#)). Read the mission statement of other colleges. How do they match up with your values and beliefs? How do they align with the value of diversity?
- Inquire with friends, faculty, colleagues, and family. Be open about diversity. What does it mean to others? What positive effects has it had on them? Ask people about diversity.

Research can help. You might consult college literature, Web sites, resource centers and organizations on campus, etc.

4.3 ASPECTS OF IDENTIFY

Every person has a range of identities, according to how they see themselves (and how others see them) in terms of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age, and so on. The identities people assume, and the relative importance they attach to them, change over time because of both personal changes in their lives and changes in the external world. Identity is not fixed but fluid. For example, you may see yourself as a part-time worker, college student, who lives with a roommate and owns a dog. This identity will change after college with such changes as full-time salaried manager, living in their own home, with a spouse or partner, and parent.



*Figure 4.2 College Student Studying.*²²

Aspects of identify may have different meanings at different times in people’s lives. The meanings behind ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic status, etc., will have different meanings to each person – some people may be proud of all parts of their identity while other people may feel embarrassed or wish they could change certain aspects. Our different identities assume greater or less importance, and play different roles in context, settings, and interactions with different people.

²² [Image](#) by [Kyle Gregory Devaras](#) on Unsplash.



Figure 4.3 Adults in the Workplace.²³

Taking this view of identity, as a social process that people engage in, rather than as a fixed essence inside them, is not to deny that particular identities are extremely important for certain groups and individuals.

Activity 4.2: Reflecting on Identity

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

- gender
- ethnicity
- age
- class

You may also want to describe other aspects of your identity that are important to you, such as nationality or regional identity, sexuality, religious or political beliefs, occupation or voluntary roles, family roles, interests and abilities, and so on. Use as many or as few terms as you like.

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

- Which of these identities (one or more) is / are the most important to you at this point in your life – and has this changed overtime?

Would you have described your identity / identities differently 10 or 20 years ago? In what way?

²³ Image by [WOCinTech Chat](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

4.4 CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

More than anything, multiculturalism is an attitude. Multiculturalism involves accepting and respecting the ideas, feelings, behaviors, and experiences of people different from oneself – all the forms of diversity described earlier. We do not actually live in a “melting pot” society in the sense that people from diverse backgrounds somehow all become the same. Society has always included a great diversity of ideas, attitudes, and behaviors.



Figure 4.4 Latinx and Hispanic Heritage Cultural Festival at College of the Canyons, Sept. 2019.²⁴

Chapter 4 Review

- Diversity refers to the great variety of human characteristics – ways that we are different even as we are all human and share more similarities than differences.
- Diversity is primarily made up of three characteristics: **cultural** (involving shared beliefs and behaviors), other diversity may be **biological** (race, age, gender), and some diversity is defined in **personal** terms (sexual orientation, religion).
- Being inclusive with our peers helps to learn things from people whose ideas, beliefs, attitudes, values, backgrounds, experiences, and behaviors are different from our own.
- By attending college, students are connecting with a diverse community that will enrich their lives and help prepare them for future work environments and relationships.

²⁴ [Image](#) by College of the Canyons, used with permission.

Chapter 4 Review

- Our identities are fluid, not fixed, and change based on the changes in our lives and how we see ourselves (and how others view us).
- The multicultural society we live in should be celebrated for the ideas, behaviors, emotions, and experiences we have with others.

CHAPTER 5: HEALTH & MONEY MANAGEMENT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Physical and mental health management.
2. Mental health coping strategies.

Health and wellness are important for everyone—students included. Not only will you do better in school when your health is good, but you will be happier as a person. And the habits you develop now will likely persist for years to come. That means that what you are doing now in terms of personal health will have a huge influence on your health throughout life and can help you avoid many serious diseases.

Considerable research has demonstrated that the basic elements of good health—nutrition, exercise, not abusing substances, stress reduction—are important for preventing disease. You will live much longer and happier than someone without good habits. Wellness is more than just avoiding disease. Wellness involves feeling good in every respect, in mind and spirit as well as in body. Good health habits also offer these benefits for your college career:

- More energy
- Better ability to focus on your studies
- Less stress, feeling more resilient and able to handle day-to-day stress
- Less time lost to colds, flu, infections, and other illnesses
- More restful sleep

5.1 HEALTH HABITS

For many college students, concerns about overall health and long-term effects may seem like a distant concern. And sometimes, keeping healthy habits while in college can be very difficult with trying to balance school, work, friends/family, and relationships. Many students may not know where to begin to start building a healthier lifestyle and what changes may need to be built in. Let's consider some basics:

Nutrition

A good place to start on learning how to build more positive health habits is nutrition and that slowly incorporating better nutrition takes time, patience, and small changes. Consider the following – how much water have you consumed today? Did you eat breakfast or do you normally skip breakfast? Were you able to grab a snack on the way out the door before class or will you just pick up something in the cafeteria or a vending machine? How are your health habits outside of school – do you eat with your family or do you normally just pick up something

quick at a restaurant before heading to work? Do you normally prepare your own meals or just eat what others have made or are eating?

Just these few questions can help identify areas in your nutrition health that may need to be adjusted slightly. If you notice that many of your eating habits and behaviors are eating are unhealthy, there are some great websites to check out to start building your nutrition knowledge:

- ChooseMyPlate.gov provides an overview of basic nutrition information, food groups, and some basic recipes that can be easily made on a budget.
- Meal prep website – meal prepping is not just for hardcore athletes, but also for busy college students and professionals. Identifying a couple of meals that you can make at home, that can be eaten with very little fuss and on the go. I meal prep throughout the week to save me time in figuring out what I will eat each day for work, but to also help save me time with my busy work schedule. It is much easier to heat up some leftovers versus standing in a line for 10-15 minutes to put in a food order. I also can save a lot of money by meal prepping!
- Pinterest – This is a great website to get ideas for any meal you are wanting to make, whether you want something quick and healthy or something more elaborate. They also have ideas around each meal of the day, snack ideas, and meal prep recipes. Some other social media websites may also be helpful, but try to stay away from the more drastic eating behaviors and ideas that are not sustainable over the course of your life.

Activity 5.1: Nutrition Self-Assessment

Check the appropriate boxes.

Statement	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom
1. I take the time to eat breakfast before starting my day.			
2. I eat lunch rather than snack throughout the day.			
3. When I'm hungry between meals, I eat fruit rather than chips or cookies.			
4. I consciously try to include fruit and vegetables with lunch and dinner.			
5. There is food left on my plate at the end of a meal.			
6. I try to avoid overeating snacks at night and while studying.			
7. Over the last year, my eating habits have kept me at an appropriate weight.			
8. Overall, my eating habits are healthy.			

Exercise

Exercise is good for both body and mind. Indeed, physical activity is almost essential for good health and student success. The physical benefits of regular exercise include the following:

- Improved fitness for the whole body, not just the muscles
- Greater cardiovascular fitness and reduced disease risk
- Increased physical endurance
- Stronger immune system, providing more resistance to disease
- Lower cholesterol levels, reducing the risks of cardiovascular disease
- Lowered risk of developing diabetes
- Weight maintenance or loss

Perhaps more important to students are the mental and psychological benefits that stems from exercise - stress reduction; improved mood with less anxiety and depression; improved ability to focus mentally; better sleep; and feeling better about oneself. For all of these reasons, it's important for college students to regularly exercise or engage in physical activity. Like good nutrition and getting enough sleep, exercise is a key habit that contributes to overall wellness that promotes college success. First, use the **Activity 5.2 - Exercise and Activity Self-Assessment** to consider your current habits and attitudes.

Activity 5.2: Exercise and Activity Self-Assessment

Check the appropriate boxes.

Statement	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom
1. I enjoy physical activity.			
2. Exercise is a regular part of my life.			
3. I get my heart rate up for twenty to thirty minutes several times a week.			
4. I enjoy exercising or engaging in physical activities or sports with others.			

1. What physical activities do you enjoy?

2. How often each week do you engage in a physical activity?

3. If you feel you're not getting much exercise, what stands in your way?

4. Overall, do you think you get enough exercise to be healthy?

5. Do you feel a lot of stress in your life?

6. Do you frequently have trouble getting to sleep?

With exercise and activity, your heart and lungs are working hard enough to improve your cardiovascular fitness. This generally means moving fast enough to increase your heart rate and breathing. For health and stress-reducing benefits, try to exercise at least three days a week for at least twenty to thirty minutes at a time. If you really enjoy exercise and are motivated, you may exercise as often as six days a week, but take at least one day to allow your body to rest. When you are first starting out, or if you have been inactive for a while, increase your exercise and activity time and intensity duration slowly, and let your body adjust between workout sessions. And, the old expression of “*No pain, no gain*” is not true, regardless of what you have heard people say or what you have read through social media.



Figure 5.1 Exercise improves memory, reduces anxiety, and boosts endorphins.²⁵

²⁵ [Image](#) by [bruce mars](#) on Unsplash.

Many students have reported that the biggest obstacle to getting enough exercise, is a lack of time. If you think back to the time-management section of this book, you know there is enough time, and that it is more of managing our time differently. Try to build exercise into your weekly schedule on certain days, so you have it as a standing item in your life. Eventually you will find that regular exercise actually saves you time because you are sleeping better and concentrating better.

Sleep

Like good nutrition and exercise, adequate sleep is crucial for wellness and success. Sleep is particularly important for students with trying to balance the pressures of attend class, study, maintain a social life, and working – that most college students have difficulty getting enough sleep with have little time to spare in their busy schedules. Yet, sleep is critical for concentrating in classes and staying focused on your goals. First, use the Sleep Self-Assessment to consider your current habits and attitudes.



Figure 5.2 Sleepy Student²⁶.

You may not realize the benefits of sleep or the problems associated with being sleep deprived. Many students do not realize they are not getting enough sleep because most they have had the same sleep habits for several years and do not give a lot of thought about how sleep can

²⁶ [Image](#) by [Tonny Tran](#) on Unsplash.

make a difference in their life. Maybe you know you are getting less sleep now, but with all the changes in your life, how can you tell if some of your stress or problems studying are related to not enough sleep? On the positive side, a healthy amount of sleep has the following benefits:

- Improves your mood during the day
- Improves your memory and learning abilities
- Gives you more energy
- Strengthens your immune system
- Promotes wellness of body, mind, and spirit

In contrast, not getting enough sleep over time can lead to a wide range of health issues and student problems. Sleep deprivation can have the following consequences:

- Affects mental health and contributes to stress and feelings of anxiety, depression, and general unhappiness
- Causes sleepiness, difficulty paying attention in class, and ineffective studying
- Weakens the immune system, making it more likely to catch colds and other infections
- Increases the risk of accidents (such as while driving)
- Contributes to weight gain

Take a moment and complete **Activity 5.3 - Sleep Assessment** to get a gauge on where your sleeping habits are at. As you go through the questions, think about how you can adjust your sleep schedule to support your good sleep habits or how you can change a couple of things to increase positive sleep habits.

Activity 5.3: Sleep Assessment

1. It is recommended that college students get _____ minutes of aerobic exercise at least _____ times a week.
2. List at least two ways to make exercise more fun.



***Pin It!* Tips for Sleep zzz**

- Avoid nicotine, which can keep you awake—yet another reason to stop smoking.
- Avoid caffeine for six to eight hours before bed. Caffeine remains in the body for three to five hours on the average, much longer for some people. Remember that many soft drinks contain caffeine.
- Don't eat in the two to three hours before bed.
- Avoid alcohol before bedtime.
- Don't nap during the day. Napping is the least productive form of rest and often makes you less alert.
- It may also prevent you from getting a good night's sleep.
- Exercise earlier in the day (at least several hours before bedtime).
- Try to get to bed and wake about the same time every day—your body likes a routine.
- Make sure the environment is conducive to sleep: dark, quiet, comfortable, and cool.
- Use your bed only for sleeping, not for studying, watching television, or other activities. Going to bed will become associated with going to sleep.
- Establish a pre-sleep winding-down routine, such as taking a hot bath, listening to soothing music, or reading (not a textbook).
- Try out a meditation technique or deep breathing to help relax your body.

5.2 STRESS MANAGEMENT

We all live with occasional stress. Since college students often feel even more stress than most people, it is important to understand it and learn ways to deal with it so that it does not disrupt your life. Stress is a natural response of the body and mind to a demand or challenge. The thing that causes stress (also known as a stressor) captures our attention and causes a physical and emotional reaction. Stressors include physical threats, such as a car we suddenly see coming at us too fast, and the stress reaction likely includes jumping out of the way—with our heart beating fast and other physical changes. Most of our stressors are not physical threats but situations or events like an upcoming test or an emotional break-up. Stressors also include long-lasting emotional and mental concerns such as worries about money or finding a job.

What Causes Stress?

Not all stressors are bad things. Exciting, positive things also cause a type of stress, called eustress. Falling in love, getting an unexpected sum of money, acing an exam you had worried about – all of these are positive things that affect the body and mind in ways similar to negative stress: you cannot help thinking about it, you may lose your appetite and lie awake at night, and your routine life may be momentarily disrupted. But, the kind of stress that causes most trouble

results from negative stressors. Life events that usually cause significant stress include the following:

- Serious illness or injury
- Serious illness, injury, or death of a family member or loved one
- Losing a job or sudden financial catastrophe
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Divorce or ending a long-term relationship (including parents' divorce)
- Being arrested or convicted of a crime
- Being put on academic probation or suspended

Life events like these usually cause a lot of stress that may begin suddenly and disrupt one's life in many ways. Fortunately, these stressors do not occur every day and eventually end—though they can be very severe and disruptive when experienced. Some major life stresses, such as having a parent or family member with a serious illness, can last a long time and may require professional help to cope with them.



Figure 5.3 Stress can make studying difficult.²⁷

Everyday kinds of stressors are far more common but can add up and produce as much stress as a major life event:

- Anxiety about not having enough time for classes, job, studies, and social life
- Worries about grades, an upcoming test, or an assignment
- Money concerns
- Conflict with a roommate, someone at work, or family member
- Anxiety or doubts about one's future or difficulty choosing a major or career
- Frequent colds, allergy attacks, other continuing health issues
- Concerns about one's appearance, weight, eating habits, and so on.

²⁷ [Image](#) by [JESHOOOTS.COM](https://www.jeshoots.com) on Unsplash.

- Relationship tensions, poor social life, loneliness
- Time-consuming hassles such as a broken-down car or the need to find a new apartment

You may not think that you experience a lot of stress until it is at critical times such as a deadline for a paper, midterms, or completing a final project for a class. Assess where your stress level is at and start to think of other areas in your life that might be more stressful than originally thought:

Activity 5.4: Stress Self-Assessment

Check the appropriate boxes.

Statements	Daily	Sometimes	Never
1. I feel mild stress that does not disrupt my everyday life.			
2. I am sometimes so stressed out that I have trouble with my routine activities.			
3. I find myself eating or drinking just because I'm feeling stressed.			
4. I have lain awake at night unable to sleep because I was feeling stressed.			
5. Stress has affected my relationships with other people.			

1. What is the number one cause of stress in your life?

2. What else causes you stress?

3. What effect does stress have on your studies and academic performance?

4. Regardless of the sources of your own stress, what do you think you can do to better cope with the stress you can't avoid?

What's Wrong with Stress?

Physically, stress prepares us for action: the “fight, flight, or freeze” reaction when confronted with a danger. Our heart is pumping fast, and we are breathing faster to supply the muscles with energy to fight, flee, or if we are overcome with stress, we may freeze. Many physical effects in the body prepare us for whatever actions we may need to take to survive a threat. But what about non-physical stressors, like worrying about grades? Are there any positive effects there? Most students will tell you it is negative!

Imagine what life would feel like if you never had worries, never felt any stress at all. If you never worried about grades or doing well on a test, how much studying would you do for it? If you never thought at all about money, would you make any effort to save it or make it? Obviously, stress can be a good thing when it motivates us to do something, whether it is study, work, resolving a conflict with another, and so on. So it's not stress itself that is negative – it is *unresolved or persistent stress* that starts to have unhealthy effects. Chronic (long-term) stress is associated with many physical changes and illnesses, including the following:

- Weakened immune system, making you more likely to catch a cold and to suffer from any illness longer
- More frequent digestive system problems, including constipation or diarrhea, ulcers, and indigestion
- Elevated blood pressure
- Increased risk of diabetes
- Muscle and back pain
- More frequent headaches, fatigue, and insomnia
- Greater risk of heart attack and other cardiovascular problems over the long term

Chronic or acute (intense short-term) stress also affects our minds and emotions in many ways such as difficulty thinking clearly or concentrating, poor memory, and more frequent negative emotions (anxiety, depression, frustration, powerlessness, resentment, or nervousness). A general negative outlook on life can create greater difficulty dealing with others because of irritability, anger, or avoidance. No wonder we view stress as such a negative thing! As much as we would like to eliminate all stressors, however, it just cannot happen. Too many things in the real world cause stress and always will.

Unhealthy Responses to Stress

Since many stressors are unavoidable, the question is what to do about the resulting stress. A person can try to ignore or deny stress for a while, but then it keeps building and starts causing all those problems, listed above. So we have to do *something* to try and alleviate the pressure that is building up inside of us. Thought, sometimes you cannot tell if a person is under stress if they are not exhibiting more “classic” signs of being stressed out, such as:

- Drinking alcohol more heavily
- Taking up smoking or smoking more than normal
- Increased drug use or starting to use drugs

- Acting more aggressively than normal
- Complaining more to friends
- Taking more risks while driving

Then there are more subtle signs, such as:

- Sleeping more than usual
- Drinking increased amounts of caffeine
- Eating less than usual
- Spending more time watching TV or playing video games

What's wrong the behaviors listed above, especially if you already have a couple of drinks with your friends each week or sleep more than usual? Why not watch television or get a lot of sleep when you are feeling stressed, if that makes you feel better? While it may feel better temporarily to escape feelings of stress in those ways, ultimately they may cause more stress themselves.

If you are worried about grades and being too busy to study as much as you need to, then letting an hour or two slip by watching television will make you even more worried later because then you have even less time. Eating too much may make you sluggish and less able to focus, and if you are trying to lose weight, you will now feel just that much more stressed by what you have done. Alcohol, caffeine, smoking, and drugs all generally increase one's stress over time. Complaining to friends? Over time, your friends will tire of hearing it or tire of arguing with you because a complaining person is not much fun to be around. So eventually you may find yourself even more alone and stressed.

Coping with Stress

Look back at your list of stressors from the Stress Self-Assessment activity. For each stressor, consider whether it is external (like bad job hours or not having enough money) or internal, originating in your attitudes and thoughts. Mark each item with an **E** (*external*) or an **I** (*internal*). You may be able to eliminate many external stressors. Talk to your boss about changing your work hours. If you have money problems, work on creating a budget you can live with, look for a new job, or reduce your expenses by finding a cheaper apartment, selling your car, and using public transportation. What about other external stressors? Are you taking so many classes that you do not have the time to study for all of them? Look into reducing your course load by one class, focus on your time-management skills, and plan your days carefully to balance your work and school demands and stick to the schedule. What else can you do to eliminate external stressors? Change apartments, get a new roommate, find better child care—consider all your options. And do not hesitate to talk things over with a college counselor, who may offer other solutions.

Activity 5.5: Assessing Stress Levels

1. Why should it *not* be your goal to try to eliminate stress from your life completely?

2. List three or more unhealthful effects of stress.

3. Name at least two common *external* stressors you may be able to eliminate from your life.

4. Name at least two common *internal* stressors you may feel that you need to learn to cope with because you can't eliminate them.

5. List at least three ways you can minimize the stress you feel.

5.4 EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Your emotional health is just as important as your physical health – and maybe more so. If you are unhappy much of the time, you will not do as well as in college or life as you can if you are happy. You will feel more stress, and your health will suffer. Still, most of us are neither happy nor unhappy all the time. Life is constantly changing, and our emotions change with it. But sometimes we experience more negative emotions than normal, and our emotional health may suffer. Take a moment to reflect on Activity 5.2 Emotional Self-Assessment to evaluate your emotional health.

Activity 5.6: Emotional Self-Assessment

Check the appropriate boxes.

Statements	Daily	Sometimes	Never
1. I sometimes feel anxious or depressed—without disruption of my everyday life.			
2. I sometimes feel so anxious or depressed that I have trouble with routine activities.			
3. I sometimes feel lonely.			
4. I sometimes feel that I have little control over my life.			
5. I have sometimes just wanted to give up.			
6. Negative emotions have sometimes kept me from studying or getting my work done.			
7. Negative emotions have affected my relationships with others.			

- Describe your emotional mood on most days.

- Describe what you'd ideally like to feel like all the time.

- What specific things are keeping you from feeling what you'd ideally like to feel like most of the time?

- Are you happy with your relationships with others?

- What do you think you can do to be a happier person?

Negative Emotions

When is an emotion problematic? Is it bad to feel anxious about a big test coming up or to feel sad after breaking up a romantic relationship? It is normal to experience negative emotions. College students face so many demands and stressful situations that many naturally report often feeling anxious, depressed, or lonely. These emotions become problematic only when

they persist and begin to affect your life in negative ways. That is when it is time to work on your emotional health – just as you would work on your physical health when illness strikes.

Anxiety is one of the most common emotions college students experience, often as a result of the demands of college, work, and family and friends. It is difficult to juggle everything, and you may end up feeling not in control, stressed, and anxious. Anxiety typically results from stress (reference 5.2 Stress Management). If anxiety disrupts your focus and makes you freeze up rather than take action, then it may become problematic. Using stress-reduction techniques often helps reduce anxiety to a manageable level. Anxiety is easier to deal with when you know its cause. Then you can take steps to gain control over the part of your life causing the anxiety. But anxiety can become excessive and lead to a dread of everyday situations.

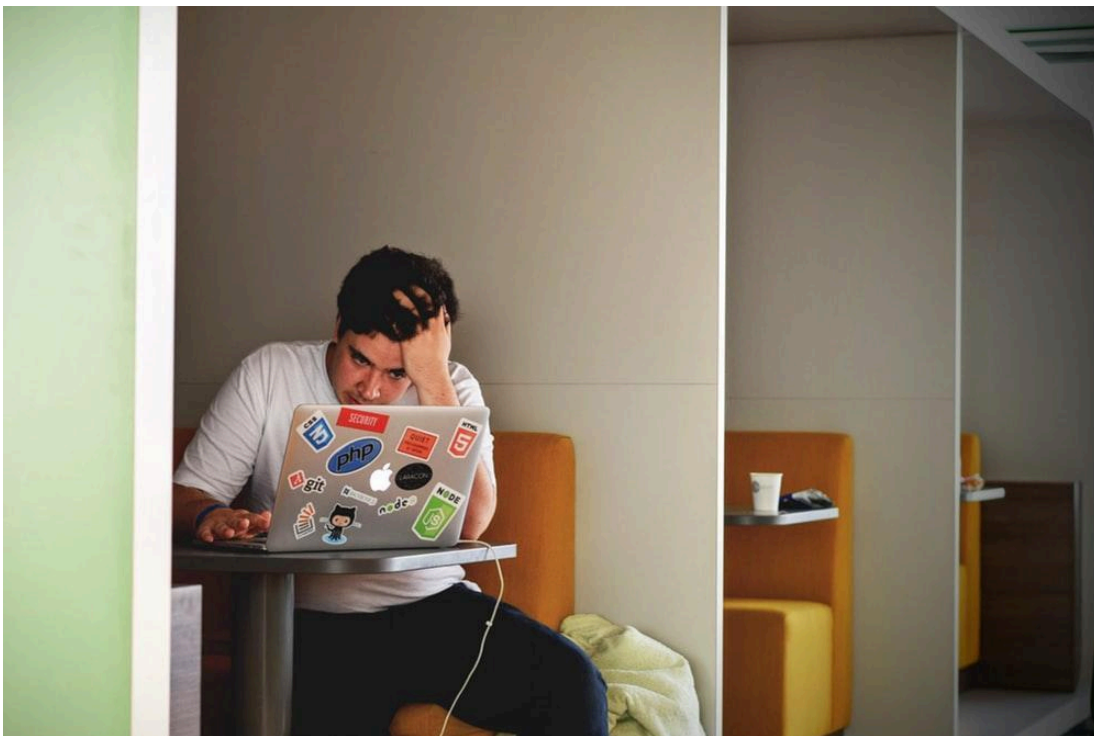


Figure 5.4 Anxiety can affect your ability to absorb and recall information.²⁸

Loneliness is a normal feeling that most people experience at some time. College students away from home for the first time are likely to feel lonely at first. Older students may also feel lonely if they no longer see their old friends. Loneliness involves not feeling connected with others. One person may need only one friend to not feel lonely; others need to feel more connected with a group. There is no set pattern for feeling lonely. If you are feeling lonely, there are many things you can do to meet others and feel connected. Don not sit alone in your room bemoaning the absence of friends. That will only cause more stress and emotional distress. You will likely start making new friends through going to classes, working, studying, and participating in campus activities.

²⁸ [Image](#) by [Tim Gouw](#) on Unsplash

Depression, like anxiety and loneliness, is commonly experienced by college students. It may be a mild sadness resulting from specific circumstances or be intense feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. Depression, like stress, can lead to unhealthy consequences such as poor sleep, overeating or loss of appetite, substance abuse, relationship problems, or withdrawal from activities that formerly brought joy. For most people, depression is a temporary state. But severe depression can have crippling effects.



***Pin It!* Health and Wellness Center at COC**

If you or someone you know is suffering from anxiety or depression visit the student [Health and Wellness Center](#):

<https://www.canyons.edu/student-services/health/index.php> at College of the canyons. The health center can provide free counseling and more information on health issues that are common among students.

Emotional Balance

This is an essential element of wellness – and for succeeding in college. Emotional balance does not mean that you never experience a negative emotion, because these emotions are usually natural and normal. Emotional balance means we balance the negative with the positive, that we can be generally happy even if we are saddened by some things. Emotional balance starts with being aware of our emotions and understanding them. If you are feeling angry, stop and think about the real cause of your anger. Are you really angry because your friend said something about one of your bad habits, or are you angry because you haven't been able to break that habit? Are you feeling anxiety because you're worried you might not be cut out for college, or are you just anxious about that test tomorrow?

Tips for Emotional Health

- Accept that most emotions cannot be directly controlled, yet you can ensure that you are getting enough exercise, using relaxation techniques, and getting adequate sleep to improve your emotional state.
- Connect with others. Your emotional state is less likely to change when you keep to yourself and “stew over” feelings.
- Develop your empathy for others. Empathy involves recognizing the emotions that others are feeling. You will find yourself in better emotional balance as a result.
- Be honest in your relationships. If you try to hide your feelings, the other person will know something is wrong and may react the wrong way.
- Understand that negative emotions are temporary. You may be feeling bad now, but it will pass in time. If negative feelings last longer, recognize that you likely need help resolving it and that help is available. Students are eligible for four free visits with our mental health counselors, located in the Student Health and Wellness office (insert hyperlink)

- If you have just become a college student, know that the first term is usually the hardest. Hang in there. Once you have developed effective study habits and time management skills, each term will be easier and happier than the one before.

CHAPTER 5 REVIEW

- Good health helps you be more successful in college
- Regular exercise is not only important for good health but is a great way to reduce stress in your life.
- Sleep is one of the first areas where college students cut back when they find themselves too busy with classes, work, and other activities. Taking the time to get enough sleep makes you more efficient when studying that it can actually save you time.
- Since many stressors are unavoidable in life, we all need to find good ways to minimize their effects. The best stress-reducers over time become good habits that will increase our wellness and help us succeed in college and careers.
- If you are having an emotional problem that persists and affects your life, do not hesitate to seek help. College of the Canyons has mental health professionals trained to help you get through any crisis.

CHAPTER 6: MONEY MATTERS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify and set financial goals to meet your needs
2. Understand the importance of researching and applying for financial aid every year even if you don't think you qualify for assistance.
3. Identify key differences among scholarships and grants, student loans, and work study programs.

If you are a new college student you may not yet have money problems or issues, but most college students soon do. It does not matter whether you are a college student directly from high school or a returning to school after being in the workforce, money issues can cause barriers to education and economic mobility. Regardless of your status, many students can relate to some of the following money dilemmas:

- Conversations around money management may not have occurred in your house and you may have less experience creating a budget and handling money in general.
- You need more time for studying, participating in internships or other college activities and you may have less time to work and make money.
- Even if you receive financial support from your family or receiving financial aid, your funds are limited and you need to stay within a budget
- You may be juggling working full time and the cost of college is not getting any cheaper
- Life expenses such as rent/mortgage, car expenses, and taking care of family matters can restrict available funds for school related expenses.

6.1 FINANCIAL GOALS

It is expensive to go to college. College tuition has risen for decades at virtually all schools, and very few students are fortunate enough to not have to be concerned with this reality. Still, there are things you can do to help control costs and manage your finances while in college. Begin by thinking about your financial goals. Whatever it is you plan to do in your future, whether work or other activities, your financial goals in the present should be realistic to enable you to fulfill your plan. Consider these scenarios:



Figure 6.1 Keri.²⁹

Keri entered college planning to major in business. Her family was not able to give her much financial support, but she chose to attend an expensive private college because she thought it would help her get into a good graduate business school. She had to take out large student loans to pay her tuition, but she was not concerned about a budget because she assumed she would make a lot of money later on and be able to easily pay off her student loans. Yet when she graduated and had to begin making payments on her student loans, she discovered she could not afford to go straight to business school after all. She put her dream on hold for a few years and took a job she did not like, so she would not go into default on her loans.



Figure 6.2 Jorge.³⁰

²⁹ [Image](#) by [@ITSD3D3](#) on Nappy.co

³⁰ [Image](#) by [Wes Hickson](#) Unsplash.

Jorge had worked a few years after high school but finally decided that he needed a college degree to get the kind of job he wanted. He was happy with his life otherwise with his nice apartment and car, so he enrolled in a couple of night classes while continuing to work full time during the day. He was surprised how much he had to study, however, and after a couple months into the semester, he felt he was struggling. He just did not have enough time to do it all – work full time and juggle school, so he dropped first one class and then his other class a couple weeks later. He told himself that he would try college again in a year or two, but part of him wondered how anyone could ever get through college while working?

What Keri and Jorge have in common is a conflict between their financial goals and reality. Both were motivated to succeed in college, and both had a vision for their future. But both were unsuccessful in finding ways to make their dreams come true because of money issues. Could they have done things differently?

Maybe Keri could have gone to a less expensive school and still reached her goal, or maybe she could have avoided such heavy student loans by working summers and part time during the school year. Maybe Jorge could have reduced his living expenses and cut back his work hours to ensure he could balance school and work better. Sometimes solutions are not that simple. Sometimes life is complicated and circumstances outside of our control create financial problems in our lives. However, with a little planning and focus most college students can improve their financial situation in small but significant ways like creating a budget, saving when you can afford to, and making future financial goals.

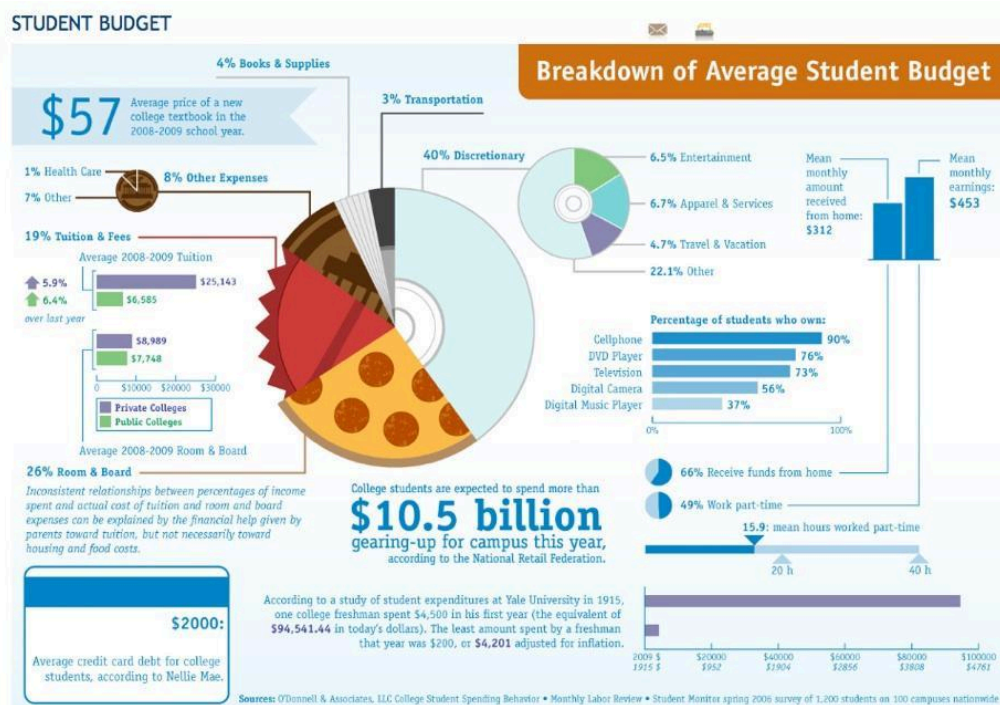


Figure 2.3 Student Budget Infographic.³¹

³¹ Image by Amber Case is under a CC BY-NC 2.0.

Taking control of your personal finances begins with thinking about your goals and deciding what really matters to you. Here are some things to think about:

- Is it important for you to graduate from college without debt? Is it acceptable to you, or necessary, to take some student loans?
- What are your priorities for summers and other “free time”? Working to earn money? Taking nonpaying internships or volunteering to gain experience in your field? Enjoying social activities and time with friends?
- How important is it to take a full load of classes so that your college education does not take longer than necessary.
- How important is it to you to live in a nice place, or drive a nice car, or wear nice clothes, or eat in nice restaurants? How important in comparison to your educational goals?

There are no easy answers to such questions. Most people would like enough money to have and do what they want, low enough expenses that they do not have to work too much to stay on budget, and enough financial freedom to choose activities without being swayed by financial concerns. Few college students live in that world, however. Since you will have to make financial choices, it is important first to think about what really matters to you and what you are willing to sacrifice for a little while in order to reach your goals.

6.2 BUDGETING 101

Budgeting can be a scary word for some people and create strong emotions such as saving for the future or feeling too restricted. Budgeting involves analyzing your income and expenses so you can see where your money is going and making adjustments when needed to avoid debt. At first budgeting can seem complex or time consuming, but once you have gone through the basics, you will find it gets easier and it can be a very valuable tool for controlling your personal finances and increasing your wealth.

Let’s cover some basic information that seem to come up through social media or conversations with friends and family:

- Debt is not something that is a normal part of life – it just seems that way. The normalizing of debt is misinformation that has been passed down for the last few generations due to the increase in how and where credit can be used.
- Budgeting is not about restricting how you live your life, but how well you can live your life.
- Budgeting can seem daunting at first, but there are many different styles and ways people will budget their money (Personally, I follow a Zero-Based Budget because I absolutely hate tracking every little purchase I make).
- There are several people through social media that opening discuss how they budget, walk you through how they create their budget, along with struggles they have encountered when they blow their budget. Instagram and Pinterest are great places to start and you can just search “budget.”

Think for a moment when the last time you compared your monthly income to your outgoing expenses? Are you confident about your spending habits and established savings goals for purchases you would like to make in the future? Or, do you feel that you run out of money before the end of the month and cannot seem to break the cycle of living paycheck to paycheck? Understanding where you want to be financially in the next few years will take some assessment of where you are today, financially. It is having the “talk” with yourself about where your money is going and being honest about your spending habits.

Activity 6.1: Budgeting

Expenditures	Amount in Dollars
Tuition and fees (1/12 of annual)	
Textbooks and supplies (1/12 of annual)	
Housing: monthly mortgage, rent, or room and board	
Home repairs	
Renter’s insurance	
Property tax	
Average monthly utilities (electricity, water, gas, oil)	
Optional utilities (cell phone, Internet service, cable television)	
Dependent care, babysitting	
Child support, alimony	
Groceries	
Meals and snacks out (including coffee, water, etc.)	
Personal expenses (toiletries, cosmetics, haircuts, etc.)	
Auto expenses (payments, gas, tolls) plus 1/12 of annual insurance premium—or public transportation costs	
Loan repayments, credit card pay-off payments	
Health insurance (1/12 of annual)	
Prescriptions, medical expenses	

Expenditures	Amount in Dollars
Entertainment (movies, concerts, nightlife, sporting events, purchases of CDs, DVDs, video games, etc.)	
Bank account fees, ATM withdrawal fees, credit card finance charges	
Newspapers, magazines, subscriptions	
Travel, day trips	
Cigarettes, smokeless tobacco	
Beer, wine, liquor	
Gifts	
Hobbies	
Major purchases (computer, home furnishings) (1/12 of annual)	
Clothing, dry cleaning	
Memberships (health clubs, etc.)	
Pet food, veterinary bills, and so on	
Other expenditure:	
Other expenditure:	
Other expenditure:	
Other expenditure:	
Other expenditure:	
Total Monthly Outgoing:	

Input your total monthly income and include expenses that you have throughout the month (fixed expenses like rent/mortgage and variable expenses like food and entertainment costs).

How are you doing with your expenses? This is a great starting place for you to build your financial awareness and incorporate some good money management skills. If your income exceeds your monthly expenses, what type of financial goals would you want to set for yourself such as building your emergency savings, purchasing a car, or going on vacation? If your

monthly expenses exceed your monthly income, it is time to identify areas of your life that you will need to adjust a little to ensure you have enough money to cover your expenses. Once you have this information, the next steps are to build a budget.

Why create and manage a budget? Going to college changes your financial situation. There are many new expenses, and you likely do not know yet how your spending needs and habits will work out over the long term. Without a budget, it is just human nature to spend more than you have coming in, as evidenced by the fact that most Americans today are in debt. Debt is a major reason many students drop out of college. So it is worth it to research the different types of budgets out there and start creating one!

To help you start exploring different budgeting styles that will fit your needs, we will cover some common ones that show up on social media quite a bit:

1. **Traditional Budget:** this is where you will total up your monthly income, expenses, and track all your purchases, down to the penny. At the end of the month, you may move any extra money left over into a savings account or decide to spend it. Some people will track their budget on a spreadsheet with charts indicating spending area percentages.
2. **Paycheck Budgeting:** this method helps to separate out expenses based on the number of paychecks you will receive in a month. For instance, if you get paid twice a month, you may allocate certain expenses to be paid with your first paycheck of the month, and the rest of your expenses with your second paycheck.
3. **Zero-Based Budgeting:** this method helps to identify where every single penny of your paycheck will be allocated before you even get paid, along with using the [envelop system](#). You identify how much your expenses will be, separate out cash to be used in your envelopes (gas, food, entertainment, eating out, fun money, etc) and once your envelope money is used up, you will either go without for the rest of the month or move money from another envelop.



Pin It! Zero Based Budgeting

Watch this video for more information on [Zero Based Budgeting](#):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=16&v=t0KLvsvShsk&feature=emb_title

Things to Think About

As mentioned before, budgeting is a skill – it may take a couple of months or even several months to find a budgeting method that works for you and your busy life. And, if you are unsure about if budgeting is for you, start small with taking one area of your life that you know you overspend in such as entertainment or getting out with friends. If you only allocate \$50 per month to eating out or entertainment, your choices will shift to try and extend your \$50.



***Pin It!* Why People Spend Too Much, Even On A Budget**

- **Old habits die hard.** Keep monitoring your spending habits and watch for things you are spending money on without really thinking about it.
- **Credit cards.** Never use them if at all possible. They make it easy to spend too much or not see how much you are spending. And, credit cards are not for emergencies. That is what an emergency savings fund is for!
- **Easy access to cash.** Just put your card in an ATM and get some cash! It is so easy to do, and an automatic habit for so many, that it is easy to bust your budget with small amounts daily.
- **Temptations are everywhere.** Even when we are careful, we are often easily influenced by friends to go out or spend in other ways. Remember why you made your budget in the first place and keep your priorities in mind. The guilt you will feel tomorrow about spending a whole week's food budget on one expensive dinner out probably is not worth the pleasure of it!

Sometimes we buy things to feel good. If that has been a longtime habit for you, it will be hard to break. Often it is better to find small things that make you feel good rather than trying to go without everything. Rewarding yourself with an ice cream treat for a week's budgeting success won't break your budget.

6.3 SAVINGS

If you have problems just getting by on your budget, it may seem pointless to even think about saving for the future. Still, if you can possibly put aside some money every month into a savings plan, it is worth the effort:

- An emergency or unexpected situation may occur suddenly. Having the savings to cope with it is much less stressful than having to find a loan or run up your credit cards.
- Saving is a good habit to develop. Saving for the future will prepare you well for the increasing financial complexities of life after graduation.
- You may need your savings to help launch your career after graduation. If you're broke when you graduate, you may feel you have to take the first job that comes along, but with some savings you may have time to find the job that's perfect for you.
- You may change your mind about future plans. Maybe you now think that you will go to work at a good job right after graduation, so you are not concerned about saving – but maybe in a couple years you will decide to go to graduate school, law school, or business school – or to start your own business, or to join a volunteer program. Your savings may allow you to pursue a new goal.



Figure 2.4 Piggy Bank.³²

Start by saving in a savings account at your bank or credit union. You can have a certain amount transferred from your checking account every month into a savings account – that makes it easier and more routine. A savings account allows withdrawal anytime but pays lower interest than other accounts. Ask your bank about money market accounts and certificates of deposit (CDs), which generally pay higher interest but have restrictions on minimum balances and withdrawals. Savings bonds are another option. All of these options are federally insured, so your money stays safe.

6.4 FINANCIAL AID

When students think of financial aid, one of the top responses is that it is money for students who cannot afford college. For those of us who work at the college level, we look at financial aid as **FREE** money that students are not taking advantage of!!!! There are different types of financial aid funding students can receive and we will talk about the various options in a moment. If you have not visited College of the Canyon's Financial Aid office, add that to your list of college resources that you need to look into ASAP!

You may already be receiving financial aid or understand what types of financial aid are available. Even if you are not receiving financial aid, however, you should understand the basics because your financial situation may change and you may need help paying for college. You owe it to yourself to learn about potential types of aid you might receive. Every college has a Financial Aid Office that can give you information about standard financial aid programs. Certain kinds of financial aid, however, such as private scholarships, are not administered by the college, so you may need to do some research. There are four main categories of financial aid:

1. **Scholarships** (money that does not need to be repaid)

³² [Image](#) on Pexels.

2. **Grants** (money that does not need to be repaid)
3. **Student loans** (money that does need to be repaid, usually starting after graduation)
4. **Work Study programs** (money that is earned for tuition or other expenses)



Pin It! Financial Aid

For more information on financial aid and federal and state grants visit [Federal Student Aid: https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/grants](https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/grants)

Applying for Financial Aid

For financial aid administered by your college, often only one general application form is required, along with detailed information on your financial situation (and those of your parents or guardians, if you are receiving their support) provided by filling out the **FAFSA** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). If you have not already done this application, learn more at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. Virtually all colleges require students to fill out the FAFSA as part of the financial aid application process.

Loans and scholarships are generally applied for separately from the FAFSA form. Follow these general rules to ensure you receive any aid for which you are qualified:

- Apply to your college for financial aid every year, even if you do not receive financial aid in your first year or term. Your situation may change, and you want to remain eligible at all times in the future by filing the application.
- Talk to the financial office immediately if you (or your family) have any change in your circumstances.
- Complete your application accurately, fully, and honestly. Financial records are required to verify your data. Pay attention to the deadlines for all applications.
- Research possible outside financial aid based on other criteria. Many private scholarships or grants are available, for example, for the dependents of employees of certain companies, students pursuing a degree in a certain field, or students of a certain ethnic status or from a certain religious or geographical background, and the like.
- Do not pay for financial aid resource information. Some online companies try to profit from the anxieties of students about financial aid by promising to find financial aid for you for a fee. Legitimate sources of financial aid information are free.

Scholarship and Grants

Scholarships and grants are FREE money – you do not have to pay them back, unlike student loans. A scholarship is generally based on merit rather than demonstrated financial need—based on past grades, test scores, achievements, or experiences, including personal qualifications such as athletic ability, skills in the arts, community or volunteer experiences, and so on. Do not make the mistake of thinking scholarships go only to students with high grades. Many scholarships, for example, honor those with past leadership or community experience or

the promise of future activities. Even the grades and test scores needed for academic scholarships are relative: a grade point average (GPA) that does not qualify for a scholarship at one college may earn a scholarship at another. Never assume that you are not qualified for any kind of scholarship or grant.

A grant also does not need to be paid back. Most grants are based on demonstrated financial need. A grant may be offered by the college, a federal or state program, or a private organization or civic group. The largest grant program for college students is the federal government's Pell Grants program. College of the Canyons' students may be eligible for the Pell Grant and/or the California College Promise Grant (formerly the Board of Governors Waiver – BOG Waiver).

Pell Grant

Pell grants are awarded to every undergraduate who qualifies and has not already earned a bachelor's degree. It provides up to \$6195 (for 2019-20), depending on your expected family contribution, cost of attendance, and whether you are attending full or part time. It can be used to pay for tuition, fees and living expenses at any qualifying college, including a California Community College like College of the Canyons. You can receive only one Federal Pell Grant per term or period of enrollment, which can be used to attend one college at a time.³³

California College Promise Grant (CCPG)

The California College Promise Grant, formerly known as the Board of Governors Enrollment Fee Waiver (**BOGW**), waives enrollment fees for qualified students for the entire school year. Students may receive a waiver for any number of units, with no minimum. You may qualify if you have some financial need, receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (AFDC/TANF), Supplemental Security Income/SSP or General Assistance and those who meet certain income standards.³⁴

Student Loans

Many different student loan programs are available for college students. Because many colleges do not have sufficient funds to offer full grants to students with financial need, financial aid packages often include a combination of grant and loan money. Ideally, one would like to graduate without having loan balances to repay later on. However, almost two-thirds of full-time college students do need student loans to pay for college. The amount of money students borrow has risen in recent years because tuition and fees have risen faster than inflation (cost of living). The total amount owed now averages \$30,000 for students at four-year colleges and over \$16,000 at two-year colleges.³⁵

³³ Information from [Federal Pell Grants](#) by [College of the Canyons](#)

³⁴ Information from [California College Promise Grant](#) by [College of the Canyons](#)

³⁵ National Center for Education Statistics (2019). [Loans for Undergraduate Students](#). Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cub.asp

Unfortunately this is a necessary reality for many students. For most, graduating from college owing some money is preferable to not going to college at all. With smart choices about the type of loan and a structured repayment program for your working years after graduation, there is no reason to fear a loan. Just remember that the money eventually has to be repaid – it is not “free” money even though it may feel that way while you’re in school. All student loans are not the same. Interest terms vary widely, and with most private loans the interest starts building up immediately.

Work Study Programs

Work study programs are the third type of financial aid. They are administered by colleges and are a common part of the financial aid package for students with financial need. You work for what you earn, but work study programs often have advantages over outside jobs. The college runs the program, and you don’t have to spend valuable time looking for a job. Work study students usually work on or near campus, and work hours are controlled to avoid interfering with classes and study time. Work study students are more engaged with the academic community than students working off campus.

Some students who enter college already working or who have special skills or job experience can make a higher hourly rate than a work study program pays. If so, you might make the same income working fewer hours, leaving more for studying and other college activities. If this is your situation, carefully weigh the pros and cons before deciding about a work study program.



Pin It! Tips for Applying for Financial Aid

- Talk to your college’s financial aid office early and get the appropriate forms.
- Start your application early to ensure you make the deadline.
- Do online research to learn about additional private scholarships you may be qualified for.
- Evaluate student loans carefully and do not borrow more than you need or can repay without hardship after graduation.

Resources

Start with the College of the Canyons Financial Aid Office (Valencia and Canyon Country Campuses) to gather information about financial aid – www.canyons.edu/financialaid. Do additional research to make sure you are considering all available options. Even though this takes some effort, it will prove worthwhile if you find other sources of funds for your college years. Below are some additional resources for the different types of aid:

- Federal government information about federal grants and student loans: <https://www.ed.gov/>
- Federal government scholarship information: <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/scholarships>

- [FinAid.org](https://www.finaid.org)
- [CollegeScholarships.org](https://www.collegescholarships.org)
- [SalaryWizard](https://www.salarywizard.com)

Activity 6.2: Financial Aid

1. What is the best kind of college financial aid to seek?

2. For each of the following statements, circle T for true or F for false:
T F You don't need to complete the FAFSA if you are applying only for a federal student loan.
T F If you apply to your college's financial aid office, they will tell you about all possible scholarships for which you may be qualified.
T F After graduation, you have to begin repaying the money you received in a grant.
T F A work study program job often has advantages over a job you find on your own.
3. As a general rule, your future payments on a student loan should not be more than _____ percent of what you expect to make with your starting salary.

CHAPTER SIX REVIEW

- Financial success while in college depends on understanding and controlling your expenditures.
- There are many ways you can spend less on optional expenses, and even essentials, and still have a full life and enjoy your college experience.
- Spending too much can quickly lead to financial problems. If you see the signs that you're starting to have money problems, take steps quickly to prevent trouble before it snowballs out of control.
- While it may seem difficult just to make ends meet, make it a goal also to attempt to save something for future needs.
- Many forms of financial aid are available for college students. Apply every year and notify the college financial aid office if you have a significant change in circumstances.
- Consider all forms of financial aid—not just the aid managed by your college. Look into private scholarships and grants.
- Carefully consider how much to borrow in student loans

CHAPTER 7: CAREER EXPLORATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify the four steps involved in career exploration and resources on campus to support each step.
2. Evaluating different career assessments that match skills, interest, and abilities to individual personality preferences.
3. Analyzing various career websites to research information on selected career fields of interest
4. Determining how careers will link back to major

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

It is important to understand that career exploration and planning is a process and does not take place over night. Be patient with yourself throughout your career exploration and do not get discouraged. You will find your goals so much more tangible once you have set a preliminary career plan. Remember, you are not alone in this process.



Figure 7.1 A career in surgery requires dedication and patience.³⁶

³⁶ [Image](#) by [JAFAR AHMED](#) on Unsplash.

7.1 CAREER EXPLORATION PROCESS

The career exploration process involves four steps. These steps are outlined below:

STEP 1: WHO AM I?

Getting to know who you are – who you really are – is the first step.

We have already started to explore other areas of your life that make you who you are and we will transition to knowing the things you are truly passionate about by:

- gathering information about your career related interests and values
- thinking about what skills and abilities come naturally to you and which ones you want to develop
- considering your personality type and how you want it to play out in your role at work

There are some career assessments that can help you start to gather information about what careers might match your likes and dislikes. We will discuss a couple below that you can start to access online for free!

California Career Zone: This is a great website to get you started on identifying potential careers based on your skills, interests, and work values. Access the website at www.cacareerzone.org and click on the “Explore Occupations” tab. Once you have completed the career assessments, you will be able to see which careers may be a fit to your personality.

Kuder Journey: This is a program the college has purchased, designed to help students with career exploration and planning. The program consists of three career assessments:

- Personal interests - this assessment allows you to connect your top interests with career clusters.
- Skills confidence - this assessment allows you to assess what you believe you are good at doing.
- Work values - this assessment helps you learn what’s most important to you in your work environment.

You will need an access code before starting Kuder Journey and your instructor or the Counseling Department will be able to provide you with the most current code. After completing the assessments, you will get a chance to research occupations that may be a good fit for you based on your preferences. From there you will then be able to explore the different majors that can prepare you for the career path you would like to pursue. The more time and effort you researching your options, the more informed decisions you will be able to make!

STEP 2: WHAT’S OUT THERE?

Once you have determined your personality type, you can begin to explore what types of careers might be best suited for you. If you have not explored further into the career

assessment websites you accessed already, I encourage you to go back and continue to dig into the information.

And, as a reminder, the career assessments are only provided a glimpse of your personality preferences at this point in your life. Your preferences may change based on experiences, career advancement, and other milestones you achieve in life. This is very common, yet students may believe their results are fixed, which is not the case.

You can compare and contrast the careers listed for each of your assessments and identify which occupations come up often and start with these. When researching careers, there will be some important pieces of information you want to gather such as what tasks you will be doing, the work environment, professional skills you will need, education levels required, and so on.

Provided below are a few occupation websites to dig deeper into specific careers so you can make an informed decision on whether the career is a good fit for you.

- **One Career Stop:** <https://www.careeronestop.org/>
- **O*Net Online:** <https://www.onetonline.org/>
- **Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH):** <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>
- **College of the Canyons Career Center:**
<https://www.canyons.edu/studentservices/career/index.php>

STEP 3: WHAT FACTORS MIGHT AFFECT MY CHOICE?

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

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



Figure 7.2 A career as a construction worker requires quick reflexes, good decision making skills, and teamwork.³⁷

STEP 4: WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

It may seem odd to be thinking about life after school if you are just getting started. But you will soon be making decisions about your future, and regardless of the direction you may choose, there is a lot you can do while still in college. You will need to focus your studies by choosing a major (we will explore this in Chapter 8). You should find opportunities to explore the careers that interest you so you can ensure that you are building the right kind of experience on which to base a successful career.

Keep in mind that deciding on and pursuing a career is an ongoing process. The more you learn about yourself and the career options that best suit you, the more you will need to fine-tune your career plan. Do not be afraid to consider new ideas, but do not make changes without careful consideration. Career planning is exciting - learning about yourself and about career opportunities, and considering the factors that can affect your decision, should be a core part of your thoughts while in college. For additional assistance with researching career options, look into registering for Counseling 110 – Career & Life Planning:

COUNSELING 110: Career Life-Planning

(CSU transferable - CSU GE Area E)

This course introduces self-assessment tools to identify college majors and careers by clarifying interests, skills, values, and personality type. Students also examine the decision-making process, self-management, life roles and goal-setting. It includes a review of labor market

³⁷ [Image](#) by [Josue Isai Ramos Figueroa](#) on Unsplash.

trends, career research, interviewing skills, resume and cover letter writing, and job search strategies.

7.2 INTERNSHIPS VS JOB VS CAREER

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

Job: something you would like to have, especially if you want to pay your bills. A job lets you enjoy a minimal level of financial security. A job requires you to show up and do what is required of you; in exchange, you get paid.

Career: involves holding jobs, but it is more a means of achieving personal fulfillment. In a career, your jobs follow a sequence that leads to increasing mastery, professional development, and personal and financial satisfaction. A career requires planning, knowledge, and skills.

While you work to pursue a career, you will continually make decisions about whether it is the right job for me. Are you feeling fulfilled and challenged? Does this job enable you to have the lifestyle you want? You want to set yourself up for success by asking yourself to consider these kinds of questions now, whether you are just graduating from high school or college, or returning to school after working for a while.

In addition to helping pay the bills, a job or internship while in school can provide experience for your résumé, contacts for future job search networking, and employment references. Work or internship experience related to your future career has significant value. Not all students can find such opportunities in their community, however. But even a job or volunteering outside your field can have value and say something about you to future employers. Your job may demonstrate that you have initiative, are responsible, are a team player or can work independently, and can take on financial responsibility.

Potential future employers will check your work references. Having an employer from your college years stating you did a good job, were always on time to work, and were honest and responsible in doing your job definitely gives you an advantage over students who graduate without having worked at all. At the same time, some jobs contribute more to your overall college experience. Remember, you are in college for an education and to gain a wide range of skills—not just for the degree. The best student jobs help you engage more deeply in the college experience, while the wrong kind of job gets in the way of that experience. Here are some factors to consider as you look for a job:

- What kinds of people will you be interacting with? Other students, instructors, researchers? Interacting with others in the world of college can broaden your college experience, help motivate you to study, and help you feel part of a shared experience. You may work with or meet people who in the future can refer you to employers in your

field. On the other hand, working in a business far from campus, for example, may offer a steady paycheck but can separate you from the academic community and detract from a positive college experience.

- Is the job flexible enough to meet a college student’s needs? Will you be able to change your work hours during final exam week or when a special project is due? A rigid work schedule may cause difficulty at times when you really need to focus on your classes.
- What will you be able to say about your work in your future résumé? Does it involve any skills—including people skills or financial or managerial responsibilities—that your employer can someday praise you for? Will working this job help you get a different, better job next year?



Figure 7.3 Students often work off campus to supplement their income.³⁸

These factors can make a job ideal for college students, but in the real world, many students will have to work less than-ideal jobs as they get started in the world of work. Working at a fast food restaurant or overnight shipping company may not seem very glamorous or offer the benefits described previously, but it may be the only job available at present. I worked at Starbucks that provided me stellar health insurance, but I did not get paid as much as I could elsewhere. Do not despair – things can always change. Make the money you need to get by in college but do not become complacent and stop looking for more meaningful work. Keep your eyes and ears open for other possibilities. Visit the COC [Student Employment Office](#) frequently (or check online) for new postings and talk to other students about job openings.

³⁸ [Image](#) by on [Brooke Cagle](#) Unsplash

STUDENT JOBS

The number of hours college students work per week varies considerably, from five to ten hours a week to full time and everywhere in between. Before deciding how much you need to work, first make a detailed budget as described later. Your goal should be to make as much as you need, and hopefully a little more to save, but first you need to know your true need. Remember your goals in college and stay focused on your education. Cut back on your optional spending so that you don't have to work so many hours that your studies are impacted.

WHERE TO FIND A JOB

Start at your campus financial aid office or student employment office. If they don't have anything right for you at first, check back frequently for new job postings. For off-campus jobs, check the classified ads in your local newspaper. Many jobs are never advertised, however, so ask friends, family members, and other students. Visit appropriate companies in your area and ask if they have openings. Many government agencies also have summer jobs or internships for college students. This work may be an ideal way to gain experience related to your chosen field.

GO TO WORK FOR YOURSELF

If you have energy and initiative, you can create your own work. While it may take some time to get started, flexibility and being your own boss can make up for this drawback. Students often make money in ways like these:

- Tutor classmates in a subject you are good in.
- Sell your technical skills to help others set up new computer hardware, teach software skills such as PowerPoint or Excel, or design Web sites. Sell things you no longer need (video games, DVDs, textbooks) on eBay.
- Earn a commission by helping others sell their stuff online.
- Provide services to faculty members and residents in the nearby community: lawn mowing, snow shoveling, housecleaning, babysitting, pet sitting, dog walking, and so on.
- Research options such as Uber or Lyft that can be tailored to your changing schedule.

BALANCING THE JOB YOU HAVE WITH YOUR IDEAL JOB

A growing percentage of students are working full time when they return to school, and many continue in the same jobs. If you're in this situation, you know that balancing work and college is one of the most difficult things you've ever done. You're used to working—but not used to finding time for class and studying at the same time. You likely feel harried and frustrated at times, and you may even start to wonder if you're cut out for college. The time may come when you start thinking about dropping classes or leaving college altogether. It may be hard to stay motivated.

If you start feeling this way, focus on your big goals and don't let the day-to-day time stresses get you down. As difficult as it may be, try to keep your priorities, and remember that while you face temporary difficulties now, a college degree is forever. Acknowledge that sacrifice and

compromise may be needed and reduce your expenses, if you can, so you can cut back on the number of hours you work. This may mean temporarily giving up some things you enjoy in order to reach your goals. If you cannot cut your expenses and work hours and simply do not have the time to do well in your classes, you may have to cut back on how many classes you take per term.

7.3 LINKING CAREERS TO A MAJOR

Why is your major important? It's important because it's a defining and organizing feature of your undergraduate degree. Ultimately, your major should provide you with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or behaviors you need to fulfill your college goals and objectives. In this section, we will look at how to select your major and how your college major may correlate with a career. Does your major matter to your career? What happens if you change your major? Does changing your major mean you must change your career?

Choosing a college major can have a big impact on your career choices, especially if you are following a technical or vocational program of study. After all, it is hard to become a pharmacist if you study computer networking. Students often get too anxious about choosing a major. Many community college students have a very clear idea of what they are studying and the job they expect to land after completing their degree, and you probably feel confident enough in your choice of major to make the investment for tuition in that program. Adding in internships and focusing on jobs that will be stepping stones to your long-term career goal(s) can help ensure you are on the right path!

CHAPTER SEVEN REVIEW

- Understanding the four steps to career exploration and how it relates to who you are
- An internship is short-term career based learning opportunities to try out a career field.
- A job is a stepping stone to the long-term goal of a career. Jobs may not relate to each other when first starting out in the world of work.
- A career is achieving a milestone that requires transitioning from job to job to help get you to your final destination
- Factors such as timing, finances, location, and understanding the effects on family/personal life are important to consider when choosing a job/career

CHAPTER 8: ACADEMIC PLANNING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

3. Understanding the differences between a Certificate, Associate Degree, and Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT)
4. Recognize factors involved in choosing a major
5. Examine the My Academic Planning tool (MAP) and develop your individualized educational plan

Now that you have explored possible career options it is time to look at the specific educational training required to help you pursue your career goal(s). The career you are considering may require specialized industry certification or licensing, an associate degree, bachelor's degree or a more advanced degree. College of the Canyons offers certificates, associate degree and transfer programs that can help link back to your potential career options.

8.1 ACADEMIC PLANNING

Choosing your college major can feel overwhelming and some students are concerned they will limit their options by committing to a major too soon. If you are uncertain about your major, it is best to focus on your general education (GE) classes. General education courses are made up of different courses that fall under sciences, social science, arts and humanities, English, math, and health or lifelong learning. These categories make up a well-rounded selection of courses that support you if you decide you want to earn an associate's degree and/or transfer.

One of the benefits of starting with your general education (GE) courses is it allows you to explore various academic areas which may end up grabbing your attention and may lead to your major. If you take a particular general education class, but do not end up liking it – that is okay – the course will still count toward your GE units! If you are considering a particular major but are not certain, you are strongly advised to take an introductory course in that academic area. For example, if you think you may like the idea of majoring in business, consider taking Business 100 - Introduction to Business. Exploring this course sooner than later can help you make a decision and determine which courses are required for the major and whether some of the courses may also double dip and satisfy GE requirements.

CERTIFICATES

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

For example, to become an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), one must become certified by passing an exam offered through the National Registry. Completing the EMT Certificate of specialization at COC prepares students to take the exam to become certified and gain employment as an EMT. For a list of certificates offered through COC view the counseling site: <https://www.canyons.edu/student-services/counseling/degrees/certificates.php>

ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAMS (AA/AS)

The associate degree is an academic specific program that requires at least 60 units to be completed. These units are comprised of general education courses and courses specific to the major. The AA/AS degree is designed to help students gain employment/job advancement and/or lead toward additional education required for your career goal(s). For a comprehensive list of associate degrees offered through COC view the counseling site: <https://www.canyons.edu/student-services/counseling/degrees/majors.php>

ASSOCIATE DEGREE FOR TRANSFER (AA-T/AS-T)

The AA-T/AS-T degrees are designed to help facilitate the transfer process for California community college students to the California State University (CSU) school system. These degrees can also help prepare students to transfer to the University of California (UC) school system. The AA-T/AS-T academic majors require at least 60-units to be completed with at least 18 units or more in a specific major. The general education required for an AA-T/AS-T will be more extensive than for the AA/AS degrees and will either follow the CSU GE transfer guide or the IGETC (UC) GE transfer guide.

The benefit of an AA-T/AS-T is that students are guaranteed admission to one of the CSU schools (a non-impacted CSU and not necessarily the CSU of the student's choice) and are guaranteed to only be required to complete 60 units towards their bachelor's degree after transfer. For more information go to:

<https://www.canyons.edu/student-services/counseling/degrees/aat-ast.php>.

These benefits do not extend to transfer to a UC, private, and/or out-of-state school.



Figure 8.1 College of the Canyons Student Welcome Week, Spring 2019.³⁹

TRANSFER PROGRAMS

College of the Canyons has transfer agreements with four-year colleges and universities that allow students to complete their freshman and sophomore general education courses and major preparation work at COC and then transfers as a junior. The transfer agreements may be found on the counseling website at:

<https://www.canyons.edu/studentservices/counseling/transfer/index.php>. For specific transfer agreements between COC and a UC/CSU school, go to www.Assist.org to identify which courses you may need ahead of transfer, to a specific school and/or major.

8.2 TRANSFER CONSIDERATIONS

While at College of the Canyons, you may work on multiple goals. You may earn a certificate, associate degree and/or transfer program. If you are considering transferring to a four-year university or college, be sure to follow these steps:

- Learn more about the transfer process. COC has different transfer agreements with the UC/CSU and some private and out-of-state institutions. Understanding the transfer requirements ahead of time will make for a smooth transition. Transfer agreements may be found on the counseling website at: <http://www.canyons.edu/Offices/Counseling>
- If you are considering transfer to a CSU school, you may wish to consider the AA-T/AS-T programs offered through COC. These degrees are designed to help facilitate the transfer process for California community college students to the CSU System. For more information about AAT/AST offered at COC go to

³⁹ [Image](#) by College of the Canyons, used with permission.

<https://www.canyons.edu/student-services/counseling/degrees/aat-ast.php> AS-T.aspx and to learn more about the **Transfer With a Guarantee** options, go to <http://adegreewithaguarantee.com>

- If you are considering transfer to a CSU or UC school, learn more about the CSU GE and IGETC (GE) transfer patterns. The CSU GE transfer pattern courses is the GE pattern all CSU schools will accept as satisfying the lower division GE coursework. The CSU GE can be found on the counseling website at <https://www.canyons.edu/student-services/counseling/transfer/index.php>
- The IGETC is the GE transfer pattern accepted by all UC and CSU schools as satisfying the lower division GE requirements. The IGETC GE transfer pattern can be found on the counseling website at <https://www.canyons.edu/student-services/counseling/transfer/index.php>
- Explore www.assist.org to learn about specific major courses necessary for transfer. This site houses all the transfer agreements between all California Community Colleges, CSU and UC institutions.
- Meet with a counselor to learn more about the transfer process and create an educational plan based on your major and transfer schools.
- Consider enrolling in **Counseling 120 - University Transfer Planning** to learn more about the transfer process. This is a one-unit course offered every term. This course provides students with information and resources to facilitate a smooth transfer to 4-year colleges and universities. Topics include UC/CSU applications, major and general education requirements, financial aid/scholarships, personalized student education plans, and analysis of factors involved in the selection of transfer schools.
- Visit the Transfer Center to learn about transfer related events and workshops. Oftentimes, university representatives come to campus to meet 1:1 with prospective transfer students. Every Fall semester, the Transfer Center hosts “Transfer Day” where many college and university representatives are present to answer transfer admission questions. View the transfer center site for details about upcoming events and activities that may support your transfer goals at <https://www.canyons.edu/student-services/transfercenter/>

8.3 My Academic Plan (MAP)

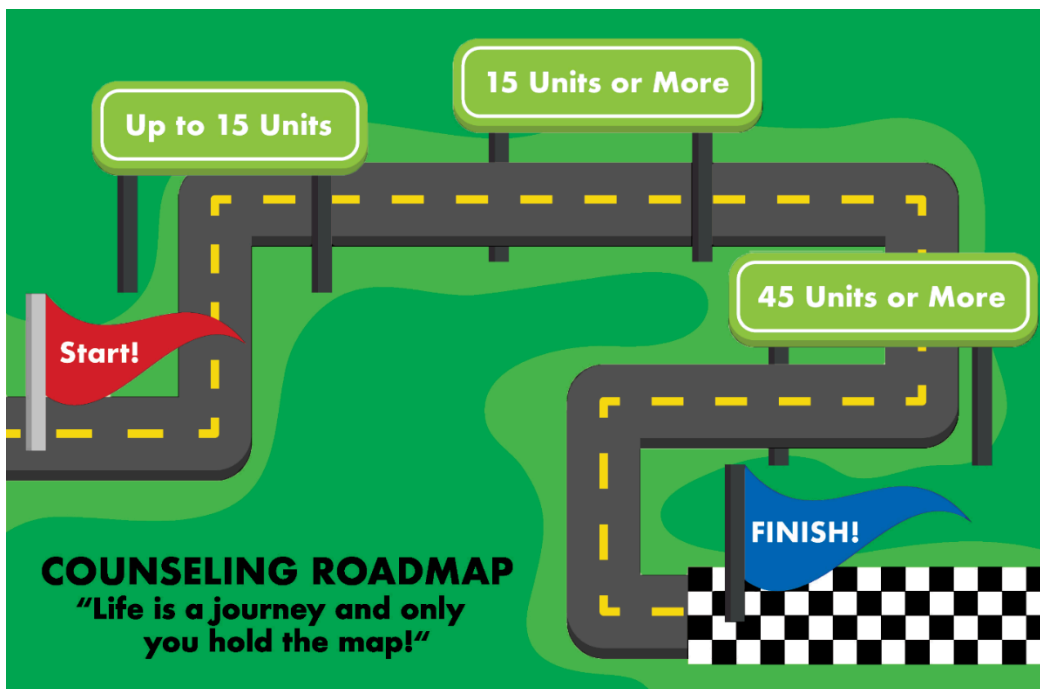
Once you determine the goal you wish to pursue at COC, you are ready to declare your major and develop your educational plan. Students are able to create their education plan in a couple of different ways – either with a counselor or online through the online Academic Planning tool called **MAP** (My Academic Plan). MAP is located on the main menu in your MyCanyons student portal. For the step-by-step guidelines on developing your MAP, you can go to <https://www.canyons.edu/student-services/admissions/resources/map.php> and view the “*Building Your MAP*” pdf document to help you get started.



Figure 8.2 My Academic Learning Plan.⁴⁰

Your MAP will allow you to track your progress toward completing your major and plan classes necessary to meet your goal. Even though students are able to plan out their classes several semesters in advance through MAP, it is highly encouraged to discuss your planned courses with a counselor to ensure you have accounted for all necessary requirements!

If you are still undecided about your major or career direction, that's ok! You can read up on all the programs COC has to offer by browsing through the [College Catalog](#) (which includes course descriptions) or through the [Counseling Department](#) link for degrees and certificates. You can research further what may best suit you - certificate, associate degree, transfer, or all three. If you have a general idea of what program you wish to pursue, you can start focusing on your general education courses and consider taking some exploratory classes toward your major next semester, to allow you to explore areas of interest.



⁴⁰ [Image](#) by college of the canyons, used with permission.

There is a lot of support on campus to help you each step of the way through your career and academic goals. Take advantage of the resources available to you and ask for help when necessary. Remember, you are not alone on this journey.

8.4 WHAT MAKES UP A MAJOR?

Typical college majors will include a combination of major courses for your specific major/degree, general education courses, and possibly elective courses. Let's unpack this information to fully understand what makes up a major:

- **Major courses** are essential to your specific field of study. To earn an associate degree, there will be a certain number of major courses required to take that may or may not relate to your general education courses. For example, as an accounting student you will need to take classes such as financial accounting and microeconomics. It is also important to consider how your major courses for an associate degree may relate toward your potential transfer school(s).
- **General education** courses consisting of sciences, arts & humanities, English, math, and possibly critical thinking, communications, and health/wellness. Courses fulfilled toward general education are required for any associates degree and also for transfer. Follow up with the Counseling Department if you are unsure if the general education courses you are taking will meet your academic goals.
- **Elective** courses may be a variable component of your degree. Determining whether or not you will need to build in elective courses to complete your major and/or transfer will depend on how many overall units are needed to complete the major in relation to general education requirements. Many students will use the term “electives” broadly to mean courses toward a specific major or general education courses. For this book, we will use “electives” as courses that fall outside of major and general education courses. Based on particular majors, students may not need to take elective courses.

To help balance out the demands of major and general education courses, it is preferred that students take a combination of general education major preparation courses during the same semester or term. This is a good way to meet the demands of your major and still make progress to meet general education requirements. Since your major courses will be clearly specified, you may not have many options of which courses you can take during a given semester or what days/times the courses are offered.

It is important to track and plan your major and general education courses early on in your academic journey and make note of when courses are typically offered, what format courses are offered in (on campus, online, hybrid). Follow up with a counselor to help you make sure you are on the best route to graduation, transfer, or both!

⁴¹ Image by [Ian Joslin](#) is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)

Although the selecting a major is important, try not to get too anxious about this decision since it could change as you continue to gather information on how majors link to different careers and vice versa. Working with a counselor can help you clarify your academic goals to be as flexible as possible. Consider the following:

- Your choice of major or degree will be important only for your first job after college; most people change careers (not just jobs, but careers) several times throughout their lifetime and there is no possible major that will cover that level of flexibility.
- Many majors and degrees share foundation courses with other majors, so you can usually change your major without having wasted your time in courses that will be unrelated to your new major. Chances are that if you change your major, it will be to something similar, especially if you have completed career assessments as recommended earlier in Chapter 7.
- If a change in major does cause a delay in completing your degree, it may be a good investment of time to follow a career path you are truly happy with.
- Take your time to engage in activities on campus to help you further explore your major such as:
 - **Major Quest** - This event is hosted every fall semester and is put on through the [Student Engagement and Student Life \(formerly ASG\) department](#). This event is where all college departments showcase their programs. Faculty are available to answer questions about the different majors within their department and career paths they may lead to.
 - Enroll in Counseling 110 - Career and Life Planning
 - Meet with a counselor to further discuss your major options
 - Explore Internship opportunities through our [Cooperative Work Education Experience \(CWEE\) program](#).
 - Volunteering can be a great way to quickly get hands-on experience with an organization without having to commit too much time if you are still unsure about a career area.

While these thoughts might remove some of the stress of making a major/degree choice, there is no doubt that it is not always easy to make a choice. The following tips may make it a little easier...and perhaps fun!

- **Make it fun.** What do you like to do for fun? What kinds of magazines do you read? What Web sites are bookmarked on your computer? What kinds of volunteer work have you done? What do the answers to these questions tell you about the kind of career you would enjoy?
- **Build on your skills.** A good choice of a program of study is not based exclusively on your likes; it should also consider your skills. What courses did you “ace” in high school? Consider also courses that you found challenging in which you learned a lot (it’s hard to keep a level of determination to tackle a tough subject if you don’t enjoy it). What do these courses tell you about what you are skilled at studying?
- **Ask around.** Find people who are following the courses of studies you are considering. Ask them what they like and dislike about their majors. If you can find recent graduates with that major, ask them about the value of their major.

- **Two is better than one.** Talk to your counselor about a double major; that is an effective way of preparing yourself for the uncertainties and options of future employment. Think about declaring a minor if your college allows it.
- **What makes you unique?** If you have a major that you would like to pursue that is not offered at your college, find out if you can plan your own major. This option is especially attractive if you want to combine two seemingly different disciplines into a major (Dance and athletics? Sociology and film? Women’s studies and economics?).
- **Be open to change.** Once you have selected a major, do not panic if it turns out to be the wrong choice later on – consider it a step toward finding the right program for you. Repeat the major selection process, but carefully consider what you learned from your original major choice. Why was it not the right major? (Did it not match your interests? Was the workload too heavy? Were the courses too tough?) What do you know now that you did not know when you made your first selection that you should consider in making a new choice?

The more time you take to explore your major and career options, the sooner you will be able to make a well informed decision. Keep the following points in mind and enjoy the process and experience involved in choosing a college major:

- ✓ There is no need to panic over the choice of a major or program of studies.
- ✓ Most students will change their major during their college years.
- ✓ Many people work and have successful careers in disciplines they did not major in.

Table 8.1: College Major Guidance

Website	Description
Majors at College of the Canyons	Lists current majors at COC with an AA/AS or AA-T/AST. A brief description of each major is highlighted along with required courses and number of units necessary for the degree.
List of College Majors (MyMajors)	A list of more than 1,800 college majors—major pages include description, courses, careers, salary, related majors and colleges offering major
Take the College Major Profile Quiz (About.com)	Quiz is designed to help students think about college majors, personality traits, and how they may fit within different areas of study
Choosing a College Major Worksheet (Quint Careers)	A six-step process to finding a college major

Website	Description
Common Mistakes Students Make in Choosing a Major	Lists common misperceptions about choosing a major and explains how these misperceptions can cloud future plans
What can I do with this major?	Lists majors and how they connect with careers, provides information about common career areas, typical employers and strategies designed to maximize career opportunities. Additional links are listed to connect to professional association and other resources related to the major.
Explore Careers (BigFuture/The College Board)	Explore careers by selecting “Show me majors that match my interests,” “Show me new career ideas,” and “Show me how others made their choices”
The College Major: What It Is and How To Choose One (BigFuture/The College Board)	When to choose a major, how to choose a major, “you can change your mind,” majors and graduate school, and majors and professions

CHAPTER 8 REVIEW

- Academic planning is a process and can be overwhelming at times.
- Certificates are short term training programs that are industry specific
- The associate degree is an academic specific program that requires at least 60 units to be completed. These units are comprised of general education courses and courses specific to the major.
- The AA-T/AS-T degrees are designed to help facilitate the transfer process for California community college students to the California State University (CSU) school system. These degrees can also help prepare students to transfer to the University of California (UC) school system.
- For specific transfer agreements between COC and a UC/CSU school, go to www.Assist.org to identify which courses you may need ahead of transfer, to a specific school and/or major.
- Students are able to create their education plan in a couple of different ways – either with a counselor or online through the online Academic Planning tool called MAP.

CHAPTER 8 REVIEW

- College majors will include a combination of major courses for your specific major/degree, general education courses, and possibly elective courses.
- Exploring your major and career options will help you make informed decisions about your future.

APPENDICES

COUNSELING CLASSES AT COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS

COUNS 010 (1 Unit)

Career Exploration (Offered credit/no credit only)

This course assists students in making career decisions. Emphasis is on selecting a career based on personal interests, abilities, values, and goals through self-assessment and career research.

COUNS 100 (3 units)

Success Strategies for the Adult Re-Entry Student (CSU transferable - CSU GE Area E)

This course integrates personal growth and values, academic study strategies and critical and creative thinking proficiency for adult reentry students, emphasizing the attainment of lifelong success in academic, professional, and personal development.

COUNS 110 (3 units)

Career Life-Planning (CSU transferable - CSU GE Area E)

This course introduces self-assessment tools to identify college majors and careers by clarifying interests, skills, values, and personality type. Students also examine the decision-making process, self-management, life roles and goal-setting. It includes a review of labor market trends, career research, interviewing skills, resume and cover letter writing, and job search strategies.

COUNS 111 (1 unit)

Introduction to College and Strategies for Success (CSU transferable - CSU GE Area E)

This course focuses on the various components necessary for college planning and academic success. Readiness for college will be explored with special attention given to students' responsibilities, study skills assessment, personal values, motivation, and goal setting. Topics include values clarification, decision making, study skills, choosing a major, the responsible student, and educational planning. Students will identify their educational goals and develop a personal plan to reach those goals.

COUNS 120 (1 unit)

University Transfer Planning (CSU transferable)

This course provides students with information and resources to facilitate a smooth transfer to 4 year colleges and universities. Topics include UC/CSU applications, major and general education requirements, financial aid/scholarships, personalized student education plans, and analysis of factors involved in the selection of transfer schools.

COUNS 142 (3 units)

Learning to Learn (CSU transferable - CSU GE Area E)

Focuses on brain-based learning strategies that develop self-regulatory learning: discovering self-motivation; gaining self-awareness; developing emotional intelligence; employing interdependence; accepting personal responsibility; applying active listening; reading and note-taking; monitoring performance; and developing a growth mindset that believes in self. Students will combine theory and practice to become successful learners and successful college students.

COUNS 150 (3 units)

Student Success (CSU & UC transferable - CSU GE Area E)

This course is designed for new students as a complete orientation of the responsibilities and benefits of higher education. Educational planning, goal setting, and career choices are examined. Study and life survival skills are provided to ensure a successful academic experience.

COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS CAMPUS RESOURCES

[Counseling Office](#). They help you choose courses and plan your program or degree. Students are encouraged to see a counselor every 6-12 months to ensure you are staying on track for your academic, career, and personal goals. Counselors can also help with study skills/strategies, stress management, concerns with a class, and can be a guide for navigating college.

- **Available at Valencia & Canyon Country campuses, and online**

[Admissions & Records Office](#). If you are needing to add/drop a course, need to order a transcript, or repeat a course, Admissions can help you! They also assist students with registration, applying to the college, and process courses from other colleges.

- **Available at Valencia & Canyon Country campuses**

[Financial Aid Office](#). If you are presently receiving financial aid or are not sure if you qualify, stop by their office today! They can help walk you through the California College Promise Grant (formerly the BOG Waiver), Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), Cal Grant and Pell Grant information, along with providing you will information on scholarships available.

- **Available at Valencia & Canyon Country campuses**

[The Learning Center \(TLC\)](#). The Learning Center has tutoring available in many different subjects, computers to use, group study rooms, and guided learning activities to help with study skills, test anxiety, along with English and math specific topics.

- **Available at Valencia & Canyon Country campuses**

[Computer labs](#). We have computer labs around campus to help support students and their busy schedules. Computers are free for students to use and just require that students show their student ID card. Depending on the location, there may be free printing up to 10 pages or a small fee. Here are some of the labs on campus:

- Library – next to The Learning Center (both campuses)
- The Learning Center
- College Life & Student Engagement (formerly ASG lab)
- Building 1B @ the Canyon Country Campus

[Student Health & Wellness Center](#). In addition to providing some basic medical care and making referrals, the Student Health Center can also help with mental health counseling, diet/exercise counseling, birth control services, and preventive health care.

- **Available at Valencia & Canyon Country campuses**

[Career Counseling](#). Career counselors can assist with career exploration, identify careers beyond graduation, administer career assessments, and discuss internship/job shadowing options.

- **Available at Valencia & Canyon Country campuses**

For additional campus resources, click this [link](#) or visit:

https://www.canyons.edu/academics/schools/socialsciences/campus_resources.php.

SOURCE

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