

PART I

Career Success

Chapter 1 Understanding Motivation

Chapter 2 Exploring Your Personality and Major

Chapter 3 Exploring Multiple Intelligences, Interests and Values

Chapter 4 Planning your Education and Career



Understanding Motivation

Learning Objectives

Read to answer these key questions:

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

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

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

What Do I Want from College?

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

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

What is the Value of a College Education?

Many college students say that getting a satisfying job that pays well and achieving financial security are important motivators for attending college. As a result of the rising cost of higher education, students have started to question whether a college education is still a good investment. Recent analyses by the Federal Reserve Bank have shown that the benefits still outweigh the cost for both an associate's and a bachelor's degree. These degrees have a 15% return, which is considered a good investment.¹ By getting a degree, you can get a job that pays more per hour, work fewer hours to earn a living, and have more time for leisure activities. In addition, you can spend your time at work doing something that you enjoy. A report issued by the Census Bureau in 2014 listed the following education and income statistics for all races and both genders throughout the United States.² Lifetime income assumes that a person works 30 years before retirement.

Average Earnings Based on Education Level

Education	Yearly Income	Lifetime Income
High-school graduate	34,736	1,042,080
Some college, no degree	38,532	1,155,960
Associate's degree	41,184	1,235,520
Bachelor's degree	57,252	1,717,560
Master's degree	68,952	2,068,560
Professional degree	85,228	2,556,840



© 2014, sergign. Used under license with Shutterstock, Inc.

Notice that income rises with educational level. Over a lifetime, a person with a bachelor's degree earns about 61% more than a high-school graduate. Of course, these are average figures across the nation and some individuals earn higher or lower salaries. People fantasize about winning the lottery, but the reality is that the probability of winning the lottery is very low. In the long run, you have a better chance of increasing your income by going to college.

Let's do some further comparisons. A high-school graduate earns an average of \$1,042,080 over a lifetime. A college graduate with a bachelor's degree earns \$1,717,560 over a lifetime. A college graduate earns \$675,480 more than a high-school graduate does over a lifetime. So how much is a college degree worth? It is worth \$675,480 over a lifetime. Would you go to college and finish your degree if someone offered to pay you \$675,480? Here are some more interesting figures we can derive from the above table:

Completing one college course is worth \$16,887.
(\$675,480 divided by 40 courses in a bachelor's degree)

Going to class for one hour is worth \$352.
(\$16,887 divided by 48 hours in a semester class)

Would you take a college course if someone offered you \$16,887? Would you go to class today for one hour if someone offered you \$352? Of course, if this sounds too good to be true, remember that you will receive these "payments" over a working lifetime of 30 years.

While college graduation does not guarantee employment, it increases your chances of finding a job. In 2014, high-school graduates had an unemployment rate of 6% as compared to college graduates who had an unemployment rate of 3.5%.³ Increase your chances of employment by continuing your education.

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

Journal Entry #1

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



© 2014, iQconcept. Used under license with Shutterstock, Inc.

Choosing a Major and Career

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

How can you choose the major that is best for you? The best way is to first understand yourself: become aware of your personality traits, interests, preferred lifestyle, values, gifts, and talents. The next step is to do career research to determine the career that best matches your personal characteristics. Then, plan your education to prepare for your career. Here are some questions to help you understand yourself and what career and major would be best for you.

To learn about yourself, explore these areas:

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

To learn about career possibilities, research the following:

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

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

Journal Entry #2

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

How to Be Motivated

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

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

Marianne Williamson

Your Mindset Makes a Difference

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

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



© Aliwak/Shutterstock.com

Can a person be too optimistic? In some circumstances, this is true. There is a difference between optimism and wishful thinking, for example. Wishful thinking does not include plans for accomplishing goals and can be a distraction from achieving them. Working toward unattainable goals can be exhausting and demoralizing, especially when the resources for attaining them are lacking. Goals must be realistic and achievable. Psychologists recommend that “people should be optimistic when the future can be changed by positive thinking, but not otherwise.”⁷ Using optimism requires some judgment about possible outcomes in the future.

There are some good reasons to think more positively. Psychologists have done long-term studies showing that people who use positive thinking have many benefits over a lifetime, including good health, longevity, happiness, perseverance, improved problem solving, and enhanced ability to learn. Optimism is also related to goal achievement. If you are optimistic and believe a goal is achievable, you are more likely to take the steps necessary to accomplish the goal. If you do not believe that a goal is achievable, you are likely to give up trying to achieve it. Being optimistic is closely related to being hopeful about the future. If you are hopeful about the future, you are likely to be more determined to reach your goals and to make plans for reaching them. Be optimistic about graduating from college, find the resources necessary to accomplish your goal, and start taking the steps to create your success.

ACTIVITY

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

Rate the following items using this scale:

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

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

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

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

Journal Entry #3

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

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

“A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.”
Winston Churchill

Find Something Interesting in Your Studies

If you can think positively about what you are studying, it makes the job easier and more satisfying. Begin your studies by finding something interesting in the course and your textbook. Contrast these two ideas:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Improving Your Concentration and Attention

You cannot learn without concentrating and paying attention, so how can you improve this skill? Have you ever watched lion tamers concentrate? If their attention wanders, they are likely to be eaten, so **they are motivated to pay attention**. Skilled athletes, musicians,



© Eugenio Maronqiu/Shutterstock.com

and artists don't have any trouble concentrating. Think about a time when you were totally focused on what you were doing. You were motivated to continue. You can set the stage for paying attention by focusing on your goals, getting some exercise, and being well-rested and alert. Here are some additional ways to improve concentration, attention, and motivation.

Avoid multi-tasking. Paying attention is not multi-tasking. Often students try to study with many distractions including cell phones and other electronic interruptions. It is a common myth that the brain is able to multi-task and pay attention to several inputs at once. However, the brain cannot multi-task; it pays attention to one input at a time. Research shows the following:⁸

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

A good example of the problems with multi-tasking is driving while talking on the phone. The brain constantly switches between paying attention to the phone and driving. If you are talking on a cell phone, you are half a second slower in stepping on the brake. At 70 mph, the car travels 51 feet in half a second. In addition, drivers miss 50% of the visual clues noticed by drivers who are not trying to multi-task. Driving while using a cell phone is like driving drunk.⁹ While studying, cell phones and other distractions reduce productivity and increase the chance for errors. Focusing on one task at a time saves time and improves the quality of work.

Manage your external environment. Find an environment that minimizes distractions. One idea is to study in the library where there are many cues that remind you to study. There are books and learning resources and other people studying. Concentration and motivation can be increased by varying the places where you study. You may be able to set up a learning environment in your home where you can place a desk or table, your computer, and your materials for learning. Vary your routine by finding a quiet place outside to study or any place where you can focus your attention. Avoid studying in the kitchen, in your bed, or in front of the TV where you will be distracted by food, sleep, or an interesting program on TV.

Manage your internal distractions.

1. **Vary the content and subjects that you are studying.** Athletes maintain concentration and motivation by including strength, speed, and skill practice in each

Managing Internal Distractions

1. Be here now
2. Spider technique
3. Worry time
4. Checkmark technique
5. Increase activity
6. Find an incentive
7. Change topics

workout. Musicians practice scales, different musical pieces, and rhythm exercises in one practice session. In your studies, you can do the same. For example, when studying a foreign language, spend some time on reading, some time on learning vocabulary, and some practice in speaking the language. Then do some problems for your math class.

2. **Be here now.** Choose where you will place your attention. Your body can be attending a lecture or be at the desk reading, but your mind can be in many different and exciting places. You can tell yourself, “Be here now.” You cannot force yourself to pay attention, but when your mind wanders, notice that you have drifted off and gently return your attention to your lecture or reading. This will take some practice, since attention tends to wander often.
3. **The spider technique.** If you hold a tuning fork to a spider web, the web vibrates and the spider senses that it has caught some tasty food and goes looking for it. After a while the spider discovers that there is no food and learns to ignore the vibrations caused by the tuning fork. When you are sitting in the library studying and someone walks in talking and laughing, you can choose to pay attention either to the distraction or to the studying. Decide to continue to pay attention to the studying.
4. **Set up a worry time.** Many times, worries interfere with concentration. Some people have been successful in setting up a worry time. Here’s how it works:
 - a. Set a specific time each day for worrying.
 - b. When worries distract you from your studies, remind yourself that you have set aside time for worrying.
 - c. Tell yourself, “Be here now.”
 - d. Keep your worry appointment.
 - e. During your worry time, try to find some solutions or take some steps to resolve the things that cause you to worry.
5. **Take steps to solve personal problems.** If you are bothered by personal problems, take steps to solve them. See your college counselor for assistance. Another strategy is to make a plan to deal with the problem later so you can study now.
6. **Use the checkmark technique.** Use the checkmark technique. When you find yourself distracted from a lecture or from studying, place a checkmark on a piece of paper and refocus your attention on the task at hand. You will find that your checkmarks decrease over time.

Intrinsic or Extrinsic Motivation

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

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



© 2014, Anson0618. Used under license with Shutterstock, Inc.

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

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

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

Locus of Control

Being aware of the concept of locus of control is another way of understanding motivation. The word **locus** means place. The locus of control is where you place the responsibility for control over your life. In other words, who is in charge? If you place the responsibility on yourself and believe that you have control over your life, you have an internal locus of control. If you place the responsibility on others and think that luck or fate determines your future, you have an external locus of control. Some people use the internal and external locus of control in combination or favor one type in certain situations. If you favor an internal locus of control, you believe that to a great extent your actions determine your future. **Studies have shown that students who use an internal locus of control are likely to have higher achievement in college.**¹⁰ The characteristics of students with internal and external loci of control are listed below.



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

Lou Holtz

Students with an internal locus of control:

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

ACTIVITY

Internal or External Locus of Control

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

Internal

External

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

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

Students with an external locus of control:

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

Affiliation

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

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

Thomas Jefferson

QUIZ

Motivation, Part I

1. To increase your chance of accomplishing your goals,
 - a. think positively and work step by step to achieve your goals.
 - b. use wishful thinking.
 - c. set high goals that may not be possible to achieve.
2. You can increase your motivation for studying by
 - a. taking the required courses.
 - b. reminding yourself that you have to do it.
 - c. finding something interesting in your studies.
3. Intrinsic motivation
 - a. comes from within.
 - b. is the result of an external reward.
 - c. involves higher pay or recognition for a job well done.
4. To be successful in college, it is best to use
 - a. an external locus of control.
 - b. extrinsic motivation.
 - c. intrinsic motivation.
5. A person who is multitasking:
 - a. Uses time efficiently.
 - b. Takes 50% longer to complete a task.
 - c. Minimizes errors.

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

Achievement

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

Using a Reward

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

Be careful about the kinds of rewards you use so that you do not get into habits that are detrimental to your health. If you use food as a reward for studying, you may increase your studying behavior, but you may also gain a few pounds. Using alcohol or drugs as a reward can start an addiction. Buying yourself a reward can ruin your budget. Good rewards do not involve too many calories, cost too much money, or involve alcohol or drugs.

As a college student, you can use a reward as a powerful motivator. Praise yourself and think positively about your achievements in college even if the achievements come in small steps.



© 2014, Andy Dean Photography. Used under license with Shutterstock, Inc.

Journal Entry #4

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

Success Is a Habit

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

Eight Steps to Change a Habit

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Habits are first cobwebs, then cables.”

Spanish Proverb

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

Aristotle

Seven Steps to Change a Habit

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

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

Walt Disney

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

Albert Einstein

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

- 7. Find a reward for your behavior.** Remember that we tend to repeat behaviors that are rewarded. Find rewards that do not involve too many calories, don't cost too much money, and don't involve alcohol or drugs. Also, rewards are most effective if they directly follow the behavior you wish to reinforce.



- 8.** Ask yourself, "What am I going to do to maintain the change?" In the long run, the new behavior has to become part of your lifestyle.

Ten Habits of Successful College Students

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

1. Attend class.

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

2. Read the textbook.

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

3. Have an educational plan.

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

4. Use college services.

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

5. Get to know the faculty.

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

6. Don't work too much.

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

7. Take one step at a time.

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

8. Have a goal for the future.

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

9. Visualize your success.

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

10. Ask questions if you don't understand.

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

QUIZ

Motivation, Part II

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

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

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Persistence

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

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

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

(continued)

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

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

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

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

- Lost a senatorial race at age 45.
- Failed in an effort to become vice president at age 47.
- Lost a senatorial race at age 49.
- Was elected president of the United States at age 52.¹¹



© Gustavo Frazao/Shutterstock.com

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

Journal Entry #5

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



© Lyudmyla Kharlamova/Shutterstock.com

College Success 1

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

Notes

1. Federal Reserve Bank of New York, “Do the Benefits of College Still Outweigh the Costs?,” *Current Issues in Economics and Finance* 20, no. 3, 2014. Available at www.newyorkfed.org/research/current-issues
2. U.S Census Bureau, “Earnings and Unemployment by Educational Attainment 2014,” retrieved from http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm
3. Ibid.
4. W. Lewallen, “The Impact of Being Undecided on College Persistence,” *Journal of College Student Development* 34 (1993): 103–112.
5. Marsha Fralick, “College Success: A Study of Positive and Negative Attrition,” *Community College Review* 20 (1993): 29–36.
6. Terry Doyle and Todd Zakrajsek, *The New Science of Learning* (Sterling, Virginia: Stylus), 85–87.
7. Christopher Peterson, *A Primer in Positive Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 127.
8. John Medina, *Brain Rules* (Seattle: Pear Press, 2008), 87.
9. Ibid., 87.
10. M.J. Findley and H.M. Cooper, “Locus of Control and Academic Achievement: A Literature Review,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 44 (1983): 419–427.
11. Anthony Robbins, *Unlimited Power* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1986), 73.



Begin with Self-Assessment

Name _____ Date _____

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

Measure Your Success

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

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



© 2014, Kenishirotie. Used under license with Shutterstock, Inc.

- _____ I am motivated to be successful in college.
- _____ I know the value of a college education.
- _____ I know how to establish successful patterns of behavior.
- _____ I can concentrate on an important task until it is completed.
- _____ I am attending college to accomplish my own personal goals.
- _____ I believe to a great extent that my actions determine my future.
- _____ I am persistent in achieving my goals.

_____ Total points for Motivation

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

_____ Total points for Personality and Major

- _____ I understand the concept of multiple intelligences.
- _____ I can list my multiple intelligences and matching careers.
- _____ I can describe my vocational interests.
- _____ I can list my top values.
- _____ My personal values generally guide my actions.
- _____ I can balance work, study, and leisure activities.
- _____ I know the steps in making a good career decision.

_____ **Total points for Multiple Intelligences, Interests, and Values**

- _____ I understand how current employment trends will affect my future.
- _____ I know what work skills will be most important for the 21st century.
- _____ I have an educational plan that matches my academic and career goals.
- _____ I know how to use job outlook in planning my career.
- _____ I have a good resume.
- _____ I know how to interview for a job
- _____ I know how to use up-to-date job search strategies to find a job.

_____ **Total points for Career and Education**

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

_____ **Total points for Managing Time and Money**

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

_____ **Total points for Brain Science and Memory**

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

_____ **Total points for Brain Science and Study Skills**

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

_____ **Total points for Taking Notes, Writing, and Speaking**

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

_____ **Total points for Test Taking**

- _____ I understand how my personality affects my communication style.
- _____ I know how to be a good listener.
- _____ I can use some basic techniques for good communication.
- _____ I can identify some barriers to effective communication.
- _____ I know how to deal with conflict.
- _____ I feel confident about making new friends in college and on the job.
- _____ I am generally a good communicator.

_____ **Total points for Communication and Relationships**

- _____ I have the skills to analyze data, generate alternatives, and solve problems.
- _____ I can identify fallacies in reasoning.
- _____ I can apply the steps of critical thinking to analyze a complex issue.
- _____ I am willing to consider different points of view.
- _____ I can use brainstorming to generate a variety of ideas.
- _____ I am good at visualization and creative imagination.
- _____ I am generally curious about the world and can spot problems and opportunities.

_____ **Total points for Critical and Creative Thinking**

- _____ I understand the basics of good nutrition.
- _____ I understand how to maintain my ideal body weight.
- _____ I exercise regularly.
- _____ I avoid addictions to smoking, alcohol, and drugs.
- _____ I protect myself from sexually transmitted diseases.
- _____ I generally get enough sleep.
- _____ I am good at managing stress.

_____ **Total points for Health**

- _____ I understand the concept of diversity and know why it is important.
- _____ I understand the basics of communicating with a person from a different culture.
- _____ I understand how the global economy will affect my future career.
- _____ I understand how the concept of the electronic village will affect my future.
- _____ I am familiar with the basic vocabulary of diversity.
- _____ I try to avoid stereotypes when dealing with others who are different than me.
- _____ I try to understand and appreciate those who are different from me.

_____ **Total points for Diversity**

- _____ I understand the theories of life stages.
- _____ I can describe my present developmental stage in life.
- _____ I have self-confidence.
- _____ I use positive self-talk and affirmations.
- _____ I have a visual picture of my future success.
- _____ I have a clear idea of what happiness means to me.
- _____ I usually practice positive thinking.

_____ **Total points for Future**

- _____ I am confident of my ability to succeed in college.
- _____ I am confident that my choice of a major is the best one for me.
- _____ **Total additional points**

Total your points:

- _____ Motivation
- _____ Personality and Major
- _____ Multiple Intelligences, Interests, and Values
- _____ Career and Education
- _____ Managing Time and Money
- _____ Brain Science and Memory
- _____ Brain Science and Study Skills
- _____ Taking Notes, Writing, and Speaking
- _____ Test Taking
- _____ Communication and Relationships
- _____ Critical and Creative Thinking
- _____ Health
- _____ Diversity
- _____ Future
- _____ Additional Points
- _____ **Grand total points**

If you scored

- 450–500 You are very confident of your skills for success in college. Maybe you do not need this class?
- 400–449 You have good skills for success in college. You can always improve.
- 350–399 You have average skills for success in college. You will definitely benefit from taking this course.
- Below 350 You need some help to survive in college. You are in the right place to begin.

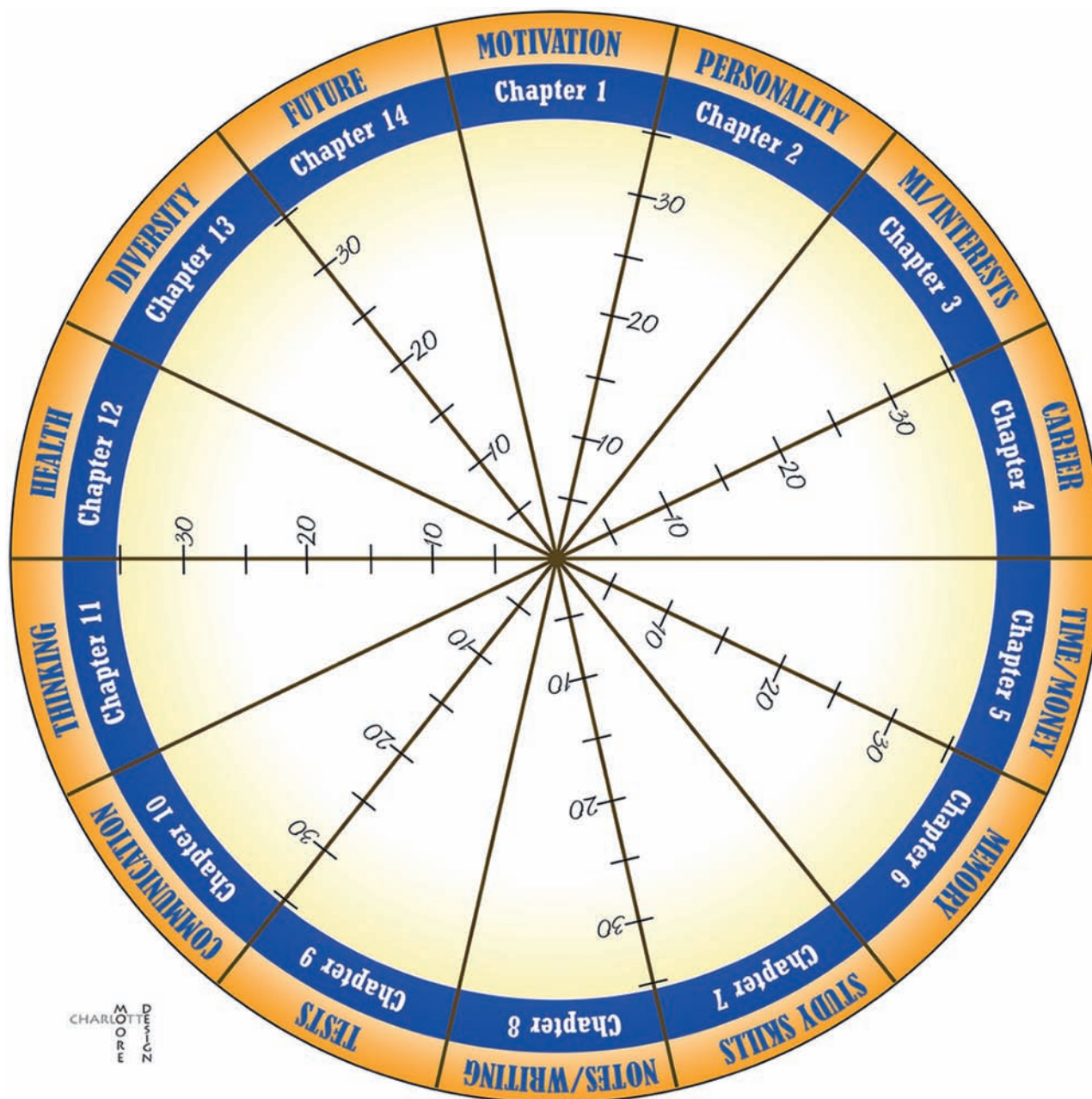
Use these scores to complete the Success Wheel that follows this assessment. Note that the additional points are not used in the chart.



Success Wheel

Name _____ Date _____

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



CHARLOTTE
WOOD
2014



1. What are your best areas?

2. What are areas that need improvement?

What Do I Want from College?

Name _____ Date _____

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

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



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

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

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____

Roadblocks and Pathways to Success

Name _____

Date _____



© 2014, iQconcept. Used under license with Shutterstock, Inc.

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

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

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



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

What are your top three roadblocks?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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

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

Textbook Skimming

Name _____ Date _____

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

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

