Sink or Swim

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

RETENTION & STUDENT SUCCESS

SINK OR SWIM: IT'S YOUR CHOICE

A GUIDE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS AT FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

This handbook was developed to assist students in the transition to Ferris State University. As the title indicates you are responsible for your success at the university. It is your choice whether to sink or swim. We know that if you use the strategies presented here, you can be successful.

The authors of this handbook have over 105 years of experience working with students in various educational areas and grade levels.

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"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"
"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.
--Lewis Carroll, "Alice's Adventure in Wonderland"

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Section 1 –

Making Sense of Your New Academic Environment

The Difference between High School Teachers and University Professors

A crucial key to success in college is understanding your professors and what they require from you. You are no longer in high school where your teachers, parents, and counselors checked up on you. Turning in assignments late is no longer an option. In college, you are *expected* to take responsibility for your academic life. This includes not only class time but scheduling, appointments, studying, and free time. If you need help, you need to ask for it. There are many places to go for help, but your first contact is always the professor who teaches the class. For that reason, it might be helpful to know some differences between how high school teachers and college professors work.

Teachers (High School)	Professors (College)
• Check your completed homework	• May not check homework, but will expect you to complete the same tasks on a test
• Remind you of your incomplete work	• May not remind you of your incomplete work
• Approach you if they think you need assistance	• Professors are usually open and helpful, but expect you to make contact if you need help
• Are usually available for conversation before, during, and after class	• Expect you to attend their scheduled office hours
• Have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students	• Have been trained as experts in their particular areas of research
• Provide you with information you missed when you were absent	• Expect you to get notes from classmates if you are absent
• Present material to help you understand the material in the textbook	• May not follow the textbook; instead, to amplify the text, they may give illustrations, provide background information, or discuss research about the topic you are studying. They may expect you to relate the classes to the textbook readings.
• Often write information on the board to be copied in your notes	• May lecture nonstop, expecting you to identify important points in your notes. Writing on the board may be to amplify the lecture, not summarize it.
• Impart knowledge and facts, help you draw conclusions, and lead you through the learning process	• Expect you to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics.
• Take time to remind you of assignments and due dates	• Expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus for due dates
• Carefully monitor class attendance	• May not formally take roll, but they are still likely to know whether or not you attended.
• *Guiding Principle*: high school is a teaching environment in which you acquire facts and skills.	• *Guiding Principle*: college is a learning environment in which you take responsibility for thinking through and applying what you have learned.

(Adapted from: Murray State University: www.murraystate.edu)

Some College Don'ts (and Do's)

Attendance

1. Do not be late for class (but, late is better than absent!).
2. Do not be absent without prior permission.
3. Do not pack up to leave before class is over.
4. Do not leave class early; the most important stuff usually happens at the end of class.

DO GO TO EVERY CLASS AND BE ON TIME!

Faculty Interactions

1. Do not be late for or miss appointments.
2. Do not use profanity in class or with a professor.
3. Do not come to class drunk or high.
4. Do not mock the professor or other students.

DO BE RESPECTFUL AT ALL TIMES!

Classroom Behavior

1. Do not sleep in class.
2. Do not eat and drink in class (especially noisy or aromatic foods and drinks).
3. Do not use cell phones in class (turn them off; don't bring them; NO TEXTING EITHER).
4. Do not have sidebar conversations while class is in session.

DO BE FULLY ENGAGED WHEN YOU ARE IN CLASS!

Academic Integrity

1. Do not plagiarize papers, speeches, or projects.
2. Do not use unauthorized help (crib notes, text messages, friends).
3. Do not make up or fabricate data or references.
4. Do not lie to get an extension, a rewrite, or credit for attending out of class events.
5. Do not provide unauthorized help.

DO YOUR OWN WORK! IT **WILL** PAY OFF IN THE END!

Studying

1. Do not procrastinate
2. Do not simply memorize
3. Do not skip review sessions
4. Do not rely on cramming/all nighters

DO KEEP UP WITH ASSIGNMENTS AND PREPARE METHODICALLY FOR EXAMS!

Syllabus Quiz or "20 Questions"

Let's start with the syllabus, the paper your professor hands out on the first day of class. That syllabus is a *"contract" between you and your instructor* detailing course description, requirements, assignments, due dates, grading policy, attendance policy and assessment methods. *This is your "game plan" for the course.* You should pay close attention in class when the syllabus is reviewed, read the syllabus closely, and mark key information as well as ask any questions you need clarified.

To show the importance of the material included in the syllabus, some faculty give a Syllabus Quiz over the material. If your faculty does not quiz you over the material, you should make copies of this page (one for each of your courses), complete the quiz and keep it along with your syllabus for use in time management and for later reference.

1. Who is your instructor?
2. What is the title of the course?
3. When does the class meet (days and time)?
4. Where does the class meet?
5. Why are you taking this course?
6. What textbook(s) is required?
7. What is the attendance policy?
8. What is the policy on tardiness?
9. When is the first exam? Or paper? Or speech?
10. How many exams/papers/speeches are required?
11. What is the policy on late assignments?
12. What is the policy on make-up exams/papers/speeches?
13. When is the last day to drop this class?
14. When is the final exam (date and time)?
15. What are the instructor's office hours?
16. Where is the instructor's office?
17. What are the opportunities for grade insurance (rewrites/dropped grades/bonus for perfect attendance)?
18. What is the class policy about academic integrity?
19. What is the first reading assignment and when is it to be done?
20. What is the minimum grade you need to earn to pass this course and move on?

Grade Insurance – So Easy, Even a Freshman Can Do It

Four or five years ago, a student worker introduced us to the basic notion of grade insurance while she was enrolled as an optometry student. Her idea worked according to the following premise.

Strong Start Coverage — With regard to the basic idea of grade insurance, it is clear that the points you get early in the semester are typically easier to earn than those that come later in the semester. Second, and just as importantly, the points earned early in the semester count exactly the same as those that may (or may not) be earned later in the semester. So, it makes good sense for students to prepare and study and perform hard early in the semester the way they do later in the semester (when they are trying to catch up) in order to maximize the number of easy, equally-valued points to be used to cover any of the harder-to-earn or blown points later. Yet, many students see the beginning of the semester as a time to coast since the workload is "easy".

We have given considerable thought to the original concept and have come to the conclusion that there are three other forms of grade insurance available for your benefit.

Solid Foundation Coverage — Basic grade insurance pays a second dividend (insurance people might call it *double indemnity*). Students who work hard at the beginning of the semester to get those "easy" points are, at the same time, preparing themselves to get the hard-to-earn points later in the semester by actually learning the early material well. Using math as an example, if you learn the math at the beginning of the semester at the A level instead of the B- or lower level, you not only get those easier points, but you also lay the foundation for subsequent learning and thus the subsequent points or grades. Nonetheless, many students choose to wait for the onset of the more challenging material before they "get busy" with true studying. It should be clear to you now that starting early pays off in several ways.

Loaner Clause — A third form of grade insurance is the provision of a substitute assignment, that is, the option to remove a poorly graded exam or paper to be replaced by a *scheduled* extra (not extra credit) assignment or exam that is to be completed by a specified deadline. At the end of the semester, the student has the choice to take the posted grades for the standard assignments OR to substitute the extra grade for the lowest grade received. The catch is that the student must complete the extra assignment as scheduled or face losing the option. Sometimes, professors will reward perfect attendance with the option to skip the final exam (or take it to replace another grade). Yet many students have ignored this opportunity until the deadline for the extra assignment has passed. This type of grade insurance certainly makes sense and we urge you to review your course syllabi carefully for this option and to use it.

Catastrophic Loss Coverage — Finally, there is an even higher level of grade insurance that takes this concept from the assignment level to the course level. First, we would all agree that some courses are easier for a given individual than others. Second, we would also agree that the grade value of the "easier" course(s) counts the same as the grade value of the more challenging courses (e.g., a 1-credit A in Tennis is equal to a 1-credit A in Quantum Physics). Therefore, another form of grade insurance would be to maximize the grades earned in the easier courses in order to balance or bolster the lower grades expected in more difficult courses. Why accept a B or a C in a course you know you could have *aced* and then wind up a) on probation or b) ineligible for a program change or c) not qualified for a scholarship because it was not enough to counteract the D (or worse) in your most challenging class. Also consider the idea that good grades earned in the basic (often easier) classes, taken at the beginning of college, will provide gpa insurance against lower grades earned in more advanced (often difficult) classes taken later.

As most people find out in real life, insurance is not appreciated until it is needed. The same lesson is true for grade insurance. So, just like you do for your car or your house, pay your grade insurance premiums on time and be covered for any academic disaster.

Avoiding the "Déjà Vu, It's Only Review" Trap

Quite often, new students will attend their schedule of classes for a week and determine that the course instructor is telling them things that they already know. We have observed that in such cases students do not pay attention, take few notes, and believe the class will "be easy." Often a good grade on the first exam will reinforce such wrong assumptions. This experience is common for students enrolled in English composition, mathematics, foreign language, U.S. History and other subjects that may have been taken in high school. But beware, it is a trap!

For some students, this sense of familiarity is similar to "déjà vu" or the sense of having lived through the exact same experience more than one time. Other students consider the first few weeks of class as review of material they believe that they already know. Either way, seeming familiarity feels reassuring and causes students to exhibit a false sense of security and believe that they will not need to work hard, especially for the first exam. Some students may even interpret the feeling of review as permission to cut class. In any of these cases, students will not have "purchased" the *solid foundation grade insurance coverage* mentioned on page 7 and may wind up with a lower grade than they might otherwise have earned either on the first exam or for the course or both.

In addition, students who believe that they have "heard all of this before" will not develop the work habits necessary for success at the collegiate level. In fact, if they do not complete the *syllabus quiz* on page 6, they will probably not complete the out of class assignments that would reinforce or add to what took place during the class meetings. They may not know to check their FerrisConnect account for the class to look for additional direction from the professor.

This false sense of security may be compounded by the fact that many college courses do not require an exam or paper until the fourth or fifth week of the semester. This common practice blurs the line of demarcation between familiar content and new material. A related issue involves the length of time between initial enrollment and finally receiving graded feedback about course performance. If the first exam or paper is not scheduled until the fourth or fifth week, the grade will not be available until the fifth or sixth week. All the while, students who have already decided that the course will consist of review and result in an easy grade assume that they are doing "fine" and that is exactly what they tell their advisor, their friends, and their families when asked, "How are you doing?" The fact is, they don't really know and, when they get their grade, it may already be too late to repair the damage.

So, we recommend that you avoid the trap by taking the following steps:

1. *Take notes* from the first day of class. Thinking about taking notes is not the same as taking notes. Taking notes is a skill that must be specific to each course. Use the review to clarify material you don't understand, to identify areas that need work, and to "fine tune" your knowledge of the material.
2. *Read the course textbook* to obtain background material, examples, and even answers to some of the important questions raised in class.
3. Practice *good listening skills.* Focus and concentrate on the main points; get them down on paper. Put the material in your own words. Reorganize the material.
4. *Review and study* (and recognize that they are <u>two different things</u>).

Your success in classes does not only depend on your mastery of new material, but on your "mastery" of material you think you know. When you take a test in college, your goal is to know the basic material so well that you will lose NO points! Then you move on to "mastering new material." College is about *understanding and using what you have learned*, not simply about "knowing."

Section 2 –

Making Your Time and Money Count

Time on Task – The 40-hour Week in College, Your Full-time Job

Every year, professors across the United States take time to inform their new students that the workload in college is different than the workload was in high school. The rule-of-thumb used by most universities is to advise students to plan to spend *at least* two hours out of class studying for each hour in class. Still, it is clear to us that most students do not believe this sound piece of advice, forgetting that in high school teachers gave limited assignments and typically permitted generous amounts of class time for the completion of those assignments. Moreover, the relatively low degree of difficulty in most high school courses both permitted and encouraged capable students to wait until the last moment to read assignments or do problems in preparation for examinations. And so, year after year, college professors scratch their heads and wonder why the same pattern emerges in their fall classes.

Instead of scratching our heads and wondering why class after class falls into the same trap – deferring or ignoring reading assignments, problem sets, papers, projects, etc. – and taking their collective lumps on the first round of grades, we thought it might be helpful to provide a concrete illustration of the difference between high school and college workloads using math as the example. Why math? Well, because almost all of you will take a math course AND because math classes have the highest D (Drop), F (Fail),W (Withdraw) rate in U.S. postsecondary education (something you might as well know now).

In high school, a student enrolled in Algebra II is scheduled to meet class for one period each day, five days a week, for 36 weeks or a total of **180 hours**. Even after making allowances for scheduled in-service days, snow days, half days and other excused absences, we can comfortably show that students receive **160 hours** of instruction in this subject for the academic year.

At the university level, the equivalent course is scheduled to meet class for one period, three days per week, for 15 weeks or a grand total of **45 hours**. Remember, the course content is exactly the same. The difference in contact time, however, is HUGE – reduced by at least 115 hours. Obviously, students must find a way to make up the difference and the ONLY way that they can do so is by spending *at least* 2 hours out of class for every hour in class. The arithmetic supporting this position is not debatable: 45 class hours + 2X45 study hours = 45 + 90 = 135 total hours. That is at least what it will take to learn the material – regardless of the subject. Three hours would be even better!

OK, it is clear that students in Algebra II should be spending at least 3 hours per week in class and 6 hours studying math (i.e., reading the text, doing the assigned problems, meeting with a tutor, etc.). Since the average credit load for university students is 13 per semester, it follows that the workload for each week can be calculated this way: 13 class hours + 2X13 study hours = 13 + 26 hours = 39 hours (or nearly 40 hours) per week, the equivalent of a full-time job. Therefore, being a full-time student IS your full-time job. If, for some reason, you believed that you only needed to be a student for the 13 hours a week that classes are scheduled, this short essay should have corrected that misperception. From the beginning of the semester, you have plenty to do for all of your classes every week:

- **reading assigned chapters and making study notes,**
- **editing notes taken during class,**
- **completing assigned out of class work for math and science,**
- **completing research in the library or on the internet for English and speech classes,**
- **writing papers or preparing speeches,**
- **preparing study materials,**
- **actually studying for exams**

It really is a 40 hour week, often with overtime! Plan your weekly routine accordingly using the chart on the next page or create your own using Microsoft excel.

The Several Time Management Habits of Effective Students

Freedom is the first thing about college that most students experience. Classes meet three days a week or two days a week instead of every day. Due dates for assignments seem to be far off in the future, sometimes not until mid-term. Of the 168 hours in each week, most undergraduates are obligated to be in class for only 12-15 hours. Many new students are living away from home for the first time and no one is reminding them about what they should be doing. Time seems to be abundant, yet what professors and advisors often hear when an assignment is late or is not done well and a class needs to be dropped is the excuse, "I did not have time" or "I did not have enough time" or "I don't know where the time went". In an earlier section, we discussed the need for students to put in two hours of work (reading, writing, completing problem sets, tutoring, etc.) out of class for every hour spent in class. Now we need to address the habits you need to develop to manage that time commitment so that it is productive.

First, you need to prepare a weekly time budget using the chart on page 8. This tool gives you a clear weekly *plan* for classes, work, athletic practices, and study time. Then, the real trick is to build the habit of using the designated study times every single day.

Second, you must use your semester planner or calendar effectively. To do so, you must sit down after the first class session(s) with the planner AND the syllabus for each class. The syllabus will almost always have a calendar that shows the due dates for quizzes, exams, papers, speeches, and projects. Your first assignment for using the 2-hour out of class rule, therefore, is to transfer that information – to the extent that it is available – from the syllabi to your planner. USE A PENCIL BECAUSE DUE DATES DO CHANGE. This information allows you to plan your out of class work so that it will not all feel as if it were dumped upon you in that notorious 4th week flurry of required work. It is up to you to make a habit of updating your planner as due dates are changed and as new assignments are identified.

Third, you must master the art and habit of the "to do list". Every evening (or every morning), you need to make a list of the specific things that you need to get done that day. No, it is not sufficient to write "go to class" or "study mathematics" or "do homework". Rather, you must list specific tasks such as: "complete math problem set 3.1" or "draft outline for persuasive speech about voting" or "read chapter 3 of Sociology text and answer questions at end of chapter". With that done, you now have a game plan for the time that you have set aside for study. You also know what materials you need to have handy.

My To Do List

1.
2.
3.

Fourth, it is essential to take advantage of found time. Sometimes, classes are cancelled. Don't go back to bed; go to the library and get something done. Read the next chapter. Put your notes in good order. Pick the topic for your next speech or paper. Similarly, the university will observe holidays and schedule mid-term recesses, but you must take advantage of those breaks to catch up, or better yet, get ahead – not merely for trips to exotic places or sleeping. Let's start with Labor Day weekend. No classes are scheduled for Labor Day, but that does not make it a day off for students. Get something done and get ahead with at least one class. The Thanksgiving holiday recess is an excellent opportunity to catch up (or get ahead) before final exams.

FSU Time Manager 

Hours	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7:00 AM							
8:00 AM							
9:00 AM							
10:00 AM							
11:00 AM							
12:00 AM							
1:00 PM							
2:00 PM							
3:00 PM							
4:00 PM							
5:00 PM							
6:00 PM							
7:00 PM							
8:00 PM							
9:00 PM							
10:00 PM							
11:00 PM							

The Dollars and Sense of College

Listed below are the business lessons that our students have learned - the hard way - as they have told us year after year when they ask to be readmitted to the University.

Cutting Class – Many new college students find the freedom they experience to be very exciting. They often have the option of going to class, *or not*. The choice to cut class is easy to rationalize – *I'm tired and needed the sleep* ***or*** *I did not feel well* ***or*** *I will get the notes from my friend* ***or*** *Missing one class won't hurt me* – but the bottom line is that every class you miss will cost you time later on. It is better to just do it – go to class and make sure you get the information you will need, get credit for the attendance quiz, and get any grade insurance that might be available. If those arguments don't convince you, maybe the bottom line will: every class period costs you about $25.

Going to Work Instead of Going to Class – Sometimes students have told us that they needed to miss class in order to get to work. Sounds reasonable at first, but let's do a simple comparison. Most students work at minimum wage jobs, so let's say that working through class will allow them to earn about $7.50 per hour. You already know that one hour of class cost $25. The cost benefit analysis here weighs heavily in favor of going to class (and scheduling work hours appropriately) as you would have to work at least 3 hours to make up for the tuition you forfeit by missing one 50-minute class session.

Not Buying Books – Have you ever heard the expression "pound wise and penny foolish"? Students tell us that they could afford to pay the $10,000 cost of tuition, room and board but could not come up with $200 to purchase the books needed for their classes. In other words, these students could not find a way to pay the 2% fraction of the total billing to make sure that they would have the materials necessary to make that $10,000 investment pay off. Now you know what that expression means.

Dropping Classes – One of the "laws" we tell students about is that a "W" or withdrawal is ALWAYS better than an "F" or failing grade. This statement is true for one reason only – the "W" only affects the student's pocketbook in terms of forfeiting the cost of tuition for the dropped course ($1,050 for a 3 credit class) while an "F" has the same dollar cost and ruins the student's gpa at the same time. The new *Satisfactory Academic Progress* or SAP rules, however, inform us that *both* choices are bad (one is just worse). Effective in 2011, students receiving financial aid (that is almost all of you reading this page) must satisfactorily complete 67% of the credits they start (both W's and F's count against that rate) AND they must maintain 2.0 gpa. The goal, therefore, is to avoid being confronted with this dilemma in the first place by taking care of business by going to class, submitting assignments on time, and studying.

Paying for the Same Real Estate Twice – One of the ways that we tell students they can regain Satisfactory Academic Progress is to repeat a class for which they received a low grade. This strategy is a good one, especially for a single class, but it is expensive because you have to pay for the credits a second time, another $1,050! Worse yet, if it is a pre-requisite class, like MATH 110 is for MATH 115, you have to wait an entire semester to take the class that you really need and, as noted above, a semester at Ferris costs more than $10,000 plus the losts earnings due to postponing graduation. It is clearly better to pass the course the first time.

Section 3 –

Making the Most of the 3 R's in College

Reading Difficult Material 

Choose a moderate amount of material or a chapter to begin.

Preview the material getting a grasp of the topic and how the material is organized.
Scan the section for titles, headings, sub-headings, and topic sentences to get the general idea; pay attention to graphs, charts and diagrams.

If there is a summary at the end of the chapter, read it. Check the beginning and the end for leading questions and exercises.

Read first for what you <u>do</u> understand, and to determine difficulty.

Read actively—annotate the passage. Mark what you do not understand to review later.

As you read, practice the "look-away method." Periodically look away from the text and ask yourself a question related to the text. Phrase the question positively. (For example: "What words *should* you look up when you cannot figure out meaning from text?"). Respond, or restate, in your own words. Make connections and associations, but don't use this exercise to memorize—but rather to understand.

Look up words. Look up the words whose meanings are important to your understanding of the material, but you cannot figure out from the context.

Read to the end. Don't get discouraged and stop reading. Ideas can become clearer the more you read. When you have finished reading, review to see what you have learned, and reread those ideas that are not clear.

Organize your notes by connecting ideas. You may choose to draw a concept map or complete a Sweat Page. Pay attention to relationships between ideas.

Do not confine yourself to words! Use representations, graphics, pictures, colors--even movement to visualize and connect ideas. Use whatever techniques work to help you understand the material.

At this point, if you do not understand your reading, do not panic! Set it aside and read it again later or the next day. If necessary, repeat this method. Waiting allows your brain to process the material, even while you sleep. This is referred to as distributed reading and spaced learning.

Re-read the section you have chosen with the framework (outline or concept map) you have constructed in mind. Separate out what you understand from what you do not understand.

If the reading is still a challenge, consult with your teacher, academic counselor, tutoring center or reading faculty.

How to Write an Effective Essay Exam

1. When taking an essay exam, be sure you:

   ~Make a quick SURVEY of the test.
   ~Budget your TIME—giving the most time to questions that are worth the most points.
   ~READ the test directions carefully.
   ~Underline the KEY WORDS in the questions.

2. Know what the question is asking you to do. Be on the lookout for these directions:

Analyze	Define	Enumerate	Identify	Relate
Comment	Describe	Evaluate	Interpret	Review
Compare	Diagram	Explain	Justify	State
Contrast	Discuss	Illustrate	Outline	Summarize
			Prove	Trace

3. Before you start writing, make a short outline in the margin of your paper by jotting down pertinent main points.

4. In answering a question, give a thesis statement, supporting details, and then summarize.

5. If time allows, proofread your answer for:

   ~omitted words and phrases that are important
   ~careless omission of parts of the question
   ~answers that are too brief
   ~unclear, incorrect statements
   ~errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation.

If you need help practicing writing essay exams or have questions about material on this page, stop in the Writing Center ASC 1017 or call (231) 591- 2534 or email writcen@ferris.edu.

Strategic Solution: Writing a Paper is Like Painting a House

As anyone who has ever done both jobs knows, writing a term paper and painting a house are similar in many ways. Both are big jobs. Both reflect upon the person doing the job. Both can be done in one of two ways: just *getting the job done* that will look OK at first glance and last about one year OR doing a *quality job* that will pass any inspection and last for a decade. Both benefit from being done in the right order, over time as shown in the lists below.

Painting a House – Just To Get it Done

1. Pick color(s)
2. Buy paint and supplies
3. Paint house
4. Smile for a while
5. Paint again next summer

Writing a Paper – To Get it Done

1. Pick a topic
2. Review Wikipedia entry
3. Write paper night before due date
4. Turn it in (on time)
5. Take a C and run!

Painting a House - Quality Job

1. Plan and schedule job
2. Pick a color scheme
3. Measure surface areas
4. Purchase supplies
    a. Scrapers
    b. Sandpaper
    c. Brushes
    d. Sprayer
    e. Paint
    f. Tape
    g. Drop cloths
    h. Ladders
    i. Scaffold
5. Scrape old paint
6. Sand as needed
7. Wash and rinse house
8. Prep
    a. Mask windows
    b. Mask doors
    c. Remove items not painted
    d. Caulk
9. Apply primer coat/clean up
10. Touch up scraping, sanding and caulking as needed
11. Apply first coat/clean up
12. Apply second coat/clean up
13. Touch up
14. Get spouse's approval
15. Golf next summer!

Writing a Paper – Quality Job

1. Carefully select and define topic as soon as assignment is given
2. Conduct preliminary research about topic on-line (e.g., Wikipedia)
3. Review paper requirements carefully
    a. Length
    b. Format
    c. Due date
    d. Citation style (MLA or APA)
4. Collect necessary reference materials
    a. Monographs
    b. Scholarly articles
    c. Current web materials
    d. Interviews
5. Read and identify pertinent items in reference materials
6. Write thesis statement
7. Create a detailed outline
8. Write first draft
9. Share with peer reviewer for feedback
10. Edit and write second draft
11. Take to Writing Center for feedback
12. Edit and write final draft
13. Proofread by reading aloud
14. Double check that paper meets all posted requirements
15. Submit early and get highest grade possible

Definition of Plagiarism

Many new college students tell us that they do not know: 1) What plagiarism is 2) How to give credit to source used, or 3) The difference between a quote and a paraphrase. This section of the pamphlet is provided to answer those questions.

Plagiarism: The appropriation of passages, either word for word or in substance, from the writings of another and the incorporation of those passages as one's own in written work offered for credit. It is always assumed that the written work offered for credit is the student's own unless proper credit is given the original author by the use of quotation marks, in-line citations, and/or other explanatory inserts.

This assumption applies to the copying of laboratory reports and homework, or the unchanged use of essential ideas or conclusions of another author, as well as the cited use of other themes, books, or pamphlets. Moreover, unless you have explicit permission from your instructor, you may NOT turn in for credit a paper completed in/for another class. There is an understanding that all students registered for a course will complete all coursework exclusively for that course alone.

Note: Plagiarism may come about through carelessness or ignorance. Every student, however, may free himself from uncertainties in this case by observing the special practice suggested by each instructor for preparation of written work in his particular course, and by following the simple general rules listed here:

1. **Direct Quotation:** When the exact words of an authority consulted are used. EVERY QUOTED WORD must be placed within quotation marks, and EACH QUOTED PASSAGE must have an in-line citation attached to it.
2. **Indirect Quotations**: When summarizing or paraphrasing the words of an authority consulted, give the exact citation for each passage which is summarized. Introduce all summaries/paraphrases by such phrases as "According to Jones..." or "As Smith suggested..."
3. **General Acknowledgment of indebtedness:** When general use is made of the thoughts, ideas, or information to be found in another person's work, always include an acknowledgment and in-line citation in the place in your paper where indebtedness occurs. If indebtedness occurs in several successive paragraphs, state that fact in the body of your paper and in individual citations.
4. **Citation form:** Every citation must identify the source used and give the page on which the borrowed material may be found. There are various citation forms, but the two used most are MLA (Modern Language Association) and APA (American Psychological Association). Although citation forms contain mostly the same information, you should not mix formats. Ask your professor which citation format is required to be used in completing the assignment.
5. **Works Cited:** Each piece of written work submitted must have a complete list of all authorities (books, periodicals, encyclopedias [Typically: not an acceptable college-level source], newspapers, etc.) which you have cited either directly (direct quotation) or indirectly (summarizing or paraphrasing). All materials, including web-based sources, periodicals, pictures, illustrations, graphics, etc. must be cited to avoid plagiarism.
6. **Works Consulted**: Pieces of research materials which you read, etc., but decided not to directly quote, summarize or paraphrase in your paper. Even if no specific reference is made to these in the body of your paper, they should be listed with works cited.
7. **Common Knowledge**: Common knowledge is information everyone knows. If in doubt about citing common knowledge information, ask your instructor. For example: In the United States, Memorial Day allows remembrance of those who are in the service or died in the service of our country.

Taking Math? Be the Best Student You Can Be 

Hi, I'm Dan Mercer, currently a pharmacy student. In my work with students as a Structured Learning Assistance (SLA) Facilitator for Chemistry and MATH 010, I have created this handout of good practices. These should help all students, even those who are math "phobic," to be successful.

Good Practices for Math Lectures

1. Read the material that will be lectured on beforehand
2. Remove distractions
3. Take neat and orderly notes
4. Pay close and careful attention to the professor
5. Stop the Professor!

Good Practices for Math Homework

1. Re-read the section prior to doing your homework
2. Supplement your lecture notes with notes from the book
3. Pay special attention to rules and examples
4. Do the problems that have the answers in the back of the book, and then check your answers with the back of the book.
5. Note where and what your errors were and try to correct them yourself
6. If you do not know why you are getting problems wrong, get help.
7. After doing toe assignment, do the rest of the problems in the section.

Where to Get Help

1. Office hours
2. Tutoring center
3. SLA

General Math Advice for College Students

Understand the Syllabus: Know how you are going to be graded

Don't Get Behind: Stay current and slightly ahead (by reading the sections prior to their being lectured on)

You Cannot "Cram" Math: Nobody can. Devote time to math regularly.

During Studying, know when enough is enough: If you can do all of the opposite (usually even) problems and feel comfortable with your answers, move on.

Most Common Math Student Mistakes

1. Not doing the homework. Practice is the key to success in math
2. Not paying attention in class
3. Not attending class
4. Treating math as a stressful ordeal
5. Rushing through problems
6. "Giving up" on math

How to Take a Math Test: Common Sense and Hard Work

General

- This is not about how smart you are, but about how organized you are, and how hard you are willing to work.
- It is something you can learn how to do.
- It is a separate issue from learning the material you will be tested on.
- On a test, your job is to show what you have learned.

Before the Test

- A math test is not about exercises!!
- A math test is about the ideas, the techniques, and the applications presented in class and in the text.
- Make a list of the things you should be able to do and arrange them into three lists: "Easy," "Maybe," and "Oh Well."
  Job 1 is to make sure the "Easy" list is absolutely solid.
  Job 2 is to move as many items as you can from the "Maybe" list to the "Easy" list.
  Job 3 is to forget about the "Oh Well" list.
  (The goal for the next test and the final will be to make the "Oh Well" list smaller and the "Maybe" list larger.)
- If you are a math jock, your study limit is three hours straight.
- If you are not a math jock, your study limit is two hours straight.
- Plan your study time over the entire week before the test.

During the Test

- Your starting score is 0% not 100%. (You must show what you know.)
- Every time you show something you've learned, you're doing great.
- Your score will depend much more on how you do on the "easy" questions, than on how you do on the "hard" questions.
- Skip any problem that looks weird and come back later.
- Don't be afraid to ask for clarification.
- To really "check" a solution, you must solve the problem again, totally.
- Never leave a question blank. Say what you do know about it.

After the Test

- Were you surprised by anything you were asked?
- How accurate was your total list of things to be able to do?
- How did you do on your final list of "Easy" items? Was it 85% or better?
- How did you test better than the last test/quiz?
- Did you go see your instructor for advice/help?
- Have you saved the test for the final?
- How will you test better the next time?

Summary

"I have passed more math tests than you will ever have to take. I have messed up more math tests than you will ever have to take. Believe me, it takes a long time to narrow the gap between what you should be able to score on a math test and what you actually do score. Anyone who is tough and willing to be patient with themselves can narrow this gap to almost nothing. Not everyone will be a math jock, but everyone who works at it will be a good test taker. They are entirely two separate notions. Good luck and happier studying!" (J. Curtis Chipman, Oakland University)

Section 4 –

Making Learning Count

Best Practices for Learners

Terry Doyle

The goal of education is not to get a degree; the goal of education is to learn. Unlike high school, where teachers presented information which you memorized and regurgitated on a test, college requires interaction with and understanding of the material. Although there are many "best practices" for learners, the 11 listed below are *essential* to making meaning.

1. Learners recognize that learning only occurs when they are actively engaged in some activity.

2. Learners pay attention only to those things that are important to them. They are very effective at recognizing what information they need and what is of no importance.

3. Learners constantly seek to find the order or organization or pattern of the information they need to learn. Information that has a context or framework (a connection to their background) is much easier to learn.

4. Learners recognize that practice increases learning. Practice causes significant numbers of dendrites and synapses to grow which not only makes it easier to recall the information from memory but increases the speed at which students can recall and use the information.

5. Learners are good at monitoring their own learning. They know when they have learned something completely and they know when they need more study. This includes having a well-developed set of "fix-up" strategies that help them find answers or understand when they struggle while learning.

6. Learners see the value of learning with others. They want the varied perspectives and different ideas that others have. They are open to help from others.

7. Learners are goal oriented. They do not allow factors such as the demeanor of the teacher (voice, dress etc) to distract them from their learning goal. They accept that they may have to learn in spite of the teacher rather than because of them.

8. Learners use learning tools effectively. They understand that learning is not just a "happening" but rather occurs because the learner has developed the skills and strategies needed to learn.

9. Learners are efficient in their learning. This means they discover their best learning style and approach and try to use them whenever possible.

10. Learners have discipline. They recognize their weaknesses and work to overcome them.

11. Learners find study areas (environments) that best suit their learning, they study and learn at times of day that are best for them, they are capable of delayed gratification and they are not afraid of hard work.

Classroom Listening Skills

A good student must be a good listener. A good listener finds areas of interest by asking, "What's in it for me?" Judging content, not delivery, a good listener asks, "What is important?' Listening for ideas, a good listener listens for ideas, and judges after comprehending what is presented. Listening for ideas, a good listener uses the most appropriate note-taking system. Concentrating, a good listener works on listening and stays focused on the topic. Listening involves the entire body, and a good listener maintains eye contact, is open-minded and becomes a partner in the classroom dialogue. Good students also:

Prepare to Listen:	Complete Assignments before class and arrive on time Are mentally ready to listen and physically ready to listen Never work on homework during class
Are Physically Ready to Listen:	Bring supplies needed Sit in a comfortable position Sit where they can hear and see well
Take Notes while they listen:	Get the main idea and key points on paper Prepare for quizzes and tests Help keep what they hear in their heads Take notes in every class, even if no one else does
Are Active Listeners:	Emphasize what's really important Clarify main idea's and key points Ask and answer questions they may have
Watch for Signals of importance from the Professor like:	Writing on board Emphasizing words Repeating words Summarizing
Listen for key words that support Main Ideas Such as:	Steps include... Characteristics of... Causes of... Purpose of... Example of... Difference between...
Listen for signals that wrap up main ideas:	In summary... As a result... Finally... From this we can see...
Are not afraid to ask:	the professor to repeat something if you didn't hear it for an example if it will help you better understand the point for clarification if

ARE RESPECTFUL!

Why is this page written this way?	**There are many note taking systems. This system is an adaptation of the Cornell Note Taking System. About 1/3 of the page is folded over. Notes are taken on the remaining 2/3 of the page. Later, the note taker looks over the notes taken and adds questions to the folded over side. The note taker then uses the questions to guide review of the material.**
Why should I take notes?	Because you can't remember everything To help focus your attention To highlight the important points
Should I tape record?	No objection, but time-consuming, harder to listen to May help pick up things that went by too fast – use only for spot checks.
What should notes include?	Not too much: You'll just have to boil it down later, when you've lost the feeling for the context. Definitions: Professor will usually go very slowly or repeat. Generalizations: Listen for signals – "In general," "to sum it up," "we conclude that," "it looks as if," "usually."
How should you take notes?	Examples/Evidence: a word or two, more if this is a formal chain of reasoning. Surprises: They're easy to forget because you have no frame for them. You also need to think about them later, because they suggest gaps in your understanding. Student Contributions: Listen carefully; they may be important.
How should you format notes?	Important Words: Then make time after class to expand and/or explain. Abbreviate: Common abbrev. or contd. If texting works for you, use it. Use Rough Outline: Not necessarily letters and numbers but indent and space Split Page: Use column to the right for your ideas, questions, reactions. Use this to guide your later class participation. (See bottom of page) Symbols: use your own. For example: Draw a box around definitions, indicate cause and effect with arrows, etc
How well did the notes work?	Can you understand them? Did they help you on a test or with a paper? Exchange with other students – we all get lost at certain points, but generally not everyone is lost at the same time. Take time to think about how to do it next semester.

Study Group Strategies

Study groups usually are three or four students who meet once a week or more to share information and knowledge about a course in which they are enrolled. Effective groups are fun, encourage participation by all members and build a relationship of caring and commitment.

Who should be part of your study group?

1. Choose members who you like, who are responsible, and who will contribute to the group.
2. Limit group membership to three or four participants
3. Select a group leader who is responsible for getting the group together.

What ground rules should you set for the group meetings?

1. Set a meeting time and place for each session.
2. Make a personal commitment to contribute to the group.
3. N*ever use* the group to replace class attendance.
4. Purpose of the meeting is to share information and to make meaning of the course materials.
5. Members should bring notes, laboratory materials, problem sets, and textbooks to each meeting.

What should happen in an effective study group?

1. Begin with class notes. Compare all members' class notes for each lecture presented since the last study group meeting. All members should agree on the basic content of the lecture notes, their importance and their meaning. Try to focus on important, essential information.
2. If members' notes disagree, try to come to a consensus about what was said, and why it is important. If your group cannot agree, or if something is missing, consult your textbook or use e-mail (FerrisConnect) or office hours to check with your professor. You may want to designate a "spokesperson" from the group to check with the professor and bring clarification/s to the group.
3. College isn't like high school: in college, "learning" is not merely memorization of facts. There are the basic facts, "literal meaning." Members can check that they know this information by asking each other questions. The second step is application—taking the information and applying it in a new or unique way. When each member can explain a concept to another member and the "learner" understands it, then the group has mastery of the material.
4. In learning for understanding, the members of the study group focus on application, comparison and contrast, analysis, and synthesis questions. Ask <u>why</u> this material is important, and <u>how</u> you can use this material—both in this class and in life. Study groups allow a place for discussion and application. Always work to connect material learned earlier in the course to the current material and make on-going connections to class lectures, the textbook and assigned readings.
5. When you discuss the material, some group members may be shy about participating. Encourage active participation by *all* group members. Your study group should be a place for you to take risks with your thinking. Group members should be encouraged to "think outside the box."
6. "Brainstorm" possible test questions that ask you to apply the material being learned. Have each member bring several test questions to each group meeting.(They should also be prepared to present the "correct" answer if the group cannot answer the question/s.)
7. Remember, the weekly study group is not a one shot meeting before the test. If your study group plans to meet the night before the Final Exam, you are simply cramming by committee and material covered in this one time meeting will easily be forgotten before the exam.
8. On-going study group meetings allow for "chunking" of material and allow the brain to move the material from short-term to long-term memory. Study groups also offer students the opportunity for in-depth discussions about course material. They provide an opportunity for students to think aloud and share insights about their knowledge. They offer students the time to find out what they know and do not know (metacognition) before a test, not during it.

Blackboard 9.1 Learn at Ferris: On-line, Mixed Delivery, or Enhanced

Introduction: In any given year, nearly every student enrolled at Ferris will take a course through the Blackboard 9.1 on-line learning platform. This may occur in three different ways:

- *Enhanced*- the instructor uses the Blackboard platform for classroom management and communication purposes with the students enrolled in the course.
- *Mixed Delivery*- sometimes referred to as Blended, the instructor uses both classroom management and instructional tools even though the class meets face-to-face (f2f).
- *On-line*- the students and instructor never meet face-to-face and all instruction and classroom management and communication occurs through the Blackboard platform.

General Rules: First things first. Make sure that you are ready to be an on-line learner.

- Make sure that you can access the course through MyFSU and Blackboard. Is your computer adequate? Do you have high speed internet access?
- Take the on-line readiness tutorial to make sure that you are ready to use Blackboard no matter what course or level of instruction. And, complete any course readiness elements in the shell.
- Take time during the first week to explore the course "shell." The "shell" is the way you interact in Blackboard with the instructor and other students. Each course will have its own shell and if you have properly registered for the course and paid your bill, you will be able to access it.

Common Myths About On-line: Some students have told us these things when they sign up for classes, but don't believe everything you hear.

- On-line classes are *easier.* **WRONG!** On-line classes have many advantages and conveniences, but they are *not* easier.
- On-line classes *take less time.* **NOT SO!** Whatever time you save going to and coming from class is taken up by the time you need to be on-line for assignments, assessments, chat sessions, communication with the instructor.
- On-line classes allow me to *do assignments when I am ready.* **ABSOLUTELY NOT!** While a small fraction of on-line courses are *self-paced,* nearly all on-line courses will have strict deadlines for assignments and enforcement is even more rigorous than for face-to-face courses.

Recommended for Success: Although on-line learning is relatively new, there are some important things you should be sure to do if you are in an enhanced, mixed delivery or on-line course:

- Check the course shell daily for assignments, announcements, e-mail, or discussions.
- Print the course calendar showing all available due dates.
- Monitor your attendance and grades regularly.
- Submit assignments as indicated in the instructions.
- If you are not sure, ask for help from the instructor, from Student and Administrative Technology Services (SATS), or your internet provider. Procrastination can adversely affect your grade.

Section 5 –

Making Excuses and Making Progress

Alibis, Excuses and Promises--We've Heard Them All Before 

During the past 30 years I have listened to or read more than 1,000 appeals to be readmitted to the university from students who have been dismissed for poor scholarship. These appeals have incorporated every possible excuse for poor performance that a student could imagine. The main categories and examples are listed below, from most to least valid.

Life Got in the Way - These things do happen, but authentic documentation and comparison to a calendar is typically required before they will be favorably considered.

- "There was a death in the family or a close friend died."
- "I was ill/had surgery or a relative was ill/had surgery."

Something Else Seemed More Important - Juggling responsibilities can be a challenge, but it is up to you to determine your priorities. If college is important, then other priorities need to be addressed accordingly or maybe you should enroll part-time or at a later date.

- "I had to work" or "I had to work excessive hours."
- "I had to take care of my children" or "my spouse" or "my parent".

Houston, We Have a Problem - OK, these excuses may be valid once, but after the first time the root problem should be addressed and resolved.

- "I had no internet access" or "my computer crashed."
- "My car broke down."

College was Harder than I Expected - Most new students are surprised by the results of their first round of exam and paper grades or the mid-terms. Even then, they fail to take advantage of all the help that is available.

- "I did not realize that this class/schedule would be so difficult."
- "I did not like/could not understand the professor."

I Had Trouble Adjusting to College Life - This is often a euphemism for a decision to put other (more fun or valued) things first. Keep in mind that if you are not eligible to stay in school, you cannot be involved in other activities. The obvious answer: put first things (i.e.classes), first.

- "I pledged a fraternity or a sorority."
- "I participated in a varsity sport. Practice and travel took more time than I thought."

Blame it On Rio - In the final analysis, you are now responsible for yourself. When something is not right, you need to take action with the appropriate office (housing for roommates, academic advising for course placement or major).

- "My roommate(s) kept me up all night."
- "*They* put me in the wrong class/major."

Ignorance of the Law - Believe it or not, students have actually used these excuses. As any judge will tell you, even when it is true, ignorance is no excuse!

- "I did not know my grades were that low."
- "I did not know that I had to pass in order to stay in school."

Just Plain Lame - Aside from being able to take care of these problems in many other ways, any student in this generation who claims the inability to use the computer must turn in their iPhone!

- "I could not get the book for the class."
- "I did not know how to use the computer for the assignments."

Coping with Stress

1. Smile
2. Get up 15 minutes earlier
3. Prepare for the morning the night before
4. Avoid relying on chemical aids (caffeine, 5hr energy, etc)
5. Don't rely on your memory ... write it down
6. Say "NO!" more often
7. Use time wisely
8. Always make copies of important papers
9. Ask for help
10. Break large tasks into smaller steps
11. Simplify your life
12. Schedule play time into every day (e.g., hanging with friends)
13. Have goals for yourself
14. Practice breathing slowly
15. Listen to music
16. Reward your self
17. Build a support network for yourself
18. Ask someone to be your "vent-partner"
19. Do it now
20. Stand up and stretch
21. Always have a plan "B"
22. Learn to meet your own needs
23. Exercise every day and eat a well-balanced diet
24. Remember you have options
25. Get enough sleep

BONUS: Relax, take each day at a time...you have the rest of your life to live

(Adapted from the Triplar Army Medical Center, Honolulu, Hawaii)

Tips for Students with Disabilities

- In college **you** are responsible for your academic life, not your parents.
- Be an advocate for yourself.
- Document your disability with letters from your physician(s), therapist, case manager, school psychologist, and other service providers.
- Make an appointment with the university Disabilities Services Office early. (Bring the documentation about your disability).
- Secure the necessary accommodations for your disability through Disabilities Services.
- Learn about your disability and about how to explain it to professors and others.
- Introduce yourself to your professors and get to know them.
- Be able to express your specific learning needs to your professors.
- Take advantage of your professors' office hours early in the semester.
- Be open-minded to accommodations proposed by your professors.
- Accommodations are to "level the playing field"; not give you an extra advantage in the course.
- Plan your schedule of courses carefully and be prepared for the challenge of college-level courses.
- Develop and use good daily study habits (e.g. study in short blocks of one hour instead of cramming).
- Be self-disciplined.
- Find a good place to study- preferably outside of your room.
- Use your professors as a resource.
- Use university support services (ASC, tutoring or SLA) on a regular basis, not just when you are sinking.
- Motivation is the key to success. You need to want it badly enough!
- Work hard, then work harder.
- Monitor your progress in each course.
- Take action by contacting your advisor, the tutoring center and Disabilities Services when you are struggling in a course.
- Don't just give up . . . reach for a life preserver!!
- Develop a support networks (academic and social).

Support Services: Here to Help You!

Writing Center
Stop in ASC 1017 or call (231) 591-2534 or email writcen@ferris.edu

- Help writing papers
- Grammar/punctuation/style
- Generating ideas for papers
- Organizing ideas
- Technical writing
- Research strategies
- Documentation/Works cited
- Resumes and cover letters
- Online writing resources

Academic Support Center located in ASC 1017
Stop in ASC 1017 or call (231) 591-3543.

- Tutoring
- Time management
- Test-taking issues
- Study skills
- Memory skills

Educational Counseling and Disabilities Services Department
Stop in Starr 313 or call (231) 591-3057

- Test-taking issues
- Stress management
- Time management
- Learning disabilities
- Program fit
- Career decision making

Birkam Health Center
Call (231) 591-2614

- Stress management
- Personal issues
- Nutrition and health
- Drug or Alcohol problems
- Giving up without asking for help

Closing Thoughts

College readiness and success is only partly about *what you know*. High school gpa's and ACT scores are important, but success is also equal parts *knowing how* to work in the college environment and then *doing it.* If you had not noticed yet, all of the pages in this pamphlet are about behaviors, not how to learn or how to study. In our experience, students who come to college less prepared with the what, can quickly overcome that disadvantage by accepting the need to listen to the good advice provided by faculty and staff (or this booklet) and then using that advice as quickly as possible – eliminating old, bad habits and replacing them with new good habits such as:

1. Going to class, every class, every lab, and every workshop.
2. Reading the syllabus for each class carefully and completing a syllabus quiz for each one.
3. Taking out any grade insurance possible in every class.
4. Putting time on task – at least 2 hours out of class for every 1 hour in class.
5. Using that time with a purpose.
6. Following all the steps necessary to complete an assignment of high quality.
7. Preparing for exams carefully, over the entire instructional period for that unit.
8. Being an active learner by taking good notes, asking questions, participating in discussions.
9. Accepting responsibility for your own learning (no excuses).
10. Asking for help when you need it (and don't wait until the last minute either).

There you have it – no magic, no mystery, and no nonsense. You can do this. Start now.

The authors of this booklet extend our thanks to others who contributed material to the booklet: Terry Doyle, FSU Reading Faculty; Curt Chipman, Mathematics, Oakland University; Dan Mercer, FSU SLA Facilitator; Murray State University: www.murraystate.edu; and Tripler Army Medical Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, Dr. Roxanna Potter, Sylvania, OH.