Your University Experience - The Next Step

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Claiming Your Education
Becoming Part of a Scholarly Community

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Much has taken place at your college or university before your arrival on campus. Students have been working on case studies, conducting chemistry experiments, composing book-length master's theses, and having discussions about Foucault over coffee. Residence hall directors have developed a growing understanding of the needs of students, and food services has worked on providing a diverse and healthy menu for students. The director of the library has been continually updating the library's print and on-line offerings, and the information technology department has worked to ensure that classroom labs are equipped with the latest technology. Students from across the country and all over the globe have traveled the same sidewalks and traversed the same corridors you now do.

So how will you react to this bustling campus and its ongoing conversations? This textbook encourages you to be an active participant in this dialogue; you've walked into an enormous room full of people talking—listen for a while if you would like, but don't forget to offer your own contributions. Rhetorician Kenneth Burke's (1973) explanation of this concept has been referred to as the Burkean parlor:

Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your ear. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. (pp. 110–111)

In Foundations for Learning, you will enter into an ongoing discussion regarding the factors that lead to college success. You will hear what experts in the field have to say regarding the philosophies and techniques addressed; in effect, you will be provided with a rationale for the advice offered. This research stretches back over 30 years in some cases, and it is important to consider the history regarding these concepts in order to apply them to current situations—your college education, say—in an educated way.

As a college or university student, then, you have the opportunity to join a scholarly community, a group of people working toward intellectual pursuits, but your membership is not guaranteed. You must work toward familiarizing yourself with the guiding principles of that community and aspire toward them if you are to be considered a peer in this environment.

You may be asking yourself, "Besides fellow classmates, who are my peers in this environment?" The answer may surprise you. Professors are experts in their respective fields—or scholarly communities—
who are helping students gain access to, and membership in, these same communities. In the context of the classroom, for example, students are expected to engage in scholarly discussions with their professors; raise questions; and, at times, even challenge them.

For a moment, think about your professors’ perspective. From their vantage point, you have made a life-altering decision to attend college. As an adult, in control of your own destiny, you have chosen to enter into a scholarly community and work toward earning membership. This process is very different from attending high school, which is a compulsory endeavor. The assumption here is that college is a carefully arrived at, well-thought-out choice. You want to be in college. You are excited about, and interested in, many, if not most, of the topics presented to you, and you are highly motivated to master new bodies of knowledge.

You’ll make many more choices now that you are attending college. You will also, for example, need to decide which courses you’d like to take, and the professor and student contract is one way in which you demonstrate your willingness to engage with the material in each of those courses.

**The Professor and Student Contract**

Teaching and learning are enhanced when teachers and learners have shared expectations regarding course outcomes. For this reason, college professors construct a syllabus, a document outlining the desired course outcomes and other relevant information for each course they teach. Syllabi are usually shared with students during the first week of class, if not the first day or earlier.

Each syllabus you are given will help you understand important information about the course and your professor: what goals you are expected to strive toward, what will be expected of you, how your work will be assessed, and perhaps even what a typical class meeting might involve.

It would be beneficial, then, to consider each syllabus carefully, understanding that your acceptance of the professor’s terms—even if this is conveyed through silent approval—is a prerequisite for remaining a student in that class. If you have questions about what you should expect after reading the syllabus, ask your professor. Conscious acceptance of, and continued adherence to, your course contract is part of being a responsible member of a scholarly community.

Keep your syllabi handy throughout the semester. These documents often include a listing of topics, assignments, and other such information you’ll need to know in order to be prepared for future class meetings. Your professor may very well include a list of all of your assignments on the course syllabus and not mention them again until they are collected for grading. This information can be quite useful when you are planning your schedule in an attempt to manage your time effectively and efficiently.

The key is to remember that the syllabus is an essential component of being a responsible member of a scholarly community. Responsibility literally means your response-ability, that is, your ability to choose a response. Ultimately, how you choose to respond to the requirements of your syllabi, for instance, will dictate your academic experience. Will you embrace all of the suggested assignments and complete them to the best of your ability or will you respond by skipping books on your supplemental reading list? As you will soon learn, the level at which you adhere to your syllabus has implications for how much you will learn each semester.

One last bit of advice regarding course syllabi: many times your syllabi will include guiding questions to focus your attention on certain topics or themes in a course. Pay close attention to such questions, for it would not be unusual to see them again in some form on a test or exam. For now, know that it will be primarily up to you to determine, based on the delivery of course material,
what questions will appear on a test or exam. To do so with reliability, you must be actively engaged
with your professors in intellectual discourse, in other words, the ability to have a rational discus-
sion about a particular subject with interested others. This type of conversation will necessitate ask-
ing questions and searching for answers, which will ultimately lead to more questions. As in the
Burkean parlor, the idea is that the conversation does not end when you leave the (class) room. To
experience such discourse, though, requires that teachers and learners alike possess the trait of intel-
lectual curiosity.

**Intellectual Curiosity**

You may need to self-reflect to determine whether you possess intellectual curiosity. Peggy Maki
(2002), an expert in higher education assessment, defines intellectual curiosity as, “the characteris-
tic ability to question, challenge, look at an issue from multiple perspectives, seek more informa-
tion before rushing to judgment, raise questions, deliberate, and craft well-reasoned arguments” (p. 6).
You may use what you have read so far in this chapter to help you determine whether you do, in fact,
possess a high degree of intellectual curiosity.

Start out by asking yourself, “If I come across something I don’t know or don’t understand, what
do I normally do? Do I skip the concept and hope the professor will deliver the answer in the next
class?” For instance, in the first paragraph of this chapter, when you encountered the last name of an
individual, Foucault, did you attempt to investigate who this person was if you did not already
know? If you did, you may have discovered that he was a French philosopher and social critic who
himself possessed intellectual curiosity. As he reflects on why he was attracted to a scholarly
environment, he muses:

> We did not know when I was ten or eleven years old, whether we would become German or
remain French. We would not know whether we would die or not in the bombing, and so on.
When I was sixteen or seventeen I knew only one thing; school life was an environment protected
from exterior menaces, politics. And I have always been fascinated by living in a protected schol-
ary environment, in an intellectual milieu. Knowledge is for me that which must function as
a protection of individual existence and as a comprehension of the exterior world. I think
that’s it. Knowledge as a means of surviving by understanding. (quoted in Foss, Foss, & Trapp,

If you possess intellectual curiosity, you might read these statements and, if it’s not immediately
apparent, assume that the reference in the first few sentences is to World War II. If you were not sure,
you might investigate further. You might read this passage and wonder what it would be like for a
10- or 11-year-old to face his or her mortality, question Foucault’s perspective that school life is pro-
tected from exterior menaces and perhaps disagree with this assertion, consider what knowledge
means to Foucault and thereby reflect on your own definition of knowledge, or wonder what he means
when he says that knowledge is a means of “surviving by understanding.”

Indeed, an intellectually curious individual collects and processes information in an elaborate,
sophisticated manner. This manner of thinking is a habit, a disposition; the intellectually curious
individual is in a routine of thinking deeply. You may be concerned that when you read Foucault’s
passage you did not “wonder” to the extent that was described. Perhaps you did not wonder at all.
You may be feeling anxious that you do not possess a disposition toward intellectual curiosity and,
without this, cannot earn membership into a scholarly community.

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Fortunately, like training your body to run a marathon, you can train your mind toward the disposition of intellectual curiosity. To do so requires a particular mind-set; it requires you to be active. You need to begin by analyzing ways in which you learn, and start thinking about how you are going to approach the endeavor of joining a scholarly community.

**Active vs. Passive Learning**

The distinction that will be made here between activity and passivity does not have to do with physical behaviors, but with psychological mind-sets. One of these mind-sets is that of the passive learner. Passive learners, whether consciously or unconsciously subscribing to the philosophy of passivity, expect faculty to teach them what they need to know (and only what they need to know). They want the library to have the journal article or book they need when they need it, and they wouldn't consider reading an essay or book that was not required reading in one of their classes. They glance through assigned material with minimal investment, expecting that the professor will offer a clear and concise summary and analysis of the reading. They may even expect the professor to tell them exactly what questions will appear on an upcoming test. After all, goes the thinking, why are they paying all of that money for tuition, anyway?

A philosophy more beneficial to college students is that of the active learner. Active learners believe that students are not at college to be acted upon and led through a series of disjointed activities toward some fuzzy end indicated by the receipt of a diploma. Active learning is about students becoming agents in their own educational process. After all, who has a greater stake in this process than the student learner?

Active learning involves doing many of the things suggested in this textbook. Take reading, for example, or, more precisely, **active reading**. Instead of passively highlighting most of a chapter with only a moderate level of comprehension, active readers engage more directly with the text. Some active readers perform text annotation, whereby the student's reaction to what is read is noted in the margins of the text itself. In this manner, questions can be asked—questions to which the student sincerely seeks answers. These questions could be brought up in class or during faculty office hours.

The ardent active learner likely wouldn't wait until class to seek out answers, however. The active learner's intellectual curiosity would encourage her to search for answers to her questions in the index of the text in question, in other works that the author has written, in works by other authors on the same subject. The goal of an active learner is to come to a better understanding, the consequence of which is asking more questions and searching for more answers.

Similarly, active listening requires you to carefully consider what a speaker has to say. An active listener identifies a speaker's main idea as well as the rationale used to support that idea. Equally important is what may be lacking from the speaker's rationale. Rest assured, for example, that members of Congress, particularly those aligned with the opposing political party, will listen actively to the president's State of the Union Address. They are interested in the president's focus: what topics have been emphasized, and which have been de-emphasized or avoided entirely? They are interested in the reasoning and evidence employed by the president. Offentimes the State of the Union Address is followed by criticism made by members of the opposing party; criticism resulting from active listening. Active listening, then, as does active reading, leads to questions.

Even the most active of learners will, at times, get stuck in their quest for answers. They may, at these moments, resist thinking about a problem in different ways, a concept that two psychologists, Friedman and Lipshitz (1992), termed **automatic thinking**. Automatic thinking is efficient when
dealing with routine activities and situations such as getting dressed. Yet, as Friedman and Lipshitz note, the advantage of automatic thinking can become a disadvantage when in the face of change or uncertainty. They argue that automatic thinking leads people to rely on what they already know; it contributes to a tendency to ignore critical information and rely on standard behavior repertoires when change is required. That is, people will continue to do what they feel most comfortable doing even if it isn’t working for them. They resist change.

Accepting the assertion that automatic thinking can be a disadvantage when in the face of change or uncertainty, how do you think automatic thinking might affect you as a first-year student? One of the major changes you will confront as a first-year student is uncertainty in approaching studying for your college courses. You will likely find out that the study skills you utilized in high school will not produce the same results when you apply them to college-level courses. Practitioners who help first-year students develop college-level study habits report that, indeed, students tend to cling to their old, comfortable habits even if these habits don’t produce the hoped for results.

Consider a first-year student, Colleen, who completed high school with a B+ average. For her first major college exam, Colleen does what she did in high school—waits until the night before to study. She diligently begins to prepare index cards, recording an important definition on each card. She finds that with the large volume of information she needs to know, it is taking her a lot longer to make index cards than it ever did before. “That’s okay,” she says to herself, “I’m in college now; this should take a little longer.” After four hours of making index cards, it is well past midnight. Poor Colleen has run out of time and is too exhausted to review the cards that she has made. She’s a little nervous but reasons that she has spent twice as much time studying than she had ever done before, so she should be ready. She takes the exam. It’s much more difficult than she expected, and she is confused by some of the questions. She earns a C on her first college-level exam.

This mediocre grade is a bit of a blow to Colleen’s ego. After all, in her estimation, she is not a C student; she’s at least a B student. In her view, this grade is a failure. She reflects on the experience in earnest and grants that she did wait too long to prepare her index cards, leaving her no time to review. The next test comes along three weeks later and she sets about making her index cards well in advance, this time leaving ample time for review. At the end of her grueling, eight-hour study session, she has each and every index card memorized backward and forward. She is ready for the test! In fact, she’s energized and excited; she feels in total control of the material. Never has she been so dedicated to her studies. This amount of effort should surely yield an A. But her exam is returned with a grade of 76 marked clearly at the top, another C.

How could this happen? She worked so hard. She put in what she considered an inordinate amount of effort. For Colleen, studying for eight hours was unprecedented. This time, she feels angry, frustrated, and helpless. She did exactly what she was supposed to do! In her automatic-thinking mode, she never considered that the grade might have resulted from how she was studying. Although she adjusted the length of time spent studying, her two approaches were identical. With automatic thinking, people tend to see only what they know and ignore critical information. When it comes to change, they gravitate toward their comfort zone. Colleen never considered that making index cards or relying on memorization as a learning skill was what wasn’t working. She automatically assumed that her personal failure resulted from the time she spent studying.

The negative consequences of automatic thinking can contribute to failure. Active thinking, argue Friedman and Lipshitz (1992), “enables people to see situations differently and to experiment with novel responses. It also enables them to become aware of how they select, interpret, and act on
information about themselves and the contexts in which they act" (p. 119). Someone once said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Becoming an active learner requires a student to experiment with new ways of learning, particularly if his or her old ways aren’t yielding the desired results.

Changing requires a certain amount of risk taking. Changing from automatic thinking to active thinking is not easy; it requires students to take full responsibility for their own learning. That is not to say that a student will have to attempt to "switch cognitive gears," or go from one mode of thought to another, alone (Louis and Sutton, 1991, p. 119). On a college campus, there are many people who can help.

The faculty and staff of institutions of higher education want students to be successful. For this reason, these individuals establish mechanisms by which students can bolster their understanding of course material outside of the classroom. Some of these mechanisms are faculty office hours, tutoring centers, counseling centers, and language labs, all integral parts of the scholarly community. The prevailing thought on a college campus is that learning occurs both inside and outside of the classroom. To get the most out of your college experience, you must expect that all students will engage in extensive out-of-classroom learning.

You may be required to utilize and/or familiarize yourself with some of the aforementioned academic programs and services. More than likely, however, you will have quite a bit of choice as to when, how frequently, and for what purposes you do so. If, for example, your economics professor requires students to visit the tutoring center "periodically" during the course of the semester, it is up to students to decide what "periodically" will mean for them. For some, periodically might mean visiting the center the day before each exam to work with a tutor to make sure they comprehend the material that they’ve studied. For others, periodically might mean a weekly appointment to review class materials to prevent the possibility of getting "lost." Although the choice is up to you, it is strongly suggested that you consciously consider the way(s) you plan on using each service—in other words, to take response-ability, to be an active learner, and to claim these services as part of your education—and that you realize that the way you use a resource will affect what you get out of the experience.

Many times students’ attitudes prevent them from seeking help. Some students who end up in academic difficulty at the end of the semester confess that they were just too proud or embarrassed to ask for help. For some, the inability to ask for help may result in poor grades. In a scholarly community, the expectation is that you will be an active learner, that you will search for clarification using all available resources. If you use the study techniques suggested in this textbook and talk with your professor during office hours, you are doing some of the right things. You should also utilize tutoring services offered at your institution. Tutoring isn’t a quick fix; it involves an ongoing relationship with a fellow student, a student with whom you can have productive dialogues regarding course materials. Tutors can help confirm what you do understand as well as help you gain a better understanding of what you don’t.

Collaboration

What better way to join a scholarly community than by working with one or more individuals toward a common goal? You will be afforded many such opportunities, and you should resist any urge you may feel to play it safe, stay in your automatic mode of thinking, and make the collaborative effort an individual effort. In other words, don’t try to complete a collaborative assignment or task by yourself. You will learn far more if you are forced to consider the opinions of others, assign tasks, track
progress, and develop interpersonal communication skills in the process. If collaboration is successful, the work of a group surpasses what would have been possible through the work of a single individual. Andrea Lunsford (2002) admonishes students to debate with group members: "Expect disagreement, and remember that the goal is not for everyone just to 'go along.' The challenge is to get a really spirited debate going and to argue through all possibilities" (p. 34).

"What types of collaborative activities might I participate in?" you ask. These might involve in-class group work, study groups, group presentations, debates, and group papers/projects, to name a few of the more common activities. These situations are unique in their own way; just think about how long you have to get the group dynamic sorted out for in-class group work as opposed to a semester-long group project. Several of these situations are discussed in the chapters that follow.

Although many students dread collaboration, what they tend to call "group work," you will likely learn much about yourself and others from these experiences. You'll be learning to synthesize ideas—those of your own and those of other individuals both in and outside your group. Through collaboration, you'll learn when and how to make concessions in order to arrive at a final product that is truly the work of an entire group. Eugene Raudsepp (1984) neatly sums up the benefits of collaboration:

Effective teamwork encourages each member to contribute his knowledge to the overall effort. ... This combination of experience and trading of ideas enables them to learn from each other. It stimulates them to learn more, and to consider a greater variety of variables when solving problems. It brings out most of their latent abilities and provides an atmosphere for continuous growth and development. ... Cooperative action by each of them contributes to a total effect that is greater than the sum of their independent contributions, (quoted in Beckman, 1990, p. 129)

### Doing Research

A discussion about scholarly communities would not be complete without mentioning research. Scholars investigate what others have said and/or written about topics in which they are interested. They use libraries and the Internet to perform some of this investigation. They also use the references in the works they find to lead to other useful sources. In addition to these solitary activities, scholars talk to peers, other scholars in their field—at meetings, at conferences, on the phone, and in person. In these ways, scholars stay up to date regarding their particular interests, whether those include molecular biology or still photography.

The research that is accessed first has to be conducted. In other words, the study that is referenced in Joe’s master’s thesis initially had to be performed. This aspect of research is another important contribution of scholars, namely adding to the body of knowledge in their particular field. Through new research, scholars hope to say something that hasn’t (quite) been said, make connections across/through ideas, and/or offer an analysis of previous research that helps others view the research in new ways. When making these connections and offering analyses of previous research, scholars write with academic honesty, meaning they cite others’ work and intellectual efforts.

How do you fit in to all of this? Well, as a scholar-in-the-making, you will be engaging in both of the aforementioned activities. You’ll be familiarizing yourself with the body of knowledge in a number of disciplines, and you’ll also be making your own contributions to the ongoing conversation. If this seems like an impossible goal, consider that these contributions will likely be small at first, but that all contributions potentially move the discussion forward.

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Plagiarism and Intellectual Property

One topic that professors often bring up when talking to students about an upcoming research project is plagiarism. Have you ever had the experience of someone taking credit for your idea? This act, presenting someone else's ideas as if they were your own, is referred to as plagiarism. Plagiarism violates the concept of academic honesty. However, presentation of someone else's ideas is not in and of itself plagiarism. If it were, scholars would be working in isolation, not benefiting from each other's work. Researchers and scholars commonly refer to each other's ideas, giving attribution to the sources of those ideas—whether those ideas were discovered through an interview, a newspaper article, a book, a listserv discussion, or a website. Attribution is the key to avoiding plagiarism.

Some institutions subscribe to a service such as Turnitin.com, a website that serves as a clearinghouse for student essays. Professors may request that you submit your essay electronically to this site. Turnitin.com then checks the paper to determine whether the work is original—or whether there is a case of plagiarism.

Whether your paper will undergo electronic scrutiny or that of your professors, you need to be sure that you have credited others for their ideas. Your college or university likely has clearly outlined some rather strict consequences for committing plagiarism in your student handbook. Why is plagiarism considered such a serious offense? The primary reason is likely that producing scholarship—conducting research and publishing findings, say—is hard work that often takes years and, many times, the efforts of multiple individuals. The result of this labor is called intellectual property. This property is unique in some way; it contains some new concept or data set or perhaps argues against a previously established correlation. At any rate, it is important that those integrating this intellectual property into their own research acknowledge the efforts of the authors.

Claiming an Education

Think back to the concept of responsibility defined earlier in this chapter: the ability to choose a response. You possess the power of choice. You have the ability to choose how you will respond to the new environment of higher education and the opportunities offered at your institution. Foundations for Learning urges you to take responsibility for your educational choices and be an active participant in the experience. The foundation for optimal learning experiences at the college level rests in your ability to recognize your role and responsibility as a student. The person who has perhaps encapsulated this idea best is Adrienne Rich, a famous poet. In a convocation speech given in 1977, she implores students to actively claim their education. She explains:

The first thing I want to say to you who are students is that you cannot afford to think of being here to receive an education; you will do much better to think of being here to claim one. One of the dictionary definitions of the verb “to claim” is: to take as the rightful owner; to assert in the face of possible contradiction. “To receive” is to come into possession of; to act as receptacle or container for; to accept as authoritative or true. The difference is that between acting and being acted upon. (paragraph 2)

Note the distinction between “acting” and “being acted upon.” What Rich is emphasizing here is that you have the choice to act upon the new environment of your institution or you can allow your first year to unfold, merely go with the flow, and simply let your college education happen to you.
Psychologists such as Albert Bandura and Walter Mischel make similar distinctions. Bandura coined the term reciprocal determinism, which identifies the notion that there is a relationship between the person and the environment. Students can certainly be influenced by the new situations they'll find in college, but they can also choose how to behave (Pervin & John, 1977). Mischel (1976) elaborates on the concept of reciprocal determinism in action:

The image is one of the human being as an active, aware, problem solver, capable of profiting from an enormous range of experiences and cognitive capacities, possessing great potential for good or ill, actively constructing his or her psychological world, and influencing the environment, but also being influenced by it in lawful ways. (quoted in Pervin & John, 1997, p. 404)

If you choose to take sole responsibility for your education and "claim" it, that is, take it as opposed to receive it, the way in which Rich suggests, you will have the capability of profiting from the great range of experiences that await you.

The argument here is that how you interact with this new environment is entirely up to you. It is ultimately your responsibility. You may be wondering what responsibility means relative to learning, and perhaps even living, at your institution. Rich’s (1999) convocation speech clearly outlines for students what responsibility means in terms of higher education. What follows are just a few of the ways she describes the concept of responsibility.

- “refusing to let others do your thinking, talking, and naming for you”
- “learning to respect and use your own brains and instincts; hence, grappling with hard work”
- “insisting that those to whom you give your friendship and love are able to respect your mind”
- not “falling for shallow, easy solutions”
- “insisting on a life of meaningful work”
- having “the courage to be different”
- “expecting your faculty to take you seriously”
- “refusing to sell your talents and aspirations short” (paragraphs 7 and 8)

Rich’s definition of responsibility acts as great advice for how you might think about conducting yourself during your first year. Which pieces of advice can you see yourself putting into action? Consider the first bit of advice, “refusing to let others do your thinking, talking, and naming for you.” You might think, “Well, that depends. Who are the others?” The answer is whomever you have well—established relationships with or whomever you decide to enter into relationships with in the future. According to reciprocal determinism, not only will your relationships influence you, but you will also shape others. How relationships influence your academic endeavors is more closely explored in the next chapter.

In this chapter, we have looked at various ways that you can claim your education, both in and out of the classroom, academically and socially. Our hope is that you will stake a more assertive claim and that you will continue to evaluate the extent to which you are driving your educational process.

References


**Glossary**

**Academic autobiography:** your academic history, which includes your development as a student and the characterization of the type of student you were in elementary, middle, and high school.

**Academic self-concept:** the component of your self-concept that includes all of the thoughts and feelings that might affect and define you as a student.

**Achievement motivation:** Murray (1938) defines this as the "need to succeed" or the desire for significant accomplishment, for mastering skills or ideas, for control, and for rapidly attaining a high standard.

**Active learners:** individuals who believe that they are primarily responsible for their own learning, that they are agents in their own educational process.

**Active reading:** a general approach to textbook reading aimed at assisting students of all learning styles. The process involves utilizing multiple learning modalities: visually processing what you are reading, summarizing passages in your own words, and questioning yourself about your level of understanding.

**Adjourning:** according to Tuckman (1965) the last stage in group development, which involves establishing formal closure for a particular project, study group, or meeting.

**American Psychological Association (APA) citation format:** a system of accepted rules for formatting particular types of documents. The association publishes a handbook outlining the particulars of this system. These accepted standards allow members of particular professional communities to communicate more efficiently.

**Annotating text:** the process of writing analytical, critical, and/or summative notes in response to a written work. This activity involves writing comments, notes, and questions in the margins, essentially establishing a written conversation between reader and text.

**Anxiety:** the feeling of being tense, apprehensive, unsettled, and unsure why.

**Attitude toward intelligence:** Dweck and Leggett (1988) identify two implicit theories of intelligence: an entity view and an incremental view. People with an entity view believe that intelligence is a fixed, single ability. Thus, ability, not effort, is the key factor that determines performance. People who hold an incremental view believe that intelligence involves a set of skills that can be improved through effort.

**Auditory learners:** individuals who tend to favor their ears as the primary mode for learning. They are most likely to remember what they hear and what they say.

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Automatic thinking: term used by Friedman and Lipshitz (1992) to describe remaining entrenched in old habits, for old ways of thinking and learning. They explain that students sometimes are immobilized to learn new information because of past experiences.

Banking model of education: Paulo Freire describes this educational model as one in which educators attempt to “dump” information into the minds of students via lecture and textbook reading.

Brainstorming: the process of letting ideas flow from your mind through your hand onto paper without making judgments as to how to say things perfectly, how to arrange the ideas, or whether or not you really want to include a particular idea. Brainstorming is about recording as much of what you are thinking as possible so that you can make these judgments later.

Campus resources: departments, people, and programs on college or university campuses that support students outside of the classroom.

Clustering: also referred to as branching, a process that involves a more visual approach to prewriting. Here, ideas are presented graphically as they relate to one another.

Comprehensive notes: complete notes with all levels of information, including generalizations, examples, explanations, transitions, questions, introductions, summaries, and repetitions.

Cornell system of note taking: a system of note taking that allows you to coordinate lecture notes with reading notes; an approach that involves, among other things, listing possible exam questions based on the notes gathered.

Daily schedule: a chronological record of how you intend to accomplish prioritized activities and/or tasks during specific hours on a particular day. Tasks and activities may be derived from your semester and weekly schedules, and/or from a to-do list.

Defense mechanisms: according to Sigmund Freud, ways in which individuals distort reality to reduce anxiety.

Delay gratification: to restrain impulses in order to put work first and then have fun.

Die-hard procrastinator: an individual who tends to get stuck in a rut to the point where he or she is completely immobilized.

Drafting: the process of turning less-than-cohesive thoughts into coherent phrases and paragraphs.

8-8-8 formula: for optimal balance with time management practices, the 24 hours in a day can be broken down into three components for college students: 8 hours for sleep, 8 hours for study, and 8 hours for leisure.


End comments: forms of instructor feedback typically found at the end of a paper that are global in nature; comments that usually provide a summary of intertextual markings and marginal comments.

External locus of control: a generalized expectancy or feeling that outcomes are largely beyond our control and are a result of luck, fate, chance, or powerful others.

Feedback: the response you receive from instructors, learning assistance staff, or peer tutors regarding your academic work, studying, or behavior; a mechanism used to revise existing academic practices.

Feedback procedure: methods of discovering your level of understanding of a particular subject. The more common methods include predicting questions that might appear on exams, making summary sheets, tutoring other students, and self-testing.

Forming: according to Tuckman (1965) the initial stage in group development involving a group getting together to work toward a collective goal and determining members’ strengths and weaknesses; the point at which the group discusses how to approach the task at hand.
Freewriting: a form of prewriting that includes the formulation of sentences and paragraphs instead of a list of ideas that would result from brainstorming.

Intellectual curiosity: defined by Peggy Maki (2002) as “the characteristic ability to question, challenge, look at an issue from multiple perspectives, seek more information before rushing to judgment, raise questions, deliberate, and craft well-reasoned arguments” (p. 6).

Intellectual discourse: a rational discussion about a particular subject with interested others.

Intellectual property: this property is unique in some way; it contains some new concept or data set, or perhaps argues against a previously established correlation. Intellectual property can be utilized by individuals other than the originator with permission.

Internal locus of control: a generalized expectancy or feeling of being reasonably in control over outcomes; attributing outcomes to your own hard work and effort.

Intertextual markings: these markings are placed within the text itself, that is, above, below, or covering your actual words.

Learning style: the pattern of personality and environmental factors related to how one learns.

Learning styles theory: addresses the ways in which a person learns best and tailors approaches to learning and studying based on the individual.

Locus of control: involves a generalized expectancy that people hold regarding the degree to which they control their fate.

Logic outline: an outline that includes a thesis statement—a sentence that reveals the purpose of the paper—as well as the points the writer will offer in support of that thesis—the supporting points.

Marginal comments: markings that occur in the (typically) one-inch margins surrounding text. These comments are usually a bit more global in scope than are intertextual markings, examining at least sentence meaning and often the significance of entire paragraphs.

Metacognition: strategies that allow students to plan, monitor, evaluate, and revise learning strategies whenever needed in studying and learning new materials; literally thinking about how you think.

Mixed modality learners: individuals who are able to function in more than one learning modality.

Modern Language Association (MLA) citation format: a system of accepted rules for formatting particular types of documents. The association publishes a handbook outlining the particulars of this system. These accepted standards allow members of particular professional communities to communicate more efficiently.

Norming: according to Tuckman (1965) the third stage in group development when the group agrees on guiding principles or rules that each group member must abide by for the group to function most productively.

Office hours: scheduled times, typically posted on a course syllabus, when professors are in their offices so that students can meet with them to ask questions or discuss problems.

Paraphrasing: the practice of putting someone else’s language into your own words, but still giving credit to the original author for her or his idea.

Passive learner: individuals consciously or unconsciously subscribing to the philosophy that others are responsible for teaching them what they need to know.

Peer review: the process of reviewing work with peers in a classroom setting.

Performing: according to Tuckman (1965) the fourth stage in group development, when the group performs effectively and productively—if it reaches this stage.

Plagiarism: the practice of presenting someone else’s ideas as if they were your own.

Portfolios: collections of student work, with an emphasis on metacognition, requiring those who keep a portfolio to consider what it will include and how it will be organized.
Prewriting: the act of recording ideas with an emphasis on getting ideas in a form that you can see or hear. Prewriting is more about what you might say than how you might say it.

Procrastinate: to put off working on an activity because it seems too complex, difficult, time-consuming, or overwhelming.

Quoting: the practice of using quotation marks around exact words that you copy down from a source.

Rationalization: justifying undesirable behaviors with excuses.

Reciprocal determinism: according to Bandura (1986) the notion that there is an influential relationship between people and their environments.

Reflective journal: a collection of thoughts written down whose purpose is to help the author think through ideas by writing about them. The act of keeping a reflective journal involves making regular entries and collecting them together to illustrate thinking over a period of time.

Replacement activities: activities in which individuals typically engage other than those that should be priorities; activities that are typically engaged in during the process of procrastination.

Research: to investigate what others have said and/or written about topics of interest. Research can be done in many ways, including a search at a library or via the Internet, and by talking with experts in a relevant field.

Responsibility: this literally means your response-ability, that is, your ability to choose a response.

Revision: a writing process activity that involves carefully reviewing your work and making changes because a word, sentence, or paragraph in the writing interferes with the meaning(s) you are trying to convey to your audience. It is a good idea to look for grammatical and spelling errors when reviewing a piece of writing, but there are other things to look for as well. Of at least equal importance are unclear and/or underdeveloped ideas that could be interpreted by an audience in ways you don’t intend.

Schema: a term used in the context of active reading. Schema refers to what you already know about the subjects that you find in your reading. Any new information presented will be interpreted/understood based on this prior knowledge.

Scholarly community: a group of people working toward intellectual pursuits.

Self-concept: our understanding of who we are, a conceptualization that encompasses all of our thoughts and feelings.

Self-efficacy: the belief that you are capable of producing desired results, such as mastering new skills and achieving personal goals.

Self-evaluate: to develop an understanding of your studying practices and procedures; to be sure that you did everything within your power to prepare adequately for a given test.

Self-regulate: to monitor your own learning and study procedures; a process under your control that is your primary responsibility.

Semester schedule: a schedule for an entire semester. A daily planner or electronic planner is used to record due dates for papers, projects, and presentations, and to enter midterm and final exam information next to the appropriate dates.

Storming: according to Tuckman (1965) the second stage in group development that occurs when conflict arises. The group must resolve these conflicts before proceeding to the next stage, norming.

Student-directed environment: a learning environment in which students are expected to adapt to the different demands of each class on their own.

Summarizing: an activity involving reducing a lengthy passage into a sentence or two while documenting the original source.
Switch cognitive gears: according to Freidman & Lipshitz (1998) to transition from one mode of thought to another.

Syllabus: a document describing a course; outlining desired course outcomes, and detailing other relevant information, such as topics and readings.

Tactile/kinesthetic learners: individuals who prefer learning when they are physically involved in what they are studying. These learners want to act out a situation, create a product, or work on a project. They understand and remember best when they physically do something.

Teacher-directed environment: a learning environment in which teachers help students adapt to the different demands of each class.

Test preparation: all of the activities involved in preparing for an exam, including reading techniques, note-taking techniques, study techniques, class participation, and other contributory activities.

Theory of multiple intelligences (MI theory): Howard Gardner's (1983) idea that intelligence is not a single capacity that "equips" a person to deal with various situations. He argues that people use at least seven intelligences—linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal—to approach problems and create products.

Three-tier time management system: consists of completing a semester schedule, weekly schedule, daily schedule, and to-do list.

Time management: a system for using time in an efficient and effective manner.

To-do list: a prioritized list of activities and/or tasks you need to accomplish based on your semester and weekly schedules. It enables you to meet the deadlines you've set for yourself.

Visual learners: individuals who use their eyes as the primary mode of learning. They want to see a picture; they want to actually see the words written down. These learners tune in to the physical environment.

Weekly schedule: a tool used to identify how much of your time is available for study. It is designed for writing in fixed commitments such as classes, labs, and job hours; listing times for eating, sleeping, grooming, transportation, leisure, and outside employment; then tentatively blocking out large spaces of time for studying.

Writing center: a resource on many college and university campuses designed to help students become better writers. In such a facility, a student can expect to work on a piece of writing in progress with a tutor on a one-on-one basis.