

Sir Arthur Lewis Community College
“Pursuit of Excellence”



Doing College Right

Doing College Right

In secondary school you may not have had to work very hard to make decent grades. You listened to what the teachers said, dutifully wrote down the information they put on the board, and answered all the questions they gave you on the study guide. Because that same information was on the exam, you may never have had to take your textbooks home at all and you still aced the test.

When you get to college, the rules change. Applying some of the following rules can help you adjust.

- ***Self-discipline.*** You have probably thought about this already. In college you need to find ways to make yourself do the things you need to do every day. Self-discipline is a skill that you must develop even if you don't have it to begin with. Just having a goal to get work done is the best first step.
- ***Motivation.*** Just as you must nurture self-discipline, you must find motivation for learning, which often means finding something positive in a course you really don't like. The trick is to motivate yourself to do the tasks involved in college. Then you can do anything you want.
- ***A game plan.*** Everyone needs a plan of action, and this is especially true for college students, who often have lots of commitments to keep track of (like assignments, meetings social obligations, and

so on). To create a game plan, you must figure out exactly what you need to do, then set aside time to get it all done.

- ***Patience.*** One way in which college prepares you for the world of work is by insisting that every student graduates having gone through his share of frustrating and oftentimes incomprehensible experiences commonly referred to as “red tape” —filling out forms; getting your ID; meeting with your advisor to register for classes on line and paper biased; setting up your campus email account; waiting in endless lines for registration, etc.
- ***A bunch of effective learning strategies.*** Many students begin college using strategies that have worked for them in the past, such as rereading a text or relying only on information supplied by the teacher. To succeed in college you’ll need to change your strategies to meet the new challenges. You’ll need to create a learning cycle, which means knowing lots of different ways to approach learning.

Get it together!

Starting out strong is really the best advice we can give you. The way you use your time during the first few weeks of class is often indicative of the way you will manage yourself and your time throughout your first year. So start with a plan to get your assignments done, do your reading right from the first day of classes and keep up with your assignments, and you will find yourself in good shape!

Six Ways College

Differs from Secondary School

1. **Greater Responsibility.** In secondary school, most of your time is usually planned by others. Someone is always bossing you around—telling you when to go to class, when to do homework, and maybe even when you can go out with friends. In College, you manage your own free time. You set your own priorities and manage all your new responsibilities.
2. **Different Class Structure and Instruction.** Unlike secondary school, college classes generally may not meet every day. You will also find that class sizes are much different in college. You may find that the way you are taught differs. They assume you are responsible and you are eager to do the work. On top of that, they assume that, if you don't ask any questions, you must understand the information. Your college Lecturers usually don't approach you if you are experiencing trouble in the course. Instead, they expect you to seek them out if you need any extra assistance (which, in most cases, they are happy to supply during their office hours.) In college you will need to get notes from a classmate and ask the professor for any other assignments or important information you may have missed.

More than likely, lecturers won't remind you about impending due dates. Instead, they expect you to

consult your syllabus regularly and turn in assignments on the proper dates.

3. **Faster Pace** You will soon notice that instruction moves at a much faster pace in college. The amount of material you may have covered in a year in secondary school may take up only one semester's worth of college work. Your lecturers have high expectations of you; they expect you to be able to keep up with what they are saying and to take good, comprehensive notes. Whew! At first you may feel like one of those little hamsters in a wheel, running faster and faster and not getting anywhere, but most students eventually adjust to the pace.
4. **New (And Improved) Kinds of Studying.** Many students begin college thinking they just need to study more. Although it's correct to assume that you will need to study longer, it's also important to understand that you need to study differently. You need to be able to connect new information with what you already know and with other content. You are also responsible for learning large amounts of information with very little guidance. Make use of Library services and Tutorials.
5. **Fewer Exams.** In college there are fewer exams, each covering a great deal of information. In a heavy reading course such as Psychology or Environmental science that can translate into reading hundreds of pages and remembering even more information presented in lectures. Ensure that you

take good notes. In addition, many college exams are cumulative, which means that the test covers all the information taught in the class during that term.

6. **Fewer Grades.** In secondary school you may have been graded on every move you made. But in college you are often assigned work that is not graded. Usually, only the scores on exams, papers, computer assignments, projects—the big things—make up what counts in your overall course grade.

Don't Mess Up

Starting off on the right foot is important for your future success in college. You really should not “blow off” a semester before you get serious about your academics, no matter what anyone tells you. Students who take **too long “adjusting”** to the demands of college learning and studying can find themselves in a deep academic pit that’s very difficult to get out of. That’s why it’s important to start out strong. As with other challenges in life, you can always lighten up.

- **Keep Up With Your Work**

Establish a reading and studying schedule and follow it each day.

- **Go to Class Every Day**

Class attendance is important for your success

- **Take a Balanced Course Load**

Take courses you are interested in and keep

motivated throughout the semester.

- **Be Aware of Your Status**

Monitor your status in every course. Once you enter college, you are for the most part, in control of the experience you will have.

“The dictionary is the only place in which Success comes before Work.” Author Unknown

If You Read Nothing Else, Read This

- Prepare to make some changes in how you think about school, learning, and studying. Doing college right means thinking about (and maybe improving) your motivation, self-discipline, and strategies for learning.
- College requires greater personal responsibility. You, rather than your parents, must keep track of all the many things you need to do as a college student.
- To stay strong, start out strong. Keep up with your assignments and (**please**) go to class every day.

Seeking Help

The first step in getting the assistance you need is admitting that you need help. Friends are good for the little things, but it's better to get professional help if you know your academics are suffering because of emotional havoc.

THE INSIDE SCOOP:

It has been shown time and time again that students who seek out help when they first begin to struggle academically make a comeback and do well. Those who don't seek the assistance they need tend to spiral downward, earning poor grades and low GPAs. So remember, it's good to ask for help early in the game.

Help Points!

Reception:	457-7300
Counseling Unit:	457-5229
Asst Registrar:	457-5226
Financial Aid Assistance	457-5229/4577306
Security:	457-7314
DASGS	457-7327
DTEMS	457-5214
DAGRI	457-7343
DTEEA	457-7329
DHS	457-7345
HJF LIBRARY	457-7349

“Everyone needs help from everyone.”

Bertolt Brecht

Sherrie Nist-Olejink, Ph.D., and JodiPatrick Holschuch, Ph. D., 2007, *College Rules: How to Study, Survive and Succeed in College*. 2nd Ed.,