Academic Transformation

THE ROAD TO COLLEGE SUCCESS

Second Edition

De Sellers, Ph.D.
Cerridwen, Inc.

Carol W. Dochen, Ph.D.
Texas State University-San Marcos

Russ Hodges, Ed.D
Texas State University-San Marcos

PEARSON
We dedicate this book to our past, present, and future students.
About the Authors

Dr. De Sellers began one of the earliest cognitive-based learning strategies courses for college students in the United States in 1973 at Texas State University–San Marcos, incorporating both the emerging theory and the research-based practice from subdisciplines in psychology and educational psychology into the course. She continued to teach the course for more than 25 years before retiring. Some of her administrative posts included Dean of the College of General Studies, Director of the Student Learning Assistance Center, and Director of the International Office. She holds both an M.A. and a Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin, where she focused her studies on adult learners. De is now the president of Cerridwen, Inc., a consulting company for educational and psychological services.

Dr. Carol W. Dochen is currently the Director of the Student Learning Assistance Center at Texas State University–San Marcos. She also teaches undergraduate courses in University College and occasionally teaches in the College of Education. Carol earned her Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration, with a minor in Educational Psychology, from the University of Texas at Austin. She is actively involved in state and national developmental education organizations and was a founding member of the annual statewide College Academic Support Programs conference and the Texas Association for Developmental Education (TADE). Carol is a frequent presenter at state and national conferences and received a College Academic Support Programs award for Outstanding Conference Institute. She has published in a variety of journals and books; has obtained numerous grants; and has established model Supplemental Instruction (SI), Online Tutoring, and other learning assistance programs at Texas State.

Dr. Russ Hodges has worked at Texas State University–San Marcos since 1986 and coordinates the university’s undergraduate learning frameworks course titled Effective Learning. Russ also teaches master’s- and doctoral-level courses in the College of Education. Russ currently serves as chair of the Council of Learning Assistance and Developmental Education Associations (CLADEA) and is a past president of the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), serving from 2004 to 2005. Russ has received the Outstanding Article Award from the Journal of Developmental Education in 2001, the Robert Griffin Award for Long and Outstanding Service from CRLA in 2007, the College Academic Support Programs (CASP) Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008, and was inducted as a CLADEA Fellow for his lifetime contributions to the fields of Learning Assistance and Developmental Education in 2009.
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AAUUGH *%^$#&!@ (I feel much better now).

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Preface

More than three decades ago, I walked to the other side of the desk and began teaching. The classroom had always been my arena of competition, and I was routinely successful as a student. If I ever gave any thought to other students who were not as successful as I, I just assumed they were lazy. It was not until I began to teach that I noticed many of my students tried to learn but failed nonetheless.

Suddenly, teaching was not as easy as I had assumed it would be. It was not simply a matter of presenting content. Each day during that first year of teaching brought questions. Was I teaching if they did not learn? Why was learning difficult for some students? Why was it so easy for me? The questions continued to pour in. Clearly, many of my students were intelligent, and I could witness their effort, but why did they often struggle to learn? What was the cause? It would have been simple to retreat to the ivory tower and proclaim that their high school preparation was poor, that they just didn’t try hard enough, that not everyone could benefit from a higher education.

Instead, I started to ask real questions. How do we learn academically? Could anyone learn more effectively? The journey that started so long ago led me back to graduate school, then on to decades of teaching, and now to this text. Along the way, I have been blessed with dynamic and innovative colleagues, challenging and adventurous students, honest teachers, and administrators who knew when to turn a blind eye to daringly experimental programs.

My seemingly simple questions came to have complicated answers. My colleagues and I searched in numerous fields, unearthing both theoretical and research answers. Over the decades, we have been part of this new field of developmental education. Developmental education has emerged in response to the needs of thousands of American students who want to be more successful academically and to the desires of institutions that want these students to succeed.

This text is the amalgamation of our experiences. These are the concepts and practices based in theory and research that help our students reach their academic goals. These concepts and practices are rooted in the ideal of an autonomous student, a person fully equipped to meet the learning challenges in academics as well as the work world.

De Sellers
ABOUT THIS EDITION

In this revised text, we focus primarily on one aspect of learning—collegiate learning. As teachers with decades of collective experience under our belts, we have come to understand that competency as a college student can be learned. Academic success courses that foster development in college learners have a long history in higher education. They have many names, emerge from differing academic disciplines, and help diverse students. They foster students’ abilities to monitor and regulate their own learning through the development of a perspective about themselves as learners. Theories from cognitive and behavioral psychology are deeply rooted in the course curriculum. This text flows from the traditions of this field, although we incorporate theories and strategies from other disciplines, such as personality theory, business, and philosophy.

We also use stories representative of the many students we have worked with over the years. Their stories explain and illustrate critical theories and strategies that can help students achieve academic success. The exercises scattered within each chapter and the journal questions at the end of each chapter give students specific opportunities to adapt the concepts to their own lives.

In preparation for revising this text, we spent the past couple of years soliciting feedback from colleagues across the nation who were using our text in their classes. Their enthusiasm and encouraging comments about what worked, and candid criticism for what needed to be changed, led us to reflect deeply about the content to include, but more importantly, to resequence the content in a way that was more intuitive for students to learn and teachers to teach. Thus, the second edition is a true collaboration that we are excited to share with our colleagues.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

Students and teachers will benefit from a variety of new content and features in this edition, including:

• An entirely new “pre-chapter” titled “Packing the Essentials,” which consists of a brief introduction, three proven organizational tools (i.e., Syllabi Matrix, Academic Calendar, and Comprehensive Notebook), strategies for managing time, working in virtual learning environments, preparing for and taking college tests, and a final section on commitment.

• New and revised (shorter) case studies that allow students to analyze real issues facing today’s diverse college population.

• Case study questions embedded within each chapter to promote class discussion and analysis of each case study.

• Material on learning, knowing, and thinking with types of knowledge (i.e., declarative, procedural, metacognitive) and levels of intellectual performance.
(using the recently revised Bloom’s Taxonomy for the cognitive domain) in Chapter 2, all of which originally appeared in different and later chapters.

- New content on guided notes and virtual learning environments (Chapter 3) and on text-reading strategies and learning from academic networking (Chapter 4).
- An expanded and updated section on brain learning theory research with all new images of neurological structures and material on the new concept of “continuous partial attention” (Chapter 5).
- A redesigned concluding chapter for the academic learning section that synthesizes material on different approaches to learning (i.e., surface, deep, achievement), academic performance, and simple and advanced study techniques (Chapter 6). These topics were scattered throughout later chapters in the original text, but our colleagues and reviewers strongly encouraged us to cover them earlier and together in the revised edition.
- An integrated and comprehensive coverage of the impact of self-regulation on student success by weaving this topic throughout four chapters (7–10). New and revised topics include setting and attaining achievable goals; academic self-regulation, will, and motivation; our own stage model of self-regulatory ability; strategies for increasing and maintaining academic motivation, improving time management, reducing procrastination and balancing our lives; and using self-change as a holistic approach to changing behaviors.
- Chickering’s Vector theory, at the request of our colleagues and reviewers, in the chapter (11) on “Patterns in Human Development.”
- An Appendix titled “Overcoming Specific Academic Anxieties” that contains updated research, strategies, and websites for coping with and reducing anxieties involving public speaking, taking tests, mathematics, and writing.

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We have relied on many colleagues, friends, and family members to help us through the lengthy, complicated process of revising and producing this second edition, and to them we owe our utmost appreciation and gratitude:

- Patricia Foster, currently a faculty member at Stephen F. Austin State University and our summer teaching colleague at Texas State, for spending several days with us, dissecting the first edition, page by page, rearranging topics, and brainstorming new ideas to make this textbook more user-friendly to students and faculty members.
- Dr. Joel McGee and the Student Learning Center faculty members at Texas A&M University for providing valuable feedback about what textbook material to keep, what to delete, and how the topics and chapters could be rearranged more effectively.
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Preface

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• Raechel Friedman, the invaluable and resourceful student assistant who was completely undaunted by any task delegated—from editing content from a student’s point of view, to researching and recommending new material, to combing through each chapter countless times for numerous reasons to make sure we met production deadlines.

• Randy Dale, doctoral research assistant, for locating valuable resources and providing research support throughout this project.

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• Dr. Ron Brown, Dean of University College at Texas State, for understanding and supporting the need to maintain a regular off-campus writing schedule until project completion as well as encouraging professional development through scholarly research and writing.

• Our reviewers, who offered constructive suggestions: Lewis Gray, Middle Tennessee State University; Stephanie Marsh, United States Military Academy Preparatory School; Tobin Quereau, Austin Community College; Sherry Shutin, Pennsylvania Highlands Community College; and Shirley Yu, University of Houston.

• Our respective family members and significant others, for their unwavering support, patience, and for cheering us on, once again!

De Sellers
Carol Dochen
Russ Hodges
MyStudentSuccessLab is an online solution designed to help students acquire the skills they need to succeed. They will have access to peer-led video presentations and develop core skills through interactive exercises and projects that provide academic, life, and career skills that will transfer to ANY course.

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**Additional Assignments** - Suggests extra activities to use with each topic:
- General activity related to an important objective for each topic.
- Internet Assignment (e.g. Google "You Tube" video on topic) to find a video on key strategies and write a critique and present it to the class.
- Resources usage – i.e. Read and take online notes on the main points of the Understanding Plagiarism guide.

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