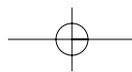


# 1

## Understanding College Culture and Your Campus



## IN THIS CHAPTER

**G**ary has found that there is a different set of expectations in college than there was in high school. As he related, some “rules” do not apply any more, but there are also new responsibilities and methods of communication. College students such as Gary realize that understanding college culture and getting familiar with the campus are two important parts of starting college. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce you to the culture of college, to reveal the truths about going to college and debunk the myths—the “quick and easy” myth, for one—and to prepare you for meeting the challenges that you will inevitably face. This chapter also provides you with information about what the college environment will look like and what you can expect in terms of communication between the college and you.

More specifically, this chapter answers the following questions, which will move you closer to being comfortable in college:

- What will college be like? What can I expect?
- What do professors expect from me? How can I meet their expectations?
- Should I worry about my grades? Are they important?
- How will I find my way around the campus?
- How can I find the help I need when I need it?
- What kinds of communication pieces will I need while in college?

C O M M U N I T Y • C O L L E G E •

## Student Profile



STUDENT: **Gary Bailey**

AGE: **26**

MAJOR: **Associate of Arts, Bachelor of Science in Zoology**

1. What was the biggest adjustment you had to make when moving from high school to college?

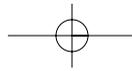
*The biggest adjustment has been time management, especially how it relates to handling everyday life and college responsibilities such as homework.*

2. Describe your college’s culture. What is expected of you and others who are enrolled in college?

*It is upbeat, but more relaxed than a 4-year university. We are expected to conduct ourselves as adults while learning as much as possible.*

3. What types of communication materials were you familiar with? Which ones were new?

*The syllabus is not new, but how much we have to rely on it is. Professors talk about the syllabus as “the contract” for the course. I have also found that getting information through e-mail has been a difference from high school.*



## What Is College Culture?

### QUICK AND EASY?

LOSE WEIGHT OVERNIGHT WITHOUT DIET AND EXERCISE

BUY GIFTS ON THE INTERNET—NO WAITING IN LINES, NO LOOKING FOR PARKING

A COMPLETE, GOURMET MEAL FOR YOUR FAMILY—IN 5 MINUTES

As these common slogans show, we are bombarded by offers to get something without effort and without sacrificing our precious time. We have come to value anything that is quick and easy. Unfortunately, the desire for “quick and easy” has spread from fast food and convenience items to higher education as well. Students who are strapped for time but who believe that a degree will give them the financial stability and career success they want often enroll in a community college because the programs are typically shorter than those at a 4-year university—the “quick” that some students are seeking. Other students enroll in a community college because they believe that the courses are not as challenging as they would be at other schools—the “easy” those students are seeking.

The degree programs at community colleges are shorter, usually requiring 1 or 2 years, but the reality is that you may need to take more time to complete a degree program if you plan to enroll as a part-time student. Also, if you need developmental or remedial classes before you can start on the required curriculum, completion of the program will be delayed.

A misconception about community colleges, however, is that the classes are less demanding. Because of technical and industrial standards and career licensing, many courses and programs are, in fact, very challenging. Instructors who teach in the technical, industrial, and business fields are expected to graduate students who can pass licensing exams, which means the standards in the class must be high. If the courses were “easy,” then the graduates would be unemployable. Likewise, students who intend to transfer to 4-year universities after they complete their general education requirements would not be successful after transfer if the courses they took at the community college were not challenging. Community colleges want well-prepared and successful graduates; thus, it is in their best interest to provide courses that require the best work from their students.

## Making the Transition

**F**or some students, the move from high school to college seems fairly simple—both require reading, writing, testing, and attending class. Students who are taking the step from work to school may also see some similarities between their jobs and their classroom work—both require working hard, keeping yourself motivated, and following the rules. If the differences between high school, work, and college are that simple, then why do so many community college students have difficulty making a successful transition?

The answer to that question can be given by the instructors who see smart, competent students have trouble adjusting to the climate and culture of college because they do not understand what is expected of them. In other words, in order to be successful, students must know what is expected of them beyond the questions on the next test; they need to know how college works and how to navigate through not only their courses, but also the common challenges that they will face as they work toward a degree or certificate.

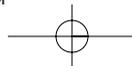


Figure 1.1 illustrates some of the differences and similarities between high school, a full-time job, and college. Notice that the greatest differences occur between high school and college while there are some similarities between a full-time job and college, although there are also distinct differences.

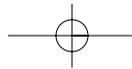
## Active Learning

Taking responsibility for your learning is the cornerstone for college success. Being an active learner means that you are no longer a passive participant in your education, listening to a lecture or reading recreationally. Instead, college classes require that you participate in your own learning by reading actively and critically (see Chapter 4), by listening actively and critically (see Chapter 4), by completing assignments, by working with other students, and by making connections among the courses you are taking and your life. Active learners also seek out more information about topics and look for ways to improve their understanding of concepts by seeking help when needed. In essence, active learners make their education a top priority.

- College professors expect students to learn actively by seeking out information on their own.
- College professors expect students to listen and read actively when they are preparing for and attending class.

FIGURE 1.1 *High School/Full-Time Work Differences*

High School	Full-Time Work	College
Attendance is mandatory in order to meet requirements	Attendance is mandatory in order to stay employed	Attendance may not be mandatory
At least 6 continuous hours spent in class each day	At least 8 continuous hours spent at work each day	Different amounts of time spent in class and between classes each day
Very little choice in what classes you take and when you take them	May have little choice in work assignments and when the work is to be completed	More flexibility in when you work on assignments and how soon you complete them before the due date
Moderate to no outside work necessary to be successful	Moderate to no overtime work necessary to complete job duties	Substantial amount of outside work to complete assignments and to be successful
Teachers check homework and keep you up to date on progress; they will inform you if you are not completing assignments and progressing well	Supervisors check completion and quality of work at regular intervals; they will inform you if you are not meeting the standards for the position	Professors may not check all homework or provide feedback on progress at regular intervals; they may not inform you if you are not meeting the standards of the course
Teachers go over material and expect you to remember facts and information	Employers provide basic information and expect you to use it to complete the job effectively	Professors provide concepts and theories and expect you to evaluate the ideas, synthesize the ideas with other concepts you have learned, and develop new theories
Frequent tests over small amounts of material allow for grades to be raised if needed	Supervisors create employee improvement plans to allow you to improve your ratings if needed	Professors provide the standards and grading criteria but often allow only a few chances (through infrequent testing/assignments) to meet them



## Attendance

Woody Allen once said, “Eighty percent of success is showing up.” Definitely, in college classes, you can’t be successful unless you attend regularly. This means you must go to class every time it meets whether or not you feel like it and whether or not there is something “important” going on. Unlike in high school, college professors may not take attendance or may not make an issue of students who do not attend; however, do not be fooled by a professor’s laid-back attitude about your attendance. Additionally, if you are receiving financial aid, through grants or loans, your attendance may be important to your continuing to receive funds. Some colleges require students to pay back funds received if a student fails to attend classes regularly.

If you do not attend class regularly, not only will you miss lectures and jeopardize your financial aid, but you will also miss valuable information about assignments, tests, and grading, information that the professor is not obligated to review with you. Especially in courses that build on concepts (such as math and English), your lack of attendance can lead to problems with successfully doing assignments and performing on tests later in the semester. Also, think of regular attendance as leverage for negotiating. If you have an emergency that prevents you from taking a test on time, your regular attendance and status as a good student can work for you in getting an extension.



### Reflection

#### EXERCISE 1.1

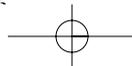
Why do you think attendance is important to success in college?  
Besides information and assignments, what can students miss when they do not attend class regularly?

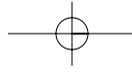


Students who have also held jobs often better understand the importance of attendance. They know that they do not get paid if they do not show up for work, and that they may be fired if they miss too many days. However, showing up for class is only part of what it takes to succeed in college. To be a successful college student, maintaining a positive attitude, preparing for class, asking for help when needed, acting with integrity, and staying self-motivated are also key factors.

If you miss a class or intend to miss a class, you should mention this to your professor. Although you may not need a doctor’s excuse, you should be prepared to justify your absence, especially if you have missed an exam. Most professors, though, do not care why you were absent. In fact, they don’t distinguish between excused or unexcused absences. Instead, they are more interested that you do not miss very many classes and that you keep up with the work.

- College professors expect students to attend class regularly.
- College professors do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences.





## Attitude

A good attitude will take you far in your journey to achieve your goals. Sometimes it will be hard to maintain a positive outlook because you will feel overwhelmed with the challenges of college, work, and family, but if you can maintain a good attitude about the whole process, your chances of success are greater. Good attitudes are infectious, and you will soon find that your instructors and classmates will reflect your good attitude.

There is no doubt that sometime in your college experience, you will feel as though the world is out to undermine your success. You may feel overwhelmed with the responsibilities of going to school and working, or you may feel frustrated that you have not progressed in your classes the way you had hoped. There are numerous reasons that you may, temporarily at least, have a pessimistic outlook on your college education or your life. Bringing a bad mood into the classroom, however, can make your attitude worse and your outlook gloomier. Even though you may feel anonymous most of the time, instructors do notice when students are disgruntled and unwilling to learn. Although instructors may not know why a student is upset, the student's bad attitude makes a lasting impression. At the very least, they may see negativity as a sign of immaturity.

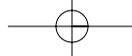
Common "bad attitude" mistakes that students can make include the following:

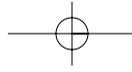
- Acting as if they know more than the professor
- Rolling their eyes or shaking their heads when an instructor is presenting material or making an assignment
- Negatively commenting out loud about the class, the instructor, or other students
- Resisting or refusing to do an assignment
- Slouching down in the seat, looking bored
- Getting angry about a low grade
- Walking out of class because they are angry or bored

Presenting a good attitude in class is easier than you think. In fact, it just takes paying a little attention to the messages you are sending through your facial expressions, body language, and verbal tone. Here are some tips for presenting a good attitude:

- Smiling, especially when the lecture is interesting or entertaining. Smiling, even when you are not happy, sends messages to your brain that you are having a good time, which then releases endorphins through your bloodstream. Endorphins are chemicals in your brain that send messages to your body that you are enjoying yourself, and they relax you and minimize sensations of pain.
- Coming to class prepared with the appropriate books and materials
- Paying attention
- Demonstrating an effort to master the material and to complete assignments
- Providing positive or constructive feedback in class or privately

The belief that instructors only like students who make As or students who gush with compliments about the course is false. The truth is that instructors





## 8 CHAPTER 1

like students who show a genuine interest and demonstrate effort in the course. It is students with good attitudes who get the most help from their instructors because the instructors realize that such students are willing to learn.

- College professors are impressed by students who maintain a positive attitude even when they are struggling with course topics and assignments.
- College professors are more willing to help students who have a good attitude.

### Effort

Gone are the days of an A for effort. In high school, students who merely complete work are usually rewarded with a passing grade. However, in college, effort must be coupled with quality. Putting forth an effort to write a paper and turn it in is only part of the requirement. You also have to adhere to the standards of the course. If your professor asks for a 10-page paper that argues a contemporary topic and uses five sources, you must follow those guidelines. Although in high school you may have earned a passing grade by writing a seven-page paper on a contemporary topic that used only three sources and contained numerous grammatical errors, this will not happen in college because the standards are higher. In some instances, you may receive no credit for completing an assignment if you have not followed the guidelines or requirements.

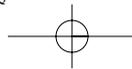
Also gone are the days when the more time you spent studying or writing a paper equaled receiving a higher grade. Students who complain about low grades by saying, for example, "But I spent 2 weeks writing the paper" will not get any sympathy from their instructor. Does this mean that there is no relationship between time invested and high scores? Definitely not. This means that you should pay attention to the quality of the work you produce within the time you spend. The quality of your work is what you will be graded on, not the number of hours you spent doing it.

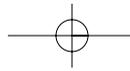
You will also find that you will need to increase your effort to get the same grades you got in high school. You will have more reading, writing, and critical thinking to do each week, and most of the work will be done outside of class. Instructors view class time as a small fraction of the course. A common rule for calculating how many hours you will need to devote to a course is to study 3 hours for every hour per week you are in class. Therefore, if you are taking a 3-hour class, you should be studying 9 hours per week for that one course. If you are taking 12 hours per semester, you should be devoting 36 hours per week to studying. That means 48 hours (36 hours to study and 12 hours to attend class) of your week will be occupied with school work—in class and outside of class.

- College professors reward students who produce high-quality work.
- College professors may not credit "good efforts" if they do not meet the requirements or standards of the course.
- College professors expect students to do a substantial amount of work outside of class.

### Grades

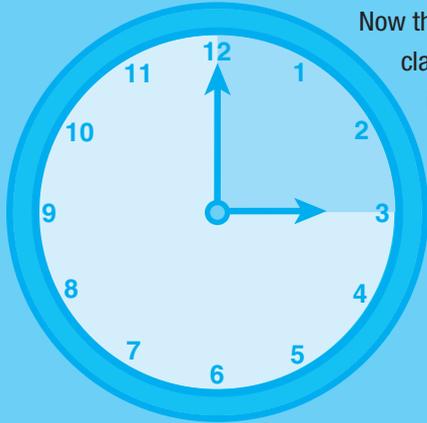
Grades are an important part of your education, and at the same time they are unimportant. How can that be? How can something be both important and unimportant? Grades are important because they often reflect your level of achievement on an assignment or in a course; they are also important for





# Time Management

## EXERCISE 1.2



Now that you know how many hours outside of class you will be required to spend preparing for class, completing assignments, and studying, determine when you have

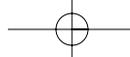
36 hours a week (if you are taking four classes) to spend on college work. Will it be on certain days or during certain periods in the week? Early morning, midafternoon, or late nights?

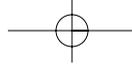
obtaining and maintaining scholarships and financial aid. Additionally, grades are important to family, friends, and employers who may be supporting you financially and emotionally. Many people view grades as a reflection of a level of success. For instance, most of the people you ask would view a student who has straight As as someone who is smart and successful.

While most people, especially students, place significance on grades, they are what educators call “non-measures” of student learning. In other words, an A in a College Algebra class does not necessarily indicate that a student knows how to solve quadratic equations. Likewise, an A in a literature course does not automatically mean that the student knows how to explicate a poem. Grades, in these instances, may not reflect what a student has learned in a course. Instead, they may reflect that a student merely turned in all his homework on time or that he is a good test taker.

If grades sometimes indicate a level of success in a course and sometimes not, what are you to do? How will you ever know when to worry about your grades and when to concentrate on learning the material? The purpose of this chapter is to help you answer these questions for yourself by explaining how professors grade and how you can make good grades in college. The chapter also discusses what you can do to deemphasize making a good grade and increase your attention on mastering the material of the course. This is not to say, however, that grades are never important. They are important because they are a way to describe the work you have done in a class. However, grades alone are not the magic carpet to success in college; they are only part of the story of your achievements. Your goal should be to strike a balance between caring about your grades and caring about improving your skills and increasing your knowledge.

GRADES CAN BE INDICATIONS OF	GRADES ARE NOT INDICATIONS OF
A certain level of success on an assignment or in a course	Your worth as a person
The time and work you put into an assignment or a course	Your educational and career potential
The knowledge and skills you have obtained	An inability to learn





## 10 CHAPTER 1

James M. Banner Jr. and Harold C. Cannon (1999), in their book *The Elements of Learning*, define grades as the following: “Grades are evaluations of your work, not of your character or intelligence. You may be a wonderful person but a failure as a biologist. You may find it impossible to do satisfactory work in history but may excel in all other subjects” (p. 160). Banner and Cannon assert, therefore, that grades have limitations. For sure, they are a necessary part of evaluation, much as you are evaluated on your job. However, as Banner and Cannon point out, grades do not show the whole picture of who you are. Grades, then, are only part of the story of your education.

As stated earlier, college professors grade a student on his or her ability to meet the standards of the course or of a particular assignment. Effort is definitely a necessary part of earning good grades—and you will earn the respect of your professor and fellow students by demonstrating an intense effort to master the concepts of a class—but it is only one part of achieving success in a course. College professors expect that you also meet the standards, sometimes called grading criteria, of the course. Figure 1.2 shows a potential set of criteria for a college-level paper. In this case, the criteria are for an A paper.

## Grading Scales

Knowing how your college assesses student performance is a start to improving your overall outlook on grading. The following is a typical grading scale in college:

90–100 A	89–80 B	79–70 C	69–60 D	59–0 F
----------	---------	---------	---------	--------

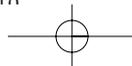
Some colleges may use a + or – next to a letter grade such as A– or C+. Usually, colleges that allow for +s and –s will also alter the grading scale to designate the different grades. Here is an example of a grading scale that includes +s and –s:

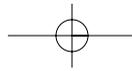
94–100 A	93–90 A–	87–89 B+	84–86 B	83–80 B–
----------	----------	----------	---------	----------

- College professors use grades to show your level of success on a particular assignment.

FIGURE 1.2 Grading Criteria for an A Paper

- An excellent introduction with engaging hooks, setup, plan for essay, and/or main idea
- An original, significant thesis that offers insightful interpretation or thought
- An inventive and logical organizational plan
- Smooth and varied transitional expressions, phrases, and sentences that provide unity and coherence
- Strong conclusion that ends the essay effectively
- Expressive, clear style with sophisticated sentence structure and word choice
- No more than three major grammatical errors





- College professors expect that you will understand the criteria by which you are graded and use any feedback to improve your grades throughout the semester.



## Honesty

Later chapters more thoroughly discuss the issue of integrity, the foundation for honesty, but it is worth mentioning here as well because honesty is such an important component to learning. It can be said that student learning is not possible without honesty and integrity. For example, if a student cheats on all the exams in a class, what has he or she learned about the subject?

In addition to being honest about doing the course work, you will need to be honest with yourself about your progress. If you do not understand the material and are earning poor grades, take the time to assess honestly your preparation for the course or your abilities. Maybe you are not spending enough time studying and reviewing for the class, or maybe you need to take a lower-level course so you can brush up on the fundamentals. It is better to admit that you need help or need better preparation than to spend valuable time performing poorly.

- College professors expect you to be honest about your goals, abilities, and needs.

## Instructors' Expectations

In addition to attendance, attitude, effort, and honesty, there are a few other expectations when you take college classes. For instance, when an instructor hands out a written assignment to be turned in at a later date, the assignment must be typed; in fact, unless otherwise stated, assume that all outside assignments should be typed, because they are easier to read and they look more professional. If you don't know how to type, now is the time to learn; relying on others to type or word-process your work could put you in a disadvantage—you may not be able to control when the person can complete the work, which can make you miss assignment due dates.

When you handwrite an assignment, the instructor expects that your handwriting be legible. Handwritten assignments should also be done in blue or black pen on white paper. Some instructors will ask you to rewrite the assignment or will lower your grade if your work is unreadable. If you have a disability that prevents you from writing legibly, be sure the instructor is aware of this at the beginning of the semester.

Another expectation that instructors have is preparation—yours. You should be prepared *before* you get to class by reading the assigned pages or completing the homework. Too often, some students think that the instructor will provide a complete overview of the material and that preparing for class is a waste of time. Nothing could be further from the truth. Instructors

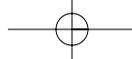
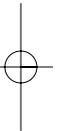
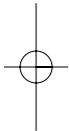
## Relating to Others

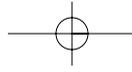
### EXERCISE 1.3

Grades have their limitations because an A cannot fully express what has been achieved. Working with a classmate or in a group, describe other ways that students can mark their success in a class. Share your ideas with your class as a whole to see whether your classmates can think of other ways that success can be marked.



Companion  
Website





## 12 CHAPTER 1

who assign reading or homework expect students to prepare—they may even administer quizzes to ensure that students have prepared—and to ask questions about anything they did not understand. Instructors may assume that if you don't ask questions or participate in a discussion, you understand the assignment. They may also hold you accountable for the assigned reading on exams even though it was not discussed in class.

As stated above regarding typing or word-processing papers, instructors expect that college students are able to access technology regularly and use it competently. What this means is that your professor will assume and expect that you have consistent access to a computer and the Internet. She will also believe that you have an e-mail account and can send e-mails—even messages with attachments—successfully. If these are skills and equipment that you do not have, you will need to find out where you can access a computer on campus or off campus and make sure that you have the ability to use it properly.

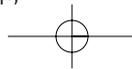
Despite the joke about instructors who are notorious for thinking that their classes are the only ones you are taking, and studying for them is the only activity you do all week, students do find that college instructors expect that your first priority is your college classes. At a community college, you may find instructors who are more understanding about your multiple responsibilities, but remember that their first concern is that you learn the material and meet course objectives.

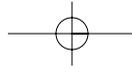
- College professors expect assignments to be typed or clearly written.
- College professors expect that students have read the assigned material before they get to class.
- College professors expect that students' first priority is their education.

## Maturity

Maturity is the foundation for many of the other components of college culture. Without a mature attitude and outlook, the other parts are unattainable. There are, however, less obvious actions that can help you present yourself as a dedicated, mature student. The first one is paying attention during lectures, presentations, talks by guest speakers, and videos. Although this sounds obvious, it is sometimes forgotten after the first few weeks of the semester. Chapter 4 will help you acquire skills for improving your ability to pay attention, but for now, work on looking at the front of the room and avoiding distractions. A common barrier to paying attention, besides staring out the window, is doing homework in class. Instructors frown on students who use class time to study for other classes or complete assignments that were due at the beginning of class. Just remember that the instructor sees what you are doing—that you are not paying attention—and will make note of it.

Small actions, but equally important ones, that convey maturity and readiness to meet college expectations include staying seated for the duration of the class, limiting side conversations with classmates that do not pertain to the class discussion, refraining from eating or participating in distracting activities, and getting ready to exit class only after the instructor has dismissed everyone. One small activity that causes big problems in class is the use of cell phones, headsets, and other electronic communication devices. Some colleges have strict policies forbidding the use of cell phones in class. There may be exceptions, however. For example, if you work in a field





that requires your immediate attention in the event of an emergency or if you have a gravely ill family member, ask whether you may leave these electronic devices turned on. In some classes, such as a chemistry lab, the distraction can be potentially dangerous. If your college does not have a policy, turn off your cell phone in class anyway. Students who answer social calls in class appear immature and unconcerned about their education.

A more important way to demonstrate maturity in college is to understand and appreciate constructive criticism from your instructor. When you receive advice or comments about your work or progress in the course, look at it as an opportunity to learn more about yourself and the expectations of college. The instructor's job is to educate you and help you learn more about the world; it is not the instructor's job to undermine those efforts by cutting you down.

Some people believe any feedback that is not positive destroys their self-confidence. Although it is nice to receive compliments, positive feedback does not necessarily challenge you to do better. Of course, we all want to hear something good about ourselves, but we also need to be open to the challenge of receiving constructive criticism about the quality of our work. It takes a mature person to value constructive criticism and learn from it.

Chapter 3 discusses diversity and relationships in depth, but it is worth mentioning here that dealing with diversity, conflict, and controversy takes a certain level of maturity. Effectively meeting any challenge to your belief system or values will demand that you act with integrity and openness. Because the purpose of getting an education is to stretch your mind and expand your ideas, you will need maturity to help you put all that new information into perspective.

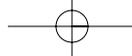
- College professors expect students to act maturely in class and to eliminate distractions—no answering cell phones, no working on homework for other classes.
- College professors expect students to meet the challenges of constructive criticism and conflict with an open mind and with maturity.

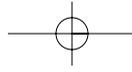
## Respect

The first step to gaining respect from others is to respect yourself. Because you have taken on the tremendous responsibility of enrolling in college—perhaps in addition to working full-time or taking care of your family—allow yourself the time and dedication needed to succeed in a degree program. Showing yourself respect also includes maintaining a positive attitude toward your progress. In other words, if you stumble along the way to your educational and career goals, don't beat yourself up. Anyone who has obtained a goal has suffered setbacks. As Mary Pickford once said, "This thing that we call 'failure' is not the falling down, but the staying down."

Respecting yourself also entails putting your best foot forward when attending class and when studying. To respect yourself, you should always prepare for class, tell yourself that you want to learn something, and follow through with difficult assignments. Self-doubt is natural and common, but continual self-doubt and belittling of your efforts will keep you from achieving your goals. These activities also demonstrate a lack of respect for yourself as a complex, worthy human being.

Students who have a healthy respect for themselves usually show respect for others as well. As you will read in Chapter 3, understanding diversity and





## 14 CHAPTER 1

*Students who have “the right stuff” such as access to a computer, textbooks, and other materials and equipment that are required for classes are much more likely to be successful.*



### Relating to Others

#### EXERCISE 1.4

Working in a group, write a 5-minute scene in which a student demonstrates disrespect in the classroom. Perform the scene for the class, and ask your classmates to determine which actions are disrespectful.



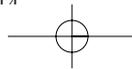
relating to others are crucial components for navigating college successfully. Demonstrating respect for others includes listening to their viewpoints no matter how different they are from yours and discussing controversial topics with an open mind and open ears. You also show respect for your professor and your classmates when you limit distractions in the classroom. Excessive talking to classmates, rustling through your belongings, and speaking out of turn are activities that can be

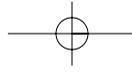
perceived as disrespectful. Leaving in the middle of class because you are bored or because you believe you have better things to do and making rude or offensive comments to fellow students or the professor are also disrespectful. Ultimately, disrespect for others is disrespect for yourself.

- College professors expect students to show respect to each other and to them.
- Students show respect by preparing for class, listening to others' viewpoints, and demanding the best from themselves.

### Responsibility

No doubt you already juggle numerous responsibilities, and going to class and studying are just more tasks that you must complete each week. Handling





your responsibilities skillfully will take a positive attitude, respect for yourself, and maturity. Obviously, as a student you have the responsibility to take notes, study for tests, and attend classes regularly. But you also have the responsibility to ask questions when you don't understand or when you think you are being treated unfairly.

The University of South Carolina has developed and adopted a creed that it expects all of its students to follow while they are enrolled at the university. Here are two tenets of the Carolinian Creed that emphasize the student's responsibility: *"I will practice personal and academic integrity. I will respect the rights and property of others."* In addition to these, you have the responsibility to take control of your education if it is not progressing the way you want. As Laura Thomas, a freshman at a community college, admits, "I realized after my first semester of college that my instructors work for me. It is my responsibility to tell them what I need. They can't help me if they don't know what I am struggling with."

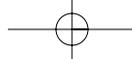
- College professors expect students to take responsibility for their progress in classes.

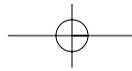
## The Right Stuff

Being prepared for college includes more than knowing where to find your classes. The most important items that you will need in order to start off on the right foot are your textbooks and course materials. You can find out what books you will need either through the bookstore or through your professors. Usually an exact list of course materials is included in your syllabus. Unlike high school, when books and course materials were provided for each student, in college you will be responsible for obtaining and purchasing your own materials—and you will need to do that before or at the very beginning of the semester. Trying to get by without the textbook or required calculator or software can seriously hurt your chances of success and is not recommended. If you find yourself unable to acquire or buy your materials, you will need to talk to your instructor immediately to ask about alternative arrangements.

In addition to books and materials, you may also need access to a computer. Your professors will expect you to have a working knowledge of how to use one. You may find that you have to word-process assignments or that you have to correspond in a chat room. If you do not have the skills needed to use a computer, seek out help from computer lab technicians, special computer classes, and classmates. Most colleges provide computer labs, e-mail accounts, and printers for student use, but their hours may be limited or you may not be able to use them when you need them most. Thus, having the necessary computer skills as well as the regular access to a computer will be integral to your success.

Other "right stuff" items include paper (for both note-taking and printing purposes), pens, a dictionary, a writing handbook, and a thesaurus. As you take more classes, you may need specialized reference books and supplies, such as a specialized calculator, to help you study and complete assignments. A sturdy backpack that allows you to carry all the books and notebooks will also be





essential. Because you will not have a locker or place to store your things between classes, you will have to find a bag that holds up to the task of carrying heavy materials over a period of weeks. One other item that new students need that is becoming more essential each year is a portable storage device that will hold your computer files and will allow you to access them at any computer. Thumb drives, also known as flash drives and pin drives, are increasingly popular because they hold a large amount of data and are easy to carry.

## Reflection

### EXERCISE 1.5

Write a description of a student who does not understand college culture. What would he or she do in class? What would he or she do outside of class? Once you have completed the description, write another description of a student who does understand college culture.



- College professors expect students to have a working knowledge of word-processing programs and e-mail.
- Students need reference materials and supplies such as a dictionary, a thesaurus, a handbook for writing, and high-quality printing paper.

## Student Learning Support

One of the most important shifts in thinking about your learning experience in college as it relates to your high school days is the various ways and places that learning and student support can take place outside the classroom. Some students believe that the only meaningful learning takes place inside the classroom and any help that occurs outside the classroom is for those with learning deficiencies. These same students are often bewildered when professors point them to a learn-

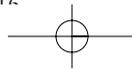
ing lab, tutors, or supplemental instruction rather than take more time in class to explain key concepts.

In college, students will need to consider classroom learning to be only a fraction of the time and activity that they will be taking part in during their college careers. In fact, if you follow the model of how many hours you are in class a week and how many hours a week you should spend studying, class time is only one-fourth of the time you should be spending learning. The rest of that time, of course, will be spent preparing for class, but it can also be spent working one on one with a tutor or reviewing notes and studying with a group. That means that 75% of your time will need to be spent on activities that contribute to your learning when you are in class.

- College professors expect you to take advantage of the student support services available at the college as part of the learning process.

## Time

How you will spend your time in college will differ dramatically from how you spent your time in high school, in more ways than one. Colleges organize class time around semesters or terms, which can be as short as 4 weeks,



usually during the summer, or as long as 16 weeks. Many colleges have at least four semesters: fall, spring, first summer term and second summer term; the summer terms are shorter than the fall and spring terms, but students can take a maximum of 7 credit hours each summer term. Other colleges organize the academic calendar around 10- or 11-week terms. If you are unsure how many weeks the semester is, count the number of weeks from the first day of class until the last day of finals. You can find the information in the college catalog or in the course outline of your syllabus.

No matter how many weeks you spend taking a course, each semester classes are scheduled on different days during the week. This arrangement may differ significantly from high school, in which most classes are taken five times a week. In college, you may take classes once a week, as is the case in evening or night classes, or you may take them on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays or Tuesdays and Thursdays. Usually, colleges do not offer classes on Friday nights, so if you take classes in the evening, you will take them either once a week or twice a week, Mondays through Thursdays.

Exceptions to this schedule occur during shortened terms such as summer semesters or intercession terms, in which you may go every day during the week. Also, you may have a lab or special class that meets only once a week but is tied to another class such as biology or chemistry. The best advice for new students is to read the schedule of classes carefully before registering, and as always, ask an adviser, counselor, instructor, or fellow student if you have trouble reading your schedule.

Colleges award credit hours based on how many hours a week you are in class during a regular semester (summer or intercession terms will double or quadruple the number of hours a week as compared to a regular semester). Thus, a 3-credit hour class will require that you spend about 3 hours in class per week—some classes may last only 50 minutes three times a week.

FIGURE 1.3 *Class Schedule*

<b>Fall 2008 (16-Week) Schedule</b>				
<b>COURSE ID</b>	<b>COURSE NAME</b>	<b>DAYS</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>CREDIT HOURS</b>
ENGL 030	COMPOSITION FUNDAMENTALS	MWF	8:00–8:50 a.m.	3.0
BIOL 110	BIOLOGY	TR	8:00–9:15 a.m.	3.0
BIOL 112	BIOLOGY LAB*	R <sup>†</sup>	9:25–11:25 a.m. <sup>‡</sup>	1.0
MATH 034	INTERMEDIATE ALGEBRA	MWF	10:00–10:50 a.m.	3.0
COLL 101	FRESHMAN SEMINAR	TR	12:15–1:30 p.m.	3.0
<b>TOTAL HOURS<sup>§</sup></b>				<b>13.0</b>

\* Labs and other special classes may meet for more than 1 hour a week, but they are usually worth only 1 credit hour.

<sup>†</sup> Some colleges abbreviate Thursday as “R.” Thus, the biology class meets both Tuesday and Thursday while the lab meets on Thursday only.

<sup>‡</sup> While this class meets two and a half hours each week, it is given 3 credit hours. Three hours is often an approximation of the time spent in class.

<sup>§</sup> If the schedule above reflects a 16-week semester, this student will spend over 40 hours in class for the semester. During summer or intercession terms, you will spend about the same number of hours in class, but you will attend class more often and for a longer period of time.

# Time Management

## EXERCISE 1.6

Using a calendar, choose 1 week and indicate how much time you will spend each day and on what tasks that will contribute to your learning.

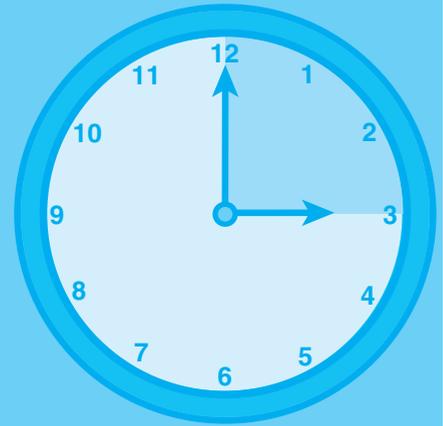


FIGURE 1.4 Summer Schedule

### Summer 2009 (4-Week) Class Schedule\*

COURSE ID	COURSE NAME	DAYS	TIME	CREDIT HOURS
MATH 101	COLLEGE ALGEBRA	MTWRF	8:00–10:00 a.m.	3.0
ENGL 101	COMPOSITION I	MTWRF	10:10–12:10 p.m.	3.0
TOTAL HOURS				6.0

\* Because this is a schedule for a 4-week term, the classes meet for more than 3 hours a week. In this case, students meet for 10 hours a week for 4 weeks, which will equal 40 hours or the equivalent of the total number of hours a 3-credit-hour class will meet during a 16-week term.

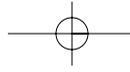
Exceptions do exist: Labs are often worth 1 credit hour, but they may meet for more than 1 hour one day a week.

As stated in the section on effort, a majority of the time that you spend in college will be outside of class. Chapter 2 provides more information about how to manage the 6–9 hours a week you will need to spend per class.

- Academic terms or semesters may differ from high school; in some cases, they may be significantly shorter.
- Colleges use standard abbreviations for schedules that may need explanations if you are unfamiliar with them.

## College Culture Shock

The paragraphs above list some of the expectations and experiences you can expect in college, but there are, to be sure, other aspects of college culture that may be uncomfortable or even shocking to you. All colleges value diversity, whether it is in the student body population or in the backgrounds of its faculty. Most definitely, you will find diversity in ideas and theories among the subjects that are offered. Some of these ideas and theories



may challenge your beliefs and values. Still other subjects may contain material that you find disrespectful, offensive, distasteful, or disturbing. Besides the reading and discussing of controversial or uncomfortable issues, your college may produce student and faculty work that contains language, images, or situations that you find offensive.

What should you do if you encounter college “culture shock”? First, remember that the purpose of higher education is to provide you with a wider worldview and understanding of diversity—even if that diversity involves different ideas, theories, and methods of representing those ideas and theories. Second, remember that you have the right to an opinion and a feeling about what you encounter in college. There is no reason you should hide your feelings or attitudes about what you are learning and encountering. With this said, the third point to remember is that with your right to an opinion, you also have an *obligation* as a college student to examine your previously held beliefs and evaluate how they are being challenged in your courses or as you participate in college activities. You also have the obligation to appreciate that there is more than one way to view an “offensive” idea or image.

### ***A Sample of Subjects That Touch on Controversial Issues***

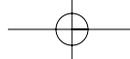


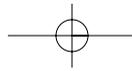
Art	Music	Theatre	Literature	Writing
Cultural Studies	Gender Studies	Philosophy	Religion	Astronomy
History	Economics	Political Science	Sociology	
Anthropology	Psychology	Biology	Chemistry	

### ***A Sample of Possible Controversial Subjects***



- The existence of God, higher being
- Conservatism and liberalism
- Nudity in art, photography
- Sexuality, including homosexuality and adultery
- The creation of the universe
- The theory of extraterrestrial life
- Evolution
- The beginning of life
- Scientific investigation and experimentation (stem cells, cloning)
- Socioeconomic theory





## What Does Your College Look Like?

**N**ow that you have a better understanding of college culture and what is expected of you, it is time to examine how your college looks. Getting to know the layout of the campus and the people who work there is important to understanding the culture. For example, knowing where to go when you need a computer will make your ability to complete an assignment a little easier. Finding your professor's office may save you time and stress when you need to talk about an upcoming test. Of course, the more you are on campus, the better able you will be to find people and places that will help you no matter what you need.

### The Campus

Find a map of your campus and study it for a few minutes. How many buildings does it have? How much parking space? How much "green" space or landscaping? Are there any unique features that make your campus an inviting and exciting place? Familiarizing yourself with your campus is probably the first activity you did when you enrolled in classes. If you have not taken a tour or simply walked around the campus, do so within the first few weeks of the semester. Locate the library, the student center, student parking, the bookstore, the business office, and the registrar's office—just to name a few destinations.

The more you know about your campus's layout, the easier it will be to find what you are looking for when you need it most. Using your map of the campus or your memory, check off in Table 1.1 the types of buildings or departments within buildings that you know are present at your college.

If your college has more than one campus, familiarize yourself with the layout of other college property. You may have to travel to a satellite campus to take a test or to pick up materials for a class. If you have the time, and the other campus is not too far away, ask for a tour.

### College Publications

**C**ollege publications are a great place to find information about courses, programs, scholarships, activities, and policy changes. It is important that you regularly read these publications in order to stay up to date with what is going on.

### College Catalog

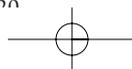
The college catalog is an essential document during your academic career. All the information that you need to apply for financial aid, to choose courses, and to graduate is contained in the catalog. You will also find out what you are required to do to complete a degree. The academic calendar is usually placed at the beginning of the catalog. There you will find the dates for registering, dropping courses, and taking final exams.

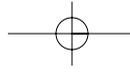


### Critical Thinking

#### EXERCISE 1.7

What would the ideal college campus look like? What buildings would it have? How would it be organized? Draw or describe a model college campus.





**TABLE 1.1** *Campus Layout Checklist*

<b>BUILDING OR AREA</b>	<b>AT MY COLLEGE</b>
Student center or union	
Library	
Bookstore	
Administration building	
Theater or auditorium	
Snack bar or food court	
Athletic training facilities (indoor or outdoor)	
Science labs	
Technical and industrial training facilities	
Computer labs	
Separate divisions (such as technical and industrial, computer information systems, allied health, business, and general education)	
Individual departments (such as accounting, drafting, welding, and natural sciences)	
Student parking	
Benches and tables for meeting outside	
Quiet study space inside	



It is important to read and keep your catalog because if the college changes any requirements of your degree program, you will be able to follow the guidelines that were published the year you began the program. For instance, if you are working on an office management degree and you have taken three semesters of courses so far, you will not necessarily have to adhere to new requirements that are made later.

### *Student Handbook*

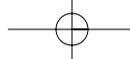
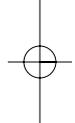
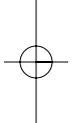
The student handbook, which provides you with specific information about student conduct, academic standards, and services, is another valuable publication. Usually, the handbook contains descriptions of career services, the bookstore, computer labs, and financial aid offices. Academic information including

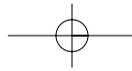
## Reflection

**EXERCISE 1.8**

What information have you found useful in your college catalog?







## INTEGRITY MATTERS

*The student handbook usually contains the college's academic integrity policy, a policy that covers any act that shortcuts the learning process and calls into question a student's integrity as it relates to academic matters. If you are not familiar with academic integrity policies, be sure to read your college's policy about student cheating and plagiarism.*

probation and suspension for misconduct and qualifications for making the dean's list can also be found in the student handbook. Most schools view the student handbook as a legal document that outlines what students can do in certain situations, so be sure to read it closely and keep a copy at home or in your book bag.

### Campus Safety Brochure

A smaller, but no less important, document that your college publishes is the campus safety and security brochure. The brochure contains policies on handling sexual assault, substance and drug abuse, and harassment. Also, you can find contact numbers for campus police as well as crime statistics for the campus.

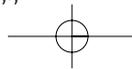
### College Newspaper

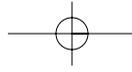
College newspapers differ from the college catalog and student handbook in that students are usually the ones who are responsible for the content. Within a college newspaper, you will find articles about upcoming events; reports on changes on the college campus; editorials on important student issues; profiles of programs; and advertisements for used books, performances by musical groups, and anything else that students want to announce. The college newspaper is also a forum to explore controversial topics and to discuss sensitive issues.

Newspapers always need students to interview, write, edit, and publish. If you are interested in working for the newspaper, contact the editor or visit a journalism or composition professor.

### Literary Magazine

One of the more entertaining and creative publications is the literary magazine. Some colleges produce a booklet or journal of students' creative endeavors; short stories, poetry, essays, artwork, and photography are just a sample of what literary magazines publish. Unlike newspapers, which are printed every day or every week, literary magazines are usually published





once or twice a year. They are a great way to express yourself and gain publishing credits.

## Bulletin Boards

Even with the increased use of the Internet, the bulletin board is still an important way to get a message to students. Found all over campus, bulletin boards usually advertise used books, needs for roommates and part-time jobs, and upcoming campus events. Bulletin boards within academic buildings often announce 4-year university programs, summer workshops, and other types of academic activities.

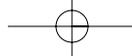
## Classroom Materials

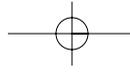
Anything that professors hand out in class is a communication tool. The syllabus is one of the most important documents that you will receive in class, so be sure to read it carefully. In the syllabus you will usually find the following information:

- Instructor's name; office location, phone number, and hours open to students; and e-mail address
- Prerequisites for the course
- Course description from the catalog
- Textbook information
- Course objectives, or what you will accomplish by the time you finish the class
- Course content, or what topics will be covered throughout the semester
- Assignments and due dates
- Grading criteria
- Attendance and late-work policies
- Academic integrity statement (which also appears in the student handbook)
- Disability accommodations policy
- General policies for classroom conduct

Even though the syllabus is considered a contract between the instructor and the student as to what to expect during the semester, some students overlook the document. After reading the syllabus closely, you can ask questions early about how the course will be conducted. Remember to reread the syllabus around midterm to refresh your memory of important dates and assignments.

Other essential information handed out in class includes directions to assignments, photocopied readings, study questions, and notes. Regard anything that is given to you by the instructor as important, even if you are told "this won't be on the test."





COURSE SYLLABUS  
COLL 1300  
College Seminar  
SPRING 2009

---

---

I. Instructor Information

Name: Sidra Hanson

Telephone: Ext. 2356

Office Location: Administration Building, Office of Fine Arts and Humanities

Office Hours: MWF 8:30–10:00 a.m., 2–2:45 p.m., and by appointment

II. Catalog Description

3 credit hours (3 hours lecture per week)

This course is designed to help students meet the demands of college life. Students will discover how they learn best and how to monitor thinking and learning processes. Students will also improve critical reading and study strategies through predicting test questions, familiarity with textbook structures, and note-taking strategies. In addition, the course will examine forces that influence overall student performance: goal setting, motivation, and attendance through attitude, reading and learning styles inventories, goal setting and time management, and expected classroom behavior. Guest lecturers will address student success issues. Grading will be A, B, C, D, or F. This is a 3-hour lecture course which does apply toward diploma requirements.

**Prerequisites: None**

III. Course Resources

Required:

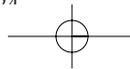
Text: Baldwin, Amy. The Community College Experience. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2009

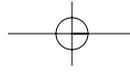
Other: Three-ring binder notebook

IV. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student should:

1. demonstrate an understanding of the benefits of higher education.
2. demonstrate familiarity with methods to promote success in college and after college.
3. describe individual learning styles and construct strategies for adaptation to other learning and teaching styles.
4. discuss the importance of behavior modification to reach a goal as well as demonstrate an understanding of the connection between attitudes, values, and goal achievement.
5. describe concrete techniques and identify specific strategies for successful study in various courses.
6. demonstrate techniques for skillful communicating across cultures and an appreciation of diversity.
7. demonstrate an ability to think creatively and critically and recognize the importance of critical and creative thinking.
8. exhibit an understanding of strategies for the effective management of time.
9. exhibit effective note taking and test taking strategies.
10. demonstrate an ability to do research in the library and use the library resources efficiently.
11. discuss the importance of maintaining a high level of health and energy, exercise, stress management, and other health issues as they pertain to academic success.





## V. GRADING

### A. Assignments

Weekly Assignments (including quizzes, group work, and writing assignments)	30%
3 Unit Exams	40%
College Seminar Portfolio	10%
Final Exam (comprehensive)	20%
	<u>100%</u>

### B. Late work/make-up policy

All assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Students who arrive late to class will not be allowed to turn in assignments for credit. Assignments may be e-mailed to the instructor before the due date if an emergency arises that prevents a student from attending class. Students arriving after or leaving before a quiz will not be allowed to make up the quiz and no in-class work can be made up. For exams, a unit exam (only) can be made up if a student communicates with me **before** the exam day. Make-up exams will not be given if the absent student does not notify me until after the exam was given.

### C. Attendance Policy for This Class

Students who miss 6 or more classes may be administratively dropped from the class. Each class period may involve at least one graded assignment, whether a quiz, in-class group work, or writing assignment. These in-class assignments cannot be made up regardless of the reason for your absence, so it is in your best interest to arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class. If you must arrive late or leave early, please let me know ahead of time.

Letter grades will be based on the following scale:

Excellent:	A (90–100)
Good:	B (80–89)
Average:	C (70–79)
Poor:	D (60–69)
Failing:	F Below 60

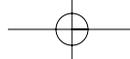
## VI. ATTENDANCE POLICY

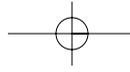
Consistent attendance is critical to the successful completion of this course. Students who are absent miss important information from lectures, class discussions, handouts and assessments, and can easily fall behind on the material.

The Division of Education and Academic Success mandates that students will be administratively withdrawn from the course after missing two weeks' worth of class. A student may miss a TOTAL of four (4) days in a TR or MW class, six (6) days in a MWF class, or two (2) days in a class that meets once a week. Once a student misses more than this number of absences, the student will be dropped as follows:

Frequency of Class	Dropped when this number of absences is reached
Once per Week	Three (3)
Twice per Week	Five (5)
Three times per Week	Seven (7)

Please note that this withdrawal policy is a division requirement, and all instructors are required to administratively drop students who fail to adhere to the attendance policy. Students who are dropped from the course will receive a WX on his or her transcript. Students missing the maximum allowed days after the last day for an instructor to drop will receive a grade of NC (no credit). In the case of College Seminar, students who miss more than the allowable number of absences after the last day for an instructor to drop will receive an F in the course.





Agencies granting financial assistance may be notified of the violation of the attendance policy by students receiving financial aid.

THERE ARE ABSOLUTELY NO EXCUSED ABSENCES FOR ANY REASON. ONCE A STUDENT MISSES MORE THAN TWO WEEKS OF CLASS, IT WILL BE NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE STUDENT TO CATCH UP, AND THE STUDENT SHOULD RETAKE THE COURSE.

#### VII. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is expected that all students who attend the college conduct themselves in a manner appropriate for the college experience. Academic integrity is a vital component of collegiate behavior. The student handbook states: "The gaining of knowledge and the practice of honesty go hand-in-hand."

The handbook also states, "The responsibility and authority of initiating discipline arising from violations of the rules against dishonesty during the process of the course are vested in the instructor of that course."

The complete Academic Integrity Policy can be found in the Student Handbook.

#### VIII. CLASSROOM POLICIES

The Student Handbook rules and regulations will be enforced in this class at all times. Professional behavior is required. Punctual attendance and intelligent participation are expected. Particulars as determined by the instructor are detailed in the paragraph below.

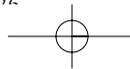
Students are expected to behave appropriately at all times in class and during communication with faculty (e-mail, phone, and in person); inappropriate behavior includes, but is not limited to, private conversations, text messaging sessions, cell phone/pager interruptions, sleeping in class, eating or drinking loudly in class, doing work for other classes during our class time, going in and out of the classroom, and not being prepared for class. Visitors, including children, are not allowed in class. If your behavior is disruptive, you will receive a warning. If the disruption persists, you will be asked to leave class, and you will be counted as absent. More severe disruptions warrant no warning. **Cell phones should be turned completely off and properly stowed during class. Students may be asked to leave if their cell phones ring or are used during class.**

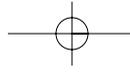
The Student Handbook rules and regulations will be enforced in this class at all times.

#### IX. COURSE SCHEDULE/COURSE CONTENT

*The following outline represents the first unit of the semester. Before we complete each unit, you will receive an outline for the next unit. This course outline and the units to follow are subject to change during the semester in order to meet the needs of the students and/or the instructor. Regular attendance in class will ensure that you know what changes, if any, have been made. Please bring all texts and notes to class for each meeting.*

Week 1:	Chapter 1, assessment pre-exam
Week 2:	Chapter 2, campus tour
Week 3:	Chapter 3
Week 4:	Chapter 4, computer lab instruction
Week 5:	Exam 1, Chapter 5
Week 6:	Chapter 6
Week 7:	Chapter 7
Week 8:	Exam 2, Chapter 8
Week 9:	Chapters 9 and 10
Week 10:	Exam 3, portfolio presentations
Week 11:	Final exam review, assessment post-exam
Week 12:	Final comprehensive exam scheduled this week





You should also consider the grades and written comments you receive as communication from your instructors. Be sure to read any comments or suggestions written on papers and exams, ask questions if you don't understand them or they are illegible, and save all feedback until the semester is over.



### College Web Site

You can go to the college's Web site to access the most current information about classes, academic programs, and contact information for professors. Because it is easier to update information on a Web site, which doesn't involve printing and distribution, you are more likely to receive the most accurate information. College Web sites usually provide phone numbers and e-mail addresses of professors and deans, which makes contacting them easier.

In addition to general information about degrees and departments, the Web site may give you access to professors' syllabi and assignments. This provides a good opportunity to investigate what courses you want to take based on the course objectives and assignments.

### Critical Thinking

#### EXERCISE 1.9

Name three ways that you have received information on campus so far this semester. Did you read a bulletin board flyer? Did you pick up a student newspaper?



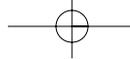
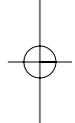
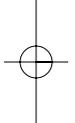
Describe the information that you received and how it was presented. Which information did you find most useful and why?

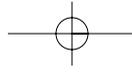


### Reflection

#### EXERCISE 1.10

What are the advantages of knowing the people on your campus? Describe a few instances when knowing administrators and what they do would benefit you.





## FROM COLLEGE TO UNIVERSITY

### *The Changes in Culture and College Services*

If you are moving from your community college to a larger, more diverse university, you may experience a slight culture shock despite the semesters you already have under your belt. In addition to a bigger campus with more buildings to find and more students to meet, you may find that a university seems more impersonal. Many students who transfer from a smaller community college complain that professors do not seem to care about them personally and that students lack the support and guidance that they received at their other school. Transfer students also note that expectations are higher—and their grades are lower—especially as they move into their majors and begin working toward a career.

Culturally, you should expect that your new university will offer more activities and groups than your smaller community college. You also should expect some kind of adjustment period as you get used to what your new professors expect of you. Statistically, transfer students do experience a slight drop in their GPA. This drop, however, is not necessarily an indication that they were not properly prepared for transfer by their community college.

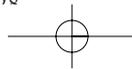
All in all, the culture shock you experience when transferring to a four-year university will depend on how much bigger and how much more different the school is from your community college. Just remember that whatever differences you notice, there are people at the 4-year school who can help you deal with the adjustment. Seek out counselors, advisers, faculty, and students to help make your transition smoother. Your campus map and list of faculty and administrators will point you in the right direction.

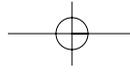
## FROM COLLEGE TO CAREER

### *How the Culture Will Change Again*

Just as you had to adjust to college culture, you will have to make a new adjustment to the workforce if you have never held a full-time job. When starting your first job out of college, you will experience a period of getting used to the way the office or business works. You will encounter new terms, new methods of doing things, and new people. In addition, you will experience working in groups or teams to accomplish tasks, and you will be expected to communicate orally and in writing. You may also rely more heavily on e-mail and computers to do your work. Certainly, integrity will be an important part of your working experience. There will be less supervision and more expectation that you do the work you say you will do.

Any anxiety can be alleviated by paying attention to how others act on the job. Just as you made friends and found mentors in college, you should look for others who can offer guidance and help as you learn the ropes of a career. Also, think about how you adjusted to college and use the same strategies to make your new working environment seem less foreign and more comfortable.





**To Do to Due List**

Fill in the 2-week calendar below with the month and days. Next, check all your syllabi and record each major assignment that is due during the next 2 weeks. Then, in the section below the 2-week calendar, write the name of the class, the assignment, and the due date (include the time that the assignment is due). Finally, break the major assignment into manageable chunks to complete before the due date. Consider what parts you can do on which days during the next 2 weeks.

Month:						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Class: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DUE DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DUE DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

Day	To Do Task
	DUE

Day	To Do Task
	DUE

Class: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DUE DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

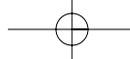
Class: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DUE DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

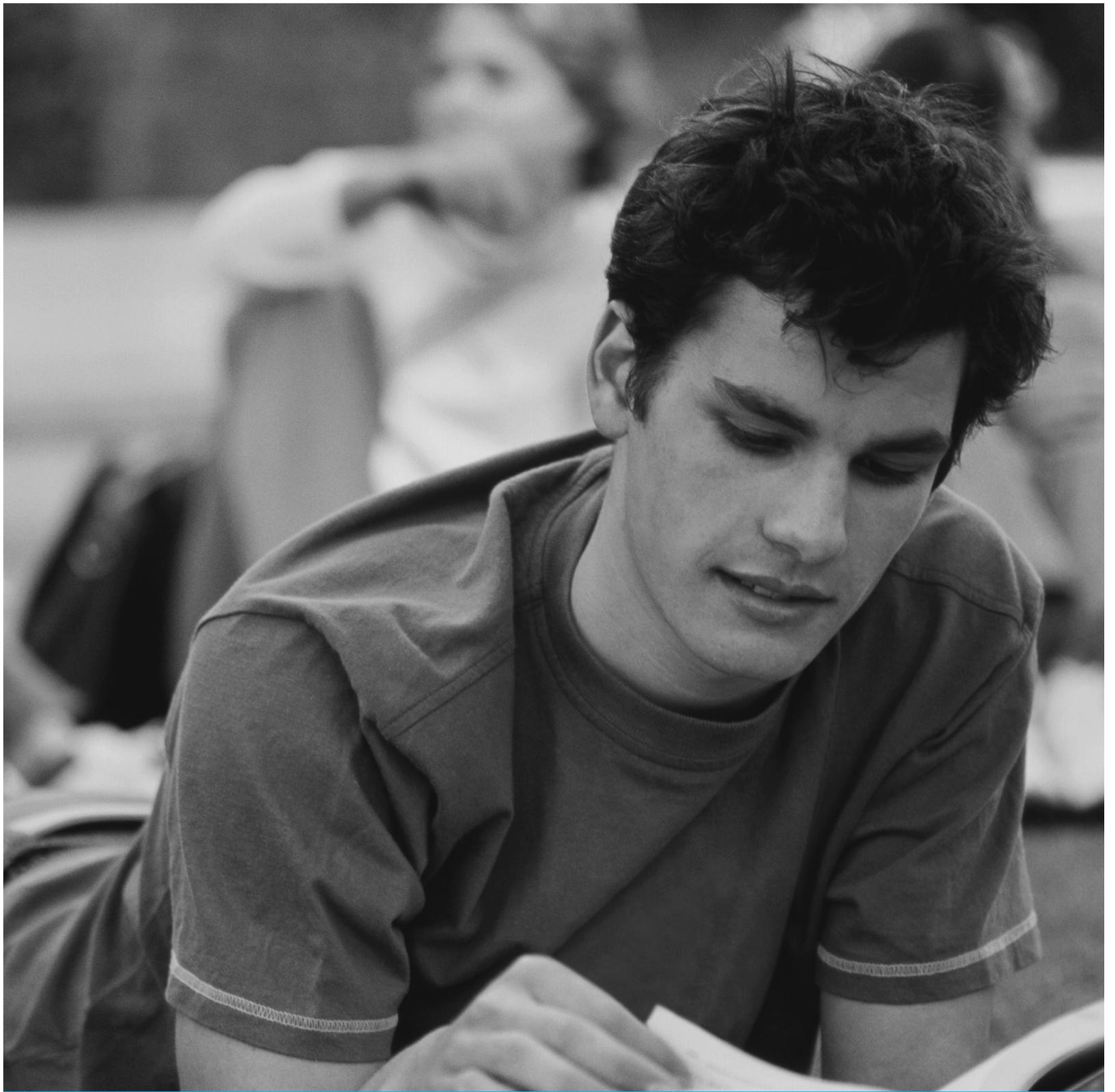
Day	To Do Task
	DUE

Day	To Do Task
	DUE

**Reference**

Banner, J. M., & Cannon, H. C. (1999). *The elements of learning*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.





# 2 Understanding Yourself and How You Learn

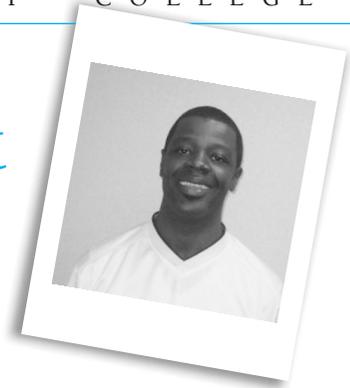
## IN THIS CHAPTER

**A**s Larry found out as he took courses and planned for his degree, considering values and evaluating goals are important first steps to being a successful college student. To help you through this process, this chapter contains information that will help you better understand yourself and how you learn. This chapter also will help you answer questions that you may have right now:

- What can I gain from college? How will I understand myself better?
- What are mission statements, goals, and values?
- Why is goal setting so important?
- What are learning style preferences and how will understanding my own help me be successful in college?

C O M M U N I T Y • C O L L E G E •

## Student Profile



STUDENT: **Larry Lemmons,**

AGE: **33**

MAJOR: **Physical Therapy**

1. What are your values?

*I value helping others, honesty, education, and being true to yourself.*

2. What are your long-term education and career goals?

*I want to be a physical therapist who helps low-income patients. I also would like to be a philanthropist.*

3. What are your short-term goals?

*I want to do well in all my classes and learn as much as possible. Making As and Bs is a short-term goal as well.*

4. What is your VARK learning style preference?

*Kinesthetic.*

## Who Are You?

**T**he question “Who are you?” sounds easy to answer. You may start by listing a variety of characteristics. For example, you are a man, age 25, married, father of a son, an electrician, and a Native American. Or, you are a single woman, age 19, part-time sales assistant, full-time student, and mountain climber. But what are you beyond those labels? Where have you been? What are you doing now? Where are you going and where do you want to be? Now the questions get a little more difficult and take more time and thought to answer. The point is that you need to have some idea of who you are, or at least an idea of where you want to be, when you begin college.

Maybe you can say that you don’t know who you are yet, but you hope that enrolling in classes and pursuing a degree will help you come to a better understanding of who you are. Don’t worry, though, if you cannot immediately articulate the essence of you. This question—“Who are you?”—and the possible answers have been intriguing human beings for thousands of years. In his book *Who Are You? 101 Ways of Seeing Yourself* (2000), Malcolm Godwin explores the ways in which we have tried to answer this question. From body types to ancient Indian mysticism to workplace dynamics, there are numerous ways you can learn more about what and how you think. The ultimate goal is to know yourself and your environment well enough to reach your goals.

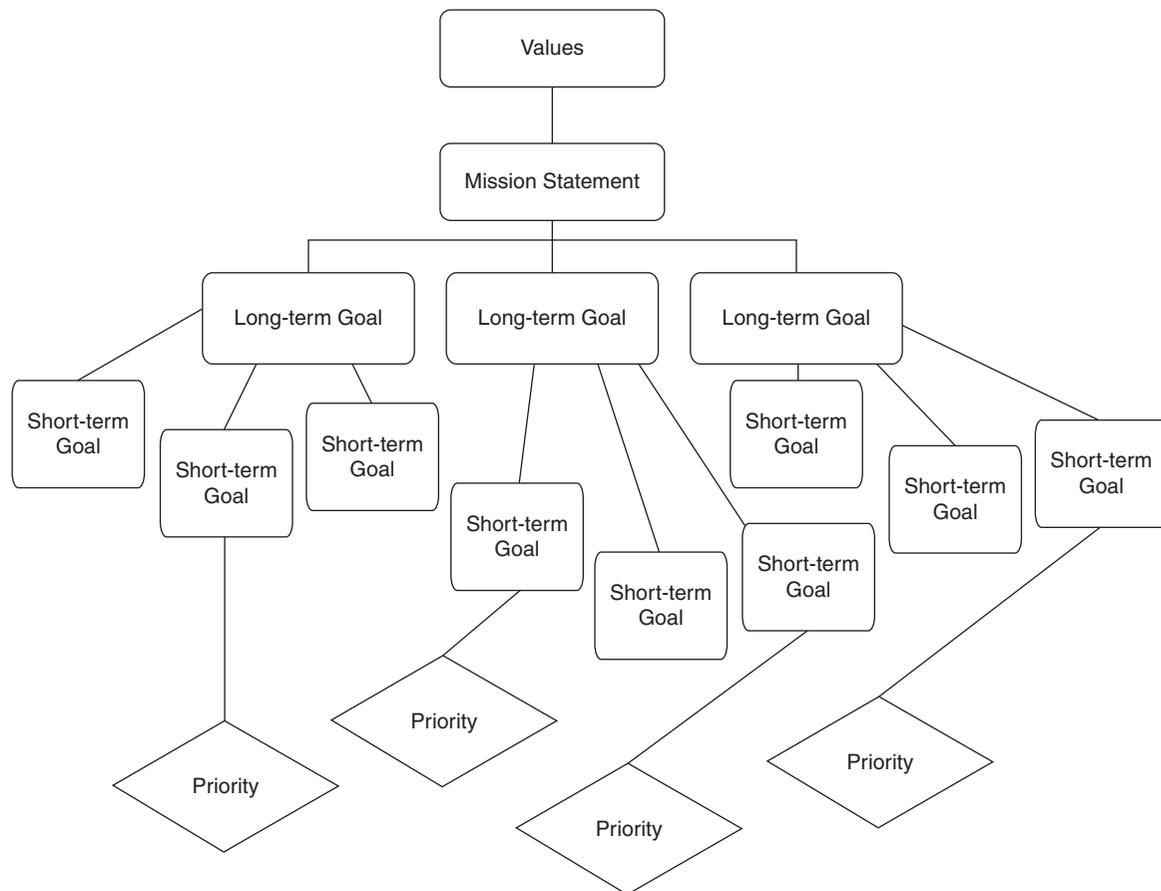
Of course, who you are will change, maybe even dramatically, as you take classes, encounter new subjects, and research interesting topics. But taking the time to reflect about yourself will help you map your course throughout your community college experience and beyond—from returning to work to raising a family, to attending another college, to having a fulfilling career. This chapter assists you in understanding who you are by helping you identify what you know and how you learn. This chapter also aids in your decisions about who and what you want to be while helping you make the transition into college.

## What Do You Value?

**V**alues are part of your belief system and are what make you unique. Values can be inherited from your parents, or they can come from what your culture, religion, or ethnicity regard as important. Values can be formed from both positive and negative experiences. For example, a value of yours may be honesty, which means that you try to be truthful and straightforward in most situations and that you expect others to be honest with you. If you value hard work, you strive to do your best in your life. If a friend has treated you with compassion, you may value sensitivity to others. On the other hand, if you have been discriminated against, you may now value open-mindedness in others.

The importance of knowing and understanding your values is that this knowledge can help you set realistic goals (see Figure 2.1). If you value a satisfying career, for instance, you will set goals that support that value. Therefore, you will probably investigate careers and fields that are challenging and interesting. If you value a stable financial future, you will set goals that enable you to earn enough money to provide for your needs and wants. If you value your family, you will make spending time with them a priority. Your values should be a true reflection of who *you* are and what *you* believe.

FIGURE 2.1 Values to Priorities Flowchart



Let's say that a student's parents want her to be a doctor because they value financial stability and success or career prestige. What if this student values, instead, meeting new people and traveling? What if she wants to learn more about ancient cultures? If she decides to adopt her parents' values and ignore her own, what kind of future can you envision for her? Although her parents' intentions may be well meant, she will have to compromise herself in order to meet their goals for her, and she will probably suffer some regret in the future.

Does this example mean that you should ignore others who have helped you figure out what you want to be? Certainly not. But you should pay attention to what you want when you do get help with your educational and career goals. Be open to others' suggestions, but make sure you feel comfortable with your final decision. Those who truly want you to succeed will be proud of you when they know you have achieved your heart's desire, not theirs.

## What Does Your College Value?

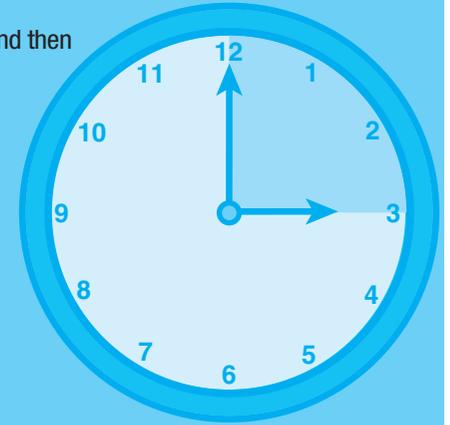
If you are having trouble determining what you value and what your goals are, consider the values of the college you are attending. In Chapter 1, you learned about college culture and what professors expect from you, but have you ever thought about your college's values, mission statement, and

# Time Management

## EXERCISE 2.1

What you spend most of your time on is usually a good indication of your values. Make a list of five activities you

participate in during an average week and then write down what value each activity supports.



**Example:**

Activity	Value
Completed algebra homework	Education
Took aunt to her doctor's appointment	Family



goals? To determine your community college's values and goals, look at the college's mission statement, the extracurricular activities, the types of degrees it awards, and the people the school employs. All colleges and universities value the success of their students. Without successful graduates, the schools would be unable to support their values of producing educated, dynamic members of the community. Thus, institutions of higher education set goals to help their students succeed. They may do this by offering tutoring and counseling services, or they may provide developmental courses for students who lack the preparation needed to be successful in college-level courses.

Although you will definitely find similarities between what you and people in the academic world value, you may occasionally find that your college's values do not mesh with yours. At the very least, you can be sure that you will meet at least one person in college (and more likely dozens) who openly or implicitly challenges what you believe.

Although you will definitely find similarities between what you and people in the academic world value, you may occasionally find that your college's values do not mesh with yours. At the very least, you can be sure that you will meet at least one person in college (and more likely dozens) who openly or implicitly challenges what you believe.

## Reflection

### EXERCISE 2.2

How have your values changed over the years? Compare what you valued 10 years ago with what you value now and discuss why that change has occurred.



## What Is Your Mission Statement?

**M**ission statements are declarations of what people or institutions believe in and what

they hope to accomplish. Mission statements, then, are usually broad strokes of the overall picture of what you want to accomplish. Values are the foundation of a mission statement. If you are unsure of your values, your mission statement will not be easy to understand and follow. Thus, you need to know what you value before you can write a mission statement.

To better understand and articulate your own values, take a look at your college's mission statement, which will reflect what it intends to do for its students. Likewise, your mission statement will reflect your intentions. As you meet your goals and learn things, your mission will likely change and your mission statement will need to be revised. Following are examples of a college mission statement and a mission statement that you can use as a model for writing your own.

#### SAMPLE COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

Northern County College provides high-quality, accessible educational opportunities at the freshman and sophomore level in associate degree and technical certificate programs, a college-transfer curriculum, continuing education, and industry-specific training to support individual and community needs in the state. The college's mission is to enable individuals to develop to their fullest potential and to support the economic development of the state.

#### SAMPLE PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT

My mission is to have a fulfilling personal and professional life that allows me to meet new people, take on new challenges, and have flexibility in my schedule. As a mother and wife, I want to have a close relationship with my family, acting both as a caregiver and as a role model. As a teacher, I will be dedicated to providing students with the best education that will prepare them for a 4-year university curriculum as well as for the demands of the world of work.

## What Are Your Goals?

**T**o fulfill your mission in life, you will need to have a plan. Setting goals and achieving them will put you on the path to fulfilling that mission. If you are not used to writing down tasks for the day or voicing your plans for the future, you will need to start working on making lists and talking about what you want to be and do.

From your list of values and your mission statement, you will be able to formulate goals that support both what you believe in and what you want for yourself. The fact that you are reading this book is evidence that you are someone who has set a goal and is working toward achieving it. Also, the fact that you are in college says that you value education as a means of improving your life. You



## Critical Thinking

### EXERCISE 2.3

You strongly believe that abortion is wrong. While studying the human life cycle in a biology class, your professor spends the class period discussing the biological effects of abortion. What would you do? What if your professor obviously believes abortion is morally right and biologically necessary? If you were required to write an objective research paper on the benefits of abortion, what would you do? Do you think writing such a paper would conflict with your values?



## Relating to Others

### EXERCISE 2.4

Working in a group, talk about your values and your purpose in college. Then, write your mission statement and share it with your group.



may have overcome many obstacles to get where you are today. You may have faced pressure from your family and friends to join the workforce upon graduating from high school rather than go to college, or you may have gotten negative feedback from others when you decided to stop working, or stop working as much, to get a degree.

Nonetheless, realize that setting and achieving goals is not as easy as writing them down and crossing them off. You will encounter obstacles, some of which may threaten to knock you off course. Flexibility and determination are the keys to achieving your goals despite setbacks.

## Writing Down Your Goals

Even with the most supportive friends and family, you still need some well-defined goals to give you direction as you chart your course in college. A goal is something that you work toward—it may be to learn how to cook macaroni and cheese, to quit a bad habit, or to write a novel. Whatever your goals, they should be reasonable and attainable in the time frame that you have assigned. For instance, if you want to lose 10 pounds in 1 week, you may need to rethink the time in which you would like to achieve your goal. A more reasonable goal would be to lose 10 pounds in 4 months. Reasonable goals are more likely to be met.

As you begin to think about your goals, consider dividing them into long-term goals and short-term goals. Certainly, one of your long-term goals is to earn a degree. This goal may take 1 year or more, depending on how many degree requirements you need to complete or how many other responsibilities you may have. A short-term goal that would contribute to your achieving a long-term goal of earning a degree could be to complete your classes successfully, to study for an exam, or to work on a research paper.

When you make a list of your goals, consider the following guidelines:

- Make your goals attainable and reasonable.
- Break larger goals into smaller goals that will lead to fulfillment.
- Think of setting goals in these time frames: 1 week, 1 month, 1 semester, 1 year, 5 years, and 10 years.
- Regularly review your goals and make changes as necessary.

Because it is difficult to plan 10 years into the future, make a list of goals that are tied to the near future. For instance, if you want to own your own business in the next 10 years, think about structuring your short-term and long-term goals this way:

### LONG-TERM GOAL (10 YEARS)

- Run a successful landscape design firm.
- Provide landscaping for low-income properties.

### LONG-TERM GOAL (5 YEARS)

- Work for a landscape design firm.
- Continue community service and encourage coworkers to participate.

**LONG-TERM GOAL (3 YEARS)**

- Complete my associate's degree in landscape design and management.
- Continue community service work.

**SHORT-TERM GOAL (9 MONTHS)**

- Complete two semesters of landscape design classes.
- Continue working at the garden center.
- Plant and maintain my own flower and vegetable garden.
- Participate in a community service project that landscapes low-income properties.

**SHORT-TERM GOAL (1 SEMESTER)**

- Complete the classes that will count toward my degree.
- Look for a community service project that landscapes low-income properties.

**SHORT-TERM GOAL (1 MONTH)**

- Help a friend plant new trees.
- Attend a local lecture on seasonal planting.
- Begin research for a final paper on plant diseases.

**SHORT-TERM GOAL (1 WEEK)**

- Study for my classes.
- Apply for a job at a garden center.
- Weed and fertilize yard.
- Take a hike in the park.

No matter what you want to achieve, be sure that you write down all your goals and review them every few months to assess your progress. Henriette Anne Klauser has made a career of helping people write down their dreams and goals on paper so that they can finally realize them. In her book *Write It Down, Make It Happen: Knowing What You Want and Getting It!* (2001), Klauser states, "Writing down your dreams and aspirations is like hanging up a sign that says 'Open for Business.' . . . Putting it on paper alerts the part in your brain known as the reticular activating system to join you in the play" (p. 33). In other words, the process of writing down your goals tells your brain to start paying attention to your ambitions and makes you aware of opportunities to achieve them.

## Managing Your Goals

You will see this suggestion throughout this book: to accomplish anything, set goals by writing them down. Even something as simple as spending two hours preparing for class should be written down as a goal for the day or week. Goals must be manageable, however. Too many goals and you could become overwhelmed at the thought of meeting them all or you may feel like a failure for not accomplishing everything. Avoid the temptation to overschedule and be realistic about how long it will take to complete your goals for the day or week. Too few goals and you will likely feel like a rudderless ship, easily veering off course.



*Engage in activities that contribute to your short-term and long-term goals rather than activities that spend your time without getting you any closer to what you want to do with your life.*

Once you have written your goals down, communicate them to your coworkers, family, and friends. Enlist them to help you meet your goals, especially if you need to schedule time to study and complete assignments. For example, tell them that you must have the evenings free of distractions, or make arrangements with them to have a weekend or weekday to yourself to study. Don't assume that because they *know* you are in school they will also *know* you need extra time and personal space to get your work finished. Managing your time will be much easier if your priorities and goals are concrete, realistic, and communicated to those around you.

## Eliminating Negative Influences As You Work Toward Your Goals



**A**s you work toward your goals, make an effort to eliminate anything that keeps you from focusing on them. If you think you don't have time to accomplish two short-term goals during the week, examine where you have been spending your time and eliminate the activities that do

not contribute to your goals or that do not reflect your values.

If you watch 7 hours of television a week, and you aren't achieving the sought-after short-term goal of becoming more informed or of relaxing, then spend that time doing something that does contribute to your goal. In addition to meaningless activities, anything that distracts you and is unnecessary in your life should be eliminated, including a habit that is destructive or dangerous, such as taking drugs (see Table 2.1).

If you are unsure of whether or not your activities contribute to your goals, take a few minutes to list what you have done this week and determine how each activity has supported or not supported one of your goals.

### Reflection

#### EXERCISE 2.5

What has been your experience with goal setting? What goals have you met? How did you achieve them? What goals do you have now?



TABLE 2.1 *Activities That Contribute and Distract from Your Goals*

ACTIVITIES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR GOALS	ACTIVITIES THAT MAY DISTRACT YOU FROM YOUR GOALS
Practicing car maintenance allows you to get to school and work safely.	Socializing excessively depletes the time and energy you have to focus on your goals.
Exercising allows you to remain healthy and reduce stress.	Mindlessly watching TV may not contribute to learning.
Eating and sleeping regularly keeps you healthy and reduce stress.	Using drugs and alcohol keeps you from focusing on goals and is dangerous.
Reading the newspaper keeps you informed, helps improve reading skills, and contributes to learning.	Sleeping and eating irregularly creates stress, which inhibits the ability to reach goals.

## INTEGRITY MATTERS

*One definition of integrity is to do what is right even in the face of adversity. Sometimes, life is difficult when you have people who do not want you to do what is right, especially if that means obtaining a college degree. To maintain your own personal integrity, you may have to make some tough choices about who you hang out with and what messages you listen to. It is not always easy, but living with personal integrity, doing what is right for you despite challenges, will pay off in the long run with a more satisfying life.*

Another type of negative influence that can affect your ability to achieve your goals is a pessimistic friend or family member. If you have someone who belittles your efforts to go back to school and earn a degree, try to limit your time with that person or try to focus on conversation topics that are not related to you. Reducing the negative effect that disapproving people have on you may not be easy, but understand that you do have control over how they make you feel.

Lillian Glass, Ph.D., in her book *Toxic People: 10 Ways of Dealing with People Who Make Your Life Miserable* (1997), recommends limiting contact with people who make you feel hurt, stressed, dumb, or unworthy. Dr. Glass refers to people who stand in your way of being your best as “toxic” because they “are hazardous to others’ mental, emotional, and physical health” (p. 12). Dealing with toxic people will reduce



### Relating to Others

#### EXERCISE 2.6

Working within a group, create your own list of activities that may distract you from reaching your goals. Then, determine what can be done to eliminate these activities or to turn them into more productive pursuits. (For example, watching TV can become an activity that supports a goal by limiting what and how much is watched.)



the time and energy you have to work on your goals and to benefit from the positive influence of those who support you.



## Managing Your Priorities

**A** discussion of values and goals cannot be complete without also talking about priorities. Simply stated, a priority is something that is important at the moment. Today your top priority could be studying for an exam, but later in the day, it could be taking care of a sick child, which means that studying will have to come second if at all. Priorities, by their very nature, can change weekly if not daily or even hourly.

Your actions also reflect your priorities. If you say that your first priority is to pass your classes this semester but you spend all your spare time playing basketball with friends, then your social life as well as a little exercise is really your top priority. You must, then, make sure you know what your priorities are and take action to satisfy them. You may also need to express to others what your priorities are so that they can help you stick to them.

### Critical Thinking

#### EXERCISE 2.7

What are the different priorities a student may have while balancing work, family, and college? Which ones will conflict with one another? What advice would you give a student whose priorities may conflict?



## Getting Organized To Manage Your Time

**T**o manage your time effectively and efficiently, organization is key. In college, being organized will be the difference between staying on top of your assignments and feeling good about your progress and stressing out! One of the first things you will need to do at the beginning of each semester is to get a syllabus from each class and compile the assignments into one place—preferably a calendar of your choice: daily, weekly, or monthly.

To stay organized, consider buying two calendars, one to hang on a wall and one to carry with you. How the calendars are organized, by month, week, or day, is up to you. Both calendars, however, should allow you to look ahead easily. Make it part of your routine every evening to write down your goals for the next day and every morning to review what you need to do for the day. As you complete each task, cross it off the list. Table 2.2 has an example of a typical list of a day's activities.

Table 2.2 is a typical monthly calendar. The benefit of using a monthly calendar is that you can visualize the whole month at one time and anticipate busy days or weeks. Drawbacks to using a monthly calendar are that it is usually not very portable and it does not provide much space to write details about your duties. They are good, however, for writing down major activities and appointments.

Another type of calendar is a week-to-week calendar, which allows you to glance at each week at a time. The benefit to a weekly calendar is that there is room to write out details of each activity; the drawback is that you can view only one week at a time, making it difficult to anticipate what you must do the next week.

TABLE 2.2 *To-Do List*

TO-DO LIST FOR THURSDAY
• Make appointment to have oil changed.
• Pick up dry cleaning.
• Make appointment with Professor Stanley.
• Take kids to baseball.
• Study for history quiz on Friday.
• Read 30 pages for English.
• Get book from library.

A third type of calendar, the daily calendar, works well if you are very busy. A daily calendar helps you keep track of numerous activities, but it is the most difficult to work with if you need to plan ahead. Since you cannot visually see the rest of the week or month, you may overlook important events or be surprised by them. Use a daily calendar only if you are extremely organized and can plan ahead effectively.

Whichever type of calendar you choose, use it every day to keep up with your daily and weekly tasks and cross them off as you complete them. Also, make a point to check your calendar each morning before you leave for work or school so you will know exactly what to expect for the day.

Managing your time is difficult at best if you are disorganized and not sure where to find anything or what you are supposed to do next. If you have not already done so before you started college this term, find a place in your house or apartment that you can call your own. Make sure it is comfortable and quiet and has adequate space for books, notebooks, and other supplies. It has to be a place where you *want* to be; otherwise, it will be difficult to go there and stay on task.

With brand-new calendars and a designated space at home to schedule and review your tasks, you shouldn't need much more, right? There is one last suggestion for keeping your life organized: Keep your area clean. You will lose valuable time looking for important papers, writing implements, and other items if your work area and book bag are cluttered. Make a point each day or week to straighten up your personal space. File away or get rid of unnecessary papers and return items such as notebooks, highlighters, and reference books to their place. The easier you can see your calendar and your work space, the easier it will be to reach your goals. Think about your personal space as if it were the path to your goals. If you purposely put obstacles in your way (i.e., clutter) as you work toward your goal, it will be more difficult to get to your destination. If, however, you clear the path of clutter, then your footing will be more secure, making it easier to reach your goal.



## Reflection

### EXERCISE 2.8

Do you use a calendar? If not, in what ways do you manage your time? If you do, how important is it to you and how do you use it?



## Managing Your Time In College

**N**ow that you have considered how you will get organized and stay on task, you will need to decide how best to spend your time outside of class. For many community college students, one of the greatest challenges they face is finding enough time to do their work to prepare for class, to review for tests, and to complete assignments. Vincent Tinto (2007), an expert on student retention, has made the message clear: “Time on task equals success.” What he means is that how much time you spend in class and out of class reading, studying, thinking, and writing relates to how successful you will be in the class. There is really no substitute for taking the time to do the work. However, how you make or manage that time is up to you. There are a variety of methods for ensuring that you give yourself enough time to complete your work. Other time management strategies will be discussed in later chapters, but for now, here is a simple plan that can help you develop good habits for studying and completing work outside of class.

### One-Hour-a-Day Time Management Plan

Take the common formula from Chapter 1 for determining how many hours a week that you should study for a college-level class: If you attend 3 hours a week, you should be studying 6–9 hours each week. If you study just 1 hour a day each day of the week, you will have studied for 7 hours. If you don’t have 1 whole hour, you can divide your time into 15- or 30-minute increments. As exercising in 30-minute intervals can still have a positive effect, studying at small segments over time will improve your understanding of the material—and is often preferred over cramming studying into one long session.

For new students, though, the question sometimes arises as to what you should be doing for those 6–9 hours each week. To start, you will need to read the assigned material *before* class. Another activity is reviewing your notes from class and filling in any gaps in information that you were not able to get down. Working with a classmate or a study group can help you add information to your notes that you may not have gotten down during class. Rewriting your notes after the discussion of the chapter or topic is another very important way you can spend an hour for the week. You may also include in your hours per week a visit to the tutoring lab so that you can reinforce the concepts you have learned or to help you make sense of any confusing concepts.

To illustrate how this works, the following plan shows what a student can do for *one* college class. Of course, if you have more than one, you will need to add an hour each day of the week for each 3-credit-hour class that you are taking. The key to making the “1-hour-a-day” plan work is to arrange your activities in advance. You fill in the times of day and the work you will do each day in the spaces provided; the “Completed” column gives you the chance to check your progress. Remember that flexibility is the key to any good time management plan. If there is a day that you don’t get to spend an hour studying, you can move the activity to another day and add an hour to your study time.

The plan in Figure 2.2 is for *one* college class. Of course, if you have more than one, you will need to add an hour each day of the week for each 3-credit-hour class that you are taking.

FIGURE 2.2 *One-Hour-a-Day Management Plan*

Day of the Week	Time	Assignment	Completed	
Sunday	3:30–4:30 p.m.	Read chapter 5 and take notes while reading. Review notes after you have read the chapter once.	Yes	No
Monday	7:00–8:00 p.m.	Review reading notes as well as class notes. Define all vocabulary terms that are key to the chapter and that are unfamiliar to you.	Yes	No
Tuesday	11:15–12:15 p.m.	Answer study questions that accompany the chapter.	Yes	No
Wednesday	8:00–9:00 p.m.	Create sample test questions on flash cards and write the answers on the back.	Yes	No
Thursday	7:00–8:00 p.m.	Complete homework questions for the chapter.	Yes	No
Friday	5:30–6:00 a.m. and 3:30–4:00 p.m.	Review flash cards.	Yes	No
Saturday	3:30–4:30 p.m.	Rewrite your notes from the entire week of class. Include any material that was assigned in the reading but not covered in class.	Yes	No

## Procrastination

**F**or college students who must balance their own lives and work with their education, procrastination can be a problem that takes them off task. Putting off studying and completing projects will certainly add to your stress, but procrastination does not have to be a part of going to college. To maximize your time, follow the tips for procrastinators given in the box on the following page.

There are many humorous sayings about procrastination. For example:

“If it weren’t for the last minute, nothing would get done.”—Anonymous

“I never put off till tomorrow what I can possibly do . . . the day after.”—Oscar Wilde

Kidding aside, procrastination can be, as American author Elbert Hubbard once remarked, “the father of failure.” Postponing an activity or a task because you do not want to do it or can find more interesting activities to do can have serious consequences. For example, if you put off researching your sociology paper until the night before, you might find that the library has closed early or that you can’t access online databases. You may even discover that your computer won’t work or that your printer is out of ink.

Procrastination can be the barrier between you and your goals. It can also cause you undue stress. Managing your time and planning ahead, however, will minimize your desire to procrastinate. Writing down your tasks and goals, too, will make them visible and make you feel the need to cross them

**IN BOX**

### ***Tips for Fighting Procrastination***

- Divide the project into smaller parts. If you have a paper to write, break the task into generating ideas, drafting the paper, and completing the final draft. Do only one part at a time.
- Create a time line of when you want to complete each part. Make adjustments if needed, but try to stick to the schedule.
- Give yourself enough time to complete each part. It is easy to assume that you can find all the resources you need for a paper in one day. A more realistic goal is to find two sources during one trip to the library.
- Just do it. Start right here, right now, and don't think about finding a better time to begin.
- Recognize that behind every procrastinator is someone who fears the unknown or failure. Acknowledge that fear by writing it down. Once you recognize your fear, you are more likely to move past it.
- Reward yourself for completing a particularly difficult or boring project.
- Write a brief list of consequences for not doing the project on time as well as one for doing it on time. Decide which list you can live with.
- Remind yourself of the reason that you are in college and think about how the project supports that reason.

off your list. The "Tips for Fighting Procrastination" box offers suggestions for fighting procrastination.

## **Staying Motivated To Achieve Your Goals**

**O**ne of the hardest parts of setting goals is maintaining the momentum to achieve them. There will be times in your academic career when you will feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities you have and you will feel unsure of your ability to handle it all. When you feel weighed down by all that you have to accomplish for a particular week or day, try to calm down first. If you can, talk with a friend, an instructor, or a counselor and explain your frustration and stress. Sometimes, if an instructor knows you are feeling overwhelmed by expectations in a course, he or she will assist you by giving you more time to complete an assignment. A friend may also volunteer to help by studying with you.

To stay motivated and to resist the temptation to give up because of the stress, review your short- and long-term goals. Is there anything that you can change that will make your goals more reasonable or attainable? Have you not allowed enough time to achieve them? Revising your goals or your time line may be necessary to keep you on track.



### ***Critical Thinking***

#### **EXERCISE 2.9**

Have you ever procrastinated? What happened and what did you learn from the experience?



Finally, think positively about yourself and your progress. Many students before you have juggled a job, classes, and a family. That is not to say that they did not doubt themselves along the way or suffer any setbacks. The difference between these students and those who were not successful is that they persevered because they believed in themselves more often than not. Tell yourself that you can get through stressful times.

## What Do You Know?

**W**e are living in an era called the Information Age—we are bombarded with more information than ever before. Although we may have access to information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, we are not more knowledgeable. The difference between information and knowledge is that information consists of facts, data, statements, and ideas, whereas knowledge is how we take that information, think about it critically, and synthesize it into our own ideas about what we have read or seen. Knowledge, in other words, comes from reflecting on the information and evaluating its worth.

When you started college, you may have thought that you did not know anything. Often, nontraditional students worry that they have been out of school too long and don't remember anything they learned in high school. However, once they get more comfortable with their classes, they usually find that their life and work experiences have provided both information and knowledge that set them apart from the younger students.

Traditional students, too, have fears about the kind and amount of information they will be learning in college, and they often feel inexperienced compared with their nontraditional classmates. Nonetheless, because they have graduated from high school recently, they are more likely to retain the information they learned, and they are more likely to be comfortable and proficient with using the Internet and other electronic information retrieval systems. Take a few minutes to think about and write down what you know how to do. Your list could include activities as simple as changing a diaper to something more complex such as networking a computer.

Once you have identified what you know how to do, you may realize that you actually know much more than you thought you did. Now, take what you know how to do and couple it with your values and goals. Then, read the following sections on



## Reflection

### EXERCISE 2.10

Create a chart of your values and goals. For example, your chart may look like the following:

Values	Goals
Education	Earn a degree in accounting

For each value and goal, describe what type of activities you can participate in that will link value to your goal.

Values	Goals



personality types and learning styles. By the end of the chapter, you should have a good understanding of what you want to accomplish and how you will get there.

## Learning Styles

**B**ecause it is important to understand what you want to accomplish and what you have already achieved, you may find it useful to explore your learning styles. Information about what you like and dislike, how you relate to others, and how to work productively will help you achieve your goals and, as Gordon Lawrence (1995) states in his book *People Types and Tiger Stripes*, help you make “dramatic improvements in the effectiveness of [your] work” (p. 5).

## Vark

There are many ways to determine your learning style preferences. Just a few include left-brain/right-brain, Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences, and Carol Dweck’s fixed and growth mind-sets. There is also the learning styles inventory VARK, which stands for visual, aural, read/write, and kinesthetic, a system developed by Neil D. Fleming and Charles Bonwell that helps you determine your learning style preference and provides study strategies based on your strengths. If you have strong preferences in more than one mode, you are considered multimodal (MM). You can determine what your learning style preference is by answering questions similar to the following.

1. When getting directions to someone’s house, what do you need to do to remember them?
  - a. Write them down.
  - b. Recite them.
  - c. Look at a map.
  - d. Drive or walk to the person’s house.

If you answer A, your preference is Read/write (R). If you answer B, your preference is aural (A). If you answer C, you prefer visual (V) information. And if you answer D, then you prefer kinesthetic (K) methods of learning. Fleming has developed a focused learning styles questionnaire that can assist you in understanding how you may respond in certain situations. However, as Fleming states on his Web site:

*VARK deals with only one dimension of the complex amalgam of preferences that make up a learning style. The VARK questions and results focus on the ways in which people like information to come to them and the ways in which they like to deliver their communication. The questions are based on situations where there are choices about how that communication might take place. It is important to say what VARK is not, so that other components are not perceived as being a part of it. VARK has little to say about personality, motivation, social preferences, physical environments, intraversion-extraversion . . . \**

\* From Neil Young, [www.varklearn.com](http://www.varklearn.com). Used with permission.

### *VARK Learning Styles Inventory*

The following information comes from Neil Fleming's Web site, <http://www.vark-learn.com>.

This questionnaire aims to find out something about your preferences for the way you work with information. You will have a preferred learning style and one part of that learning style is your preference for the intake and output of ideas and information.

Choose the answer that best explains your preference and circle the letter. Please select more than one response if a single answer does not match your perception.

Leave blank any question that does not apply.

1. You are helping someone who wants to get to your airport, town center, or railway station. You would:
  - a. Go with her.
  - b. Tell her the directions.
  - c. Write down the directions (without a map).
  - d. Draw or give her a map.
2. You are not sure whether a word should be spelled "dependent" or "dependant." You would:
  - a. See the words in your mind and choose by the way they look.
  - b. Think about how each word sounds and choose one.
  - c. Find it in a dictionary.
  - d. Write both words on paper and choose one.
3. You are planning a holiday for a group. You want some feedback from them about the plan. You would:
  - a. Describe some of the highlights.
  - b. Use a map or Web site to show them the places.
  - c. Give them a copy of the printed itinerary.
  - d. Phone, text, or e-mail them.
4. You are going to cook something as a special treat for your family. You would:
  - a. Cook something you know without the need for instructions.
  - b. Ask friends for suggestions.
  - c. Look through the cookbook for ideas from the pictures.
  - d. Use a cookbook where you know there is a good recipe.
5. A group of tourists want to learn about the parks or wildlife reserves in your area. You would:
  - a. Talk about or arrange a talk for them about parks or wildlife reserves.
  - b. Show them Internet pictures, photographs, or picture books.

- c. Take them to a park or wildlife reserve and walk with them.
  - d. Give them a book or pamphlets about the parks or wildlife reserves.
6. You are about to purchase a digital camera or mobile phone. Other than price, what would most influence your decision?
  - a. Reading the details about its feature.
  - b. Trying or testing it.
  - c. The salesperson telling you about its features.
  - d. It is a modern design and looks good.
7. Remember a time when you learned how to do something new. Try to avoid choosing a physical skill, e.g., riding a bike. You learned best by:
  - a. Listening to somebody explain it and asking questions.
  - b. Written instructions—e.g., a manual or textbook.
  - c. Watching a demonstration.
  - d. Diagrams and charts—visual clues.
8. You have a problem with your knee. You would prefer that the doctor:
  - a. Gave you a Web address or something to read about it.
  - b. Used a plastic model of a knee to show what was wrong.
  - c. Described what was wrong.
  - d. Showed you a diagram of what was wrong.
9. You want to learn a new program, skill, or game on a computer. You would:
  - a. Read the written instructions that came with the program.
  - b. Talk with people who know about the program.
  - c. Use the controls or keyboard.
  - d. Follow the diagrams in the book that came with it.
10. You like Web sites that have:
  - a. Things you can click on, shift, or try.
  - b. Interesting design and visual features.
  - c. Interesting written descriptions, lists, and explanations.
  - d. Audio channels where I can hear music, radio programs, or interviews.
11. Other than price, what would most influence your decision to buy a new non-fiction book?
  - a. It has real-life stories, experiences and examples.
  - b. Quickly reading parts of it.
  - c. A friend talks about it and recommends it.
  - d. The way it looks is appealing.
12. You are using a book, CD, or Web site to learn how to take photos with your new digital camera. You would like to have:
  - a. Clear written instructions with lists and bullet points about what to do.
  - b. A chance to ask questions and talk about the camera and its features.

- c. Diagrams showing the camera and what each part does.  
 d. Many examples of good and poor photos and how to improve them.
13. Do you prefer a teacher or presenter who uses:  
 a. Demonstrations, models, or practical sessions.  
 b. Question and answer, talk, group discussion, or guest speakers.  
 c. Handouts, books, or readings.  
 d. Diagrams, charts, or graphs.
14. You have finished a competition or test and would like some feedback. You would like to have feedback:  
 a. Using examples from what you have done.  
 b. Using a written description of your results.  
 c. From somebody who talks it through with you.  
 d. Using graphs showing you what you have achieved.
15. You are going to choose food at a restaurant or café. You would:  
 a. Choose something that you have not had there before.  
 b. Listen to the waiter or ask friends to recommend choices.  
 c. Choose from the descriptions in the menu.  
 d. Look at what others are eating or look at pictures of each dish.
16. You have to make an important speech at a conference or special occasion. You would:  
 a. Make a diagram or get graphs to help explain things.  
 b. Write a few key words and practice saying your speech over and over.  
 c. Write out your speech and learn from reading it over several times.  
 d. Gather menu examples and stories to make the talk real and practical.

**SCORING.**

For each question, mark your answer below and then add up how many Vs, As, Rs, and Ks you have. The largest number of V, A, R, or K indicates your learning style preference. For example, if you marked B for question number 2, your learning style preference for that question is V. If you have more Vs than any other letter, your learning style preference is Visual.

QUESTION	CHOICE A	CHOICE B	CHOICE C	CHOICE D
1	K	A	R	V
2	V	A	R	K
3	K	V	R	A
4	K	A	V	R
5	A	V	K	R
6	K	R	V	A
7	K	A	V	R
8	R	K	A	V
9	R	A	K	V



QUESTION	CHOICE A	CHOICE B	CHOICE C	CHOICE D
10	K	V	R	A
11	V	R	A	K
12	A	R	V	K
13	K	A	R	V
14	K	R	A	V
15	K	A	R	V
16	V	A	R	K

#### CALCULATING YOUR SCORE

Add the number of each letter and write the totals in the spaces below.

Total Number of Vs circled \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of As circled \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Rs circled \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Ks circled \_\_\_\_\_

### Critical Thinking

#### EXERCISE 2.11

What is your learning style preference and how do you think knowing such information will help you succeed in college?



## FROM COLLEGE TO UNIVERSITY

### *What You Know and How You Learn Will Change*

If your beliefs, goals, and values remain relatively unchanged during your community college experience, your move to a 4-year university should be easy, right? The transition can be relatively smooth if you are willing to apply some of the ideas in this chapter to your new environment and your new challenges.

First, your definition of who you are will change when you transfer, perhaps dramatically. You will likely be more confident in your abilities and you will be better able to handle the stress of juggling numerous responsibilities. Second, your values may also change after your semesters at a community college; if you were unsure of what you valued before, you may finally have a clearer picture of your belief system. On the other hand, you may be more confused than ever about what you believe after studying different religions, psychological theories, and social ideas. Because higher education values inquiry and research, no matter what shape your values are in by the time you transfer, you will find support as you struggle to make sense of it all at both the community college and the 4-year university.

Third, just as your knowledge of yourself and your values will have changed, your goals will go through a transformation. While your main goal of graduating with a 4-year degree will still be in sight, you will notice that

you have already met some of your smaller goals. Perhaps you have completed an associate's degree or you have just become more organized. Just the fact that you are ready to transfer credits means that you have accomplished some necessary steps to fulfilling the rest of your goals.

Finally, you will be able to revise your list of what you know because what you know will change after taking classes at a community college. You may even be able to include in your "What I Know" list a career choice. Also, you may know yourself better, through application of the learning styles discussed earlier. However, you will need to be prepared to adapt to different teaching styles and new pressures after you transfer.

Now, to prepare yourself for the next step, you will need to revise, preferably on paper, your list of what you know. You will also need to realize that the learning styles that you have felt most comfortable with may need to be adapted—or new styles will need to be explored and used—at your 4-year school.

## FROM COLLEGE TO CAREER

### *Goals and a Mission Will Help You Succeed*

Many businesses rely on creating mission statements, strategic plans (long-term goals), and operational plans (short-term goals) to chart a course for their success. Because you have experience writing your own mission and goals, you will be able to contribute to your company's planning. You will be able to do this because you understand how the company's values underlie its mission and how its goals create its road map to success. Your experience in goal setting will also help you to write departmental or personal goals. If you understand how values, mission, and goals fit together, you will be better able to create goals that are explicitly linked to the focus of your workplace.



## References

- Fleming, N. D. (2006). "VARK: A Guide to Learning Styles." 4 May 2007.  
[www.vark-learn.com/english/index.asp](http://www.vark-learn.com/english/index.asp)
- Glass, L. (1997). *Toxic people: 10 ways of dealing with people who make your life miserable*. New York: St. Martin's.
- Godwin, M. (2000). *Who are you? 101 ways of seeing yourself*. New York: Penguin.
- Klauser, H. A. (2001) *Write it down, make it happen: Knowing what you want and getting it!* New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Lawrence, G. (1995). *People types and tiger stripes*. 3rd ed. Gainesville, FL: CAPT.
- Tinto, V. (2007, January). *Student retention*. Lecture given at Northwest Arkansas Community College, Bentonville, AR.



# 3 Understanding Others in College And Diversity

## IN THIS CHAPTER

One of the easiest parts of college can be the hardest for busy college students. The easy part to making friends and forging relationships is that people are everywhere—in class, computer labs, and the library. As LaToya has discovered, getting to know those around you is essential to your well-being and happiness while you are working on your degree. The hard part, however, is making the time to cultivate relationships. As a community college student, you most likely have other activities that fill your schedule outside of class: work, family, hobbies, church, and friends. Part of this chapter's purpose is to show you the benefits of starting and maintaining strong relationships with people on campus.

In addition to making friends and connections with people in college, this chapter also discusses diversity as an issue to be explored and appreciated. More specifically, this chapter answers these questions:

- Who are the people on campus?
- What are the benefits of cultivating relationships in college?
- What kinds of professors will I encounter and how will I learn from them?
- What is constructive criticism and what is its purpose?
- What is diversity and how is it important in college?
- How are stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination related?

## COMMUNITY • COLLEGE •

### Student Profile



STUDENT: **LaToya Harris**

AGE: **20**

MAJOR: **Associate's Degree in Nursing**

1. How has diversity affected you in college?

*It hasn't really affected me because I enjoy talking to different kinds of people, but I did notice that having different ages on campus makes my classes different than when I was in high school.*

2. How have your relationships changed since you've been in college?

*I found out who is really a friend and who cares about me and my college success and who doesn't.*

3. Why is getting to know others on campus important?

*The more people you know, the more likely you are to have a safety net if you stumble along the way. Getting to know your professors, though, can do more for you than just improve your enjoyment in class—they have connections with others in the community and in businesses!*

4. What is your VARK learning style preference?

*Read/write.*

## Relating to Others

If there is one thing that college students need to do well in order to successfully complete courses and degrees, it is probably relating to others more than anything else. The college experience is fundamentally about the relationships you form with your instructors, with classmates, with administrators and staff, and with family. In some cases, the bonds will be strong and will last well beyond the end of the semester and graduation. These relationships help support you as you go from one semester to another, and they help you in attaining scholarships, awards, and even jobs. Professionals know this well—that often it is not only what you know, but also who you know that helps you succeed. Therefore, approaching your relationships while you are in college as opportunities for not only lasting friendships but also professional connections will put you in the right frame of mind as you begin your college experience.

This chapter provides you with some basic information about who is on campus and why you may need them, the challenges that you may face in terms of learning to deal with diverse groups of people, and the changes you may face in your personal relationships. The chapter also gives you ideas for strengthening those relationships—even if that means learning more about a different group's values. How you use that information every day will be up to you. Certainly, you will face challenges in dealing with different and difficult people, but how you handle those situations will speak volumes about your commitment to learning more about others and yourself.

## The People on Your Campus

Research has shown that getting to know at least one person on your campus will increase the likelihood that you will stay in college and complete your degree. The same research does not indicate that there is one particular person that you should befriend in order for you to stay in college; instead, it concludes that anyone you develop a relationship with can potentially have a positive effect on your academic success. That means whether it is the janitor or a career counselor, getting to know someone beyond just her name, title, and face is to your advantage.

You have probably noticed that many people work at a college—and most of them are there to support and guide you through your college experience. Equally important to understanding where buildings and services, as discussed in Chapter 1, are located is knowing who does what on your campus. It saves you time when you know, for example, that to get copies of your transcript will involve speaking with someone in the registrar's office or that checking on loan applications will include contact with a financial aid officer. All of these people are charged with helping you succeed each semester you are in college, and it will make your transition from either high school or the world of work much easier if you are familiar with the various common job titles and their job descriptions.

Table 3.1 provides basic job descriptions for college officials. Your college may use different titles for these positions, or your college may have more positions than the ones listed.

TABLE 3.1 *Basic Job Descriptions for College Officials*

<b>Position</b>	<b>What They Do</b>	<b>Why You Should Know Them</b>
Board of trustees	A group of people who are charged with overseeing the operations and planning of the college	The board of trustees is the last stop along the way to making a major change on campus. Controversial issues, such as censorship, demonstrations, and firing of faculty, may be addressed to them directly, depending on the circumstances.
President	The head of the school	Like the board, the president is one of the last stops along the line for concerns about campus issues if attempts to resolve them are not successful.
Dean of students	Sometimes called vice president for instruction; takes care of matters concerning curriculum, classes, degree programs, and instructors	If you have concerns about a grade and all attempts to address the matter with the instructor and the dean are fruitless, the dean of students can step in. Issues that are potentially volatile, such as sexual harassment, should be taken to his or her immediate attention.
Dean of student services	Sometimes called vice president of student services; oversees all student-related services such as contacting prospective students, enrollment, and counseling	You may actually meet the dean of student services when you enroll, and he or she will be an important contact person if you need assistance with any aspect of taking college classes.
Registrar	Handles registration and transcripts	You may visit the registrar if you have recently applied for admissions or if you have transferred. Also, you may need to contact him or her if you receive a grade that is not correct or you need to apply for an incomplete grade.
Career counselor	Helps you discover what career you may be interested in and best suited for; may also help you plan your academic career so that you can be prepared to enter the workforce	Stop by his or her office as soon as you get enrolled. You can take a skills and interest inventory that will help you think about the classes you want to take and the degree you want to complete. A career counselor can also help you build a resume and provide tips for interviewing.
Director of financial aid	Handles financial aid for students and has access to scholarship information	If you need financial aid, the earlier you can see someone in the director's office, the better. Time is the key to getting what you need—apply early and follow up on the application. The financial aid office is usually very busy the week classes start, so plan ahead.

*(continued)*

TABLE 3.1 *Continued*

<b>Position</b>	<b>What They Do</b>	<b>Why You Should Know Them</b>
Library director	Manages library services for students and faculty	Talk with the director or any library staff when you need help finding a source. They can be very effective in assisting you with the research process.
Dean	Manages a group of departments or, if the division is small, a group of individual instructors	A dean is the next stop when you have an issue concerning a class or an instructor. After you have talked with the instructor, you may see a dean to get more advice or help. Deans should be notified immediately of potentially volatile situations such as verbal threats or physical assault by another student.
Department chair	Oversees the instructors and curriculum in the department	You may visit a department chair when you are considering a major in the department or if you need to talk about a certain class or instructor after you have already talked with the instructor.
Professor, instructor, and lecturer	Are responsible for teaching	There are many names and ranks for the people who deliver content, motivate you to think critically, and assess your progress. They are the people you will have the most contact with on the campus and the first people you should talk with when you have a problem.
Adviser	Helps students plan their schedules and their degrees before registration and during the semester	An adviser is another key person to your success in college. Consider the adviser the personal trainer who sets goals with you and helps you achieve them.

In addition to familiarizing yourself with the titles of administrators and the levels of faculty, make a list of administrators and faculty you may need to contact during your college career. Write down the names, titles, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of the professors, department chairs, advisers, financial aid officers, and deans whom you encounter. Keep the list in a safe place so that when you need to ask a question or get advice, you will have quick access to the list.

### *Cultivating Relationships with Professors*

There may be no one more important to your college and career success than a professor. He does not just provide you with access to the content and support you as you think critically about the subject matter but he also can be a mentor and a resource as you complete your degree and start your career. One way to start out on the right path to a good relationship is to greet your professor with a smile and a “hello” when you see her in and out of class.

Unlike your experience with some teachers in high school, college professors see their relationships with their students outside of class as part of their advising and mentoring duties. For many instructors, their students are not only people in their classes, but they are also potential graduates from their programs or transfer student success stories. Being friendly in and outside of class is a great way to start on the path to a strong, valuable relationship during your college career (and maybe even after!).

Another way to start developing meaningful relationships with your professors is to appreciate the diversity of disciplines, personality types, and teaching styles among them. For sure, you will not love every class (although we professors wish you could), every teaching style, and every personality that you will encounter in college. When you take pleasure in the class and the instructor, enjoy every minute of it; when you don't, use the experience to keep you focused on what you want: a college degree. Also realize, however, that what you "don't like" at first may just be a first impression that will not necessarily be your feeling at the end of the course. Sometimes students' initial experiences in a class are different and uncomfortable, but those same experiences may be ones that they reflect on as the most meaningful because they learned something about the course topic as well as themselves.

If there is something that professors want you to know about getting to know them it is to be mindful and respectful of each instructor's expectations in terms of class preparation and policies regarding attendance, late work, and make-up exams. Relationships built upon acknowledgement of others' boundaries (in this case, professors' expectations and policies) as well as respect and integrity are stronger and more authentic. To cultivate a solid relationship with your professor, make the most of his office hours. Office hours are best used for questions about material that was previously covered, assignments and policies that were previously explained, and anything else that does not pertain to the day's lecture or in-class activity. Sometimes students see office hours only as a time that a problem is discussed; office hours should be used for positive visits as well—stopping by to say "hello!" or to follow up on an idea that sparked your interest in class are great ways to strengthen your relationship.

It would be a perfect world if there were no conflicts in your relationship with your instructor. However, there may be a time when you don't feel as though you have a strong, respectful relationship. If you experience conflict with a professor, discuss the issue as soon as possible—and in private. Use "I" statements to explain your perspective rather than "you" statements. For example, saying "I am confused about what our exam will cover" is better than saying "You were confusing when you talked about the exam." Using "I" statements also underscores your control over your actions and reactions during the conflict. Look, too, for common ground that can help you manage the conflict maturely and respectfully.

A good relationship for its own sake is perfectly acceptable, but also remember that professors can provide a link to other opportunities beyond the classroom. You will most likely turn to a professor when you need a recommendation letter for student activities, scholarships, internships, and jobs. Getting to know at least one professor well will give you an advantage when you want to move forward in your college career. Professors in your certificate and degree program are usually tied closely to the business and industry in

which they teach. Thus, a good relationship with a professor in respiratory therapy, for example, may lead to a job opportunity in the field. A professor who teaches a general education course, one designed for transfer to a 4-year university, may work closely with a professor in the same discipline at the local university. She may know about special scholarships or helpful people to contact once you have completed your degree.

While a good relationship with your professor is a key to your enjoying your education experience, it also must be said that be sure to remember that your professor is not an equal in the relationship and still must challenge you to learn and stretch your concept of yourself and others as well as evaluate you during and at the end of the term. Creating boundaries in relationships is discussed later in the chapter.

### *Getting to Know Advisers, Counselors, Administrators, and Learning Support Staff*

In addition to professors, some of the most important relationships that you will forge during college will be with people whose sole job is to make sure you succeed. Counselors and advisers will be key people in your academic career, so take the time to get to know these individuals. College administrators also play an important role.

**Advisers.** Your adviser may be the first person you encounter at college. An adviser explains to you what courses you should take, how many hours you should take a semester, and how to plan remaining semesters. An adviser works for you; it is his or her job to see that you complete your degree with little difficulty. You may be lucky enough to have the same adviser throughout your college career. In that case, regular contact with your adviser will help keep the lines of communication open. If you have a different adviser each semester, you may wish to find one person on whom you can rely to act as regular adviser. That person may be a former professor or a counselor who has advised you in the past. The goal is to find someone on campus who has an interest in your education beyond one semester.

**Counselors.** You should take the opportunity to get to know at least one counselor on your campus. Whether it is a career counselor or a disability counselor, make it a point to schedule an appointment with one. Getting to know counselors is a great way to obtain more information about the school and its services. For example, a career counselor may inform you of a career fair or recruiting day. He or she can also help you prepare a resume and practice interviewing. Counselors who deal with students who have personal issues are another valuable resource for you. Even if you do not need personal counseling, you may benefit from a relationship with a counselor. This type of counselor can give you tips for managing stress and dealing with difficult people.

**Administrators.** While it may be more difficult to maintain a relationship with an administrator, it is definitely worth your effort to get to know people on your campus besides faculty, counselors, and staff. Administrators, such as deans and library directors, can provide information and perspectives that you cannot get from other people. One benefit of cultivating a good relationship

with an administrator is that when you do have a problem that needs to be resolved, you already know with whom you will be talking.

**Tutors, Mentors, and Student Leaders.** Just when you think you cannot find any more people to connect with on your campus, remember that a variety of people work or volunteer their time to help you achieve your academic, career, and personal goals. Those people can include tutors in a learning assistance lab. Working one-on-one with them provides you with a unique relationship in that a tutor can really get to know what your learning needs are and how to help you fulfill them. A tutor can be a great resource for understanding the material for a class because he or she is often a student also or has just recently taken the class.

Student or peer mentors are other types of people you will find on your campus who can be instrumental in keeping you on track to success. Peer mentors are usually current students who have done well in their classes and who are willing to provide support to new students who may need extra encouragement to navigate the choppy waters of the first few semesters. Peer mentors may give you advice for studying, for choosing a degree, or for balancing family, work, and college. And just think—if you are also successful, you may be a great peer mentor for a student who was just like you when you started!

One final group of people with whom you may come in contact is student leaders. You may find them in special clubs, associations, or student government. Unlike peer mentors, whose primary role is to work one-on-one with a student, student leaders work with both students and the college or organization to provide leadership in certain areas. For example, a student government representative may ask college officials to provide more family-friendly activities so that more students can attend with their children. If administrators agree, the Student Government Association may work with students to find out what types of activities are best and may organize an event to get more students involved.



## Reflection

### EXERCISE 3.1

What relationships on campus have you cultivated so far? Which ones have you not cultivated?



## Getting Along with Classmates

Last, but certainly not least, getting to know your classmates can make the difference between struggling all alone and meeting new challenges with a like-minded support group. Who else can relate to the challenge of studying for a chemistry final exam than the students in the class with you? Think about it: your classmates will be the majority of the people who populate a college campus. You may get to know well only three or four professors throughout your college career, but you have the potential of meeting and working with hundreds of students.

In addition to connecting on a shared experience with your fellow students, you can also rely on them as study partners or emergency note takers if you can't be in class. Another benefit to making friends with classmates is that you can learn about other classes, instructors, and degree programs from them. Who else is better to ask than those who have been through the class or program? Their firsthand knowledge could help you choose the best classes and the most promising programs.

Getting to know your classmates can be relatively simple, especially since you will be sitting close to them during each class. Here are a few tips for making the most out of creating lasting relationships with fellow students:

- Introduce yourself to those sitting around you. It may be easier to arrive to class early and start conversations with other students.
- Exchange phone numbers or e-mail addresses with classmates who seem reliable and trustworthy. You may need to call someone if you miss class.
- Offer to study with someone. Not only will you help a classmate, but you will also help yourself learn the material.
- Keep in contact with friends even after the semester is over. While you may not share classes anymore, you still may be able to study and offer support to one another.

## Time Management and Relationships

**N**o doubt you are getting the connection between college success and time management, because the first two chapters have included sections on how to manage your time effectively while taking college classes. Then, it should be no surprise that cultivating and maintaining good relationships takes time and takes making time to work on them. One mistake new students make is underestimating how much time they will need to devote to meeting with advisers, counselors, and professors outside of class. Some think that unless there is an academic problem, they will not need to see their professors regularly during their office hours. Nothing could be further from the truth: If your goal is to make solid connections during the semester with your professors, you will need more time than just before class or right after. Moreover, if you find that you will need to work closely with a counselor or tutor, you will have to find enough time during the week to make that happen. Some students schedule their classes and work or family obligations with so little wiggle room that substantial amounts of time to get extra help or to plan out their degrees do not exist.

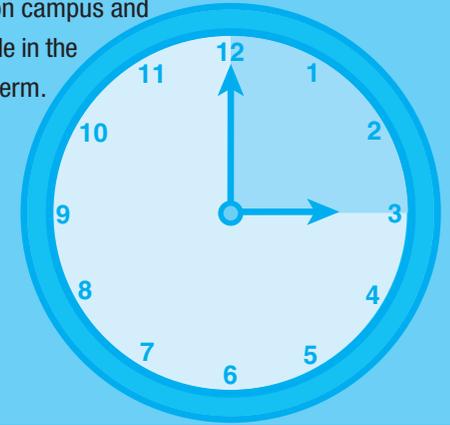
With this said, it is a good idea to look at your schedule now (and consider this when you plan for next semester) and see what days and times work best for you and try to keep them free in case you need to use them at the last minute. If you find you do not need that time that day to take care of personal business on campus or to talk to your professor, you have a little extra time that can be used for studying, completing assignments, or even relaxing a bit. It is hard to make any relationship work if you don't spend enough time nurturing it; likewise, relationships in college, whether they are with professors, counselors, advisers, or fellow classmates, need time to develop. The benefits of taking the time to cultivate strong relationships are

# Time Management

## EXERCISE 3.2

Consider your schedule for this week and determine how much time you have to meet with a professor or a counselor. Determine which days and times work best for you

to make appointments with people on campus and record those openings in your schedule in the calendar that you are using for this term.



endless and can certainly help you stay on course and possibly provide you with new opportunities for connections you couldn't have imagined.

## Creating Boundaries

**B**ecause you will be surrounded by a diverse group of people of all ages, it may be difficult to create and maintain the traditional boundaries that exist between students and their counselors, professors, administrators, and learning support staff. It almost seems contradictory, but boundaries may be necessary at the same time that you are getting to know others. Why should you refrain from close relationships with professors and advisers when you need them to get to know you if you are to ask for a referral or recommendation?

For one, some colleges discourage intimately personal relationships between professors and students, just as many companies prohibit the same type of overly friendly relationship between supervisors and their employees, because such relationships can be problematic. One possible problem is that intimate relationships can result in perceived or actual unfair evaluation or treatment. Because a professor is considered a superior, the college views the professor's role as one of authority and power. Many sexual harassment policies and laws are built on the imbalance of power between a person in authority and a subordinate. Another possible problem is that other students may see the relationship as favoritism and feel as though they are being treated unfairly. Additionally, there is the possibility of a sexual relationship, which is sometimes strictly prohibited at colleges. If you have not already done so, check your student handbook regarding your college's policy about relationships between students and faculty. Ultimately, you will need to make the decision that is best for you and the situation as to how friendly you should be with faculty or other college officials.

If you get along well with your professor and genuinely enjoy her company, then your best move is to respect the professor–student relationship



while you are in class and then continue the friendship after you have finished the semester and have no intentions of taking another class with that professor again. Some friendships between professors and students are long lasting, so consider cultivating them once the class is over.

## Relating to Others

### EXERCISE 3.3

Working within a group, decide whether personal relationships between faculty and students should be encouraged and supported or prohibited. Be sure to provide a list of benefits that support your stance.



## Handling Constructive Criticism

An integral part of relationships in college, especially with professors, is the handling of constructive criticism that will invariably be a part of your educational experience. Often, when the words *constructive criticism* are used, students may focus on the negative connotations of the word *criticism*. It may be helpful then, to define constructive criticism by what it is *not*. Constructive criticism is *not* the tearing down of an individual through degrading and demeaning remarks. Constructive criticism is *not* a personal attack. Constructive criticism is *not* excessively negative comments about a person's work.

Some people often consider any feedback that is not entirely positive indication of a failure, or worst yet, they assume that the person giving the constructive criticism does not like them. To better understand constructive criticism, think about its purpose and that of higher education: The purpose of constructive criticism is to help you learn and improve so that you are able to live an enriched, fulfilling life, and the purpose of higher education is to help you expand your body of knowledge and worldview so that you can experience an enriched, fulfilling life.

To improve your understanding of how to give and receive constructive criticism, think about what it *is* (Figure 3.1). Constructive criticism is a positive response to someone's work. Constructive criticism *is* feedback that is focused on the person's work, not on the person. Constructive criticism *is* intended to help someone improve and learn. Being able to handle constructive criticism is a crucial part of maintaining strong, honest relationships.

FIGURE 3.1 *What Constructive Criticism Is and Is Not*

Is	Is Not
A positive response to someone's work	A personal attack
Feedback that is focused on the work	Feedback that is focused on the person
Intended to help someone improve and learn	Excessively negative

## Managing Conflict

**T**he section above on cultivating relationships with your professor touches on managing conflict, but it is worth discussing in depth as it relates to other relationships you have or you will have while in college. Only nonliving things are conflict-free! If you are breathing, it is guaranteed that you will have to manage conflict at some point in your life—and college is no exception! The conflict may be between you and another student, you and a professor, you and a college employee, or you and a family member. The most likely times for conflict are at the beginning and end of the semester, when stress and tension can be high for college employees and students, or when you feel stress in other parts of your life.

While you cannot run from conflict, you can use it as just another method for learning more about yourself and others. James and Constance Messina, on their Web site [www.coping.org](http://www.coping.org), describe conflict as any situation that causes you stress: Anger, lack of communication, threats, negativity, and risk of loss are all stressors that can cause people to experience conflict within themselves or with others. Although you often cannot control stressful situations, you can be in charge of how you react to conflict and what you choose to take away from the experience. By improving your reaction to conflict, you increase your chances of having a positive experience.

According to James and Constance Messina (2003), you can view conflict as a

- Time of growth for the parties involved.
- Time in which problems can be solved creatively by looking together at a variety of alternatives.
- Chance to evaluate our performance objectively.
- Time for us to increase our knowledge of one another.
- Chance to reveal our unique ways of thinking, acting, and feeling.
- Chance to show understanding, respect, and acceptance of the unique ways in which others think, act, and feel.\*

If you are able to view conflict, and stress in general, as a time for personal growth or an opportunity to improve yourself and others' view of you, you will be in a better position to overcome the challenges you face. Changing your attitude about conflict is as simple as changing the words that you use to describe the situation or the person who is causing you stress.

The following two Conflict Scenario boxes offer a conflict scenario and a conflict scenario solution.

A stressed student in this conflict scenario might turn his frustration into anger toward the professor, either by complaining about her to the other students or by making a negative comment to her directly. Although the

\* Used with permission.



### Reflection

#### EXERCISE 3.4

How do you feel about receiving criticism? Is it something you like to avoid altogether or do you welcome it from certain persons? Explain your answer.



## Conflict Scenario

**IN BOX**

You started off the semester on the wrong foot by arriving late and unprepared for class several times, and you can sense that your professor is not happy with your behavior. To make matters worse, you made a D on the first exam, and you are sure that she has written you off as a poor student. You would like to talk with her so that you can show her you are a good student—it's just that you have been distracted with personal issues—but you've been told that she does not accept excuses from students about their personal lives. The one time you did approach her, she didn't seem interested in talking with you. In fact, you believe that she was rude. What do you do?

## Conflict Scenario Solution

**IN BOX**

Your goal in this situation is to demonstrate that you are, in fact, a good student who has had some personal problems and that you are eager and willing to do all future work for the course. But first you must be absolutely sure that you are committed to doing better in class. If you honestly believe that you can devote more time and energy to the course, schedule a meeting with your professor. At this meeting, explain that you have been disappointed with your previous work and that it is unusual for you to have such a difficult time in a course. You don't have to explain the details of any problems you are having; instead, you can say that you have had outside distractions that are now taken care of. End your conversation with the assurance that you will strive to do better work—and then keep your promise.



student may feel better by verbally attacking her and letting off steam, he is not really handling the conflict. Another stressed student might retreat, ignore the conflict, and drop the course. It seems natural to have a “fight or flight” reaction to a conflict such as this, but neither response actually improves the situation.

## Critical Thinking

### EXERCISE 3.5

Have you ever been asked to give someone constructive criticism? If so, how did you handle it? Did you feel uncomfortable about being honest? How did the person react? How do you handle criticism?



## When a Problem Arises

**A** time may arise when you have a problem in one of your classes. If it does, you can be assured that the college's employees will work with you to resolve it. There are, however, rules and procedures regarding how to resolve a problem. Knowing and following these procedures will ensure that a problem is handled appropriately and quickly.

The first step to resolving a conflict in class is to define what the problem is. Is it a communication problem? Is it a problem with the course material? Is it a problem with the course standards? Once you have defined the problem, your next step is to discuss the problem with the person directly. If the problem is with your instructor, make an appointment during his or her office hours to discuss the issue. If you are emotional—angry, upset, nervous—wait until you have calmed down to discuss the problem. Your goal in meeting with the instructor is to resolve the conflict.

In order for the process of conflict resolution to work, you will need to complete the first two steps. If you are not satisfied with the result or if you feel the problem has gotten worse, move to the next step: talking to the department chair or dean. You will no doubt be asked whether you have met with the instructor. Again, your goal at this step is to resolve the issue. Occasionally, the instructor may be called in to help resolve the issue. Staying calm and focused on resolving the conflict will be to your advantage. In the event that the problem is not solved at this level, your last stop is with the dean of students or vice president for instruction. Starting at the top will only delay resolution. Table 3.1 illustrates this process.

## Integrity in Relationships

As you will see as you read the rest of this book, integrity is an important part of college life and the world at large. *Integrity* is defined as “a strict adherence to an ethical code of conduct,” but the definition can be expanded to show its relevance to relationships. You can have integrity in relationships by being honest with other people and demanding honesty from them. Without integrity, relationships are superficial and meaningless.

The underlying factor of integrity in a relationship is trust. If you can trust others, you will be better able to learn, grow, expand, and improve yourself. If you do not have trust, then you may shut yourself off from others and experiences that are new to you. Trusting others takes time—it isn’t an overnight event. Give people reasons to trust you and then deliver on your promises. Likewise, put your trust in others, giving them an opportunity to prove themselves trustworthy.

A specific part of trust in relationships is reliability or, expressed another way, doing what you say you will do. If your classmate asks you to take notes for him on days he cannot be in class and you fail to do so each time, you lack reliability. Your classmate will not be able to trust you to help him. If you agree to take notes knowing that you may not be able to do it, you are not being honest—with him or yourself.



### Relating to Others

#### EXERCISE 3.6

As a group, describe three situations in which a friend can demonstrate honesty and integrity in the face of a difficult decision.



## INTEGRITY MATTERS

*Maintaining integrity in relationships includes being honest with others and with yourself. It takes time and energy as well as conscious decisions to be honest in order to build trust in relationships. However, the rewards are great!*

Acting with integrity is not easy and doesn't always come naturally. Instead, it is a conscious decision to do what is right even when it makes things harder and more uncomfortable for you and others. Being reliable and trustworthy takes more work because you may find yourself doing things (such as taking notes for a friend or driving a coworker home at the end of the day) that are inconvenient and time consuming. Moreover, the rewards for acting with integrity are not always immediate; therefore, remember that despite how you feel at the time, the effects of your action will be far reaching and positive.

### An Attitude of Gratitude

**O**ne of the most important and fulfilling ways to create and maintain strong relationships is to express gratitude for what people do for you. Giving thanks should not be a once-a-year event that accompanies eating turkey and watching football. Saying "thank you" to fellow students, professors, advisers, and other college employees will help you forge the kinds of relationships that will last throughout your academic career and beyond. If a classmate lends her notes to you, thank her. If a professor goes out of his way to meet with you about your research paper, show your gratitude. If your adviser sends you information about a scholarship she thinks you could win, tell her how much you appreciate her thoughtfulness.

If the favor or special consideration took a substantial amount of the giver's time and energy, consider writing a formal thank-you note. A quick note that reflects how much the person's actions meant to you will show how thoughtful and considerate you are. People remember those who demonstrate their gratitude, which could be helpful when you need another favor.

### Tips for Lasting Relationships

**W**hat a shame it would be to spend several semesters in college and not have one single friend to show for it! As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, community college students do have a harder time of cultivating friendships because of their busy schedules and because they do not typically spend 4 years with the same group of people. What can you do to forge relationships in college?

- Make a point of getting to know the other students in your classes.
- Exchange e-mail addresses or phone numbers with other students.

- Leave time in your schedule to talk with friends or meet with instructors. If you must leave directly after class to get to work, you will not be as successful in cultivating important relationships.
- Make an appointment with each of your instructors during the semester to ask questions or get feedback on your progress. Your ulterior motive is to cultivate a relationship with them.
- Learn to take constructive criticism with a positive attitude and remember its purpose is to help you improve.
- Approach conflict as an opportunity to learn more about yourself.
- Always act with integrity. Lasting relationships are ones that are built on trust and doing what is right.
- Thank someone for a job well done or a favor. Return the favor when you have a chance.



## Reflection

### EXERCISE 3.7

What are your experiences with expressing appreciation to others? If there is one person you would thank for encouraging you to enroll in college, who would it be and what would you say?



## Changes in Your Relationships with Family and Friends

**E**ntering college will be a new experience not only for you, but also for your family and friends, especially if they have not gone to college. Communication, then, will be the key to weathering any changes in your relationships. They need to know how you feel about going to college, and they need to be aware that you will be going through changes while you are there. Surely you will be experiencing changes in your outlook on life, your belief in yourself, and your attitude toward the future.

When these changes occur, people around you may react differently. Some will be supportive and excited that you have created personal goals and are achieving them. A few, however, may react negatively. These people may be jealous of your success or your new “lease on life” because they did not have the same opportunities or because they squandered the opportunities they did have. Others who react negatively may be insecure about themselves and feel “dumb” around a person in college; these



## Reflection

### EXERCISE 3.8

Do you have any friends or family members who have reacted negatively to your enrolling in college? If so, how do you feel about their attitudes? What steps have you made to understand their reactions and to make your feelings known?



same people often fear that once the college student graduates, he or she will leave them for a “better” spouse or friend. Also, there are parents who do not want to acknowledge that their children are grown adults who are and should be making decisions on their own; parents are also often worried that their children will be exposed to a value system and beliefs that are very different from what they taught them.

Whatever the reasons that the people around you react to the changes you experience, be comforted by the fact that you will survive and, better yet, you will have more of an understanding of the *diversity* of opinions that you will encounter. Learning how to deal with people in college will allow you to apply what you learn to your personal relationships.

## Exploring Diversity

**A**n exciting part of college is that you will meet and work with people from all ages and backgrounds. Unlike at a traditional university, at your community college you may be part of a study group that includes a grandparent, home-schooled teenager, veteran, administrative assistant to a dean, full-time detective, and minister. At a community college, then, it is crucial to be sensitive to others’ values and perspectives, which is one of the purposes of diversity.

A simple definition of diversity is “difference” or “variety.” Another term that often floats around when diversity is discussed in a college setting is “multiculturalism.” While the two words have different connotations, they often have the same motivation—to expose the community to a variety of ideas, cultures, viewpoints, beliefs, and backgrounds.

When people talk about diversity, they usually mean race, gender, ethnicity, age, and religion. Colleges that want to promote diversity on their campuses often look for opportunities to hire and enroll people who have backgrounds different from the majority of the campus population. They do this with the belief that diversity enriches the educational experience for all because it exposes students, faculty, and staff to new ideas and challenges our preconceived notions of the world around us.

## Other Kinds of Diversity

Dealing successfully with diversity includes more than working well with people from different nations, different religious or political backgrounds, and different disabilities; you will also need to consider the diversity of attitudes and work ethics. For example, not everyone you meet in college or in your career will value the same things you do. What will you do if you work with others whose values conflict with your own? What will you do if the difference between your and others’ work ethics cause conflict?

You will get the opportunity to work with others in class when you are assigned a group project or presentation. Even if you all are the same gender, race, religion, and age, you will still find that each of you is different and has different expectations and opinions of the assignment (Figure 3.2). Being able work with others, regardless of their learning and work styles, is a skill. The more you are exposed to diversity, the more you will be able to handle and appreciate the differences between you and everyone you meet.

FIGURE 3.2 *Overview of Diversity*

- Racial, ethnic, cultural
- Religious
- Political
- Sexual orientation
- Generational
- Socioeconomic
- Ability and motivations
- Comfort level/orientation to college/readiness
- Learning styles/personality types
- Teaching styles

## Gender and Sexual Orientation Diversity

The latest educational statistics show that almost two-thirds of the college student population across the country is female. In the past few decades, women have enrolled in college in record numbers. It may seem strange to think that several decades ago, the presence of women in college, especially in law and medical schools, was considered unusual. Unless you attend a same sex institution, you will encounter gender diversity at your college, and what this means for you is that you will have plenty of opportunities to work with both men and women and explore any preconceptions you have about the differences between the sexes. You may have to pay more attention to society's assumptions about gender and be more attuned to how language, art, and sciences, among other disciplines, perpetuate gender stereotypes.

Sexual orientation is another type of diversity that you will more than likely encounter in college if you have not already. Homosexuality and bisexuality are just two categories of sexual orientation diversity. Organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign ([www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)) strive to educate others about discrimination that can—and does—occur because of stereotypes and prejudice regarding sexual orientation. Why should you know more about sexual orientation as a part of diversity? Sexuality is part of the human experience, and one purpose of higher education is to help you better understand and appreciate your and others' human experience. Recognizing sexual orientation as a category of diversity gives you a more complete picture of humankind.

**Sexual Harassment.** Colleges and universities as well as the workforce have aggressively educated students and employees about the definitions and prevention of sexual harassment for decades. Sexual harassment, by legal definition, refers to a superior, or a person in power, harassing a subordinate, or a person with less power than the harasser. College and employee policies often broaden the definition to include any unwanted sexual advances that create an uncomfortable situation or hostile environment. This broader definition means that a student can sexually harass another student or a student can sexually harass a professor—or any other scenario that involves students, prospective students, and employees and guests of the college. To round out the definition, it should be noted that women can sexually harass men and that people of the same sex can also experience sexual harassment.

Despite educational programs for new students and required seminars for employees, colleges—as with any place in which people live and work—are not immune to instances of sexual harassment. According to Katz (2005), the American Psychological Association surveyed female graduate students about their experiences in college. The survey results found that 12.7% of female students experienced sexual harassment and 21% avoided taking certain classes for fear of being sexually harassed. Surveys about sexual harassment in the workplace paint a dimmer picture, with 31% of female employees and 7% of male employees claiming to have been sexually harassed at work.

Educating yourself about the seriousness of sexual harassment, your college's policy on sexual harassment, and the behaviors that are often considered sexual harassment are steps in the right direction to minimizing incidents. For sure, sexual harassment is no laughing matter, and a review of your college's statement on the matter will reveal what lengths the college will go to discipline those who sexually harass others. Some college policies list the following behaviors as sexual harassment:

- Offensive jokes or comments of a sexual nature
- Requests or demands for sexual favors in return for favorable treatment or rewards (e.g., a good grade)
- Unwanted physical contact or assault
- Showing or distributing sexually explicit materials to others
- Posting sexually explicit images or Web sites in college-owned online course management systems or e-mailing those images or Web sites with college-owned computers

While it may not be considered sexual harassment if it is not distributed to others, accessing sexually explicit Web sites with college-owned computer hardware and software may be prohibited conduct that will result in disciplinary action by the college and possible criminal charges.

As with all forms of diversity and possible problems, be sensitive to others; treat everyone you meet on campus with respect; and be honest with others if you feel uncomfortable in a situation or with certain conversation topics.

## *Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Diversity*

Over the last 20 years, college embraced and developed multicultural studies in response to the previous emphasis on “white, male, Western” history, ideas, and culture. Since 2001, we have dealt with our attitudes toward Middle Eastern culture and religion as the world's spotlight is on our country's relationship with Afghanistan and Iraq. Cultural and racial ignorance at its worst has led to the deaths of millions of people all over the world. Understanding and appreciation for the diversity in culture and ethnicity at its best create connections between peoples who have much to learn from each other (Figure 3.3).

## *Generational Diversity*

The idea that our parents' generation is vastly different from our own, which will be greatly different from our children's generation, is considered a fact of life. It's almost a requirement for adults to bemoan the younger generation's habits and attitudes and wish for a “simpler” time that upheld a different set

FIGURE 3.3 *Tips for Appreciating Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Diversity*

Work to eliminate all racial, ethnic, or cultural stereotypes or slurs from your thoughts and vocabulary. Stop yourself before you speak and ask “Is this a stereotype or could it be offensive to some?”

Racial, ethnic and cultural jokes, images, and cartoons are insensitive at best, harassment at worst. Avoid making fun of others’ heritage. Be sensitive to others’ backgrounds.

Learn more about your heritage and culture.

Strive to learn more about cultures that are new to you or different from yours.

Participate in college and community cultural celebrations.

Attend seminars, guest lecturers, and artistic performances about different cultures and countries.

Do not tolerate others who exhibit racial and cultural insensitivity. If you don’t feel comfortable saying something to them, avoid them and similar situations in the future.

of values, just as it is common for the younger generation to roll their eyes when their parents start singing their favorite songs. One unifying viewpoint among the generations is that different generations view the world differently.

You will, no doubt, encounter generational diversity at your community college and in the world of work—more so than in generations past. The American Association of Community Colleges (2004), cites the following statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics: 46% of community college students are over the age of 25, and 15 percent are over 40. These statistics mean that almost half of the students on a community college campus are not the traditional college age of 18–22. What this fact means is that you will be attending classes and working with other students who come from a different generational cohort than you.

What is a “generational cohort”? According to Ron Zemke, Claire Raines, and Bob Filipczak, in their book *Generations at Work: Managing the Clash of Veterans, Boomers, Xers, and Nexters in Your Workplace* (2000), a generational cohort is a group of the population that was born within a certain period, that marked as important some of the same world events, and that hold certain common values. The authors recognize and describe four generations that can be found in the workplace (and college for that matter):

GENERATION	BIRTH YEARS	CORE VALUES
Veterans	1922–1943	Dedication, sacrifice, patience, respect for authority
Baby Boomers	1943–1960	Health and wellness, optimism, personal growth
Generation Xers	1960–1980	Diversity, fun, self-reliance, global thinking
Nexters	1980-present	Civic duty, morality, street smarts



## Reflection

### EXERCISE 3.9

What generational cohort are you? What do you consider the historical events that define your generation?



Each of the generational groups, the authors contend, hold certain values that influence how they work with others and how they achieve personal success. The diverse core values and attitudes can create enriching experiences for all generations that work together, or they can be a cause of conflict for those who do not understand and appreciate fellow students and coworkers of a different generation. Misunderstanding generational differences at its

worst can become ageism, which is discriminating against someone because of his or her age. The key with generational diversity—as with all types of diversity—is to learn more about yourself and others and appreciate the differences.

## Personality Types and Learning Styles Diversity

**A**s you learned in Chapter 2, there are a variety of ways to describe what we are like and even how we learn. This information is certainly important to understanding ourselves, but it is also helpful as we work with others in the classroom and on the job.

Take for example a couple who are trying to decide what to do on Saturday night. Person A suggests they go out with friends to a club to dance. Person B suggests they stay home and watch a movie. It's not hard to imagine that the subsequent conversation contains the question "Why do you always want to . . .?" and either one person gives in and does what the other wants or each does something on his or her own. Now, consider that the couple has taken a personality test and knows that one of them is an outgoing person and the other is shy. Knowing that each has a different preference when enjoying free time may not eliminate the conflict completely, but it does provide information and insight into the other's likes and dislikes. That information makes it easier for both to appreciate the differences and opens the door to compromise.

Now, consider personality types and diversity in the classroom or workplace. Here is an example of how personality diversity can affect group work:

**IN BOX**

### *Example of Personalities at Play*

Jackie, Thuy, and Yolanda are working in a group to complete a task. Jackie wants to list all the possible ideas before deciding which one they should pursue. Yolanda wants to consider only one or two ideas because she feels that going through all of them would waste time. When Jackie and Yolanda ask Thuy which action they should take, she shrugs and says, "I don't care. Whatever you want." Yolanda and Jackie are frustrated because they assume Thuy doesn't care about the project. Thuy thinks both Yolanda and Jackie are wrong in their approach, but they are so domineering that she doesn't think it is worth telling them what she really thinks.

Without knowing why the others are acting the way they do, do you think that this group will complete their task? Even if they do, they will not understand one another's work personality, which may cause problems later on if they are assigned to work together again. For sure, they will not understand themselves well enough to work well with other personality types on future projects. What if, instead of trying to work together without an appreciation for the diversity of personalities, they talk about what they are like and how they like to work? If Thuy tells Jackie and Yolanda that she avoids conflict and would rather listen to others than offer an opinion, they will both understand why she responds that way to what she thinks is impending conflict. If Jackie tells the others that she loves generating ideas and needs constructive criticism to help her shape her ideas, she may find that both Thuy and Yolanda would be more willing to give it to her and not be afraid of hurting her feelings. If Yolanda tells Jackie and Thuy that she would rather support others toward a common goal rather than come up with the goal herself, the rest of the group may decide to reorganize how they are approaching the project in order to play on each other's personality types and strengths.

## Teaching Styles Diversity

You will encounter many personality types on campus—in and out of the classroom. You will also encounter a variety of teaching styles. It has been said that most professors teach the way they learn best, but there are college instructors who use a variety of teaching methods to encourage student learning. You will be more successful if you can identify each teaching style and what you need to do to adapt to it. Gone are the days of saying, "I just can't learn in her class. She doesn't teach the way I need her to." Like the people who must work together in groups and be sensitive to each other's personalities, you, too, will need to recognize what your learning style is and how it will fit into your professor's teaching style. Ideally, your instructor will recognize that his students have different learning styles and adapt his material to those styles, but not every instructor will vary his teaching style to meet your needs. Your best bet is to be ready to learn no matter what the teaching style.

To help you recognize the different methods of teaching, Figure 3.4 contains a description of each and tips for making the most of them.



## Relating to Others

### EXERCISE 3.10

In a group, determine which of the teaching style types is the best one for the majority of the group. Then, determine which one is the hardest for the majority of the group? What tips can the group list that would make the most challenging teaching style more enjoyable?



## Stereotypes

A discussion of diversity is not complete without mentioning some common problems associated with society. *Stereotyping* is an oversimplified

FIGURE 3.4 *Teaching Styles*

Teaching Style	Description	Tips for Success	VAR K Category
Lecture	Professor talks for the majority of the class; a brief outline may be included; questions are limited or discouraged; usually very structured	Practice good listening skills; record lectures with permission; take good notes during class and review them frequently	Aural, read/write
Discussion	Professor poses a question and requires students in the class to answer and build upon an idea or theme	Practice good listening skills; record theme or question for the discussion; note repeated ideas; record essence of each person's contribution; participate in discussion	Aural, read/write
Project	Professor bases class learning on projects; provides instruction for assignment; assigns roles; monitors progress	Make connection between project assignment and course objectives; ask for feedback during project to make sure you are progressing; refer to course materials for extra help	Aural, kinesthetic
Problem solving	Professor poses or writes a problem on the board; walks through solving the problem	Break process down into steps; identify any step that is unclear; ask for extra practice and feedback if needed	Visual, read/write, kinesthetic



## Critical Thinking

### EXERCISE 3.11

Using Figure 3.5, take one of the diversity categories and its corresponding stereotypes. Create a list of other stereotypes that exist for the group. Then, write a response to why you think these stereotypes exist and what you can do to eliminate the stereotypes.



opinion of someone or something. We use stereotypes to make quick decisions every day. When choosing a checkout line, we may make a quick decision as to which is the fastest based on the people in line and what they have in their carts. When playing outfield on a softball team, we may stereotype the smaller players as weaker hitters, which will cause us to move closer to the infield. Parents also encourage children, who have difficulty making complex decisions, to stereotype what a stranger is in order to protect them. Although these stereotypes are not necessarily harmful, they can create problems. We may get in a line we think will be shorter, but we end up standing in line for a longer time; we may move so close to the infield that the smaller player hits the ball over our heads; we may confuse children about the characteristics of a stranger, making it difficult for them to trust adults.

Stereotypes can serve a purpose in the short run, but as the examples above illustrate, stereotypes do not take into consideration all the facts.

FIGURE 3.5 *Types of Diversity and Common Stereotypes*

Types of Diversity	Common Stereotypes
Gender	<b>Women:</b> weak, emotional, maternal, domestic <b>Men:</b> strong, unfeeling, intelligent, brave
Sexual orientation	<b>Heterosexuals:</b> focused on family, moral, politically conservative <b>Homosexuals:</b> immoral, sexually promiscuous, liberal
Race, ethnic, and cultural	<b>Asian Americans:</b> driven, intelligent, hard-working, achievers <b>Southerners:</b> polite, old-fashioned, religious, poorly educated
Generational	<b>Generation Xers and Nexters:</b> lazy, unfocused, disrespectful, demanding, pessimistic <b>Veterans and Baby Boomers:</b> out of touch, computer illiterate, idealistic
Socioeconomic	<b>Upper class:</b> live off investments, leisure-focused, charitable, Republican <b>Middle class:</b> hard-working, productive “family values,” family-focused, burdened by taxes <b>Lower class:</b> lazy, unwed mothers, drug addicts, unemployed, welfare
Personality types/ learning styles	<b>Visual:</b> always understands ideas in pictures; must have visual cues to comprehend <b>Kinesthetic:</b> always using hands or body to learn; uncomfortable sitting still <b>Extrovert:</b> always prefers being with all people
Teaching styles	<b>Lectures:</b> boring, difficult to make connections between material, passive learning <b>Discussion:</b> unfocused, disorganized, difficult to take notes, “light learning”

For the most part, stereotypes keep us from having to think about the complexity of issues, and often we are unable to appreciate the beauty of diversity (Figure 3.5). In essence, stereotypes are a shorthand for evaluating situations and making decisions, but, if used repeatedly, they can become prejudice and discrimination.

## Prejudice

Prejudice is literally “pre-judging” a person or situation without knowing the facts. Prejudice is often based on stereotyping. Let’s take a seemingly harmless example of stereotyping that can result in prejudice: If you assume that all smaller softball players are weak hitters, you may take that stereotype a bit further by disliking playing with smaller players because they don’t make the game very challenging.

Like stereotyping, prejudice is a judgment based on little or no information or on misinformation about a person or thing. In other words, it is based on ignorance or a lack of correct information. That is why education is so important—you can avoid prejudging people and things by learning about

them and making decisions about them based on knowledge rather than ignorance. While we cannot always avoid stereotyping, we can eliminate prejudice and subsequently eradicate discrimination by deciding to learn about others.

**Types of Prejudice.** There are a variety of ways in which we can categorize ourselves and others. Used as one way of understanding ourselves better, these types of diversity are useful tools. If they are used to stereotype and then judge people, the categories become means to discrimination.

**Sexist Attitudes.** The increase of women in college has changed the culture to be more sensitive and inclusive to women, but stereotypes and prejudice about females still exist. However, sexism is not limited to prejudice against women. Men, too, can suffer from sexist attitudes based on stereotypes. Examples of sexist attitudes in college:

- “My welding instructor is a woman! What does she know about welding? I can’t possibly learn what I need to know for a job.”
- “My male psychology professor is so much more demanding than the female professor. I should have taken her instead. Plus, she would understand that I am a parent who has to juggle raising kids and going to school.”

**Homophobia.** Sexual orientation prejudice is often in the form of homophobia, or fear of homosexuals. Homophobia is sometimes borne out of ignorance of sexual orientation diversity, and sometimes it comes from a person’s own background and values. Examples of homophobic attitudes in college:

- “My algebra instructor is gay. I don’t approve of homosexuality, so it makes me very uncomfortable to be in his class.”
- “I am avoiding taking composition so that I won’t have to take the lesbian instructor who teaches it at the time I need it. She won’t grade me fairly because I am a male.”

**Racist Attitudes.** Racist attitudes can be obvious or subtle. Like all other prejudices, people can hold racist views and not realize that they are being intolerant. Asking people of other races what kinds of racism they experience is one way to understand what they perceive as prejudice. Monitoring your own words, actions, and attitudes is another way to be more sensitive to other races and cultures. You may think you don’t mean any harm by what you say or do, but the recipients of racism don’t always agree. Examples of racist attitudes in college:

- “I am going to study with the two Asian Americans in my physics class. They are super smart, and maybe that will rub off on me.”
- “The Hispanics at this college are only here to keep from being deported back to their own country. I resent having to take classes with them.”

**Ageist Attitudes.** As you read earlier in the chapter, different generations have different values and viewpoints. An environment in which people from different generations work closely together can be exciting or tense, depending on how much people are willing to recognize, understand, and appreciate their generational differences. Problems arise, though, when people have

prejudicial attitudes about a certain age group. We usually think of ageist attitudes as ones that stereotype people older than us, but people also can hold prejudicial views against those who are younger. Examples of ageist attitudes in college:

- "I don't want to be in a study group with him. He could be my grandfather, and I am sure that he doesn't know one thing about computer networks."
- "I can't relate to the girls in my project group. All they talk about is going out and getting drunk. They have no real responsibilities and they don't take this class seriously."

## Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when an action is taken on the basis of a prejudice. If, for instance, you decide that you do not want to play softball with teams with smaller players because you believe they are not as fun as teams with bigger players, you have discriminated against smaller players and their teams. Because of recent laws and lawsuits, colleges and other places of business are sensitive to discrimination issues. Sexism, racism, and ageism are the most common types of discrimination in the workplace. It will be an important part of your education to understand how and why people discriminate so that you can avoid similar problems.

Even though most workplaces strive hard to eliminate sexual, racial, and age discrimination, other types can creep into everyday situations. For example, a coworker may declare that she won't hire anyone from a certain college because she believes that all its graduates are more interested in partying than in working. Your boss may state his disdain for people from a certain part of the country and then refuse to promote an employee who is originally from that area. While you may not be able to change everyone's mind, you should be attuned to these more subtle, and sometimes acceptable, forms of discrimination and make an effort to eliminate them.



*Getting along with a diverse group of classmates will be a key to your success when you have to collaborate on class projects.*



## Critical Thinking

### EXERCISE 3.12

When are stereotypes helpful or even necessary for survival? (Hint: Think about how we stereotype situations, ideas, and objects.)



## From Stereotype to Discrimination

Sometimes it is difficult to see how stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination all fit together. Here are two examples of how a stereotype can evolve into discrimination:

### Example 1

**IN BOX**

**Stereotype:** 18-year-old college students are immature and irresponsible.

**Prejudice:** I do not like to talk to 18-year-old college students.

**Discrimination:** I refuse to be placed in a study group with 18-year-old college students.

### Example 2

**IN BOX**

**Stereotype:** Biology professors are atheists.

**Prejudice:** I don't think that atheists should be allowed to teach biology.

**Discrimination:** I will give my biology professor a poor evaluation because she is an atheist.



## Relating to Others

### EXERCISE 3.13

Working within a group, list situations in which you have been discriminated against. How did you feel? What did you learn about yourself and others in those situations?



Companion  
Website

## FROM COLLEGE TO UNIVERSITY

### *The Relationships You Foster Now Will Open Doors After Transfer*

Your relationships with advisers, counselors, and professors should yield more contacts at your new school. Advisers and counselors will be able to recommend certain programs and administrators. Professors will be able to put in a good word with the people they know at your transfer school, which may mean extra consideration for admission into a program or for a scholarship.

Those same relationships may also prove fruitful if your advisers, counselors, or professors have inside knowledge of little-known internships and aid, or if they know about deadline extensions and special transfer scholarships. The closer the relationships you have, the better able you will be to use your connections to make a smooth transfer. Advisers, counselors, and professors can also provide advice about the particular challenges you may face once you have completed the move.

## FROM COLLEGE TO CAREER

### *Dealing with Diversity Is a Key to Success on the Job*

We sometimes think that once we reach our ultimate educational goal and have started our dream career, we will be magically transported to a world in which everyone gets along with one another. Unfortunately, we are brought back down from the clouds as early as the first day on the job.

Certainly, you will never stop needing to make positive connections with others or to redefine the relationships you already have. You will also encounter diversity daily and will have to rely on what you have learned in college (and life in general) in order to consider others' feelings, beliefs, and attitudes. What you have learned in college about other cultures, time periods, and philosophical and political ideas should provide you with a well-rounded view and will make it easier to work with and appreciate your diverse coworkers.



## References

- American Association of Community Colleges. (2004). Retrieved July 13, 2005, from [www.aacc.nche.edu](http://www.aacc.nche.edu)
- Katz, N. (2005). "Sexual harassment statistics in the workplace and in education." Retrieved July 5, 2005, from [womenissues.about.com/cs/sexdiscrimination/a/sexharasstats.htm](http://womenissues.about.com/cs/sexdiscrimination/a/sexharasstats.htm)
- Messina, J. J., & Messina, C. M. (2003). "Tools for relationships: Handling conflict." Retrieved July 27, 2005, from [www.coping.org/relations/conflict.htm#behaviors](http://www.coping.org/relations/conflict.htm#behaviors)
- Zemke, R., Raines, C., & Filipczak, B. (2000). *Generations at work: Managing the clash of veterans, boomers, xers, and nexters in Your Workplace*. New York: Amacom.