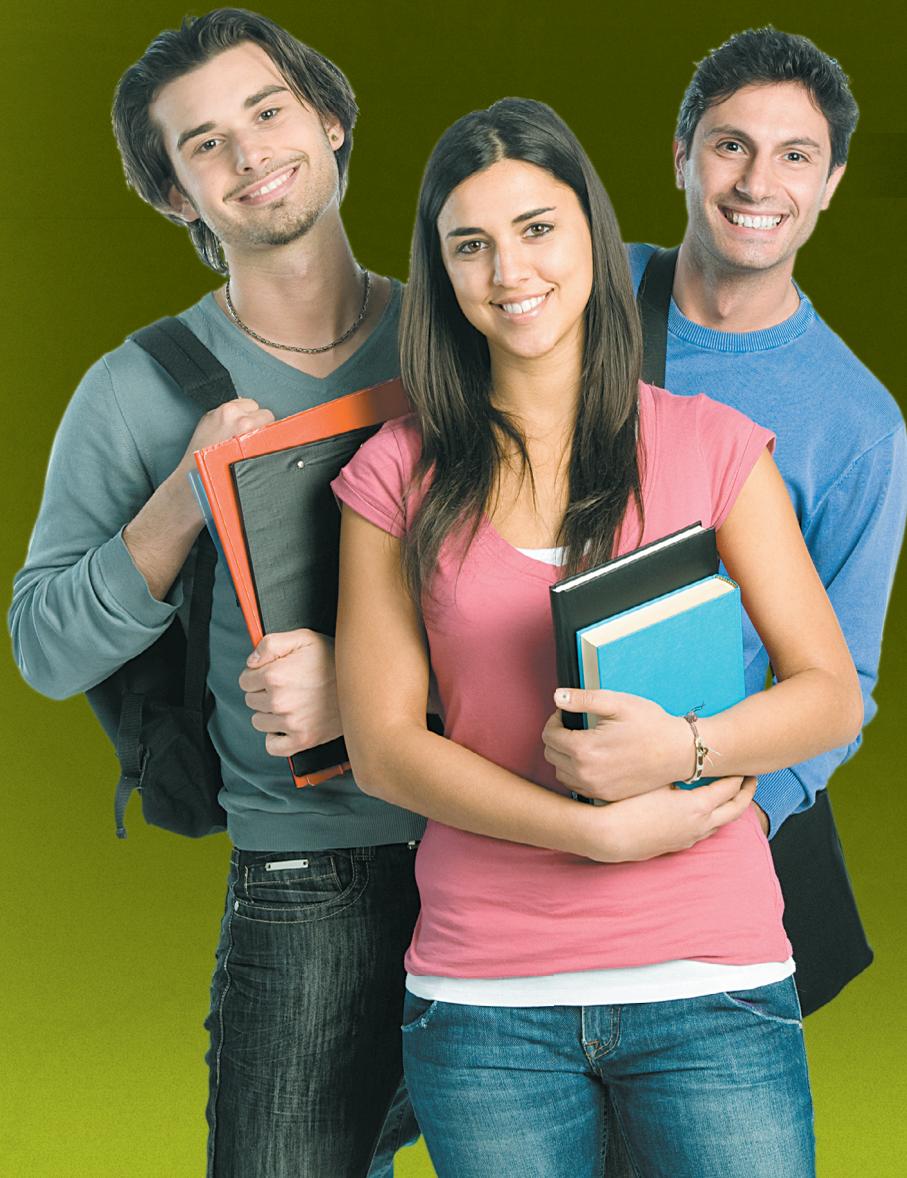


Transitions, BALANCE, AND ORGANIZATION



LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the time you finish reading this material and completing its activities, you will be able to do the following:

- Explain two ways a college education will be valuable for you.
- Describe two college transition issues you have already experienced or you think you will have to experience before the end of this term.
- Provide two examples of how knowledge of your life dimensions will help you be successful in school and/or balanced in your personal life.
- Identify two organizational strategies you can use immediately that will help you achieve academic success.

The First Day of CLASS

It is the first day of the college term. Your instructor asks you to take out a piece of paper and respond to the following statements:

1. You have been placed in a first-year, orientation-to-college course this term. Explain why you do NOT really need this stuff! There must be some mistake. After all, you have spent many years in classrooms, and you have plenty of life experiences. You know what to do and how to do it.

Key Terms

Balance
C.A.P. Principle
Critical thinking
Habit
Integrity
Opportunity costs
Priority management
Six dimensions of well-being
Transitions

Chapter INTRODUCTION

You have made it! You have purchased your books and hold the class schedule in your hand. With confidence from your prior experiences—and, yes, perhaps a bit of anxiety—you have arrived for the first week of classes. Your road to this point may have been short, leading directly from high school graduation to the college campus. Or perhaps the road first carried you through significant life events such as marriage, children, military service, or a stint in the workforce. Whatever the route, you are here and ready for a fascinating and challenging new stage of life.

2. You have been placed in a first-year, orientation-to-college course this term. Explain why you DO really need this stuff! Even though you have spent many years in classrooms and have life experiences, there are some areas you need to improve on as you begin the term.

CRITICALLY THINKING about *Your* situation

*Take a quiet moment to reflect
on the statements just presented:*

1. What reasons come to mind as to why you feel you do *not* need to be in this type of course?
2. What reasons explain why this course is the *correct* placement for you this term? (Piscitelli, 2013).

Regardless of your personal history, your life experiences can serve you well in college. Reflect and draw upon those skills as you tackle the new challenges in front of you and discover how much you have to offer yourself and those around you.

Success in any endeavor involves work on our part. The question “What are you doing to get what you want?” reminds us that we have to work to reach our dreams. Success is a journey that requires dedication. Obviously, students do not purposefully start their days saying, “I will look for ways to

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be disorganized. I want to be unhealthy and unhappy.” But even students who think they know what to do to be successful may make ill-advised choices that create frustration and difficulties. Like all students, you must navigate and make choices about a series of transitions when you walk on campus.

A **transition** is a change that occurs as you move from one phase of your life to another. Enrolling in college is one of those transitions. Each school term will introduce you to new instructors, course work, and classmates. It will be exciting and, at times, anxiety producing. Your school offers many resources to help you get the most from your college experiences. However, before you can identify the correct resources, it will be helpful to ask yourself two questions: “What do I want from school?” and “What am I willing to do to get what I want?”

Choices for College Success will demonstrate how organized action and critical thinking on your part will help you achieve academic success, create a healthy and balanced life, and reach your dreams.

In short, this is a book that will help you get what you want from school and life.

CORE PRINCIPLES

You will find three core life-skill principles present throughout this book: Critical thinking, priority management, and personal well-being. Each principle integrates with and complements the other two.

CRITICAL THINKING

When we critically think, we gather information, weigh it for accuracy and appropriateness, and then make a rational decision based on the facts we have gathered. Critical thinkers are active learners who seem to never stop asking questions about whatever is before them. As you read each of the topics, apply your **critical thinking** skills to determine how you can best use the strategies to help you become successful in the classroom and make connections that go beyond the classroom.

PRIORITY MANAGEMENT

Since priorities are those things that are important in your life (those things that help you get what you want), it makes sense to practice **priority management**. When you do this, you are critically thinking about what important things you need to do each day to move closer to your dreams. When you manage your priorities, you will decrease your stress—and improve the balance and health in your life (Winget, 2004). Effective priority management is another essential life skill (Urban, 2003).

PERSONAL WELL-BEING

When we speak of well-being, we look at the habits of our lives that lead to steadiness, stability, and equilibrium. How you handle the transitions in front of you will have an impact on your health and well-being. The reverse, also, is true. The level of your

health and well-being will have an impact on how you handle your college experiences. *Choices for College Success* will show you how to critically examine those habits that may cause instability and disequilibrium in your life. Do you show respect for yourself by caring for your mind, body, and spirit? Do your priorities reflect honesty, fairness, and trustworthiness? The pages ahead will help you critically examine the various dimensions of your life.

Activity 1.1

Critically Thinking about Your Ability to Handle Transitions

Before you answer the items below, reflect on how you currently handle change in your life. Think of how well (or poorly) you have been able to make transitions from one way of doing something to a new way.

There are no “right” answers for the questions below. As with all of the reflective activities in this book, write from your heart. This exercise is not meant for you to answer just like your classmates—or to match what you may think the instructor wants to see. Take your time to give a respectful and responsible general accounting of your experiences with transitions. A truthful self-assessment now will help you build on skills you have while developing those you lack.

For the following items, circle the number that best describes your typical experience with transitions. The key for the numbers is:

0 = never, 1 = almost never, 2 = occasionally, 3 = frequently, 4 = almost always, 5 = always

When considering your past successes and challenges with transitions, how often:

1. Were you able to identify habits that created problems for you reaching a goal?	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Were you able to take action to change habits that created problems for you reaching a goal?	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Have you carefully considered all of the “costs” (money, time, relationships, and health) before taking action?	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Did you prioritize a series of tasks so that you could concentrate on the important issues in your life?	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Have you faced the prospect of change with excitement and enthusiasm?	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Have you followed a responsible diet and exercise routine?	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. Have you managed and expressed emotions appropriately?	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. Have you carefully examined all information and weighed all options before making a decision?	0	1	2	3	4	5

Add up your scores for items 1, 2, and 5. Divide by 3. Write your answer here:

Using the key explanations above for each number (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), complete this sentence: When it comes to handling transitions, I _____ handle change effectively.

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Add up your scores for items 3, 4, and 8. Divide by 3. Write your answer here:

Using the key explanations above for each number (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), complete this sentence: When it comes to critical thinking, I _____ gather and evaluate information effectively.

Add up your scores for items 3, 6, and 7. Divide by 3. Write your answer here:

Using the key explanations above for each number (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) for this activity, complete this sentence: When it comes to my health and well-being, I _____ treat myself with respect physically and emotionally.

Based on your answers, what insights do you have about your experiences with transitions, critical thinking, and personal well-being?

THE VALUE OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION

A college education represents a huge investment of time, money, and emotion. When you made the choice to enroll in school, you sacrificed something. To be here, you have given up the opportunity to be somewhere else or do something else with your precious resources.¹

Economists frequently refer to the concept of **opportunity costs**. Each time you make a choice to do one thing, you eliminate, or at the very least, postpone, another option. For instance, if a student decides to drop out of school so that he can get a job, earn money, and buy a car, the opportunity cost of buying the car is the loss (or postponement) of his school graduation.

For everything we do, there is a cost of some sort. It is not always directly related to dollars and cents—but something is gained and something is lost.

When you are sitting in class or completing a homework assignment, you could have chosen, instead, to earn money in the workforce. The amount of money you are *not* making because you are in school is an opportunity cost. If you could be earning \$10,000 a year and stay in college for four years (instead of earning income), your opportunity cost equates to \$40,000—the amount of money you could have earned in that same period of time. When you consider other educational costs, such as tuition, books, transportation, room, board, and fees, the cost to attend college is considerable.

With those kinds of numbers to consider, why do people decide to attend college? One explanation is because the value of a college education is greater in

¹Innumerable sources tout “value of a college education.” A recent Google search (August 26, 2012) found about 710,000 sites! A few have been referenced in this section for your continued reading.

the long term. Whenever you feel emotionally drained or may be thinking of giving up on college, consider that the opportunity cost of a college education is an investment in you. What you are doing now will help you get what you want in the future.

DOLLARS AND CENTS

Consider the opportunity costs of not pursuing a college degree. According to the *U.S. Census Bureau News*, full-time workers with a bachelor's degree earn on average about \$52,200 per year. High school graduates (no college) earn about \$22,000 less per year (Ewert).

Even as income figures change from year to year, the positive relationship between years of schooling and potential income remains. Do the math (see Table 1.1). If the “accumulated earnings” (the amount that would be earned over the career span of a worker) are considered, the numbers are staggering. A person with a four-year college degree can expect to earn nearly one million dollars *more* than someone without a degree. Calculate the additional value of graduate degrees, and the money differential continues to widen. That might make all those college tests and term papers seem a little bit more bearable!

BEYOND DOLLARS AND CENTS

A college education has value beyond your savings account. A liberal arts education, for example, provides a broad base of knowledge to prepare you for many types of jobs. It exposes you to differing viewpoints, and it helps you critically analyze what you read and what you hear. Higher education provides advanced knowledge of history, politics, and culture. You discuss issues with like-minded individuals as well as debate issues with those who hold opposing beliefs. A college education allows you to broaden your knowledge base, reaffirm your beliefs, and, at times, change your positions.

The value of a college education is dollars and cents—but it is so much more.

Table 1.1 U.S. Census Bureau: Income Differential* According to Level of Education (full-time workers) (Ewert, 2009)

	Less Than a High School Diploma	High School Diploma	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree
Median Income	\$24,000	\$30,600	\$41,472	\$52,260	\$65,004	\$81,996
Income Earned in 40 Years	\$960,000	\$1,224,000	\$1,658,880	\$2,090,400	\$2,600,160	\$3,279,840

*The numbers do not take into account pay raises or inflation.

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Activity 1.2

Critically Thinking about What You Want from College and What You Can Do to Get What You Want

(A note to the student: You will find reflective activities throughout the book. Use these as journaling exercises to help you reflect on your personal choices concerning your education and your life. Please take your time. In other words, slow down and concentrate. In this way, you will help yourself to critically think about what you are doing with different aspects of your life—and evaluate what you still need to do to stay balanced and healthy while moving toward your dreams. Place your answers in your class notebook or personal journal, or keep a computer file of all your reflections.)

Students enroll in college for a variety of reasons. Some students come to:

- Advance in a current job
- Develop a sense of independence
- Earn a lot of money
- Explore areas of interest
- Find a job
- Fulfill a lifetime dream
- Train for a skill
- Learn about the world
- Make a better life for family and self
- Reach specific goals
- Participate in intellectual discussions
- Play college-level athletics
- Socialize with peers

Consider what you want from college and reflect on why you have decided to spend your time and money in college at this point in your life. List the top three reasons you came to college. That is, what do you want from college? What are your dreams?

For each of the three items you listed, what is one action (beyond enrolling in college) you can take right now that will help you get closer to what you want?

KEY TRANSITIONAL ISSUES



People experience change when they move into their first job, when they move into their first apartment, or when they become involved in their first serious relationship. Life brings change—transitions from one place to another.

At times, change can cause fear of the unknown. It, also, can be quite energizing as it brings elements of excitement and vitality to your life. Change, therefore, can bring life. Change is invigorating and passion producing.

Where you are now physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially is different from where you were at this time last year. Whether you are a full-time student fresh from high school or a part-timer taking classes after work a couple of nights a week, your new surroundings—the campus, the classrooms, the diverse mix of students and instructors—may look and feel different compared to what you are used to in your life.

As you face new challenges, you may be anxious about stepping outside of your comfort zone. Be willing to use your old skills in new situations—adjust and change as needed—but never forget that you have a great deal of experience from which to draw.

For instance, you can use note-taking skills developed in previous classes while also experimenting with new strategies. Or if you already know how to juggle a busy social or family calendar, you can apply your priority management skills to your course assignments.

PHYSICAL TRANSITIONS: Diet, Exercise, and Stress Release

You may have heard of the “Freshman 15.” It refers to the fifteen pounds students reportedly gain in their first year of college. Whether because they consume fatty fast foods, alcohol, or late-night snacks, students often find their waistlines expanding. Exercise, also, may suffer when getting used to a new college routine (*Freshman 15*). For others, increased stress levels might even cause weight loss. Whether you gain, lose, or maintain a healthy weight, the college environment can present temptations that may lead to unhealthy habits—habits that can create challenges for the rest of your life.

Making the time to balance class expectations and a workout regimen will require discipline on your part.

INTELLECTUAL TRANSITIONS: What You Can Do Right Now

Many non-academic reasons are responsible for students dropping out (leaving with no plans to return to college) or stopping out (leaving with plans to return in the near future) of college. Finances, time factors, family concerns, and emotional issues can cause a student to withdraw from school (Whitbourne, n.d.; *News Blaze*, 2007).

Having said that, college success *will* depend on how well you do in the classroom. Even with appropriate finances, time, and family support, you will need to perform academically if you expect to remain in college. And that performance begins at the start of the school term. It is not unusual to feel overwhelmed at the beginning of a new school term. Use the following basic academic organizational checklist now to start on a positive note.

- Read each class syllabus carefully (and regularly) and transfer due dates to your calendar (paper or electronic).
- Begin to build a positive relationship with each instructor. Visit your instructors during office time for clarification of course material and expectations.
- Come prepared each class to ask appropriate questions and participate in discussions.
- Complete all assignments on time.
- Review your class notes immediately after each class. You can do this on your own or as part of a study group.
- Find and explore the campus library.
- Be curious! Ask questions; seek answers.

EMOTIONAL TRANSITIONS: Managing the Freedom and Responsibility of College

College life provides a great deal of personal independence but also requires a corresponding level of emotional responsibility. The emotionally mature (or emotionally intelligent) person is aware of her emotions, can manage her emotions, understands

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the emotions of others, and can have an “adult” relationship with another person (Goleman).

College life demands that you attend classes, read extensive assignments, complete research projects, involve yourself in lab work, and, possibly, engage in community service activities. Additionally, you may have to balance family, work, and/or cocurricular responsibilities. At times, it may seem as though there are not enough hours in the day.

In many ways, college life is different from high school and the world of work. Even though rules and procedures vary from college to college and from instructor to instructor, the responsibility for getting to class and completing assignments rests squarely on the student’s shoulders. If you miss an 8:00 a.m. psychology class every Monday, there is a better than average chance that no one on the campus will come looking for you. You will have to make it to the class or scramble to get the notes and instructions you may have missed.

Perhaps you are taking only one course, slipping away during your lunch break at work to take an English class. If your boss requires you to take a different lunch shift and it interferes with your schooling, it will be your responsibility—not your instructor’s—to handle the conflict. There will not be a counselor or some other person to intervene on your behalf. Moreover, when it comes to absences, you will encounter instructors who will not make a distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. Their view holds that a missed day of class participation is a *missed* day—there is no way to make that up. The class discussion occurred and cannot be repeated. Also, remember that the dynamics of the class will change without your presence. Your input will add an important dimension to class discussions.

Family life, also, will have an impact on how a student adjusts in college. Consider the different circumstances of the following students—and what they will need to do in order to adjust to college demands.

- **Student #1.** Coming from a family where rigidly enforced rules were common, this student can go in a couple of directions. On the one hand, always having had the rules explicitly stated and enforced, he may not know what to do in college because no one is directing his every move; he is not used to making his own decisions. On the other hand, once away from the strict family rules, he might “go wild” with his newfound independence.
- **Student #2.** This student has enjoyed more freedom than the student described above, but still had somebody always available to help in times of difficulty. For instance, her parents were constantly on the phone to the high school guidance counselor, seeking assignment extensions. It comes as quite a shock when she enters college and must live with the consequences of her actions that cannot be “fixed” by someone calling the school. In fact, due to confidentiality laws, schools face some restrictions as to the information they can release without student permission (FERPA).
- **Student #3.** Our third student has had a great deal of responsibility placed upon him to raise siblings, care for an elderly relative, or work to help support the family. Such responsibilities may continue during college. He will still be accountable for his home-based duties while finding time to tackle the expectations of college. This overly responsible student may have a stressful time balancing everything he must do.
- **Student #4.** This student has come to college more than a decade after graduating from high school. She (or he) works full-time to support her (or his) two children. Daily life is a challenge between arranging daycare, getting to and from

work, taking care of a household, and completing college assignments. She (or he) is very responsible, yet wonders if college will be too much to handle.

SOCIAL TRANSITIONS: A Balancing Act

You might be actively involved in cocurricular activities like student government or intramural sports. Alternatively, you may only be on campus a short time each day, leaving campus immediately after class in order to go home or to work. The time you spend with family and friends may need to be adjusted so you can meet your academic obligations. You might find the following general strategies helpful now:

- On average, budget two hours of study time for each hour spent in a class.
- Commit to work and cocurricular activities once you have scheduled appropriate time for class, study, and sleep. Critically think and distinguish between priorities and non-priorities.
- Consider how you will maintain your health.
- Be sure to schedule time for physical, emotional, and social renewal.

How you use time is your choice.

Developing supportive relationships. A successful transition to college can be enhanced by the right people—and there are many on campus waiting to help you. To name all of the key people on campus would require its own chapter. Moreover, a key person to one student might not be a key person to another student. For instance, a student needing financial assistance (grants, scholarships, or an on-campus job) may find the financial aid office initially to be the most important stop on campus. An athlete might find his coach to be the key contact.

Educators often mention the same “top three people to know” for a student to have an increased chance of college success.

- **C**lassmate
- **A**dvisor or counselor
- **P**rofessors

Note that the first letter of each name forms the acronym *C.A.P.* When you follow the **C.A.P. Principle**, you form relationships with three key people who can help you connect with the physical campus, adjust to the college experience, and persist to graduation. In fact, do not settle for knowing just one of each; get to know as many as you possibly can.

WELL-BEING AND SUCCESS

Think of well-being as being a condition of **balance** or contentment when you feel intellectually alert, emotionally stable, and physically strong. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle will help you adapt and thrive in your new environment. In short, your balance (or lack of it) will have a major impact on the quality of your college and life experiences.



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DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS

Dr. Bill Hettler, cofounder of the National Wellness Institute (NWI), developed the *Six Dimensional Wellness Model*. This very simple yet powerful model reminds us that a balanced life needs more than three good meals and a restful night's sleep. Each of the **six dimensions of well-being** has an impact on the other five. According to the NWI, no single category operates by itself; all six—social, occupational, spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional—impact each other for a balanced *or* unbalanced life (Hettler).

The transitions we reviewed previously match up with Hettler's dimensions. That means successfully navigating each of the transitions you face is critical not only to your success in college but also to your overall sense of balance in life. Your health and well-being will have an impact on how well you handle each transition you encounter. As you review each category below, think how your daily activities and lifestyle measure up to each description.

Table 1.2 Dimensions of Wellness

Dimension	Description of a "Balanced Person"
Physical	You maintain a healthy lifestyle (diet, rest, exercise, strength, and muscle flexibility). You are able to recognize and appropriately respond to warning signs of ill health.
Intellectual	You actively seek to expand your knowledge base and skill base and to develop your creativity and critical thinking skills.
Emotional	You have the ability to manage and express emotions appropriately and handle stress effectively.
Social	You maintain positive relationships with people around you and build a support network of family, friends, classmates, and/or coworkers. You have an awareness of your impact on society and the environment—and their impact upon you.
Occupational	You are involved in a profession or course of study that is personally satisfying. You learn new skills and develop career-oriented goals.
Spiritual	You stress the importance of finding your life's purpose by reflecting (meditating, praying) on the purpose of life, and then you act on your beliefs and values to reinforce your discovered purpose. You acknowledge and understand that you are part of a larger universe.

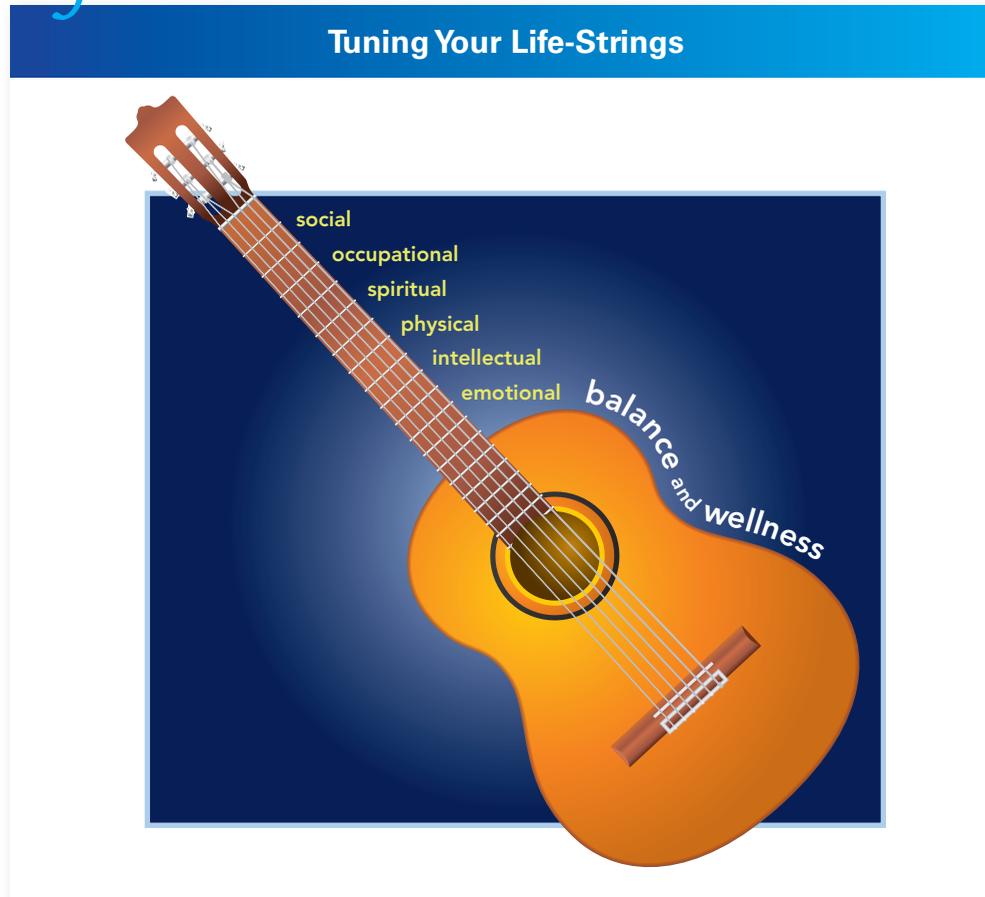
Source: Adapted from "The Six Dimensional Wellness Model," National Wellness Institute, http://www.nationalwellness.org/?page=Six_Dimensions (accessed June 19, 2013).

One way to think of this model is to visualize a six-string guitar (Figure 1.1). The guitar (you) will be able to make harmonious music with properly tuned strings (life dimensions). If one of the six strings (life dimensions) falls out of tune or breaks, the guitar will still play, but the song will not be as pleasing. As more strings weaken or break from undue stress, the guitar loses its ability to play music. The remaining strings will not be able to carry the tune, possibly leading to the total collapse of the guitar (mind, body, spirit).

Whatever metaphor or image you use, it may help to remember that each life dimension is intimately related to your growth as an individual. By taking notice and care of each dimension of your life, you will take important steps toward turning your dreams into realities. If ignored, however, any one of the dimensions can have a detrimental effect on the others. For instance, if you consistently operate on too little sleep, eat less than nutritious food, associate with negative people, or depend on the “help” of drugs and alcohol to cope with life’s challenges, your life dimensions will eventually weaken. The small consistent choices you make and carry out have huge consequences.

Early in the college experience, you may face any number of stressors that will weaken one or more of your life dimensions. If this happens to you, draw on your experiences, college resources, and the healthy ways you already possess to strengthen each dimension in your life. Strategies to help balance your new expectations will

Figure 1.1



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help you maintain your health. Care for your life dimensions, and you will continue to play rich music.

BALANCE IS NOT NECESSARILY “EVEN”

When thinking of the concept of *balance*, you may envision something with equal parts. For instance, a balanced wheel might have six evenly spaced spokes. Or if you had two book bags, you would consider them balanced if they each weighed the same. That thinking does not necessarily hold true when examining your life dimensions.

One of your dimensions probably looms as the most significant in your life. It is the strongest or the one that serves as the “rock”—the foundation, the base—for your life. For some people, the spiritual dimension is their guiding light. In times when their entire world seems to be crumbling around them, they can draw on their spiritual strength to maintain balance and safely weather the turbulence.

For you, the physical dimension may be the part of life that provides a strong foundation. In times of stress, you might find that physical exercise, yoga practice, or a cup of green tea helps you stay calm.

Whatever dimension is your strength, it may well overshadow all the other dimensions of your life. Moreover, your “base” dimension might very well change over the course of your semester—and life.

Activity 1.3

Critically Thinking about Personal Well-Being

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU AND YOUR ACADEMIC SUCCESS?

Reread the descriptions in Table 1.2 and then rank (place in order of importance) each according to its strength in your life. In your notebook or personal journal, write the numbers 1 through 6. Next to the number 1 write the name of the life dimension that you consider the strongest in your life. For the purpose of this activity, consider “strongest” to mean that which helps you maintain health and balance (a feeling of wellness and stability) in your life. In the second column, explain how you think the dimension will help you be successful in school. Then next to the number 2 write the dimension that is the second strongest in your life, and so on for the rest of the items.

WELL-BEING AND INTEGRITY

Often, architecture will be described in terms of structural integrity. Such a description indicates to what extent the structure is doing what it is *supposed* to do. A bridge that has structural integrity does what it was built to do—provide for safe transportation from one point to another. Likewise, a tall office building that safely houses its occupants also has structural integrity.

A similar description applies to people. Our beliefs and values are at the center of our moral code. When they guide us—motivate us—to act with integrity, to do what is right and avoid what violates our code, then we do what we are supposed to do.

HONESTY, RESPONSIBILITY, AND RESPECT

In its broadest sense, **integrity** means conducting oneself in an honest, responsible, and respectful fashion. If you say you will do something, you do it. When you do something wrong, you admit your errors. Your actions show respect for yourself as well as for those around you. Living a life of integrity is more than a series of strategies and techniques; it requires a specific mindset and value structure to do what is right for you and for others. There are no shortcuts or cram courses on how to be a person of integrity. You do not practice integrity for part of the day; it is woven into your life.

The manner in which you take care of, or neglect, the dimensions of your life has an impact on your health and well-being. In reality, when you develop and practice a healthy lifestyle, you act with integrity. That is, each of your six life dimensions becomes stronger when you act honestly, responsibly, and respectfully within each dimension. Table 1.3 explains this relationship between integrity and well-being.

Table 1.3 **Connection between Integrity and the Dimensions of Well-Being**

Dimension	Connection to Your Integrity
Social	<p>You respectfully enter—and maintain—relationships.</p> <p>You speak with honesty when talking with or about other people.</p> <p>You do not put yourself or another person in foolishly risky situations.</p>
Occupational	<p>On the job (or in the classroom) you take care of your responsibilities in an honest fashion.</p> <p>You are honest with yourself about why you do (or will do) what you do for work.</p>
Spiritual	<p>You respectfully attempt to understand differing spiritual beliefs.</p> <p>You seek to live your life according to a higher purpose.</p>
Physical	<p>You treat your body with respect.</p> <p>You follow a responsible diet and exercise regimen.</p>
Intellectual	<p>You do not engage in acts of academic dishonesty.</p> <p>You continuously feed your mind with responsible thought-provoking material.</p> <p>You respectfully listen to and discuss differing points of view.</p>
Emotional	<p>You find healthy and responsible ways in which to handle stressful situations.</p> <p>You are respectful of your emotional needs as well as the needs of those around you.</p> <p>You understand how your emotional well-being affects other dimensions of your life.</p>

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PRIORITY MANAGEMENT AND PERSONAL WELL-BEING

HABITS

Once a day, an hour, or a minute goes by, we can never get it back. It is gone forever. If we want to use time effectively, we have to build good habits. This book will help you examine how you can prioritize your time to improve the physical, intellectual, emotional, and social areas of life while helping yourself succeed in your studies. In addition, you will learn how building habits of organization now (or improving on the effective ones you already have) will have a positive impact on your life outside of college. If you can concentrate on your priorities, you will have a better chance of mastering your life.

A **habit** is something we repeat with such frequency that it becomes an involuntary act. It seems as though we cannot help but do it. If each day finds you mindlessly drifting from one activity to the other, it will be difficult to build a life with disciplined habits. Waste time on a regular basis and it will become a habit—a bad habit. Effective organization requires critical thought and practice—and good habits. It is a skill that, when mastered, can improve many aspects of your life.

Organization, however, involves more than time. For instance, some students may drop out of college because they find it difficult to use their time and their financial resources effectively. Whether they run out of time or run out of cash, the shortfall has a negative impact upon their continued enrollment.

DISORDER

Habits of disorganization can create stress, which in turn can threaten your well-being. For instance, the disorganized student can experience any or all of the following:

- Clutter
- Debt
- Discouragement
- Illness
- Loss of financial aid
- Lost opportunities
- Lowered GPA
- Missed assignments
- Missed exams or quizzes
- Missed interviews or appointments
- Relationship difficulties
- Reputation as someone not dependable
- Stress
- Suspension from school
- Tardiness to class

ORDER

Now, look at how organization can positively affect your life:

- Financial responsibility
- Goal attainment
- Health
- Increased chances of landing the job you want
- Greater likelihood of securing and maintaining financial aid
- Higher GPA
- Improved opportunities
- Meaningful relationships

- Peace and calm
- Regular punctuality
- Reputation as being dependable
- Success on exams and quizzes
- Smooth progress in academic programs
- Timely completion of assignments

On which person—the disorganized and chaotic or the organized and orderly—would you want to depend? Sound organizational habits weave their way throughout your life by enabling a positive work ethic and helping you develop healthy habits of balance and wellness. To build these practical habits, you will need to critically evaluate how you organize your life (or not).

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW TO GET STARTED

Consider the following “just-in-time” organizational tips shown in Table 1.4 to help you now with your studies.

Table 1.4 Organization Creates a Foundation

If You Want To...	Then...
Remember all important due dates (assignments, payment deadlines)	Review all your syllabi now and place the assignment due dates on a calendar.
Reach your educational dreams	Establish clear goals and take action each day to move closer to your goals.
Earn “respectable” grades—and eventually make the dean’s list	Create a study schedule that blocks out at least two hours a week for each hour spent in the classroom.
Finish course work quickly and with quality results	Sign up for a class schedule that fits your lifestyle. Be realistic.
Work or play sports or join the band	Make a list of all your obligations (work, family, cocurricular activities)—and determine how much quality time you have for class. Do not overextend yourself.
Finish lengthy reading assignments—and remember what you have read	For each reading assignment, read a few pages a night rather than waiting and wading through the entire chapter the night before it is due.
Better understand classroom lectures	Ask whether your instructor posts outlines or notes online for student use.
Understand your notes	Set up a schedule so that you can review your notes nightly. Jot down any questions you might have, and ask your instructor the next class session.
Get notes for the class sessions you miss	Early in the semester identify a study partner and consider exchanging phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses.
Perform as well as possible on all of your exams	Develop a study schedule so that you can begin a nightly review rather than waiting for a night-before cram session. You might want to explore the possibility of joining a study group.
Be healthy	Schedule a specific amount of time each day for healthy physical activity and appropriate sleep each night.

Chapter SUMMARY

Life as a college student will have moments of exhilaration and challenge. You will be able to maximize the highpoints and minimize the anxiety if you build habits that will help you navigate the transitions you will encounter.

Before leaving this material, keep the following points in mind:

- Whenever you feel emotionally drained or may be thinking of giving up on college, consider that the opportunity cost of a college education is an investment in you.
- Be willing to use your old skills in new situations—adjust and change as needed—but never forget that you have a great deal of experience from which to draw.
- Develop healthy and respectful relationships with classmates and college staff to help you transition successfully.
- Maintaining a healthy lifestyle will help you adapt and thrive in your new environment.

CRITICALLY THINKING

What Have You Learned?

Return to the situation that was described (and you wrote about) at the beginning of this topic. Specifically, look at the second part of that scenario, which stated:

You have been placed in a first-year, orientation-to-college course this term. Explain why you **DO** really need this stuff! Even though you have spent many years in classrooms and have life experiences, there are some areas you need to improve on as you begin the term.

Reflect on the answer you wrote to that statement. After you complete that, review your notes from this chapter, the learning outcomes, the key terms, bold-faced headings, and the figures.

Based on what you have read in this material, write a revised response to the situation above. Please describe what has caused you to adjust (or maintain) your evaluation. In what ways do you see a first-year, orientation-to-college course in a different way than when you started reading this material? How will you use your strengths to minimize your challenges?

