getting started

habits for success in college, career, and life
Growing up in the Jacksonville Housing Authority in Florida, Donique Wray faced challenges from the start. Before she was born, her mother ran away from home at age 13 to live on the streets. Then when she was 9, her father was sentenced to life in prison for committing murder. In this world, with an absent father and a mother who struggled to survive and to recognize value in herself and her daughter, Donique lacked role models who could guide her. She had to learn to self-parent, and her anger often got the best of her, leading to difficulties in high school including frequent absences and low performance.

Despite her challenges and stubborn attitude, Donique’s school counselor, Travis Pinckney, saw something special in her. Encouraging her to move beyond her past, he began to work with her to help her develop hope and a vision for the goals she could achieve. He advised her to retrain her focus on attendance, academic performance, and college entrance tests. She got it. She began to work tirelessly, retaking whole credit courses she had failed, starting grade recovery, mentoring at-risk ninth graders, and retaking the SAT, all while working at the local library. During that period she used her passion for writing to create a short film to help other students learn from her academic and social mistakes. But could she persist enough to gain entrance to college and thrive there?

(to be continued ...)

Many students find it challenging to persist past the obstacles that challenge them. You’ll learn more about Donique’s experience at the end of the chapter.
How Can College Get You Where You Want to Go? (and if you have no clue where you are going, how can college help you figure it out?)

Persistence is what helps you do what you have to do to get where you want to go—and you are already building it. Whether you’ve just completed high school or its equivalent or are returning to school after staying home with young children, whether you’ve worked in one or more jobs or served in the armed forces, you have persisted through the experience. Now you have decided to pursue a degree, enrolled in college, found a way to pay for it, and signed up for coursework. Game on: Now it’s up to you to finish strong so that you reap the benefits of your time and efforts.

From the simplest possible perspective, college success is about accomplishing tasks and responsibilities: Show up (either in person or virtually) to class, pay attention and participate, do your best work, and turn assignments in on time. But issues and distractions can make it tough to persist on a day-to-day basis. Many students wonder, “Why am I doing this?” It’s an important question to ask yourself. As you begin to answer, knowing more about how college will help you in the workplace can help you stay in motion toward your goals.

What you learn in specific coursework is important, especially in courses related to your major and what you want to pursue in your career. But even more importantly, college is a training ground for life. It is an opportunity to build skills and habits that you need to survive in this era of rapid change, when:

- Many formerly domestic jobs have moved overseas.
- Graduates working in the United States now compete with and work with people who live in different time zones, speak different languages, and come from different cultures.
- Technological development continues at an ever-faster pace, demanding constant learning and training.
- Global media and communication technology enable exposure to different people, places, values, cultures, beliefs, and perspectives.
- Knowledge work, such as Internet technology, is on the rise while labor-based jobs, such as factory work, are in shorter supply.
What you need to achieve your goals in this world, where you may compete for information-based jobs with highly trained and motivated people from around the globe, is different from what workers needed even one generation ago. In addition to specific skills and consistent hard work, you need transferable skills—skills and qualities that can transfer to any job or career area—like these:

- A commitment to lifelong learning
- The ability to work in a team
- Problem solving and critical thinking
- Self-management skills, including time management
- Communication, both in person and in writing
- Flexibility in the face of change

Look at Key 1.1 for the results of a recent survey of employers, showing what they most value in potential employees (note the high number of transferable skills).

College provides multiple opportunities for you to gather and hone the tools you need to succeed, tools such as the following:

**Skills specific to academic subjects and career paths.** At the most basic level, your coursework trains you in areas that link to the workplace opportunities you aim for.

### Key 1.1 Employers rate the importance of candidate qualities and skills.

What employers look for in people they hire, ranked by the percentage of employers who value each quality or skill

Experience as a learner. You know those core requirement courses that don’t seem to relate to your career goals? They train you in how to learn. In today’s workplace, where rapid change means that employees frequently have to learn new ideas, techniques, and technology, knowing how to learn is an essential skill for anyone who wants to keep a job.

Opportunities to grow as a team player and social being. The modern workplace values teamwork above almost all other qualities. Whether you go to class online or in person, you interact with others. The more practice you have working with people—instructors, fellow students, co-workers—the more marketable you will be.

Opportunities to give back to those around you. One of the best ways to develop valuable skills, both transferable and task specific, is through giving to others. Explore any volunteering opportunities your college may coordinate or offer, including service learning courses.

Think about yourself right now. Complete the short assessment in this chapter’s All About You, a self-awareness building exercise. Then consider: Would you hire yourself? If you answered no, all is not lost: The work you do in this course will prepare you to succeed in college and get the job you want after graduation. If you answered yes, this course will help you improve even more.

College is a transition for any student. Take a look at what the transition means and the resources that can support you.

ALL ABOUT YOU

If you were a hiring manager and could only hire one person in your small company this year, what qualities would you most want in that employee? For example, would you require strong communication skills, excellent teamwork, or the ability to problem solve? Write your top five qualities in the spaces that follow and rank their levels of importance from 1 to 5, with 1 being the highest and 5 the lowest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compare your list with lists from one or more classmates. Ask the following questions: What qualities from other lists would you include on your own? Would you change your rankings?
How Can You Transition to College-Level Work? (and step up your game no matter your starting point?)

The so-called typical path of the student—graduating from high school at 18, attending college for 2 to 4 years, and then finding a job right after graduation—is no longer typical. Today, students follow a variety of paths and time schedules to reach their goals. However, whether high school graduation was last year, 10 years ago, or achieved by working toward a GED, every student faces the challenge of transitioning to college work and culture.

Knowing what to expect will help you prepare. Here are two significant differences everyone will face (spend some time with your college’s student handbook to get informed about details specific to your school).

**More independence and responsibility.** Perhaps the single most significant difference between high school and college is the extent to which you are responsible for your actions. You will be expected to make the following—and more—happen on your own:

- Buy books and other assigned materials.
- Use your syllabi to set up your schedule for the term.
- Keep on top of assignment deadlines and exam dates.
- Get help when you need it.
- Complete assigned coursework.
- Set up study group meetings.
- Be present, on time, and with needed materials, whether in a classroom or on a computer.
- Manage your out-of-class time effectively.

**Increased workload.** College means more work per course, and more challenging work, than you completed in high school. You will be required to read more material and to move faster through those materials. Your brain will need to both recall information and think critically about it (analyze, compare and contrast, evaluate, and more). To manage all this, you need adequate study time. A rule of thumb is to study at least 2 hours for each hour of class time, meaning that if your classes are in session for 9 hours a week, you need to schedule at least 18 hours of study and work time through the week, every week.

You are not alone as you face these challenges. Look to the people around you, the technology available to you, and this course for support.
People Can Help

Faculty and staff are among the most valuable—but underused—sources of help. A recent survey of college freshmen indicated that only 25% of students asked a teacher for advice after class throughout the term, and only 8% considered seeking counseling.¹ That means that 75% did not ask their instructor for help and 92% would never seek counseling, no matter the need.

Don’t let these important sources of support go untapped. Connect with instructors, teaching assistants, advisors, tutoring centers, and counselors throughout your college career.

Instructors and Teaching Assistants

You have frequent contact with instructors, whom you may see in person or connect with online one or more times a week. Consult them to:

- Clarify material presented in class.
- Help with homework.
- Find out how to prepare for a test.
- Ask about a paper while you are working on it.
- Find out why you received a particular grade on a test or assignment.
- Get advice about the department—courses, majoring—or related career areas.

Before or after class works well for a quick question. When you want to have a longer conversation, make an appointment to talk during in-person or virtual office hours, start up an exchange using e-mail, or request a phone call by leaving a voice mail message.

Office hours. Instructors’ regular office hours appear on your syllabi, on websites for individual courses, and on instructors’ or departmental web pages. Always make an appointment for a conference. Online instructors may offer videoconferences through Skype or other platforms. Adjunct instructors who have no permanent office space may prefer phone calls.

E-mail. Instructors’ e-mail addresses appear on your syllabi and on the course sites. Use e-mail to clarify assignments and assignment deadlines, to ask questions about lectures or readings, and to clarify what will be covered on tests.

Voice mail. If something comes up at the last minute and your instructor has provided a phone number on the syllabus, leave a short, specific message. Adjunct instructors without a school-sponsored phone number may provide a cell number, or they may only be reachable by e-mail.

Academic Advisors, Tutors, and Academic Centers

An academic advisor is a student’s personal connection with the college, and most colleges assign an advisor to each student. Your advisor will help you choose courses, plan your overall academic program, and understand college regulations, including graduation requirements. Although you may only be
required to meet with your advisor once per term, you can schedule additional meetings if you need.

Tutors can give you valuable and detailed help on specific academic subjects. Most campuses have private tutoring available, and many schools offer free peer tutoring. If you feel you could benefit from the kind of one-on-one work a tutor can give, ask your instructor or your academic advisor to recommend a tutor.

*Academic centers,* including reading, writing, math, and study-skills centers, offer consultations and tutoring to help students improve skills at all levels. If your school has one or more academic centers, you may be able to find a tutor there.

**Counseling**

College counseling services can help you address academic problems, stress, and psychological issues. As stated on the website of one school’s counseling services, “counseling services are designed to assist students with addressing the difficulties that they encounter during these years and to promote greater overall wellness within the student population.”

Counseling is confidential, focused on your particular needs, and directed toward helping you handle what is bothering you. In most cases it is not ongoing, and it ends when you have achieved the goals that you and your counselor have defined.

**Knowing How to Use Technology Can Help**

Technology permeates college life. In a given day you might access a syllabus online, work on a team project with fellow students using a document-sharing platform, use the Internet to tap into a library database, draft an assignment on a computer, and e-mail a paper to an instructor. An increasing number of campuses have wireless networks, and of course some courses take place completely online. Some schools use a “paperless” system in which all student notifications are sent via e-mail. Here are some ways to smooth the transition using technology:

**Get connected.** Register for a school e-mail account and connect to the college network. Learn how to operate your school’s learning management system (LMS) and explore your course sites in the LMS. Register your cell phone number with the school to receive emergency alerts.

**Use computers to find information.** Frequent the college website, and use library databases. If they are available, download podcasts of lectures.
Be a cautious user. Save your work periodically onto a primary or backup hard drive, CD, or flash drive. In addition, install an antivirus program and update it regularly.

Stay on task. During study time, try to limit Internet surfing, direct messaging, visiting Facebook pages, and playing computer games.

Follow guidelines when contacting instructors via e-mail. When you submit assignments, take exams, or ask questions electronically, rules of etiquette promote civility and respect. Try these suggestions the next time you e-mail an instructor:

- Use your school account. Instructors may delete unfamiliar e-mails.
- Don't ask for information you can find on your own. Check the syllabus and the course website for answers first.
- Write a clear subject line. State exactly what the e-mail is about.
- Start with a greeting using the instructor's name and title. “Hello, Professor Smith,” or “Hi, Dr. Reynolds,” is better than “Hey” or having no greeting at all.

  - Be clear and comprehensive. First, state your question or problem and what you want to achieve. If necessary, support your position. End with a thank you and sign your full name.
  - Use complete sentences, correct punctuation, and capitalization. Avoid abbreviations, acronyms, and other styles more suitable to texting.
  - Give the instructor time to respond. Many instructors state on course materials that they will respond within a specific time period, often 24 hours. If you hear nothing after a couple of days, send a follow-up note that contains the full text of your first message.

This Course Can Help

The goal of this course is to help you build the skills and habits that will propel you successfully into your future.

- With your instructor and fellow students, you will build teamwork skills as well as your ability to get along with others.
- With your coursework and text, you will improve your study skills, critical and creative thinking skills, and learning strategies, as well as your ability to self-manage.
- With your electronic interactions, whether on your course site, a MyLab, or other electronic materials, you will increase your skill as a user of technology.

Where do habits fit in? Productive, positive habits make skill building and goal achievement possible. The skills you build will serve you only if you are in the habit of using them. Take a look at how habits affect your life.
What Is a Habit and How Can It Help? (how can you actually follow through on changing habits?)

**Habits** affect much of your day-to-day life including what you eat, what you wear, what you do and when, where you put things, and much more. People perform habits over and over again without really thinking about what they are doing.

**Bad and Good Habits**

What makes a habit “bad” or “good”? Bad habits have negative effects. Some, like alcohol and drug abuse, are destructive to your health and well-being. Other bad habits prevent you from reaching important goals. A common example: Leaving studying until late in the evening after classes, your work shift, and social time may leave you with almost no energy to do schoolwork well or on time. Good habits, in contrast, have positive effects. If you are in the habit of keeping study materials with you throughout the day and turning to them whenever you have a block of time, you’ll be more able to stay on top of your assignments.

Although some habits have the same effect on almost everyone, what makes many habits good or bad often depends on individual circumstances. Writing papers in the evenings might work well for one student and be labeled a “bad habit” by another who can’t write well at that hour. The collection of habits that work best for you will be as individual as you are.

Most students begin college with a set of habits they have had for years. The first step is self-knowledge: Identify your particular habits and analyze whether each has positive or negative effects on your life. Then the larger challenge is to adjust or set aside the habits that have negative effects and improve or add habits that foster success.

**How to Improve Your Habits**

Adjusting habits is a challenge for anyone, but determination combined with self-knowledge can bring change. In fact, recent brain research shows that when people work to change old habits and solidify new habits, they actually create new brain cells and new neural pathways that move currents from cell to cell.3 There are two ways to improve your habits:

*Replace or change an existing habit.* When an existing habit has negative effects, it is not enough to just ditch it. You have to substitute something in its place, says Scott H. Young, a student who is a habits expert: “If you opened up your computer and started removing hardware, what would happen? Chances are your
computer wouldn't work. Similarly, you can't just pull out habits without replacing the needs they fulfill. For example, if you try to stop eating sugar in high-stress situations, you will need to come up with a healthier stress-response action.

**Begin a new habit.** When you create a new habit, you are starting from the ground up, deciding on the specific nature of the habit as well as when, where, and how to use it.

Whether replacing or generating a habit, use the following steps to make the change:

1. **Identify what you want to change and why.** What do you want to accomplish? Are you changing an existing habit or beginning a new habit? Write it down in specific terms. Use positive language: “I will use my time between classes to study” is more motivating than “I need to stop wasting time between classes.”

2. **Name specific, short-term actions related to this habit change.** For example, if you aim to use between-class time to study, a specific behavior might be, “Bring my psychology book on Tuesdays so I can study between algebra and lunch.”

3. **Set up support.** You are more likely to succeed if your friends or family help you stay on track. Set up a progress-report plan with someone. Maybe once a week you’ll call or post a note on Facebook. Consider asking your support person to send motivating texts or e-mails.

4. **Get started, and keep it up for at least 21 days—maybe 30.** Habits experts note that it takes at least 21 days of consistently performing a new or changed habit to get it to stick. Personal development expert Steve Pavlina, noting how software companies give consumers 30 days to try out a new product, recommends that you follow that lead and beef up your “trial period” to 30 days.

5. **Be accountable as you go.** Note your actions and your progress in writing. Use whatever works for you—your planner, a separate notebook, e-mails, a computer document.

6. **Evaluate your progress.** Step back and evaluate how the process is going, and ask your support person or people to give you feedback if possible.

7. **If necessary, switch gears.** Not everyone responds well to drastic change. If a new habit isn’t sticking or your attempts to change are making you want to give up, go back and adjust your habit goal. For example, a student who has always pulled all-nighters before exams might not be able to cut out all late-night cramming. Instead, she could build in 3 hours of study time the night before the exam as part of a week-long study schedule.

As you work to establish new habits, keep it simple. Work on only one or maybe two habits at a time. If you attempt more, you run the risk of overloading and not successfully changing any of them. Over time and through trial and error, you will find what works for you.
Think of a habit of yours that you think might get in the way of your ability to succeed in college. Write it here: __________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

Why do you want to change this habit—in other words, what negative effect does it have on your academic performance? ________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

Describe the new or changed habit you would like to adopt. __________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

Name two specific, short-term actions you will take to make this change.

1. _____________________________________________________________________________________

2. _____________________________________________________________________________________

Identify the start date and end date (21 days later) of the period of time when you will focus on this change on a daily basis. _____________________________________/____________________________________________

Name someone who will support your efforts. _____________________________________________________

Describe how you will track your progress.
___________________________________________________________________________________________

Finally, put your two actions to work every day for 21 days. Describe the result here. What is different, if anything? Evaluate the effect this process had and whether you achieved your goal of positive change.
___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________
Now that you know more about habits, examine the set of habits that you will explore throughout this text. Any of them that you make your own will benefit you throughout your life.

What Habits Drive Success?
(and how can you make success-building habits your own?)

Being able to solve problems effectively is a key ingredient of academic, career, and life success. Art Costa, professor emeritus of education at California State University, Sacramento, and co-director of the Institute for Intelligent Behavior in El Dorado Hills, California, studied how students respond to problems and handle unfamiliar information and situations. He found that students who solved problems most effectively tended to rely on a certain group of habits. These positive habits promote success when used regularly and consistently.

The Habits for Success

To help you solve problems successfully and achieve your college and life goals, Keys to Effective Learning features 11 Habits for Success based on Costa’s work (see Key 1.2). Practicing these habits will help you:

- Work more effectively toward the grades you want.
- Manage yourself—your time, money, and responsibilities.
- Maximize your learning potential.
- Work well with others at school and elsewhere.
- Succeed in your coursework for your major.
- Graduate and thrive in the workplace.

The chapters of Keys to Effective Learning introduce you to these habits and give you opportunities to explore them. Each chapter features a habit and builds that habit in connection with the chapter topics, through both what you read and the exercises you complete. In the last chapter, you will have the opportunity to revisit all 11 habits—to apply each, evaluate your development, and plan how to make progress in the future.
### Key 1.2  Where to find, and some ways to use, the Habits for Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HABIT</th>
<th>CORRESPONDING CHAPTER</th>
<th>APPLY IT TO THE CHAPTER...</th>
<th>APPLY IT TO LIFE...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| PERSIST. Stick with it until you complete it. Finish strong. | Chapter 1  
Habits for Success | Stick to your goal of earning a college degree.                                            | Persist in working on a relationship that means a lot to you.                       |
| LEARN. Be a lifelong learner, always seeking to know more. Take initiative and be self-directed. | Chapter 2  
Learning Preferences | As your strengths and challenges change over time, self-directed learning allows you to respond to those changes. | Be ready to learn new skills and knowledge to stay employable in an era of rapid workplace change. |
| ANTICIPATE. Design a plan of action and define specific goals before beginning. | Chapter 3  
Time and Money | Plan out your class meetings, work times, and other responsibilities at the beginning of each week. | Before rushing into a big purchase such as a car, research what will get you the most bang for your buck. |
| COMMUNICATE. Ask for help and give help when you can. Connect with others with a purpose in mind. | Chapter 4  
Setting and Reaching Goals | Friends and classmates can help hold you accountable for steps toward an important goal. | Ask for ideas about how others manage stress through food and exercise choices. |
| IMAGINE. Expand your thinking to create new and useful ideas, solutions, and techniques. | Chapter 5  
Critical and Creative Thinking | Brainstorm possible ways to get the courses you need to fulfill requirements. | Risk trying out a new idea in your home life, and let it be okay if you make a mistake. |
| INQUIRE. Use questions to build knowledge. Excavate problems so you can solve them before they grow out of control. | Chapter 6  
Reading and Studying | Ask questions before reading (while skimming material) or during reading (in margins) in order to maximize your understanding of what you read. | In any conversation, take time to ask questions that help you understand the situation and the person better. |

(continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HABIT</th>
<th>CORRESPONDING CHAPTER</th>
<th>APPLY IT TO THE CHAPTER...</th>
<th>APPLY IT TO LIFE...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONTRIBUTE</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
<td>Concepts in one course can apply to another; for example, you can use psychology ideas</td>
<td>When you are stopped short by a problem, recall and use how you’ve approached</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading Across</td>
<td>when analyzing a character in a book.</td>
<td>similar problems in the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the Disciplines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LISTEN</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
<td>When classmates speak up in class, listen to and consider their questions and ideas as</td>
<td>Let co-workers have a say when a situation comes up, and consider their ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active Listening and</td>
<td>you would those of your instructor.</td>
<td>carefully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note Taking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERCEIVE</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
<td>Use senses-based mnemonic devices to remember science and math facts.</td>
<td>Engage your vision, hearing, and other senses to strengthen your ability to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Memory</td>
<td></td>
<td>remember procedures and people’s names on the job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RISK</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
<td>Use test preparation strategies to make the risk of test taking a responsible one, with</td>
<td>Before making a drastic life change, consider whether your chances of success are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Test Taking I:</td>
<td>a strong likelihood of success.</td>
<td>good enough for you to take the plunge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Test Preparation and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Objective Tests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADJUST</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
<td>When you encounter a tricky essay question, a flexible mind will help you approach it</td>
<td>When a health problem throws you a curve ball, optimize your actions to promote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Test Taking II:</td>
<td>comprehensively.</td>
<td>successful problem solving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Getting Results on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Essay Tests and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graded Projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted with permission from Discovering & Exploring Habits of Mind (pp. 22–37), by Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kallick. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. © 2000 by ASCD. Learn more about ASCD at www.ascd.org.
You can use one or more of the Habits for Success to confront academic challenges you will face in college—from learning to understand difficult texts to listening from the perspective of your instructor. In many cases you will use more than one habit at a time. For example, when working with a study group, you may connect with purpose, contribute to the work, and listen to other perspectives. With more practice, the habits will become simpler to apply no matter what the situation and will become an essential part of how you operate in school, in the workplace, and in your personal life. The chapter features and exercises will help you persist in habit exploration throughout the term.

**Coaching to Build Habits for Success**

What is coaching? To begin to answer this question, consider a basketball team playing a game. Although the coach has run the practices and drills, at game time he or she gives support from the sideline. The players are in the spotlight, accountable for their performance. Coaching gives the players the tools to succeed, the power to generate ideas, and the motivation to act so that they can perform at game time.
Like the basketball team, you are accountable for your actions. An academic or career or life coach can help you build habits that promote success. Through in-person conversations involving powerful questions that inspire thinking and generate action, a coach can prepare you to perform when your time in the spotlight arrives.

Coaching can apply to any area of your life, and many different people can use coaching tools— instructors, advisors, and more. The personal relationship is key to building trust and producing results. In each chapter of this text, you will have two opportunities to benefit from coaching.

**With the Powerful Questions exercises, you team up with a fellow student and coach each other.**

**With the Inside Tips feature, one of the authors coaches you in a way that matches her expertise.**

### Carol Carter is your career coach.

Carol was a vice president in the corporate world and now is president of her own company.
company. She has hired hundreds of graduates and has worked with many interns throughout her 30-year career. She will give you guidance on what employers look for in people they hire, so that you can work to build these much-needed skills in school.

**Sarah Lyman Kravits is your college coach.** Sarah is a student success instructor. She will coach you on how to solidify the study and self-management skills you have, improve the ones you struggle with, and use these skills to improve academic performance now and throughout college. She will also help you see the connection between school and life success.

How willing are you to work hard to reach your definition of success? It will take effort to rid yourself of habits that limit you and to develop habits that empower you—but if you are willing to put forth that effort, you will reap the benefit. Your opportunity to create positive change is now. This book and course will give you the chance to change your reality, creating opportunities and opening doors to the rest of your life.

**Habit in Action Wrap-Up**

**What happened with Donique?** After raising her scores and GPA and joining the Hicks Prep Club, Donique was accepted to the University of North Florida (UNF) and awarded the Hicks Scholarship—4 years of tuition, room and board, and meals worth $80,000. She made a strong start, especially considering her past. Donique set academic goals with Assistant Director of UNF Foundation Scholarships, Probyn Inniss, and chose to spend time with friends who nurtured her. She also camped out regularly at the Writing Center at UNF, revising and improving her papers, working to improve her writing on the way to one of her life goals—writing books and blogs that can help others.

Donique understands the persistence it takes to advocate for yourself, to fight for the people, resources, and opportunities that promote success. She does not yet know whether she will focus on criminal justice, sociology, or English literature. But she has the inner wisdom to know that regardless of what she majors in, being true to her own passion and vision will help her finish strong. As she says, “You can’t get to a better place without enduring the difficulty of the challenges on the path.”

**Connect this story to your life:** Where do you need to advocate for yourself, and in pursuit of what goal? Identify an action you will take as a self-advocate. Who can you call on to help you finish strong? Identify a person who can support you and what help you will request.
Building Skills for successful learning

Note the Important Points

Describe an important goal that college helps students achieve. __________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

Name two challenges students face as they adjust to college culture. ________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

Define a habit and describe what makes it "bad" or "good." ________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

Name two strategies a person can use to change or replace a problematic habit. ____________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

According to Art Costa’s research, what do the Habits for Success help people to do more effectively?
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
Critical Thinking

applying learning to life

Target Challenges at the Start

Students come to college coursework with a variety of levels of preparation. Examine how prepared you are by answering the following questions on paper or a computer document.

Gather information: How well do you think your high school experience prepared you for college work? Do you feel that you lack skill in reading, writing, math, or any other area?

Generate ideas for what might help: When you have addressed academic or workload challenges in the past, what has worked and what has not? Flip through the text: What chapters or sections may help you with a particular shortcoming?

Take action: Commit to addressing a particular challenge using book strategies, a careful eye toward your syllabus, and a campus resource. Define specific details by filling in the blanks below. Then, put your plan to work starting now.

Your challenge: ________________________________________________

Book strategy #1 ____________________________________________ on page _________

Book strategy #2 ____________________________________________ on page _________

Syllabus dates/weeks to watch: _____________________________ and ___________________________

Campus resource: ________________________________

Location: __________________________ Phone/e-mail: ________________________________

Contact resource by: __________________________ Goal of contact: __________________________

Getting Started 21
Team Building

collaborative solutions

Shifting to College-Level Work

In person or online, gather a group of three to five students. Generate a list of transition challenges that can affect performance in class, outside of class, or both. When you have as many challenges as you have group members, each person should choose one.

Look at the challenge assigned to you. On your own and in conversation with friends or family, generate as many practical ideas about how to overcome it as you can. E-mail your list to everyone else in your group.

After everyone has sent and received ideas, come together in person or online and discuss them. Which ideas may work better than others? Are there new ideas group members might add? In your discussion, narrow down to a “top three” ideas for each transition challenge.

The last step: Identify one of the transition challenges you face yourself. Make a plan to put one or more of the top three ideas to work. Evaluate whether it helped you cope.
Persistence Brings Test and Life Success

Preparation for tests scheduled at any time in the term starts on the first day of class. Everything you do for a course—every fact and idea that you hear, every concept you read, every assignment you generate, and every topic you discuss—builds your knowledge, preparing you to finish strong by showing what you know on test day. And all of it prepares you to face the tests that will come your way at work and in life.

Make a plan to persist toward test success starting now. Looking at the syllabi for the courses you are taking this semester, determine which test is coming up first. Fill in the following in relation to this test:

Course: __________________________________________________________________________

Test date and time (note in calendar or planner): __________________________________________

From what you can tell from the syllabus, topic(s) covered on the test: ________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Time each week you will study for this test (for example, every Thursday from 3:00 to 4:30):
_________________________________________________________ (note in calendar or planner)
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Office hours for the instructor who teaches this course: ____________________________________

Use this information to prepare—honor your weekly study times, consult with your instructor, and stay aware of the test date. After the test, evaluate: Describe whether these strategies helped you persist and finish strong.
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________