The greater danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we hit it.”—Michangelo Buonarroti
Grow

MyStudentSuccessLab is an online solution designed to help you acquire and develop (or hone) the skills you need to succeed. You will have access to peer-led video presentations and develop core skills through interactive exercises and projects.

Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning is a simple way of explaining the levels at which we all learn material and acquire information. The learning levels progress from basic to more complex learning and thinking. Examples are detailed below. Throughout this lesson, you'll see colorful triangles to the side of some activities. They let you know on which level of Bloom's Taxonomy the questions are based.

- LEVEL 1: Remember
  Define academic success.

- LEVEL 2: Understand
  Discuss the three major factors of academic success.

- LEVEL 3: Apply
  Demonstrate how your values affect your goal setting.

- LEVEL 4: Analyze
  Compare and contrast long- and short-term goals.

- LEVEL 5: Evaluate
  Predict how SMART goals will help your academic success.

- LEVEL 6: Create
  Write one major long-term goal.

Because you’ll learn how to:
- Create long- and short-term goals that align with your personal mission statement

Because you’ll be able to:
- Explain three cornerstones to academic success
- Analyze the relationship between change, values, motivation, and academic success
- Write a personal mission statement and long-term and short-term goals
- Analyze the characteristics of SMART goals
CREATING A ROAD MAP TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

How Can Writing Goals Bring about Positive Change?

Our goal is to help you become the most successful student, thinker, citizen, leader, and lifelong learner that you can possibly be. This lesson is designed to help you understand some of the basic truths about college life and academic survival and to learn to set goals that help you attain academic and personal success. We believe that you can actually create your own academic success. So what is the formula for creating a successful future?

- Set clear, realistic goals that help you get better every day
- Recognize your abilities and build on them
- Recognize your weaknesses and strive to improve them
- Use your passion, motivation, and desire to make your goals and dreams a reality

Earning a college degree can open up new worlds for you. You will most likely make more money and enjoy a more challenging and rewarding career. Your chances of finding a good job and keeping that job are greatly increased. High school graduates have a much higher unemployment rate than college graduates. College should make you a better thinker who is more creative and open to a more diverse population. Study the chart in Figure 1.1 to understand how important a college degree is to you.

**Figure 1.1 Education, Pay, and Unemployment Statistics of Full-Time Workers 25 and Over**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Mean Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>Professional Degree</td>
<td>$103,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>Doctorate Degree</td>
<td>$88,867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>$69,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>$57,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>$44,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>Some College, No Degree</td>
<td>$40,556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>$34,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>Less Than High School Graduate</td>
<td>$27,470</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Earning a degree requires certain skills, academic abilities, dedication, hard work, goals, and focus. Going to college can be compared to taking a long road trip or setting out on a long journey to a desired destination, and it requires using a trusted road map to avoid unnecessary delays and detours. Millions of people have taken this journey and have been successful because they did what they needed to do—they did the right things at the right time, and they did them right.

Dropping out of college, however, is an equally common event. According to Rzadkiewicz (2011), “Approximately 35 percent of students who enter college will drop out during the first year.” Some students leave because they made serious mistakes, such as partying too much and not going to class so they flunked out. Some couldn’t manage their time; others couldn’t manage their money. Still others didn’t like their instructors and couldn’t adjust to heavy workloads and the demanding rigor that college brings. Another group fails to complete the journey because they simply couldn’t figure out how the system works so they gave up in frustration, anger, fear, and disappointment. This does not have to be you! You can complete this journey.

ADJUSTING TO THE CULTURE OF COLLEGE

What Are the Steps to Success?

College is not like high school! The work is faster paced; the expectations are much higher; you have to use higher level thinking skills and move beyond rote memorization; projects will require creativity and teamwork; you will have more freedom that you must manage wisely; assignments will demand that you research and discover resources; more technology will be incorporated; the instructors are not like your high school teachers; the student population is more diverse—the list of differences goes on and on! That’s why going to college is so exciting! This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience to study, learn, grow, change, and move way down the road toward becoming the person you are meant to be.

There are many resources and people to help you—but you have to go to them. They will not seek you out. Research shows that only a small percentage of students actually seek help outside of class from instructors. Most instructors are willing to meet with you and give you assistance and advice, so when you feel lost or scared, get an appointment with the instructor in whose class you are struggling.

Most colleges and universities have numerous centers designed to provide additional help. You might find an academic center, a math/statistics lab, a writing center, a technology center, a language lab, and many others. You will find many student organizations that can be helpful to you. Ask your instructors and advisors for advice on where to go to get special assistance.

List three resources on your institution’s campus that could help you improve and become more academically successful:

1. ________________________
THREE MAJOR FACTORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Why Are They So Important?

There are a number of factors that affect academic success: going to class, studying, avoiding cramming, taking good notes, hanging out with people who are serious about getting an education, not working too many hours in a part-time or full-time job, finding a tutor if you feel like you are falling behind—the list goes on and on, and they are all important factors. There are three factors, however, that make a major difference in whether you succeed or become part of the almost 40 percent of students who drop out.

The first factor is simply to understand completely why you came to college:

- Did you come because your parents expected you to?
- Did you come because you always knew you would go to college?
- Did you come because you couldn't find a decent job without an education?
- Did you come because your boyfriend, girlfriend, or partner was coming?
- Did you come because you truly love going to school?
- Did you come because you want to make more money and this is the ticket?
- Did you come because all your friends were going to college and you did not want to be left behind?
- Did you come because a college degree is a status symbol that you think you should have?

All of these points are valid reasons for deciding to go to college. But that is just the first step. Now that you are here and enrolled, you have to take steps beyond just getting in the front door. Now what? Do you know what you want to study? Do you have any idea if there are good jobs in the field you have chosen?

The second important factor is to take personal responsibility for your success. You may have looked forward to making your own decisions for a long time—now’s your chance. Your mother won’t be there to wake you up on time and make you go to class; most of your instructors won’t track you down and tell you they are worried about you; your friends are worried about making it themselves so they won’t be looking over your shoulder. You are on your own! You are going to experience a big culture shock if you are entering college directly from high school. If you are coming back to college after having been away for awhile, the technology factor may impact you hard. Regardless of the obstacles you might
encounter, you own them. It is up to you to do what it takes to succeed, so take ownership and responsibility!

The third major factor related to your academic success is to make connections with other people. Most people are social animals, at least to an extent. There are very few true loners who want to go off into the woods and live like a hermit. Most of us need a network of people in order to be healthy and happy. We need a strong support system when we go through difficult times; we need people with whom we can have fun and enjoy life; we need professional friends with whom we can collaborate and forge successful ideas; and we need instructors and advisors with whom we can discuss problems and concerns. This is a great time to build your network, whether it is social or professional. This is a great time to connect with people and to hone your communications skills.

**THE TEN ESSENTIAL CORNERSTONES FOR SUCCESS IN A CHANGING WORLD**

**What Skills Are Needed to Be Successful?**

If you are going to become the person you are capable of being, you will have to embrace change. Change, that you direct, creates opportunities for you to grow and prosper in ways you may have never imagined. You need to know this about change: It is a developed skill that takes

*I know the price of success: dedication, hard work, and constant devotion to the things you want to see happen.*

—Frank Lloyd Wright

**Figure 1.2 Ten Essential Cornerstones for Success in a Changing World**

**PASSION**  The ability to show a passion about one’s mission and a willingness to align personal goals with education, talents, experiences, and skills. An ability to demonstrate concern not only about personal success, but also about the world and one’s surroundings—a commitment to **civic literacy** and seeing oneself as “a citizen of the world.”

**MOTIVATION**  The ability to find the inner strength and personal drive to get up each day and face the world with an “I can, I will” attitude. The ability to develop a strong personal value and belief system that motivates you when the going gets tough. The ability to know who you are and never let anyone steal your identity or erode your personal ethics.

**KNOWLEDGE**  The ability to **become highly skilled in a profession** or craft that will enable you to make a good living for yourself and your family in a rapidly changing workplace and to use lifelong learning to maintain your marketable skill sets. The ability to master important academic information beyond your major field in areas such as math, science, psychology, history, technology, economics, and communication and to practically apply that information in an evolving and highly technical work environment.

**RESOURCEFULNESS**  The ability to apply **information literacy**—to know where to find information and the resources that will help you be successful in your academic studies and your chosen profession, and **how** to evaluate that information to determine if it is useful and accurate. The ability to look for and to seek new opportunities, options, and outcomes. The ability to imagine, integrate, and implement new ways of solving old problems.

**CREATIVITY**  The ability to use **creativity and innovation** in solving problems that will enable you to anticipate new and emerging issues, to communicate and use what you know and what you have learned and discovered to
time, usually requires an attitude adjustment, and demands that you take action that moves you toward a goal. Change embraces two actions: letting go and holding on. Change requires letting go of bad habits, people who drag you down, and habits that are non-productive, and holding on to the positive people, strengths, and talents that have served you well in the past.

Whether we like it or not, a massive transformation is taking place all over the world. This change is making success more difficult today than it was in the past. Your college education should make you more competitive, give you an edge, and allow you to successfully build a good life for you and your family.

The Ten Essential Cornerstones for Success in a Changing World (Figure 1.2) includes skills you will need for your success, personal independence, and continued growth in the new world that is emerging.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHANGE, VALUES, MOTIVATION, AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Why Are These Relationships Important to Success?

There is a definite relationship between being able to change, establishing a set of worthy values, becoming a motivated person, and achieving academic success; they are all mixed up together. We have already discussed the all-important ability of being able to change and move toward an expanded world filled with opportunities. Now, you need to get in touch with your value system and decide which values you need to hold onto and which ones need to be adjusted and added. Your values influence your choices and your choices influence your actions. We all make decisions and choices based on what we value.

Values are simply those qualities, standards, and answer critical questions and solve complex and demanding problems.

**ADAPTABILITY**  The ability to make good choices based on future opportunities and a changing workplace and to constantly **reinvent yourself** as change brings about necessity and opportunity. The ability to work effectively in a climate of changing priorities and uncertainty.

**OPENMINDEDNESS**  The ability to **accept and appreciate a highly diverse workplace** and the inherent differences and cultures that will be commonplace. The ability to listen to others with whom you disagree or with whom you may have little in common and learn from them and their experiences. The ability to learn a new language, even if your mastery is only at a primitive, broken, conversational level. The ability to conduct yourself in a respectable and professional manner.

**COMMUNICATION**  The ability to develop and maintain healthy, **supportive personal and professional relationships** and to build a solid network of well-connected professionals who can help you and whom you can help in return.

**ACCOUNTABILITY**  The ability to **accept responsibility and be accountable** for all aspects of your future including your psychological well-being, your spiritual well-being, your relationships, your health, your finances, and your overall survival skills. Basically, you must develop a plan for the future that states, “If this fails, I’ll do this,” or “If this job is phased out, I’ll do this,” or “If this resource is gone, I’ll use this,” or “If this person won’t help me, this one will.”

**VISION**  The ability to guide your career path in a new global economy and to understand and take advantage of the inherent impact of worldwide competition—even if you live in a small town and work for a small “mom and pop” company. The ability to **“see” what is coming** and prepare for the changes, adapt to circumstances, and grow with grace and style.
beliefs that we consider to have merit or worth. Your values tend to guide your life and determine your choices. If you value attention, you will dress a certain way, or drive a flashy car, or do things that make people look at what you are doing. If you value an education, you will choose to study, to get assistance, and to turn in assignments on time. Someone who values a fit body will most likely choose to exercise, eat properly, and rest sufficiently. Below you will find a list of items. Read them carefully and circle the ones you truly value. If you value something that is not on the list, add it in the spaces at the bottom:

Honesty  Affection  Punctuality  Respect
Frankness  Open-Mindedness  Reliability  Trustworthiness
Sincerity  Wit/Humor  Spontaneity  Devotion
Frugality  Justice  Creativity  Caring
Spirituality  Friendliness  Energy  Intellect
Attentiveness  Conversational  Money  Security
Fine Dining  Beauty  Devotion  Enthusiasm
Positivism  Commitment  Foresight  Creativity
Organization  Learning  Listening  Giving
Control  Comfort  Knowledge  Courage
Athletic  Ability  Thoughtfulness  Independence
Safety  Fun  Excitement  Party
Love  Friendship  Writing  Speaking
Reading  Family  Dependability  Teamwork
Time Alone  Time w/ Friends  Phone Calls  Walks
Exercise  Problem Solving  Empowerment  Integrity
Service to Others  Modesty  Strength  Tolerance
Imagination  Self-Esteem  Food  Power
Winning  Goals  Risk Taking  Change
Self Improvement  Forgiveness  Fairness  Optimism
Successful Career  Motivation  Trust  Direction in Life
Working  Hobbies  Books  Mentoring
Stability

Now that you have circled or written what you value, choose the five that you value the most. In other words, if you were only allowed to value five things in life, what five would you list below? In the space to the right of each value, rank it from 1 to 5 (1 being the most important to you, your life, your relationships, your actions, your education, and your career).

Take your time and give serious consideration to this activity, as you will need to refer to this exercise later in this lesson.

List                    Rank
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________

Now, look at your #1. Where did this value originate?
Defend why this is the one thing you value more in life than anything else.

How does this one value motivate you?

Now that you are in touch with your personal values, you are ready to focus on developing a mission statement and on setting goals.

**DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT**

**Why Is It Important to Have a Mission?**

Many expert life coaches believe that creating a powerful personal mission statement is one of the best ways to change your life. It is important to get it right because your goals and plans for the future will emanate from this mission statement. Using a personal mission statement is the practice of living your life with direction and purpose rather than wandering like an explorer without a compass.

Your personal mission statement should be focused on these five things:

1. What is the purpose of my life?
2. What are my core strengths?
3. What do I value, believe in, and stand for?
4. What do I enjoy? What things lift me up and make me happy and fulfilled?
5. What action plan do I need to put in place to complement my purpose in life?

Important components of mission statements answer the following three questions: **What do I want to be, what do I want to do, and what do I want to have?**

Someone who seeks a career in owning a fine-dining restaurant, for example, might answer these questions in the following manner:

**I would like to be** a fine-dining restaurant owner, an owner of my own catering business, a wife and mother, a good daughter to my parents, a good sibling to my brother and sister, and a good community servant to people who need help.

**I would like to do** exciting things with my life like travel to all the continents and visit all the major cities in this country. I would like to take my family and parents to Broadway plays and scenic vacations. I would like to sponsor homeless children for camps.

**I would like to have** my own restaurant and later add three more restaurants of different types. I would like to have my own catering business that will support my charitable efforts. I would like to have a nice home for my family on 10 acres of land with horses and a pond.

Now, you should answer the following questions on the next page carefully and truthfully. You should please yourself—not someone else.
What do I want to be?

What do I want to do?

What do I want to have?

When writing your personal mission statement, you should begin with the end in mind. Look way down the road and imagine you have come to the end of your life. What will you want to have accomplished? In whose life will you hope you made a difference? What character and values do you want to be known for? Who do you want to be as a person, employee, spouse, parent, colleague, and friend? What do you dream of having and doing?

Now that you have determined what is really important to you, you are ready to begin writing your personal mission statement. This might take some time and you may want to continue to edit and adjust it for several days; you might even change this statement months from now. But get started now! Remember, no one can put boundaries on you except you. Don’t worry about what anyone else will think about your ambitions and purpose. People around you have no idea how hard you are willing to work or how big your dreams are.

Having a personal mission statement is like having a compass with you at all times to guide your decisions. You are always pointed in the right direction, and you don’t wander around lost.

A sample mission statement follows. As you can see, it is very specific about what this person is actually going to do:

I want to start my own business and own several restaurants and a catering business. My plan is to employ homeless people and people who have lost their jobs and give them a chance to own part of the business. When I have established four successful restaurants, I want to build a women’s and children’s shelter called Samantha’s Place. I will use this shelter to teach women how to work in the restaurant and catering business and help them get jobs so they can take care of their children. I want to change lives, make a difference, and be an example to my own children. I want to marry my soul mate and live in the country in a nice home with our children. I want to travel to all the continents with my husband and children, and I want to retire financially secure.

Some other examples of personal mission statements using values follow:

I want to use my love of physical fitness to start a family-oriented gym with programs for people of all ages. I want to live a clean, healthy life and raise a family with children who are proud of me and who I am as a person. My goal is to help other people learn to eat healthy foods and exercise frequently. I would like to take my programs into schools and I hope to make videotapes to sell that will help me help others.
I want to start a plumbing company and own the largest company in Oklahoma City. I want to be able to take my family on international trips and provide them with a good living. I want to buy my mother a nice home and make her life comfortable. I would like to provide scholarships for deserving children who have grown up on Native American reservations to honor my grandmother who was Native American.

None of these may relate to you—and they don’t have to. This is your mission statement, so make it belong to you; make it appealing and exciting enough that you want to spend your life working toward accomplishing it.

Now write your personal mission statement using the values you listed previously and your be, do, and have statements. Remember, you can erase and change and edit as much as you want to—just make it yours! You can start on this today and EDIT it next month. The important thing, however, is to think about it every day until you get it right for you.

**My Personal Mission Statement:**

---

**USING YOUR LIFE’S MISSION TO SET LONG-TERM AND SHORT-TERM GOALS**

**Are Goals Really That Important?**

When you have defined your mission, you are ready to set long- and short-term goals, the building blocks and foundation to a well-lived life. Setting concrete goals is one of the best things you can do to attain your academic and professional accomplishments. Few people take the time to sit down and think about where they are going with their one lifetime when it is a proven fact that a clear, well-defined, personal mission statement and written goals make a major difference in how much one accomplishes in life. Many people tend to drift around aimlessly with little purpose in what they do every day. They simply get up and do the same thing over and over again and wonder why their lives seem empty and meaningless and why they never seem to get ahead. Life is a series of choices, but many people just make decisions without thinking about the ramifications to their lives and the lives of their families. Choose! Choose intentionally! We want you to make conscious choices about what you are doing and where you are going.

"A goal properly set is halfway reached."

—Abraham Lincoln
After you have identified and solidified your long-term goals, you are ready to think about short-term goals that are really action plans that you do every day en route to your lifetime achievements. Before you do that, let’s focus on writing SMART goals. SMART is a mnemonic that has been around for quite some time and has been used by many organizations.

Luke Bryan is the consummate goal setter. From the time he got his first guitar from his parents at age 14, he knew what he wanted to be: a country singer and performer. He set out to reach his goal by doing something every day to get better—one step at a time. Luke had talent, but he also had determination and a vision for what he could become. After playing in local clubs and working with local bands for several years while he finished high school, Luke was ready to make his move to the big time; he was heading for Nashville! But fate intervened in a devastating and untimely way. His brother, Chris, died in an automobile accident the same day he was to leave. Rather than go to Nashville, Luke went to college and paid his way through school performing with local bands.

After graduation, Luke went back home to South Georgia and began working with his father in farm-related businesses, but his heart was not in it. Finally, his father told him he had to go chase his dreams, so he left for Nashville. Within two months, Luke had landed a deal as a songwriter. Luke said, “One of the biggest days of my life was signing a contract with Capitol Records. All my wishes and dreams came together right there in that room.” While performing locally, Luke was discovered by a Capitol Records representative. In 2007, his song All My Friends Say was climbing the charts at the same time that his song Good Directions, performed by another artist, was also headed up the charts. Luke was on his way toward reaching his goal! Today Luke Bryan is a bona fide country star, performing all over the country, traveling in his own tour bus, and living his dream.

EXTRAORDINARY REFLECTION

Luke was encouraged to go after his dreams by his family and friends. He believes that it is important to surround yourself with people who are on the move and believe in their dreams. How have your family and friends helped you reach your goals thus far?

CHARACTERISTICS OF SMART GOALS

“Happiness is not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort.”

—Franklin D. Roosevelt
and individuals. Each letter in SMART indicates one criterion of a well-written goal. You can probably locate several versions of this plan, but for our purposes, we are going to define SMART as shown in Figure 1.3.

Using the SMART goals criteria, write one goal related to your personal academic achievement that you can accomplish this semester.

"Decide you want it more than you're afraid of it."
—Bill Cosby

| SPECIFIC AND SIGNIFICANT—SMART goals are those that are detail oriented and will make a significant difference in your life if you achieve them. |
| MEASURABLE—You might hear this said at work: “What gets measured, gets done.” You have to have a plan of how well you are going to do something or how much you are going to accomplish. |
| ACTION-ORIENTED AND ATTAINABLE—You have to do something to make goals happen, so action is required. These actions have to be under your control. |
| REALISTIC AND RELEVANT—Goals need to be realistically achievable so you don’t get frustrated and quit. They need to be just out of reach so you have to stretch and grow to attain them. |
| TIME-BOUND OR DEADLINE ORIENTED/TRACKABLE—Goals need to be guided by a sense of urgency—you don’t have forever to make something happen, so give yourself a realistic deadline for reaching your goals. |

**WRITING LONG-TERM AND SHORT-TERM GOALS**

**How Can Goal Setting Bring About Success?**

In the beginning, you should write only a few goals that are important to you. Fewer goals will enable you to experience success that will be motivating to you. As you grow and learn, you will alter your goals and increase your list to fit your current circumstances. **Long-term goals** are exactly what they appear to be—they take time to accomplish. Long-term goals may take one year, five years, or even twenty years. Because they do take a long time, we tend to get discouraged,
so we need to set short-term goals that are like intermediate steps en route to the bigger goals. Some people refer to short-term goals as enabling goals—they enable you to take the steps that help you reach your long-term plans. Short-term goals are based on your long-term goals and should be the steps that lead you to accomplishing the long-term goals. Both your short-term and long-term goals should relate to your personal mission statement.

If you study the lives and successes of most people who have “made it,” you’ll discover that they have some things in common: hard work, dedication, knowledge, and determination. However, the biggest commonality is the ability to set and work toward a goal. From Bill Gates to Michael Jordan to Barack Obama to Oprah, they decided what they wanted, developed a road map to achieve it, worked hard, and never gave up. Yes, they faced troubles and hard times, but they understood that giving up would only lead to failure. This is true of everyone. Set realistic goals, but also don’t limit yourself by your current conditions. Through goal setting and hard work, you can have the things you want in this life.

Reflections on Goal Setting

If you study the lives and successes of most people who have “made it,” you’ll discover that they have some things in common: hard work, dedication, knowledge, and determination. However, the biggest commonality is the ability to set and work toward a goal. From Bill Gates to Michael Jordan to Barack Obama to Oprah, they decided what they wanted, developed a road map to achieve it, worked hard, and never gave up. Yes, they faced troubles and hard times, but they understood that giving up would only lead to failure. This is true of everyone. Set realistic goals, but also don’t limit yourself by your current conditions. Through goal setting and hard work, you can have the things you want in this life.

Writing Goals

Each lesson-end assessment is based on Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning. See the first page of this lesson for a quick review.

This activity uses levels 1–6 of the taxonomy

Using the My Personal Goal sheet that follows, write one short-term goal that is specific, relates to your mission statement, has action steps, has a narrative statement, has an “I deserve statement,” and has a deadline. You can use this form as many times as you want to write separate goals.

My Personal Goal

To help you get started, use this goal-setting sheet as a template for this and future goals.

Name

Goal Statement (with action verb and target date)
Action Steps (concrete things you plan to do to reach your goal)

1. 

2. 

3. 

Narrative Statement (how your life will look when you reach your goal)

I deserve this goal because:

1. 

2. 

I hereby make this commitment to myself.

My Signature_____________________________________________________

Date ______________________
Reference