FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

1) Personal Efficacy

**Efficacy** is the power to achieve a desired goal. Students with personal efficacy take responsibility for applying effort and achieving a goal. A student can develop **skills**, like time management and effective study practices, and **attitudes**, like confidence and persistence, that lead to efficacy.

2) Successful Students Are Responsible For Their Own Learning

Successful students don’t wait for their teachers to entertain and engage them. In order to get the most out of their classes, students need to take responsibility of engaging with the material and the process, even when the teacher’s presentation is not exciting. In *Plugging in: Choosing and Using Educational Technology*(1995), Jones, Valdez, Nowakowski, and Rasmussen describe indicators of engaged learning:

In engaged learning settings, students are *responsible for their own learning*; they take charge and are self-regulated. They define learning goals and problems that are meaningful to them; have a big picture of how specific activities relate to those goals; develop standards of excellence; and evaluate how well they have achieved their goals. They have alternative routes or strategies for attaining goals—and some strategies for correcting errors and redirecting themselves when their plans do not work. They know their own strengths and weaknesses and know how to deal with them productively and constructively. Engaged learners are also able to shape and manage change. (8)

3) Healthy Habits of Mind

In his book *A Different Kind of Classroom*, Marzano defines habits of mind as mental habits individuals can develop to render their thinking and learning more self-regulated. These mental habits include:

- Being aware of your own thoughts, emotions, and behaviors
- Planning: making responsible choices
- Being aware of available resources
- Being responsive to feedback
- Evaluating the effectiveness of your choices and actions. (17-19)
4) Prior Knowledge

Our experience of reading and learning relies on prior knowledge, which is a combination of the learner’s preexisting *attitudes, experiences, and knowledge*:

**Attitudes**
- Beliefs about ourselves as learners/readers
- Awareness of our individual interests and strengths
- Motivation and desire to learn

**Experiences**
- Everyday activities that relate to reading and learning
- Events in our lives that provide background understanding
- Family and community experiences that we bring to school with us

**Knowledge**
- Of the reading and learning process itself
- Of subject matter (for example English, history, science, or math)
- Of specific topics (such as fables, the Civil War, photosynthesis, or fractions)
- Of ways of organizing information (for example, main idea versus supportive evidence, or theory versus application, or cause and effect)
- Of different types of style and form (fiction and nonfiction, or narrative and exposition, or paragraph versus list)
- Of the academic and personal goals

[Adapted from *The Strategic Teaching and Reading Project Guidebook* (Kujawa & Huske, 1995).]

5) Cultural Background

For students to excel in their academic pursuits, they must feel “at home” in the academic setting. Cultural diversity in a classroom can enhance understanding not only of the course material but of various people and cultures as well. Awareness of cultural differences and how to respond to them can facilitate a student’s growth.

In the book *Cross-Cultural Communication: An Essential Dimension of Effective Education*, O.Taylor identifies some elements of communicating across cultures:

- Differences between cultures are often perceived as threatening.
- Feelings of apprehension, loneliness, or lack of confidence are common when visiting and experiencing another culture.
- First-hand experience is the best way to understand the many subtleties of any culture.
What is logical and important in one culture may seem irrational and unimportant to another.

In describing another culture, people tend to stress differences and overlook similarities.

Stereotyping due to over-generalization may be inevitable among those who lack frequent contact with other cultures.

Personal observations of others about another culture should be regarded with skepticism.

All cultures have internal variations.

Cultural awareness varies within individuals.

One’s own sense of cultural identity often is not evident until one encounters another culture.

Cultures are continually evolving.

Understanding another culture is a continuous process.

One should understand the language of a culture to best understand that culture. (3-4)

What are some of the features of COLLEGE CULTURE?

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Can you see yourself feeling at home in this culture?
PRINCIPLES OF TIME MANAGEMENT

1) RECOGNIZE WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL: The most important Time Management rule to remember is that YOU control your schedule; it does not control you. Though sometimes you may feel that your schedule is controlling you, the reality is that you make choices, sometimes difficult choices, about how to spend the hours and minutes of your life.

2) ACCEPT WHAT YOU CANNOT CONTROL: No matter how clever and hardworking you are, there are still only 24 hours in a day. If you try to do too much, you will not succeed. DIFFICULT CHOICES that students often have to make include:

- Studying instead of partying
- Writing an assignment instead of texting a friend
- Reading instead of watching TV or playing games
- Going to the tutorial center or library instead of the beach
- Working fewer hours (and living on less money) than before
- Taking the bus instead of driving (because you can read on the bus)

3) USE A CALENDAR and DAILY/WEEKLY PLANNER: There are many kinds of calendars that you can easily carry with you. Nowadays, many people have electronic calendars, but the old-fashioned paper calendars designed for students work very well. You need to be able to work with various blocks of time: a semester, a month, a week, a day, and an hour.

4) SCHEDULE A REGULAR TIME EACH WEEK FOR PLANNING AND SCHEDULING: Give yourself 30-60 minutes every week to review the tasks you need to accomplish (objectives) and the appointments/commitments you have in the coming week. During your Time Management hour, make a To-Do list: decide when you will accomplish each objective using a work sheet such as the Weekly Planner, and write your plan into your Calendar. Then don’t forget to follow your plan.

5) PRIORITIZE: Remember that you are the only one who can achieve your goals. As you plan your weekly activities give high priority to those activities that will keep you on track toward your goals.

6) BE FLEXIBLE AND PRO-ACTIVE: As you follow your plan for the week, striving to accomplish your objectives and meet your commitments, obstacles will sometimes arise. It is precisely at times like this that you need to remember that YOU control your schedule. If you are delayed in accomplishing an objective for some reason, you need to find another time slot in your week to complete the task. Likewise, if you want to add something to your schedule, move things around; don’t just ignore your plan.

7) STAY HEALTHY: Healthy, relaxed students are able to work more efficiently and lose less time to illness. Three habits for your physical health: PROPER NUTRITION, EXERCISE, and REST. Relaxation and recreation are important, too. Learn strategies for reducing stress.
Activity Logs [adapted from Mind Tools at www.mindtools.com]
Find Out How You Really Spend Your Time

How long do you spend each day on unimportant things – things that don’t really contribute to your goals? Do you KNOW how much time you’ve spent playing games, watching television, or talking/texting with friends?

Are you aware of which times of day you are likely to be better focused, more alert, or more energetic? Your effectiveness may vary depending on how long it is since you’ve eaten, the length of time since you last took a break, routine distractions, stress, discomfort, or a range of other factors.

Activity logs help you to analyze how you actually spend your time. The first time you use an activity log, you may be surprised at what you find. Time management is a skill that begins with an awareness of how you spend the hours of your days.

**Exercise 3: Activity Log and Written Analysis (see p. 3 of Worksheet Packet)**

Keeping an Activity Log for several days helps you to understand how you spend your time, and when you perform at your best.
1) Keep the log with you throughout the day and write down the things you do as you do them.
2) Every time you change activities, whether working, relaxing, studying, visiting, etc., note down the time of the change.
3) Be specific: “homework” or “afternoon” is not specific enough. Better: “Math problems” or “Wrote introduction for English essay” and “3:30 – 5:15.” Likewise, “Eating” is not specific enough. Write down WHAT you eat in order to monitor nutrition (which can affect energy levels).
4) As well as recording activities, note how you feel, whether alert, flat, tired, energetic, etc.

**Learning from Your Log**
Once you have logged your time for a couple of days, analyze your daily activity log. Notice the amount of time you spend on activities that have a high value to your goals, compared to the amount of time you spend on low-value activities.
Are energetic in some parts of the day, and flat in other parts? A lot of this can depend on physical health.

WRITE out your analysis: explain what you notice about how you spend your time, whether you prioritized tasks effectively (did you get your work done?), and whether you learned anything about what times of day are your most productive hours.

Your analysis should help you to manage your time more effectively:
Prioritize: eliminate or reduce some of the low-value activities in order to increase the time you have for high-value activities. Schedule your most challenging tasks for the times of day when your energy is highest. That way your work will be better and it should take you less time.

**Key Points:**
Activity logs are useful tools for auditing the way that you use your time. They can also help you to track changes in your energy, alertness and effectiveness throughout the day. By analyzing your activity log you will be able to identify and eliminate time-wasting or low-yield jobs. You will also know the times of day at which you are most effective, so that you can carry out your most important tasks during these times.
Preparing a To-Do List (Weekly and Daily)

Step 1:
On a piece of paper, write down all of the tasks that you need to complete. If they’re large tasks, break them in to smaller tasks that you can schedule in one-hour or two-hour blocks.

Step 2:
Reflect on each of these tasks and prioritize from HIGH (very important, or urgent), to MEDIUM, to LOW (unimportant, or not at all urgent).
If your list of HIGH priority tasks is unrealistically long, reconsider and reprioritize. Sometimes you need to make difficult choices.

Using Your To-Do Lists
Follow the prioritization, starting with the most important tasks first. As you complete each task, cross it off your list.
Many people find it helpful to spend, say, 10 minutes at the end of the day, organizing tasks on their To-Do List for the next day.

Exercise 4: To-Do List. (see pages 4-5 of Worksheet packet)

1. Look at your Cabrillo assignments for the coming week. List each assignment on the worksheet, being very specific about each one (not just “Math” but “Math problems on pages 46-52”).
2. List other obligations, such as work or family.
3. List your personal needs, such as exercise or going to the dentist.
4. Assign a priority value to each activity (HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW)
5. Rewrite the combined list of activities in order of priority, HIGH to LOW.
6. Decide which tasks have to be done first (consider due dates, appointments, etc.).
7. Make three To-Do lists, one for each of the next three days.
8. Assess your lists, and adjust where necessary to make your objectives realistic.
   Don’t forget to make difficult choices.
Exercise 5: Planning Your Week (see page 6 of Worksheet packet)

After making your prioritized To-Do list, you are ready to use a Weekly Planner Work Sheet to schedule your week’s activities. Following the principles outlined above, schedule the coming week’s tasks and commitments into the grid.

Here are some tips:

1) Use pencil.

2) Fill out the left column in half-hour increments, beginning with the time you wake up.

3) Plug in pre-scheduled activities such as classes, work, appointments.

4) Once the pre-scheduled activities are written in, you can see the hours you have for homework and other projects. Break larger tasks into smaller tasks; work with one- or two-hour chunks of time. After plugging in the “work,” you can assign your free hours to healthy recreation and relaxation.

5) Remember to give yourself time for getting ready, for transportation, and for healthy meals.

6) Once you are satisfied with the work sheet, you can transfer the information into your calendar (again, using pencil).

7) Even after you have put the plan into your calendar, YOU still control it; it doesn’t control you. Make wise choices. Evaluate and adjust regularly.
Setting Goals

Why set goals?
1) Goal setting is a powerful process for taking responsibility for the outcomes of your life.
2) Having clear goals will help to manage your time, motivate you, and give your life direction.
3) Accomplishing goals builds self-esteem and confidence.

What is a SMART Goal?
To define realistic goals that will allow you to take responsibility for creating your future, aim for SMART goals:
S - Specific.
M - Measurable.
A - Attainable.
R - Relevant.
T - Time-bound.

For example, instead of having a goal “To succeed in school,” you’re more likely to succeed if you have a goal like “To complete my Public Safety Certificate at Cabrillo College by June 5, 2014.” The second of these goals is SMART.

Step 1: Setting Long-Term Goals
The first step in setting personal goals is to consider what you want to achieve in the long term. Setting long-term or lifetime goals gives you the power to choose what your future will be.
You may have various categories of goals. A balanced, satisfying life involves more than just work. Consider some of the following categories.
Career – What kind of work would you find most satisfying? Consider the work itself and the income it would provide.

Education and Experience – What interests would you like to pursue for the satisfaction of learning more? Are there special experiences you would like to have, such as travel, performance, or physical challenges?

Family – Are you a parent or would you like to be a parent? What kind of parent do you want to be? Do you want a life partner? What kind of partnership would be most satisfying?

Self-Expression – Are there skills or interests you would like to develop in art, music, dance, or language?

Self Image – Do you have beliefs about yourself that hold you back? Are there “scripts” that repeat in your mind that you would like to “rewrite”?

Physical – Is your physical health as robust as you want it to be? Would you like to be stronger, thinner, more resistant to illness? Would you like to reduce the amount of harmful chemicals you consume? Do you tend to over-indulge in recreational drugs or alcohol?

Public Service – Are there problems in your community or in the world that you would like to help solve. Can you see yourself volunteering time and creative energy to interests like social justice or environmentalism
Exercise 6: Setting Long-Term Goals (Use your own paper)

Spend some time reflecting on the categories listed in Step 1 above.
List one specific goal for each category that is relevant to you. As you do this, be sure that the goals that you have set are ones that you yourself want to achieve, not goals that your parents, family, or employers might want. Don’t spend your life achieving someone else’s goals!
Now prioritize the goals: Which goals are most important to you? Rank the goals in order of importance, with the first being the most important. You do not need to have a goal for each category, but for this exercise, list at least four goals from four different categories.

Step 2: Setting Smaller Goals

Once you have set your long-term goals, set a five-year plan of smaller objectives (short-term goals) that will help you to reach your long-term goals.

Exercise 7: Setting Smaller Goals (Use your own paper)

For either your Career goal or your Educational goal, create a five-year plan, a one-year plan, six-month plan, and a one-month plan of progressively smaller goals that you should reach on your way to achieving your long-term goals. Then create a to-do list of things that you should do TODAY to work towards your lifetime goals. Finally review your plans, and make sure that they fit the way in which you want to live your life.

Goal Setting Example

Four of Julia’s lifetime goals are as follows:

Career – “To be a nurse.”

Education – “To learn how to cook healthy, delicious meals.”

Physical – “To lose weight and maintain a healthy weight, and to increase and maintain strength and endurance.”

Self-Image – “To believe in myself as a strong, capable person; to erase the script in my mind that tells me I’m stupid.”

Now that Susan has listed her lifetime goals, she then breaks down each one into smaller, more manageable goals. Let’s take a closer look at how Julia might break down her lifetime career goal - becoming a nurse:

Five-year goal: “Complete Nursing Program at Cabrillo College.”

Two-year goal: “Complete all pre-requisite course work for Nursing Program. Apply for admission to Nursing Program.”

Six-month goal: “Improve my language and math skills, and pass my classes.”

One-month goal: “Learn good self-efficacy habits”

One-week goal: “Complete all assignments for all my classes. Meet with math tutor to review homework. Go to English teacher’s office hours to ask about essay assignment.”

By breaking major goals down into smaller, more manageable goals, you are more likely to achieve your long-term goals.
Staying On Course

Setting goals is an ongoing process. Keep the process alive and relevant by reviewing and updating your plans frequently. Periodically review the long-term plans, and modify them to reflect your changing priorities and experience. One good way of doing this is to schedule a regular, weekly appointment with yourself to review your goals and plans, and to assess your achievements. Call it the self-efficacy hour.

Tips for Setting Goals

**Make your goals relevant** – don’t adopt someone else’s goals as your own.

**Be positive** – Instead of “Don’t turn in sloppy work,” have a goal to “Make all my assignments neat and legible. Follow assigned format.”

**Be specific:** Include dates, times and amounts so that you can measure achievement. If you are specific, you will know when you have achieved your goal and you can feel satisfied

**Prioritize** – If you have to choose between two activities, choose wisely. Ask yourself, which choice will bring me closer to my goals?

**Write down goals** – You can see your promise to yourself.

**Keep daily objectives realistic** - If a goal is too large, then it can seem that you are not making progress towards it. Keeping goals small and incremental gives more opportunities for reward.

**Set goals for your own actions, not goals for outcomes** - As much as possible, aim for accomplishments that you determine. Instead of “Get accepted into the Nursing Program,” say “Complete and submit application to the Nursing Program.” If you base your goals on personal performance, then you can control the achievement of your goals, and draw satisfaction from them.

**Set realistic goals** - It’s important to set goals that you can actually achieve. It’s possible to set goals that are too difficult because you might not appreciate either the obstacles in the way, or understand quite how much skill you need to develop to achieve a particular level of performance.

Review of Goal Setting

By setting goals you can:

- Decide what your future will be.
- Decide what is important and what is distracting or not important.
- Increase motivation.
- Build confidence in yourself.

Set your lifetime goals first. Then, set a five-year plan of smaller goals that you need to complete if you are to reach your lifetime plan. Keep the process going by regularly reviewing and updating your goals. Take time to enjoy the satisfaction of achieving your goals when you do so. Reward yourself for successes.