

# THE PATH TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

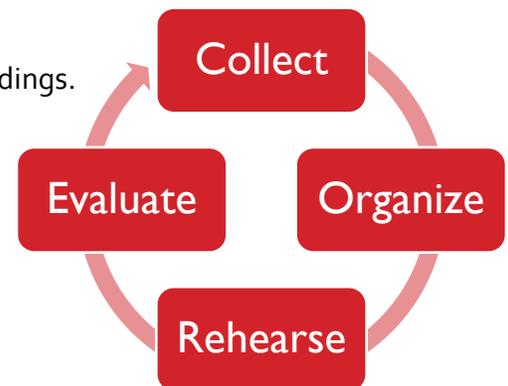


Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences

# THE PATH TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

## STEP UP TO THE PLATE

- **4 Keys to College Success:**
  1. Accept personal responsibility for your grades.
    - It's not your professor or the class, it's about your behavior and attitude.
  2. Find self-motivation.
    - Work toward meaningful goals and your dreams!
  3. Master self-management.
    - Plan, and be intentional in your actions as you progress through your classes.
  4. Be supportive.
    - Don't just support yourself and your goals; help others achieve theirs too!
- **3 Quick Ways to Activate your Studies:**
  1. When you're reading, pause at the end of each section to review it and take notes.
  2. During lecture, pause occasionally to make sure you're not only engaged in lecture, but taking accurate notes.
  3. Take breaks when you study—your brain plateaus and will stop being productive after too much time trying to focus.
- **Try the CORE Learning System:**
  1. Collect
    - Gather information from the lectures and readings.
  2. Organize
    - Turn your notes and readings into an efficient study guide.
  3. Rehearse
    - Review, revise, and evaluate your materials.
  4. Evaluate
    - Confirm your understanding of the material.
- **3 Lifestyle Changes for Better Studying:**
  1. *Get enough sleep!*
    - This will increase your alertness in class, concentration, and memory. It will also combat reading without understanding material.
  2. *Get regular exercise!*
    - It improves your processing abilities.
    - It promotes brain cell growth.



- It increases the bridges between your neurons (they help with memory)!
  - All you need is 30 minutes of increased heartrate 4-5 times per week.
3. *Concentrate on learning!*
- Remove distractions as best as possible.
  - Mental fatigue is rare—*it's usually boredom*.
  - To improve concentration, try these techniques:
    - **Pencil Technique**
      - Keep a pencil at the ready so you're inclined to take notes.
    - **Checkmark Technique**
      - Put a checkmark on a blank piece of paper every time your mind wanders and you break concentration.
  - Managing distractions takes a positive attitude for internal (in your mind) and external (environmental) distractions.
    - **Internal distractions**
      - Plan ahead and make a realistic to-do list.
      - Ward off daydreams.
      - Deal with your personal issues rather than putting them off.
      - Manage anxiety about classes.
    - **External distractions**
      - Find a good place to study—loud or quiet, whatever helps you focus on your work.
      - Make sure you're comfortable—clothing, chair, and environment included!
      - Keep your materials close at hand so you can stay in one spot.
      - Make sure there is good lighting.
      - **Avoid noise when possible.**

## SET GOALS

- Goals can be both short term (by the end of the day) to long term (term-long goals).
- Goals help keep you organized and assist you in managing your time wisely.
- When making goals, be sure they follow the SMART rules:
  - **Specific**—there is a clear outcome
  - **Measurable**—you can stay on track and reach your target
  - **Actionable**—turn tasks into action
  - **Realistic**—without this, will you achieve your goal?
  - **Timely**—a timeframe will give you a goal deadline
- Ask yourself:

- What is my motivation for doing this?
- Why is this important?
- Figure out resources or people who can help you accomplish your goals. Connecting yourself to other people or resources holds you accountable to your goal.
- How to Set a Goal:
  - Write it down! This is critical.
  - Free-write whatever comes to mind, then cross out unimportant goals.
  - Write down your activities, and the reasoning behind each.
    - Based on this, does one stick out? Write down why it's important to you.
  - Visualize! This gives you short-term and long-term motivation.
    - How to Visualize:
      - Relax! Breathe deeply as you tighten and release muscle groups from your head to your toes.
      - Use present tense. Imagine yourself there now!
        - Ex: I AM walking across the stage to receive my diploma.
      - Use all five of your senses in your visualization.
        - Imagine the scene—what do you see, smell, hear, taste, and touch?
      - Embrace feelings. Imagine that moment as grand and fantastic as you want it. Allow yourself to feel the excitement!

<b>Specific</b>	What do you want to happen?	Ex: I want to ace my final exam in chem.
<b>Measurable</b>	How do you know when it's accomplished?	Ex: I will get a 92 or better on the exam.
<b>Actionable</b>	Can you begin to work towards this goal now?	Ex: I can create a study plan and organize all the information that will be covered on the final.
<b>Realistic</b>	Is this too tough or too easy for you?	Ex: No, if I start now I can be successful without neglecting other exams.
<b>Timely</b>	What is the time frame to finish?	Ex: I will study chem for one hour a day until the final exam on April 24 <sup>th</sup> , and three additional hours on the weekend before.

## STUDY SMARTER, NOT HARDER

- Create a study schedule and routine for studying certain subjects at a specific time and place. Make your routine as habitual as going to class, eating, or watching your favorite TV show.
- Study subjects that are difficult or your least favorite **FIRST**. When you start a study session, you're fresh and most focused. Plus, you get to stop worrying about it once it's done.
- What's your peak time of day? When do you feel most alert and full of energy? Circle one.
  - Morning/Afternoon/Evening/Late Night
  - That is when you should be studying your most challenging subjects.
- Don't study for longer than an hour without a 10 minute break. This allows your mind to process what you just studied. Try the **Pomodoro Timer Method** to keep you on track.
  - Art or paper writing, when you need a continual flow, are exceptions. When you feel like you've accomplished a goal, that's a good stopping point.
- Schedule review sessions like you schedule the rest of your study time. Do these immediately after class, if possible. By reviewing your notes from class within 24 hours, you will retain more of what was covered.
- Ready to create a study plan? Go through these questions:
  - Do I focus better on one subject or when I switch them up?
  - How long can I concentrate before needing a break? Time yourself so you know your optimal study session time. Shorter periods of time mean shorter breaks. (For example, 30 minutes of studying= 5 minute break; 50 minutes of studying = 10 minute break)
  - What are my goals for the study session?
  - Do I need complete silence or do I need background noise?
  - Do I work better by myself or with other people?
  - What do I need to study? Do I *absolutely* need a computer (or will it lead to hours of Netflix instead of studying)?
  - Does where I study have enough light to stay awake and focused?
  - Is it too comfortable for me to fall asleep (ie. studying in bed)?
  - Do I have enough space to spread out the materials I need?

## STRATEGIES COMPILED FROM THE FOLLOWING SOURCES:

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