Chapter Roadmap

1

Introduction

In this chapter you will learn about some of the ways in which college is different from high school, and you will gain a better understanding of what will be expected of you. This chapter also describes how this book is designed to help you do your best in college and ultimately reach your goal of earning a college education and a degree.

This chapter roadmap page presents the formal learning goals for this chapter and a checklist that you should follow as you read and study the chapter.

Student Learning Goals

After completing this chapter you should be able to do the following:

1. Describe the ways in which high school and college are different.
2. Anticipate many of the challenges associated with attending college.
3. Define success in college in terms of both certification and qualification.

Chapter Checklist

You will benefit most if you complete the activities in the order that they are listed.

❑ **Target Date/Deadline:** _____
Complete Critical Thinking Activity 1.1.

❑ **Target Date/Deadline:** _____
Convert the student learning goals to questions that you can answer as you read the chapter. Write your questions on the study guide pages near the end of this chapter.

❑ **Target Date/Deadline:** _____
Read the chapter.

❑ **Target Date/Deadline:** _____
Try to answer the reading comprehension questions as you come to them in the chapter. Check each answer by comparing it to the list of correct answers in the back of the book. If any answer was not correct, then review the passages preceding the question to see why you missed the question.

❑ **Target Date/Deadline:** _____
Answer the student learning goal questions you created. These answered questions will be your study guide.

❑ **Target Date/Deadline:** _____
Write down any questions, insights, or comments that you have as you read so that you can bring them up in class.

❑ **Target Date/Deadline:** _____
Complete Review Questions 1.1.

❑ **Target Date/Deadline:** _____
Complete Assignment 1.1 (Record of Grades).

❑ **Target Date/Deadline:** _____
Review what you have learned from this chapter.

Critical Thinking Activity 1.1

Before you read this chapter—and without looking anything up on the Internet or elsewhere—use the space provided on this page to write your own definition of success in college.

What is success in college?

Adjusting to College:

We're Not in High School Anymore!

1

"Some people dream of success while others wake up and work hard at it."
—Winston Churchill[1]

For many first-time college students, college is like a magical land filled with new wonders and experiences. Perhaps you, like most students, are experiencing greater autonomy and independence than you ever have before. Surely some adjustment will be necessary to keep your balance. Most students realize that this is true of their social lives—but they may not immediately realize how much college differs from high school academically.

This book will help you successfully transition from high school to college. It covers principles, attitudes, and behaviors that will help you maximize your college experience, reach learning outcomes, stay in your academic program, and graduate. Chapter 1 begins by describing some of the ways in which college is different from high school academically.

1.1 High School Is Not College

High school and college are different in many ways. This is not to say that high school is inferior but rather to help students identify and address the challenges unique to college. There is a misconception that college is like "Grade 13"; but students who believe that college is like high school do not perform as well as students who have more accurate expectations. High school may have prepared you academically for college, but the norms (the way things are done) in college are often very different from what you have experienced in high school. What, specifically, are the differences? Table 1.1 presents some of the most important ones.

Montgomery College's First Year Experience Program (http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/edu/) offers the following five guiding principles based on the differences between high school and college:[2]

1. As a high school student, you were probably told what to do and were corrected if you did not do it, but in college "you are expected to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of your decisions."[2]
2. In high school you were probably told what you needed to learn from the reading assignment in class, but in college it is "up to you to read and understand the assigned material [because the] lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption that you've already done so."[2]
3. High school was primarily about learning facts and skills, but "college is a learning environment in which you take responsibility for thinking through and applying what you have learned."[2]
4. High school focused on "the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown how to solve."[2] In college, however, "mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems."[2]
5. In high school you may have been rewarded for a "good-faith effort," but in college "results count … good-faith effort will not substitute for results in the grading process."[2]

You have probably begun to formulate a pretty good picture of how the college experience will be different from the high school experience after reading Table 1.1. Consider the practical implications of some of those differences. What are the implications of increased freedom and responsibility? What changes will you have to make to the way you study and prepare for exams or other assessments? How will your reading load be different? What will professors expect of you?

Table 1.1

High School Versus College*

Characteristic	High School Model	College Model
Venue for Learning	Most learning occurs in class. Students may study outside class as little as one to two hours a week, and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation.	Most learning occurs outside of class. On average, students will need to study about two hours outside of class for each hour spent in class.
Schedule	The student attends classes back-to-back for about six hours each day (thirty to thirty-five hours per week).	The student must create his or her own schedule. Most classes do not meet every day. There may be many unscheduled hours between classes. Class times vary throughout the day and evening. The student spends only twelve to seventeen hours each week in class.
Role of the Instructor	Teachers are directive and nurturing.	Professors expect the student to be independent and to take personal responsibility for learning.

Characteristic	High School Model	College Model
Office Hours	Teachers do not keep office hours. Instead, they answer questions and offer help to students in class.	Professors schedule regular office hours in order to meet with students individually. Scheduled office hours are usually posted in the syllabus, on the professor's website, and on the office door. (The syllabus is a document that contains lots of important information about the expectations of the course.) You are not interrupting or bothering professors when you meet with them during their office hours. That time has been set aside especially for you. You could just drop by the office; however, if you have a serious question, you should make an appointment so that the time slot will be reserved for you.
Reading Requirements	The student seldom needs to read anything more than once, and sometimes listening in class is enough.	The amount of reading assigned by professors may be large. The student must review class notes and text material regularly. Preparation for exams typically requires multiple reviews of all course materials.
Presentation of Material	Teachers present the material at a slower pace, and the presentation is designed to support the textbook.	Professors present the material at a faster pace, and their presentation is designed to supplement the text. Professors often expect you to study the book on your own—and then they will add to or explain it.
Frequency of Testing	There is frequent testing. Therefore, the student is required to master only a small amount of the total course material for any single exam.	Testing is less frequent (often limited to a midterm and final). Therefore, the student must be prepared to demonstrate mastery of a much larger amount of material for a single exam.
Extra Credit	High school grades may be derived not only from exams but also from other assignments. Consistently good homework grades or extra credit assignments might be used to compensate for poor performance on exams and raise your course grade.	College grades are usually derived from exams and major papers. Typically, there is limited opportunity (or none) to earn additional points toward the semester grade. It is important that you determine how each of your courses will be graded. This information is provided in the syllabus.

* Information paraphrased from multiple sources

Sources: College Board (2009). *College survival tips: Making the transition*. Retrieved May 17, 2009, from https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/campus-life; D. Thompson (2011). What's the best investment: Stocks, bonds, homes … or college? *The Atlantic*. Retrieved April 30, 2012, from http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2011/06/whats-the-best-investment-stocks-bonds-homes-or-college/241056/; R. Hansen. Retrieved September 22, 2015, from http://www.mycollegesuccessstory.com/academic-success-tools/high-school-vs-college.html.

Reading Comprehension Question 1.1 (Knowledge)

Which of the following are ways in which college is different from high school?

a. In high school, teachers are directive and nurturing.
b. In college, the amount of reading assigned by professors can be very large.
c. In college, professors expect you to study the text on your own.
d. All of the above

1.2 College Involves Freedom and Responsibility

It is great to be an adult in college with the independence and freedom to make your own decisions about how you spend your time. The downside is that you are now the only person responsible for those decisions.

When you were younger, your parents may have taken responsibility for making sure you woke up and made it to school on time. Some of your teachers may have distributed study guides and prescribed exactly what you should do for homework. In order to be successful, you simply did as you were told.

In contrast, now that you are an adult in college you will have to take charge of managing your time and planning your homework. You have to set your alarm, take care of all of your personal needs, get to class on time, and be ready to learn. No one will make you do it, and no one will check to see what you do or don't do. If you don't get it right—if you don't make learning a personal priority—then you are likely to earn some failing grades.

Rarely do you hear college students use the term *homework*. Instead you might hear them use the term *study,* as in "I have to study this weekend for a history test on Tuesday." This is probably because college professors almost never assign homework. Generally speaking homework is a set of practice exercises assigned by a teacher; usually, it contributes to students' grades for the class. Unlike high school teachers, college professors leave it to students to decide for themselves how to go about learning the required information. So if college professors don't assign homework, does that mean you don't have to do work at home? No. It means that you will have to create your own reading, learning, and practice exercises, and assign them to yourself. That is the definition of studying.

Professors may not assign homework, but they definitely expect you to invest a lot of time and effort in studying. Students who practice good, regular study habits find it much easier to learn and earn high marks in college. Developing an effective study plan is one of the things that you will explore in this book.

In College, Studying Happens Outside of Class

Another important thing that you need to know about college is that most studying—and therefore most learning—will happen outside of class. Typically, the bulk of learning in school prior to college occurs in the classroom. In college, you will have to do a lot of reading and studying before

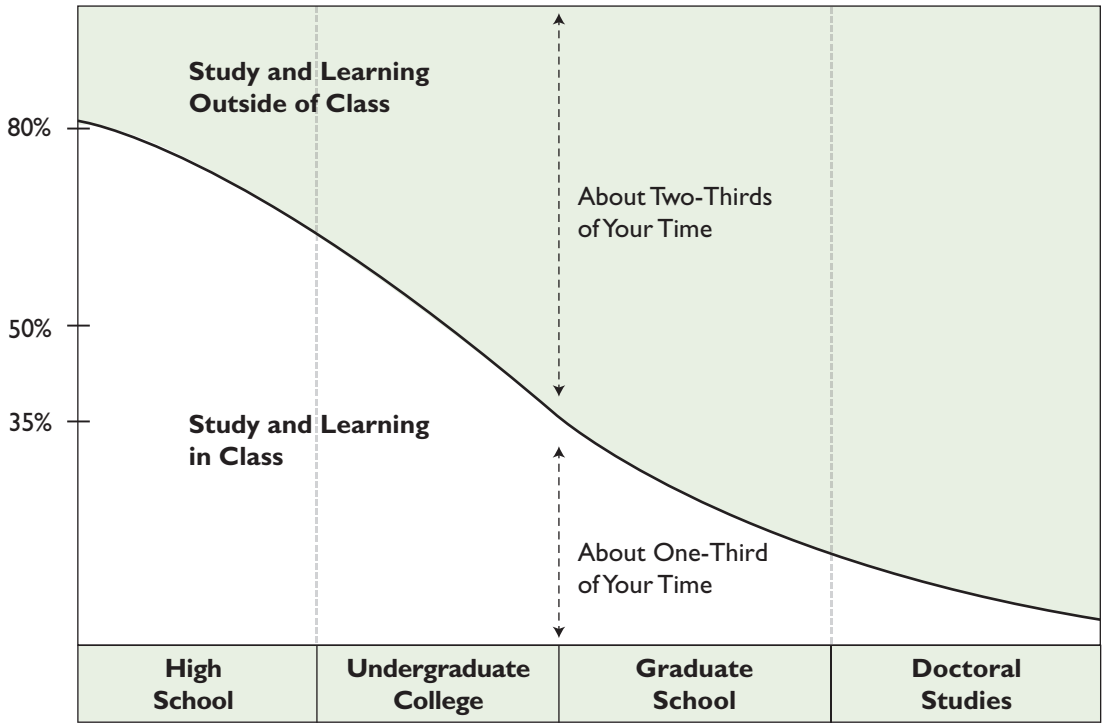
you even go to class in order to be successful at learning. The figures vary from course to course, but as a general rule, about two-thirds of the learning in college takes place outside of class.

Figure 1.1 illustrates the phenomenon that the higher you go in college, the more studying and learning will take place outside of class.

Figure 1.1

Venues for Studying and Learning at Various Academic Levels

Higher levels of education require a larger percentage of outside study.



It is not the case that every college course requires two hours of study outside of class for every hour of class time. Each course that you take in college will be somewhat different. Some will require you to spend a lot time studying outside of class, and others not so much. Taken together, however, the average is about two hours outside of class for every hour spent in class. In order to be successful, you will need to determine how much time you will need to spend studying for each of your classes, and plan that study time as a part of your daily routine. One thing that can help you plan your time, and that every college course has in common, is a document called the *syllabus*.

The Syllabus Is Your Best Friend

In college, the syllabus will be your best friend. The syllabus is the main way in which professors assist you in planning your study regimen. The syllabus is a document that is distributed, or otherwise made available (sometimes online), on or before the first day of classes. It contains lots of important and useful information about the expectations of the course and often includes descriptions and deadlines for assignments and the dates of exams. You need to know this information to be successful in the course. Make reading the syllabus a top priority, and ask your professor to clarify any part of the syllabus that you do not understand.

Apart from providing the syllabus, professors typically do not give homework or tell you how to study for their classes. You now have to decide for yourself when, how long, and what to study. You have to make up your own homework. This skill takes practice and time to learn. This book will help you get it right.

However, if classes have already begun, you should not wait to read all of your syllabi—you should read them carefully as soon as you have access to them. One of the things you should do right away is find out how you will be graded in each course, so that you can start keeping a record of your progress. The successful student never has to ask the professor, "How many days have I been absent?" or "What is my grade in this class so far?" A successful student will keep a personal record of absences and grades on exams or other assignments.

The assignment that accompanies this chapter (Assignment 1.1) will help you get started with the process of keeping a record of your grades. Assignment 1.1 provides you with a single page on which to record your progress. You will need a separate page for each course, so make copies as needed. As soon as you get a syllabus for each course, immediately use the Assignment 1.1 form to list the exams or other assignments that will be required. Later, when you receive grades on the exams or assignments, you can record them in the space provided. Any time you are absent from a class session, you should record the date of the absence in the space provided on the form. In this way you will always know where you stand in the course; and if some of your early grades are poor, you can take steps early in the semester to improve. Constant monitoring of your progress and early intervention are keys to success in college.

Want to learn more? Try this resource.

How is college different from high school?
http://bvtlab.com/S77R8

Montgomery College's First Year Experience Program website offers the following advice on transitioning to college:[2]

- Take control of your own education: Think of yourself as a scholar.
- Get to know your professors; they are your single greatest resource.
- Be assertive. Create your own support systems, and seek help when you realize you may need it.
- Take advantage of academic and student support services on campus.
- Take control of your time. Plan ahead to satisfy academic obligations first, and then make room for everything else.
- Stretch yourself: Enroll in at least one course that really challenges you.
- Make thoughtful decisions: Don't take a course just to satisfy a requirement, and don't drop any course too quickly.
- Think beyond the moment: Set goals for each semester [or quarter], the year, and your college career.

Making a smooth transition into college is the first step on the road to success in college.

Reading Comprehension Question 1.2 (Literal Comprehension)

Which of the following is one of the major differences between college and high school?

a. In college, two-thirds of learning takes place outside of class.
b. In college, professors are nurturing and directive.
c. In college, professors have all the answers.
d. In high school, teachers are not as highly directive as college professors.

1.3 The Road to Success

What Is Student Success?

This student success book is designed to orient the new college student to the unique challenges associated with college life. The overarching goals of the book are to enable the student to avoid the pitfalls that often result in failure and to seize the opportunities that lead to success. This book will help you to problem solve as you go through your first year of college.

What is success? You may find a plethora of statements defining success in books and on the Internet. For example, consider these somewhat humorous success statements from the online *Quote Garden* (http://bvtlab.com/78P76):

> *"I couldn't wait for success … so I went ahead without it."* Jonathan Winters
>
> *"Success is simply a matter of luck. Ask any failure."* Earl Wilson
>
> *"It's not that I'm so smart; it's just that I stay with problems longer."* Albert Einstein
>
> *"Don't be afraid to give your best to what seemingly are small jobs. Every time you conquer one, it makes you that much stronger. If you do the little jobs well, the big ones will tend to take care of themselves."* Dale Carnegie

Some of these statements about success are funny and even insightful, but they only address the topic of success in a general sense. How do you define success specifically with regard to your experience in college? In Critical Thinking Activity 1.1, which appeared at the beginning of this chapter, you were asked to think about and write a definition of success in college. So—what is success in college? Success in college ultimately means graduating (i.e., earning a degree); it also includes all of the quality milestones along the way, such as learning as much as you can and maintaining a high grade point average (GPA). Success in college means not only becoming better certified but also better qualified.

So—What Is Success in College?

There is no question that one of the main purposes of attending college is to acquire a credential. The college diploma is meant to signify that students have met certain academic and other requirements that have prepared them for any number of careers, generally, as well as careers associated

with their discipline, specifically. The credential is supposed to represent a certain level of learning and mastery. Usually, the way that mastery is determined is through grades. If students make high marks or grades, it is assumed that they have learned what they need to know to master the discipline. However, it is important to distinguish between grades and learning, as they are not always the same.

In and of itself, a grade does not represent learning. For example, when students cram for an exam the night before a test and are able to score high enough on the test to pass the course—but literally forget 80 to 90 percent of what they studied within a short time thereafter—then those students will have acquired a passing grade but might not have really learned what they need to know. If too many of the grades they receive were acquired in this manner, then their diplomas are a misrepresentation of their actual learning. If passing without truly learning becomes ubiquitous at a particular college or university, then the status of a degree from that institution loses much of its value in the job market. In an extreme case, the diploma loses its meaning and is nothing but a piece of paper. Therefore, it's very important that as you are progressing through your academic program, you strive to make high grades through learning. If you truly learn the material, you will automatically make higher grades and you will be prepared for the career of your choice. While you must take care to always make good grades, never lose your focus on learning. The real reason you are in college is to learn and change and grow—and to become a person worthy of your credentials.

Success Means Becoming Qualified

If you focus on learning rather than grades, you will become qualified. If you focus on grades to the exclusion of learning, you may become certified, but you won't be qualified. You will be a fraud. No student enters college planning to be a fraud. Sadly, the structure of our educational system—with its focus on grades and credentials—pushes students in that direction. The wise student will not succumb to the path of least resistance; he or she will not focus on grades alone to the exclusion of learning. Instead, the wise student will design study plans that give him or her time to actually learn the material, to grow and to change, and, in the process, to attain high marks and a credential. In this way, the wise student will become both certified and highly qualified. The personal benefits of becoming both certified and qualified remain with you for years to come because you have been changed.

So the primary purpose of taking a course is not to simply pass the exam or get the credit—instead, the primary purpose is to learn something important. Every course that you take should change you in some way. Even though your beliefs, values, and personal goals may not change, your knowledge of the world, your ability to think critically, your ability to reason, and your ability to apply the sum of your knowledge to new challenges—all should be improved. Therefore, it is safe to say that a liberal arts education should change you. It should make you a better person. That is success.

What Is Failure in College?

Failure in college can manifest as flunking out, dropping out, or losing out. Flunking out happens when students accumulate too many failing grades and find it nearly impossible to raise their GPA to the level required for graduation. Dropping out occurs for many reasons. Sometimes students drop out due to factors beyond their control, but too many students drop out for academic reasons.

Losing out is what happens when a student graduates without having been challenged, without having changed for the better, and without being prepared for what lies ahead. This book aims to help you avoid all of these types of failure.

1.4 Attitudes and Resources for Success

This book is designed to help students connect to various resources and to develop attitudes and habits that will support their success. Table 1.2 illustrates these goals by listing some of the resources and attitudes that the book will address. As illustrated in the table, attitudes involve both perspectives (How do you view the task at hand?) and practices (How do you approach the task at hand?). Resources include knowledge (What things do I need to know to be successful?), tools (What tools will help me achieve success?), and helpers (Who is here to help me be successful?). Each of these items is very important.

Table 1.2

Examples of Attitudes and Resources for Success

Attitudes		Resources		
Perspectives	**Practices**	**Knowledge**	**Tools**	**Helpers**
Focus on learning	Maintain a study calendar	College policies and procedures	Library resources	Academic advisors
Embrace responsibility	Develop a study plan for each class	Expectations in college	The college website	Tutors
View academics as a top priority	Develop and maintain a long-term graduation plan	How to develop and follow a study plan	College catalog	Faculty
Hold realistic expectations for college	Attend cultural events that enhance learning	How to design a long-term academic plan	Student organizations	College counselors
Commit time and effort to college success	Participate in student organizations	How to prepare for early registration	Fitness facilities	College staff in various departments
Eliminate hindrances to success	Develop a fitness plan	How to manage your time	Planning calendar	Campus security
	Develop positive relationships with helpers	How to listen and take notes	Written study plan	
	Assess yourself		This textbook	
	Get help early			

Reading Comprehension Question 1.3 (Inferential Comprehension)

What is the main reason for this college success guide?

a. To enable the student to avoid the pitfalls that often result in failure and to seize the opportunities that lead to success
b. To keep track of new students in the system
c. To provide students with an easy book for their first semester
d. None of the above

Reading Comprehension Question 1.4 (Analysis)

Why is it important for the student to know what happens in his or her first year of college?

a. The student can be prepared for classes.
b. The student can achieve the intended benefit from college.
c. The student will be clear about what is required in college.
d. All of the above

1.5 Summary

This chapter discussed the transition to college and contrasted the expectations and experiences of students in college compared to high school. You were challenged to create your own definition of success in college and were informed that college success involves the acquisition of both a credential (earning the degree) and a quality education (becoming a changed person through learning). There was also a brief discussion about attitudes and resources that will help you to be successful. We will explore specific attitudes and strategies in more detail in other chapters.

Name: _____

Study Guide | Goal 1

The student will be able to describe the ways in which high school and college are different.

Questions	Answers & Notes

Name: _____

Study Guide | Goal 2

The student will be able to anticipate many of the challenges associated with attending college.

Questions	Answers & Notes

Name: _____

Study Guide | Goal 3

The student will be able to define success in college in terms of both certification and qualification.

Questions	Answers & Notes

Study Guide | Preparing for Class

Use this page to record questions or insights to discuss in class.

Name: _____

Review Questions 1.1

Instructions

Following are five true-false statements taken from the information in this chapter. First, try to answer them without looking back at the chapter. Then review the chapter to see how well you did.

Question & Answer	Rationale
Circle true or false for each of the following statements.	Write an explanation stating why each statement is true or false.
1. Tests are given more frequently in college than in high school. True or False	Your Rationale:
2. College is very similar to high school except that you live away from home and you have to study a little more. True or False	Your Rationale:
3. If you ask your professor to help you with time management, he or she will call you every morning to wake you up for class. True or False	Your Rationale:
4. Class meetings are very important in college because most learning occurs in class. True or False	Your Rationale:
5. The road to success involves your attitude toward learning, as well as your use of campus resources. True or False	Your Rationale:

Name: _____

Assignment 1.1

Maintain a Record of Your Progress

Goal

The purpose of this activity is to prepare the student to constantly monitor his or her grades for each course so that he or she will be able to remedy low or failing grades early in the semester.

Objective

The student will keep a record of his or her grades for each course and will use the record to evaluate his or her progress on a regular basis.

Instructions

The successful student never has to ask the professor, "How many days have I been absent?" or "What is my grade in this class so far?" because a successful student will keep his or her own record of absences and grades on exams or other assignments. You can use the **Record of Grades and Attendance** form provided on the next page of this textbook. *You will need a separate copy of the form for each of your courses, so make photocopies of the form before you write on it.*

Follow These Steps

Step 1: Consult the syllabus for each of your courses to determine how the semester grade will be calculated for that particular course. Use the form called **Record of Grades and Attendance** provided on the next page to list of all of the factors that contribute to the semester grade (e.g., exam scores, attendance, grades on essays, grades for discussions, and so on).

Step 2: Keep a record of the grades earned or points earned for each of these factors. Update it every time you receive a new grade or assignment feedback. If your grade is low or the feedback on other assignments suggests that you could do better, then think about ways that you can improve before the next graded assignment is due.

You will need to complete a separate record of grades for each of your courses. Recording your grades in one place will make it easier for you to monitor your progress throughout the semester.

Notes

Name: _____ Course: _____

Record of Grades and Attendance

Grades

What is the semester grade formula for this course?

Exam or assignment	Date Submitted	Grade/Score
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
Total:		

Attendance Record

What is the attendance policy for this course?

You should attend every class. However, if you are ever absent from this class, record the date of the absence here so that you can keep track of absences and calculate how they affect your grade.	1.
	2.
	3.
	4.
	5.