

Peak Performance

SUCCESS IN COLLEGE AND BEYOND

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Peak Performance

eleventh edition **SUCCESS IN COLLEGE AND BEYOND**

Sharon K. Ferrett, Ph.D.
Humboldt State University

**Mc
Graw
Hill**



Dedication

To the memory of my parents, Albert Lawrence Ferrett and Velma Mary Hollenbeck Ferrett, for setting the highest standards and their seamless expression of love.

To my husband, Sam, and our daughters, Jennifer and Sarah; all teachers, they've tried out exercises and offered valuable suggestions. With thanks and love.

—Sharon K. Ferrett



PEAK PERFORMANCE: SUCCESS IN COLLEGE AND BEYOND, ELEVENTH EDITION

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Some ancillaries, including electronic and print components, may not be available to customers outside the United States.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 LMN 24 23 22 21 20

ISBN 978-1-260-26249-0 (bound edition)

MHID 1-260-26249-9 (bound edition)

ISBN 978-1-264-23532-2 (loose-leaf edition)

MHID 1-264-23532-1 (loose-leaf edition)

Portfolio Manager: *Brian Sylvester*

Senior Product Developer: *David Ploskonka*

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Content Licensing Specialist: *Jacob Sullivan*

Cover Image: *vchal/Shutterstock*

Compositor: *SPi Global*

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Ferrett, Sharon K., author.

Title: Peak performance : success in college and beyond / Sharon K.

Ferrett, Ph.D. Humboldt State University.

Description: Eleventh edition. | New York, NY : McGraw-Hill Education, [2021] | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Audience: Ages 18+

Identifiers: LCCN 2020016679 (print) | LCCN 2020016680 (ebook) | ISBN 9781260262490 (paperback) | ISBN 9781264235322 (loose-leaf edition) | ISBN 9781260782103 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Academic achievement. | Performance. | Career development. | Success.

Classification: LCC LB1062.6 .F47 2021 (print) | LCC LB1062.6 (ebook) | DDC 378.1/98-dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020016679>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020016680>

The Internet addresses listed in the text were accurate at the time of publication. The inclusion of a website does not indicate an endorsement by the authors or McGraw Hill LLC, and McGraw Hill LLC does not guarantee the accuracy of the information presented at these sites.

Brief Table of Contents

The 11th Edition xv

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) xxiii

Getting Started xxvii

PART ONE

Building Foundation Skills

- 1** Be a Lifelong Learner 1
- 2** Build Peak Habits 45
- 3** Expand Your Emotional Intelligence 71
- 4** Manage Your Time 105
- 5** Maximize Your Resources 143

PART TWO

Basic Skills and Strategies

- 6** Listen and Take Effective Notes 177
- 7** Actively Read 207
- 8** Improve Your Memory Skills 243
- 9** Excel at Taking Tests 271
- 10** Express Yourself in Writing and Speech 303

PART THREE

Application

- 11** Become a Critical Thinker and Creative Problem Solver 337
- 12** Create a Healthy Mind, Body, and Spirit 377
- 13** Build Supportive and Diverse Relationships 417
- 14** Explore Majors and Careers 455

Glossary 499

Bibliography 503

Features Guide 507

Index 509

Your School's Resources 523

Table of Contents

The 11th Edition xv

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary

Skills (SCANS) xxiii

Getting Started xxvii

PART ONE

Building Foundation Skills

1 Be a Lifelong Learner 1

What Is a "Peak Performer"? 2

Self-Management: The Key to Reaching Your Peak 3

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 1.1: AM I A POSITIVE

PERSON? 4

Self-Assessment 5

Creativity and Critical Thinking Skills 6

Visualization and Affirmations 6

Reflection 7

PEAK PROGRESS 1.1: THE ABC METHOD OF SELF-MANAGEMENT 8

Tools to Help You Reach Your Peak 9

Be Persistent and Resilient to Succeed in College and Beyond 9

Discover Your Purpose: A Personal Mission Statement 9

Skills for School and Job Success 10

Discover Your Learning Style 10

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 1.2: WRITING YOUR PERSONAL

MISSION STATEMENT 11

Integrate All Learning Styles 12

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 1.3: PEAK PERFORMANCE

SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST 13

Are You a Reader, Listener, or Doer? 14

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 1.4: LEARNING STYLE INVENTORY 16

Redefining Intelligence: Other Learning Styles 18

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 1.5: MULTIPLE

INTELLIGENCES 19

Discover Your Personality Type 20

Carl Jung's Typology System 21

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator 21

Connect Learning Styles and Personality Types: The Four-Temperament Profile 22

Analyzers 22

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 1.6: THE FOUR-TEMPERAMENT PROFILE 23

Supporters 25

Creators 25

Directors 26

Integrate Styles to Maximize Learning 27

Adjust Your Learning Style to Your Instructor's Teaching Style 28

The Adult Learning Cycle 29

Overcome Obstacles 31

Focus 32

TAKING CHARGE 34

CAREER IN FOCUS: SETTING BUSINESS GOALS 36

PEAK PERFORMER PROFILE: BLAKE MYCOSKIE 37

REVIEW AND APPLICATIONS 38

CASE STUDY: MAKING A COMMITMENT 39

WORKSHEETS

Worksheet 1.1: Applying the ABC Method of Self-Management 40

Worksheet 1.2: My Learning Style, Personality Types, and Temperament 41

Worksheet 1.3: Applying the Four-Temperament Profile 42

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO: AUTOBIOGRAPHY 43

2 Build Peak Habits 45

Build Better Habits 46

Three Parts of a Habit 46

Building the Habit: The Habit Cycle 47

Applying the Habit Cycle: Homesickness 48

The 10 Qualities of Peak Performers 49

The Importance of a Positive Attitude	51
Strategies for Creating Positive Change	51
PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 2.1: MAKE A COMMITMENT TO LEARN AND APPLY POSITIVE HABITS	53
Overcome Obstacles with Positive Habits	54
Overcome Obstacles to Change	54
PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 2.2: OVERCOME OBSTACLES WITH HABITS	55
PEAK PROGRESS 2.1: APPLYING THE ADULT LEARNING CYCLE TO DEVELOP POSITIVE HABITS	57
PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 2.3: COMMITMENT CONTRACT	58
Contract for Change	59
TAKING CHARGE	60
CAREER IN FOCUS: GOOD HABITS IN THE WORKPLACE	62
PEAK PERFORMER PROFILE: FRED ROGERS	63
REVIEW AND APPLICATIONS	64
CASE STUDY: SPREADING GOOD HABITS	65
WORKSHEETS	
<i>Worksheet 2.1: Building Better Habits</i>	66
<i>Worksheet 2.2: Applying the ABC Method of Self-Management</i>	67
<i>Worksheet 2.3: Overcoming Resistance to Change</i>	68
CAREER DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO: PLANNING YOUR CAREER	69

3 Expand Your Emotional Intelligence 71

Emotional Intelligence and Maturity	72
Character First: Integrity, Civility, and Ethics	73
Responsibility	74
PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 3.1: CHARACTER AND ETHICS	75
PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 3.2: SKILLS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES	76
Self-Control	77
Self-Esteem and Confidence	77
PEAK PROGRESS 3.1: APPLYING THE ADULT LEARNING CYCLE TO SELF-CONTROL	78
A Positive Attitude and Personal Motivation	79
How Needs and Desires Influence Attitudes and Motivation	79
The Motivation Cycle	80
PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 3.3: NEEDS, MOTIVATION, AND COMMITMENT	81
Motivational Strategies	82
PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 3.4: SELF-TALK AND AFFIRMATIONS	83

PEAK PROGRESS 3.2: SETTING GOALS	83
PEAK PROGRESS 3.3: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE	85
The Benefits of Higher Education	85
PEAK PROGRESS 3.4: SKILLS FOR SCHOOL AND CAREER	87
PEAK PROGRESS 3.5: WHAT KIND OF WORKER/STUDENT ARE YOU?	88

Overcome Obstacles with Positive Habits and Mental Shifts 88

Positive Habits: Control Your Reactions	88
Staying in College: Resiliency and Grit	89
Create Positive Mental Shifts	90
TAKING CHARGE	92
CAREER IN FOCUS: POSITIVE ATTITUDES AT WORK	94
PEAK PERFORMER PROFILE: CHRISTIANE AMANPOUR	95
REVIEW AND APPLICATIONS	96
CASE STUDY: GETTING MOTIVATED	97
WORKSHEETS	
<i>Worksheet 3.1: Applying the ABC Method of Self-Management</i>	98
<i>Worksheet 3.2: My Reinforcement Contract</i>	99
<i>Worksheet 3.3: Self-Esteem Inventory</i>	100
<i>Worksheet 3.4: Learning Styles and Motivation</i>	101
<i>Worksheet 3.5: Practice Self-Control</i>	102
CAREER DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO: ASSESSMENT OF PERSONAL QUALITIES	103

4 Manage Your Time 105

Use Time Effectively	106
Where Does Your Time Go?	107
Where Should Your Time Go?	107
PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 4.1: TIME LOG	108
PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 4.2: HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND?	109
Setting Priorities	109
PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 4.3: LOOKING AHEAD: YOUR GOALS	110
PEAK PROGRESS 4.1: INVESTING YOUR TIME IN HIGH-PRIORITY ITEMS: THE 80/20 RULE	113
Build a Prioritization Habit	113
Time-Management Strategies	114
PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 4.4: YOUR DAILY ENERGY LEVELS	117
Time Management and Your Learning Style	118
PEAK PROGRESS 4.2: APPLYING THE ADULT LEARNING CYCLE TO TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR TIME AND LIFE	119

Overcome Obstacles with Better Time-Management Habits 120

Stop Procrastinating 120

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 4.5: PROCRASTINATION 121

Control Interruptions 122

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 4.6: INTERRUPTIONS! 123

Juggling Family, School, and Job 124

PEAK PROGRESS 4.3: ONLINE LEARNING 125

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 4.7: KEEPING YOUR LIFE GOALS IN BALANCE 127

TAKING CHARGE 128

CAREER IN FOCUS: FOCUS ON TASKS 130

PEAK PERFORMER PROFILE: MALCOLM GLADWELL 131

REVIEW AND APPLICATIONS 132

CASE STUDY: JUGGLING FAMILY AND SCHOOL 133

WORKSHEETS

Worksheet 4.1: Applying the ABC Method of Self-Management 134

Worksheet 4.2: My Time-Management Habits 135

Worksheet 4.3: Time Wasters 136

Worksheet 4.4: Practice Goal Setting 137

Worksheet 4.5: Map Out Your Goals 138

Worksheet 4.6: Daily Prioritizer and Planner: Your To-Do List 139

Worksheet 4.7: Weekly Planner 140

Worksheet 4.8: Month/Semester Calendar 141

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO: DEMONSTRATING YOUR TIME-MANAGEMENT SKILLS 142

5 Maximize Your Resources 143

Explore and Engage in Your School's Resources 144

People Resources 145

PEAK PROGRESS 5.1: HOW TO FORM A STUDY GROUP 146

Program Resources 148

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 5.1: ACTIVITIES AND CLUBS 151

Additional Online and Information Resources 151

PEAK PROGRESS 5.2: STAYING SAFE 152

PEAK PROGRESS 5.3: USING TECHNOLOGY AT SCHOOL 152

Students with Disabilities 153

Commuter Students: Get Involved! 154

Returning Students 155

PEAK PROGRESS 5.4: EXPLORE YOUR COMMUNITY'S RESOURCES 156

Manage Your Financial Resources 157

Keep a Budget 157

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 5.2: MONEY IN/MONEY OUT 158

Research Financial Assistance 158

Avoid Credit Card Debt 159

Protect Your Identity 159

Save for the Future 160

PEAK PROGRESS 5.5: APPLYING THE ADULT LEARNING CYCLE TO MANAGING FINANCIAL RESOURCES 162

Get Financial Help If You're in Trouble 163

You Are a Great Resource! 164

Overcoming Obstacles 164

TAKING CHARGE 166

CAREER IN FOCUS: BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES 168

PEAK PERFORMER PROFILE: ERIC GREITENS 169

REVIEW AND APPLICATIONS 170

CASE STUDY: USING RESOURCES 171

WORKSHEETS

Worksheet 5.1: Applying the ABC Method of Self-Management 172

Worksheet 5.2: Networking 173

Worksheet 5.3: Community Resources 174

Worksheet 5.4: Monthly Budget 175

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO: MANAGING RESOURCES 176

PART TWO

Basic Skills and Strategies

6 Listen and Take Effective Notes 177

Attentive Listening Strategies 178

Prepare to Listen 178

Stay Attentive 179

Review What You Have Heard 180

PEAK PROGRESS 6.1: APPLYING THE ADULT LEARNING CYCLE TO BECOMING AN ATTENTIVE LISTENER 181

Recording the Message 181

The Cornell System of Note Taking 181

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 6.1: ATTENTIVE LISTENING 182

PEAK PROGRESS 6.2: FORMAL (TRADITIONAL) VERSUS INFORMAL (CREATIVE) OUTLINES 183

Mind Maps 184

Combination Note-Taking Systems 185

Note-Taking Strategies 186

**PEAK PROGRESS 6.3: GETTING THE MOST OUT OF
A CLASS LECTURE 188**

Assess and Review Your Notes 191

PEAK PROGRESS 6.4: TAKING NOTE OF SPECIAL CHALLENGES 193

Taking Notes with New Technology 194

Overcoming Obstacles to Better Notes 194

Build a Better Note-Taking Habit 194

TAKING CHARGE 196

CAREER IN FOCUS: LISTENING IN THE WORKPLACE 198

PEAK PERFORMER PROFILE: ANNA SUI 199

REVIEW AND APPLICATIONS 200

CASE STUDY: DEVELOPING ATTENTIVE LISTENING
SKILLS 201

WORKSHEETS

*Worksheet 6.1: Applying the ABC Method of
Self-Management 202*

Worksheet 6.2: Listening Self-Assessment 203

Worksheet 6.3: Mind Map a Lecture 204

Worksheet 6.4: Use the Cornell System of Note Taking 205

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO: LISTENING AND NOTE
TAKING IN THE WORKPLACE 206

7 Actively Read 207

The Importance of Active Reading 208

Reading Systems 209

The Five-Part Reading System 209

The SQ3R Reading System 210

**PEAK PROGRESS 7.1: APPLYING THE ADULT LEARNING CYCLE TO
BECOMING A BETTER READER 211**

Reading Strategies 212

**PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 7.1: USING THE SQ3R READING
SYSTEM 213**

PEAK PROGRESS 7.2: READING FOR DIFFERENT COURSES 215

PEAK PROGRESS 7.3: TO HIGHLIGHT OR NOT TO HIGHLIGHT? 216

PEAK PROGRESS 7.4: USING YOUR TEXTBOOK 217

Reviewing Strategies 217

PEAK PROGRESS 7.5: DIGITAL READING MATERIAL 218

Build Your Vocabulary 220

PEAK PROGRESS 7.6: LOOK IT UP! USING A DICTIONARY 221

Manage Language Courses 222

Specialized Reading 222

Comprehending Technical Material 222

Reading Manuals 224

Completing Forms 224

Overcome Obstacles to Better Reading 225

Build a Better Reading Habit 225

Reading Difficulties 226

Create a Positive Attitude 226

PEAK PROGRESS 7.7: READING WITH CHILDREN AROUND 227

TAKING CHARGE 228

CAREER IN FOCUS: KEEPING UP-TO-DATE 230

PEAK PERFORMER PROFILE: SONIA SOTOMAYOR 231

REVIEW AND APPLICATIONS 232

CASE STUDY: EFFECTIVE READING HABITS 233

WORKSHEETS

*Worksheet 7.1: Applying the ABC Method of
Self-Management 234*

Worksheet 7.2: Attitudes and Reading 235

Worksheet 7.3: Different Types of Reading 236

Worksheet 7.4: Summarize and Teach 237

Worksheet 7.5: Creating a Reading Outline 238

Worksheet 7.6: Analyzing Chapters 239

Worksheet 7.7: Mind Map Your Text 240

Worksheet 7.8: Breaking Barriers to Reading 241

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO: DEMONSTRATING
COMPETENCIES 242

8 Improve Your Memory Skills 243

The Memory Process 244

Memory Research 244

**PEAK PROGRESS 8.1: APPLYING THE ADULT LEARNING CYCLE TO
INCREASING YOUR MEMORY SKILLS 245**

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 8.1: BEING OBSERVANT 246

PEAK PROGRESS 8.2: SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM MEMORY 248

**PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 8.2: USING A MIND MAP TO ENHANCE
MEMORY 249**

Memory Strategies 250

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 8.3: MEMORY ASSESSMENT 252

**PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 8.4: LEARNING STYLES AND
MEMORY 253**

**PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 8.5: ACRONYMS AND
ACROSTICS 254**

**PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 8.6: A WALK DOWN MEMORY
LANE 256**

PEAK PROGRESS 8.3: REMEMBERING NAMES 258

Overcome Obstacles 258

Build Better Memory Habits 258

TAKING CHARGE 260

CAREER IN FOCUS: INTEGRATING LEARNING STYLES 262
PEAK PERFORMER PROFILE: DAVID DIAZ 263
REVIEW AND APPLICATIONS 264
CASE STUDY: OVERCOMING MEMORY LOSS 265
WORKSHEETS

*Worksheet 8.1: Applying the ABC Method of
Self-Management 266*

Worksheet 8.2: Memory 267

Worksheet 8.3: Mental Pictures 269

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO: APPLYING MEMORY
SKILLS 270

9 Excel at Taking Tests 271

Test-Taking Strategies 272

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 9.1: TEST TAKING 273

During the Test 275

PEAK PROGRESS 9.1: TAKING ONLINE EXAMS 276

PEAK PROGRESS 9.2: SPECIAL STRATEGIES FOR MATH AND SCIENCE
TESTS 277

After the Test 277

PEAK PROGRESS 9.3: USING TEST RESULTS 278

Taking Different Types of Tests 279

Objective Tests 279

Essay Tests 280

PEAK PROGRESS 9.4: IMPORTANT WORDS IN ESSAY QUESTIONS 282

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 9.2: ESSAY TEST
PREPARATION 283

Last-Minute Study Tips 284

Overcome Obstacles 284

Build Better Test Habits 285

Test Anxiety 285

PEAK PROGRESS 9.5: PREPARING FOR A PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL 287

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 9.3: REFLECTION ON TEST
ANXIETY 288

Cheating 289

PEAK PROGRESS 9.6: APPLYING THE ADULT LEARNING CYCLE TO
IMPROVING YOUR TEST-TAKING SKILLS AND REDUCING TEST
ANXIETY 290

TAKING CHARGE 292

CAREER IN FOCUS: TESTS IN THE WORKPLACE 294

PEAK PERFORMER PROFILE: ELLEN OCHOA 295

REVIEW AND APPLICATIONS 296

CASE STUDY: COPING WITH ANXIETY 297

WORKSHEETS

*Worksheet 9.1: Applying the ABC Method of
Self-Management 298*

Worksheet 9.2: Exam Schedule 299

Worksheet 9.3: Preparing for Tests and Exams 300

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO: ASSESSING YOUR
SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES 302

10 Express Yourself in Writing and Speech 303

The Importance of Writing and Speaking 304

The Writing Process 304

Prepare 305

PEAK PROGRESS 10.1: HOW TO GENERATE TOPIC IDEAS 306

Organize 308

Write 308

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 10.1: PREPARING RESEARCH
PAPERS 309

Edit 310

PEAK PROGRESS 10.2: WRITING DO'S: THE SEVEN C'S OF EFFECTIVE
WRITING 312

PEAK PROGRESS 10.3: ONLINE WRITING AND SOCIAL NETWORKING 313

PEAK PROGRESS 10.4: WRITING CITATIONS 314

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 10.2: THAT'S NOT FAIR (USE) 316

Review 317

Information Literacy 317

PEAK PROGRESS 10.5: CHECKLISTS FOR WRITING PAPERS AND GIVING
SPEECHES 318

Using the Library for Research 318

Taking Your Search Online 319

Public Speaking Strategies 320

PEAK PROGRESS 10.6: EVALUATING ONLINE INFORMATION 321

Overcoming Obstacles with a Positive Mindset and Habits 323

PEAK PROGRESS 10.7: APPLYING THE ADULT LEARNING CYCLE TO
IMPROVE YOUR PUBLIC SPEAKING 324

Build Better Public Speaking Habits 324

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 10.3: CONTROLLING STAGE FRIGHT
AND WRITER'S BLOCK 326

TAKING CHARGE 328

CAREER IN FOCUS: COMMUNICATION SKILLS 330

PEAK PERFORMER PROFILE: TONI MORRISON 331

REVIEW AND APPLICATIONS 332

CASE STUDY: LEARNING COMMUNICATION SKILLS 333

*Worksheet 10.1: Applying the ABC Method of
Self-Management 334*

Worksheet 10.2: Practice Paraphrasing 335

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO: YOUR WRITING AND
SPEAKING SKILLS 336

11 Become a Critical Thinker and Creative Problem Solver 337

Essential Critical Thinking Skills 338

Creative Problem-Solving Steps 340

Critical Thinking and Creative Problem-Solving Strategies 341

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 11.1: THINK IT THROUGH 342

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 11.2: USING CRITICAL THINKING TO SOLVE PROBLEMS 344

PEAK PROGRESS 11.1: ASKING QUESTIONS 345

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 11.3: INDUCTIVE VERSUS DEDUCTIVE REASONING 347

Common Errors in Judgment 347

Creative Problem Solving 349

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 11.4: NINE-DOT EXERCISE 350

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 11.5: MINDSETS 352

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 11.6: DECISION-MAKING APPLICATION 354

Math and Science Applications 356

PEAK PROGRESS 11.2: CREATIVE IDEAS CHECKLIST 356

Problem-Solving Strategies for Math and Science 357

Overcome Math and Science Anxiety 360

PEAK PROGRESS 11.3: PROBLEM-SOLVING CHECKLIST 361

PEAK PROGRESS 11.4: APPLYING THE ADULT LEARNING CYCLE TO OVERCOMING MATH AND SCIENCE ANXIETY 362

Overcoming Obstacles: Building Better Habits 362

TAKING CHARGE 364

CAREER IN FOCUS: CREATIVITY AT WORK 366

PEAK PERFORMER PROFILE: SCOTT ADAMS 367

REVIEW AND APPLICATIONS 368

CASE STUDY: CONQUERING FEAR OF FAILURE 369
WORKSHEETS

Worksheet 11.1: Applying the ABC Method of Self-Management 370

Worksheet 11.2: Apply Blooms Taxonomy 371

Worksheet 11.3: Preparing for Critical Thinking 372

Worksheet 11.4: You Can Solve the Problem: Sue's Decision 374

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO: ASSESSING AND DEMONSTRATING YOUR CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS 376

12 Create a Healthy Mind, Body, and Spirit 377

Redefining Health: Connecting the Mind, Body, and Spirit 378

The Mind 378

The Body 378

The Spirit 378

Awareness and Prevention 379

Strategies for Good Health Management 381

PEAK PROGRESS 12.1: EATING FOR HEALTH AND ENERGY 382

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 12.1: REVIEWING YOUR HEALTH 384

PEAK PROGRESS 12.2: EATING DISORDERS 385

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 12.2: GETTING PROPER REST 386

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 12.3: COMMITTING TO EXERCISE 387

Manage Stress 388

PEAK PROGRESS 12.3: APPLYING THE ADULT LEARNING CYCLE TO

CREATING A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE 391

Unhealthy Addictions 391

Alcohol Abuse 392

Cigarette Smoking 393

Illegal Drug Use 393

Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medication Abuse 394

Overcoming Addictions 394

Codependency 395

Emotional Health 395

Depression 395

Suicide 397

Protecting Your Body 398

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) 398

Birth Control 400

Understanding and Preventing Acquaintance Rape 400

Overcoming Obstacles with Better Habits 402

TAKING CHARGE 404

CAREER IN FOCUS: PREVENTING STRESS AND FATIGUE AT WORK 406

PEAK PERFORMER PROFILE: MARK HERZLICH JR. 407

REVIEW AND APPLICATIONS 408

CASE STUDY: INCREASING YOUR ENERGY LEVEL 409

Worksheet 12.1: Applying the ABC Method of Self-Management 410

Worksheet 12.2: Stress Performance Test 411

Worksheet 12.3: I Am What I Eat 413

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO: INVENTORY OF INTERESTS 415

13 Build Supportive and Diverse Relationships 417

The Importance of Effective Communication and Rapport 418

Strategies for Building Communication and Rapport 418

PEAK PROGRESS 13.1: SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE TECHNOLOGY 420

Assertive Communication 421

Communicating with Instructors and Advisors 421

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 13.1: ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION
ROLE-PLAYING 422

PEAK PROGRESS 13.2: E-MAIL ETIQUETTE WITH INSTRUCTORS 424

Conflict 425

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 13.2: OBSERVING CONFLICT 426

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 13.3: CONFLICT RESOLUTION 427

Constructive Feedback 428

Dealing with Shyness 429

PEAK PROGRESS 13.3: MAKING SMALL TALK 430

Overcome Obstacles to Effective Communication 430

Attentive Listening 431

Creating Better Communication Habits 432

Build Healthy Relationships 432

Romantic Relationships 432

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 13.4: PATTERNS IN
RELATIONSHIPS 433

Relationships with the People You Live With 434

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 13.5: HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIPS 435

Appreciate Diversity 436

Communication Strategies for Celebrating Diversity 436

PEAK PROGRESS 13.4: APPLYING THE ADULT LEARNING CYCLE TO
BECOME A BETTER COMMUNICATOR 437

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 13.6: APPRECIATING
DIVERSITY 439

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 13.7: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE
CALLED? 440

Diversity in the Workplace 441

Sexual Harassment at School and Work 441

PEAK PROGRESS 13.5: TEAM PLAYERS 442

TAKING CHARGE 444

CAREER IN FOCUS: TEAM BUILDING AT WORK 446

PEAK PERFORMER PROFILE: CHRISTY HAUBEGGER 447

REVIEW AND APPLICATIONS 448

CASE STUDY: SUCCESSFUL TEAMWORK 449

WORKSHEETS

*Worksheet 13.1: Applying the ABC Method of
Self-Management 450*

Worksheet 13.2: Study Team Relationships 451

Worksheet 13.3: Appreciating Diversity 452

*Worksheet 13.4: Are You Assertive, Aggressive, or
Passive? 453*

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO: ASSESSING YOUR
RELATIONSHIP SKILLS 454

14 Explore Majors and Careers 455

Connecting School and Job Success 456

Exploring and Choosing a Major 456

PEAK PROGRESS 14.1: SERVICE LEARNING 459

Values, Interests, Abilities, and Skills 459

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 14.1: YOUR VALUES 460

Exploring Careers 462

Build a Career Development Portfolio 462

PEAK PROGRESS 14.1: APPLYING THE ADULT LEARNING CYCLE TO
EXPLORING MAJORS AND CAREERS 463

When Should You Start Your Portfolio? 464

How to Organize and Assemble Your Portfolio 464

Elements of Your Portfolio 464

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 14.2: TRANSFERABLE SKILLS 468

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 14.3: INVENTORY OF PERSONAL
QUALITIES 469

Overcome the Barriers to Portfolio Development 474

Plan the Job Hunt 474

Submitting a Cover Letter 475

Interviewing 475

Take Charge of Your Career 478

PERSONAL EVALUATION NOTEBOOK 14.4: ASSESSMENT IS
LIFELONG 481

TAKING CHARGE 482

CAREER IN FOCUS: CAREER PLANNING IS LIFELONG 484

PEAK PERFORMER PROFILE: URSULA BURNS 485

REVIEW AND APPLICATIONS 486

CASE STUDY: EXPLORING CAREERS 487

WORKSHEETS

*Worksheet 14.1: Applying the ABC Method of
Self-Management 488*

*Worksheet 14.2: You Can Solve the Problem:
Majors 489*

Worksheet 14.3: You Can Solve the Problem: Careers 491

Worksheet 14.4: Checklist for Choosing a Major 493

Worksheet 14.5: Preparing Your Résumé 494

*Worksheet 14.6: Informational Interview: What's the Job
Like? 495*

*Worksheet 14.7: Informational Interview: Who Are You
Looking For? 496*

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO: EXPLORING
CAREERS 497

Glossary 499

Bibliography 503

Features Guide 507

Index 509

Your School's Resources 523

The 11th Edition

The 11th edition of Peak Performance continues to provide students with common-sense strategies for excelling in school, career, and life. Peak Performance delivers the essential tools for managing time and resources by showing students how to

- Empower themselves to feel that they belong in college through the power of grit, perseverance and resiliency.
- Practice a positive, open mindset that focuses on growth, learning, and effort.
- Learn how habits work and how to replace counter-productive habits with positive habits that will help them in college and beyond.
- Learn to integrate all learning styles and critical and creativity for maximum success.
- Learn how to seek out mutual support and resources on campus for challenges new students face, and remain persistent in pursuit of their goals.
- Focus sustained effort to cultivate essential qualities for school, job, and life success.

Major Connect Updates

APPLICATION-BASED ACTIVITIES

These are self-graded assignments that measure students' ability to apply what they have learned using their critical thinking skills. In each of the 10 scenarios,

the student helps a “friend” who is struggling with an issue related to the topic. By asking questions and making recommendations, the student helps their friend solve the problem. A virtual instructor provides assistance to the student as needed.

ABAs Currently Available (More Forthcoming)

- Dealing with Test Anxiety
- Goal Setting and Setting SMART Goals
- Group Work and Managing Conflict
- Introduction to Building Mission Statements
- Overcoming Procrastination
- Preparing for a Job Interview
- Successful Note Taking
- Tracking Your Time
- Choosing a Major
- Building a Personal Budget

TOPIC-BASED ANIMATIONS WITH ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Critical topics are reviewed in short, engaging videos that you can assign with multiple choice questions in Connect. Twenty different animations, 2 to 4 minutes in length, address topics such as note taking, building calendars, setting goals, and many others.

Global Updates and New Features

- **Open Mindset:** Instructors stress the importance of a positive attitude as a foundation for all learning. Woven throughout the book is the concept that talent and abilities are not as important as *effort, grit, and the willingness to learn and grow*. An *open, positive mindset* is focused on growth and resiliency while a negative, *closed mindset* is fixed on being right and resisting change and growth. A positive mindset helps students overcome obstacles.
- **Habits:** From the last edition, instructors told us students want to succeed in college and beyond, but sometimes they need help implementing the skills taught in class. Therefore **Building Better Habits** was a major focus. This feature will help students implement the skills and concepts they learn in class. The Habit Cycle will teach students how to identify triggers for their habits and how to create a productive behavior routine and a reward that leads to a cycle of success. This feature is based on actual brain science and is threaded throughout the book, with a new habit introduced in every chapter. These topics include health, time management, test taking, and so on. This content supports the strengthening of this editions' theme of resiliency and a positive, open mindset.
- **Personal Evaluation Notebook Activities:** Instructors told us they love these activities because students can easily apply what they learn.
- **Expanded and Updated Research:** We have updated the latest brain research throughout the book to help students see the “why” behind concepts and strategies.
- Based on instructor feedback, we revamped some of our feature boxes to make the book more accessible and less potentially distracting to

students. **Get Involved** and **Leverage Your Success** have been moved to the instructor manual.

- Our **Connect** product includes a chapter-specific video series highlighting time management, goal setting, reading, note taking, and other critical topics as well as assessments based on critical thinking and decision making.

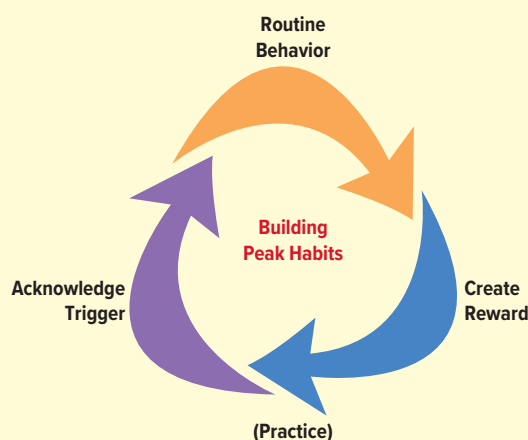
Peak Performance Features

Every chapter includes the following features. These features were written and designed to help students apply, practice, and better understand the core concepts explored in each chapter.

Chapter Features

Habit Cycles

Building Better Habits is a major focus in the 11th edition and is included in every chapter. The Habit Cycle will teach students how to identify the things that trigger their bad (and good) habits, how to create a positive routine behavior, and how to identify a reward that leads to a cycle of success.



Personal Evaluation Notebook

2.2

Overcome Obstacles with Habits

Write out possible obstacles that you might face and think of creative ways to overcome them using the Habit Cycle.

State a concrete, simple goal:

1. Write out one to two specific obstacles to that goal.

2. Write out one to two specific ways to overcome those obstacles.

Personal Evaluation Notebooks

The PEN exercises are a chance for students to evaluate what they have learned in the chapter up to that point, and apply it so that they are better prepared to move on to the next topic in the chapter. To save space, many of these exercises will be on the Web.

Peak Progress

*The Peak Progress exercises in every chapter help students create the results they want by encouraging them to consider and practice key concepts. They will learn new strategies, helpful tips, and how to apply the **Adult Learning Cycle** and the **ABC Method of Self-Management**.*

Peak Progress

3.3

Differences between High School and College

Entering college brings a new level of responsibility and expectations as compared to your previous educational experiences, mimicking what is expected on the job as well as managing your personal life. For example, in college, you are expected to

- Have more responsibilities and budget your time and money.
- Express your opinions logically, not just give facts.
- Motivate yourself.
- Handle more freedom and independence.
- Attend larger classes that meet for longer periods but less often.
- Be responsible for knowing procedures and graduation requirements.
- Write and read more than you have before.
- Think critically and logically.
- Receive less feedback and be tested less often but more comprehensively.
- Use several textbooks and supplemental readings.
- Complete more work and turn in higher-quality work.
- Interact with people of different values, cultures, interests, and religions.
- Learn to be tolerant and respectful of diversity.
- Encounter new ideas and critique those ideas in a thoughtful way.
- Get involved in the community, school clubs, volunteer work, and internships related to your major.

Think Creatively and Critically

These features provide situations to help students think in creative ways and apply critical thinking skills. Each feature also includes scientific research pertaining to the example.

Research shows that people who routinely practice mindfulness and meditation activated neurons in the part of the brain (prefrontal cortex) that controls attention and focus.¹

Chloe is always late because she does several things at once and is scattered. Her family, friends—everyone—continually tell her how frustrating it is that she keeps them waiting. She finally got the message when her best friend texted her that she was tired of her inconsideration and the group was leaving for a party without her. The rush she always felt from doing many things at once and keeping up with texts and e-mails was replaced with the realization that she had let others down.

- What negative characteristics are being demonstrated by someone who is habitually late?
- What problems does this create—in school, on the job, in personal situations?
- Do you think that practicing meditation or mindfulness would help her to be more attentive and focused? What are specific strategies that you would suggest to help her become more focused, attentive, and dependable.

THINK CREATIVELY AND CRITICALLY

End-of-Chapter Features

Taking Charge

The Taking Charge feature is an opportunity for students to review what they've learned and prepare for assessments.

Career in Focus

In each chapter, these workplace case studies help students understand the practical applications of the chapter by applying what they've learned to a career situation.

Peak Performer Profile

Each Peak Performer Profile highlights people who have demonstrated the qualities, attitudes, and skills of a Peak Performer. Students are asked critical thinking questions that pertain to the Peak Performer and his or her success.

Review and Applications

Practice is a core concept in this book. It is not enough to read about successful strategies. This feature will help students choose one strategy to change. This reinforces the power of taking small changes.

Case Studies

Throughout this book we have tried to highlight the connection between college success and career success. This feature provides a college-based case study and then connects the same strategies to a career-based case study. Students will see that the strategies that make them successful in college will make them successful in their careers.

Worksheets

These worksheets provide the opportunity to apply chapter concepts. At the end of each chapter, students will take the next step from theoretical concepts to practical application.

Career Development Portfolio

These activities help the student to connect what they've learned in a chapter to what they may want from a career or what they will need to do as they are building a career.

Ancillaries

Lassi: Learning and Study Strategies Inventory

The LASSI is a 10-scale, 60-item assessment of students' awareness about and use of learning and study strategies related to skill, will, and self-regulation components of strategic learning. The focus is on both covert and overt thoughts, behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs that relate to successful learning and that can be altered through educational interventions. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that these factors contribute significantly to success in college and that they can be learned or enhanced through educational interventions such as learning and study skills courses.

The LASSI is available in print or online at www.mheducation.com. Ask your McGraw-Hill Education sales representative for more details.

Instructor Resources

Located in Connect, these extensive resources include chapter goals and outlines, teaching tips, additional activities, and essay exercises. Also included are unique resource guides that give instructors and administrators the tools to retain students and maximize the success of the course, using topics and principles that last a lifetime. Resources include:

- Instructor Manual
- Retention Kit, containing:
 - Facilitator's Guide
 - Tools for Time Management
 - Establishing Peer Support Groups
 - Developing a Career Portfolio
 - Involving the Faculty Strategy
 - Capitalizing on Your School's Graduates
- Course Planning Guide
- Sample Syllabi
- PowerPoints
- Test Bank—includes matching, multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions

Customize Your Text

Peak Performance can be customized to suit your needs. The text can be abbreviated for shorter courses and can be expanded to include school schedules, campus maps, additional essays, activities, or exercises, along with other materials specific to your curriculum. However you want to customize, we can make it happen, easily. McGraw-Hill

Education can deliver a book that perfectly meets your needs. Contact your McGraw-Hill Education sales representative for more information:

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the many instructors whose insightful comments and suggestions provided us with inspiration and the ideas that were incorporated into this new edition:

Reviews

Barbara Blackstone	University of Maine at Presque Isle
Dudley Chancey	Oklahoma Christian University
Norman Crumpacker	Mount Olive College
Laura Ringer	Newberry College
Carol Decker	Tennessee Wesleyan College
Kina Lara	San Jacinto College South
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Valerie Merriwether	Oakland Community College
Paula Hood	Coastal Carolina Community College
Sandra Lancaster	Grand Rapids Community College
Oliver Brook	Sierra College
Ericka Haynes	University of Louisiana

Acknowledgements

Patricia White	Danville Community College
Nikita Anderson	University of Baltimore
Skip Carey	Monmouth University
Michael Dixon	Angelo State
Elizabeth S. Kennedy	Florida Atlantic University
Christopher Thompson	Loyola University Maryland
Linda Kardos	Georgian Court University
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Nari Kovalski	Atlantic Cape Community College	Barbara J. Masten	Lourdes University
Gretchen Starks-Martin	College of St. Benedict & St. Cloud State University	Mary Ann Ray	Temple College
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Cathy Hall	Indiana University Northwest	David Trimble	El Paso Community College
Susam Epps	East Tennessee State University	Susan Selman	Patrick Henry Community College
F. Janelle	Jackson State University	Nicki Michalski	Lamar University
Hannah-Jefferson		Donna Hanley	Kentucky Wesleyan College
Cecile Arquette	Bradley University	Stephen Van Horn	Muskingum University
Nancy Lilly	Central Alabama Community College	Beverly Hixon	Houston Community College
David Roos	Dixie State University	Bruce A. Wehler	Pennsylvania College of Technology
William McCormick	University of Central Oklahoma	Hilary Billman	Northern Michigan University
Sue Maxam	Pace University	Jonathan Villers	Alderson Broaddus University
Tracy Ethridge	Tri-County Technical College	Lynn M. Fowler	Cosumnes River College
Dr. Reyes Ortega	Sierra College	Rico Gazal	Glenville State College
Susan Sies	Carroll Community College	Marcia Laskey	Cardinal Stritch University
Leigh Smith	Lamar Institute of Technology	Cheryl Spector	California State University, Northridge
Mary Silva	Modesto Junior College	Christopher Lau	Hutchinson Community College
Donna Wood	Holmes Community College	Gail Malone	South Plains College
Gretchen Haskett	Newberry College	Elias Dominguez	Fullerton College
Debbi Farrelly	El Paso Community College	Vincent Fitzgerald	Notre Dame de Namur University
Miriam Foll	Florida State College at Jacksonville	Jayne Nightingale	Rhode Island College
Paul DeLaLuz	Lee University	Annette Sisson	Belmont University
Mirjana Brockett	Georgia Institute of Technology	Kathie Erdman Becker	South Dakota State University
		Kendra Hill	South Dakota State University

Jennifer Parrack-Rogers	Blue Ridge Community College
Virginia Wade, Ed.D.	Marymount California University
Dixie Elise Hickman	American InterContinental University
Gail Tudor	Husson University
Wayne Smith	Community Colleges of Spokane
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Pamela Bilton Beard	Houston Community College–Southwest
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Susan Wilson	Portland Community College
James K. Goode	Austin Peay State University
Walter Tucker	Miami Dade College–North Campus
Andrea Smith	Florida Gateway College
Aubrey Moncrieffe Jr.	Housatonic Community College
Susan Bossa	Quincy College
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Carol Billing	College of Western Idaho
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Dr. Arlene Trolman	Adelphi University
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Desiree Fields-Jobling	Brookline College
Agostine Trevino	Temple College

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Sandra Sego	American International College
Joseph Selvaggio	Three Rivers Community College
Michael Abernethy	Indiana University Southeast
Jean Buckley-Lockhart	LaGuardia Community College
Jane M. McGinn, Ph. D	Southern Connecticut State University
Christine M. ViPond	Lord Fairfax Community College
Ami Massengill	Nashville State Community College–Cookeville Campus
Kevin Ploeger	University of Cincinnati
Keith Bunting	Randolph Community College
Laura Skinner	Wayne Community College
Mary Lee Vance	Purdue University Calumet
Dr. Hanadi Saleh	Miami-Dade College
Judith Shultz	Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
Bertha Barraza	Mt. San Jacinto Community College
Patricia Twaddle, M.Ed.	Moberly Area Community College
Misty Engelbrecht	Rose State College
Scott Empric	Housatonic Community College
Tim Littell	Wright State University
Kerry Fitts	Delgado Community College
Judith Isonhood	Hinds Community College
Michael Kuryla	State University of New York–Broome
Bryan Barker	Western Illinois University
Jerry Riehl	University of Tennessee
Eunice Walker	Southern Arkansas University
Therese M. Crary	Highland Community College
Pauline Clark	West Valley College
Christopher Old	Sierra College
Lisa Marie Kerr	Auburn University at Montgomery
Remona Hammonds	Miami-Dade College–West Campus
Sarah Strout	Dominican College

Also, I would like to gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the McGraw-Hill editorial staff—specifically, David Ploskonka, for his considerable effort, suggestions, ideas, and insights.

—Sharon K. Ferrett

SCANS: Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills

Competency Chart

Competencies and Foundations

Peak Performance Chapters That Address SCANS Competencies

Resources: Identifies, Organizes, Plans, and Allocates Resources

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Managing time | Chapter 4, Leverage Your Success |
| • Managing money | Chapter 5 |
| • Managing space | Chapters 2, 4 |
| • Managing people | Chapters 3, 13 |
| • Managing materials | Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 10 |
| • Managing facilities | Chapters 5, 6, 10, 12 |

Information: Acquires and Uses Information

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Acquiring information | Chapters 5, 6, 7, 10 |
| • Evaluating information | Chapters 8, 9, 10 |
| • Organizing and maintaining information | Chapters 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, Leverage Your Success |
| • Using computer to process information | Chapters 5, 10 |

Systems: Understands Complex Interrelationships

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| • Understanding systems | All chapters |
| • Designing systems | Chapters 6, 7 |
| • Monitoring systems | Chapters 4, 6, 7, 12 |
| • Correcting systems | Chapters 4, 5, 6, 11 |

Interpersonal Skills: Works with Others

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| • Positive attitudes | Chapters 2, 3, 13 |
| • Self-control | Chapters 2, 3, 13 |
| • Goal setting | Chapters 1, 3, 43 |
| • Teamwork | Chapters 2, 3, 13 |
| • Responsibility | Chapters 2, 3, 13 |
| • Stress management | Chapter 12 |

Technology: Works with a Variety of Technologies

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Selecting technology | Chapters 10, 14, Tech for Success |
| • Applying technology | Chapters 5, 10, 14, Tech for Success |
| • Maintaining technology | Chapters 10, 14 |
| • Solving problems | Chapters 10, 11 |
| • Staying current in technology | Chapters 5, 10, 14 |

Source: United States Department of Labor, 1992.

(continued)

SCANS: Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills *(concluded)*

Competencies and Foundations

Peak Performance Chapters That Address SCANS Competencies

Personal Qualities

- Responsibility, character, integrity, positive habits, self-management, self-esteem, sociability Chapters 2, 3, 13

Basic Skills

- Reading—locates, understands, and interprets written information in prose and in documents, such as manuals, graphs, and schedules Chapters 7, 10
- Writing—communicates thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing and creates documents, such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs, and flowcharts Chapter 10
- Arithmetic/mathematics—performs basic computations and approaches practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques Chapter 11
- Listening—receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues Chapters 6, 13

Thinking Skills

- Creative thinking—generates new ideas Chapter 11, Personal Evaluation Notebooks, Think Creatively and Critically
- Decision making—specifies goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risks, and evaluates and chooses best alternative Chapter 11, Case Study, Personal Evaluation Notebooks, Think Creatively and Critically
- Listening—receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues Chapters 6, 13
- Seeing things in the mind's eye—organizes and processes symbols, pictures, graphs, objects, and other information All chapters, with a strong emphasis in Chapter 11
- Knowing how to learn—uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills Chapter 1
- Reasoning—discovers a rule or principle underlying the relationship between two or more objects and applies it when solving a problem Chapter 11

Do I Belong in College?

Many of my students have told me I'm like a cheerleader, rooting them on to success. I know they all have what it takes to succeed, even when they have their own doubts. Why? Because I've been there, too. As I stepped onto the beautiful University of Michigan campus, I questioned whether I belonged. My small farming community seemed far away, and I felt out of place. Many students had come from fancy prep schools and wealthy families. I had gone to a one-room schoolhouse and then to a tiny high school in the thumb of Michigan. I was putting myself through college with part-time jobs and baby-sitting in exchange for room and board.

I was asking myself questions you might be asking no matter your background or family history. *Would I be able to make it here? Did I belong?* I thought back to a time in high school when I also questioned whether I belonged. I learned to overcome an intense fear of public speaking by sticking with it, practicing, and developing grit and perseverance. I ended up on the debate team and winning a state speaking contest. How had I made this transformation from shy and fearful to feeling confident in front of people? The secret was shifting to a positive, open mindset that focused on practice. I knew that with effort I could grow and learn and achieve my goals.

I felt that same fear when I entered a PhD program at Michigan State University. I was surrounded by smart, confident scholars who had graduated from excellent schools. *Did I belong here?* I looked at my habits and personal qualities and realized that my experiences as a farm kid made me a hard worker and persistent. I knew that no amount of effort was too great to achieve the goal of graduating. I was incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be admitted to a competitive graduate program. I wanted to make my parents proud because they never had the choices that I had. *I chose a positive, open mindset that focused on effort and growth. I worked hard, developed grit and determination, and bounced back after setbacks—qualities I learned growing up on a farm.* I visualized myself as a successful college graduate and held that image firmly in my mind whenever I was discouraged.

I returned to our farming community and taught for a year in the same one-room schoolhouse that I (and my father) had attended. It was my mission to encourage the students to develop their full potential and set high goals.

I believed in them and told them that they could succeed in college. *"You belong,"* I said often. They all had the same work ethic that I had and that discipline would serve them well. From there I went on to teach in college. Over the years, I have had many students who wondered if they belonged in college. I assured them that they did indeed belong and cheered them on to graduate.

I would have never dreamed of being a college professor and an administrator when I was in high school, but, at only 24 years old, I accepted a dean position at Delta College, a large community college in Michigan. A few years later, I moved to California as Dean of Continuing Education at Humboldt State University. I developed a new program in student success. That project launched this book and became my life's work. Over the years, I have had several students who wondered if they belonged in college. I helped them replace negative thoughts and behavior with positive habits. I watched them become confident and engaged students. I felt I was on the brink of something important. I was. Over the years I have seen the power of habits and how they change lives.

Throughout this book, we talk about the attributes of a "peak performer" and attempt to define success—in school, career, and life. However, in the end, *you* have to define success for yourself. Only you can determine what drives you, what makes you happy, and what will become your own life's work. What I know for sure is that an open, positive mindset that focuses on growth, grit, and resiliency will support your goals.



If I could give you only three pieces of advice as you journey to find your passion in life, they would be

1. Develop perseverance, resilience, GRIT. How do you respond to setbacks? Do you throw up your hands, get angry, blame others, and quit when the going gets rough? Do you believe that your intelligence and qualities are fixed and that you can't change? Or do you take a deep breath, assess the situation, resolve to work harder, use strategies that work, stick with it, and remind yourself that you can learn, stretch, and bounce back. *A positive mindset focuses on growth and effort. You can cultivate resiliency, grit, and perseverance through effort, learning, and practice.*

2. Create positive HABITS. *Positive habits flow out of a positive, open mindset. They support your goals and use the whole of your intelligence to help you stretch and grow. Keep it simple and focus on one change at a time. For example, exercise everyday*

and you will find that this one habit spills over into other areas of your life. You will be healthier and more positive.

3. ENGAGE and connect with people. You will feel that you belong in school and at work when you relate well with others and build friendships and positive relationships. *Engage with other students, faculty, and staff. Engage in clubs, music, theater, athletics, and other events and connect with others who are positive and supportive. Getting involved and making connections helps create a sense of belonging and well-being and often result in life-long friendships. Create positive relationships.*

And when you need a little help developing your own “cheer” along the way, please drop me an e-mail at sharonferrett@gmail.com. *I believe in you!*

—Sharon K. Ferrett

Getting Started

Congratulations! You are about to start, or restart, an amazing journey of opportunity, growth, and adventure. You may be at this point in your life for a number of reasons: You may be going to college right after high school; you may be focusing on a specific career or trade and want to acquire the appropriate skills or certification; or you may be returning to school after years in the workforce, needing additional skills or just looking for a change.

Whatever your reasons, this is an opportunity for you to learn new things, meet new people, acquire new skills, and better equip yourself both professionally and personally for the years ahead. This book is designed to get you started on that journey by helping you (1) learn how you learn best—and incorporate new ways to learn; (2) maximize available resources and seek out new opportunities; (3) relate what you are exploring now to future success on the job; and (4) strive to become the best person you can be.

Now that you have your book in hand, you are ready to get started. Or are you really ready? What else should you be aware of at this point? You may have already attended a basic orientation session where you learned about school and community resources and program requirements. Going through orientation, meeting with your advisor, and reviewing your catalog will help you get oriented. Additionally, this quick review is designed to outline the essentials that you will want to know, so

that you not only survive but also make your first year a success. Peak Progress 1 provides a handy checklist for the essential tasks you need to consider and accomplish the first week of school. Add to this list any tasks that are unique to your situation or school.

Why Are You Here?

College success begins with determining your goals and mapping out a plan. A good place to start is to reflect on why you are in college and what is expected of you. You will be more motivated if you clarify your interests and values concerning college. You will read in Chapter 3 the reasons students don't graduate from college, including juggling multiple responsibilities, having poor study skills and habits, and lacking preparation, motivation, and effort. College is a commitment of many precious resources you can't afford to waste—time, money, and mental energies. Consider the following statements and your reasons for being in college, and share this in your study team or with students you meet the first few weeks of class:

- I value education and want to be a well-educated person.
- I want to get a good job that leads to a well-paying career.

Peak Progress

1

Tasks to Accomplish the First Week of School

- Attend orientation and meet with an advisor. Ask questions and determine available resources. (See Peak Progress 2 for questions to ask.)
- Register and pay fees on time.
- Set up an e-mail account and check it daily.
- Check deadlines and procedures. *Never* just quit going to class.
- Buy books and keep receipts. Establish a record-keeping system.
- Find out the location of classrooms, parking, and school resources.
- Know expectations and requirements. Get a syllabus for each class.
- Create an organized study area. Post instructors' names, e-mails, office locations, and hours, as well as important deadlines.
- Form study teams and exchange e-mails and phone numbers. Get to know instructors and other students.
- Explore resources, such as the library, learning skills center, health center, and advising center.
- Go to all classes on time and sit in the front row and get to know others.

- I want to learn new ideas and skills and grow personally and professionally.
- I want to get away from home and be independent.
- I want to make new friends.
- I want to have new experiences and stretch myself.
- I want to fulfill my goal of being a college-educated person.

Jot down what you want from college and why you're motivated to get it.

List four values that are most important to you and how college will help you achieve them.

1.

2.

3.

4.

What You Need to Know and Should Not Be Afraid to Ask

You don't want to learn the hard way that you need one more class to graduate, only to find it's offered only once a year (and you just missed it). Make your time with your advisor productive by getting answers to important questions that will help you map out your coursework. Peak Progress 2 provides a handy checklist of common questions to get you started.

What Do You Need to Do to Graduate?

You will be more motivated and confident if you understand graduation requirements. Requirements vary among schools. Don't rely on the advice of friends. Go to orientation and meet with your advisor early and often. Check out the catalog and make certain you know what is required to graduate. Fill in the following:

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- Number of units required:
- General education requirements:
- Curriculum requirements:
- Residency at the school:
- Departmental major requirements:

The Most Common Questions Students Ask Advisors

1. What classes do I need to take for general education?
2. Can a course satisfy both a general education and a major requirement?
3. Can I take general elective (GE) courses for Credit/No Credit if I also want to count them for my major?
4. How can I remove an F grade from my record?
5. What is the deadline for dropping courses?
6. Can I drop a course after the deadline?
7. What is an “educational leave”?
8. What is the difference between a withdrawal and a drop?
9. Do I need to take any placement tests?
10. Are there other graduation requirements, such as a writing exam?
11. Where do I find out about financial aid?
12. Is there a particular order in which I should take certain courses?
13. Are there courses in which I must earn a C- or better?
14. How do I change my major?
15. Which of my transfer courses will count?
16. What is the minimum residency requirement for a bachelor’s degree?
17. Is there a GPA requirement for the major?
18. Is there a tutoring program available?
19. If I go on exchange, how do I make sure that courses I take at another university will apply toward my degree here?
20. What is a major contract, and when should I get one?
21. When do I need to apply for graduation?
22. How do I apply for graduation?
23. What is a degree check?
24. What is the policy for incomplete grades?
25. Can I take major courses at another school and transfer them here?
26. As a nonresident, how can I establish residency in this state?
27. How do I petition to substitute a class?
28. Once I complete my major, are there other graduation requirements?
29. What is academic probation?
30. Is there any employment assistance available?
31. Is there a mentor program available in my major department?
32. Are there any internships or community service opportunities related to my major?

- Cumulative GPA required:
- Other requirements, such as special writing tests and classes:

How to Register for Classes

Find out if you have an access code and the earliest date you can register. Meet with your advisor, carefully select classes, and review general education and major requirements. Add electives that keep you active and interested. Make certain that you understand why you are taking each class, and check with your advisor that it is meeting certain requirements.

Many colleges have a purge date and, if you miss the deadline to pay your fees, your class schedule is canceled. You may not be able to get into classes and may have to pay a late fee.

Know the Grading System

Learn the minimum grade point average (GPA) that you need to maintain good standing. If your GPA falls below 2.0, you may be placed on academic probation. The GPA is calculated according to the number of credit hours each course represents and your grade in the course. In the traditional system, A = 4 points, B = 3 points, C = 2 points, D = 1 point, and F = 0 points

(your school may have a different system, so ask to be sure). To calculate your GPA, first determine your total number of points. Following is an example:

Course	Grade Achieved	Number of Credit Hours	Points
Political Science	<i>C</i>	2	$2 \times 2 = 4$
Psychology	<i>B</i>	3	$3 \times 3 = 9$
English	<i>A</i>	3	$4 \times 3 = 12$
Personal Finance	<i>A</i>	1	$4 \times 1 = 4$
TOTAL		9	29

Then, to arrive at your GPA, you must divide your total points by your total number of credit hours:

$$\text{GPA} = \text{total points divided by total number of credit hours}$$

Thus, in this example,

$$\text{GPA} = 29 \text{ divided by } 9 = 3.22$$

Monitor your progress and meet with your instructors often, but especially at midterm and before final exams. Ask what you can do to improve your grade.

Adding or Dropping Classes

Ask about the deadlines for adding and dropping classes. This is generally done in the first few weeks of classes. A withdrawal after the deadline could result in a failing grade. Also, make certain before you drop the class that

- You will not fall below the required units for financial aid.
- You will not fall below the required units for playing sports.
- If required, the class is offered again before you plan to graduate.
- You don't need the class or units to meet graduation requirements.
- You are meeting important deadlines.
- You talk with the instructor first.
- You talk with your advisor.

Never simply walk away from your classes. The instructor will not drop you, nor will you be dropped automatically if you stop going to class at any time

during the semester. It is your responsibility to follow up and complete required forms.

An Incomplete Grade

If you miss class due to illness or an emergency, you may be able to take an incomplete if you can't finish a project or you missed a test. Check out this option with your instructor before you drop a class. Sign a written agreement to finish the work at a specific time and stay in touch with the instructor through e-mail and by phone.

Withdrawing or Taking a Leave of Absence

Some students withdraw because they don't have the money, they can't take time off from work, they lack child care, or they are having difficulty in classes. Before you drop out of college, talk with your advisor and see if you can get the support and motivation to succeed. If you want to take a leave to travel, want to explore other schools, are ill, or just need to take a break, make certain that you take a leave of absence for a semester, a year, or longer. Taking a leave means that you do not have to reapply for admission, and generally you fall under the same category as when you entered school.

Transferring

Before you transfer to another school, know the requirements, which courses are transferable, and if there is a residency requirement. If you plan to transfer from a two-year school to a four-year school, your advisor will help you clarify the requirements.

Expectations of Professors

Most professors will hand out a syllabus that outlines their expectations for the class. Understand and clarify those expectations and the course requirements right from the first day of class. Worksheet 1 is a convenient guide to complete when checking your progress with your instructor. Complete a similar form for each class. You'll want to have contact information about your professor, office hours, location of office, and so on. Every week or so reflect on how you're doing in every class and develop a relationship with your professors so that you are known as a serious student who wants to excel. Continually assess how you're doing and make adjustments as necessary. Reflect, assess, and adjust. This takes just

a small amount of time and effort, but can result in big returns such as a meaningful relationship, clarification, and a better grade. It is also an excellent habit to get into for job success. Knowing your supervisor's expectations and checking deadlines, goals, progress, and ways to improve job performance are vital for peak performance.

The Best Strategies for Success in School

In this text, we will focus on a number of strategies that will help you determine and achieve your goals. The Best Strategies for Success in School provides a comprehensive list of the proven strategies you will find woven throughout this text. Apply these to your efforts in school now and through your course of study. You will find that not only are they key to your progress in school, but also they will help you develop

skills, behaviors, and habits that are directly related to success on the job and in life in general.

Commitment

The best strategies in the world can't help you if you're not committed to acquiring new skills and creating positive long-lasting habits. Reflect on how committed you are to succeeding in college and in life. Are you just going to skim through this book or are you going to dig out key points, reflect on concepts, practice creating positive habits, and do the exercises? Take the challenge: go to class; read; reflect; write; experiment; and engage and connect with professors, other students, and campus activities. If you're committed and willing to learn new ideas and change your habits, you're on your way to being a peak performer.

The Best Strategies for Success in School

1. **Choose an open and positive mindset.** Believe that you can enhance your intelligence and positive qualities through effort, perseverance, and grit. These beliefs will help you grow, create a sense of curiosity, a passion for learning, and the ability to bounce back. A positive mindset will help you thrive throughout life.
2. **Attend every class and be an active and prepared participant.** Show that you are engaged and interested by being on time, sitting in front, participating, asking questions, and being alert. School is your job. Show up and be prepared!
3. **Pretest yourself. THIS IS THE NUMBER ONE PROVEN TIP.** Make up tests and take samples. Even better, do this with your study team. Pretesting reduces anxiety and gives you practice. You will see where you need to put in more effort.
4. **Write a summary.** After you preview the chapter, close the book and write a short summary. Go back and fill in with more details. Do this after each reading. Summarize out loud and share with your study team. This enhances learning.
5. **Know your instructors.** Choose the best instructors, call them by their preferred names and titles, e-mail them, and visit them during office hours. Arrive early for class and get to know them better. Get to know at least one instructor each term and stay in touch. This person may become your mentor and friend.
6. **Know expectations.** Read the syllabus for each course and clarify the expectations and requirements, such as tests, papers, extra credit, and attendance. Ask questions. What can I do to improve my grade?
7. **Join a study team.** You will learn more by studying with others than by reading alone. Make up tests, give summaries, and teach others. **TEST YOURSELF.** This is a proven technique for getting good grades.
8. **Organize your study space.** Create a quiet space, with a place for school documents, books, catalogs, a dictionary, a computer, notes, pens, and a calendar. Eliminate distractions by closing the door, and focus on the task at hand. Study first and then socialize. Do first things first.
9. **Map out your day, week, and semester.** Write down all assignments, upcoming tests, meetings, daily goals, and priorities on your calendar. Review your calendar and goals each day. Do not socialize until your top priorities are completed.
10. **Get help early.** Know and use all available campus resources. Go to the learning center, counseling center, and health center; get a tutor; and talk with your advisor and instructors about concerns. Get help at the first sign of trouble.
11. **Give school your best effort.** Commit yourself to being extra disciplined the first 3 weeks—buy your textbooks early; take them to class; get to class early; keep up on your reading; start your projects, papers, and speeches early; and make school a top priority. The first month is critical for making positive habits.
12. **Use note cards.** Jot down formulas and key words. Carry them with you and review them during waiting time and right before class.

(continued)

The Best Strategies for Success in School *(concluded)*

13. **Review often.** Review and fill in notes immediately after class and again within 24 hours. Active reading, note taking, and reviewing are the steps that improve recall. Review over time to increase your recall.
14. **Study everywhere.** Review your note cards before class, while you wait for class to begin, while waiting in line, before bed, and so on. Studying for short periods of time is more effective than cramming late at night.
15. **Identify your strengths and weaknesses.** Be open to grow and change and believe that you are capable of increasing your intelligence and positive qualities. They are not fixed. Put more emphasis on effort and less on talent.
16. **Organize material.** You cannot remember information if it isn't organized. Logical notes help you understand and remember. Use a mind map for outlining key facts and supporting material.
17. **Dig out information.** Focus on main ideas, key words, and overall understanding. Make questions out of chapter headings, review chapter questions, and always read summaries.
18. **Look for associations.** Improve memory by connecting patterns and by linking concepts and relationships. Define, describe, compare, classify, and contrast concepts. Use creative ways to increase your memory.
19. **Ask questions.** What is the obvious? What needs to be determined? How can you illustrate the concept? What information is the same and what is different? How does the lecture relate to the textbook?
20. **Bounce back.** The most successful students learn that failure is just an indicator. Learning involves setbacks and making mistakes. Effort is the key. Keep going.
21. **Study when you are most alert.** Know your energy level and learning preference. Maximize reviewing during daytime hours. Block out mornings or afternoons.
22. **Turn in all assignments on time.** Give yourself an extra few days to review papers and practice speeches. Sometimes 20 percent more effort results in 80 percent improvement.
23. **Make learning physical.** Read difficult textbooks out loud and standing up. Draw pictures, write on a chalkboard, and use visuals. Tape lectures, go on field trips, and study with others. Integrate all learning styles.
24. **Review first drafts with your instructor.** Ask for suggestions and follow them to the letter. Share your first drafts with your study team or learning center.
25. **Pay attention to neatness.** Focus on details and turn in all assignments on time. Use your study team to read and exchange term papers. Proofread several times.
26. **Practice! Nothing beats effort.** Practice speeches until you are comfortable and confident. Give your speech to your study team or in your classroom.
27. **Recite and explain.** Pretend that you are the instructor and recite main concepts. What questions would you put on a test? Give a summary to others in your study group. Make up sample test questions in your group. This really works!

(continued)

The Best Strategies for Success in School *(concluded)*

28. **Take responsibility.** Don't make excuses about missing class or assignments or about earning failing grades. Be honest and take responsibility for your choices and mistakes and learn from them.
29. **Ask for feedback.** When you receive a grade, be reflective and ask questions: "What have I learned from this?" "How did I prepare for this?" "How can I improve this grade?" "Did I put in enough effort?" Based on what you learn, what new goals will you set for yourself?
30. **Negotiate for a better grade before grades are sent in.** Find out how you are doing at midterm and ask what you can do to raise your grade. Offer to do extra projects or retake tests. Be sincere and show you want to improve.
31. **Always do extra credit.** Raise your grade by doing more than is required or *expected*. Immerse yourself in the subject, and find meaning and understanding.
32. **Take responsibility for your education.** You can do well in a class even if your instructor is boring or insensitive. Ask yourself what you can do to make the class more effective (study team, tutoring, active participation). Be flexible and adapt to your instructor's teaching style.
33. **Develop a positive, open mindset.** Think about positive actions that you need to overcome obstacles, and work on developing them each day.
34. **Stay healthy.** You cannot do well in school or in life if you are ill. Invest time in exercising, eating healthy, and getting enough sleep, and avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs. Binge drinking not only destroys brain cells, but can be deadly.
35. **Dispute negative thinking.** Replace it with positive, realistic, helpful self-talk, and focus on your successes. Don't be a perfectionist. Reward yourself when you make small steps toward achieving goals. Always look for positive actions.
36. **Organize your life.** Hang up your keys in the same place, file important material, and establish routines that make your life less stressful.
37. **Break down projects.** Overcome procrastination by breaking overwhelming projects into manageable chunks. Choose a topic, do a rough draft, write a summary, preview a chapter, do a mind map, and organize the tools you need (notes, books, outline).
38. **Make school your top priority.** Working too many hours can cut into study time. Learn to balance school, your social life, and work so that you're effective.
39. **Meet with your advisor to review goals and progress.** Ask questions about requirements, and don't drop and add classes without checking on the consequences. Develop a good relationship with your advisor and your instructors. Take advantage of all the resources available to help you.
40. **Be persistent.** Whenever you get discouraged, just keep following positive habits and strategies and you will succeed. Success comes in small, consistent steps. Be patient and keep plugging away. *Effort* is key to success.
41. **Spend less than you make.** Don't go into debt for new clothes, a car, CDs, gifts, travel, or other things you can do without. Education is the best investment you can make in future happiness and job success. Keep your life simple.

(continued)

The Best Strategies for Success in School *(concluded)*

42. **Use critical thinking, and think about the consequences of your decisions.** Don't be impulsive about money, sex, smoking, or drugs. Don't start a family until you are emotionally and financially secure. Practice impulse control by imagining how you would feel after making certain choices. Be creative by exploring many options and being flexible.
43. **Don't get addicted.** Addictions are a tragic waste of time. Ask yourself if you've ever known anyone whose life was better for being addicted. Do you know anyone whose life has been destroyed by alcohol and other drugs? This one decision will affect your life forever. Don't start smoking or taking drugs.
44. **Know who you are and what you want.** Visit the career center and talk with a career counselor about your interests, values, goals, strengths, personality, learning style, and career possibilities. Respect your style and set up conditions that create results. Try out internships and part-time jobs.
45. **Use creative problem solving.** Think about what went right and what went wrong this semester. What could you have done that would have helped you be more successful? What are new goals you want to set for next semester? What are some creative ways to overcome obstacles? How can you solve problems instead of letting them persist?
46. **Contribute.** Look for opportunities to contribute your time and talents. What could you do outside of class that would complement your education and serve others? Check out internships, volunteer, and service learning opportunities.
47. **Take advantage of your texts' resources.** Many textbooks have accompanying websites, DVDs, and study materials designed to help you succeed in class.
48. **Respect yourself and others.** Be supportive, tolerant, and respectful. Look for ways to learn about other cultures and different views and ways to expand your friendships. Surround yourself with people who are positive and successful, who value learning, and who support and respect you and your goals.
49. **Focus on gratitude.** Look at the abundance in your life—your health, family, friends, and opportunities. You have so much going for you to help you succeed.
50. **Just do it.** Newton's first law of motion says that things in motion tend to stay in motion, so get started and keep working on your goals! *Create positive habits* that support your goals and practice, practice, practice. Once again, effort is key.

Progress Assessment

Course: _____

Instructor: _____

Office: _____

Office hours: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

1. How am I doing in this class?

2. What grades have you recorded for me thus far?

3. Are there any adjustments that I should make?

4. Am I missing any assignments?

5. Do you have any suggestions as to how I can improve my performance or excel in your class?

Complete a similar form for each class. You'll want to have contact information about your professor, office hours, location of office, and so on. Every week or so reflect on how you're doing in every class and develop a relationship with your professors so that you are known as a serious student who wants to excel.

Be a Lifelong Learner

LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this chapter, you will learn to

- 1-1** Demonstrate how a positive, open mindset creates perseverance
- 1-2** Identify self-management techniques for success
- 1-3** Create a personal mission statement
- 1-4** Identify skills and competencies for school and job success
- 1-5** Identify your learning style
- 1-6** Identify your personality type
- 1-7** Explain how to integrate learning styles and personality types
- 1-8** Apply the Adult Learning Cycle and integrate the VARK System
- 1-9** Describe how to overcome obstacles with positive habits and better focus

SELF-MANAGEMENT

*It's the first week of classes
and I'm already overwhelmed.
How will I manage all this?
I'm so nervous, I've started
to chain smoke. Do I even
belong here?*

Are you feeling like this? Are you afraid you will never achieve your goals? Instead of focusing on negative feelings, channel your energies into positive results and envision yourself being successful. A positive, open mindset focuses on growth and learning. Perseverance and grit flow from these beliefs. You can fulfill your potential

with effort and positive habits. In this chapter, you will learn about self-management and how to use self-assessment, critical thinking, visualization, and reflection to become a success in all facets of life. Relax; you do belong. You have grit.

JOURNAL ENTRY What are you hoping to gain from your college experience? How does earning a college degree help you both personally and professionally? Consider answering the question “Why am I here?” Is your answer part of a bigger life plan? **Worksheet 1.1** will help you answer those questions. Think about the obstacles you may have faced to get to this point and what you did to overcome them. You’ll discover that lifelong learning begins with learning about yourself.



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Focus on **EFFORT**,
not *ability or talent*.

“Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome.”

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
Founder of Tuskegee Institute

For a long time, I’ve asked the question, What makes the difference? Why is it that some people succeed in spite of obstacles, hardships, and setbacks and others fail even though they have ability, talent, and a high IQ? *The answer is that people who are successful—peak performers—have a positive, open mindset. They understand the power of perseverance and grit. A positive mindset is focused on growth and flows from the belief that skills and essential qualities can be cultivated and enhanced through effort, practice, and perseverance. Peak performers know they can motivate themselves to improve in school, reach their goals, and create a love of learning. This isn’t about picking up a few tips, but involves a new way of seeing. It involves a core belief that their intelligence is not fixed, but can be developed through effort and resilience. They are able to bounce back from setbacks by turning obstacles into opportunities for growth. They know that learning is lifelong and are curious and passionate about learning and growing through effort. In short, peak performers have grit.*

Lately, you may have been asking yourself, “Who am I?” “Why am I in school?” “What course of study should I take?” “What kind of job do I want?” or “What should I do with my life?” These are all important questions. Some you may have already answered—and some of those answers may change by tomorrow, next week, or next year. And that’s OK. This is all part of a continual process—of learning about yourself and what you want out of life. *Whatever your goals are in life, a college degree will help you to succeed both personally and professionally.*

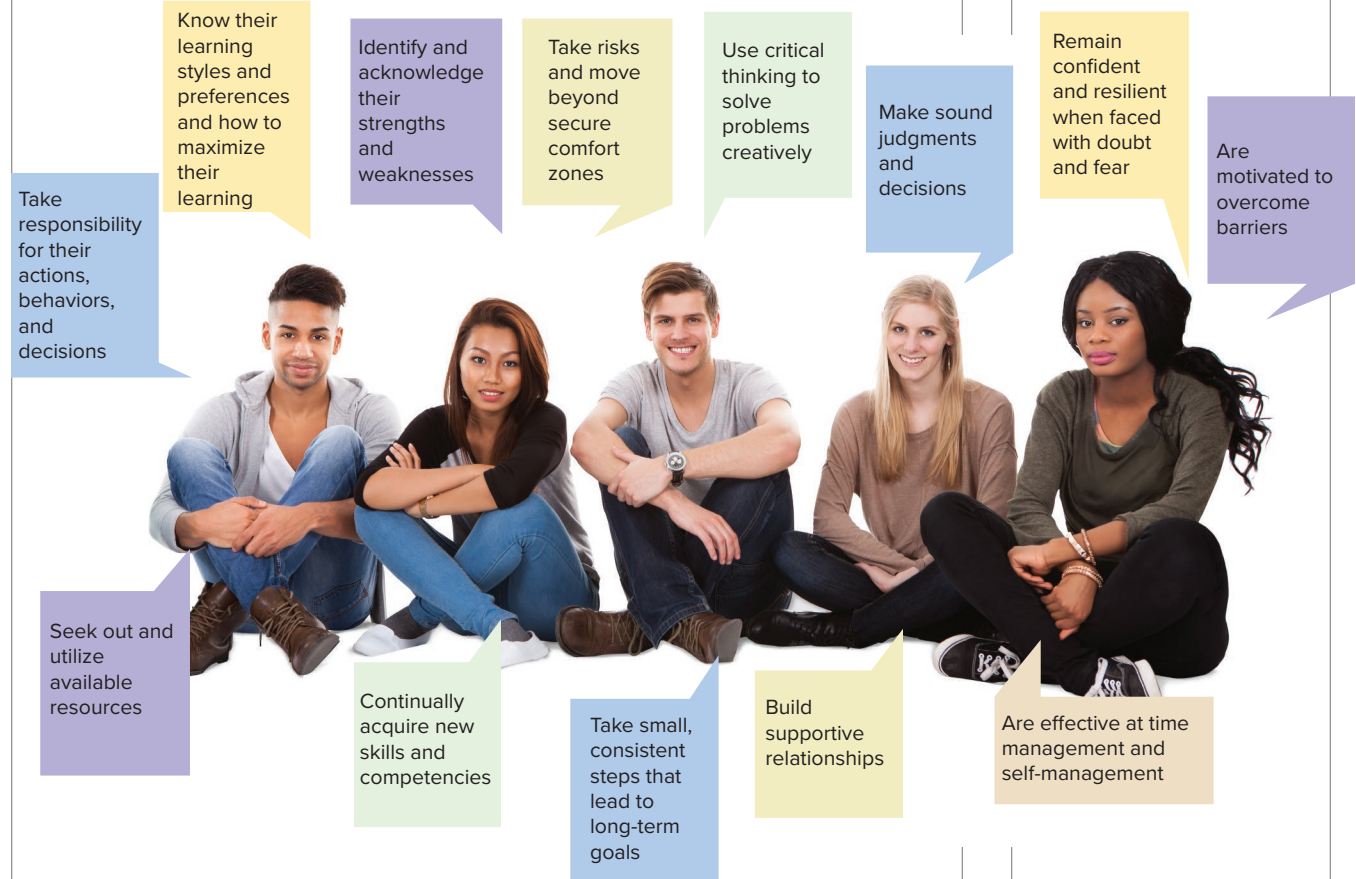
As you journey on the road to becoming a peak performer, this book will show you methods that will help you master self-management, learn critical skills, set goals, and achieve success. One of the first steps is self-assessment. Self-assessment requires seeing yourself objectively. This helps you determine where you are now and where you want to go. Then, by assessing how you learn—including your learning and personality styles—you will discover how to maximize your learning potential.

The many exercises, journal entries, and worksheets throughout this text support one of its major themes—that success in school and success in your career are definitely connected! The skills, qualities, and habits you learn and practice today will guide you throughout your life. Perseverance and grit all flow from an open, positive mindset that focuses on growth.

What Is a “Peak Performer”?

Peak performers come from all lifestyles, ages, cultures, and genders. *They have one common factor: they have an open, positive mindset that focuses on growth and effort. This growth mindset is based on the belief that they can develop their full potential by cultivating essential personal qualities and enhancing their intelligence. This belief leads to curiosity, a love of learning, and positive choices. Anyone can become a peak performer by setting goals, putting in the effort to achieve them, and by being resilient in the face of setbacks. Peak performers excel by focusing on results. They know how to change their fixed, negative thoughts into positive, open, and realistic beliefs. They break down long-term goals into daily action steps and positive habits. They realize that taking small, consistent steps can produce big changes over the long haul. They are persistent and realize the value of completing*

Peak Performers



Andrey_Popov/Shutterstock

their degree. They bounce back by seeing mistakes and setbacks as challenges and opportunities to grow. They use the whole of their intelligence and are curious and awake to the wonder of life. They know they belong. Peak performers have growth mindsets and know that growth takes effort, persistence, and sheer determination.

Every day, thousands of individuals quietly overcome incredible setbacks, climb over huge obstacles, and reach within themselves to find inner strength. They are successful because they know that through effort they can learn and grow and bounce back. They are masters, not victims, of life's situations. They control the quality of their lives by creating a positive, open mindset. In short, they are their own best friend. They have grit!

Self-Management: The Key to Reaching Your Peak

What is a primary strength of every peak performer? A positive, open attitude! Peak performers stretch themselves in their studies, their work, and virtually everything they do. This fundamental inclination to view life as a series of opportunities to learn and grow is a key to their success. They face obstacles and realize that with effort and positive actions they can overcome them. A positive open mindset creates resiliency and persistency—two key qualities for college and job success. Does this describe how you approach each day? Check your attitude by completing **Personal Evaluation Notebook 1.1**.

Personal Evaluation Notebook

1.1

Am I a Positive Person?

Having a positive attitude is key to effective self-management. Most people believe they are generally positive but often are not truly aware of their negative self-talk or behavior. Answer the following questions to determine your overall outlook. After you have answered the questions, ask a friend, co-worker, or family member to answer the questions about you. Were your answers the same?

	Mostly True	Sometimes True	Rarely True
I believe that I can learn new things and enhance my intelligence.	_____	_____	_____
I look for the positive in each situation.	_____	_____	_____
I do not take offense easily.	_____	_____	_____
I welcome constructive criticism and use it to improve.	_____	_____	_____
I am resilient and not easily discouraged.	_____	_____	_____
I can improve my character and personal qualities.	_____	_____	_____
I do not take everything personally.	_____	_____	_____
I take responsibility and face problems, even when it is not comfortable.	_____	_____	_____
I don't dwell on personal mistakes.	_____	_____	_____
I don't look for perfection in myself.	_____	_____	_____
I don't look for perfection in others.	_____	_____	_____
I do not depend on others to make me happy.	_____	_____	_____
I can forgive and move on.	_____	_____	_____
I do not become overly involved or disturbed by others' problems.	_____	_____	_____
I do not make snap judgments about people.	_____	_____	_____
I praise others for their accomplishments.	_____	_____	_____
I don't start conversations with something negative.	_____	_____	_____
I view mistakes as learning experiences.	_____	_____	_____
I know if Plan A doesn't work, Plan B will.	_____	_____	_____
I look forward to—not worry about—what tomorrow will bring.	_____	_____	_____

Add up the check marks in each column. If your “Mostly True” column scores are the highest, you are already a very positive and open person. If you have several check marks in the “Rarely True” column, you may want to reflect on how you can become a more positive person who is open to growth and learning.

You have a choice. Mindsets are just beliefs and anyone can develop the powerful beliefs of a peak performer. In fact, we all had this open, positive mindset as babies. We took on the most difficult tasks of learning to walk and talk with zest. We never decided that the tasks were too hard or not worth the effort, but jumped in with enthusiasm and resiliency. We can recapture that exuberant learning by focusing on growth. Instead of dwelling on problems, create options, alternatives, and behaviors to keep you on track. Redirecting your negative, fixed thought patterns into positive, open thoughts and actions will give you more drive and make every task seem more meaningful and less daunting. Develop grit!

A positive, open attitude is one of the many components of **self-management**. Are you responsible for your own success? Do you believe you can control your own destiny? Think of self-management as a toolkit filled with many qualities, strategies, and skills you can use to keep you focused, overcome obstacles, develop perseverance, and help you succeed.

Along with a positive attitude, very important techniques in this toolkit are self-assessment, critical thinking, visualization, and reflection.

Self-Assessment

One of the first steps in becoming a peak performer is **self-assessment**. Out of self-assessment comes recognition of the need to learn new tasks, skills, relate well with others, set goals, manage time and stress, and create a balanced, productive life. Self-assessment requires facing the truth and seeing yourself objectively. It isn't easy to admit you procrastinate or lack certain skills. Honest self-assessment is the foundation for making positive changes. An open, positive mindset wants honest feedback so growth can flourish.

Self-assessment can help you

- Focus on growth and where you want to improve
- Understand strengths and integrate learning styles
- Be resilient and bounce back from setbacks
- Use critical thinking and reasoning to make sound decisions
- Determine your interests and what you value and clarify goals
- Change negative patterns of thinking and behaving
- Create a positive, open, and motivated state of mind
- Work more effectively with diverse groups of people for mutual support
- Thrive when stretching yourself and redirect stress into energy
- View setbacks as challenges and opportunities for growth and learning
- Determine and capitalize on your strengths
- Recognize irrational and negative thoughts and behavior
- Create positive habits that support your goals
- Utilize resources that maximize your energies and efforts

The world is full of people who believe that, if only the other person would change, everything would be fine. This book is not for them. Change is possible if you take responsibility for your thoughts and behaviors and are willing to practice new ways of thinking and behaving. With consistent effort, growth and change will happen.

Self-assessment is very important for growth at school and for job success. Keep a portfolio of your awards, performance reviews, training program certificates, and projects. Assess the results achieved and set goals for improvement. At the end of each chapter, you will find a Career Development Portfolio worksheet, which

“Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes.”

CARL JUNG
Psychologist

will help you relate your current activities to future job success. This portfolio will furnish you with a lifelong assessment tool for learning where you are and where you want to go and a place for documenting your results. This portfolio of skills and competencies will become your guide for remaining marketable and flexible throughout your career. Chapter 14 further explores how to develop an effective portfolio and prepare for your future career.

Creativity and Critical Thinking Skills

Throughout this book, you will be asked to apply creative and critical thinking skills to college and life. **Critical thinking** is a logical, rational, systematic thought process that is necessary in understanding, analyzing, and evaluating information in order to solve a problem or situation. Creativity is seeing with fresh eyes and using new approaches to solve problems. It's being flexible and imaginative. Self-management involves using your creativity and critical thinking skills to make the best decisions and solve problems.

Using critical thinking helps you

- Suspend judgment until you have gathered facts and considered sources
- Look for evidence that supports or contradicts your initial assumptions, opinions, and beliefs
- Ask, "Is this true? How can I be certain?"
- Adjust your opinions as new information and facts are known
- Ask questions, look for proof, and examine the problem closely
- Reject incorrect or irrelevant information
- Reflect on how you act
- Recognize and dispute irrational thinking
- Look at likely consequences to your actions
- Develop creativity in problem solving

Because critical thinking determines the quality of the decisions you make, it is an important theme throughout this book. You use your critical thinking and creativity skills every day—from analyzing and determining your learning styles to communicating effectively with family members, classmates, and co-workers.

Make sure to complete the exercises and activities throughout this book. **Think Creatively** case studies throughout the text highlight that we are constantly making decisions that often have many repercussions—both positive and not-so-positive. Work through these to enhance your creative and critical thinking skills. You can be a better thinker.

Visualization and Affirmations

Visualization and affirmations are powerful self-management tools that help you focus on positive actions and outcomes. **Visualization** is the use of imagery to see goals clearly and envision engaging successfully in new, positive behavior. For example, "I see myself engaged in college, doing well, and graduating. I can see myself walking across the stage and my parents applauding. I feel such a sense of accomplishment. I did It!" **Affirmations** are positive self-talk and thoughts that counter self-defeating patterns of thought with more positive, hopeful, and realistic thoughts and feelings. For example, "I am friendly, kind, respectful, and fun to be around. I have many friends because I'm a good friend. I am open and positive and know that I can grow through experience and effort."

Using visualization and affirmations can help you create positive thoughts, relax, boost your confidence, change your habits, and perform better on exams, in speeches, or in sports. You can use them to rehearse for an upcoming event and practice coping with obstacles.

Through self-management, you demonstrate that you are not a victim or passive spectator; you are responsible for your self-talk, images, thoughts, and behaviors. When you observe and dispute negative thoughts and replace them with positive and realistic thoughts, images, and behaviors, you are practicing critical thinking and creativity. You are taking charge of your life, focusing on what you can change, and working toward your goals. In short, a positive, open mindset helps you focus on growth and learning.

You can practice visualization anytime and anywhere. For example, between classes, find a quiet place and close your eyes. It helps to use relaxation techniques, such as taking several deep breaths and seeing yourself calm, centered, and focused on your goals. This is especially effective when your mind starts to chatter and you feel overwhelmed, discouraged, or stressed. See yourself achieving your goals. Say to yourself, “I feel calm and centered. I am taking action to meet my goals. I will use all available resources to be successful. My IQ and qualities are not fixed. I can grow, change, and stretch daily.”

Reflection

Another important self-management tool is **reflection**. To reflect is to think about something in a purposeful way, with the intention of creating new meaning. When you are aware and attentive to your thoughts and feelings, you gain insight into who you are now, who you’ve been in the past, and who you’d like to be in the future. Sometimes the process causes us to reconsider our previous beliefs and behavior and explore new alternatives and ideas. Reflection can activate the prefrontal circuits in the brain and help strengthen your mind and make your brain more flexible and resilient. Research shows that when you focus attention on the mind, circuits in your brain can be changed and you can improve your health and relationships. Learn to breathe and respond calmly in creative ways.

Don’t confuse reflection with daydreaming. Reflection is conscious, focused, and purposeful—not simply letting your mind wander. When you reflect, you acknowledge your thoughts and feelings and then either let them go or direct your thoughts in more positive ways. Reflection helps you develop empathy, kindness, and compassion as you develop the ability to understand yourself and others. *As you practice reflection, the connections among your neurons fire and grow and you create a more integrated and balanced brain.* You feel flexible and freer. Reflection helps you to see the mind more clearly so that you can consciously change it. For example, let’s say you are feeling angry with a friend. With reflection you are able to see that you are not defined by your anger, nor do you have to act upon it. With reflection you can accept your feelings and allow them to be transformed so they don’t lead to depression. With practice you can learn to be more positive, balanced, calm, and integrated and less prone to becoming angry and lashing out. Be still and tune in.

A convenient way to reflect is to meditate or spend a few minutes each day sitting quietly and simply recording your thoughts, such as in a journal. This text provides an opportunity to practice reflection and critical thinking, including a **Journal Entry** exercise at the beginning of each chapter and a follow-up **Worksheet** at the end of each chapter.

Throughout the text, we’ll explore additional self-management techniques that focus on certain aspects of your schoolwork, employment, and personal life. **Peak Progress 1.1** explores the ABC Method of Self-Management, a unique process

“It’s not the load that breaks you down, it’s the way you carry it.”

LOU HOLTZ

College football coach

Peak Progress

1.1

The ABC Method of Self-Management

Earlier in this chapter, you answered some questions to determine if you approach everyday life with a positive attitude. Researchers believe that positive, optimistic thinking improves your skills for coping with challenges, which may also benefit your overall health and minimize the effects of stress.

What does “negative thinking” mean? If you are negative, you may tend to

- Filter out and eliminate all the good things that happen and focus on one bad thing
- Blame yourself (or someone else) automatically when something bad happens
- Anticipate the very worst that could happen and dwell in fear
- Feel like a failure and give up easily
- Believe that effort is not worth it
- Criticize yourself—either aloud or internally—in a way you would never do to someone else
- Determine that you are fixed and can’t change or grow
- Waste time complaining, criticizing, reliving, making up excuses, trying to look smart—rather than creating solutions and moving on and actually being smart

The good news is that anyone can learn and grow with a positive mindset. Be aware of patterns of defeating thoughts that are keeping you from achieving your goals. Dispute these negative and irrational thoughts with a positive mindset focused on growth.

Clear thinking will lead to positive emotions. Let’s say you have to give a speech in a class and speaking in public has caused you anxiety in the past. Your chattering mind might say, “I am terrified. I just hate getting up in front of people. I just can’t do this.” These negative beliefs and irrational thoughts can cause severe anxiety and are not based on clear thinking. Try this affirmation: “Public speaking is a skill that can be learned with practice and effort. I will not crumble from criticism and, even if I don’t do well, I can learn with practice and grow from constructive feedback. I will explore all the resources available to me, I will practice, and I’ll do well in this class.” Then visualize yourself standing straight, tall, and confident in front of the class. You are confident, calm, attentive to the audience, and making your key points. The audience is engaged and responding with warmth and acceptance. You feel accomplished and connected.

Self-management can be as easy as ABC. These simple steps help you manage your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors so that you can create the results you want.

A = Actual event: State the actual situation that triggered your emotions. Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings.

B = Beliefs: Describe your thoughts and beliefs about the situation that created these emotions and behavior. Breathe deeply so that you create space for reflection and become calm and focused.

C = Challenge: Dispute the negative thoughts and replace them with accurate and positive statements. Creatively choose the most positive and appropriate response.

Let’s use another example. When you read the quote at the beginning of this chapter, you might have felt the same way—overwhelmed. You are in a new situation, with many new expectations. Let’s apply the ABC Method to focus your energies on developing a positive outcome. For example, you might say,

A = Actual event: “It’s the first day of class and I have a mountain of reading and lecture notes to go over. I feel overwhelmed.”

B = Beliefs: “What if I fail? What if I can’t keep it all straight—learning styles, personalities, temperaments? These other people are probably a lot smarter than me. Maybe I should drop out. Wow. I need to slow down and stop my chattering mind. So first I’m going to breathe deeply until I’m calm and focused. I belong here.”

C = Challenge: “Going to college is a big change, but I have handled new and stressful situations before and I welcome this new challenge. I will put a lot of effort into my classes. I know how to overcome feeling overwhelmed by breaking big jobs into small tasks. I will confront new challenges, be persistent, and use proven strategies like testing myself and joining a study team. There are lots of resources available to help even if I face setbacks. I am persistent. I can do this! I have grit and determination.”

When you challenge negative thoughts and replace them with open, positive thinking, you feel energized, and your thoughts spiral upward: “I’m excited about discovering my learning and personality styles and how I can use them to my advantage. So many resources are available to me—my instructor, my classmates, advisor, and the book’s resources. I will get to know at least one person in each of my classes, and I will take a few minutes to explore at least one resource at school that can provide support. I will go to classes, test myself, and study in teams. I see myself confident and energized and achieving my goals. I will persist. I belong here! I am growing and learning daily.”

In the end-of-chapter **Worksheets** throughout this text, you will find opportunities to practice the ABC Method of Self-Management.

to help you work through difficult situations and achieve positive results. It uses skills such as critical thinking, visualization, and reflection to find positive outcomes.

Tools to Help You Reach Your Peak

This product is full of strategies and tools to help you reach your peak performance. The **ABC Method of Self-Management** will help you challenge and dispute negative and irrational thinking, it will help you reflect upon your beliefs and determine if they are helpful and supportive or limiting. When you become discouraged, go through the steps and replace negative thoughts and feelings with optimistic and hopeful thoughts. This is where creativity and critical thinking come in. You are in charge of your thoughts!

A feature called **Think Creatively and Critically** will help you practice using both creativity and critical thinking. This feature will also weave in brain research that shows you that the brain continues to grow and change. Brain research has shown that the brain takes the shape the mind rests upon.¹ If you continually rest your mind on self-criticism, doubt, worry, and anxiety, your neurons will fire together and you will have low self-esteem, become discouraged, and be quick to anger. However, *when you practice mindfulness, see the good in yourself and life, let go of negative thoughts, and focus on your goals, your brain will grow in self-confidence, calm strength, and resiliency.* Be positive and open to growth.

The Habit Cycle feature will show you how to consciously plan and change your behaviors so that better behaviors become automatic habits and part of your everyday life.

Other features in this book will help you learn new skills, become more focused, and get the most out of staying in college. Let's get started!

Be Persistent and Resilient to Succeed in College and Beyond

At the beginning of the book, I wrote a letter to you to share my experiences of doubt and confusion. There will be times in college and in a new job when you might feel that you don't belong. This is a normal and common feeling and shouldn't result in you quitting college or a job. As we will stress throughout the book, resiliency and persistence are important qualities for college and job success. You have to bounce back from setbacks, and you must be willing to make positive changes by building better habits. All the exercises and examples are designed to engage you in college; connect you with new friends, faculty, staff, and co-workers; and, in short, keep you in college. These same strategies and habits will allow you to successfully transfer into the world of work. There is no point in learning how to become a successful student if you drop out. The key to creating a sense of belonging is to engage and connect. All of these features are designed to help you feel as if you belong in college and help you overcome obstacles. With an open, positive mindset, you will focus on growth and resiliency. You belong. You have grit!

Discover Your Purpose: A Personal Mission Statement

At the beginning of the chapter, you were asked to write about why you're in school and how it relates to your life plan. In the Getting Started section, you also explored many reasons you are attending college, such as to learn new skills, get a well-paying job, and make new friends. Thinking about the answers to these and

related questions gets you started on writing your mission statement. As the poet Mary Oliver asked, “What do you plan on doing with your one wild and precious life?” How will you use this gift?

A **mission statement** is a written statement focusing on desired values, philosophies, and principles. It looks at the big picture of your life, from which your goals and priorities will flow. *When you have a sense of purpose and direction, you will be more focused and your life will have more meaning.* Don’t be concerned if you don’t feel that you have enough experience or direction to write a complete mission statement. It does not have to be lengthy and detailed, but simply a reflection of your values and interests at this point in your life. You can revise your mission statement as you grow and change. Your draft might say, “I want a job that is flexible and challenging. I know I like working with people. I value service and I want to make a difference in the world. I like to work with children. I may want to study child development and ways to use play to engage children and help them learn. I’d like to travel, so having a month or so off would be great. *When my life is over, I want to be known as a person who was well-traveled, well-spoken, well-educated, and that I changed lives for the better. I was kind and my life made a difference.*”

In one sense, you are looking at the end result of your life. What do you want to be remembered for? What legacy do you want to leave? What—and who—do you think will be most important to you? Think about your values or what you consider to be very important and regard highly. What is desirable and worthy of your time and effort? For example, if you value health above all else, you will make it a top priority and make time to exercise, eat well, and get enough sleep. This value will become a habit that will help shape your life.

Here is another example of a mission statement: “I want to thrive in a health care career that allows me to use my creativity, grow in knowledge from mentors and colleagues, and advance into leadership positions. I value relationships and flexibility. I want to work closely with patients and make a positive impact in my profession. I want to provide an effective balance with personal interests, including having a family, traveling, and participating in my community.” Your mission statement will change as you grow.

Think about how a college education will help you fulfill your mission in life. If you have chosen a profession (for example, nursing or teaching), you may want to include the aspects of the career that interested you (such as helping others achieve healthy lifestyles or educating and nurturing young children). Your mission statement (**Personal Evaluation Notebook 1.2**) will help you overcome obstacles.

Skills for School and Job Success

What does it take to succeed in a job? Based on feedback from employers, the Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS; **Figure 1.1**) lists the skills and competencies that are necessary for job, as well as academic, success. Rate your skills by using honesty and critical thinking to complete **Personal Evaluation Notebook 1.3**.

Discover Your Learning Style

Everyone processes information differently and there is no single right way to learn, but knowing your preferred learning style can increase your effectiveness in school and at work. Keep in mind that although you may have a preference, you do

Personal Evaluation Notebook

1.2

Writing Your Personal Mission Statement

To write your mission statement, begin by answering these (or similar) questions:

1. What do I value most in life? What gives my life meaning?

2. What nouns and/or adjectives best describe me? (designer, creative, builder)

3. Which verbs best describe what I like to do? (create, explore, write, draw)

4. What is my life's purpose? List one change in this world I'd like to make.

5. What legacy do I want to leave? What did my life mean?

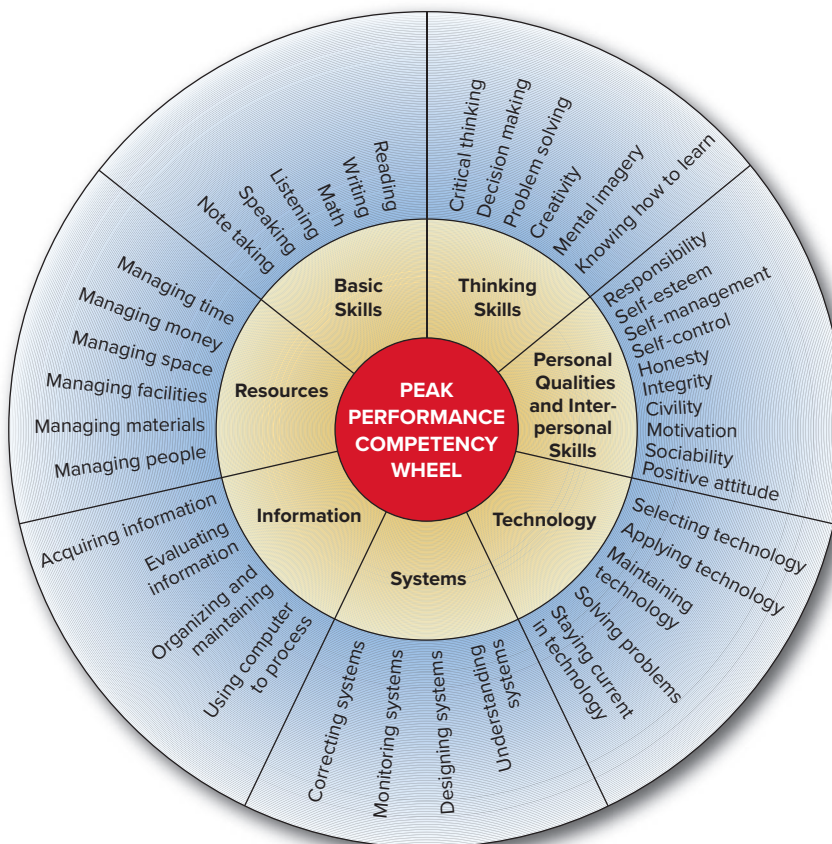
6. How will completing college help get me there?

7. Draft a personal mission statement.

Figure 1.1

Peak Performance Competency Wheel

SCANS recommends these skills and competencies for job success. Which of these skills have you been acquiring?



not have a fixed style. By having an open mindset you can integrate various styles and means to enhance creativity and imagination, grow in new ways, and promote lifelong learning.

Integrate All Learning Styles

Some people are more comfortable with sequential, logical, and factual thinking. They may favor facts and order, and they may think in a logical, detailed thought process. Other people may be more inclined to use an intuitive and insightful approach to solving problems and processing new information. They are more comfortable with feelings and hunches, like to think abstractly, intuitively, and synthesize the big picture. You can use both learning styles. *A specific learning style may come more naturally to you, but you should try to develop them all.* They will benefit you in different aspects and courses in your life.

Figure 1.2 lists left-brain or right-brain dominant traits.

It's important to note that current research suggests that the left and right brain difference is more of a metaphor than a completely accurate representation of the brain. You may find one of these "sides" to better match your personality than the other, but it does not actually mean you're using only one side of your brain.

The key to success is to use all your brain power and integrate a variety of learning styles. For example, Steve Jobs complimented linear, technical traits with design, visual, style, creativity, and beauty to create an innovative product that combined function and form.

Personal Evaluation Notebook

1.3

Peak Performance Self-Assessment Test

Assess your skills and behaviors on a scale of 1 to 5 by placing a check mark. Examples are given for each. Review your answers to discover your strongest and weakest areas.

Area	Excellent		OK		Poor
	5	4	3	2	1
1. Reading (e.g., comprehending; summarizing key points; reading for pleasure)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Writing (e.g., using correct grammar; presenting information clearly and concisely; documenting accurately)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Speaking (e.g., expressing main points in an interesting manner; controlling anxiety)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Mathematics (e.g., understanding basic principles and formulas; showing work)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Listening and note taking (e.g., staying focused and attentive; recording key points)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Critical thinking and reasoning (e.g., assessing facts; making decisions; linking material)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Creative problem solving (e.g., developing options; weighing alternatives)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Positive visualization (e.g., creating mental images to support goals)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Knowing how you learn (e.g., recognizing preferred learning style; integrating all styles)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Honesty and integrity (e.g., doing the right thing; telling the truth; presenting original work)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Positive attitude and motivation (e.g., being optimistic; identifying personal motivators; establishing goals)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Responsibility (e.g., keeping commitments; not blaming others)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Flexibility/ability to adapt to change (e.g., being open to new ideas; seeing the big picture)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

(continued)

Personal Evaluation Notebook

1.3

Peak Performance Self-Assessment Test (*concluded*)

Area	Excellent		OK		Poor
	5	4	3	2	1
14. Self-management and emotional control (e.g., taking ownership of thoughts and behaviors)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. Self-esteem and confidence (e.g., focusing on strengths; maintaining a positive self-image)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. Time management (e.g., setting priorities; planning; accomplishing tasks)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. Money management (e.g., budgeting; minimizing debt; saving)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
18. Management and leadership of people (e.g., inspiring; communicating; delegating; training)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
19. Interpersonal and communication skills (e.g., building rapport; listening; being an effective team member)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
20. Ability to work well with culturally diverse groups (e.g., respecting and celebrating differences)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
21. Organization and evaluation of information (e.g., identifying key points and ideas; summarizing; documenting)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
22. Understanding technology (e.g., using essential programs; troubleshooting basic problems)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
23. Commitment and effort (e.g., being persistent; working consistently toward goals)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Are You a Reader, Listener, or Doer?

Your brain allows you to experience the world through your senses. One simple way to explore how you learn best is to ask yourself if you are a reader, listener, or doer. Do you get more information from *reading and seeing*, *talking and listening*, or *doing*? Of course, you do all these things, but your learning strength, or preferred style, may be in one of these areas. For example, you may organize information visually, favoring right-brain activities. A person who learns best by observing, visualizing, or reading possesses a **visual** learning style. Someone who learns better by listening is considered an **auditory** learner. A **kinesthetic** learner learns by doing a physical activity. **Reading** and writing were also separated out as important ways

Is more comfortable with feelings

Thinks intuitively based on hunches and opinion

Uses abstract thinking

Likes a sense of space

Uses holistic, visual thinking

Uses pictures and drawings

Is more “physical”

Uses visuals and colors

Lives in the moment

Looks at the whole for patterns

Likes mind maps or creative outlines

Likes group work and open-ended

Is more comfortable with facts

Thinks rationally based on reason and logic

Uses concrete thinking

Likes a sense of order

Uses linear, step-by-step thinking

Uses speech and words

Is more “cerebral”


Makes lists and notes

Is concerned about time

Analyzes parts of the whole

Likes traditional outlines

Likes well-organized lectures



Right-Brain Dominant

Left-Brain Dominant

Figure 1.2

Left-Brain versus Right-Brain Traits

Put a check mark next to the descriptions that apply to you.
Would you consider yourself more of a left-brain dominant person or a right-brain dominant person?

Eri Morita/Getty Images

that some people learn information. As you’ll see, the **VARK** system stands for *Visual, Auditory, Reading, and Kinesthetic*. We will use the *VARK* system to integrate learning and help you think through the *Adult Learning Cycle* in different ways.

Personal Evaluation Notebook 1.4 has a Learning Style Inventory that will help you discover your learning style.

VISUAL LEARNERS

Visual learners prefer to see information and read material. They learn most effectively with pictures, graphs, illustrations, diagrams, time lines, photos, and pie charts. They like to perceive in three-dimensional space and re-create through visualization. They might use arrows, pictures, and bullets to highlight points. Visual learners are often holistic in that they see pictures in their minds that create feelings and emotion. These learners are picture smart. They often use visual descriptions in their speech, such as “It is clear . . .,” “Picture this . . .,” or “See what I mean?” Visual learners tend to

- Be right-brain dominant
- Remember what they see better than what they hear
- Prefer to have written directions they can read
- Learn better when someone shows them rather than tells them



• Visual Careers

Visual learners may enjoy being an interior designer, a drafter, a journalist, or a graphic artist. *Are you interested in any of these careers?*

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Personal Evaluation Notebook

1.4

Learning Style Inventory

Determine your learning preference. Complete each sentence by checking a, b, or c. No answer is correct or better than another.

1. I learn best when I

- ☐ a. see information.
- ☐ b. hear information.
- ☐ c. have hands-on experience.

2. I like

- ☐ a. pictures and illustrations.
- ☐ b. listening to recordings and stories.
- ☐ c. working with people and going on field trips.

3. For pleasure and relaxation, I love to

- ☐ a. read.
- ☐ b. listen to music.
- ☐ c. garden or play sports.

4. I tend to be

- ☐ a. contemplative.
- ☐ b. talkative.
- ☐ c. a doer.

5. To remember my student ID, I need to

- ☐ a. look at my ID card over and over.
- ☐ b. say it out loud several times.
- ☐ c. write it down several times.

6. In a classroom, I learn best when

- ☐ a. I have a good textbook, visual aids, and written information.
- ☐ b. the instructor is interesting and clear.
- ☐ c. I am involved in doing activities.

7. When I study for a test, I

- ☐ a. read my notes and write a summary.
- ☐ b. review my notes aloud and talk to others.
- ☐ c. like to study in a group and use models and charts.

8. I have

- ☐ a. a strong fashion sense and pay attention to visual details.
- ☐ b. fun telling stories and jokes.
- ☐ c. a great time building things and being active.

9. I often

- ☐ a. remember faces but not names.
- ☐ b. remember names but not faces.
- ☐ c. remember events but not names or faces.

10. I remember best

- ☐ a. when I read instructions and use visual images to remember.
- ☐ b. when I listen to instructions and use rhyming words to remember.
- ☐ c. with hands-on activities and trial and error.

11. When I give directions, I might say,

- ☐ a. "Turn right at the yellow house and left when you see the large tree."
- ☐ b. "Turn right. Go three blocks. Turn left onto Buttermilk Lane."
- ☐ c. "Follow me," after giving directions by using gestures.

12. When driving in a new city, I prefer to

- ☐ a. use a map and find my own way.
- ☐ b. stop and get directions from someone.
- ☐ c. drive around and figure it out by myself.

Score: Count the number of check marks for all your choices:

Total a choices _____ (visual learning style)

Total b choices _____ (auditory learning style)

Total c choices _____ (kinesthetic learning style)

The highest total indicates your dominant learning style. If you are a combination, that's good. It means you are integrating styles already.

- Like to draw, sketch, and visualize information
- Like graphs, pictures, and diagrams
- Keep a list of things to do when planning the week
- Gesture frequently while talking and watch facial expressions
- Like to read for pleasure and to learn

AUDITORY LEARNERS

Auditory learners prefer to rely on their hearing sense. They may like music and prefer to listen to information, as in lectures. They like to talk, recite, and summarize information aloud. Auditory learners may create rhymes out of words and play music that helps them concentrate. When they take study breaks, they listen to music or chat with a friend. They are usually good listeners but are easily distracted by noise. They also tend to listen to their feelings and thoughts and intuition. They not only have self-understanding, but also tend to have empathy for others. They are people smart. They often use auditory descriptions when communicating, such as “This rings true . . .,” “It’s clear as a bell . . .,” “Do you hear what you’re saying?” or “My intuition says. . . .”

Auditory learners tend to

- Be left-brain dominant
- Remember what they hear better than what they see
- Prefer to listen to instructions
- Like lectures and relate information to their own experiences
- Like to listen to music and talk on the telephone
- Plan the week by talking it through with someone
- Use rhyming words to remember
- Learn best when they hear an assignment as well as see it

Auditory learners may enjoy being a disc jockey, trial lawyer, counselor, or musician.

READER/WRITER LEARNERS

Reader/writer learners prefer to learn information through words on a printed page. They like to write information and teach with words. They like to write out summaries, rewrite their notes, write letters, and read for understanding. They learn best when they read, talk, and write information. These learners are verbal/linguistic smart. They tend to

- Be left-brain dominant
- Write and rewrite notes
- Write questions and summaries
- Be logical, have the ability to reason, and solve problems
- Respond in writing

Reader/writers may enjoy being writers, lawyers, journalists, or scientists.

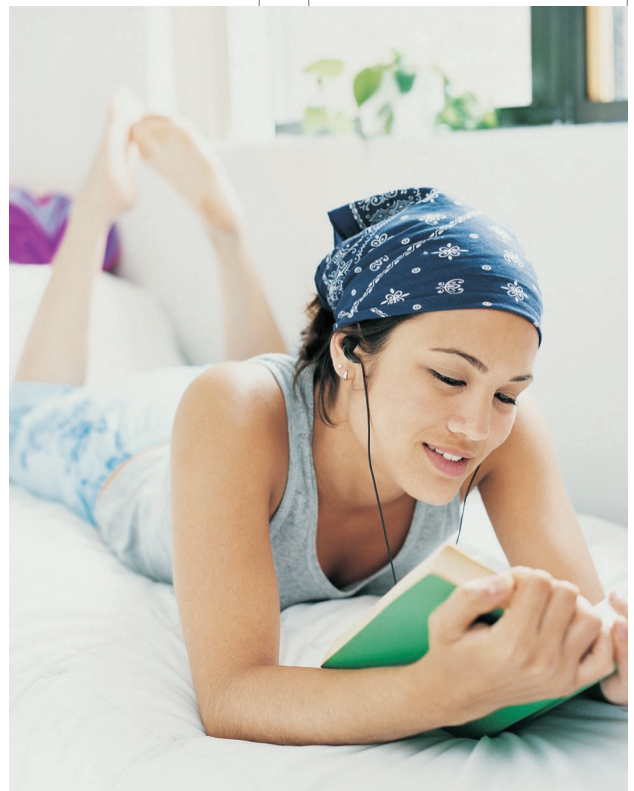
KINESTHETIC LEARNERS

Kinesthetic learners are usually well coordinated, like to touch things, and learn best by doing. They like to collect samples, build models, and use note cards, and often like to

• Know How You Learn

Everyone has his or her own way of learning. *What type of learning style do you think best suits this person?*

Digital Vision/Getty Images



spend time in nature. They like to connect abstract material to something concrete and make it practical. They are good at hands-on tasks. They are body smart and often also outdoor smart. They often use phrases such as “I am getting a handle on . . .,” “Let’s see how this works . . .,” and “Let’s put these samples in classifications that. . .”

Kinesthetic learners tend to

- Be right-brain dominant
- Create an experience
- Use hands-on activities
- Build things and put things together
- Use models and physical activity
- Write down information
- Apply information to real-life situations
- Draw, doodle, use games and puzzles, and play computer games
- Take field trips, observe nature, and collect samples
- Relate abstract information to something concrete

Kinesthetic learners may enjoy being a chef, a surgeon, a medical technician, a nurse, an automobile mechanic, an electrician, an engineer, a forest ranger, a police officer, or a dancer.

Redefining Intelligence: Other Learning Styles

Because each of us has a unique set of abilities, perceptions, needs, and ways of processing information, learning styles vary widely. Besides visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reader/writer learning styles, there are other, more specific styles, we all have more than one learning style. *The key is not to try to fit yourself in a box, but to see what styles tend to describe you and then integrate all styles for success.* Styles are not fixed, but fluid.

Intelligence has been redefined. We used to think of it as measured by an IQ test. Many schools measure and reward linguistic and logical/mathematical modes of intelligence; however, Thomas Armstrong, author of *7 Kinds of Smart: Identifying and Developing Your Many Intelligences*, and Howard Gardner, who wrote *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, illustrated that we all possess many different intelligences. (See **Personal Evaluation Notebook 1.5**, which includes a number of traits associated with each “intelligence.”)

1. **Verbal/linguistic.** Some people are **word smart**. They have verbal/linguistic intelligence and like to read, talk, and write information. They have the ability to argue, persuade, entertain, and teach with words. Many become journalists, writers, or lawyers. **To learn best:** Talk, read, or write about it.
2. **Logical/mathematical.** Some people are **logic smart**. They have logical/mathematical intelligence and like numbers, puzzles, and logic. They have the ability to reason, solve problems, create hypotheses, think in terms of cause and effect, and explore patterns and relationships. Many become scientists, accountants, or computer programmers. **To learn best:** Conceptualize, quantify, or think critically about it.
3. **Spatial.** Some people are **picture smart**. They have spatial intelligence and like to draw, sketch, and visualize information. They have the ability to perceive in three-dimensional space and re-create various aspects of the visual world. Many become architects, photographers, artists, or engineers. **To learn best:** Draw, sketch, or visualize it.