



open**Stax**™

College Suc- cess

College Success

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CONTENTS

Preface 1

1 Exploring College 5

- Introduction 5
- 1.1 Why College?** 7
- 1.2 The First Year of College Will Be an Experience** 12
- 1.3 College Culture and Expectations** 16
- 1.4 How Can This Book And This Course Help?** 27
- Summary 29
- Rethinking 29
- Where do you go from here? 29

2 The Truth About Learning Styles 31

- Introduction 31
- 2.1 The Power to Learn** 32
- 2.2 The Motivated Learner** 36
- 2.3 It's All in the Mindset** 45
- 2.4 Learning Preferences** 50
- 2.5 Personality Types and Learning** 54
- 2.6 Applying What You Know about Learning** 58
- 2.7 The Hidden Curriculum** 61
- Summary 64
- Career Connection 64
- Rethinking 64
- Where do you go from here? 64

3 Managing Your Time and Priorities 65

- Introduction 65
- 3.1 The Benefits of Time Management** 66
- 3.2 Time Management in College** 68
- 3.3 Procrastination: The Enemy Within** 73
- 3.4 How to Manage Time** 76
- 3.5 Prioritization: Self-Management of What You Do and When You Do It** 82
- 3.6 Goal Setting and Motivation** 90
- 3.7 Enhanced Strategies for Time and Task Management** 94
- Summary 102
- Career Connection 102
- Rethinking 102
- Where do you go from here? 102

4 Planning Your Academic Pathways 103

- Introduction 103
- 4.1 Defining Values and Setting Goals 104**
- 4.2 Planning Your Degree Path 110**
- 4.3 Making a Plan 122**
- 4.4 Managing Change and the Unexpected 128**
- Summary 134
- Career Connection 134
- Rethinking 134
- Where do you go from here? 134

5 Reading and Notetaking 137

- Introduction 137
- 5.1 The Nature and Types of Reading 138**
- 5.2 Effective Reading Strategies 141**
- 5.3 Taking Notes 153**
- Summary 171
- Career Connection 171
- Rethinking 172
- Where do you go from here? 172

6 Studying, Memory, and Test Taking 173

- Introduction 173
- 6.1 Memory 174**
- 6.2 Studying 182**
- 6.3 Test Taking 190**
- Summary 198
- Career Connection 198
- Rethinking 198
- Where do you go from here? 198

7 Thinking 199

- Introduction 199
- 7.1 What Thinking Means 201**
- 7.2 Creative Thinking 202**
- 7.3 Analytical Thinking 211**
- 7.4 Critical Thinking 214**
- 7.5 Problem-Solving 217**
- 7.6 Metacognition 219**
- 7.7 Information Literacy 222**
- Career Connection 229
- Rethinking 229
- Where do you go from here? 229

8 Communicating 231

- Introduction 231
- 8.1** An Overview of Communication 232
- 8.2** Purpose of Communication 236
- 8.3** Communication and Technology 237
- 8.4** The Context of Communication 245
- 8.5** Barriers to Effective Communication 251
- Summary 256
- Career Connection 256
- Rethinking 257
- Where do you go from here? 257

9 Understanding Civility and Cultural Competence 259

- Introduction 259
- 9.1** What Is Diversity, and Why Is Everybody Talking About It? 260
- 9.2** Categories of Diversity 273
- 9.3** Navigating the Diversity Landscape 279
- 9.4** Inclusivity and Civility: What Role Can I Play? 288
- Summary 290
- Career Connection 290
- Rethinking 290
- Where do you go from here? 290

10 Understanding Financial Literacy 293

- Introduction 293
- 10.1** Personal Financial Planning 295
- 10.2** Savings, Expenses, and Budgeting 300
- 10.3** Banking and Emergency Funds 306
- 10.4** Credit Cards and Other Debt 312
- 10.5** Education Debt: Paying for College 316
- 10.6** Defending against Attack: Securing Your Identity and Accounts 324
- Summary 332
- Career Connection 332
- Rethinking 332
- Where do you go from here? 332

11 Engaging in a Healthy Lifestyle 333

- Introduction 333
- 11.1** Taking Care of Your Physical Health 335
- 11.2** Sleep 342
- 11.3** Taking Care of Your Emotional Health 346
- 11.4** Taking Care of Your Mental Health 350
- 11.5** Maintaining Healthy Relationships 354

11.6 Your Safety	360
Summary	367
Career Connection	367
Rethinking	367
Where do you go from here?	367

12 Planning for Your Future 369

Introduction	369
12.1 Why Worry about a Career While I'm in College?	370
12.2 Your Map to Success: The Career Planning Cycle	375
12.3 Where Can You Go from Here?	394

A Conducting and Presenting Research 397

B Recommended Readings 405

C Activities and Artifacts From the Book 407

Index 415

Preface

Welcome to *College Success*, an OpenStax resource. This textbook was written to increase student access to high-quality learning materials, maintaining highest standards of academic rigor at little to no cost.

About OpenStax

OpenStax is part of Rice University, which is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable corporation. As an educational initiative, it's our mission to transform learning so that education works for every student. Through our partnerships with philanthropic organizations and our alliance with other educational resource companies, we're breaking down the most common barriers to learning. Because we believe that everyone should and can have access to knowledge.

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Format

You can access this textbook for free in web view or PDF throughOpenStax.org, and for a low cost in print.

About *College Success*

College Success is designed to meet the course needs of a one-semester course, workshop, or seminar for first year experience or college transition students. FYE programs vary greatly according to institution, so the textbook has been developed to cover the most common concepts, and the open license and flexible formats provide many opportunities for coordinators, instructional designers, and faculty to tailor the material for their needs.

This book is an invitation—an invitation to students to step boldly into their college experience. *College Success* addresses the evolving challenges and opportunities of today's diverse students. The intensive development work leveraged expertise from hundreds of FYE coordinators and faculty across the country. It highlights resources available to students as they embark on new roads of independence and responsibility. Students engage in careful self-analysis and research-based strategies to identify their strengths, challenges, and aptitudes. While they explore study skills and learning methods, they are continually asked to apply the concepts in reading, writing, and thinking exercises, which build both a solid base for classroom discussion and a portfolio they can augment throughout their college career. Recognizing the ubiquity of technology and social media, the authors address relevant information and advice where appropriate throughout the text. The material is rooted in motivation, growth-mindset, and resilience; student readers will feel seen and involved as they continually encounter one of the textbook's core themes: "real-life" doesn't stop when college starts.

Student engagement and self-analysis are reflected in each section through applications and activities. Student reflection and opinions can be captured directly in the text, online, or in worksheets provided through the ancillary package.

The diversity and intersectionality of students was considered in every example, context, and application, and the text's active surveys and detailed profiles make student voices a key element of the reading.

Interconnected topics are acknowledged and built upon, demonstrating that no element of college learning and growth occurs in isolation. The result is a cumulative, more complete understanding, which better prepares students to meet the multi-dimensional challenges of higher education.

Openly licensed and free in all digital formats, the text provides unparalleled flexibility in its use, customization, and accessibility for faculty and students. The book is provided at no cost in online, pdf, epub, Kindle, and other formats. It is also available in print for a very low price.

Robust instructor ancillaries will support faculty and course designers with teaching notes, additional exercises, worksheet versions of the in-text activities, lecture slides, and assessment items.

Features

- **Student Profiles:** The voices of real students inform every chapter. These students grapple with the same concepts, from improving study skills to embracing diversity, and through their experiences and successes we share important stories.
- **Get Connected:** Apps, websites and tech opportunities that our experts recommend to help students better face the challenges of college and life beyond the classroom.
- **Analysis and Applications:** Peppered through every chapter are opportunities for students to reflect on concepts, try out processes, and apply what they're learning.
- **Career Connection:** How can the material in each chapter help the student once they leave the classroom? Features at the end of every chapter help students apply what they've learned to work life.
- **Where Do You Go From Here?:** Each chapter gives students the opportunity to dig in deeper and hone their research skills by choosing one topic for a closer look.

Student Surveys and Results

Chapters begin and end with a survey, posing questions that will get readers engaged in considering their own level of connection and understanding of the chapter's concept, from time management to personal finance to career planning. The close of each chapter revisits the survey, helping students gauge how their understanding has evolved.

Student survey results are gathered anonymously and will be regularly provided to adopters as part of the instructor resources. (See below for more information on instructor resources.) In the future, the surveys will be assignable and the results viewable on an individual-course basis. For the survey results featured in the textbook, hundreds of students from a diverse array of colleges and universities provided their feedback to

inform future students taking the course.

Estimated Module Completion Time

Each section of College Success includes an estimate of the average time needed to read through the material, work on the activities and applications, and—where necessary—explore external websites or watch videos. Each student will engage the material differently, and faculty will likely prioritize or assign certain components over others. As a result, the actual time students spend will vary greatly. OpenStax will periodically update these estimates based on user feedback. As with all other elements of the text, these estimates may be adjusted by instructors (or deleted completely) based on addition or removal of material or activities.

Additional Resources

Student and Instructor Resources

We've compiled additional resources for both students and instructors, including Getting Started Guides, lecture slides, and a Test Bank.

The most robust of these is the Instructor Resource Manual, developed by author Amy Baldwin based on extensive experience and requests from faculty reviewers and survey respondents. For each chapter, the IRM will contain:

- Detailed teaching suggestions
- Bloom's Taxonomy matrix, indicating the alignment of each chapter activity and application to the level of Bloom's it fulfills.
- Overarching “big picture” questions from the chapter
- Topical and cumulative case scenario activities, which present a realistic situation based on the concepts, and ask students to respond via writing or another method. These may be adapted and assigned by instructors.

Instructor resources require a verified instructor account, which you can apply for when you log in or create your account on [OpenStax.org](#). Instructor and student resources are typically available within a few months after the book's initial publication. Take advantage of these resources to supplement your OpenStax book.

Community Hubs

OpenStax partners with the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME) to offer Community Hubs on OER Commons—a platform for instructors to share community-created resources that support OpenStax books, free of charge. Through our Community Hubs, instructors can upload their own materials or download resources to use in their own courses, including additional ancillaries, teaching material, multimedia, and relevant course content. We encourage instructors to join the hubs for the subjects most relevant to your teaching and research as an opportunity both to enrich your courses and to engage with other faculty.

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About the Authors

Senior Contributing Author

Amy Baldwin, University of Central Arkansas

Amy Baldwin has dedicated her entire career to supporting students in their successful transition to college.

She wrote the first, groundbreaking student success textbook for community colleges and for first-generation students. After 18 years as an award winning community college professor, she now serves as Director of the Department of Student Transitions at the University of Central Arkansas. This unique blend of experience provides perspective on two critical student and faculty populations, which she has brought to this book and her extensive work with Complete College America, Achieving the Dream, and the Developmental Education Initiative.

Amy and her husband Kyle live in Arkansas and have two children, Emily and Will.

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1

Exploring College



Figure 1.1

Chapter Outline

- 1.1** Why College?
- 1.2** The First Year of College Will Be an Experience
- 1.3** College Culture and Expectations
- 1.4** How Can This Book And This Course Help?



Introduction

Student Survey

How do you feel about your ability to meet the expectations of college? These questions will help you determine how the chapter concepts relate to you right now. As we are introduced to new concepts and practices, it can be informative to reflect on how your understanding changes over time. We'll revisit these questions at the end of the chapter to see whether your feelings have changed. Take this quick survey to figure it out, ranking questions on a scale of 1 – 4, 1 meaning "least like me" and 4 meaning "most like me."

Don't be concerned with the results. If your score is low, you will most likely gain even more from this book.

1. I am fully aware of the expectations of college and how to meet them.
2. I know why I am in college and have clear goals that I want to achieve.
3. Most of the time, I take responsibility for my learning new and challenging concepts.
4. I feel comfortable working with faculty, advisors, and classmates to accomplish my goals.

You can also take the [Chapter 1 survey \(<https://openstax.org/l/collegesurvey01>\)](https://openstax.org/l/collegesurvey01) anonymously online.

STUDENT PROFILE

"As students transitioning to college, responsibility is an inherent component of self-advocacy. As someone accepted on full funding to a 4-year university, but whose life's circumstances disallowed attending college

until years later, I used to dream of a stress-free college life. The reality is, college can be a meaningful place, but it can also be challenging and unpredictable. The key is to *be your own best advocate*, because no one else is obliged to advocate on your behalf.

"When I began my community college studies, I knew what I wanted to do. Cybersecurity was my passion, but I had no understanding of how credits transfer over to a 4-year university. This came to haunt me later, after I navigated the complex processes of transferring between two different colleges. Not everyone involved volunteers information. It is up to you, the student, to be the squeaky wheel so you can get the grease. Visit office hours, make appointments, and schedule meetings with stakeholders so that you are not just buried under the sheaf of papers on someone's desk."

—**Mohammed Khalid**, University of Maryland

About this Chapter

In this chapter, you will learn about what you can do to get ready for college. By the time you complete this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- Recognize the purpose and value of college.
- Describe the transitional experience of the first year of college.
- Discuss how to handle college culture and expectations.
- Identify resources in this text and on your campus for supporting your college success.

Reginald	Madison
Reginald has, after much thought and with a high level of family support, decided to enroll in college. It has been a dream in the making, as he was unable to attend immediately after high school graduation. Instead, he worked several years in his family's business, got married, had a son, and then decided that he didn't want to spend the rest of his life regretting that he didn't get a chance to follow his dreams of becoming a teacher. Because it has been almost a decade since he sat in a classroom, he is worried about how he will fit in as an adult learner returning to college. Will his classmates think he is too old? Will his professors think he is not ready for the challenges of college work? Will his family get tired of his long nights at the library and his new priorities? There is so much Reginald is unsure of, yet he knows it's a step in the right direction.	It has been only three months since Madison graduated from high school. She graduated in the top 10 percent of her class, and she earned college credit while in high school. She feels academically prepared, and she has a good sense of what degree she wants to earn. Since Madison was 5 years old, she's wanted to be an engineer because she loved building things in the backyard with her father's tools. He always encouraged her to follow her dreams, and her whole family has been supportive of her hobbies and interests. However, Madison is concerned that her choice of major will keep her from dance, creative writing, and other passions. Furthermore, Madison is heading to a distant college with no other people she knows. Will she be able to find new friends quickly? Will her engineering classes crush her or motivate her to complete college? Will she be able to explore other interests? Madison has a lot on her mind, but she aims to face these challenges head-on.

While Reginald and Madison have had different experiences before and certainly have different motivations for enrolling in college, they have quite a bit in common. They are both committed to this new chapter in their lives, and they are both connected to their families in ways that can influence their commitment to this pursuit. What they don't know just yet—because they haven't started their classes—is that they will have even more in common as they move through each term, focus on a major, and plan for life after graduation. And they have a

lot in common with you as well because you are in a similar position—starting the next chapter of the rest of your life.

In this chapter, you will first learn more about identifying the reason you are in college. This is an important first step because knowing your *why* will keep you motivated. Next, the chapter will cover the transitions that you may experience as a new college student. Then, the chapter will focus on how you can acclimate to the culture and meeting the expectations—all of which will make the transition to a full-fledged college student easier. Finally, the chapter will provide you with strategies for overcoming the challenges that you may face by providing information about how to find and access resources.

1.1 Why College?

Estimated completion time: 22 minutes.

Questions to consider:

- Why are you in college?
- What are the rewards and value of a college degree?
- Why this course?

This chapter started with the profiles of two students, Reginald and Madison, but now we turn to who you are and why you are in college. Starting this chapter with *you*, the student, seems to make perfect sense. Like Reginald and Madison, you are probably full of emotions as you begin this journey toward a degree and the fulfillment of a dream. Are you excited about meeting new people and *finally* getting to take classes that interest you? Are you nervous about how you are going to handle your courses and all the other activities that come along with being a college student? Are you thrilled to be making important decisions about your future? Are you worried about making the right choice when deciding on a major or a career? All these thoughts, even if contradictory at times, are normal. And you may be experiencing several of them at the same time.



Figure 1.2 Decision-making about college and our future can be challenging, but with self-analysis and support, you can feel more confident and make the best choices.

Why Are You in College?

We know that college is not mandatory—like kindergarten through 12th grade is—and it is not free. You have made a *choice* to commit several years of hard work to earn a degree or credential. In some cases, you may have had to work really hard to get here by getting good grades and test scores in high school and earning money to pay for tuition and fees and other expenses. Now you have more at stake and a clearer path to achieving your goals, but you still need to be able to answer the question.

To help answer this question, consider the following questioning technique called “The Five Whys” that was originally created by Sakichi Toyoda, a Japanese inventor, whose strategy was used by the Toyota Motor Company to find the underlying cause of a problem. While your decision to go to college is not a problem, the exercise is helpful to uncover your underlying purpose for enrolling in college.

The process starts with a “Why” question that you want to know the answer to. Then, the next four “Why” questions use a portion of the previous answer to help you dig further into the answer to the original question. Here is an example of “The Five Whys,” with the first question as “Why are you in college?” The answers and their connection to the next “Why” question have been underlined so you can see how the process works.

While the example is one from a student who knows what she wants to major in, this process does not require that you have a specific degree or career in mind. In fact, if you are undecided, then you can explore the “why” of your indecision. Is it because you have lots of choices, or is it because you are not sure what you really want out of college?

The Five Whys in Action

Why are you in college?	I am in college to <u>earn a degree in speech pathology</u> .
Why do you want to <u>earn a degree in speech pathology</u> ?	I want to be able to <u>help people who have trouble speaking</u> .
Why do you want to <u>help people who have trouble speaking</u> ?	I believe that <u>people who have trouble speaking deserve a life they want</u> .
Why do you feel it is important that <u>people who have trouble speaking deserve a life they want</u> ?	I feel they often <u>have needs that are overlooked and do not get treated equally</u> .
Why do you want to use your <u>voice to help these people live a life they deserve</u> ?	I feel it is my purpose to help others achieve their full potential despite having physical challenges.

Do you see how this student went beyond a standard answer about the degree that she wants to earn to connecting her degree to an overall purpose that she has to help others in a specific way? Had she not been instructed to delve a little deeper with each answer, it is likely that she would not have so quickly articulated that deeper purpose. And that understanding of “why” you are in college—beyond the degree you want or the job you envision after graduation—is key to staying motivated through what will most likely be some challenging times

How else does knowing your “why,” or your deeper reason for being in college, help you? According to Angela Duckworth (2016), a researcher on *grit*—what it takes for us to dig in deep when faced with adversity and continue to work toward our goal—knowing your purpose can be the booster to grit that can help you succeed.¹ Other research has found that people who have a strong sense of purpose are less likely to experience stress and anxiety (Burrown, 2013)² and more likely to be satisfied in their jobs (Weir, 2013).³ Therefore, being able to answer the question “Why are you in college?” not only satisfies the person asking, but it also has direct benefits to your overall well-being.

ACTIVITY



Try “The Five Whys” yourself in the table below to help you get a better sense of your purpose and to give you a worthy answer for anyone who asks you “Why are you in college?”

¹ Duckworth, A. (2016). *Grit: The Power and Passion of Perseverance*. NY: Simon & Schuster.

² Burrow, A.L. & Hill, P.L. (2013). Derailed by diversity? Purpose buffers the relationship between ethnic composition on trains and passenger negative mood. *Personality and Psychology Bulletin*, 39 (12), 1610-1619. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167213499377>.

³ Weir, K. (2013). More than job satisfaction: Psychologists are discovering what makes work meaningful--and how to create value in any job. *American Psychological Association*, 44 (11), 39.

The Five Whys: Your Turn

<i>Why are you in college?</i>	I am in college to ...
<i>Why do you ...</i>	I ...
<i>Why do you ...</i>	I ...
<i>Why do you ...</i>	I ...
<i>Why do you ...</i>	I ...

What Are the Rewards and Value of a College Degree?

Once you have explored your “why” for enrolling in college, it may be worth reviewing what we know about the value of a college degree. There is no doubt you know people who have succeeded in a career without going to college. Famous examples of college dropouts include Bill Gates (the cofounder and CEO of Microsoft) and Ellen DeGeneres (comedian, actor, and television producer, among her many other roles). These are two well-known, smart, talented people who have had tremendous success on a global scale. They are also not the typical profile of a student who doesn’t finish a degree. For many students, especially those who are first-generation college students, a college degree helps them follow a career pathway and create a life that would not have been possible without the credential. Even in this time of rapid change in all kinds of fields, including technology and education, a college degree is still worth it for many people.

Consider the following chart that shows an average of lifetime earnings per level of education. As you can see, the more education you receive, the greater the increase in your average lifetime earnings. Even though a degree costs a considerable amount of money on the front end, if you think about it as an investment in your future, you can see that college graduates receive a substantial return on their investment. To put it into more concrete terms, let’s say you spend \$100,000 for a four-year degree (*Don’t faint! That is the average sticker cost of a four-year degree at a public university if you include tuition, fees, room, and board*). The return on investment (ROI) over a lifetime, according to the information in the figure below, is 1,500%! You don’t have to be a financial wizard to recognize that 1,500% return is fantastic.