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Jordan LewisProfessor LagemannNew Student Seminar12 December 201710Strategies to be a Successful StudentWhen beginning yourfirst semester as a college student, there are certain things you shouldconsider doing. In my opinion, there are ten very important strategies to learnin order to be a successful student for the next few years at college. Incomingstudents should think about setting some goals and planning ways to reach thosegoals, you should organize your space well, manage your time well, considerbeginning your journey to find a career, discover your type of learning style, know how to prepare and take tests, quizzes and exams, make sure you stayactive and exercise, keep track of and stick to a sleep schedule, manage yourstress levels, and make sure to keep track of your finances.

It is important, especially for a first-year college student, to set some short and long-termgoals and create steps as to how one would go about accomplishing those goals. First year students should know about this strategy as they are nearing thebeginning of the school year so that they can plan out what they want to do, where they want to go in life. A short-term goal is a type of achievement thatcould be completed in a few days, a few weeks, or even a month. A long-termtype goal is a goal that is set to be completed within the next few years orso. For example, some people set a long-term goal of graduating in four yearswith a bachelor’s degree of science or art. During the time of this goal theythink about things they can do or things they can improve on in order to ensurethat they achieve this goal.

Someone might also set a short-term goal ofgetting straight A’s by the end of the semester and to ensure that they do getgood grades, they would create steps to help and guide them to this goal. Thebook, College Success, gives a good example of people setting goals and taking certain steps toachieve those goals. For example, “ To help his widowed mother, Juan went towork full time after high school but now, a few years later, he’s dissatisfiedwith the kinds of jobs he has been able to get and has begun taking computerprogramming courses in the evening.

He’s often tired after work, however, andhis mother would like him to spend more time at home. Sometimes he cuts classto stay home and spend time with her” (ELI, Lumen Learning), Juan set a goalfor himself to help support his widowed mother and to do that he took thenecessary steps, he believed, in order to reach that goal and support hismother. He went full time after high school to make some money to possibly helphis mother with house or car payments, but he wasn’t satisfied with making thatlittle money and he decide to take matters into his own hands and started totake computer programming courses in the evening while still working in themorning because he want to be able to make more money.

To help first yearstudents to set goals and possibly help them to make steps to completing thosegoals, one could go to the Center for Career Services office at Montclair Stateto talk with someone about goal setting and things they can do to keep them ontrack with those goals. Another strategy afirst-year student should consider learning about is managing one’s spacecorrectly. Managing one’s space can be something as simple as moving the deskto a certain spot in your room so you won’t be facing anything that mightdistract you, or moving the bed away from your desk so you won’t be tempted tojust hop in it and take a nap instead of studying or doing homework.

Afirst-year student can use this strategy in many ways, they can start by movingthe desk and face it in the direction of the wall so they won’t be distractedby the tv if someone is using it or they won’t be distracted by a gaming systemthat they have been dying to play all day. Managing space does not have to berestricted to just moving furniture around the room it could also mean usingcertain spaces for certain things. For example, your bed should be a place andsymbol of relaxation so it should be only used for just sleeping or just lyingdown. Your desk is a place of work and is meant to get stuff done like homeworkor studying, so the desk should be a place to do these things without gettingdistracted by outside distractions. According to College Success, in order to have success in managing your space right you should work on taskone at a time and not try and multitask. “‘ Okay,’ you might be thinking, ‘ whyshould it matter if I write my paper first and then answer e-mails or do themback and forth at the same time?’ It actually takes you longer to do two ormore things at the same time than if you do them separately—at least withanything that you actually have to focus on, such as studying” (ELI, LumenLearning), stating that it is important for students to designate certain areasfor certain task such as a bed for sleeping or a desk for studying. AtMontclair State, you could talk to some upper classmen and ask for help on howto manage your space better to get the most out of your room or you could go tothe Office of Residence Life and talk with them about better ways to manage thespace in your dorm. Time management is avery important strategy and skill for a first-year student to have.

If youmanage time correctly, you will have time to do fun things and go to events oncampus as well as get your work done on time and be done efficiently. Timemanagement can be anything from what time you will take a shower and eatbreakfast every day, to how long will you spend working on a paper each dayuntil it is due. In order to manage your time better you first need to knowwhat you spend most of your time doing and what you can do to adjust  andwork that around a schedule that you will create. You need to learn how topractice this strategy over and over again until it becomes routine and youhave to learn how to combat and prevent procrastination. For example, one canuse something as simple as a calendar or planner to keep you on track on thingsyou need to do and when you should do it to ensure that it is done on time. Themost important thing to remember when managing your time is what can you do tominimize procrastination. Procrastination is the number one enemy of timemanagement. College Success describes it very well stating, “ Procrastinationis a way of thinking that lets one put off doing something that should be done.

This can happen to anyone at any time. It’s like a voice inside your head keepscoming up with these brilliant ideas for things to do right now other thanstudying” (ELI, Lumen Learning), procrastination can be anything like goingfrom saying “ I’m going to go study” to “ maybe I’ll just play one game on myXbox really quick and then get back to studying” next thing you know it is fourhours later and it is almost twelve midnight. If a first-year student needshelp developing their time management skills, they can go to the Office ofResidence Life or they can go to the Center for Advising & StudentTransitions(CAST) to get help from fellow peers on how to manage their timebetter and more efficiently.

Most first-year studentsdo not realize that it would be a good idea to start looking into careers andinternships starting their freshman year. It is important for students goinginto their first year to discover who they are and what they want to do for therest of their life. After they get themselves settled in the first month ofschool they should immediately start to look for internships, co-ops, or justsomeone volunteer work for experience. The book, College Success, states, “ Career exploration and job hunting are not short-term projects butprocesses that continue over time” (ELI, Lumen Learning).

Career explorationshould be an ongoing process and should begin your first year. When I firstcame to Montclair, job searching was not the first thing that came to mind, theonly thing I was worried about was not failing my first semester. One day, acareer counselor came into my New Student Seminar class and spoke with us aboutwhen job exploration should begin and how to start, which I believe reallyhelped me. I may not have been able to start looking for internships thebeginning of my freshman year but after that presentation I went back to mydorm and did some research about some internships available the followingsummer for my sophomore year. One place you can go to help you with thisprocess is The Center for Career Services, which can help you get stuff outthere, for example your resume, and you can also talk to them about potentialthings you would like to be a part of like volunteer work just to gain someexperience in the field that you are in.

The next strategy afirst-year student should know about is how to discover your type of learningstyle. Some people may already have this part down by the end of high school, but there is no harm in trying to rediscover your learning style because theway they teach things in high school are very different from how things aretaught in college. For example, when I first arrived at my Psychology 101class, I did not realize what I was in for. When I was in high school I was soused to teachers either giving us notes to fill in or having a slideshowpresentation for us to copy down. The first time my teacher taught we just tookout our notebooks and had to begin to write down whatever she said and that wasa shock for me at first. Of course I have adjusted now and I am used to it butthe adjustment was not easy. I had to learn ways I could abbreviate words inorder to keep up with her talking and I had to learn how to write faster.

According to College Success, there are four steps in the learning style thatyou must master in order to rediscover how you learn, “ Think first about thedifferent situations in which you learn. Obviously you learn during class, whether by listening to the instructor speak or in class discussions in whichyou participate. But also learn while reading your textbooks and othermaterials outside of class. You learn when you talk with an instructor duringoffice hours. You learn by talking with other students informally in studygroups. You learn when you study your class notes before an exam.

All of thesedifferent learning situations involve the same four-step process” (ELI, LumenLearning), these four steps are preparing, absorbing, capturing, and reviewing. To help first year students with this learning strategy, there are plenty ofworkshops all around campus for different subjects. For example, there is awriting workshop to help students with papers, you could talk fellow peers andtry and make a study group or you could talk to your professor about the bestway to succeed in that class.

Preparingfor and taking quizzes and exams is also an important strategy for first-yearsstudents to develop. Some students have what is called test anxiety, whether itbe they have a hard time studying for the exam or if they remember somethingthat they couldn’t remember during the test. Those examples are just smallsymptoms of test anxiety, but these symptoms can be overcome or controlled. Forexample, one great way to reduce test anxiety is to actually be prepared andreview the material, according to College Success, “ A primary cause oftest anxiety is not knowing the material. If you take good class and readingnotes and review them regularly, this stressor should be greatly reduced if noteliminated” (ELI, Lumen Learning), hence the reason it is important to takegood notes in class and record even the smallest of details in the lecture.

Incoming students can go to the Academic Success Center to obtain help on testtaking and note taking during lectures to better improve their grades andreduce test anxiety.            It is veryimportant to stay active and exercise regularly or as often as possible. Themost talked about thing incoming freshmen hear about is the freshman fifteen. While the freshman fifteen actually happens and is true, it does not have tohappen to everyone. When I first came to Montclair, I had already learned aboutthe freshman fifty from my brother who graduated from college, the same year I graduatedfrom high school, and I was determined to not let that happen to me so Idecided to work out regularly or as often as possible.

College Success putsit best when it states the benefits of exercise, “ Regular exercise has manybenefits for your body and mind. You’ll also be a better student. It is easierto make exercise a regular part of your life if you explore your interests andjoin activities with others. The time you spend exercising will be made up forwith increased ability to concentrate when it’s time to study” (ELI, LumenLearning), I felt more energized and doing better as a student when I began towork out regularly. The campus has a Recreation Center open from six in themorning to either twelve or one at night. The rec center has many funactivities for students to do and for them to make new connections but mostimportantly, in this case, the rec center has a gym and is free for all Montclairstate students.            One thingI wish I had done was stick to a better sleep schedule. I encourage all incomingfreshmen to go to bed and wake up at reasonable times, otherwise they will bementally and physically drained from the lack of sleep.

At the start of thesemester I did not really take sleep that seriously, I would stay up to abouttwo or sometimes three in the morning just playing video games and would wakeup the next day and almost miss my classes. Freshman, in general, in college donot really understand the importance of sleep until it catches up to them andthey have to fight to get themselves to bed or out of bed. “ Like good nutritionand exercise, adequate sleep is crucial for wellness and success. Sleep isparticularly important for students because there seem to be so many timepressures—to attend class, study, maintain a social life, and perhaps work—thatmost college students have difficulty getting enough. Yet sleep is critical forconcentrating well” (ELI, Lumen Learning), there are so many times where I couldgo back and tell myself not to go to bed at three in the morning because youwill regret it.

There is really no on campus resource to help you with yoursleep schedule but take it from upper classmen who have been there and alsotake it from me, get as much sleep as you possibly can you will be able toconcentrate better and do better in school.            Managing your stress is very important in college, if youdon’t manage your stress it will take over your mind. There are different waysto deal with stress, there are stress balls, meditation, and many more ways. College students are the most affected by stress, “ We all live with occasionalstress.

Since college students often feel even more stress then most people, it’simportant to understand it and learn ways to deal with it so it doesn’t disruptyour life” (ELI, Lumen Learning), the biggest and most commonly known exampleof stress in college is finals week. Finals week is the peak of all stress forcollege students, but there are ways to control and manage stress levels. Montclair offers on campus workshops about stress management, all students arewelcome and you can learn the best ways to control stress and also ways to notlet it control you.            The laststrategy that I believe all incoming students should be informed about is howto keep track of their finances. “ Taking control of your personal financesbegins with thinking about your goals and deciding what really matters to you”(ELI, Lumen Learning), there are so many deadlines and so many payments thatmust be made prior to and during the academic year. It is important forstudents to keep track of certain payments that must be made at certain timesand also keep track of the available money that they possess and should spendit wisely. For example, be sure to apply for financial aid each year and makesure to get any other loans that might be needed.

There are also on campus jobsavailable for students to make money either for themselves or that money willbe put towards their tuition. Along with making money there also comes aresponsibility of spending less and keeping track of what you buy and how muchmoney you spend. This is also a good time to start building credit because youcan only do so much, in today’s world, without any credit. People need goodcredit for things like buying a car or purchasing a house or apartment. AtMontclair state, students can go to the Office of Financial Aid for any helpthat they need regarding finances and ways to manage it. In conclusion, the first year of college is most likely themost stressful and challenging year for first-year students because they areforced to think and make decision about stuff they do not even have on theirmind and are not worried about at the moment. There are ten importantstrategies that all incoming students need to learn in order to have success inthe next few years at college.

Incoming students should think about settingsome goals and planning ways to reach those goals, you should organize yourspace well, manage your time well, consider beginning your journey to find acareer, discover your type of learning style, know how to prepare and taketests, quizzes and exams, make sure you stay active and exercise, keep track ofand stick to a sleep schedule, manage your stress levels, and make sure to keeptrack of your finances. If you learn about all of these strategies andmaster them, then an incoming student will be set for success in the future         Jordan LewisProfessor LagemannNew Student Seminar12 December 2017WorksCitedELI (Extended LearningInstitute at NOVA), Lumen Learning. “ CollegeSuccess.” College Success | Simple Book Production, Dec. 2012, courses.

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