

# TEACHING COLLEGE SUCCESS TO ADULT LEARNERS

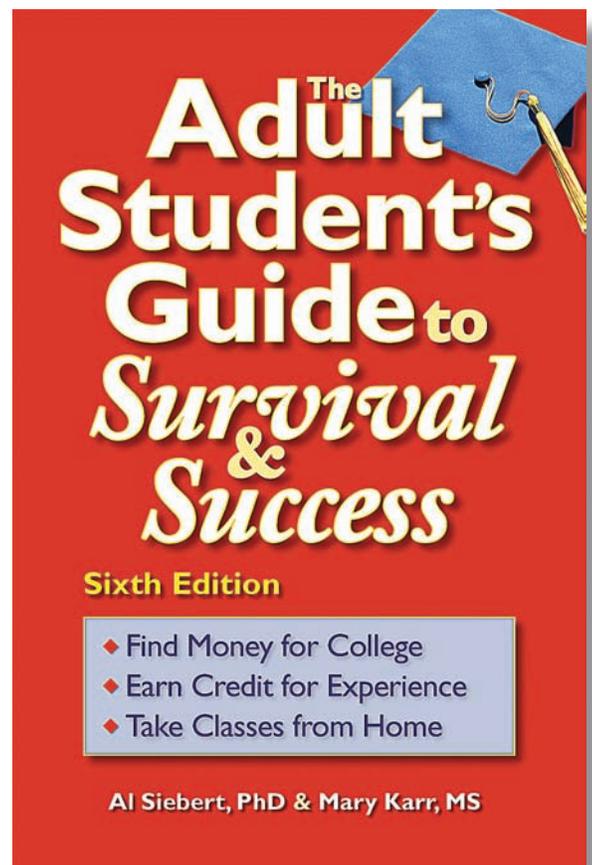
**Al Siebert, PhD &  
Mary Karr, MS**

*An Instructor's Manual to Accompany:*

## **The Adult Student's Guide to Survival & Success (6<sup>th</sup> Edition)**

### **Help Your Students:**

- ◆ Get Financial Help
- ◆ Study at Home
- ◆ Create a Support Group
- ◆ Get Excellent Grades
- ◆ Create a Portfolio
- ◆ Hold Up Under Pressure
- ◆ Develop Internet Skills
- ◆ Gain Family Support
- ◆ Increase Self-Confidence
- ◆ Write Papers and Past Tests
- ◆ Work in Learning Teams
- ◆ Improve Communications Skills
- ◆ Be Resilient in Non-Stop Change
- ◆ [www.AdultStudent.com](http://www.AdultStudent.com)



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Exercises may be duplicated for classroom use.

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If any of your students protest about the emphasis on learning internet and information technology skills, have them go online to read the executive summary of the book *Being Fluent With Information Technology* at the National Academies Press website. (Link available at [AdultStudent.com/eds/](http://AdultStudent.com/eds/))

Lawrence Snyder, the chair of the committee that produced the report for the National Research Council, said in an interview in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 5, 2000), that “college students need more than computer literacy to succeed in their educational, professional, social, and personal lives. Information technology *fluency* should be the goal of all colleges as they prepare their students for graduation.”

We have included several internet help articles at the website on subjects such as searching help and authenticating online resources.

## **The Student Portfolio**

*The Adult Student's Guide* is written to help adult learners acquire many of the required competencies and makes it easy to document the competencies in a portfolio. As Barbara Ritter emphasizes at the [AdultStudent.com](http://AdultStudent.com) website, the personal portfolio is proving to be an efficient, effective tool for career transition and job acquisition. Résumés, letters of reference, application forms, and other traditional means of job acquisition are still useful and important. The portfolio, however, gives an applicant a competitive advantage because it provides evidence to back up what is described in the résumé or cover letter. Proof of the importance of student portfolios is seen in the trend for colleges to file student portfolios at the college website.

## **Preparing Adult Learners for Career Success in a Rapidly Changing World**

Most adult learners come to college to prepare for a new career. In today's world, however, passing tests to earn a college diploma is not enough. Today's employers need technology-proficient employees who can thrive in lean, rapidly changing organizations that no longer provide workers with job descriptions.

As described in the text, employers need highly resilient workers who can adapt to change quickly, are self-motivated, think critically, learn rapidly,

work well in teams, handle difficult people, overcome negativity in the workplace, plan and complete projects, hold up under pressure, and cope well with setbacks. Fortunately, you can count on most of the adult learners in your class to respond well to these challenges.

Teaching adult learners can be very rewarding and satisfying. We wish you well, hope that you get excellent evaluations from your class, and can enjoy the inner satisfaction of seeing many of your adult learners reach their education goals.

# Helping Students Succeed in College & Overcome Their Fears and Concerns

The first two chapters of *The Adult Student's Guide to Survival & Success* focus on how to be successful in college and ways to overcome fears and concerns felt by adult learners. As you know, adult students are more anxious and nervous than traditionally aged students. But once their fears and concerns are resolved, they settle down and are often more motivated and involved than younger students.

Students often start college outwardly worrying about the academic part (taking tests, writing papers, how to study), while inwardly worrying about their more personal non-academic concerns (how to pay for school, compete with younger students, and deal with family and work pressures). Both areas of concern need to be addressed. Students need to connect with each other and develop a sense of belonging to the group. Feeling comfortable with you and getting to know each other, are critical for student retention.

The most important thing you can do with the class at the start is to create a warm and accepting atmosphere. Most people have a need to feel comfortable before they will talk about personal issues. There are many ways to accomplish climate control. You probably have some ideas of your own, but the following works well for us on the first day of class:

- ◆ **Greet students as they arrive.** Encourage them to introduce themselves to others sitting near them.
- ◆ **Begin class with some brief background comments about yourself.** Instructors teaching “University 101” in the Freshman Year Experience program at the University of South Carolina find that talking about their first week as a freshman in college is an excellent start. (You will add more about your interest in your college major later.)
- ◆ **Discuss the course syllabus.** Adult learners need a comprehensive course syllabus.

They need to know what will be expected of them—when tests, papers, and projects will be due, what textbook and materials they must have, and how grades will be determined. They need to know how to reach you and when you can be available to meet with them. Plan on taking time to go through the syllabus to answer questions and clarify any concerns or issues they bring up.

- ◆ **Let them know if you expect and require that they all have computers and must be able to receive email messages from you.** Get a list of their email addresses if not provided on your class registration list.
- ◆ **Explain how *The Adult Student's Guide* will be useful to them** in learning how to be successful in their courses, study effectively, writing, test-taking, time management, relating to different instructors, and resiliency skills.
- ◆ **Be sure to talk about their fears and concerns during the first class meeting.** Have them go through the “List of Fears and Concerns” on pages 10-15 in Chapter 2 in *ASG/6* or duplicate and use the longer list at the back of this instructor's manual. Have them rate themselves on each item, add more of their own, and then talk with other students sitting nearby about their ratings. Have them talk with each other in small groups about their scores before moving into full class discussion.
- ◆ **Ask for and list on the board their main questions and concerns.** This shows students that you will focus on what they want to be covered.

- ◆ **Self-talk.** A further discussion about the fears students have when starting college would be to address how self-talk affects each student's thinking, feelings and behavior. Self-talk is what we say to our self about how we see our self.

A discussion about the effect of self-talk and how it contributes to success or failure would be a good follow-up to Exercise 2, Fears and Concerns.

- ◆ **Discuss with the class the information about “how to be successful” described on pages 2–3 in Chapter One of the textbook.** Ask the class for personal examples of being successful. Have them discuss how their ability to be successful with past efforts match what the psychology research shows.
- ◆ **Pass out a copy of the “List of Terms to Know”** duplicated from page 24 in this manual, **and ask the class to define or explain the terms.** (As with all exercises at the end of the manual, you may copy them and use them as handouts. Notice that on pages 25-26 we have provided you with the same list, with the definitions.)

The “List of Terms to Know” serves many purposes. First, it gets everyone involved and talking in a nonthreatening way. Second, it helps avoid academic jargon that often confuses students. Third, the List provides a jumping off point for other discussions. Students can add other items and come up with solutions for each other. Finally, the List can serve as a unifying theme for the course. You will notice that the List begins with some general acronyms that most colleges use. Next comes terms that are also mentioned in the chapters. When appropriate, we have noted the chapter where the term could be discussed. Experience has shown that going back and forth between the list and more personal concerns maintains a balance that keeps both the task oriented and the social-emotional oriented students feeling included. This balance makes your classroom an inviting place to be.

- ◆ **Encourage your students to form small support groups following the guidelines on pages 15-18 in the textbook.** Have students who wish to do this exchange names, phone numbers, and email addresses. Support groups are very important for adult learners. A phone call, email, or meeting can provide valuable encouragement when it is needed most.

- ◆ **Before you end the class, invite students to arrange for a short individual conference with you.** Some may have difficulties that they wish to keep private. Older students tend to have more physical problems. They may not hear very well, may be on medications that make them sleepy. You will want to know if they have any physical or learning problems or other matters that they want you to be sensitive to. If a student reveals special needs, appropriate referrals and recommendations can be made to college resources.

One-to-one sessions let you learn much more about a student. Ask such questions as:

- ◇ Why did you decide to come to college?
- ◇ How does your family feel about your starting college?
- ◇ What do think will be the biggest barrier to your success in school?
- ◇ What do you hope going to college will do for you?”

Allowing them to see you in your office settings helps you be seen as more approachable. You will learn things about your students that you might never know from what they reveal in class.

### **Core Activity**

Have the class divide into small groups. Tell them to make two lists. One is a list of helpful self-talk based on the research by Carol Dweck and David McClelland covered in Chapter One, pages 2-3, in the textbook. The other list is about and unhelpful, self-defeating self-talk. After awhile have each group read their lists.

Examples of self-talk from the research by Dweck and McClelland show that successful people have thoughts and beliefs about themselves such as:

- ◆ I keep on going during difficult times.
- ◆ This isn't easy for me, but I'm persistent.
- ◆ I feel OK about not doing well at first when I'm learning something new.
- ◆ Sometimes I feel discouraged, but I keep on going anyway.
- ◆ I work hard to do my best in challenging situations.
- ◆ I've overcome past difficulties and expect to succeed here, too.
- ◆ I'm excited about my dream of my future, but know there will be many difficulties to overcome.

Unhelpful self talk might include:

- ◆ I'm the brightest person in this class.
- ◆ I expect to get an 'A' without working hard.
- ◆ This will be a snap course for me.
- ◆ My career success is already guaranteed.

Discussion might include questions such as:

- ◆ How does the situation affect the thoughts that affect a person's feelings and behavior?
- ◆ How does starting college affect their thinking about potential success or failure?
- ◆ What does each student feel about their possibilities of graduating and how might their feelings affect their behavior?

Other of the main fears and concerns that have emerged from the small group discussions can be addressed in the same way. Make them aware that what people tell themselves often affects how they feel about a particular fear or concern and their feelings can influence their behavior.

**Other suggestions:** The sooner you begin calling students by their names, the faster they feel welcomed and accepted. Let the students know that you and many college resources are available to assist them in getting the education they want.

~ Accomplishments Portfolio, pages 7-8  
Learning Disabilities, page 11  
Share your concerns, page 15

## Chapter 3

# How to Choose A Program, Get Financial Help, and Become Oriented

About half of the acronyms and terms from the List of Terms (see Exercise 1, page 26 of this IM) are either introduced in Chapter 3 in the text or are terms you will want to define for the class. By now students have run across several of the terms and are usually wondering what they mean. The List can be divided up, worked on in pairs or in a learning team. After students have had time to come up with definitions, regroup the class and go through each part of the list with the entire class.

Invite several “college smart” adults from one of your previous classes to speak to this class about how they coped with all their challenges. New students appreciate hearing a panel of successful, seasoned, older students give tips about how to register for the classes they want. They usually find it easier to absorb information about how to find parking and where to store their book bags, given to them by fellow students fresh with the experience. Peer advisors and former star students usually make fine panel participants. After each member has given a short “success tips” talk, encourage your current students to ask questions of panel members.

Most adult students feel strong financial pressures. If possible, invite a guest speaker from the Financial Aid Office to come to your class. Adult students usually assume they do not qualify for federal or state programs because of their age or because they are enrolled part-time, so they don’t even inquire.

⚡ The financial aid resources file at the [www.AdultStudent.com](http://www.AdultStudent.com) website has links to websites with scholarship and financial aid information.

Orientation to the college can be speeded up by devoting part of a class meeting to having students share with each other what their first week was like and what they have discovered or learned about the college. They will tell each other things that never occurred to you as being important!

*Suggestion:* Consider assigning students a short paper on “Why I decided to return to college.” This paper will give an early assessment of their writing skills.

Remember, the most critical time for student retention is in the first three weeks. Prompt attention to students with physical or learning difficulties can open doors they thought closed forever.

### Take Your Class on a Campus Tour

Ask someone from the student orientation office to lead your class on a campus tour—that you take with them. During the tour you can add your own information about campus resources and get to know your students more personally as you walk along. An important point to emphasize is that every resource center on campus exists to help them succeed in college, graduate, and have a rewarding career.

Be sure to include in the tour meeting the staff and student workers at the:

- ◆ **Student Health Center.** Nurses and physicians provide free or low cost emergency medical help, medical tests, and healthy life-style information to students at the college. Adult learners with known medical problems may want to let the staff know about their condition.
- ◆ **Fitness Center.** The exercise machines, weight room, swimming pool, basketball and handball courts, and other fitness activities are not just for young student athletes, they are for *all* students.
- ◆ **Computer Center.** A primary resource for assistance in learning computer and internet skills.
- ◆ **Art, music, and theater departments.** Adult students can bring their families and friends to enjoy a wide variety of exhibits, concerts, and plays.

- ◆ **Athletic department.** Has schedules of many athletic events that spouses and children might enjoy attending.
- ◆ **Counseling Department.** A free service for students needing some professional help in handling difficult life challenges.
- ◆ **Cafeterias.** The student union is a place to enjoy a beverage, snack, or meal with a classmate or while completing a school assignment.

Last but not least:

- ◆ **Connect Your Students with the Library.** Learning how to use today's modern college library is so important, arrange for a special tour and briefing by one of the librarians. Some adult students will be surprised to learn that the old card catalog is seldom used or nonexistent any more, and that there are areas in the library where food is allowed. Those who haven't been in a school library for a long time may feel overwhelmed by the computer terminal searching procedures and internet connections to other libraries. An important part of the tour is to have them connect with the library staff to learn how helpful and dedicated the staff is to their success.

## Share Your Suggestions with Other Instructors

- ~ What have you learned that is very important to do with adult students during first few days? Please send your tips and suggestions for posting at the instructor's resource file at [AdultStudent.com](http://AdultStudent.com).
- ~ Financial Aid resources, page 25-30  
Support Service facilities, page 30-31

## Chapter 4

# How To Succeed in College

Adult students have had many successes and failures in their lives. A useful assignment is to have them write a short paper in which they describe some of their best successes and why these successes give them confidence that they can handle the challenges of college just as they have handled past challenges.

### Core Activity

Take advantage of the experience that adult students bring to the class. Put them into small groups with one person writing down the answers to these two questions:

1. What should adult students do to succeed in college?
2. What will reduce an adult student's chances of succeeding in college?

*After a few minutes:*

- ◆ Have each group recorder read their two lists to the class.
- ◆ Lead a discussion about what insights and conclusions can be drawn from their lists.
- ◆ Get suggestions from students about what habits might lead them to success in this class and what they need to avoid doing.
- ◆ Lead a group discussion about the importance of setting goals and the importance of having a personal calendar.
- ◆ Ask students who use personal organizers to explain how their lives have changed since they started using one.
- ◆ Show students how to use this chapter to organize how they plan to do everything listed in the course syllabus.
- ◆ Have students set a realistic success goals and list the small steps that will help them reach their goal.

### Note Taking Skills

Well-organized class notebooks are essential for success in college. Does each student have a separate notebook or a three-ring binder with separate sections for each course?

Show them an example of a well-kept notebook with good lecture notes. Discuss the benefits of having well-organized notebooks and what can happen when class notes are scattered or mixed together with other courses. Some students may use a laptop computer (or smaller device) to take notes. Discuss the importance of a structured electronic filing system, and use a “list view” of files in the file browser window, with the modify date property showing. Encourage them to use simple but descriptive filenames, create organizing folders for each discipline, and subfolders for the different sequences and courses. Grouping by subject tends to be more beneficial for reference than grouping by term or semester date.

Tell the students they will be expected to hand in their notes from one of your class sessions. In this way, you can check their note-taking skills.

You can divide the class into thirds and have each third use one of the three suggested note-taking systems in the *Adult Student's Guide* (p. 37).

Compare the notes taken and talk about the pros and cons of each system. Why did one system work well for this particular class and the other systems not so well? Why might a different class or instructor call for a different style?

A good way to show how important good notes are, is to give the students five minutes to study their notes before giving them a pop quiz on your previous class. Give the quiz and have them score each other's answers. This activity makes it very clear to the group that good note taking and an organized notebook lead to success in courses.

- ◆ Classroom Listening, page 36
- ◆ Note-Taking Samples, page 37
- ◆ Developing and Setting Goals, page 39

## Chapter 5

# Online Learning

Chapter 5 was added with the fifth edition of the *Adult Student's Guide* and is one proving to be important since most schools, from elementary through higher education, are now expecting students to become computer literate.

For the adult learner, online courses can be a way of squeezing in an extra course without having to be away from home or work. Even for instructors who don't teach courses online, knowing how to help students gain experience and knowledge about the online environment is useful.

Chances are that your school has you placing some items, such as a syllabus or calendar, on a course website. Some instructors also place supplemental reading material, examples of student papers, self-quizzes, etc., on the class site. The ability to enable email contact with and among students is often one of the most valuable parts of the class web page.

As you know, with technology constantly evolving, students are being presented with more and more opportunities to post information about themselves through web-based vehicles such as wikis, blogs, forums, and other collaborative software systems. You may wish to have a discussion about the public nature of such posts and how something posted years before can come back and haunt a job applicant.

### Core Activity

- ◆ If you are using a web page in your class, then the first thing you should do is have students explore what is there. Computer-literate students will already have done this, but those that are unsure of their online computer abilities will probably try to avoid the college website altogether. There are several activities that can encourage involvement. We have also included some general internet help files on our AdultStudent.com website.

- ◆ Make sure that students know where the school's computer lab is located and what hours the lab is open.
- ◆ Query the class to see who is and who isn't comfortable with online searches. (We have files at our website with tips on searching and evaluating the answers.)
- ◆ Separate the class into small groups with a mix of students who have online skills and those with less experience. Have them discuss what they know about working online. Follow this with a general class discussion.
- ◆ Give each group an online assignment that has the inexperienced students observing what the more skilled students do.

If you are using a course web page as a supplement to your classroom, you could assign a short project for small groups to complete and post at the site. Most course software allows the instructor to divide a class into groups and open discussion areas that can only be accessed by those named in each group.

We encourage you to use a group project exercise since many online courses make effective use of a "group" sort of tool in the class. Also, businesses today want college graduates who are able to work with one another to complete projects in a timely manner. This can often mean working collaboratively on an internal network or website. Alternately, you can explore the "Track Changes" function of MS Word and email group projects to group members.

 Internet Learning and Distance Education resources, page 46.

## Chapter 6

# The Best Way to Study

Adult learners have so many responsibilities, many of them find it difficult to find time to attend classes, complete the weekly readings, and study for tests. If you hold class discussions about assigned readings, you quickly realize which students don't do the assigned readings. Some students are slow to realize that taking a college course for credit requires a commitment of time and energy that they must stick with. Starting college is a difficult period of adjustment as they combine class time and studying with other demands in their lives.

To emphasize the importance of a study schedule, they need to be aware of how well or how poorly they manage their time. Pass out copies of the "Sources of Wasted & Saved Time" lists (Exercise #3, page 28) and have students identify their worst and best habits.

### **Core Activity**

Put the class into small groups with one person being a recorder to write down the answers to these two questions:

1. What are time wasters?
2. What are useful ways to manage your time well?

*After a few minutes:*

- ◆ Have each recorder read the group's two lists to the class.
- ◆ Lead discussion about what insights and conclusions they can draw from their lists.
- ◆ Lead group discussion about the importance of managing their time well and some of the challenges they face. As you go through the lists, point out and reinforce the good strategies.
- ◆ Have the students create realistic study schedules for next week and list the small steps that will help them reach their goal.

A useful weekly assignment is to have teams of students conduct a search for practical guidelines

for time management. Have each team give a short class report on what they found, perhaps post their combined tips at the course website.

### **Chapter Highlights**

Explain to the class why study activities that involve most of the senses increases their speed of learning and their ability to remember what is learned. Writing answers to their questions and verbalizing (reciting) their answers is a far more effective study technique than silently reading answers. Generally, the more a student verbalizes what is being learned, the greater the amount of retention.

An assignment that reinforces good study practices is to ask each student to develop six to eight questions, with answers, for each chapter assigned. (We've already given them a head start with each chapter's title page.) Have the students hand in or email their questions to you. Then construct their exams and quizzes from these questions!

Participation is part of their class grade. Praise students for asking good questions during class. Ask students to read selections from their written work. Three to five minutes per student works well. This allows other class members to see what you expect in good work and gives students experience speaking to a friendly group. Giving oral reports reduces the fear of speaking up in other classes.

Point out to them how their lists of practice questions can serve as a review of the text material at the end of the term. Trading questions and answers in their study group facilitates active group learning.

Adult students often find it difficult to study at home. Suggest that they study with other students in the library or student center, or perhaps in a coffee shop near home or campus.

Older students frequently need some refreshing in math, writing, and other basic skill areas. Encourage students to inquire about the many resources available at the college Learning Center. Emphasize that software programs, audiotapes, and tutoring are available to them at no cost.

## Chapter 7

# How to Get High Grades on Tests

Fear of tests ranks very high with adult students. Short, easy, weekly quizzes, graded and discussed in class, will give them the kind of practice and experience that helps increase their confidence. Use the list of terms used in college as a quiz that can be scored in class.

A benefit from having students email you or hand in questions (with answers) that they've written from their textbook reading or lecture notes, is that if you construct quizzes and tests from their questions, this helps decrease their test anxiety. This method also helps students relate better to the construction of quiz items.

A key influence on how many students strive to get high grades is your grading philosophy and method for determining grades. If you grade "on the curve" then you increase competition among the brighter students and decrease cooperative team-based learning and studying. We recommend an achievement based method of grading in which each student is graded according to how well he or she participates, does course assignments, and demonstrates mastery of the course.

### Core Activities

Put the class into small groups with one person being a recorder to write down the answers to these two questions:

1. What do you know about how to get high grades on tests?
2. What can keep a student from doing well on tests?

*After a few minutes:*

- ◆ Have each group recorder read their two lists to the class.
- ◆ Lead discussion about what insights and conclusions they can draw from their lists.
- ◆ Get someone to volunteer to compile the suggestions about what behaviors lead to getting high grades on tests and what can

interfere. Have the volunteer post the lists at the class website.

Sometimes low grades are a function of a low self-image or from being in a social group that feels disdain for students who get top grades. Lead discussion addressing these questions:

1. How would you feel if you got a high grade?
2. What would your friends or family say if you earned a high grade in this course?

Find out if some students have negative expectations linked to getting a high grade. Do their important friends express opinions that a C is good enough? What are their opinions of students who get top grades?

If low scores on tests is mostly from not being able to manage study time well, refer them back to the study skills chapters.

- ◆ Have the students spend a few minutes writing out a realistic plan for getting a high grade on their next test. Then have them pair up and discuss their plans with others.

~ Blooms Taxonomy, page 76.

- ◆ The textbook examples of what differentiates between C, B, and A grades are based on Bloom's taxonomy. See our website for a link to an article that explains Bloom's model and provides examples.
- ◆ For an excellent discussion of core issues underlying "critical thinking" read the paper "Quest for the Grail? Searching for Critical Thinking in Adult Education" by Heather Boxler presented at the 2002 Adult Education Research Conference, also at the AS.com website, in the educators section.

## Chapter 8

# How to Write Excellent Papers

Some adult students are nervous about writing papers while others have had a great deal of writing experience. In either case, success in college requires good library research skills. If some students still have not learned how to use the library, they may have to be sent to explore the library as a learning team and required to give a class report.

As we emphasize in Chapter 8, even inexperienced writers can produce a good paper by formulating and then answering important questions. Once their questions are written out, the internet and the college library become wonderful resources for finding answers.

Make their first written assignment a short paper of one to three typewritten pages. Once they have completed this assignment, confidence in their ability to write longer papers will increase. You can also increase their confidence in writing by requiring everyone to post comments about an issue for critical thinking at the class webpage.

Encourage students to use their learning teams to proofread or listen to each other read rough drafts of each other's papers. A listener frequently finds it easy to identify an awkward sentence structure or lack of transition.

### **Core Activity**

Put the class into small groups with one person being a recorder to write down the answers to these two questions:

1. What must be done to write an excellent paper?
2. What would you do if you wanted to receive a poor grade on a paper?

*After a few minutes:*

- ◆ Have each group recorder read their two lists to the class.

- ◆ Lead discussion about what insights and conclusions they can draw from their lists.
- ◆ Get suggestions from students about what behaviors lead to writing excellent papers and what can interfere.
- ◆ Have the students develop a realistic plan for writing an excellent paper.
- ◆ Get someone to volunteer to compile the suggestions about what behaviors lead to writing excellent papers. Have the volunteer post the suggestions at the class web page—and record this extra activity in their portfolio.

For students whose self-image is that they can't write, ask them to write you a letter describing how they feel about writing a paper and tell you about any unpleasant experiences or fears they may associate with writing.

# Learning Styles & Teaching Styles: How to Influence Instructors

Chapter 9 is the first of the chapters emphasizing that life skills are as important as academic skills. This would be a good time to lead a group discussion about important life skills that can help a person's career. For contrast, have the students list self-defeating things they've seen educated people do.

Many assessments of learning styles exist. A valuable class assignment would be to send several learning teams to the library to research and report on what is known about learning styles. Other teams can be assigned to conduct internet research.

For a common frame of reference, instruct everyone to locate and take the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, or one like it. The Myers-Briggs is one of the most popular models of personality assessment in the world and is used in many business settings. The test, and others, can be found in the library, counseling center and at websites (↗ check our site for some links). An alternative version, the Temperament Sorter, created by David Kiersey and found in his book *Please Understand Me, II*, gives students a better understanding of themselves. Because adult learners have had many more real-life experiences with different kinds of people than younger students, they understand the different personality types much better. They are more open to the understanding that teachers with personality types different than their own may be more difficult to learn from.

Whether or not the students take a personality type inventory, have them discuss qualities listed in this chapter that characterize their own particular learning style. Discuss how these inclinations can help or hinder classroom success.

Discuss, as well, your experiences with students who don't do well on tests at first, but who come in to talk with you about what they can do to learn better and ask you what extra work they can do to salvage a bad grade.

### Core Activity

Every student has had good instructors and poor ones. Put the class into small groups with one person being a recorder to write down the answers to these two questions:

1. What do great instructors do or not do?
2. What do poor instructors do or not do?

*After a few minutes:*

- ◆ Have each group recorder read their two lists to the class.
- ◆ Lead discussion about what students can do to improve the instruction they receive. (Before this discussion have some of them read "Making Friends With Instructors," by Barbara Clark, on pages 100-101 in *ASG/6*.)
- ◆ Have the students develop a realistic plan on how to learn in a course taught by a less than great instructor.

↗ See an article on how temperament, as based on the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, affects group dynamics at AS.com. (*This article represents text removed from previous editions of the ASG.*)

## Chapter 10

# Family and Friends: How to Gain Their Support and Encouragement

When adult students start taking college courses, their families and friends will react to this “change” forced on them like they handle almost any change forced on them. Discuss with the class how the reactions of their families and friends parallel the three reactions to life-disrupting change described by Spencer Johnson in his bestselling book *Who Moved My Cheese?* Some are excited about the change and encourage you. Others go along with it with passive acceptance. A few will dislike having their lives disrupted and resist it.

Some students keep their families informed by posting a weekly work and class schedule placed where everyone can see them. Suggest that if they call their family members on their cell phones when they have several minutes (not while driving!) they will reduce the likelihood of getting phone calls during class unless there is an emergency.

What kinds of support groups does your college have that adult students could link with? Have them find out and let each other know.

Some older students feel guilty about taking time for school, especially if they have children at home. Have them read and do the suggestions in the text about how to make going to college a positive experience for the whole family.

### Core Activity

Put the class into small groups with one person being a recorder to write down the answers to these questions:

1. What are some of the problems you’ve had with your family and friends about going to college?
2. What are useful ways to increase support and encouragement from family and friends? (Read on pages 105-106 how Mary Karr got support from her three teenagers.)

3. What are wrong things to do? What will lose support from family and friends?”

*After a few minutes:*

- ◆ Have each group recorder read their two lists to the class.
- ◆ Lead discussion about what students can do to increase the support they receive.
- ◆ Have the students develop a realistic plan for improving support from family and friends.

# How to Balance Going to College with Working

It is important for instructors to understand and be considerate of the work life of adult students. Most adult learners work while attending school. They must. If they are forced to make a choice between working and attending classes, working will win. The income they get from working is essential to their family. Working, for adult students, is much different from younger traditional students who may have work-study positions at the college.

Working adult students must successfully balance and juggle the many demands on their time. When you get to know your students personally, you learn when their work loads are heaviest. You learn which ones will be very stressed at work during the Christmas sales season, which ones will be stressed during the early Spring push to launch and ship new products, and which ones are pushed hardest in April during tax season.

### **Supportive activities:**

- ◆ Students can benefit from hearing about successful strategies for combining work demands and college life from other students. Consider inviting former students to talk to the class about how to successfully combine work and school demands.
- ◆ Make sure that students who are looking for work-related experience know about the cooperative education program.
- ◆ Invite several people from the business world to talk to the class about ways that employers support life-long education.
- ◆ Encourage students who are working to ask their employers how much support is available. Most employers are very supportive. Some employers allow employees to take classes online while at work. Many employ-

ers will allow work schedule changes during examination weeks. Some employers reimburse enrollment costs after a course is satisfactorily passed.

Web-based courses (online), and computer enhanced courses were previewed in Chapter 3, page 22, and Chapter 5, page 43. Now is the time for a more lengthy discussion about alternative ways of taking classes. Make students aware of the possibility of taking a course at home or at work. Suggest to some students that they explore taking an online course and discuss if it could be an option for them.

## Chapter 12

# How to Handle Pressure Well

To reach their educational goals, adult college students must be able to handle pressure well. An effective way to engage students is to read to the class (or post at the class web page) the following statement from Dr. Hans Selye's book *The Stress of My Life: A Scientist's Memoirs (Second Edition)*, p. 70.:

In seeking a name for my theory, I borrowed a term from physics, where "stress" refers to the interaction between a force and the resistance to it. I merely added an adjective to emphasize that was using the term in a special sense, and baptized my conceptual child "biological stress." But frankly, when I made this choice I did not know the difference between 'stress' and 'strain.' In physics "stress" refers to an agent which acts upon a resistant body attempting to deform it, whereas "strain" indicates the changes that are induced in the affected object. Consequently I should have called my findings the "strain syndrome." I did not distinguish between the causative agent and its effect upon the body.

Selye, the originator of the popular belief that our lives are full of "stress," emphasizes in his confession that it isn't the situation, it is how a person reacts to it that counts.

Ask the class for their opinions and reactions. Then pair them up and have them interview each other asking these questions:

"How well are you handling all the pressures in your life?" and "What do you do to take care of yourself?"

### Core Activity

Put the class into small groups with one person being a recorder to write down the answers to these two questions:

1. What helps a person handle a high level of pressure and strain? What should be included in a plan to cope well with pressure?"
2. What are self-frazzling things you've seen people do? If a person was to have a conscious plan to not cope well with pressure, what would they do?"

*After a few minutes:*

- ◆ Have each group recorder read the two lists to the class.
- ◆ Lead discussion about what students can do to cope well with all their pressures.
- ◆ Have the students develop realistic personal plans for coping well with pressures.

## Chapter 13

# Resiliency in a World of Constant Change

Coping well with pressure is not enough in today's world of non-stop change. Our students must be prepared for employers who no longer want obedient employees who follow job descriptions. Employers want self-motivated life-long learners who adapt quickly to change and handle disappointments or setbacks without feeling victimized. Employers need self-confident people who are both self-reliant and good team players.

Resilience is defined as:

*The ability to recover quickly from disruptive change, illness, or misfortune without being overwhelmed or acting in dysfunctional ways.*

A useful classroom discussion is to ask the class why resilience is important in today's world and to ask them for examples from their lives.

### Core Activity

After a few minutes, put the class into small groups with one person being a recorder to write two lists:

1. What is the difference between people who are highly resilient and 2. those who can't seem to handle an ordinary day?"

After a few minutes:

- ◆ Have each group recorder read the two lists to the class.
- ◆ Have the class take the quiz "How Resilient Are You?" on pages 142-143 in the textbook, or online at [www.ResiliencyQuiz.com](http://www.ResiliencyQuiz.com).
- ◆ Lead discussion about the items on the quiz. (⚡ Note: Each item is research based. Further information about the traits exhibited by resilient people can be found at: [www.ResiliencyCenter.com](http://www.ResiliencyCenter.com) and in *The Survivor Personality*, by Al Siebert.)
- ◆ Ask students how much they feel validated by this material and what new insights they have gained.

- ◆ Have the students develop realistic personal plans for increasing their resiliency.

Perspective: "Resiliency" is "mental health" in action. Resiliency is emerging as a more attractive and useful concept than trying to coach people about how to be more mentally healthy. Anything you have learned or know about indicators of mental health applies quite well to resiliency.

**Suggestion:** Because learning the precise meaning of words and terms is so important in college, it can be fun to ask the class to tell you what the verb for resiliency is. One way to do this is to say to the class:

A person good at coping is able to cope...

A person good at surviving is able to survive...

A person good at thriving is able to thrive...

A person good at being resilient is able to...

(The verb for resilient, as defined in Webster's unabridged dictionary, is "resile.")

⚡ Resiliency Quiz Results, page 143

# Effective Teaching: The Heart of Retention

Students who feel a connection with an instructor are more likely to remain in college. Effective teaching is at the heart of student retention. For you to be an effective college-level instructor, you must consciously work to acquire good teaching skills. You probably remember taking college courses from instructors deficient in teaching skills. Most of us have horror stories we can tell about incompetent, uncaring instructors. One reason why college students drop out is because many instructors have never taken a class on how to teach. Teaching is a skill that has to be learned just as you had to work on learning the subject you teach. If you've had no courses or instruction on how to teach college students we recommend the following:

1. Purchase and use:

*Classroom Research: Implementing the Scholarship of Teaching.* by Patricia Cross, Jossey-Bass, 1996.

*Teaching Tips: A Guidebook for the Beginning College Teacher* (current edition), by Wilbert J. McKeachie, D.C. Heath and Company.

2. Arrange to meet regularly with other instructors to discuss ways to improve teaching skills. When Al was a teaching fellow in the psychology department at the University of Michigan, McKeachie held a weekly brown bag seminar. Anyone could come. Participants discussed whatever topics they wanted. It was immensely helpful. When Mary was a teaching assistant in the Speech Communication Department at Portland State University, she attended a three-hour weekly seminar that focused on teaching skills and how students learn.

3. Enroll in one of The Freshman Year Experience instructor training workshops offered through the University of South Carolina. For information about workshops in your area call (803) 777-6029 or see their website at: <http://www.sc.edu/fye>
4. Get feedback from students and listen to their suggestions on how you could improve. The back of this book has a form you can copy and use.
5. Have your college subscribe to *Chronicles of Higher Education* so that you can access their Instructor's Resource section online ( under Educator's Links).

It takes years of self-motivated, self-managed learning to become an effective college instructor. One has to be a life-long student, however, a student of teaching effectiveness. The effort is worth it. The satisfaction you derive from knowing you've taught well, and experiences gained from making a difference in some of your students' lives, gives you an emotional reward far more valuable than any paycheck.

## Instructor Resources at AdultStudent.com

"Making Accommodations for Students with Learning Disabilities in College Classrooms" Presented by Dr. Joseph Pitts at the National Conference on the Adult Learner 2000, Atlanta, Georgia.

"From Job Descriptions to Professionalism" by Al Siebert. *The Business Journal*, August, 1996.

“Teaching Adult Students the Way They Learn”  
by Al Siebert. Presentation at Noel/Levitz  
Student Retention Conference, 1993. Pub-  
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December, 1993.

(Additional online resources are added con-  
tinually.)

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## *Exercise 1*

# List of Terms to Know

CLEP:

DANTES:

ACT:

SAT

GRE:

MAT:

GMAT:

L-SAT:

M-CAT:

PLA:

CRN:

School:

College:

University:

Quarter:

Semester:

Term:

Difference between admission and registration:

Schedule:

Catalog:

Course sequence:

Syllabus:

What is “the discipline”:

Attendance:

AD:

AA/AS:

BA:

BS

PhD:

Lower division/upper division:

Credit:

GPA: Grade Point Average

P/NP:

How do you convert quarter hours to semester hours (or sem. to quarter):

Incomplete:

Audit:

Transcript:

Residence credit:

Distance Learning:

Prerequisite/instructor approval:

Reading & Conference:

Independent Study:

What kind of notebook should you use?:

Theory

Hypothesis:

Concept:

Hypothetical construct:

Model:

Precis:

Outline:

Mapping:

Blue Book:

Scantron:

On reserve:

Indexes:

Abstracts:

Style manual:

i.e.:

e.g.:

Primary source:

Secondary source:

References:

Bibliography:

Annotated bibliography:

Teaching environment:

Learning environment:

Practicum credit:

Internship:

Cooperative education:

## Exercise 1

# List of Terms to Know (Instructor copy)

**CLEP:** College Level Examination Program

**DANTES:** Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Educational Support

**ACT:** American College Testing

**SAT:** Scholastic Aptitude Test

**GRE:** Graduate Record Examinations (various specialty areas)

**MAT:** Miller Analogies Test (100 difficult items used as a short GRE, especially in Education)

**GMAT:** Graduate Management Aptitude Test (School of Business Administration)

**L-SAT:** Law School Admission Test

**M-CAT:** Medical College Admission Test

**PLA:** Prior Learning Assessment (where students write essays based on life experience and earn credit.)

**CRN:** Course Reference Number

**School:** training for jobs, vocation

**College:** a specific academic/learning discipline with career courses

**University:** made up of schools and colleges

**Quarter:** four per college year

**Semester:** two per college year (equal to three quarters)

**Term:** usually a quarter, but may be a semester.

**Difference between admission and registration:** accepted by a college, but not in specific courses (and reverse)

**Schedule:** the courses offered during a specific quarter or semester

**Catalog:** lists all requirements for all departments and programs, is a contract between an admitted student and the college

**Course sequence:** Two or three courses taken one after the other; some required classes can be taken in any order

**Syllabus:** an outline of what will be covered in a course, class assignments, dates when coursework is due, and dates of examinations

**Discipline:** A specific field of study

**Attendance:** (discuss issues about importance of attending all classes.)

### Chapter 3

**AD (AA/AS):** Associate Degree—junior and community colleges (Associate of Arts/Associate of Science).

**BA (MA):** Bachelor of Arts (Master's thesis usually required for MA)

**BS (MS):** Bachelor of Science (Master's thesis usually required for BS)

**PhD:** Doctor of Philosophy in the discipline. Master's may not be required if accepted straight into the PhD program. Dissertation usually required.

**Lower division/upper division undergraduate courses:** 100-200 level/300-400 level

**Credit:** earned for courses completed—about 1 credit per 10 class hours

**GPA:** Grade Point Average (See *ASG/6*, p. 40)

**How to convert quarter hours to semester hours (or sem. to quarter):** 2 sem. hrs. = 3 quarter hrs., 3 quarter hrs. = 2 semester hrs.

**Incomplete:** Must still complete all course work after the course is ended. Usually have a year, unless extended by petition

**Audit:** Attend classes, but don't take tests or receive a grade

**Transcript:** a student's record of courses and grades, kept permanently in the registrar's office

**Residence credit:** must have (X)# hrs. at the specific campus

**Distance Learning:** telecourses, real time, but at different locations, or Web-based courses online

**Prerequisite/instructor approval:** something required before you can enroll in a course—usually another class—usually must get instructor’s signatur.

**Reading & Conference:** read 3-6 books and have a weekly or bi-weekly conference with the instructor

**Independent Study:** you are the only student.

#### Chapter 4

**What kind of notebook should you use?** See ASG/6, page 35

#### Chapter 5

Use the terms listed at our website under “Internet Glossary”

#### Chapter 6

**Theory:** Constructing answers. “Someone’s conceptualization of an observed set of events. Ideas that guide us in making decisions and taking actions. Laypersons—educated guess; scholars—construction of what an experience is like based on systematic observation. Theory is in this sense the scholar’s best representation of the state of affairs at any given time.”

**Hypothesis:** a speculation about relationships, an assumption, unproven theory, tentative

**Concept:** an idea; a general notion, abstraction

**Hypothetical construct:** an inferred variable, imagined (e.g., intelligence)

**Model:** a pattern of interconnected variables or relationships, physical representation

**Precis:** a summary form of taking notes

**Outline:** taking notes listing key concepts and phrases

**Mapping:** a visual form of taking notes

#### Chapter 7

**Blue Book:** May need for essay exams, purchased at the bookstore

**Scantron:** Answer form for multiple choice/true-false exams using computer scoring

#### Chapter 8

**On reserve:** books or articles held for your class at the library

**Indexes:** Lists of library resources

**Abstracts:** Library resources with short descriptions

**Style manual:** writing authority such as that put out by the American Psychological Association (APA), or Modern Language Association (MLA)

**i.e.:** Latin for id est: “that is”

**e.g.:** Latin for exempli gratia: “for example”

**Primary source:** A first-hand reference, original work

**Secondary source:** A reference taken from an article or book referring to a primary source

**References:** List of sources cited in the text or article

**Bibliography:** A list of publications on a subject or by a given author

**Annotated bibliography:** Contains short statements describing the essence of each publication

#### Chapter 9

**Teaching environment:** through grade 12, the responsibility is on the teacher

**Learning environment:** in college the responsibility for academic success is on the student

#### Chapter 11

**Practicum credit:** undergraduate course credit earned for supervised work (unpaid) using skills taught in the program, may be repeated

**Internship:** program requirement credit (usually graduate) earned for working in a supervised setting, (some paid, some not, seldom repeated)

**Cooperative education:** student receives academic credit for working in paid position for an employer who cooperates with a school vocational program

## Exercise 2

# Fears and Concerns

**Rate each issue listed below.**

1 (small concern) – 5 (big concern).

\_\_\_ I won't be able to compete with younger students.

\_\_\_ I won't fit in.

\_\_\_ Not knowing how to organize my time effectively.

\_\_\_ I don't know how to use computers.

\_\_\_ My family and friends will feel neglected.

\_\_\_ Feeling overwhelmed by school work.

\_\_\_ Pressure of job, school and family.

\_\_\_ Won't have enough money to live on while in school.

\_\_\_ Child care.

\_\_\_ Instructors might not want me in their classes.

\_\_\_ Not sure I can handle everything.

\_\_\_ I'm not sure that I can do all the work required.

\_\_\_ I'm not sure what classes I should take.

\_\_\_ I have trouble setting goals and sticking to them.

\_\_\_ I'm concerned I've been out of school for too long.

\_\_\_ I feel nervous about asking questions in class.

\_\_\_ I have a lot of responsibilities outside of school.

\_\_\_ I have reading problems.

\_\_\_ I'm nervous about taking tests.

**Write a list of other fears and concerns you have:**

## Exercise 3

# Sources of Wasted and Saved Time\*:

### Check off the time wasters that apply to you:

- Telephone / cell phone interruptions
- Drop-in visitors
- Repeated crises
- Lack of objectives
- Disorganization
- Too much work attempted at once and unrealistic time estimates
- Multi-tasking / easily distracted
- Lack of (or unclear) communications or instructions
- Inadequate, inaccurate, or delayed information
- Indecision and procrastination
- Confused responsibility and authority
- Inability to say "NO"
- Many tasks left unfinished
- Lack of self-discipline
- Watching television / surfing internet
- Leisure magazine/book escapes

### Your Own Weaknesses:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Time and Energy Savers

1. Write down your commitments, appointments and deadlines. Don't trust your memory, however good it might be!
2. Set your priorities first thing in the morning before any work gets under way, or the night before—whichever works best.
3. Use your high productivity hours for your highest priority projects.
4. Use a time-organizer to schedule your day, but don't over schedule.
5. Tackle time-consuming projects in stages, one piece at a time.
6. Concentrate on one task at a time.
7. Institute a quiet period in your day. Include both physical and sitting activities.
8. When a day's project is stressful, take short breaks.
9. Have light meals to avoid the drowsiness that follows a big meal.
10. Use your low productivity hours for easy-to-do projects.
11. Write down ideas when they occur to you.
12. Carry reading material with you. Use waiting time to read.
13. Be organized.
14. Set reasonable deadlines for yourself and others.
15. Make decisions now if possible.
16. If something isn't clear, ask for clarification. Do not assume you know. You might find you have to do it all over again.

\* Adapted from *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life*, by Alan Lakein

# Course Evaluation

Course Title \_\_\_\_\_ School Year \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor's name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Rating of the instructor:

1      2      3      4      5  
poor (1)                      excellent (5)

Rating of the course:

1      2      3      4      5  
poor (1)                      excellent (5)

In the space below, please state...

1. What I liked most about the instructor:

2. What I liked most about the course:

3. Suggestions for improvement:

4. Other comments:

# Also Available

## Books:

*THE RESILIENCY ADVANTAGE: Master Change, Thrive Under Pressure, and Bounce Back From Setbacks*, Al Siebert, PhD  
Berrett-Koehler, 2005. ISBN-13: 978-1-57675-329-3 \$16.95  
**Educator discount: only \$12.**

*THE SURVIVOR PERSONALITY: Why Some People Are Stronger, Smarter, and More Skillful at Handling Life's Difficulties... and How You Can Be, Too*  
Al Siebert, PhD. (Foreword by Bernie Siegel, MD)  
Berkley/Perigee Books, 1996. ISBN: 0-399-52230-1 \$14.95  
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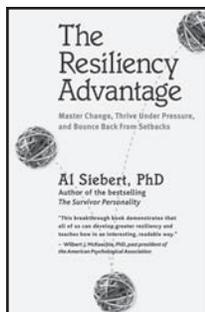
Purchase orders accepted. FEIN: 20-4071535

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For other books and resources about survivor resiliency, visit our sister website at:

**www.ResiliencyCenter.com**

Have comments about our book, this instructors manual, or website? Please complete our online survey and enter to win a copy of *The Resiliency Advantage*, by Al Siebert, awarded quarterly: **www.AdultStudent.com/survey**



Practical Psychology Press is proud to announce that co-author **Al Siebert** received the 2006 Independent Publishers "Best Self-Help Book" Award for his book *The Resiliency Advantage*.



# About the Authors

**Al Siebert** is a veteran who attended college on the GI Bill of Rights. He received his MA and PhD in psychology from the University of Michigan. He taught adult education classes and management psychology for over 35 years at Portland State University, he is currently the Director of the Resiliency Center.

He is author of the award-winning *The Resiliency Advantage*, which helps people discover and strengthen their inner resilience, and *The Survivor Personality*, a self-help book about the inner nature of people strengthened by adversity used as a supplemental textbook in some healthy-human development courses. He is co-author with Tim Walter of *Student Success: How To Succeed In College and Still Have Time For Your Friends*, 8th edition, Harcourt-Brace, 2000. He has presented at many Freshman Year Experience and Noel-Levitz Student Retention conferences. He conducts staff development sessions and facilitates professional development retreats for educators.

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**Mary Karr** started college when the youngest of her four children started high school. She earned a BS in psychology and speech communication and her MS in speech communication from Portland State University. She teaches a college success seminar for re-entry students at Marylhurst University and evaluates essays submitted for prior learning credit in Communications courses. She created and taught the first on-line, credit course on Listening in the nation for Marylhurst University in 1997, followed by the first on-line course in the nation on Nonverbal Communication in 1999.



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