THE NITTY GRITTY OF COLLEGE SUCCESS

One of the major ingredients of college success is preparation through good study skills. What are good study skills?

- **Regular class attendance** This is a must. If you don’t go to class, you will not do well. Class time is when the teacher tells you what’s important, and what you will be tested on. In many classes, poor attendance brings down your grade.
  
  **Copout excuse:** “But I can’t make it to class every time.” Why is this? If there isn’t enough time in your schedule to make it to class, it’s time for a gut check because something’s going to give, and that’s usually school.

- **Reading all assigned readings before class** This prepares you for the day’s lecture. You are better prepared to understand your instructor’s lecture if you have done the reading beforehand. Think of it as learning it for the second time: once in your book, and twice, in class.
  
  **Copout excuse:** “I’ve tried to read the assignments, but I never really understand most it, so what’s the use?” Good news: **You are not expected to understand everything in the reading—that’s precisely why your teacher discusses it in class.** You give yourself an advantage by reading it beforehand. It’s easier to understand difficult material the more you read or hear it. Plus, your notes will be more thorough.

- **Taking effective notes** Take good notes and use them throughout the semester, not just on the night before a test. Your notes are your lifeblood to success.
  
  ✓ **Write as much as possible during class.** If you’re not sure whether something is important or not, don’t take a chance; write it down. You can always disregard unimportant stuff later.
  
  ✓ **Skip lines if you write in paragraph form.** This makes it easier on your eyes to read, and helps you in the step to follow . . .
  
  ✓ **Clean up notes right after class.** This is when the lecture is freshest in your mind. By quickly underlining key terms, inserting subject headings in the margin, finishing incomplete thoughts, you’re reinforcing the lecture. Plus, by simply cleaning up your notes, you have quickly just studied them.
  
  ✓ **Read your notes as often as possible that day.** This builds gradual mastery by reinforcing through repetition.
  
  ✓ **Reread the day’s notes before you go to sleep** It’s important to review what you’ve learned on the same day you learned it. This forces your brain to begin familiarizing itself with the material.
Through this process of reinforcement through repetition, you are reminding your brain not to forget material.

✔ **Reread the week’s notes at the end of the week** This continues the process of mastery through repetition. The more you study something, the better you understand it. Study your notes along with the week’s reading assignments.

    ❖ **This is a great time to cross-reference your notes with your textbook and handouts** On the page of your notes that discuss a particular chapter, write down in your notes the pages where textbook discusses the same material. This makes it easier to cross-reference and synthesize information. This helps save time later when you have to check up on something, and again, by cross-referencing, you’re actually studying the material again.

✔ **Study all your month’s notes at the end of the month** This brings everything together. By this time, you’re reminding yourself about what you already know, as opposed to trying to relearning everything you’ve forgotten.

    ❖ **Do this in a study group** It’s much easier to review so much material with a group of people. By hearing others explain something in different words, you understand things better. Also, by explaining things to others, you’re improving your own mastery of the topic. Speaking of study groups . . .

- **Form or join a study group** The best reason to study can be demonstrated in the following question--what would you rather have while you’re studying? Check one:

    _____ one brain

    _____ more than one brain

**The answer is a no-brainer.** More than one brain is better than one for several reasons:

    ▪ **Others may understand the subject better** They can explain things in a way that’s easier for you to understand.

    ▪ **Others may have material in their notes that you don’t** Let’s face it. Everyone daydreams and drifts in and out of a lecture. And during these times, we’re missing out on material that could potentially be very important. Compare notes and fill in details you may have missed.

    ▪ **You may have missed a class or two** Check others’ notes for that class period (but realistically, you should have done this as soon as possible after the missed class).

**Copout excuse:** “*I know more than everyone else, so it’s a waste of time.*” One reason why teachers know as much as they do about their subject matter is because they have mastered the material through repetition, and also because they have had to teach difficult material in many different ways to different types of people. The more different ways
we can explain something, the more thoroughly we understand that topic. By helping others, you deepen your knowledge of your subject. That’s why the tutors at the Chaffey College Success Centers are so good, because they have had to explain complex problems in many different ways to different types of learners.

Copout excuse #2: “You never get anything done because everyone goofs around too much.” This is a valid complaint.

Solution: Everyone needs to understand and agree beforehand what exactly the group needs to study. Assign a cop to the group that keeps everyone in line if it gets out of hand. Also, the cop needs to be sure the group takes a break every hour or so. The brain and body need a break to stay fit. Take breaks every hour to minimize goofing off. Don’t give the cop any attitude, and choose a different cop each session.

► For the reasons stated above, studies show that students who study in study groups or with a study partner perform better than those who study alone.

- Know where your teachers’ and counselor’s offices are, and when they hold office hours. Meet with your teacher during office hours at least three times per semester. This is when you can get good one-on-one time with your teacher to discuss the class and your progress in it. Like a doctor who diagnoses something before it becomes a problem, your counselor is vital to your overall success in school. They monitor your progress, and help you stay on track. Counselors give you that extra push of support, and educate you about all the great student services at Chaffey.

- Get free tutoring at one of the Chaffey College Success Centers
  The tutors are carefully hired and constantly trained to tutor at their peak level. Most of them come highly recommended from your own teachers. They’re good at what they do because they know their material, and love helping others to understand it as well.

  Copout excuse: “Tutoring is for dummies.” WRONG!
  Institutional Research at Chaffey College has found out three important facts. Students who take advantage of the Chaffey College Success Centers and the services we provide:

  - have higher GPAs than those who don’t come to the Success Centers
  - stay in school longer (are less likely to drop out) than those who don’t come to the Success Centers
  - transfer to four-year schools or earn AA degrees or certificates at a higher rate than those who don’t come to the Success Centers

Good students take advantage of the expert tutoring at the College Success Centers because they learn more when they’re with a tutor than if they try to go it alone. Your brain and a tutor’s brain can be a potent combination.
FIVE KEYS OF STUDENT SUCCESS

1. Attend class regularly, having read all assignments beforehand
2. Take complete notes in class, and use them on a regular basis throughout the semester (reinforcement through repetition)
3. Form or join a study group, or find a study partner
4. Meet with your teachers and counselor regularly during office hours
5. Get tutoring at any of the Chaffey College Success Centers.

How to locate any of the Success Centers, and how they can help you:

Rancho Success Center: Located in EEC 101. Reading, or any subject other than the ones not covered in the centers listed below, as well as general overall college success skills, phone 652-6932

Language Center: Also located in EEC 101. ESL and foreign language classes, including ASL, phone 652-6907


Writing Success Center: Located on the first floor of the library. For whichever class you have a writing assignment to complete, not just English, phone 652-6820

Chino and Fontana Success Centers: These centers provide all the above services offered on the Rancho Campus.

Fontana Success Center (16855 Merrill Ave. Fontana, 92335): Located in Room 107, phone 652-7408

Chino Reading, Writing and ESL Success Center (5897 College Park Ave. Chino, 91710): Located in Room 240, phone 652-8160

Chino Multidisciplinary Success Center (5897 College Park Ave. Chino, 91710): Located in Room 145, phone 652-8150

You must present a current Chaffey College student ID card to enter any Chaffey College Success Center