

WRITING RIGHT @ CGCC

THE WRITING CENTER NEWSLETTER



CHANDLER-GILBERT
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

August-September 2008 • Volume 6, Issue 1

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College: Getting Started on the Right Foot

This fall, many students will be entering college for the first time ever. In fact, you may be reading this as a brand new Chandler-Gilbert student.

After years in a familiar school, college may seem intimidating or even a little bit scary. Despite any triumphant achievements or disastrous disappointments you may have had in high school, however, college can be your redeeming chance to start with a blank slate. Why not start off on the right foot? These tips can help any student start off the academic year confidently, establishing a foundation that can support him or her throughout an entire college career.

Tip #1: Go to class and complete homework.

This tip may seem obvious, but so many students seem to believe that in college they can attend class and complete homework if and when they choose. As a college student, you're expected to act as a responsible adult that enrolled in a course to learn. By missing class or missing work that's assigned, you lose an essential part of your learning. Doing so could cause a domino effect that may be difficult to overcome in time for finals.

Tip #2: Schedule your time wisely - don't procrastinate!

In a typical week, you should be spending about 2 hours studying for each hour spent in class. For a 3-credit course, that equals to approximately 9 hours a week: perhaps 1-2 hours reading materials for the class, 3-5 hours working on homework assignments, and about 2 hours reviewing and preparing for tests. If this seems like a lot of time—it is! Many students are also taking multiple classes, working full- or part-time jobs, and/or taking care of a family. Finding time to study is tricky, but knowing ahead of time that you may need to make some adjustments should help alleviate the time crunch. Sometimes students don't realize the commitment a college-level course requires, but there are many ways to

make this work. Write down all assignment due dates, get started on them early, and get help when you need it!

Tip #3: Look for and take advantage of help.

Resources for students are everywhere on campus. Learning centers that offer tutoring for free are available on both the Pecos campus and on the Williams campus. All students should visit these sites early in the semester to get acquainted with the rich resources available. That way, when you really need help on that major paper that's due in a week, you know what to do and where to go in plenty of time. And, remember that teachers are there to help; if you have an issue, communicate with your teachers right away. Take advantage of office hours—that's what they're for!

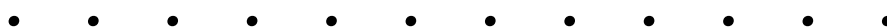
Tip #4: Show enthusiasm.

This tip may seem simple, but a student's personality and interest go a long way. When you sit in the front of the class, this lets teachers know that you care and that you want to pay attention. When you ask relevant and thoughtful questions in class and take notes during class, your teachers take note of that; that helps your class participation scores too. Sparking enthusiasm for a course's subject matter, readings, assignments, and homework may be difficult to achieve, but that's part of your responsibility as a student.

Tip #5: Discover and improve your study habits.

College is different from high school—there's no debate there. So, the study habits you had in high school might have to change a little, as what you did then may not work as well any more. Maybe you're a procrastinator; learn how to adjust for that and plan ahead so that you're not frantically trying to complete an assignment the morning it's due. The CGCC Learning Center website (www.cgc.maricopa.edu/lc) offers web resources about study habits that could help. Finding

See TIPS page 2





Yeah, Write.

Having trouble brainstorming ideas for your English paper? Not sure how to get started on your next writing project in your history class? Need someone to help you think about your organization in your business proposal paper? Visit the Writing Center. Drop-in tutoring is available for all your writing needs

“Revision is one of the exquisite pleasures of writing.”

--Bernard Malamud

TIPS from front page

out what works best for you is essential to your success in college. Also, establish a distraction-free place to study that has a desk, a comfortable chair, good lighting, and all the supplies you need. It should not be a place where you routinely do other things. It should be your study place. Check out the Study Environment Analysis chart from Virginia Tech to help you determine your best study location: www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/studydis.html.

Tip #6: Learn useful test-taking strategies to manage test anxiety.

One simple way to avoid test anxiety is to study every day; cramming for a test the night or morning before will only heighten your nervousness. Then, on test day, pay close attention to directions, both oral and written. Take at least 10 deep abdominal breaths to ease any tension and to help you focus. Look over the entire test before answering anything, and then you can more carefully gauge the time you have to complete the test most effectively. It's a good idea to answer essay questions first. Also take note of information offered in any of the questions that may help in other parts of the test. Remember that your entire college career is NOT dependent on your performance on one exam.

Tip #7: Get involved on campus.

You may be wondering how you can get involved in campus activities if you're spending so much time studying! But, you can combine your interests and have campus events tie into your classes. Many student groups are based on career goals (Teachers of Tomorrow, Student Nurses in Action, etc.) or class subjects (Creative Writing Club, Philosophy Club, Hands-On Environmental Action Team, etc.) that can only further reinforce what you're studying and learning about. These groups may be the extra support you need, and they can also make you feel more comfortable on campus as you get to know more students and staff.

Tip #8: Stay healthy and invest in your physical well-being.

Your body is the vehicle to carry your wisdom, knowledge and everything to your future. Good health will help you study more effectively. Eat, exercise, and sleep. Regular exercise will actually help to keep your stress level down and will help you feel more alert and productive. Studying on four hours of sleep and an empty stomach or junk-food

diet is a waste of time. Avoid food and drink containing caffeine just before or just after taking an exam or studying.

Tip #9: Take responsibility for your actions.

As a college student, you're responsible for your success and for your setbacks. Take charge and focus on your college career. Don't let class meetings or assignments slide by; every assignment counts. If your teacher offers extra credit, complete it as soon as you can. It's better to have those extra points in your pocket and end up not needing them instead of wishing you had those extra points at the end of the semester to get an "A" instead of a "B." And, in those rare times you do happen to slip up, accept and learn from your mistakes.

Tip #10: Reward your success.

College isn't easy. Many of you are juggling work, families, jobs, athletics, and many other commitments. Even if you're "just" going to school, you'll be busy keeping up with college-level work. Therefore, take time out to reward yourself for getting school projects done! Enjoy a favorite treat, talk to a friend, or plan an outing with family or friends. You deserve it.



Here's a list of resources to help you stay on the right track in college:

Tips for Academic Success from the University of Washington Counseling Center depts.washington.edu/counsels/resources/4students/workshops/workshoptips.html

The Ten Commandments for Taking a Test www.westga.edu/~mfaucett/teaching/10Commands.html

The Basics of Effective Learning: Study Skills from Bucks County Community College www.bucks.edu/~specpop/studyskills.htm

College Success from The College Board www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/college-success/index.html

Get to Know CGCC Staff!

Annie Jiminez

Annie Jiminez, Director of the International Education Program (IEP) at CGCC for the past four years, is fascinated with the students she works with. "International students can teach so many great things about different cultures, traditions, and systems," Annie says. It's not hard to find Annie all over campus, talking with students, coordinating events, sharing her enthusiasm for her program, and spreading her program's mission.

According to the program's website, the IEP's mission is to "encourage global citizenship and promote cultural understanding and appreciation." Annie has a lot planned this fall semester with events fulfilling this mission: one event is a three-day global leadership retreat for international and American students in Prescott, AZ. More information will be posted on the IEP website in September (www.cgc.edu/ss/intl). Additionally, the IEP office will be collaborating with the Inter-Cultural Exchange (ICE) Club to organize day trips so international students can familiarize themselves with the community as well as Arizona. In the third week of November the IEP office will be coordinating a series of activities to celebrate "International Education Week," which is nationally recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

Another main mission of the IEP program is to help international students with admissions and ESL advisement and to "create a positive and successful experience for students at CGCC through access, programs and quality service." In that vein, Annie and her office have coordinated a series of workshops that includes "How to lease an apartment," "How to buy a car," "Preparing for a job," and "Completing your income taxes," among others throughout the year. Annie has also developed some tips for international students to succeed. She finds that many students in general don't understand the importance of developing strong reading skills. She advises that international students could improve their reading skills by reading leisure materials in English instead of in their native language. "They should read material other than college textbooks to improve their reading skills. If the mind is relaxed when reading English text, it helps improve reading comprehension," she suggests. She also recommends that international students can improve their aural skills by reading a book while listening to it in its audio-book format.

In her role, Annie has found that some of the students she works with sometimes mistakenly combine homework time and study time. Annie suggests that students should program time in their day to do their homework and separate time to study and review material and notes. "Doing one's homework is simply not enough to complete a class successfully," she cautions. Moreover, students should plan the semester in advance by using a calendar planner. Annie advises that they note due dates for all assignments as well as reminders a few days in advance to avoid procrastination and "cramming." They should also try to join study groups or take the initiative to organize one.

In our increasingly global world, the IEP program and Annie's dedication provide much needed support at CGCC. The program also provides assistance for domestic students interested in studying abroad, and the IEP office has a collection of books and other resources on international issues. Annie believes that all students, both international and American, should keep in mind that as global citizens their education is the most important long-term investment they will ever make that will play a critical role on how successful they are in life.

The Archives

For more great information and handy writing tips, check out earlier editions of *Writing Right @ CGCC*, available at: www.cgc.edu/lc/writing_center then click on *Newsletters*.

Sparking Creativity
(March 2008)

Using Feedback
(October 2007)

Set Your Sights on Citing Sources
(March 2007)

All About Transitions
(April 2006)

Writing a Critical Analysis: How pizza can help
(February 2006)

Say What? Decoding your instructor's assignment sheet
(Sept/Oct 2005)

Taking the Mystery Out of Citing Sources
(April/May 2005)

Organization... not just for closets!
(February 2005)

Getting Started
(October 2004)

Concluding Thoughts
(May 2004)

