

FastStart: Strategies for College Success Student Workbook





Day 1: Strategies for College Success

Day 1 Student Learning Outcome

- You will become familiar with Maysville Community and Technical College and be able to effectively utilize resources available to you.
- Students will become aware of their motivation level that assesses students' diligence, self-discipline, and willingness to exert the effort necessary to successfully complete academic requirements.

MCTC Student Services					
Office	Contact Person	What do they do?			
Admissions, Registration and Records	MAY: Lynne Ellen Lindsay, ext. 66184 LVC: Lori Gaunce, ext. 66405 RC: Anita McCoy ext 66314	 The Admissions Office processes admissions applications, ACT or COMPASS scores, high school transcripts or GED scores, and official college transcripts. The Registrar's office maintains student academic records, (admissions, courses, grades, GPA, transcripts, etc.) and coordinates registration. They also offer a variety of student services, including: good standing letters-loan deferments-registration assistance-verification of enrollment-good student discount-transcript services-address changes-official name changes. 			
Financial Aid	All Campuses. 1-855-469-6282	• MCTC is dedicated to providing our students with a high quality, affordable education. We believe that everyone should have access to higher education and we offer a range of options to assist you in achieving your goals. MCTC offers the following a variety of federal and state grants, work study opportunities, loan programs, and scholarships.			
Disability Support Services	MAY: Tabatha Butler, ext. 66209 LVC: Sherry Stacy, ext. 66414 RC: Karen May, ext. 66349	 MCTC has a coordinator to assist students with accommodations when necessary. Students with disabilities who desire academic accommodations must provide the coordinator with current documentation of their disability including evidence of the need for academic accommodations. If you need an accommodation because of a documented disability, you are required to register with Disability Services each year. 			
Ready to Work and Work and Learn Programs	MAY: Courtney Sergent, ext. 66181 RC: Paula McHale, ext. 66301	 Ready to Work is designed to promote the success of Kentucky Transitional Assistance program recipients who attend community or technical colleges and to provide short-term training opportunities. Work and Learn works with K-TAP recipients in conjunction with Adult Basic Education for those students who are working towards a GED and also high school graduates who are brushing up on basic skills before entering college. 			
Student Support Services (SSS) Program	Jim Settles, ext. 66263	SSS is a federally funded TRiO grant program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. SSS serves 160 students at MCTC each academic year who have barriers to attaining a college education. Our goal is to provide services for students in order to help them reach their academic and personal goals! All services are free, but you must qualify for the program in order to receive services.			
Counseling	Vacant,	 Counseling services are directed at assisting students in reaching their fullest potential. Because the Kentucky Community and Technical College System encourages only short term personal counseling, a close relationship exists between the counselors and outside agencies. Students may be referred for additional help to agencies such as Comprehend, Inc., the Women's Crisis Center, the Kentucky Vocational Rehabilitation Offices, social services offices, or independent mental health providers. 			
Veteran Affairs	MAY: Vacant, RC: Jo McCarty, ext. 66312	The Veteran Affairs office assists students who served in a branch of the military and qualifies for GI benefits.			

		MCTC Student Services
Office	Contact Person	What do they do?
Master Advising	MAY: George Rodgerson, ext. 66191 LVC: Sherry Stacy, ext. 66414 RC: Jo McCarty, ext 66312	Master Advising is the entry point for most new students coming to MCTC. Students often begin their college journey with an appointment to meet with a Master Advisor. Master Advising provides advising, registration, and retention services for new, undecided, distance learning students and students in developmental classes.
Testing Center	MAY: Frances Peterson, ext. 66123 LVC: Sherry Stacy ext. 66414 RC: Jo McCarty, ext 66312	• The College's placement entrance exam and other standardized tests, exams for on-line courses, math skills exams and make-up tests are administered in the Testing Center. The Compass placement exam, a test similar to the ACT admissions exam but designed for junior and two-year colleges, is given through the Internet on computer. All entering freshman are required to take Compass unless they have the requisite ACT scores.
Tutoring Center	MAY: George Rodgerson, ext. 66191 LVC: Marty Muenks, ext. 66410 RC: Maggie Baker, ext 66307	Tutoring services are also available for specific subjects. The learning center is available for registered students who want to sharpen their academic skills or want to review previously learned skills
Adult Education	MAY: Bill Teegarden, ext. 66261 LVC: Crystal Banks ext. 66422	The MCTC Adult Education Center offers Compass Preparation. You can improve your COMPASS scores with a few hours of individualized tutoring and practice in math, language or reading skills. This program is designed to help prepare you for college courses and to test you out of developmental classes. Adult Education also assists students with basic computer literacy training, English as a Second Language, Family Literacy and GED Diploma Preparation and Training.
Library Services	MAY: Sonja Eads, ext. 66126 LVC: Carla Keller, ext. 66417 RC: Kathy Riddle ext. 66366	The library provides information services to the students, faculty and staff, as well as to patrons who reside in the district's service area. Student ID Photo Library Cards issued at the home campus library.
Bookstore	MAY: Kaye High, ext. 66166 ROW: Jeannie Bradley 606-783-0286	• The MCTC Bookstore is dedicated to providing your entire required textbook and reference book needs. Store inventory also includes a large selection of supplies, gift and novelty items, Maysville Community and Technical College clothing and apparel, candy and other snack items. The Bookstore offers Wholesale Book Buy-Back every day, as well as a Retail Buy at the end of each semester (Retail Buy means if the Bookstore is using the book again for the upcoming semester, we will buy that book at Retail which is 50% of the purchase price).
Business Office	All Campuses. 1-855-469-6282	Tuition fees are due at time of registration. The Business Office will accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover. A FACTS tuition management payment plan is available to students as a payment option.

LASSI – Motivation (MOT): Group Discussion

- For this section we will use your score on the LASSI Motivation assessment to identify behaviors that are conducive to academic success.
- "The Motivation Scale assesses students' diligence, self-discipline, and willingness to exert the effort necessary to successfully complete academic requirements (sample item: When work is difficult I either give up or study only the easy parts). Students who score low on this scale need to accept more responsibility for their academic outcomes and learn how to set and use goals to help accomplish specific tasks" (Retrieved from http://www.hhpublishing.com).

Key to success – You must take ownership of your education!
Discussion Points
What does your score mean?
What do the experts say?
Motivation vs. Inspiration? What is the difference?
Are you motivated? Inspired? Both?
List 5 things that motivated you to attend Maysville Community & Technical College:
1
2
3
4
5

• Questions / Activities:

Day 2: Strategies for College Success

Day 2 Student Learning Outcomes

 You will be able to access and navigate through Student Self-Service, your student e-mail account and Blackboard.

Student Self-Service, Email and Blackboard Overview

Using technology is a huge part of being successful in college. Technology will be a part of your career and of your life outside of college. Knowing how it all works now will make your future with it easier.

Account activation, Student Self-Service, and Financial Aid... HELP!

Account Activation

- ✓ Go to http://kctcs.edu/students/user_account_center and click on KCTCS user account activation (this program is only compatible with internet explorer)
- ✓ You are required to provide your date of birth and two of the following items (Student Id, Social Security Number, Admissions Application Reference Number, or Personal Email Address) **These items must match the information you provided on your admission application.**
 - The next screen will give you your user name and your e-mail address--write these down, you will need them later
- ✓ You will also be required to provide a verification question and answer, once this has been done click on "set my password"
- ✓ The next screen will require you to provide your last name and student Id.
- ✓ On the next screen you will see a place to create and set a password, 8 characters long and include 3 of these 4 items
 - Capital Letter, Lower-case letter, Number, Symbol
- ✓ If your password is successfully set then click *ok*. If not, try a different password.
- ✓ Your username and password will be the same for your email, student self-service and blackboard

Student Self-Service Website Access Info

- ✓ Your account must be activated to go further
- ✓ Go to https://students.kctcs.edu and click on Login Here. Then enter your user id and password
- ✓ Once you are logged in you will see SA Self Service and you can access your personal information

Email

✓ You will not have access to email until 24 hours after class enrollment

Schedule

- ✓ Once you have logged onto your SA Self Service Click on:
 - KCTCS Schedule (this will be located under the box that shows the current weeks schedule.
 - > This will also be the schedule you will use at the bookstore when purchasing books

Financial Aid

- ✓ To apply for Financial Aid, please visit www.fafsa.ed.gov.
- ✓ The school code is 006960
- ✓ To view your financial aid award:
 - ➤ Go to SA Self Service and Click on:
 - Campus Finances
 - Click on View Financial Aid
 - Click on the Aid Year to see a list of your awards
 - Click on Accept/Decline Financial Aid
 - Click on Aid Year
 - Click on Accept or Decline to show your preference
 - Click on Submit to send information to the Financial Aid Office.

How to videos can be accessed at www.maysville.kctcs.edu.click Click on Current Students

And then on Student Services Self Help Videos

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Day 3: Strategies for College Success

Day 3 Student Learning Outcomes

- You will identify traits of a successful college student.
- You will be able to set SMART goals to become a more successful student.

"Top 10" Successful Student Behaviors

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Now, consider the following two questions and write down a few thoughts on each.

- 1. Being as honest with yourself as possible, what are your strongest points as a student? Which, if any, of the Top Ten Successful Student Behaviors do you do regularly?
- 2. What do you predict will be your biggest academic challenge in college? Why? Which behaviors from the Top Ten list can help you overcome this challenge?

SMART Goal Setting

A SMART goal explains a behavior using the following components:

Specific	A SMART goal identifies a specific action or event that will take.
Measurable	The description of a SMART goal and the outcomes should be quantifiable.
Achievable	A SMART goal should be attainable given available resources.
Realistic	A SMART goal should require you to stretch beyond your normal routine and regular abilities, but allow for likely success.
Timely	A SMART goal should state the time period in which it will be accomplished.

Sample Goals:

Which of the following are SMART goals? Indicate which of the SMART components are part of each goal.

Goal		S	M	A	R	T
1. To study ha	rder.					
2. I want to joi	n a student organization.					
3. To get a 4.0	Spring 2012 semester GPA.					
4. To become	a better student.					
5. To improve	my next test grade in ENG 101 by one					
letter grade.						
6. I want to de	crease my credit card debt.					
7. To locate an	nd apply for at least five summer jobs by					
March 1, 20	12					
8. To lose five	pounds.					

Writing a SMART Goal

Personal Goal:	
	Can my goal be more specific? If yes, rewrite:
Specific	Can my goar be more specific. If yes, fewfite.
Measurable	Is my goal quantifiable? If not, rewrite:
Achievable	Can I achieve this goal? If not, rewrite:
Realistic	Is this goal realistic – within grasp, but not too easy?
Timely	Do I have a specific time period for my goal? If no, rewrite:

Additional SMART tips:

- Consider short- and long-term goals.
- Develop several goals. For example, a list of 5 to 7 academic goals should keep you focused for one semester.
- Keep your goals in writing and in a visible location. You are more likely to stay motivated.
- Review your goals frequently.

Day 4: Strategies for College Success

Day 4 Student Learning Outcomes

- You will identify your preferred learning style using the VARK Questionnaire
- You will understand how learning styles and teaching styles may differ and how to optimize your preferred learning style in taking notes, participating in class and study for exams

VARK: What is your preferred learning style?

Take the VARK Questionnaire:

Go to www.vark-learn.com. Click on Questionnaire located on the right side your screen and complete the questionnaire. Read each question and then choose the answer which best explains your preference and click the box next to it. When you have completed the all the questions, click OK to see what your score reveals about you. Make you write down your scores for class discussion.

Visual (V): This preference includes the depiction of information in charts, graphs, flow charts, and all the symbolic arrows, circles, hierarchies and other devices that instructors use to represent what could have been presented in words. It does **NOT** include movies, videos or PowerPoint.

Aural / Auditory (A): This perceptual mode describes a preference for information that is "heard or spoken." Students with this modality report that they learn best from lectures, tutorials, tapes, group discussion, email, speaking, web chat, talking things through.

Read/write (R): This preference is for information displayed as words. Not surprisingly, many academics have a strong preference for this modality. This preference emphasizes text-based input and output - reading and writing in all its forms.

Kinesthetic (**K**): By definition, this modality refers to the "perceptual preference related to the use of experience and practice (simulated or real)." Although such an experience may invoke other modalities, the key is that the student is connected to reality, "either through concrete personal experiences, examples, practice or simulation" All

VARK: How can you maximize your preferred learning style?

After you complete the VARK Questionnaire, think about the answers to each of the following questions.

1.	Do you have a strong or a weak learning preference, or are you multimodal? How do you think this helps or hurts you?
2.	Think of a classroom experience where you felt you learned a lot. Can you think of ways that that this experience fits into your preferred learning style?
3.	Think of a classroom experience where you feel like you didn't learn anything. What learning style was the instructor teaching to? What could have you done to get more out of the lesson?
4.	Write down some ideas on how you can maximize your preferred learning style when taking notes in class, participating in class and studying for a test?

Day 5: Strategies for College Success

Day 5: Student Learning Outcomes

- We will recap the week and discuss ways to apply what we've learned to your college education.
- You will learn what advice other first-time college students have for you and how to apply it to your educational experiences.

Advice From Other Students

Students from the GEN 102 Strategies for Academic Success class have some great to share with you. They have sat where you are sitting right now and would like to offer some words of encouragement.

#1

My advice to beginning college students would be to start out slow, do not take more than 12 hours your first couple of semesters to allow yourself to get the feel of what college is like, and the pace at which you must work to complete the courses. I highly advise that you talk with your counselor quite frequently to ensure you are taking the right classes and that you are on the right path to fulfill whatever your career may be. I would also suggest that you develop some type of study habit for studying. I have realized that college is completely different than high school. One last piece of advice I have is to try to be self-motivated. In high school you always had teachers telling you when your assignments were due, and when the tests would be, but in college, you do not. As a college student you are expected to know when to do your work and when to turn it in. I hope this advice helps your students.

#2

My advice to new freshmen would be the following:

- 1. Be prepared—research your options for classes required, semesters those classes are offered, and any pre-reqs. Your advisor should take care of all of this, but don't count on it.
- 2. Look into taking some CLEP exams and getting any credit for life experience or classes taken in the past.
- 3. Buy used books at the bookstore or online at Amazon to save money.
- 4. Apply for all scholarships available; you never know if you will get one if you don't apply.
- 5. Do your very best and work hard.
- 6. Taking Calculus online is VERY hard, I don't recommend it unless absolutely necessary.

#3

My first piece of advice is to make time to study. Your everyday life may be busy, but try to put aside at least an hour a day to read a chapter from your textbook or just look over your notes.

Second is to never be scared to ask for help. This is not high school and you are an adult now, so if you are having problems with an assignment, just ask your instructor or your classmates. That's what they are there for.

Last, try not to get behind in your work; if you are able to work ahead, then do so. You will always do better on an assignment if you are not stressed out because it is due that night.

Other than that, I would like to wish all you new students, young and old, the best of luck.

#4

My words of advice for incoming college students would be to prioritize everything that they do. Prioritizing was the most important thing I had to understand in today's super-busy world. College will always be hectic and you have to be able to manage your time right, including your everyday lifestyle outside of school. It's imperative that every student stay on top of deadlines and allow themselves sufficient time to complete their work on time. Knowing what has to be done first will help students organize their lives. Hope this helps!

#5

I was 47 when I started college. I thought I was too old to go, but I have learned in these last two and a half years you are never too old. I see these young kids start a class and then drop out after a few weeks or after the first test, but I have learned that you have to give it more time than that. I have never dropped a class yet, but there have been a few in the past that I would have liked to drop, but I stayed with them and passed. You have to be willing to make a commitment to stick with the class you are taking and to give it your all. You may have something better to do with your time than study, but think of what you will get out of each class you take: a better future to look forward to. Here I am almost through with all of the classes I need, but if I had the money, I would like to take more classes. I like the college life. There is one other thing, at the start of this class I have been taking care of my mother-in-law 24/7 so don't let anyone tell you can't work and go to school too, because you can.

#6

Advice I would give to incoming students: 1. If taking online classes get as far ahead as you possibly can. 2. Don't take on too much. 3. Say "no" (I mean when someone asks you to do something and you really don't want to or you don't have time to do it, say no). That is something I have started doing and things are not so stressful. 4. Take time out for yourself and school work. 5. Get a planner and write down all assignments and due dates, especially for Internet classes. It is very easy to confuse the classes and due dates. 6. If you don't have kids, don't have them while you are in college.

#7

There are a few strategies that work for me. The first one is to print the Syllabus and read it carefully and highlight certain information, if needed. Always stay ahead of deadlines. When you have free time, work ahead. Staying current is only one day away from being behind. Make yourself notes of all the due dates of your assignments. Check it at least once a day. Read your e-mail at least twice a day. Always read the announcements completely. What I do is print that page once a week and keep a copy with any notes that I may have for that class.

#8

My advice to a new college student is to not miss class and don't sign up for a class with the intent to drop it if it is too hard. Pay attention and try to learn the material, and don't memorize to answer questions, but rather try to understand concepts to apply.

#9

The advice I would give to a freshman just starting off in college is to never give up. Always try harder and harder; we all get discouraged with school but always stay at it. I would recommend to not take off a year or a semester like some people say they do because normally, they will never go back. And always pick a set date or time of the week to study and get all of your homework done and out of the way. It takes a lot of self-discipline to make it through college but don't ever give up. That is the best advice I could give to anyone just starting off in school.

#10

From my experience as a college student, I have learned that planning is the best key to success. Whether you are fresh out of high school or a non-traditional student like myself, planning can be a very important factor. Reading the material is very crucial. Give yourself plenty of time to complete assignments so you will have plenty of time to ask questions and/or do research. That will also prevent you from getting stressed out trying to rush and get done before the assignment is due. Study for all exams! Nobody knows it all. Also, don't be afraid to ask questions. I was always told that there is no such thing as a dumb question.

#11

The top advice I would give a new student for college would be know what you want. I spent about two years taking classes I didn't need. I would have already been finished and have my degree, but I had no clue what I wanted to major in. I would also tell them to take a few online classes even if they are a little scared at first. I never wanted to take an online class because of

the fear I would not keep up without someone telling me what to do. I have several online classes now and I love them. One other thing would be don't give up, as I learned in my Accounting 101 class. Things can seem impossible but if you really try, you can do anything. I failed the class by three points my first try and on my second, I got a B! I can't tell you how proud of myself I am. I have learned over the years it don't take much for others to be proud of you but it takes a lot for you to be proud of yourself.

#12

You don't want to be all books and have no personality or people skills but at the same time, don't forget you're in school to do your best and receive an education. Don't treat college like you did High School, it is a different environment. Even if you didn't have to study much in High School, trust me, you'll have to study at least some in college. Remember the uneasiness you probably will feel at first will pass quickly. To stay focused remember not to look too far ahead; be aware of your goals but focus on your present priorities. Start a good communication line between yourself and your professors, they can help keep you on track. And remember, have fun! Once you finish college you will have the whole rest of your life to work, so enjoy your college experience!

#13

The most valuable piece of advice that I can offer to an incoming freshman is that no matter how many pointers I give, you will never succeed unless it is your goal (not someone else's i.e. Mom, Dad, Grandma, etc.). Just make sure you're ready. It takes some people just one year of working in the real world, it takes some ten. Just pick the best time and make sure it's your time. The second piece of advice that I have is to never wait until 10:00 the night before the big test to study! Give yourself about 15 uninterrupted minutes daily. Moreover, NEVER, NEVER wait until the morning of the test to study. If (and that's a big "if") you must cram, do it before you sleep. You retain much more if you give your brain some down time.

#14

I would have to tell the new students just starting college is make sure that you have time to do all of the work, and time to study. Most of all just enjoy the many exciting and new adventures of being a college student.

#15

As a new student or a returning student always remember it's important to do well. Don't overload yourself with classes to where you can't do well in each subject. It's not so much the quantity of classes but the quality of the work you do in the class. Take what you are comfortable with and study hard. Allow time each and every day for your subjects. Stay on top of things and don't get behind. It's not easy playing catch up.

#16

As someone who has gone 4 years of school and graduated with a degree and worked really hard to get good grades, I have found one flaw, I failed to network like I should have when I was in school. So my advice to an incoming college student, especially a person right out of high school, is to network, network, network! I was told that hundreds and hundreds of times at UK but now do I see why I was told to network. Even if a student has a 4.0 grade average and is in all the great clubs, an employer will pick someone they know over you. And when I say network I really just mean to get some field-related experience of if the student has the opportunity to listen to an employer or meet an employer and the student talks to the employer and the employer has a name to put with a face, the student has just opened a door for a possible job. I thought that by having great grades and getting a degree in a field that is always growing, I would be able to walk into an employer's office and leave with a great job; this is NOT the case! Every employer is looking for some sort of experience in the field. In a nutshell my advice is to network and get as much field-related experience as possible!

#17

My advice to beginning students that can be used in the class "Strategies for Academic Success" is to always work hard in all that you do for the classes one is taking so that the student will not look back upon the class and say I could have done better. My philosophy about school and class is that if you "start it, finish it". By this I mean use time wisely while in class and out of class. I would recommend working along in class on the assignments that will be due next class because if it is done then, it is still very fresh in your mind. I have found many things to help me be successful in college like to stay motivated, always work ahead, and to be positive even if everything is not going as planned. One major key area is homework and for entering freshman just coming in from high school or an older student that is finally starting college I recommend them to complete any and all homework. If all homework is turned in and completed, it will help the student through the class and it will have a big positive impact on your end of the semester grade. For students entering college straight from high school I would definitely recommend to take a full semester of classes, consisting of four 3 credit hour classes with about 2 basic classes and 2 electives if at all possible. This is an easier load to get used to rather than taking all basic core classes that end up most of the time to be more difficult. For an older student finally

entering college I recommend them to start off part-time consisting of 6 credit hours taking 1 basic core class and 1 elective pertaining to their major. This is some of the many things and ideas that can help to the building of a successful college career and I'm glad I could share it with you.

#18

I am a dislocated worker. The factory I worked at offered to pay for two years of college. I thought that I had no chance in going back to college. I had been out of High School for 15 years and a lot has changed since then. I knew that in today's society, I needed to better my education in order to get a good paying job. Also, I could find a job in something that I really enjoy doing, such as Business Administration-Office Systems. Which I am going for a two year degree in Business Administration. The first thing everyone needs to do is Think Positive. This is where I started off wrong. I was not thinking positively. However, after the end of the first and second semesters, my grades opened my eyes. I was doing very well in college. I could not believe that I was making good grades. You have to make time and effort in doing your homework. This is the most important thing in college. You cannot procrastinate on doing your homework. Try to work ahead, this way if you run into problems, you will have time to correct the problems. There are always people around to help you if you need help. Always ask questions if you do not understand. And I would like to say to everyone, "Never Let Anyone Tell You That You Cannot Make It."

#19

The keys to success I have discovered to college life include: 1. Staying with the community college scene as long as you can. I made the mistake of going to an out-of-state University and ended up dropping out. I waited 5 years to go back and will finally finish in the spring of 2009. Community college classes are more personal and easier because you have more access to the professors. 2. Work ahead. If a professor offers you the opportunity to work ahead, jump on it. Don't wait until the last minute because you never know if another class will throw something on you last minute. Working ahead is also helpful if you have a family or career. I have a four year old and you never know when something will come up—so don't wait until the last minute because if you are like me, family will always come first and then your GPA will suffer. 3. Don't be afraid to ask questions. I don't know how many times I have heard other students talking among themselves about what they don't understand but never ask the teacher. Odds are if you and your friends don't know, then the teacher needs to provide more information. In one class I was so nervous about the first exam that I asked the teacher what I needed to study and she told me. I was the only person in the class to get an A which meant I blew the curve for everyone else but after the exam grades were posted, the teacher asked me to stand up and tell the other students how I got my A. Needless to say, if everyone would have asked, they would

have done better on that first test that they failed. The other grades were so bad the teacher let everyone drop one test grade after that—for me I was able to skip the final! Ask—it will and can make a huge difference.

#20

For the beginning college students I would say study hard, read your homework, and to always ask questions if you don't understand something. Don't be scared to ask for help if you need it. The instructors cannot help you if you don't ask for help.

#21

My advice to a beginning college student would be to always stay a step ahead in class. Be prepared in every class by reading your chapter thoroughly. If you have any questions at all, be sure to ask the teacher before you get so lost you can't catch up and don't be embarrassed by asking. I have sat in Math classes before too afraid to ask a question only to find out from my neighbor that they also had the same question but were too afraid to ask too! Also, going the extra mile in your homework is a good idea too. For example, if a teacher asks you to answer questions 1-5 at the end of your chapter but there are 10 questions on the page, go ahead and try to answer the other 5 because sometimes those are questions that can pop up on exams.

#22

I am 44 years old, and I tried college right out of high school, but I didn't have my head set on straight. I was too busy dating, partying, and cutting class. This time around (and at my age I don't have a lot of parties to attend—LOL) so I am taking school more seriously. For the older students that are beginning I would just like to reassure you that it isn't as difficult as you might think. I have worked since I was 14 and became a displaced worker last year. When I started this I made up my mind that I would treat this as my new job and invest my time and effort just like I had to working for someone else. I feel it has paid off; I have been able to maintain a pretty fair GPA for the last 3 semesters. This is no disrespect to the younger students out of high school, but I think it was easier for me to comprehend this time. I hope that you do well and always remember the instructors are there to help you and I have found all of mine have put out a 110% but I had to be willing to ask them for help if I didn't understand it. As for the younger students, you have an advantage over us old folks; you have just graduated and the information that you are going to be building on is still fresh in your minds. Your knowledge in technology is more current than most of the older students, and it would be appreciated if you have someone in your class that could benefit from what you know, if you share or help them. I assure you that if you need help you can ask one of the "more advanced in age" students and they will be willing to help. To all students I think the most important thing to remember is that school is a job and you must treat it like one. Good luck to all of you and never feel defeated.