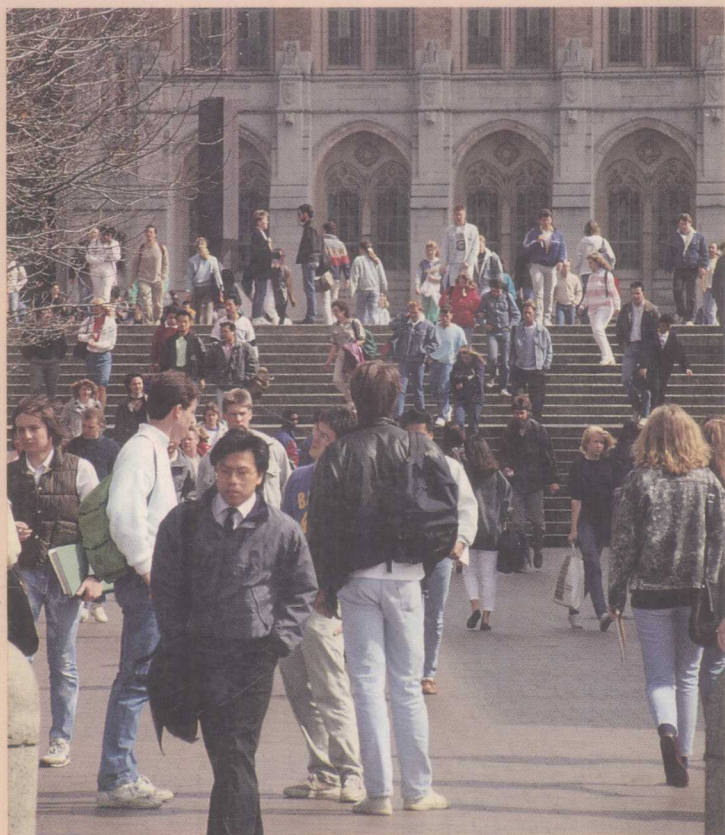


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GETTING *the most out of* COLLEGE

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF COLLEGE



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Allyn and Bacon
Boston London Toronto Sydney Tokyo Singapore



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PREFACE

Whether you are young or old, first-time student or returning, contemplating college or already enrolled, this book will help you maximize your learning and personal development. You will need to draw on your education time and again throughout your life, and you may make recurrent investments in post-secondary education.

Our aim is to help you meet those needs and profit from those investments. We do so by sharing concepts, exercises, and illustrative quotes from students. Many of our graduate and undergraduate students have told us how much they wish they had known about some of these things much earlier.

Most people who seriously pursue education after high school go to a nearby community college, a four-year college, or a university. More prospective college students than ever before choose their college because it has low tuition or offers financial aid, or it's near home. For many practical reasons, working adults have a limited choice of institutions. Therefore, the critical issue is not choosing the right college, but getting the most out of the available institution.

Although we oriented this book toward the college experience, its content is applicable to many different learning contexts: to graduate and undergraduate education; to getting the most out of corporate education and training; and to independent, self-designed learning projects. Anytime you move through a significant educational endeavor, this book can help you make the transition into new environments, new experiences, new activities. It helps you maximize learning that lasts. It helps you move on with your life in ways that build on your knowledge, competence, and personal growth. This is not a book to read now and then put on the shelf. It is a lifelong resource for planning and action.

One of our problems in writing this book is that there is such diversity in college students. They range in age from 18 to eighty, and they vary widely in ethnicity, national origin, and socioeconomic status. We are convinced that the ideas and accompanying exercises can be helpful to all students. However, it is difficult to find quotations and examples that speak to all of you, regardless of your individual backgrounds. So you may run into persons and passages that don't seem quite right for you. When that hap-

pens, just skip to the substantive content and exercises, or try to adapt the examples to your own situation.

On the average, people in the United States change *careers*, not just jobs, five times during their lives. The “one life, one job” career pattern of earlier days has passed. It used to be that you went to school, then to college, got a job, got married in your early twenties, bought a house, raised a family, and retired at 65. Now, people create different combinations. Many delay or interrupt their post-secondary education until they are clearer about occupational orientations and life style interests. They put off marriage and child rearing until their mid- or late thirties. Women frequently integrate marriage and child rearing with substantial career responsibilities. Men actively contribute to homemaking and child rearing, albeit less often than women, and they too combine these responsibilities with job choice and work patterns. Important career changes occur when people are in their forties and fifties. Many persons continue full- or part-time employment and seek further education when they’re well into their seventies.

We are living in an information age and a knowledge-driven society. Men and women move in and out of post-secondary education to acquire additional knowledge or competence, to keep current in professional specialties, or to become certified for new work. In the United States more money is spent on corporate education than in college and university education. Successful corporations are “learning organizations.” On the average, adults spend about 180 hours per year in formal and non-formal learning projects. For satisfying work and a good life, today and during the 21st century, you need to be a lifelong learner.

If you are a high school student contemplating college, this book can help you understand how to get started. It clarifies the range of purposes you can pursue; teaches you how to successfully tackle courses, classes, and other opportunities for learning; demonstrates the time, energy, and emotion required; and suggests the initiatives you can take.

If you are an adult, working, either single or married with a family, and have community responsibilities, this book helps you think more deeply about the trade-offs you face in investing in your own learning and development. It provides a basis for discussions with others about the conditions you will require and the help you will need to get the most from your experiences.

If you are a student already enrolled in a college or university, the concepts, exercises, and student comments can help you make better use of the resources available and get more out of the experiences and activities you undertake. If you are close to completing your college career, you can review how you functioned and think about how you can learn better in the future. You can clarify what you want to do next, and you can identify the knowledge, competence and personal strengths you take with you as you move on.

If you are a parent, close friend, or spouse or partner of a current student, this book gives you a realistic sense of what good learning requires. You can better understand the support and understanding you need to provide.

As a lifelong student, you will want to keep this book handy, not only as you go through college, but also as you pursue further education. During college you may want to refer to it each semester to review your achievements and make your plans. This review will maximize your learning and personal development as you experience the different stages of your college career. Given your particular purposes, talents, resources, and energy, you will get the most you can out of college.

Acknowledgments

We are indebted to many who helped make this book a reality. The route from initial idea to contract was short, thanks to James J. Murray, III, Director of the Division of Advancement, Membership and Publications, at the American Council on Education. Jim helped us refine our thoughts and make the connection with Allyn and Bacon.

Creating this book together has been challenging: while Nancy stayed at the University of Maryland, College Park, Art went off to France on a study leave from George Mason University. We really learned how to communicate with a fax machine! Coordinating writing and sharing drafts long distance, with different computers, required expert assistance from Betty Bowers, Nancy's secretary, and Pat O'Connell, Art's secretary. Betty shifted between the Macintosh and the IBM, and helped in numerous ways. Pat transcribed segments of recorded interviews, early chapter drafts, and critiqued the full manuscript.

We based the book on conceptual frameworks developed in our previous work on transitions, and our observations of the impacts of college on younger students and adult learners. Much of that work, of course, stands on the shoulders of other researchers, many of whom are close and valued colleagues. The interviews with students as they were moving in, moving through, and moving on give the book a vitality and freshness that enlivens our professional prose. We thank all the students who shared so candidly their observations about college experiences. Susan Bourne's interviewing skill and remarkable ability to establish instant rapport with diverse students elicited the rich and spontaneous comments that supplied many meaningful vignettes.

A number of colleagues reviewed the manuscript and gave us very helpful substantive and editorial reactions: Marcia Fallon, advisor to first generation college students at the University of Maryland; David Potter, Dean of Arts and Sciences at George Mason University; Linda Reisser, Dean of Student Services at Rockland Community College.

Nancy discussed the book with her two children, Karen and Mark, who had recently graduated from Hood College and George Washington University respectively. Art got helpful reactions from his daughter Susan, an experienced high school guidance counselor. Steve Schlossberg was, as always, 100% supportive, grocery shopping and cooking so that Nancy could be at the computer. Art's long-standing collaboration with Jo is well known. She carefully reviewed the full manuscript and supplied multitudinous substantive and editorial suggestions. Her gourmet meals laced with new French sauces and fine wines set the stage for hours of thoughtful exchange.

We also want to acknowledge each other. This has been a true collaboration. We have learned together. We have shared clear, and at times hard-hitting, reactions. We have come out of this joint effort closer friends and stronger colleagues.

Arthur W. Chickering
George Mason University

Nancy Schlossberg
University of Maryland

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This is not a typical book. You don't just read it or study it, and then put it on the shelf or pass it on. It's like learning in college. You have to actively work with it. Throughout the book numerous exercises help you think about yourself, your future plans, what you want to get out of college, how you learn best, what you can do to improve your learning. These exercises both illustrate the major concepts and help you apply them to your own particular condition as you move into and through your college career, and as you move on from college. So you will continually go back and forth between reading and then responding to questions based on the best thinking you can muster at the time.

The best way to use this book is to read it straight through first, without doing the exercises. This reading will show you our general orientation, the content we cover, and our basic recommendations. You'll get the flavor of our ideas, exercises, and student comments. Then go back to the particular chapters or sections most appropriate for you at this time. Re-read what the students have to say, and digest the conceptual material. Take the time to do each exercise as thoroughly as you can.

The exercises help you clarify your thoughts, make intentional decisions about areas for further development, and undertake activities to achieve your purposes more effectively. The items in the exercises provide concrete illustrations of the basic ideas. You may find it helpful to discuss the exercises with others. It's hard to know ourselves well; we all develop a capacity for self-deception and self-protection. But remember, these exercises aren't going to be graded. You don't have to share them with anyone else if you don't want to. They will serve you well only if your responses are as candid as possible. Think carefully about the implications of the concepts and exercises for your own behavior.

Some of the exercises you will answer right in the book. But many exercises will call for narrative responses that require space and paper beyond that provided in the book itself. If you use this book well, you may also want to come back to several exercises more than once as you pursue col-

lege or further education. Some of the exercises suggest you compare later responses with earlier ones. For these reasons, it would be most helpful if you use a looseleaf notebook in which you can insert the exercises you complete, and then add more copies as you come back to them in the future. Creating this kind of workbook to go along with the published volume will significantly improve the value of the book and the pay-offs from the time and energy you invest.

Part 1, *Moving In*, helps you make the transition into the learning situation. All transitions involve learning new roles, new routines, and new relationships. They involve new assumptions about yourself and your future. Moving into college is no different.

Chapter 1, *College Changes Your Life*, shares these ideas and helps you handle that transition.

Chapter 2, *Your Purposes: You Can Learn More than You Think*, helps clarify what you want to get out of college. You don't need to be crystal clear about a particular occupational orientation or educational interest. College is the best place to explore your interests, test future possibilities, pursue many different purposes. Often these turn out to be mutually reinforcing rather than mutually exclusive. You can go after specialized knowledge and skills for a particular job or volunteer activity. You can strengthen more general capacities such as critical thinking and conceptualizing ability, skills in oral and written communication, interpersonal competence. You can clarify your own motivation and values for your future life and work. You can become more self-confident. General capacities like these are critical for career success.

You can also pursue the dimensions of personal development important for a good life: managing emotions, moving through autonomy to achieve sound interdependence, and developing integrity. Becoming clearer about what you want to get out of college helps you plan, and invest time and energy more systematically, to achieve those ends.

The last chapter in Part 1, *Taking Stock*, helps you assess your situation, your supports, and your "self," and to take stock of the knowledge and competence you already have. You analyze your situation, your supports, your real self, and your strategies for coping with various challenges or problems as you meet them. You learn about assessing the knowledge and competence you already have from prior work and life experiences.

Part 2, *Moving Through*, shares key concepts and orientations for achieving learning that lasts.

Chapter 4, *Deciding On a Major*, provides perspectives to help you decide where to put your primary emphasis. Building on what you've learned in Chapters 2 and 3, you examine career and life style priorities in relation to the purposes you identified. Chapter 4 helps you consider how

to relate a “liberal education” in the arts, humanities, social and natural sciences, to more specific professional preparation.

Chapters 5 and 6, *Maximizing Learning from Courses and Classes* and *Maximizing Learning beyond Courses and Classes*, use David Kolb’s experiential learning theory. This conceptual framework shows you how to take charge of your own learning in ways that increase the working knowledge and competence available to you in the future. These chapters help you integrate academic studies with other responsibilities and activities on campus, at home, at work, and in the community, and link academic theories with real-life experiences for more substantial learning.

Chapter 7, *Developing Mature Relationships*, helps you handle close friendships and intimate relations. It also helps you connect with, and learn from, students and others whose backgrounds differ from your own.

Chapter 8, *Time Management, Learning, and Test Taking*, offers nuts-and-bolts advice about how to balance all your various opportunities for learning. It helps you achieve learning that endures, and teaches you how to succeed on tests.

Chapter 9, *Taking Control and Keeping It*, tells you how to profit from challenges by increasing your options and taking control. It helps you appraise challenges and increase your coping strategies.

The last chapter in Part 2, *Seven Action Principles for Doing Your Best*, helps you put it all together. It shares seven basic ways to function that apply across the full range of your college experience: (a) building relationships with faculty; (b) working collaboratively with other students; (c) learning actively; (d) getting prompt feedback; (e) emphasizing time on task; (f) setting high expectations; and (g) respecting diverse talents and ways of learning. Brief inventories for each of these principles help you identify specific ways to get the most from all the varied opportunities and resources available to you.

Part 3, *Moving On*, helps you make a smooth, solid transition to the next part of your life. You will be creating your own special mix of work, friends, and relationships; avocational and recreational interests; contributions to your community; and further learning.

Chapter 11, *Where Are You Going from Here?* helps you clarify your life, career, social, and educational plans and aspirations. It discusses gender differences in integrating career, marriage, and family responsibilities.

Chapter 12, *Taking It with You*, suggests the challenges and tasks that lie ahead. You identify where you are in a “life span” perspective, and the “developmental tasks” you have already achieved, those which are underway, and those which you will likely face in the near future. An exercise called “Personal and Professional Development in a Life Span Perspective” helps you define the kinds of learning and personal development you want to undertake in light of the knowledge, competence, and personal characteristics you have developed through your college experiences.

A LIVING EXAMPLE

This book is based on more than fifty years of research on conditions that influence student learning in college. We also wanted first-hand insights and experiences from current students. Therefore, we interviewed sixty freshmen, juniors, and seniors different in age, ethnicity, and national origin. These students shared the rich experiences and thoughtful reactions that we use throughout the book. They often make important points more clearly and effectively than we can. Their comments reveal the real-life complexities behind our abstractions. All agreed to let us quote them directly. We use their exact words, but we substitute fictitious names to protect their privacy. Often their language is eloquent and to the point. Sometimes it's ungrammatical and rambling. But we think you will learn from those interviews just as much as from our professional observations.

Among all the students we interviewed, one stands out. She is an excellent example of how to get the most out of college. She acts in ways highly consistent with the seven principles we discuss in Chapter 10. She was unusually thoughtful and energetic in deciding on her major. She focuses on learning, not just on getting good grades. She regularly pursues learning beyond her courses and classes.

We share some of her comments with you. This is not to say, "Go and do likewise," but to give a flesh-and-blood example as you begin this book. We'll call her Victoria.

"Victoria, if you looked at last week or the week before can you give me a picture of your typical schedule?"

"The way my schedule works out I take two classes each day. Mondays I have Physical Chem and Calculus. Then Tuesdays is Organic and English. I do a lot of outside activities, extracurricular activities, like Chemistry Club and the Tutoring Center. I also teach aerobics and ballet. So I'm kind of busy. But generally I go to class and I usually eat after that. Then I begin to study and read ahead. Usually I'm about two or three chapters ahead of the class."

"Is that something you've always done?"

"No. It's something I had to learn to do. I think one reason I get good grades on my quizzes and tests is that I'm ahead of the class. After studying, I relax for a while to work on the Chemistry Club or socialize. Then maybe I'll go back at night and read a little bit and end my day with some studying."

"That's on Monday?"

"Monday I have about three hours I spend on teaching. So I also reserve time in case I need to go to the tutor or to the teacher to ask questions. I find my planner very helpful. That is what I call my life because it has all the hours for each day. I block out all my times and say, 'Here's when I have this tutor and here's when I can study.' I've gotten a feel for

how long it takes me to read something and how long it takes me to understand something.”

“Did you use the planner in your freshman and sophomore years?”

“No, I didn’t know how to use it then. I was always organized. I would always write down goals and stuff I wanted to do. But I wouldn’t have blocked out times in the day. I would lose track of time because I didn’t do that. It would just slip away. It’s like, ‘Oh. Where did all my time for studying go?’ When you block it out you can see, ‘Here’s five hours I can study.’”

“When did it click in for you?”

“Last year. It was definitely last year ’cause I started taping class sessions. I was working full-time, going to school, and doing other things. I was taking hard classes. I really had no other choice but to manage my time. If I didn’t I would’ve probably failed at everything I was doing.”

“How many credit hours did you carry last year?”

“Twelve. Then I dropped down to 11.”

“You were saying that Mondays through Fridays are basically the same. How would you rate your percentages between study time and social time?”

“I give myself about two days, 48 hours a week, just to do nothing, be social, get away from school. Percentage-wise — I figured this out — I spend probably 80% of my time school-oriented or for things I have to do. But that includes Chemistry Club, my teaching, and all that kind of fun stuff.”

“How about Saturdays and Sundays?”

“Generally speaking, Friday night I play around. I take a jazz class on Saturday morning for fun. Then I try and study, but usually I’ll end up playing that day too. On Sunday I tutor four people in my Chemistry class for three or four hours. I tell them everything I know and it helps them. I don’t charge them. Basically I don’t need to do anything more in terms of studying, because if you can explain something to somebody you understand it. I organized a Chemistry Tutoring Center in Organics.”

Notice how Victoria balances class time and studying with work responsibilities and “... 48 hours a week just to do nothing” and be social. She builds in activities that help her learn and have fun at the same time, like the Saturday jazz class and the Chemistry Club. She does volunteer tutoring to help classmates and to learn better herself. She uses a daily planner to keep herself organized according to her priorities.

Here’s how she approaches studying:

“Is the type of studying you’re doing different from before, now that you’re a junior?”

“Over the years my studying has changed. I used to rely mainly on getting all my information in class. In high school you could do that. In your beginning courses in college, if the teacher really explains things and you

take good notes, you can do well. But I've found as I've gone into upper-level classes that I've had to read the book and go for extra help sometimes. I go ask the teacher to explain some things because the lectures are abstract and not real detailed. They expect you to already know the information. So sometimes you have to get a tutor or somebody to help you out."

"How would you describe the standards you set for yourself, and how do you achieve them?"

"I have very high standards. I don't feel good when I slack off or I'm not responsible. I think that's something you learn in college too, responsibility. I tend to take a lot on my plate at one time. It's hard 'cause I want to do so much. I go about achieving them by prioritizing, which I learn to do more and more. It's a trick to do that, because sometimes you really want to go out to dinner instead of studying. But at this stage in the game, school comes first. That comes over all my other activities, including my job. That's how I achieve what I want to achieve."

"Is it easier to prioritize this year than last?"

"Well, last year was the first year I ever worked and went to school. Before that it was always just school. I never had to accept responsibility for anything. My parents were supporting me. I really learned to prioritize when I took control of my own life; when I had to take responsibility, when the creditors would get after me if I didn't pay my car insurance or something. I learned that school's important, but I also learned to set up time so that I can make money to live off."

"Tell me about yourself and other students in relation to your academic work."

"Last year it really started in Calculus. It was great because we would study together. We would do our homework independently and then meet and discuss it. Then we'd come out after the tests and compare."

"How about joint projects and collaborative learning?"

"Yeah. I learned how important it is to work in groups. It's great because everybody gets to understand what's going on."

"When you use a study group, it's in courses you need help to manage more than the easier ones?"

"I use them when the teacher doesn't tell me everything I need to know. Sure, you can work for a grade, but the idea is to really learn something. When my fiancé went to college he was a psychology major. He worked full-time. His grades weren't wonderful. He got Cs and Ds. People kept telling him he wouldn't amount to anything. But when he came out of college he had really learned something. He's very successful now. He makes a really good living and he's very happy in what he does. So I think, although grades are important, the most important thing is to learn. You have to understand that you're here to learn."

"What advice would you give other students about getting the most out of their academic program?"

"I would say don't do a program for anybody but yourself. If you have ownership of your program, you work harder for it and you don't mind doing things. I love learning and I love going to school. I think I get upset or I lose that when somebody demands that I do it for them. So do it for yourself and not for anybody else. Have an idea where you are going with your classes. Don't just take classes 'cause you feel like taking them. Take them with some sort of purpose.

"I'd also say, 'Learn by your mistakes.' I make them all the time. But I think admitting them and learning from them is the best thing you can do. I don't think any leader or person who has succeeded has not made a mistake. I learned that when I cover them up, I'm only hurting myself. When I don't cover them up it makes me a better person."

Victoria brings the same sense of self-direction and assertiveness to extracurricular activities as she does to her academic studies. There's lots of energy and enthusiasm. She's adventurous and open to new experiences, eager to get involved and learn from them. She goes off campus for some of her most important experiences.

Consider how she approaches extracurricular activities:

"What advice would you offer to help other students get the most out of extracurricular activities?"

"I could write a book. I've gotten involved a lot with school and outside things. You can't let life be all school. You need to keep a foot in regular life. I was very active in student government. I did some internships with senators and stuff in Washington and learned a lot of exciting things. It's good to do extracurricular things in school because it makes you feel school spirit and school loyalty. But I also think it's healthy to do things out of school — a job, volunteer work, dance class, or whatever — because it really provides a good balance."

"You seem energized by all your activities."

"Yeah. It started in my sophomore year. I get really excited about something when I engineer it. I like to create things. I started a club called 'The Political Learners Council' and that gave me a boost."

"Do you remember when the light bulb went on? What brought the change?"

"I don't know. A lot of things. Freshman year I just was there, trying to fit in, trying not to mess up anything, worried about school. I had good grades my freshman year. But sophomore year I just kinda took the attitude, 'I don't want to just fit in.' That was what changed. It wasn't right for me just to fit in. It was right for me to do things how I wanted to do them. And I wasn't hurting anybody. So that's why I did all I did.

With all her energy, curiosity and self-determination, it took Victoria a while to decide on a major. Her initial choice was wiped out for reasons beyond her control. But she did not let that set-back deter her from exploring other options and maintaining momentum toward a meaningful choice.

Here's how she decided on her major:

"Anything else about managing your program?"

"Sometimes you have to do like spring cleaning. You rearrange your goals and see what you want. I changed my major three times. So I had to do a little cleaning and see what it is I wanted to do."

"You changed your major three times?"

"Do you want the whole story? It's pretty interesting. I came in as a dance major. I always wanted to be a dancer. It was ironic, because I hurt myself and I could no longer keep up with the dance classes. I had to not dance for about two years. So it was choose another major or quit college.

"My freshman year, I was taking biology and a senior course called physiology of exercise. I was interested in that and really studied. It was, like, 'WOW! I have a brain, too!' I didn't realize I had a brain until I started taking these classes. So I declared myself a physical education, physiology of exercise, major. I was planning to go into physical therapy or something of that nature. Then during the summer I thought about it. I thought about biology and I thought about English and I thought about dance, and all these different majors.

"My mom's a nurse and I decided I wanted to be a doctor. But I always had this fear of chemistry. So I said, 'OK, if I can just get through Chemistry I know I can get into med school.' I took chemistry and had this wonderful teacher who just completely opened up my eyes and made me excited. I really started to enjoy chemistry. I was like, 'Hmmm, this seems like a good major.' So it clicked for me.

"I don't want to work in chemistry. I don't love it that much. But it seemed like the best way to work toward med school. And if I don't get into med school when I graduate, I'll probably get into a Masters program in Chemistry, which I've left open as an option."

"Tell me a bit about the process of deciding on a major."

"Well, you see, dance was fun and exciting for me and I loved it. I got into college, quite frankly, on a dance scholarship. But when I started tapping into my intellect it was like a completely new thing for me. When I started taking classes and realizing I could learn and that I had intelligence, I really started to get excited about education."

"What type of information did you seek when deciding on med school?"

"I contacted some med schools. I identified their requirements. I talked with a lot of people. I talked with professionals and with my parents. I would say that if you want to go into a particular field you need to find out what the field is about. So I talked to people in the field."

"You just called individual people?"

"I just cold-canvassed. Just called med schools and said, 'Do you have an advisor I can talk to?'"

"And are people really open to that?"

"Oh yeah. I had one person say, 'Why are you calling now?' but it was like, hey, I don't care, I'm making a decision here."

"What advice would you give a student on deciding on a major?"

"The best advice I could give is not to be pushed into something for the wrong reasons. I'm kind of guilty of this 'cause I have a little sister and I tend to push her toward college. I want her to get an education, but if she doesn't she has to do what's right for her. I guess if I were to talk to her I would say, 'Do what interests you. If you don't know what major you want try everything.'"

"Take a variety of courses the first year?"

"Take everything that may even remotely interest you. Especially take courses that you think are gonna be difficult or gonna be a challenge, something that didn't come easy in high school. Because you learn. The main thing is to do it for yourself, 'cause you can ensure success if you do it for yourself."

Consistent with her advice to do it for yourself and not for somebody else, Victoria invested lots of time and energy exploring alternatives, getting information, testing possibilities and her own ability, in deciding on a major. All that work paid off, so she clearly owns her priorities. She is energized and motivated. There are many things she wants to learn. She is using resources and opportunities for learning in ways that provide lots of enjoyment and satisfaction as well as solid learning and personal growth.

There is more to our interview with Victoria, but this gives you a sense of how she tackled college. She took charge and exercised initiative. Learning that lasts was more important to her than just getting good grades. She reached out for new experiences, and she was open to what she could learn from them. She set high standards for herself. She developed the ability to set priorities and manage her time accordingly. She balanced academic work with other activities that were fun and contributed to her learning. By collaborating with other students as well as offering tutoring, she strengthened her own learning. She coped with the injury that knocked her out of her main interest and initial major by actively exploring other alternatives. To confirm her interest, she found out what she needed to

work toward medical school. She learned that she had a good mind, and she enjoyed using it. She learned that she didn't have to "just fit in." Most important, she learned that owning her program, and organizing her time, energy, and enthusiasm for her agenda and not someone else's, was the key to her success.

You certainly are not Victoria. Your background, purposes, priorities, interests, future plans, and aspirations are different, but if you can develop ownership and enthusiasm for your program and invest the same energy as Victoria did, you too will achieve significant learning and personal development.

This book cannot define a program for you. It cannot supply the priorities and energy you will need to pursue it successfully. It *can* help you think all those things through. It *can* help you make an effective transition into college, clarifying your purposes and your strengths and weaknesses. It *can* help you make sound decisions concerning your major, and maximize your learning from courses and other activities. It *can* help you develop more mature relationships and move on to your post-college career knowing how to continue lifelong learning and further personal development. So use it actively and keep it handy.