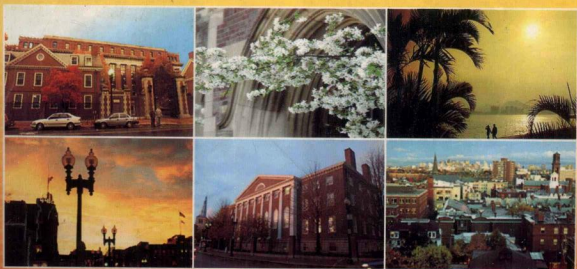


自主性英语阅读 A

Read • Think • Learn

主编 范革新



知识出版社

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Unit One College Education

Text 1 How to Get the Most out of College Education?

Pre-reading questions

1. International students accustomed to their own educational system must adapt to the new educational environment. What are the classroom norms in China? And what are the classroom norms in US? *中国: 2. 小组合作, 老师讲, 学生听*
2. Classroom participation is rather diverse in US, such as solving problems in groups, designing projects, making presentations, and examining case studies. What cultural value does it imply?
3. How do you interpret the relationship between the professor and the students?

You have worked hard to get to college. You no doubt have high hopes for enjoying it and getting an education which will influence and benefit your professional life. Statistics do indicate that college graduates have greater earning power and hold higher level executive jobs throughout life. And studies also indicate that men and women with college degrees enjoy more job satisfaction and healthier family lives.)

But these advantages, desirable as they may be, can distract from the most important benefits of a college education. The real measure of a successful college career will not be the grades you earn, the degree you win, the job you get, but rather the intangible benefits of living and learning in an intellectual environment. *无形的, 无形的, 无形的*

As a freshman you will be responsible for learning on your own and for getting the most out of classes, teachers, textbooks, research, study, libraries, and extracurricular activities. Your intellectual curiosity will be heightened and, hopefully, you will experience the satisfaction that comes with knowledge and with accomplishment. You will be meeting, mixing and learning with people whose opinions and attitudes differ from your own. You will be forced to make choices and to discipline yourself as never before in order to take full advantage of the wonderful opportunities that awaits you. *等待, 等待, 等待*

Learning to be interested in learning

Your attitude toward learning is a key factor in determining whether you get the most out of college. Most professors agree that students who have the motivation, or desire, to learn will succeed. If you have the interest in acquiring knowledge, you will enjoy learning and will be willing, if not eager, to study.

Acquaint yourself early with the rich resources of the college library. Ask the librarian to show you how to use the card catalog, the central resource for finding books you will need to research class assignments. Get to know the reference room with its store of encyclopedias, *百科全书, 百科全书, 百科全书*

almanacs, indexes, government publications and, sometimes, old and rare books. Many libraries today also offer a selection of audio-visual periodicals room and see what variety of magazines, newspapers, and professional journals are available for your study and reading pleasure.

Extracurricular activities will provide you with a wide choice of non-academic opportunities.

The campus newspaper glee club, team sports, outing club or student government are a few of the many things that might appeal to you. Each offers a chance to develop an interest, a talent and leadership qualities. But beware of signing up too soon in freshman year for non-academic activities that might eat into your more important study or job responsibilities.

College life is a total environment—intellectual, social and physical. All aspects are interrelated and can contribute one to another. It is important to know how to use your time so you can enjoy a variety of activities each day.

Set goals for yourself. Every term you'll have to make choices about what classes to take, how hard you're going to study, what extracurricular activities you'll participate in, and what friends to see. If you establish priorities for all of these, you will make better use of your energies and abilities.

Studying and learning is hard work— but so is backpacking, mountain climbing or playing varsity football. The secret to academic achievement is going to rest in your determination to succeed and in your willingness to study consistently.

Every student needs a quiet place to study and read, from the first week of college to the last. Whether it is the library or your own room, you will learn better if you are away from distractions, interruptions and noise. (Many learning specialists even recommend that a student's desk face a blank wall.)

Professors want students to learn and to get good grades. Most college instructors welcome an opportunity to meet with their students, to answer questions and to exchange ideas. Introduce yourself and get to know your teachers. They will respect your interest and will realize you are serious about learning.

Grades in college are not the only mark of success. Of course, they are important to earning the degree. But, in the long run, it will be your ability to learn, and your interest in continuing to learn, that will benefit you most throughout life.

Don't get discouraged or anxious when you find some work difficult. College isn't meant to be easy. If it is, you've chosen courses below your capabilities. It is normal that some courses demand more perseverance and hard work than others.

If, however, you are feeling continual pressure or anxiety about college, there are many resources available to help you. Seek advice from the Dean of Students, the college counseling center, the dorm resident, or your instructors. They are all there to assist you. Don't be too proud or too shy to ask for help.

Appraise your own weakness and strengths. Set out to profit from your abilities and to

improve your weak points. You are probably going to be in college for two or four years, and it might be the only time in your life when you can concentrate most of your energies on yourself. Learning how to channel these energies productively will help you get the most out of every experience.

Are you willing to work?

Signing up for classes is only one of the unfamiliar tasks required of you soon after arrival at college. Finding your way around the campus, meeting faculty and classmates, arranging your room if you're away from home, attending orientation sessions, buying textbooks and supplies, or opening a bank account, are all chores you'll have to accomplish within the first few days. It's important to undertake each task in order of priority.

Selecting and registering for the right courses should take priority over other activities. Since you're in college to get an education above all, it's important that you initially devote your energies to your class schedule.

Selecting Classes

Here are some helpful hints to consider;

Study the catalog carefully. Know what courses are offered. How many are required and how many hours will they take? What electives are available and which ones interest you most?

Ask other students the names of the teaching instructors they thought were the best. Look up these professors' names in the catalog and see if you can sign up for one of their courses.

Take a light load the first term, fourteen or fifteen hours only. This will give you time to adjust to college-level work.

Evaluate your academic strengths and weaknesses. Don't sign up for more than one course that you know will be especially difficult for you.

Select courses in a variety of Subjects. This will give you basic general knowledge and can help you decide later what area to major in.

Choose classes that take place during your best hours. Some students are "morning people," others are more alert in the afternoon. If you find it hard to get going before nine, don't sign up for an 8 a.m. courses.

Evaluate the wisdom of scheduling classes back-to-back. If you have one rightafter another there will be no time for review, preparation, or a break in between.

Register early after you have made a careful course selection. Some classes have limited enrollments. Be ready with second choices in case a class is full.

Attending Classes

More independent study is required of college students than high school students. On average, one hour of class requires two or three hours of study. Before classes begin here are some things to consider:

Get to the first class in plenty of time. Instructors usually start off their courses with an overview of the term's work. They will probably also hand out a "syllabus" or course outline and give directives about required and recommended textbooks. *(S. GROSS)*

Classes are apt to be large, so sit in the front where you will have fewer distractions and be able to hear and be heard more easily.

Be punctual for every class. Instructors often stress the most important things first. They also notice which students arrive late and might interpret this as lack of interest.

Listen carefully to everything your instructors say. What they emphasize and the questions they ask will give you an indication of what they consider important. Some instructors may lecture continuously. It is easy to start daydreaming. Keep alert and take good notes. You can be sure most instructors notice which students are paying attention.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Instructors respect students who show an interest. Nearly all teachers set aside two or three hours a week for consultation. When there is not enough time in class to ask questions make an appointment.

If you find a course too difficult after two or three classes think about switching. Discuss it with your instructor, dean or adviser. It's best to be realistic and make the change early, so one course doesn't demand too much of your time or energy. You can then substitute a more appropriate course.

Relying on textbooks

Students cannot expect to cover coursework without having these basic learning tools accessible for daily study. By reading them carefully, underlining the important ideas and facts, as well as making your own notes in the margins, textbooks can become your reliable study companions.

Professors usually give clear-cut instructions about which assigned books are required, recommended or optional. If you have any questions, be sure to ask the instructor so you can buy the books you need to pass the course.

Buy your textbooks early so you have them for the first assignment. When you go to purchase your books you may find the "bookrush" at the college store similar to the line for the new science fiction movie. Don't let this deter you. A few weeks later there may be no copies left when the first exam is fast approaching!

Do you use your time wisely?

In college your ability to manage your time well will greatly influence the grades you will earn. Learning how to budget your time carefully will be as important as budgeting your cash. Just as you know how much money you have to spend each year, you'll have to start off each term with a work schedule that makes productive use of all your available time.

Each weekday should include a balanced combination of activities: class, study, exercise, sleep, nutritious meals, personal chores and perhaps, a job. Weekends, too, should be scheduled, with some study time built in.

It's easy to lose an hour at the snack bar, to postpone signing up for class, to be late buying the required books, to skip study before and after classes, and ultimately, not to be prepared for exams.

Experience shows that intelligent use of time in college requires a personal work schedule. A weekly time chart, divided into half-hour segments, can serve as a framework for daily activities. It can also be indispensable in helping you plan the whole term. Here are some guidelines for the productive use of each week's 168 hours.

Weekly schedule

Activity	Hours
Classes:	15
Study:	38 (average 2 1/2 for each class)
Eating:	14
Exercise:	7 (one hour each day to keep fit)
Sleep:	53 (most people require an average 7- 8 hours)
Wasted time:	7 (let's hope no more than 1 hour daily)
Personal chores:	10 (this should allow time for laundry, dressing, Shopping and cleaning)
Free time:	10 (for researching, writing term papers, studying difficult subjects, extracurricular activities or a special weekend)
Social time:	14 (for friends, a good movie, a bestseller or a little disco)
TOTAL:	168 hours

Time should be included for study before and after each class— even if it is only ten minutes. This will allow for the preparation and review needed for every class period. Before the class starts you'll want to look over your textbook underlinings and the notes you have made on the assigned chapters. After class you will want to review your notes immediately so that you can clarify them if necessary. "Forgetting" takes place most rapidly right after something is learned, so this review helps you remember the material.

At least two hours of study should be budgeted for each class hour. It is advisable to schedule part of this time shortly before the class begins. In this way you'll remember what you have been studying and will be prepared for class.

Study periods should normally be one hour long, followed by a ten minute break. Your

ability to concentrate will greatly affect your ability to learn. Experts find that most people need a change of pace after an hour's concentration.

Wasted minutes add up quickly to wasted hours. Be stingy with your time and use it in productive portions. A half-hour of exercise is far better than three, ten-minute interruptions or idle daydreams. Notice how short chats, snacks or study interruptions eat into your day if you are not careful.

Students with paid jobs often use time better than those who don't work. They know the value of work and how much they earn each hour. But for those who do hold down jobs, it is recommended that they work only 14 to 20 hours a week. Otherwise they will not have enough hours and energy left to schedule sufficient study time for each class.

Neatness and organization can also help you save time. If you get in the habit of putting your textbooks on the same shelf, your notes in one place, and keeping your desk tidy, you won't waste time looking for things. Have everything in one place so when you sit down to study you have pens, fresh paper, and everything else you need at hand.

Force yourself to do the hardest work first. You'll be fresher and won't find fatigue an excuse for not undertaking the difficult subjects. You'll also be proud of yourself. When your class schedule is final, make a trial schedule for each day with all the half-hours indicated from 7:30 a.m. to midnight. For the first two weeks note on it each night how you did spend your time. By the third week of classes you can **make a final schedule that realistically reflects your own needs and work habits.** Keep a copy of this work schedule on the top of your desk and another on the inside cover of your notebook.

Do you know how to take good class notes?

An important factor in getting good grades will be your ability to take clear, well-organized class notes. Most freshmen find the typical college lectures a totally new experience. In the smaller give-and-take style of high school, class notes were not critical. Now you will have to get into the swing of note-taking. It will take practice, like other good study habits.

Listening carefully to the instructor's lecture and writing down the important points is the key to a successful note-taking. The process of listening and writing at the same time will also help you understand. A few basic techniques can help.

The purpose of class notes is to record the instructor's lesson in a manner that will allow you to review and understand the material afterwards. Your objective, therefore, is to outline the main and supporting ideas and facts so that they are clear and understandable.

Write rapidly in your own form of shorthand. Don't try to take down everything—keep to the main points. Develop your own style of abbreviating and condensing the important data. Some people leave out vowels, for instance, or use only the first syllable, and omit articles and obvious verbs. Common abbreviations and symbols found in most dictionaries can often be of great help.

Instructors' teaching methods will differ. You'll have to be alert to each one's style and organization. Often they start each class with an overview or outline and use it as a framework for their lecture. This, of course, is another reason for being punctual.

Indenting and spacing will help make your notes more readable. Start a new line out to the left for an important heading. Indent subheads under this and so on.

Start a new page for each class, with the date and topic heading the page. When a new major topic or division is introduced, begin another new page so that you will have enough room to record the appropriate material under it.

A lined 8 1/2 x 11 note-book is recommended. On the front cover you can paste your work schedule, as well as your name, address and phone number in case you ever misplace it. You can keep all your class notes, and the instructor's handouts, in this one book by tabbing sections for each course. You can also add or delete notes or fresh paper as you need to. Most students, by the way, find that notes made in pen are much more legible and durable than those in pencil.

It is best to write on the right-hand pages only. You can then make your own study, review or textbook notes on the left-hand pages.

Be alert to the instructor's tone, emphasis or questions. These may be clues to things that will appear on an exam. For example, if Professor Smith says, "Five important reasons for the treaty were..." or "Remember now..." you can be sure those are things to be recorded.

Class lectures and textbook assignments do not always parallel each other. Your class notes will reflect the instructor's approach to the topic, but you might find it helpful to make additional notes from your textbook on the left-hand page across from your class notes.

Design your note-taking system so that you have sufficient room to record the instructor's material, your reading notes AND your review notes on one page or two opposite pages.

Remember, review your class notes as soon as possible after the session has ended. In this way you'll be able to correct, clarify or fill-in where necessary. This review time will also be critical in helping you remember the class material when it is fresh in your mind.

One style of note-taking, developed at Cornell University, has been very helpful to students. On every right-hand page, draw a vertical line from top to bottom, 2 1/2 inches in from the left side. In class use the large 6 inch column on the right for recording the lecture material. After class and during study times, use the smaller left-hand column for making your own review notes. By marking down the key word, idea or fact, it can help you remember what you are studying and help you review for exams. Some students find it helpful to use a colored marker or pen during review to underline the important words or phrases.

Completing textbook or reading assignments before each class will help minimize note-taking in class. You will know whether the material under discussion is in the text or not.

You will already have underlined the important ideas in the book, so you won't have to duplicate the same facts write "refer to textbook chapter."

College should be an exhilarating educational and personal experience. It can dramatically affect and benefit your attitude, your abilities or failure in getting the most out of college will be up to you.

Good luck!

Post-Reading Memo

I. The great ideas in the text

1. In China, students in most universities may still humbly obey their teachers' commands and remain relatively silent during a classroom period. In US, students talk, drink, and even eat during lectures and sometimes criticize their teachers' methods or contradict their statements.
2. Emphasis on team spirit, independence, and innovation is encouraged and since some courses are "applied" rather than theoretical, the teaching stresses on doing and involvement.
3. In class, the professor, in a position of authority, establishes an egalitarian relationship with students. If students contradict the professor's points of view, they should be prepared to substantiate their perspective. However, out of class, he or she may have coffee with them but the next day give them a failing grade if they do not do well in an exam.

II. The challenging sentences

1. But beware of signing up too soon in freshman year for non-academic activities that might eat into your more important study or job responsibilities.
2. Learning how to budget your time carefully will be as important as budgeting your cash.
3. Now you will have to get into the swing of note-taking.

III. The useful words and phrases

intangible 无形的

Encyclopedias 百科全书

almanac 年鉴

glee 高兴

varsity 大学代表队(的)

channel 引导

deter 延缓,耽搁

indispensable 不可缺少的

^ɒ
tab 称呼,命名,选定

legible 易读的,字迹清晰的

be stingy with 小气,吝啬

Text 2 A Guide for the Non-Traditional and the ESL Student

Pre-reading questions

1. Relationship among students in the American classroom can be seen as a mirror of American society. How do you interpret this mirror?
2. During the first two years of undergraduate education, the general courses might not be part of one's major. Do you think the general courses are useful to them? Why?
3. The manner in which education is provided in any country reflects the basic cultural and social beliefs of the country. What American values does the American university system reflect?

Foreword

Broadly speaking, a non-traditional student is someone who has decided to return to college at a later age—later, that is, than 18 to 22 years old, which until recently was thought the “normal” age for a college student.

Remember, however, that you and other returning students also have a real advantage over your younger peers: you have come to realize that education is a lifelong process, not a formality that grinds to a halt at age 22. And today, perhaps more than ever, you have the opportunity to pursue a college education at any time in your life. More and more, the university (and society at large) recognizes the special needs of the nontraditional student. Educators have responded by making college a more flexible process. You can approach it at your own pace. This flexibility also extends to paying for college. A college education is an expensive proposition, of course. But, thanks to various financial aid outlets, it is becoming more accessible to would-be students of every financial (and social) status.

This chapter is designed to tell you more about what it means to be a non-traditional student. We'll discuss the advantages and disadvantages presented by your special status, and how to capitalize on them and overcome them respectively.

Non-traditional students have a variety of backgrounds and goals. Some went to work for a few years after high school and are now in their early 20s. Some have waited longer to complete their advanced education — ^{there} hence the large number of non-traditional students in their early 30s. Some returning students over 35 are retirees (not necessarily by choice) from business, homemaking, government, or military service. In all age brackets, two trends prevail: many returning students are married and /or have children, and many are women seeking to resume their formal education.

Regardless of age, sex, marital status or parenthood, all returning students must prepare to take on new challenges and change their lifestyle. Some have decided to return to an earlier abandoned occupation, or to leave one occupation for another. Some are motivated to

change careers by the promise of a higher income. Some are preparing to enter the mainstream of the work world for the first time. Finally, some are returning to college with no particular goal in mind beyond bettering themselves.

Which of the above motives is closest to your own? Whatever your reasons are for resuming your formal education, they're good reasons—because they open a promising avenue for realizing your full potential.

ADVANTAGES OF RETUNING STUDENTS

Non-traditional students are growing in number and importance. In other words, you're not alone. Furthermore, countless others like you have already completed their studies successfully and furthered their careers as they had intended. Indeed, the success rate among returning students is markedly high. One reason is that returning students—like you—possess certain assets that come only with age and experience.

1) Unlike many younger college students, you're not seeking an education because you "have to"—because your family and peers expect it. Older students tend to have stronger motivations. Your special eagerness to learn is, in itself, a valuable asset. It means you are willing to search for answers, to ask for assistance, to reach out.

2) The experiences of adult life, besides teaching you the value of an education, give you specific advantages in the classroom. Generally speaking, well-rounded individuals make the best college students, and being older, you are likely to have had more exposure to life. You have met more people and read more newspapers, magazines, letters and books than younger students. These life experiences are of immense value.

3) Older students, closer in age to their professors, tend to be less awed by them than younger students. It's important to view instructors objectively.

4) College, especially at advanced levels, involves much more than sitting in a classroom. In research and fieldwork, you'll be meeting many kinds of people. The ability of older students to interact more comfortably with others—businesspeople, for example, and office workers—is another asset.

5) The more experience one has outside the classroom, the more one is able to handle a variety of responsibilities all at once. College can be quite a juggling act for returning students, and this skill will prove handy when it becomes necessary to organize priorities, arrange study schedules, and use time efficiently.

CAPITALIZE ON YOUR ASSETS

Given this pool of potential assets, it might appear that returning students have an automatic edge on younger students. Indeed, this is often the case—but not always. As in all age groups, adults differ in talent and skill. For some who return to the classroom, the advantages of age and experience will not outweigh the drawbacks. The assets cited above are only a generalized profile.

即：优势 弥补因年龄增长而出现的不足

We all have different life experiences and different reactions to them. Upsetting

experiences and crises can result in your having a low self-concept. Success and reward, on the other hand can build self-confidence. In short, life experiences can exert a variety of effects on your self-concept, ranging from depression to exhilaration. So there is no guarantee that having lived longer and having done more will make you better prepared for college and a career.

Experiences are important. But more important than the experiences themselves, or your feelings about them, is how you **make use of them**—how you capitalize on your investments in living, so to speak. Here are some guidelines for making your life experiences help you when you return to college.

1) Maximize your college experience. College costs a lot of money; get the most out of it. Relate what you do in the classroom to the effect it will have on your career and your life. This is especially important in selecting courses. For example, suppose you plan to enter a corporate management training course upon graduation. Bear in mind that when a potential employer reviews your resume, he or she is likely to be much more impressed with an accounting course than a course in art history. This advice may sound like plain common sense. Still, it is surprising how many students plan their schedules according to whim.

2) Use the whole campus. Many students—especially of “traditional” college age—assume that an education begins and ends in the classroom. They’re wrong. You’ll maximize your potential at college by participating in field trips, public lectures, service committees, and conferences dealing with your area of study. Use the library whenever possible—it’s a vital resource. Talk with advisors, counselors, professors, and visitors. Even informal conversations with fellow students can be valuable. Many students have landed jobs on the basis of these and other experiences (off campus and on), even if they are not directly related to coursework. Granted, it is difficult to file extracurricular activities into a crowded schedule—and as a returning student, you are likely to have a very tight agenda—but you can try.

3) Learn how to learn. Have you ever done a serious analysis of your work habits—either in school, in the office, or at home? Attitudes and habits can determine your success or failure in any of these settings. Take a cold, hard look at the way you work and study. Are you comfortable with the habits, patterns, and techniques you employ? Are you as productive as you could be? Asking yourself these questions will pay off at college, while you are more or less fully preoccupied with the learning process. It will also help later in your career, for, as you know, learning never really stops.

Learning how to learn also means being objective and analytical about the way classes are taught. All professors are not alike, and they certainly aren’t all perfect. To whatever extent possible, find out about a course and its professor before you sign up for it. Ask other students (or the professors themselves) how the course is taught, and fill out your schedule according to the teaching styles with which you are most comfortable. For example, you

may find it easier to learn in a seminar format than in a straight lecture setting. In a seminar format, where the professor leads a group discussion based on pre-class readings, there is more opportunity to ask questions (but also more of a chance to wander away from the subject of the course). If you like to learn that way, try to select as many seminar courses as possible. Some students prefer the lecture format, where the professor does most of the talking. Be careful in deciding what is best for you; you will learn more, and enjoy your classes more, as a result.

4) Monitor your feelings. Every now and then, on your own or with the help of others, take a look within yourself. Ask yourself things like, "Who am I?" "What do I want out of life?" It sounds simple; it's not. Moreover, in the rush of exam, quizzes, and research papers, it is an easy rule to forget. Remembering it, however, can save you a lot of worry. It helps you keep on track in relating your college curriculum to your career goals, and it helps you gauge the amount of time you should devote to various tasks. Suppose, for instance, that you are majoring in business administration but are taking an organic chemistry course as an elective. The person sitting next to you is a pre-med student. It's much more important for that person to get a good grade in organic chemistry than it is for you. If you get a "C" in the course, don't waste valuable time trying to raise it to a "B" or an "A"—save the effort for your economics courses.

5) Plan to adjust your lifestyle and manage your time. Rearranging priorities means taking a fresh look at how you use the hours you have available. College, whether part-time or full-time, fills up many hours: In addition to classroom time, consider commuting, studying, researching, and extracurricular pursuits. Those hours have to come from somewhere. Therefore you will have to budget your time more efficiently. This may mean spending less time doing things you enjoy or that are important to you. (If you have a family, the problem is worse. We'll discuss this in a moment.) No matter how you arrange your college schedule, you will run into conflicts. But effective time management will ease the situation.

Some students give little thought to time budgeting, preferring to take each hour as it comes. This is a fine attitude for vacationers—but college is no vacation. These students invariably run into scheduling conflicts, and worse, tend to forget some of the tasks associated with their coursework.

Effective time management begins with planning, organizing and scheduling—that is, planning the activities and tasks that you must fulfill, organizing them on the basis of which are the most important, and scheduling the necessary time for them. A good way to help manage your time is with a monthly or weekly planning calendar—with plenty of bookroom. For each day or week, map out all the activities and tasks that need your attention. Set aside a reasonable amount of time for each. When you complete an assignment, cross it off and proceed to the next. In this way you can keep better track of your assignment flow, and you will not forget any of your responsibilities.

To succeed in college, of course, it is essential to budget plenty of time for out-of-class study. A good rule of thumb is two hours of study for every hour of class. That may sound like too much and in fact shorter study periods are often sufficient. But this method will rescue you from the temptation of slotting study periods into “leftover” hours—and it will provide you with ample time to relax.

Another key to good time management is to schedule your most demanding tasks for the times when your mind and body are at their most alerts. Leave the more routine chores for the other hours. Are you a “morning person”? If so, you may want to get up early and do your toughest homework before noon. Save the “nonthink” task, like grocery shopping and laundry, for afternoon or evening.

As you adjust priorities, daily routines, and the management of your time, you are in a larger sense adjusting your lifestyle. Your lifestyle includes relationships with other people—family, friends and coworker. If you have a family to take care of, no doubt you have already given some thought to how your attending college will affect your relationship with them; the change may involve shifts in roles and responsibilities of all family members.

6) Make full use of student service offices. Colleges and universities recognize that the concerns of students—young and old—are not limited to academics. They have responded with a growing network of student service specialists to help students with their individual needs.

In short, the student services office is one of the most important resources you will encounter on campus. Make the most of it.

Adjusting to the College Environment

People of all ages have difficulties with transitions—changes in old routines, adjustment to new surroundings and relationships. Returning to college after a long absence, or entering it for the first time, is such a transition. Sometimes problems surface immediately and are quickly solved. Other problems start out small and become major headaches. Here are some adjustments that returning students often have to make and strategies for coping with them: **Impatience.** Non-traditional students often find the road back to college a rocky one. Anything that stands in your way becomes a nuisance, and on most campuses you will find many such nuisances: Registration line, waiting lists for some courses, hard-to-find professors, and overly busy office help are only a few.

The frustrations do not end with registration. Consider this situation: after going through registration and finally entering the classroom, you are interested in the immediate practical application of what you are learning. While younger students are encouraged to think about ultimate goals, for you the “ultimate” is here and now. With that in mind, you encounter professors (some younger than you) who trail off into subject areas that seem, to you, to have little to do with the main theme of the course. In other words, you may grow impatient with what you consider time wasted on trivia.

Under these circumstances, you must bear in mind that college is not a place for an “instant education.” You must realize, furthermore, that much of the subject matter that seems unimportant or useless while you are studying it will become valuable at a later, unexpected date. Not every experience you have in college will help you later in life. But many of your studies will prove helpful, even if they don’t seem that way at the time. And since the value of these studies is hard to predict, it is best to pay attention to everything, or to as much as possible.

Grade competition. “Get the course—get the grade—get the degree.” That summarizes the attitude of many who go to college, and a passing grade seems the key to the whole process. Therefore you will find yourself sitting next to many students who appear overly concerned with getting “A”s in every course. Such an attitude seems petty, and it may appear to get in the way of your overall objectives—to acquire practical knowledge as quickly as possible, to gain marketable skills, and to get that diploma.

Grades are important—never underestimate them. Whether or not they are always fair, grades are designed to measure your performance—how much you have learned. However, employers do look at some grades more closely than others; an investment firm, for example, won’t care much about how well you did in ceramics. Therefore, while you should certainly aim to “get the grade” in all your courses—so as to keep your point average high—it is wise to concentrate especially on the grades in your major field of study. Some schools, when releasing your grades, provide two figures: your overall grade point average, and the average for the courses in your major.

Overconfidence. Some older students assume that there are really few new things their professors can teach them; in a sense, their life experiences shield them against new knowledge. Some returning students further assume that age and intelligence are synonymous. They think their instructors will automatically be more impressed by them than by “traditional,” younger students. The errors of these assumptions should be obvious, but often they are not.

Retuning students who enter the classroom with these assumptions sometimes reinforce them by indulging in long, disjointed classroom discourses on their experiences. Further, their ramblings may have little to do with the course topic. Feel free to speak up in class, by all means, but keep the overall goals of the course in mind.

Lack of Confidence. At the other end of the scale are those retuning students who suffer from inferiority complexes. In and out of the classroom, they dwell on what they cannot do rather than what they can do. Don’t keep telling your professors, counselors, job interviewers and fellow students how unworthy you are, or else they’ll begin to believe you.

Fortunately, lack of confidence tends to vanish as one’s college career gets under way. The tasks associated with a college education may seem puzzling at first, but they become less mysterious in a fairly short time.