

POWER

Learning

Strategies for Success in College and Life

Second Edition



Robert S. Feldman

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and Life

Robert S. Feldman

University of Massachusetts—Amherst



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P.O.W.E.R. LEARNING: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS IN COLLEGE AND LIFE

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Preface

In the first edition of *P.O.W.E.R. Learning*, I wrote about Mark Johnson, a student I encountered early in my teaching career. Smart, articulate, and likable, he certainly wanted to succeed in college, and he seemed every bit as capable as students who were doing quite well. Yet Mark was a marginal student, someone who allowed multiple opportunities to succeed to pass him by. Although he clearly had the ability to do well in college—and ultimately in life—he lacked the skills needed to take full advantage of his talent.

Over the years, I encountered other students like Mark. I began to wonder: Was there a way to teach *every* student how to succeed, both academically and beyond the classroom? *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* is my answer.

Based on the conviction that *good students are made, not born*, the central message of *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* is that students can be successful in college if they follow the basic principles and strategies presented in this book. Once mastered, these principles and strategies can help students to maximize their potential, both in and out of the classroom.

This text is designed to be used by students in first-year experience courses. For many students, the first-year experience course is a literal lifeline. It provides the means to learn what it takes to achieve academic success and to make a positive social adjustment to the campus community. If students learn how to do well in their first term of college, they have built a foundation that will last a lifetime.

I wrote *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* because no existing text provides a systematic framework that helps students develop learning and problem-solving strategies that work effectively both in and out of the classroom. The book is an outgrowth of my experience as a college instructor, most of it involving first-year students, combined with my research as a psychologist on the factors that influence learning.

Judging from the response to the first edition—now in use at hundreds of colleges and universities in North America and beyond—the approach embodied in the book resonates with the philosophy and experience of many educators. *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* provides a framework that students can begin to use immediately to become more effective students. That framework is designed to be

- easy-to-grasp, logical, and compelling, so that students can readily see its merits;
- effective for a variety of student learning styles—as well as a variety of teaching styles;
- workable within a variety of course formats and for supplemental instruction;
- valuable for use in learning communities;
- transferable to settings ranging from the classroom to the dorm room to the boardroom;

- effective in addressing both the mind *and* the spirit. P.O.W.E.R. explains useful cognitive strategies and skills to students, while at the same time engaging the natural enthusiasm, motivation, and inclination to succeed that students carry within them.

Based in part on comprehensive, detailed feedback obtained from both instructors and students, *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* meets these aims. The book will help students confront and master the numerous challenges of the college experience through use of the P.O.W.E.R. learning approach, embodied in the five steps of the acronym P.O.W.E.R. (Prepare, Organize, Work, Evaluate, and Rethink). Using simple—yet effective—principles, *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* teaches the skills needed to succeed in college and on the job.

Changes that Make a Difference: P.O.W.E.R. Learning, 2/E

Consistent with the extensive class-testing and reviewing that shaped the first edition, each chapter in this second edition has been reviewed by a large group of seasoned first-year experience instructors. Their responses, in addition to classroom testing and feedback from the many students and instructors who used the first edition, have resulted in some significant enhancements to the text:

Personal Styles Assessments: Every chapter now includes a new *Personal Styles Try It*. These self-diagnostic questionnaires help students measure their learning style or other personal style. Examples include “Find Your Time Style” (Chapter 2); “Measure Your Test-Taking Style” (Chapter 5); and “Find Your Problem-Solving Style” (Chapter 11).

Civic Engagement, Civility, and Classroom Etiquette: Increasingly important in and out of the classroom, the topic of appropriate respect and concern for others is now directly addressed in several chapters, including Chapters 1, 5, 10, and 12.

Chapter 10: Making the Most of Technology. From distance learning to using e-mail effectively, this new chapter includes coverage of word-processing, working and studying online, presentation and spreadsheet programs, and locating and evaluating information, both in libraries and on the Web.

Speaking of Success Interviews: These informative and inspiring profiles have been refreshed with several new faces, including Kenisha Creary (University of Hartford) in Chapter 3; Catalina Angeles (California State University at San Marcos) in Chapter 9; Naison Nayamatutu (Carthage College) in chapter 10; Ben Carson (Yale University) in Chapter 11; Sandra Marotta (Metropolitan State University, St. Paul, MN) in Chapter 12; Jerry Yang (Stanford University, co-founder and director of Yahoo) in Chapter 13; and Justin McCarthy (Washington College) in Chapter 14. (Additional *Speaking of Success* interviews, along with all of those from the first edition of the book, are available on the P.O.W.E.R. Learning website.)

Reorganized Table of Contents: Many instructors, especially those using customized versions of the text, requested that the most important (and most often assigned) chapters be moved to the beginning of the book. That has been done. Additionally, material on listening has been incorporated into the note-taking chapter, better suiting the approach of most instructors.

An overall streamlining and tightening of textual material. Every sentence has been reassessed with the goal of making the text even more readable and the vocabulary precisely appropriate for first-year students.

Addition of new design features. The overall graphic design, which was the source of considerable enthusiasm from instructors in the first edition, has been slightly modified to reflect new material and improve readability.

The Goals of P.O.W.E.R. Learning

Although *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* has been thoroughly revised, the goals of the book remain the same in this new edition:

- **To provide a systematic framework for organizing the strategies that lead to success.** First and foremost, the book provides a systematic, balanced presentation of the skills required to achieve student success. Using the *P.O.W.E.R.* framework and relying on proven strategies, *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* provides specific, hands-on techniques for achieving success as a student.
- **To offer a wide range of skill-building opportunities.** *Students learn by doing.* *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* provides a wealth of interactive exercises, diagnostic questionnaires, case studies, and journal writing activities designed to help students try out and eventually *master* the skills and techniques they need to become effective learners and problem-solvers.
- **To demonstrate the connection between academic success and success beyond the classroom.** Stressing the importance of *self-reliance* and *self-accountability*, the book demonstrates that the skills required to be a successful student are tied to career and personal success.
- **To develop critical thinking skills:** Whether to evaluate the quality of information found on the Internet or to judge the merits of a position taken by a friend, the ability to think critically is more important than ever in this age of information. Through carefully crafted questionnaires, exercises, journal activities, and guided group work, *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* helps students to develop their capacity to think critically.
- **To provide an engaging, accessible, and meaningful presentation.** The fifth goal of this book underlies the first four: to write a student-friendly book that is relevant to the needs and interests of its readers and that will promote enthusiasm and interest in the process of becoming a successful student. Learning the strategies needed to become a more effective student should be a stimulating and fulfilling experience, and *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* makes that experience possible. In short, *P.O.W.E.R. Learning: Strategies for Success in College and Life* is designed to give students a sense of mastery and success as they work through the book. It is meant to engage and nurture students' minds and spirits, stimulating their intellectual curiosity about the world and planting a seed that will grow throughout their lifetime.

Achieving the Goals of P.O.W.E.R. Learning

The goals of **P.O.W.E.R. Learning: Strategies for Success in College and Life** are achieved through a consistent, carefully devised set of features common to every chapter. They include the following:

Chapter-opening scenarios

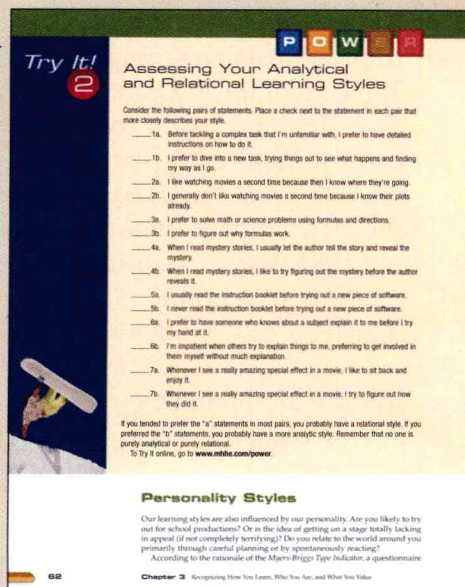
Each chapter begins with a short vignette, describing an ordinary individual grappling with a situation that is relevant to the subject matter of the chapter. Different chapters feature students running behind schedule (Chapter 2), figuring out a way to keep up with reading assignments (Chapter 7), or facing a long list of French vocabulary words to memorize (Chapter 9).

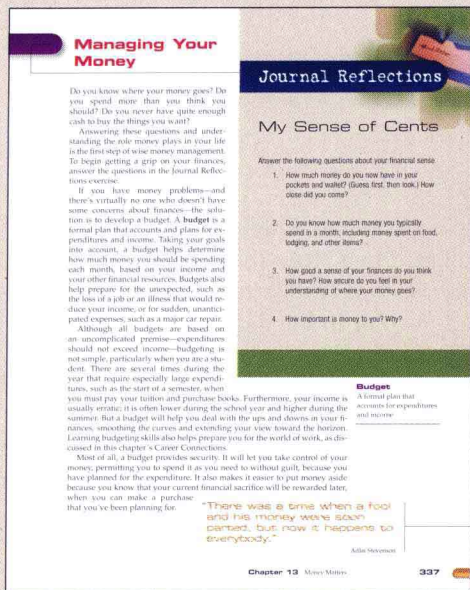
Looking Ahead sections

These sections provide a bridge between the opening vignettes and the remainder of the chapter and include questions that allow students to articulate the chapter's objectives.

Try It! activities

These sections, interspersed throughout the chapter, include written exercises of all types. There are at least five *Try It!* activities in every chapter, and at least one of these is designated as an in-class, group exercise. Examples of *Try It!* exercises include "Assessing Your Analytical and Relational Learning Style" (Chapter 3), "Take a Test-Taking Test" (Chapter 5), "What's Your Level of Self-Consciousness?" (Chapter 7), and "Work the Web" (Chapter 10).





Journal Reflections

This feature provides students with journal prompts that ask students to reflect on and think critically about the chapter content and about related prior experiences. For example, the “Journal Reflections” in Chapter 8, “Writing and Speaking,” asks students to reflect on their feelings about the writing process, and the one in Chapter 13, “Money Matters” asks students to evaluate their financial savvy after performing a few simple but eye-opening exercises (e.g., “How much money do you now have in your pockets and wallet? [Guess first, and then look.] How close did you come?”).

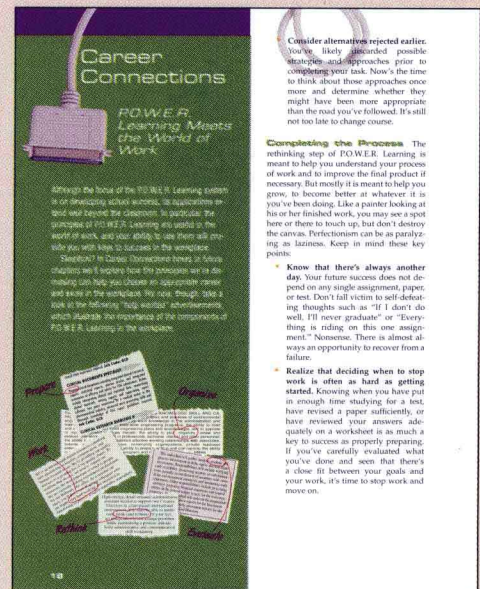


Speaking of Success

Every chapter includes interviews with people who exemplify academic success. Some of these individuals are well-known figures, such as Bill Cosby, Rebecca Lobo, and John Irving; others are current students or recent graduates. Many of these individuals have struggled to overcome difficulties in their personal lives or in school before achieving academic or career success.

Career Connections

This feature links the material in the chapter to the world of work, offering practical demonstrations of how the strategies discussed in the chapter are related to career choices and success. Topics addressed in these sections include narrowing career choices, applying for jobs, and developing workplace listening skills.



Organize: Mastering the Moment

You now know where you've lost time in the past, and your priority list is telling you where you need to head in the future.

Now for the present. You've reached the point where you can organize yourself to take control of your time. Here's what you'll need:

• **A master calendar.** The master calendar shows all the weeks of the term on one page. You don't need to buy one; you can make it easily enough yourself. It need not be great art; a rough version will do. The important point is that it must include every week of the term and seven days per week. (See the example of a master calendar on page 57.)

• **A weekly timetable.** The weekly timetable is a master grid with the days of the week across the top and the hours, from 6:00 A.M. to midnight, along the side. This will permit you to write in all your regularly scheduled activities, as well as one-time appointments when they arise. (A blank weekly timetable is provided opposite the inside front cover of this book.)

• **A daily to-do list.** The daily to-do list can be written on a small, portable calendar that includes a separate page for each day of the week. Or it can simply be a small notebook, with a separate sheet of paper for every day of the week. Whatever form your daily to-do list takes, make sure it's portable, because you'll need to keep it with you all the time.

The basic organizational task you face is filling in these three schedules. You'll need at least an hour to do this, so set the time aside. In addition, there will be some repetition across the three schedules, and the task may seem a bit tedious. But every minute you invest now in organizing your time will pay off in hours that you will save in the future.

Follow these steps in completing your schedule:

1. **Start with the master calendar,** which shows all the weeks of the term on one page. In most classes, you'll receive a syllabus, a course outline that explains what the course is all about. Traditionally, a syllabus includes course assignments and their due dates, and the schedule for tests that will be given during the term. Write on the master calendar every assignment you have, noting it on the date that it is due. If the instructor hasn't included due dates, ask her or she probably already knows, or at least has a general idea, of the week that various assignments will be due. Pencil in tentative assignments on the appropriate date.



Chapter 2 Making the Most of Your Time

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Master calendar

A calendar showing the weeks of a longer time period, such as a college term, with all assignments and important activities noted on it.

Weekly timetable

A calendar showing all regions, pre-scheduled activities due to occur in the week, together with one-time events and commitments.

Daily to-do list

A calendar showing the tasks, activities, and appointments due to occur during the day.

Running Glossary

Key terms appear in boldface in the text and are defined in the margins. In addition, they are listed in a "Key Terms and Concepts" section at the end of the chapter, with accompanying page references. Glossary terms are highlighted in color in the index.

End-of-chapter material

Each chapter ends with a "Looking Back" summary that restates the chapter's objectives, a list of key terms and concepts, and an annotated list of student resources. These resources include campus offices, relevant supplemental readings, and "Taking It to the Net" exercises, which provide students with practice in using the World Wide Web.

Looking Back

Back

How does my reading style and attention span affect my reading?

• The most important aspect of reading is understanding, not speed. People have different reading styles that can be modified to improve their ability to read with understanding.

• One problem people have with reading is a limited attention span. However, attention span can be increased with self-awareness and practice.

How can I improve my concentration and read more effectively?

• Reading should be approached with a clear sense of purpose and goals, which will vary from assignment to assignment. Examining the frontmatter of a book and creating advance organizers is also useful.

• Maintain focus by breaking down the reading into small chunks, taking breaks as needed, dealing with distractions, and writing while reading.

How can I best retain what I have read?

• Understanding of reading assignments can be cemented in memory by identifying the main ideas, prioritizing them, thinking critically about the arguments, and explaining the writer's ideas to someone else.

• Quickly rereading assignments and notes taken on them can greatly help in solidifying memories of what has been read. Concept maps that structure and relate ideas can also help.

Key Terms and Concepts

Advance organizer (p. 147)

Attention span (p. 152)

Concept mapping (p. 163)

Frontmatter (p. 149)

Learning disabilities (p. 161)

Resources

On Campus



If you are experiencing unusual difficulties in reading, and the problem is one you encountered in high school, you may have a learning disability. If you suspect this is the case, take action. Many colleges have an office that deals specifically with learning disabilities. You can also talk to someone at your college's counseling center; he or she will arrange for you to be tested, which can determine whether you have a problem.

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Chapter 6 Building Your Reading Skills

The Case of . . .

War and Peace

One thousand four hundred eighty-four

That's all Chenille Lawrence could think about when she got to the bookstore to purchase *War and Peace*, which her instructor said they'd be reading over the next 4 weeks. Sure, she thought to herself, it's great literature, as her instructor had said. It's undoubtedly a classic that every well-educated person should read some time in his or her life. Sure, maybe reading it would change her life in unimaginable ways, as her instructor had also argued (although she had strong doubts that its immediate effect would be anything but pain).

At she could think about, though, was its length—1,484 pages, not even counting the introduction. How would she ever get through such a giant book?

1. How would you advise Chenille to prepare for her reading of *War and Peace*? What sort of advance organizers would you suggest she create?
2. How would you suggest Chenille organize her time so that she could finish the book in the allotted 4 weeks?
3. How might Chenille stay focused on her reading? How might she most effectively use writing as a way to accomplish her task?
4. Why is evaluation important for effectively reading a long book such as *War and Peace*? How might Chenille evaluate the book and her understanding of it as she reads?
5. In what ways can Chenille use rethinking techniques to improve her understanding of the book?

Case Study

Each chapter ends with "The Case of . . .," a case study that invites students to apply that chapter's principles in solving a unique problem. Case studies are based on situations that students might themselves encounter. For instance, the case study in Chapter Four, "Taking Notes," describes the difficulties experienced by a student who writes down the instructor's every word ("The Case of . . . The Human Dictation Machine"); the case study in Chapter 11, "Making Decisions That Are Right for You," describes an all-too-typical problem involving an apartment lease and roommates. Each case provides a series of questions that encourage students to use what they've learned in responding to these dilemmas.

P.O.W.E.R. Tools for Instructors and Students

The same philosophy and goals that guided the writing of *P.O.W.E.R. Learning: Strategies for Success in College and Life* have informed the development of a comprehensive, first-rate set of teaching aids. Through a series of focus groups, questionnaires, and surveys, we asked instructors what they needed to optimize their courses. We also reviewed what other publishers provided in the way of teaching aids to make sure that the ancillary materials accompanying *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* would meet and exceed the level of support to which instructors are accustomed. We are confident that whether you are an instructor with long experience or one who is new to the course, this book's instructional package will provide practical guidance that will enhance instruction inside the classroom and maximize your time outside of the classroom.

Print Resources

Annotated Instructor's Edition (AIE) (0-07-248072-6): The AIE, prepared by Joni Webb Petschauer and Cindy Wallace of Appalachian State University, contains the full text of the student edition of the book with the addition of marginal notes that provide a rich variety of teaching strategies, discussion prompts, and helpful cross-references to the Instructor's Resource Manual.

Instructor's Resource Manual and Testbank (0-07-248071-8): Written by Joni Webb Petschauer and Cindy Wallace of Appalachian State University with additional contributions from experienced instructors across the country, this manual provides specific suggestions for teaching each topic, tips on implementing a first-year experience program, handouts to generate creative classroom activities, transparency masters, audiovisual resources, sample syllabi, tips on incorporating the Internet into the course, and a bank of chapter quizzes.

Customize Your Text: *P.O.W.E.R. Learning, 2/e* can be customized to suit your needs. The text can be abbreviated for shorter courses and can be expanded to include semester schedules, campus maps, additional essays, activities, or exercises, along with other materials specific to your curriculum or situation.

Distance Learning Faculty Guide: *Designing and Teaching a Distance Learning Course with P.O.W.E.R. Learning, 2/e*, written by Christopher Poirier and Robert S. Feldman, will provide instructors with an overview of distance learning, an introduction to the most popular distance learning platforms, and detailed instructions on how to design and teach a distance learning course with *P.O.W.E.R. Learning*.

Human Resources

Workshops with Author and Author Team: Are you faced with the challenge of launching a first-year experience course on your

campus? Would you like to invigorate your college success program, incorporating the most recent pedagogical and technological innovations? Is faculty recruitment an obstacle to the success of your program? Are you interested in learning more about the P.O.W.E.R. system?

Workshops are available on these and many other subjects for anyone conducting or even just considering a first-year experience program. Led by author Robert Feldman, *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* Instructor's Manual authors Joni Webb Petschauer and Cindy Wallace, or one of the McGraw-Hill *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* consultants, each workshop is tailored to the needs of individual campuses or programs. For more information, contact your local representative, or drop us a line at fye@mcgraw-hill.com.

Digital Resources

P.O.W.E.R. Learning Student CD-ROM (0-07-248073-4): This CD-ROM (available in Windows and in Mac) provides students with a rich multimedia extension of the text's content. Each module of the CD-ROM is tied to a chapter of the text, featuring interactive self-assessments, simulations, video and audio clips, crossword puzzles, Web links, journal activities, and an Internet primer. The CD-ROM is available free when packaged with new copies of the text.



P.O.W.E.R. Learning Website (www.mhhe.com/power): Instructors and students will find downloadable resources, demonstrations of all of our software programs, opportunities for online discussion, e-mail access to the author and project contributors, Web exercises, and a rich bank of links for college success.

PageOut, WebCT, Blackboard, and more: The online content of *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* is supported by WebCT, eCollege.com, and Blackboard. Additionally, our PageOut service, free to qualified adopters, is available to get you and your course up and running online in a matter of hours! To find out more contact your local McGraw-Hill representative or visit <http://www.pageout.net>.

PowerPoint Slides: These slides, drawn from the book's graphics and other sources, offer a variety of electronic options to enhance instructor and student presentations.

Study Smart: Study Skills for Students, 2.0 (Online at www.mhhe.com/studysmart2 or on CD-ROM (0-07-245515-2): Developed by Andrea Bonner and Mieke Schipper of Sir Sanford Fleming College, this innovative study skills tutorial teaches students essential note-taking methods, test-taking strategies, and time management secrets. *Study Smart* is free when packaged with new copies of *P.O.W.E.R. Learning*.

Video Resource (0-07-236710-5):

Real People Talk About Real Success: Filmed expressly for *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* on various campus locations and “real world” settings, this documentary-style video features a variety of inspiring people, both professionals and students, describing life challenges and how the elements of the P.O.W.E.R. system help them achieve success. Designed for use during the early part of the semester, this video is ideal for helping break the ice and stimulating discussion. Ask your McGraw-Hill representative for details.



Start Right Video Series: Produced in conjunction with the National Orientation Directors Association, this program consists of six videos (approximately 20 minutes each) on diversity, residential life, academic success, wellness, alcohol, and money. The series is supported by an instructor's guide by Nancy Hunter Denny, offering discussion questions, handouts and worksheets, and student exercises. An additional hour-long program, *The Facilitator's Training Video*, illustrates effective methods and strategies for peer discussion leaders. Ask your McGraw-Hill representative for details.

Additional Value-Added Packaging Options

Random House Webster's College Dictionary (0-07-366069-8): Updated for the 21st century, this dictionary is available for a nominal cost when packaged with the text.

Spanish/English Glossary English as a Second Language Guide: Created for students who learned English as a second language, this guide provides a glossary of key concepts, useful vocabulary terms and explanations of each chapter of *P.O.W.E.R. Learning*.

Dear Student:

Do you find that there's not enough time to accomplish all the things you want to do? Do you put off studying for tests until the last minute? Do you sometimes have trouble making decisions?

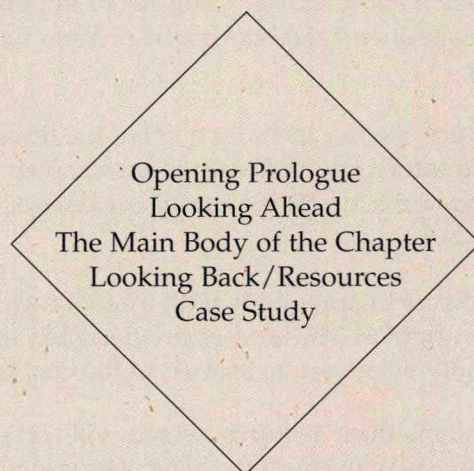
If so, you're not alone. Every first-year college student encounters challenges such as these, and many others. That's where *P.O.W.E.R. Learning: Strategies for Success in College and Life* comes in. It is designed to help you master the challenges you'll face in college and in your everyday life. The P.O.W.E.R. Learning system—which is based on five key steps embodied in the word P.O.W.E.R. (Prepare, Organize, Work, Evaluate, and Rethink)—teaches strategies that will help you become a more successful student and that will give you an edge in attaining what you want to accomplish in life.

But it's up to you to make use of the book. By familiarizing yourself with its features and using the built-in learning aids, you'll maximize its usefulness and be more likely to get the most out of it.

Familiarize yourself with the scope of P.O.W.E.R.

Learning. Begin by skimming the Table of Contents, which provides an overview of the book. By reading the chapter titles, you'll get a sense of the topics that are covered and the logic of the sequence of chapters.

Take some time to flip through the book. Choose a chapter that sounds interesting to you, skim a few pages, and see for yourself the kinds of practical information the book provides. Note that every chapter has the same diamond-shaped pattern:



Use the built-in learning aids

Now that you have a broad overview of *P.O.W.E.R. Learning*, you're ready to consider the book's different components.

Opening Prologue. This is a brief account of a student confronting a typical challenge that is relevant to the chapter topic.

Looking Ahead. This opening section orients you to the topics covered in each chapter, providing a link between the opening situation and the rest of the chapter. It also includes a list of key questions that are addressed—and answered—in the chapter.

Journal Reflections. This feature poses questions related to chapter content; the idea here is for you to think about them and keep your responses in a journal that will serve as a record of your progress through the course.

Try It! Every chapter offers at least five opportunities for you to gain hands-on experience with the material covered in the chapter. These activities include questionnaires, self-assessments, and group exercises that you can do with your classmates. The name says it all: Try It!

Speaking of Success. Every chapter includes an in-depth interview with someone who has achieved academic success. Some of these people are well-known individuals, whereas others are current students or recent graduates who have overcome academic difficulties to achieve success.

Career Connections. *Career Connection* boxes illustrate how the strategies and skills discussed in the chapter can help you on the job—in addition to helping you find a job in the first place.

Running Glossary. Key terms appear in boldface in the text and are defined in the margins. In addition, they are listed in a “Key Terms and Concepts” section at the end of the chapter. (All these terms are also identified in the index in color.)

Looking Back. *Looking Back* is a summary that lists the key points discussed in the chapter.

Key Terms and Concepts. This list of important terms is alphabetized, and the page numbers refer back to the point in the chapter where the term was introduced.

Resources. Every chapter includes a list of the three types of resources that can help you find information relevant to the chapter: a list of on-campus resources; books; and websites. There are also exercises in using the web, called *Taking It to the Net*.

Case Study. Every chapter ends with a case study (“The Case of . . .”) and accompanying questions. These cases are designed to provide you with an opportunity to apply what you’ve learned in the chapter.

Every chapter contains these features, which will serve as familiar guideposts as you make your way through the book. The structure will help you in organizing the book’s content, and in learning and remembering the material.

Get in touch

I welcome your comments and suggestions about *P.O.W.E.R. Learning*, as well as the website and CD-ROM that accompany the book. You can send letters to me at the Department of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts 01003 or send me an e-mail message at feldman@psych.umass.edu. I *will* write back!

A final word: *P.O.W.E.R. Learning* presents the tools that can maximize your chances for academic and life success. But remember that they're only tools, and their effectiveness depends on the way in which they are used. Ultimately, you are the one who is in charge of your future.

The start of college offers a wonderful point of departure. Make the journey a rewarding, exciting, and enlightening one!

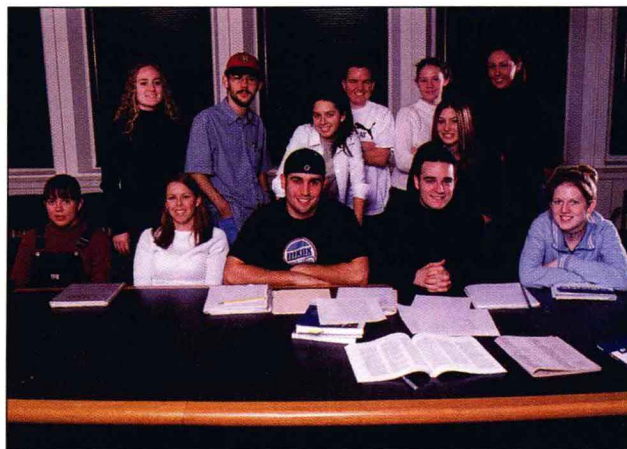
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