

Second Edition

The Community College Experience

PLUS

Amy Baldwin



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Second Edition

The Community College Experience **PLUS**

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Pulaski Technical College

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Preface

Nothing is more rewarding than teaching in a community college, especially working with students who are new to college and maybe even the first in their family to earn a college degree. At times, though, the work can be challenging because there is so much we feel they need to know to be successful. We mean well, but it is often hard to teach them everything that we think is important. Enter *The Community College Experience PLUS*. The idea behind the book was to address that very dilemma. I found that my students needed to know much more than “traditional four-year university students” (What is “traditional” anyway?). There were so many things that even I didn’t know they didn’t know! This book was written to provide that basic information to these students as well as a realistic picture of what it will take to succeed in college. There is no candy-coating or hand-holding in these pages. Why? Because these students are successful in their own right already—many of them hold down full-time jobs, take care of their family, and participate actively in their communities. They just need a little more—a little more basic information that we often take for granted they know (What is a credit hour?); a little more realism (Your relationships *will* change when you are in college, and sometimes it is not for the better); and a little more support (You already are an effective time manager, so let’s build on that foundation with these tips!).

The first edition of *The Community College Experience PLUS* was an effort to provide more practical information to students who are new to college; the “plus” was additional topics and opportunities for reflection and critical thinking. The “plus” is still part of this edition, but it is a more streamlined “plus” in that only the essential information for student success has been kept. The extras, such as exercises, tables, and in-depth topics, can be found in the Instructor’s Manual.

The second edition of *The Community College Experience PLUS* is organized around three principles: acclimating/relating, learning, and planning. These three principles are key to our students’ success and they mirror the stages students go through in their first semester. Several of the chapters have been combined into one and moved ahead to coincide with the time in the semester when students will most need the information and skills. Most significantly, there is more information on time management strategies that are crucial to students’ success from day one. The students have spoken: Time management is a major issue for them, and they will find more ideas for improving time management in Chapter 4.

Another notable addition is the section on memory and learning in Chapter 6, which is based on recent brain research. Readers can learn more about how they learn—and how to improve their learning in and out of class. The other chapters have been streamlined to present the essentials of student success and updated to provide the latest information.



Author Bio

Community College Connections

Amy Baldwin earned a B.A. in English Literature at Rhodes College (Memphis, TN) and an M.A. in English and British Literature at Washington University (St. Louis, MO). Since 1996, she has been teaching student success, composition, and literature at Pulaski Technical College (North Little Rock, AR).

In 2007, she co-founded the National Student Success Institute with Steve Piscitelli at Florida State College at Jacksonville and Dr. Robert Sherfield at the College of Southern Nevada, which provides faculty development and resources to community colleges. Since 2009, she serves on the Advisory Board for the newsletter *Student Health 101*, an online publication, which also publishes a community college version, that is sent to students all over the country and focuses on maintaining a healthy lifestyle while in college. Her other community college connections include serving as co-director of her college's Achieving the Dream initiative and the recent appointment as a technical assistance provider (TAP) to the new Developmental Education Initiative (DEI), funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. She also serves on the Executive Committee of the Two-Year College English Association-Southwest Region. In 2006, she won the TYCA-SW Teaching Excellence Award.

Innovation

Amy Baldwin was one of the first instructors at her college to teach online in 1999, and from 2003–2006, she served as the distance education coordinator, assisting in the growth of online classes and training faculty to teach online. In 2007, she set out to help develop a professional development program for faculty and staff and took on the role of the college's first professional development coordinator. In an effort to share student success strategies beyond the boundaries of her college, she created and co-chaired the first statewide conference that focused on promoting student success at Arkansas colleges and universities. As part of her role as co-director of Achieving the Dream and professional development coordinator, she started the college's first New Faculty Academy to help new faculty learn more about what they can do to be successful instructors.

Service

Amy's service to the college includes creating the first student literary magazine, *The View from Here*, in 1998, which is now in its tenth volume; serving on the editorial staff for *Milestones*, the student academic journal; serving as the self-study editor for accreditation; developing online professional development classes for K-12 teachers; and serving as co-liaison for the Foundations of Excellence® self-study on improving first-year students' experience. She also serves on the Pulaski Technical College's Leadership Class Steering Committee, a program she helped start in 2007 that provides leadership training and education for potential leaders at her college.

Personal

Amy lives in Little Rock, Arkansas, with her husband and two children. She is currently a higher education doctoral student at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock where she is focusing her studies on student retention. In between her work, family, and studies, she has provided nearly 100 professional development workshops at conferences and community colleges on student success, engaging activities, academic integrity, online learning, and research writing.



Photo by Lennon Parker

New Features

- **Student stories** is a new feature that replaces the Community College Student Profiles. In these vignettes, readers are provided with a true-to-life short narrative of four students' experiences in college that illustrate common challenges, dilemmas, and situations that can be explored further in the PLUS critical thinking exercises.
- **My Story** is another new feature that allows students to relate their own story to the chapter's topics.

Returning Features

- **Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Reflection exercises** are included in each chapter so that students can take some time to think about, talk about, and reflect on what they have learned. The most effective exercises have been retained for this edition, while the ones that appeared in the first edition will be available in the Instructor's Manual.
- **The PLUS critical thinking exercises** tie to each chapter's opening story by asking readers to determine the best course of action for the main character. In addition, readers are asked to apply what they have learned about personality and learning styles to their own situation.
- **Integrity Matters** will continue to provide students with a look at how integrity plays a part in their success in college and life.
- **Path of Discovery Journal** topics give students a way to connect with the material in the chapter.
- **Chapter Review Questions** provide students with a way to check reading comprehension and understanding.

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In addition, I appreciate the feedback from the various students, faculty, and administration who helped shape this second edition: Allison Perrin, South Plains College; Ellen Vician, College of DuPage; and Rick Woodard, Rose State College.



MyStudentSuccessLab

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To help students build college success and career development skills, students must **apply** what they learn. MyStudentSuccessLab (www.mystudentsuccesslab.com) offers students a self-paced, interactive, virtual lab designed to offer *application* and *practice* of their skills. By developing strategies that work best for them, students experience greater relevance, motivating them to achieve success.

Working with a number of our authors and faculty members, we created a lab experience that provides interactive critical-thinking cases, a goal setting and journaling tool, reflection exercises, video with applications, interactive simulations, and more. MyStudentSuccessLab is a unique, valuable learning tool that offers:

GENERAL Student Success TOPICS, including:

- Welcome to College/College Culture, Academic Skills, Life Skills, and Career Skills

Within EACH TOPIC:

- Objectives, Pre-Assessment, E-book (with Multimedia features), Interactive Case Study, Interactive Activity, Goal Setting and Journaling tool, and Comprehension Test

Posted to the COURSE RESOURCES Section:

- Understanding Plagiarism guide, Prentice Hall Planner, Student Reflection Journal, *10 Ways to Fight Hate*, Student Success Supersite, and Dictionary of Contemporary English Online

Class Info | Grade Tracker | Class Manager | Account Summary | Log Out | Help

Welcome, Dr. P.H. Kowalski
MyStudentSuccessLab

HOME | CHAPTERS | RESOURCES | INSTRUCTOR

Welcome to the MyStudentSuccessLab e-book, designed specifically for Keys to Success by Carter, et al. This fully interactive lab experience will help you master Keys' success strategies on your own time and at your own pace through ongoing assessment, skill building, and timely tools. The e-book is an electronic version of the text, page-for-page, that completely integrates multimedia resources so learning becomes more fun and effective. From audio, videos, and online journaling to goal-setting, skill simulations, and interactive critical-thinking cases, MyStudentSuccessLab prepares all types of learners for the demands of college and beyond.

Instructor Resources
Index of Multimedia
Search media by chapter, a-head and media type
Installation Wizard
Install plug-ins needed for this course.

CALNDAR | PIE CHART | SLEEP | CLASS | STUDY | WORK | FAMILY | OTHER

Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday

7 am

8 | Sleep

9

10

11 | Rest for awhile be

12 pm

1

START THE ACTIVITY | REPLAY THE DEMO | SAVE | SUBMIT



Chapter features to support your course objectives:

- **Pre-Assessment**—Students have the opportunity to take a pre-test before reading each chapter. Their test results identify chapter topics they must master. The assessment feedback identifies students' strengths and weaknesses so they can learn more effectively.
- **E-book with multimedia**—*The Community College Experience PLUS*, Second Edition, is available on this site with MSSL links embedded throughout for ease of use. Gain access to content, including interactive chapter features, video, weblinks, journal prompts, self-assessments, chapter exercises, and more.
- **Interactive Case Studies**—Students can practice their decision-making skills with these interactive cases. Each case requires them to apply skills and strategies they've learned in the chapter—such as time management, critical thinking, and listening—to solve problems. At the end of the scenario, students receive constructive feedback relating to each choice they made as they worked through the case.
- **Goal Setting and Journaling tool**—Our unique Goal Setting and Journaling tool will help your students learn to set "SMART" long-term and short-term goals as they move through each chapter—and keep track of how well they are meeting those goals. The journaling activity will help them discover obstacles preventing them from attaining their objectives—and what will help them succeed. This tool's features allow you and your students to monitor their progress and identify areas for potential improvement. As the instructor, you also have the option of reviewing their journals for completion or content.
- **Comprehension test**—After reading a chapter, students take a post-test to check comprehension. Choose from multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, short answer, and essay questions, and results will be imported to Gradetracker.
- **Portfolio Exercises**—Students can build an electronic portfolio containing artifacts of their work with these classroom-tested exercises. Students demonstrate skill mastery with actual work that can be shared with future instructors or employers.
- **Weblinks**—Looking for current issues in student success and career development? Weblinks offer quick access to relevant, reliable links that update course content.

NOTE—A way to search for ALL media within the site is to use the *Index of Multimedia*. Students can choose from many icons, such as *Explore* or *Watch*. *Explore* refers to Interactive features such as our Time Management Activity: Interactive calendar; *Watch* links to Videos. Videos include study skills, workplace tips, and role-playing videos to help students see how other students cope with the demands of college or show how the course content relates to this class and beyond.

MyStudentSuccessLab is integrated into the text to reinforce the content! Wherever the MSSL icons appear in the margins, your students can follow the link instructions to

access the **MyStudentSuccessLab** resource that corresponds with the chapter content. *Activities & Exercises* are assignable and give students the opportunity to understand each chapter's material by applying content in an engaging way.

Margin Note Icons for Exercises include:

- **Practice** identifies opportunities for students to demonstrate skill level and reflect on the reading.
- **Explore** points to multimedia interactive exercises that reinforce the material.
- **Interactive Reading** highlights features where students read and respond to specific material.
- **Case Study** spotlights features that focus on student real world scenarios with probing questions.
- **Profile** indicates exercises that aid students in developing their personal portfolio.



MyStudentSuccessLab is available as a supplemental package option, as well as for stand-alone purchase. It is available in CourseCompass, Blackboard, and WebCT course management platforms, as well as a version to use for other learning platforms.

MyStudentSuccessLab is easy to use and assign. It allows students to set their own pace, build self-awareness, and practice what *they* need to set personal goals and achieve success in college, career, and life. Visit www.mystudentsuccesslab.com to explore this exciting new online teaching resource, contact your local sales professional, or send an inquiry to Student.Success@pearson.com for additional support.



Supplemental Resources

INSTRUCTOR SUPPORT

Resources to simplify your life and engage your students.

Book Specific

Print

Instructor's Manual with Test Bank

Online Computerized TestGen

Online PowerPoints

Online Instructor's Manual with Test Bank

Technology

*"Easy access to online, book-specific **teaching support** is now just a click away!"*



Instructor Resource Center—Register. Redeem. Login. Three easy steps that open the door to a variety of print and media resources in downloadable, digital format, available to instructors exclusively through the Pearson/Prentice Hall Instructor's Resource Center. Click on "Educator," then click on "Download Instructor Resources" to access online resources.

<http://www.prenhall.com>

Are you teaching online, in a hybrid setting, or looking to infuse exciting technology into your classroom for the first time?



Then be sure to refer to the **MyStudentSuccessLab** section of this Preface to learn about our revolutionary resource that **helps students build college success and career development skills, and to *apply* what they learn.** MyStudentSuccessLab (www.mystudentsuccesslab.com) offers students a self-paced, interactive, virtual lab designed to offer *application* and *practice* of their skills. By developing strategies that work best for them, students experience greater relevance, motivating them to achieve success.

*"Choose from a wide range of **video resources** for the classroom!"*

Prentice Hall Reference Library: Life Skills Pack, 0-13-127079-6, contains all 4 videos, or they may be requested individually as follows:

- Learning Styles and Self-Awareness, 0-13-028502-1
- Critical and Creative Thinking, 0-13-028504-8
- Relating to Others, 0-13-028511-0
- Personal Wellness, 0-13-028514-5

Prentice Hall Reference Library: Study Skills Pack, 0-13-127080-X, contains all 6 videos, or they may be requested individually as follows:

- Reading Effectively, 0-13-028505-6
- Listening and Memory, 0-13-028506-4
- Note Taking and Research, 0-13-028508-0
- Writing Effectively, 0-13-028509-9
- Effective Test Taking, 0-13-028500-5
- Goal Setting and Time Management, 0-13-028503-X

Prentice Hall Reference Library: Career Skills Pack, 0-13-118529-2, contains all 3 videos, or they may be requested individually as follows:

- Skills for the 21st Century—Technology, 0-13-028512-9
- Skills for the 21st Century—Math and Science, 0-13-028513-7
- Managing Career and Money, 0-13-028516-1

Complete Reference Library - Life/StudySkills/CareerVideoPack on DVD, 0-13-501095-0

- Our Reference Library of thirteen popular video resources has now been digitized onto one DVD so students and instructors alike can benefit from the array of video clips. Featuring Life Skills, Study Skills, and Career Skills, they help to reinforce the course content in a more interactive way.

Faculty Video Resources

- Teacher Training Video 1: Critical Thinking, 0-13-099432-4
- Teacher Training Video 2: Stress Management & Communication, 0-13-099578-9
- Teacher Training Video 3: Classroom Tips, 0-13-917205-X
- Student Advice Video, 0-13-233206-X
- Study Skills Video, 0-13-096095-0
- Faculty Development Workshop (DVD), 0-13-227192-3

Current Issues Videos

- ABC News Video Series: Student Success 2/E, 0-13-031901-5
- ABC News Video Series: Student Success 3/E, 0-13-152865-3

MyStudentSuccessLab PH Videos on DVD, 0-13-514249-0

- Our six most popular video resources have been digitized onto one DVD so students and instructors alike can benefit from the array of video clips. Featuring Technology, Math and Science, Managing Money and Career, Learning Styles and Self-Awareness, Study Skills, and Peer Advice, they help to reinforce the course content in a more interactive way. They are also accessible through our MSSL and course management offerings and available on VHS.

*"Through partnership opportunities, we offer a variety of **assessment options!**"*

LASSI—The LASSI is a 10-scale, 80-item assessment of students' awareness about and use of learning and study strategies. Addressing skill, will, and self-regulation, the focus is on both covert and overt thoughts, behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs that relate to successful learning and that can be altered through educational interventions. Available in two formats: Paper, 0-13-172315-4, or Online, 0-13-172316-2 (Access Card).

Noel Levitz/RMS—This retention tool measures Academic Motivation, General Coping Ability, Receptivity to Support Services, PLUS Social Motivation. It helps identify at-risk students, the areas with which they struggle, and their receptiveness to support. Available in Paper or Online formats, as well as Short and Long versions. Paper Long Form A: 0-13-0722588; Paper Short Form B: 0-13-079193-8; Online Forms A, B & C: 0-13-098158-3.

Robbins Self Assessment Library—This compilation teaches students to create a portfolio of skills. S.A.L. is a self-contained, interactive, library of 49 behavioral questionnaires that help students discover new ideas about themselves, their attitudes, and their personal strengths and weaknesses.

Readiness for Education at a Distance Indicator (READI)—READI is a Web-based tool that assesses the overall likelihood for online learning success. READI generates an immediate score and a diagnostic interpretation of results, including recommendations for successful participation in online courses and potential remediation sources. Please visit www.readi.info for additional information. 0-13-188967-2.

Pathway to Student Success CD-ROM, 0-13-239314-X The CD is divided into several categories, each of which focuses on a specific topic that relates to students and provides them with the context, tools and strategies to enhance their educational experience.

*"Teaching tolerance and discussing **diversity** with your students can be challenging!"*

Responding to Hate at School—Published by the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Teaching Tolerance handbook is a step-by-step, easy-to-use guide designed to help administrators, counselors, and teachers react promptly and efficiently whenever hate, bias, and prejudice strike.

*"For a terrific one-stop shop resource, use our **Student Success Supersite!**"*

Supersite—www.prenhall.com/success—Students and professors alike may use the Supersite for assessments, activities, links, and more.

*"For a truly tailored solution that fosters campus connections and increases retention, talk with us about **custom publishing**."*

Pearson Custom Publishing—We are the largest custom provider for print and media shaped to your course's needs. Please visit us at www.pearsoncustom.com to learn more.

STUDENT SUPPORT

Tools to help make the grade now, and excel in school later.

*"Today's students are more inclined than ever to use **technology** to enhance their learning."*



Refer to the **MyStudentSuccessLab** section of this Preface to learn about our revolutionary resource that **helps students build college success and career**

development skills, and to *apply* what they learn. MyStudentSuccessLab (www.mystudentsuccesslab.com) offers students a self-paced, interactive, virtual lab designed to offer *application* and *practice* of their skills. By developing strategies that work best for them, students experience greater relevance, motivating them to achieve success.

"Time management is the #1 challenge students face." We can help.

Prentice Hall Planner—A basic planner that includes a monthly and daily calendar plus other materials to facilitate organization. Paperback, 8 1/2 x 11.

Premier Annual Planner—This specially designed, annual 4-color collegiate planner includes an academic planning/resources section, monthly planning section (2 pages/month), and weekly planning section (48 weeks; July start date), which facilitate short-term as well as long-term planning. Spiral bound, 6 x 9. Customization is available.

"Journaling activities promote self-discovery and self-awareness."

Student Reflection Journal—Through this vehicle, students are encouraged to track their progress and share their insights, thoughts, and concerns. Paperback, 8 1/2 x 11. 90 pages.

"Our Student Success Supersite is a one-stop shop for students to learn about career paths, self-awareness activities, cross-curricular practice opportunities, and more!"

Supersite —at www.prenhall.com/success.

"Learning to adapt to the diverse college community is essential to students' success."

10 Ways to Fight Hate —Produced by the Southern Poverty Law Center, the leading hate-crime and crime-watch organization in the United States, this guide walks students through 10 steps that they can take on their own campus or in their own neighborhood to fight hate everyday. 0-13-028146-8

"The Student Orientation Series includes short booklets on specialized topics that facilitate greater student understanding."

S.O.S. Guides help students understand what these opportunities are, how to take advantage of them, and how to learn from their peers while doing so. They include:

- Connolly: *Learning Communities*, 0-13-232243-9
- Hoffman: *Stop Procrastination Now! 10 Simple and SUCCESSFUL Steps for Student Success*, 0-13-513056-5
- Watts: *Service Learning*, 0-13-232201-3
- Jabr: *English Language Learners*, 0-13-232242-0



Introduction

What Does the Community College Student Look Like?

What is a typical community college student like? Well, a “typical” community college student is hard to find. In fact, community colleges enjoy a richly diverse student body, perhaps more diverse than in any other type of higher education institution, because their programs, services, and reputations appeal to many people at different times in their lives. To see for yourself, walk into the student center or pass by a study area, and you may overhear a similar conversation between four new friends—students who have formed a study group—about how they chose to attend a community college.

Evan, 20, tells the group that he chose a community college because of its reputation for caring faculty and rigorous core classes that will prepare him for an engineering career. He plans to complete his associate of science degree first, because he can apply for a scholarship when he transfers if he keeps his grades up. Evan also reveals that he made good grades in high school and could have attended a four-year university out of state. However, he liked what his community college had to offer and preferred sitting in a small class that offered individual attention rather than getting lost in a sea of 200 students listening to a lecture.

For Laura, 31, the community college was a logical choice because of the learning support it offers and the flexible scheduling. She shares with the group that after her youngest son started kindergarten, she enrolled in a community college, because she envisioned something better for herself and her future. Not knowing what she wanted to do, she took classes that interested her and fulfilled the requirements for an associate of arts degree. At the end of last semester, she was inspired by her teachers to pursue social work, and she now has a “thirst for knowledge.” With the help of counselors and instructors and the learning support staff, she has overcome a learning difficulty and enjoys the fact that she serves as a role model to her children when she sits down to study and complete assignments.

Michael, 42, has served in the military and has a wealth of work experience and knowledge, but he has lacked a degree and a career that he feels is his life’s purpose. He tells the study group that his girlfriend convinced him to check out the nursing program at the community college, because the graduates always found high-paying jobs and were known for being well prepared for jobs. Before Michael can gain acceptance into the nursing program, he has to complete a developmental math course, which is why he asked his fellow students to form a study group. Michael has learned quickly that he can be more successful if he studies with others.

Juanita, 18, is the youngest of the group, but she is the most experienced community college student at the table, because she has been taking concurrent classes through her high school for over a year. Juanita’s high school counselor first told her about the program that provides college-level classes to high school students so that they can earn college credits while still in high school. As Juanita explains to the study group, she chose

to take concurrent classes because she wants to earn a master's degree, and the sooner she can reach her goal, the more time she will have for a family and a career. However, she admits that it has been challenging to keep up with the demands of her classes. She is expected to read, write, and study more than she has done in her high school classes that were not taught at the college level.

These stories are representative of students who attend community colleges everywhere. Enrollments nationwide are skyrocketing, changing the face of the college graduate. Today's college students come from a wide variety of backgrounds, represent numerous ethnicities, and possess various abilities.

What do all these people have in common with you? They discovered that an education is key to realizing dreams and achieving goals. They know, as you do too, that the first step to a satisfying career and a life filled with possibilities is enrolling in college. In addition, like you, they chose to start their academic careers at a community college.

The reasons that students like you are choosing to enroll in a community college are just as diverse as the community-college population. A resounding reason, though, is that community colleges offer services, classes, and an intense level of personal attention not typically found at a four-year institution. You will see these "extras" in the types of classes and degrees offered, as well as in the personalized attention and assistance you will receive.

No doubt, you have your own story as to why you are attending a community college, but the common denominator you share with your classmates and the students profiled in this text is that you all took an important step to improving your lives through education. With guidance, determination, and hard work, you will succeed in your quest.

Why Choose a Community College?

Whatever your reason for starting your education at a community college, The College Board lists its own reasons to attend a community college, which are adapted and added to in the list below:*

You are excited about your community college. You know your community college well—it has a great reputation for academics and professional services and you want to go there. This is what attracted Michael to his community college: a strong program that will prepare him for a job.

You don't want to pay a lot for college. Historically, community colleges' costs have averaged less than four-year universities' tuition and fees, in part because their missions include providing education to people who cannot afford to go to a four-year institution.

You don't want to pay a lot when you get to a four-year institution. Many four-year colleges and universities offer generous transfer scholarships for students who earn high grades at the community college. This is what Evan wants to earn when he completes his associate of science degree, and he knows that the four-year institution of his choice will accept all of his courses at the community college because of a strong articulation agreement.

*"Six Benefits of Community Colleges." Copyright © 2008 The College Board, www.collegeboard.com. Reproduced with permission.

You took a few concurrent classes in high school and loved the experience. More and more, high school students are enrolling in community colleges before they reach 18 years of age—just as Juanita did before she started taking college classes on campus. These classes, often called concurrent or dual-enrollment classes, allow students to earn college credit before they graduate from high school. Juanita is an example of such a student.

You are not sure what degree you want or if you even want to get a degree. Community colleges are a great place to start taking classes if you are unsure of your future goals. Because community colleges offer technical, business, and industrial classes as well as a university-transfer curriculum, you have more options to choose from. You can take classes in computers, music appreciation, welding, and business communication—all in the same semester. If you decide that college is not for you, you won't have a large tuition bill looming over you.

You want to work on improving your academic skills and your grades. Community colleges are well known for their open admission policies, smaller classes (one-on-one attention), and student services. Thus, a community college is the best place to improve your reading, writing, and math abilities, because you have more contact with your instructors and the opportunity to take classes that help you refine basic skills.

You need a flexible schedule because of work and family responsibilities. Just as community colleges cater to students who need help developing their skills and students who cannot afford high-priced colleges and universities, community colleges are also more likely to offer classes that fit the busy schedule of a working student. Many community colleges offer online courses; telecourses; early-morning, evening, and weekend classes; and accelerated classes. Laura has chosen to attend the community college because the classes can be taken around her family's schedule.

Other reasons you decided to enroll in a community college may include:

- The college is near your workplace, which makes it easier to get to class and back to work.
- The school has on-site day care that is affordable and accredited.
- You know someone who went to a community college, and now she has a great job.
- You took one class for fun, such as creative writing, and now you want to take more.
- You received a scholarship to attend.
- You want a “practical” degree.
- The college is closer to home so you can spend more time with your family.
- The community college has fewer distractions, such as fraternities and sororities, so you can concentrate on academics.

The Benefits of Higher Education

Certainly, the list could continue, and you will definitely find that there are many more reasons to love your experience in college, but consider for a moment what your experience can do for you personally and professionally.

Perhaps the most important reason people enroll in college is to get a better job. No doubt, higher education can help you find career success, but there are other reasons completing a degree (or just taking a few classes) can improve your life. The more formal education you have, the more likely you are to earn more money. Earning more money allows you to provide better for yourself and your family. Education can improve your life by increasing your understanding of yourself and the world around you. The more you know and understand other people, other cultures, and yourself, the better able you are to influence your community in a positive way. Knowing more about yourself also improves your self-esteem and personal happiness. Moreover, higher education gives you the lifelong learning skills necessary for your health and well-being. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness may be a cliché these days, but they are the primary results of an education.

- Going to college improves your life through a better career, more money, and better lifestyle choices, because you are more informed.
- Going to college improves your freedom to make those choices—the more you know, the better choices you make, and the more liberty you have to make those choices.
- Going to college makes you more satisfied with your life, because you feel proud of your achievements.

Why Read This Book?

After reading the reasons why over five million students are attending a community college, you may be able to add a few more. But whatever your reason, you can be sure that you made the right choice. Your community college experience will enrich your life regardless of how long you stay, what degree or certificate you complete, or where you go afterward.

The purpose of this book, then, is to help you make the most of your community college experience. In the chapters, you will find information about college life and culture, the expectations of professors, study and test-taking skills, and managing your financial and educational future. You will also discover practical information to help you prepare to transfer to a four-year college or university or enter the workforce directly.

Remember, though, that this book is only one source of assistance for you as you make your way through decisions and deadlines. You can also look to your instructors, peers, counselors, advisors, friends, and family to help you with all of the challenges of being in college while juggling work, family, and extracurricular activities.

Remember, you are not alone: More than five million other students are experiencing what you are going through—the anxiety, the uncertainty, the exhilaration, and the pride that come from starting on such an important and life-changing journey. No matter how many classes you take or what degree you finally complete, you have now taken the first step to bettering yourself by improving your education.

Reference

The College Board. (2008). Six benefits of community colleges: It might be the right path for you. Retrieved February 20, 2008, from <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/csearch/where-to-start/8169.html>