

Preface

TO THE STUDENT

Welcome to College! *College Success: A Concise Practical Guide* is especially designed to help you succeed in college. It contains twelve brief—but rich—chapters on topics proven to make a difference for academic success. This book is written by two professors who have over forty-six years of combined teaching experience. They have taught in small two-year colleges as well as in large public and private universities. The book can be used alone or in conjunction with a course that focuses on student success in college.

Following are ways in which you will benefit from reading this book and completing all of the assignments:

- You will learn to approach the challenge of college with a **perspective** and **attitude** that will help you be successful—not only in college but in life after graduation.
- You will learn **techniques** that will help you plan, organize, listen, learn, read, and write in college.
- You will learn how to connect with **people** on campus who will support your success.
- You will learn how to connect with **resources** on campus that will support your success.

If this book is used while you are taking a course about being successful in college, read the chapters thoughtfully before your instructor discusses them in class. You will be glad you did.

How This Book Works

College Success includes exercises and assignments that you can complete on your own or as part of a course. The classroom is a great place to discuss techniques for success and your new college experiences with your instructor and your peers. A student success class can be like a support group for new college students.

The Chapter Roadmap

Each chapter begins with the *chapter roadmap* page. The chapter roadmap includes a brief abstract or summary of the chapter, a list of the learning goals for that chapter, and a checklist to help you work through the chapter.

The Learning Goals One of the most important features of this textbook, and possibly any textbook, is the list of learning goals. The learning goals are a series of statements that describe what you should be able to do after you have read and studied the chapter. These goals help you identify what aspects of the chapter are most important; therefore, if used properly, they can help you sharpen the focus of your study. In a well-designed course, the learning goals and the questions you see on exams will be linked—that is, the exam questions will be specifically designed to measure whether you have successfully achieved the learning goals. Thus, you could use the learning goals to develop a study guide that would enable you to efficiently prepare for exams. We will describe how to do this in more detail under the section titled “How to Use the Study Guide.” The checklist will help you connect the learning goals to the study guide pages found at the end of each chapter. The study guide pages, if used properly, will help you identify and learn the important concepts of the chapter. Those concepts are the same ones that you can expect to see represented on exams.

The Checklist The checklist presents a series of activities to complete as you study the chapter. You will benefit most if you *complete the activities in the order in which they appear* since they are deliberately ordered to give you the best learning experience. For example, the first item on the list is the “Critical Thinking Activity.” This should be done before you read the chapter, because if you have completed it prior to reading, you will better understand the chapter. The same principle applies to the second item on the checklist: compiling a series of questions about the learning goals that you can reference as you read.

Critical Thinking Activity

As mentioned earlier, immediately following the chapter roadmap page is a critical thinking activity. Remember that college-level study is more about thinking and understanding than about memorization. Some memorization may still be necessary—especially when you encounter concepts that are completely new to you; however, thinking critically about and analyzing those concepts are central to a college education. Please note that the critical thinking activity is the first item on the checklist and is designed to be completed before you read the chapter.

Reading Comprehension Questions

As you read, you will periodically come across *reading comprehension questions*. There are four types of these questions in each chapter. When you encounter one of these questions, pause from your reading and try to answer it. When you finish the chapter, check your answers for all four questions against the answer key located in the back of the book. If you missed any of the questions, go back and review that section of the chapter and try to figure out why.

This activity is designed to help you improve your reading comprehension in four areas: 1) knowledge, 2) literal comprehension, 3) inferential comprehension, and 4) analysis. The answer key is not just for checking your work—you can also use it to assess your strengths and weaknesses. Simply count the number of questions you got correct in each of the four categories. This will give you a general idea of which types of reading comprehension you do best and which types you may need to work on.

Chapter Summary

The brief chapter summary can be used to quickly grasp the topics that will be covered. Reading it and the learning goals before you begin the chapter will create a framework for all the information to follow, so that you will learn and remember more.

Review Questions

Near the end of each chapter you will find a page of review questions with five true-false questions. You should mark your answer and then, in the space provided, write your rationale (reason) for selecting true or false. If you are using this book for a student success course, then your instructor will have the answer key for the chapter review questions.

Assignments

One or more practical assignments can be found at the end of each chapter (with directions provided). If you are taking a student success class, your professor may assign some of these for a grade.

How to Use the Study Guide

Each chapter has a *study guide*, designed to help you understand and discuss material from the chapter. As already mentioned, the learning goals for each chapter are listed at the beginning (on the chapter roadmap page). These goals are then repeated on the top of each study guide page. The learning goals tell you what is important in the chapter. If you want to seriously study the chapter and accomplish the learning goals, you will need to do more than simply read the learning goals. You will need to break them down into one or more questions. Below is a five-step method for using the study guide.

Step 1: Convert the Learning Goals into Questions Before You Read the Chapter

The learning goals are expressed as statements. Therefore, if you want to make sure that you thoroughly understand each goal, you will have to first convert them into questions. Do this *before* you read the chapter in the space provided for you on the study guide pages. Simply *write the questions in the left-hand column* of the study guide page. Look at Figure 1 as an example. The fictional student, Sharon Cooper, has converted Learning Goal 1 for Chapter 3 into five different questions. Each of these questions will help Sharon with a different aspect of the goal. Notice how the questions are broken down into the *smallest parts* possible. Thus, there are many questions covering just one goal. You should try to break down the goal into *as many questions* as you can. This will allow you to focus on the details of the goal, rather than just skimming the chapter's contents.

Figure 1

Example of Study Guide Page Based on a Lesson Objective

Name: Sharon Cooper

Study Guide | Goal 1

The student will be able to compare and contrast the focus-on-grades approach with the focus-on-learning approach.

Questions	Answers & Notes
1. What is the focus-on-grades approach?	It is an approach to learning in which the student thinks of the grade as something separate from learning. Given this focus, he or she attempts to achieve the desired grade with the least investment possible.
2. What is the focus-on-learning approach?	It is an approach to learning in which the student seeks to learn as much as he or she can in the course.
3. How are the focus-on-grades and the focus-on-learning approaches similar? (compare)	These approaches are similar in that they are both ways in which students approach the way they learn in college. They both result in grades that are reflective of the approach taken.
4. How are the focus-on-grades and the focus-on-learning approaches different? (contrast)	These approaches are different in that the student is trying to learn at a different level, resulting in good grades if the student has learned but not necessarily a good grade if the student has not learned at a deeper level. The focus-on-grades approach involves focusing on what is on a test and on shortcuts that the student can use to learn quickly. The focus-on-learning approach involves focusing on learning the most a student can learn in the course and on what the most important material to learn is.
5. What are at least two ways in which the focus-on-learning approach is more effective than the focus-on-grades approach?	The focus-on-learning approach is more effective because it results in deeper learning than the focus-on-grades approach. Deeper learning means that the student will retain the information for the longterm, and not just for a short-term test. In addition, the focus-on-learning approach automatically results in higher exam scores because the student has learned the material he or she needs to know.

Step 2: Read the Chapter

Once you have clarified exactly what it is that you need to learn from the chapter, you are ready to *start reading*. As you read, *keep the learning goal questions in mind*. When you encounter information pertaining to one of your questions, you should make a note of it. Some students like to highlight the information and then write a note for themselves in the margin reminding them why it is highlighted.

Step 3: Answer Your Study Guide Questions

Once you understand the answers to your study guide questions, you should record the answers in the right-hand column of the study guide (see Figure 1). Why? This will allow you to create a series of questions and answers that you can use as a study and regulation tool (see Step 5).

Step 4: Read Your Study Guide Pages

With your study guide completed, you can now study simply by reading through it. It is often helpful to read the pages aloud as a study activity. Read and repeat. You should read your study guide on a regular basis throughout the semester.

Step 5: Use the Study Guide to Test Yourself

Testing yourself as a part of your regular study routine is called **regulation**. This is a key to success, especially if you are going to have an exam based on the learning goals. Hold a blank piece of paper in your hand and use it to cover the right column (the answers). Then read the first question to yourself. Try to answer it. After you state your answer, slide the blank page down to reveal the answer and check your progress. Repeat this with the next questions, and so on, until you finish all the questions. Note any questions that you miss and spend additional time studying those before your next regulation session. Use this regulation strategy on a regular basis throughout the semester. Then, on the night before an exam, you will not need to stay up long hours cramming. By then, all you will probably need to do is read your study guide and regulate one last time. After a good night's sleep, you can wake up refreshed and go tackle the exam with confidence. If you regulate on a very regular basis, as we have described here, you will be so familiar with the most important questions of the course that by the time you take the exam, you are sure to score very high. What's more, the knowledge you have gained will be imprinted in your long-term memory, where it will serve you for years to come.

Student Resources

The following student resources are available for this textbook at www.BVTLab.com:

Practice Questions

Students can work through hundreds of practice questions online. Questions are multiple choice or true/false in format and are graded instantly for immediate feedback.

Flashcards

BVTLab includes sets of flashcards that reinforce the key terms and concepts from each chapter.

Chapter Summaries

A convenient and concise chapter summary is available as a study aid.

PowerPoint™ Slides

All instructor PowerPoints™ are available for convenient lecture preparation and for students to view online for a study recap.

From the Author

We hope this book will help you navigate through your first year of college as successfully as possible! Feel free to contact either one of us with questions or suggestions for improving this book.

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TO THE INSTRUCTOR

This book was written with the student in mind and has been developed as a comprehensive reading and study guide that both student and instructor can use in a course focusing on college success. The book is also written so that students can use it independently, in case they are not enrolled in a college success course. The book is learner centered and will hopefully capture the interest of students and keep them engaged throughout the semester.

This text has several features that we hope will provide additional resources and enrichment to assist the student in becoming a successful college scholar. Many of the features and resources can also be useful in the classroom as activities that will provide valuable experiences for your students. These include 1) chapter roadmaps (which comprise a brief chapter summary, chapter learning goals, and a study checklist), 2) critical thinking activities, 3) a comprehensive test bank, 4) reading comprehension questions, 5) links to websites that complement the chapter, 6) study guide pages for each chapter, and 7) learning activities and assignments designed specifically for each chapter—all in a student-friendly format.

Student-Friendly Format

This text is written in plain, everyday language that is designed to be student friendly and easily understood. Multiple features were designed to be helpful to the student as he or she progresses through the text.

Chapter Roadmaps

Chapter roadmaps are located at the beginning of each chapter. They include an overview of the entire chapter, along with learning goals and a checklist designed to help students focus on the most important concepts as they work through each chapter. The learning goals presented in the chapter roadmap are linked to the study guide (where they are repeated) and also to exam, quiz, and homework questions in the test banks.

Critical Thinking Activities

Immediately following the roadmap page is a critical thinking activity, which is intended to be completed by the student *prior* to reading the chapter. Note that this order is reinforced in the checklist. Each activity poses a problem or issue that will stimulate further critical thinking by students and will help mentally prepare them to get the most from the chapter. This feature was developed in order to engage the student in deeper thought about a topic; the critical thinking activities are also well-suited for use by the instructor in the classroom as a discussion starter.

Reading Comprehension Questions

Four questions have been included throughout each chapter so that students can self-regulate their reading comprehension. The questions have been designed to assess the following four major aspects of reading: 1) knowledge, 2) literal comprehension, 3) inferential comprehension, and 4) analysis. At the end of the book is a table that can be used by the student to record his or her answers and to check them against an answer sheet. The table then allows students to tally the number of questions they got correct in each of the four categories, giving them a general idea of their reading strengths and weaknesses.

Links to Websites

Links to relevant websites are included in each chapter. They are designed to provide additional information and to pique students' interest about the topic.

Study Guide Pages

At the end of each chapter are study guide pages based on the learning goals. Space is provided for student-generated questions and answers. Please refer to “How to Use the Study Guide” (in the section titled “To the Student”) for more detailed information.

Learning Activities and Assignments

The learning activities and assignments include specific interactive exercises that encourage the student to apply concepts covered in each chapter.

Instructor Supplements

We have created the following teaching package for instructors:

BVTLab

An online lab is available for this textbook at www.BVTLab.com, as described in the BVTLab section below.

Instructor's Manual

The Instructor's Manual (IM) provides many resources for the instructor, including teaching suggestions and strategies for each chapter; instructor checklists; student handouts; a catalog of carefully evaluated, lesson-related videos for each chapter; and suggested “tweets” and blog posts for each chapter. New in the seventh edition are lesson plans for each chapter, including both a traditional lesson plan and a flipped class lesson plan for each chapter.

PowerPoint Slides

PowerPoint slides are provided for each chapter. New in the seventh edition are annotations with materials from each chapter to assist you in teaching the content.

Test Bank Files

Test questions were developed to reinforce chapter concepts and to measure progress toward the learning goals, as well as to verify that students have read the chapter. This test bank is available to the instructor for use in homework, quizzes, and/or exams, and can be found at the faculty ancillary website for this text. The test bank includes questions in multiple formats (including multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay) for each chapter, and they are linked to each learning goal. The test bank is available in three database formats: Respondus®, Microsoft® Excel®, and a comma-separated text file. The questions from the test bank are also available as a Microsoft® Word® or text document.

Course Management Software

BVT's course management software, Respondus, allows for the creation of tests and quizzes that can be downloaded directly into a wide variety of course management environments such as Blackboard®, WebCT™, Desire2Learn®, Canvas™, and others.

BVTLab

BVTLab is an affordable online lab for instructors and their students. It includes an online classroom with a grade book and chat room, a homework grading system, extensive test banks for quizzes and exams, and a host of student study resources. Even if a class is not taught in the lab, students can still utilize the resources described below.

Course Setup

BVTLab has an easy-to-use, intuitive interface that allows instructors to quickly set up their courses and grade books, and to replicate them from section to section and semester to semester.

Grade Book

Using an assigned passcode, students register for the grade book, which automatically grades and records all homework, quizzes, and tests.

Chat Room

Instructors can post discussion threads to a class forum and then monitor and moderate student replies.

Student Resources

All student resources for this textbook are available in BVTLab in digital form.

eBook

Students who have purchased a product that includes an eBook can download the eBook from a link in the lab. A web-based eBook is also available within the lab for easy reference during online classes, homework, and study sessions.

Instructor Resource Edition

Hopefully you are reading this from the preface of *College Success: Instructor Resource Edition* (IRE)! The IRE includes, for each chapter, a summary of the objectives, tips and advice from the authors, information on how to create a culture of learning and how that relates to the chapter's contents, a brief overview of the contents, and an Abridged Lesson Plan. (In the Instructor's Manual, we also have full-length lesson plans for both a traditional classroom format and a flipped class format for those instructors seeking more detailed guidance.)

From the Author

We hope this textbook will be valuable to you as you teach students the tools and strategies necessary to succeed in college and beyond. Please let us know if you have suggestions for improvement or other comments. We encourage you to contact BVT if you wish to obtain a copy of *College Success: Instructor Resource Edition* (IRE). Also, if you wish to adapt this book specifically to your own institution's needs, perhaps by adding or modifying portions, please contact BVT Publishing at 800-646-7782.

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TO THE ADMINISTRATOR

Some background information about how this textbook was developed may be of interest to administrators. The personalized, versatile, and cost-effective features of the book are of particular interest.

Our Experience

The institution where David teaches has a one-credit-hour orientation course that, in the past, was required for students who had tested into learning support classes (such as learning support math or learning support English). Typically, only underprepared students enrolled in the course (as the orientation course was not otherwise required).

However, administrators and faculty were seeking practical, effective, and cost-efficient ways to improve learning and to increase retention, completion, and graduation rates. It was clear that a majority of new students entering college had weak or nonexistent organizational skills and poor study strategies. The approach and strategies most commonly employed by students (such as cramming for exams as the primary or sole method of study) appeared to be ineffective and sometimes counterproductive. This was true for students in general—not just for those who had lower entrance exam scores.

We decided to create an orientation course similar to a first-year experience course that would be required for all new students. The instructor would serve as a mentor, and the students in the class would serve as a support group for one another during their first semester. Topics addressed by the course would include basic study skills as well as an orientation to campus policies and procedures. Initially, the course was taught by volunteer faculty as a part of their service to the college. For the first year, we adopted a textbook that was similar in design to the textbooks used in other courses and typical of those used for student success at that time.

Evaluation of the program after the first year revealed a few problems with the textbook. The cost of the book to students was prohibitively high (over \$100), and we found that instructors used very little of the book in their classes (usually only about one chapter). So we began looking for a solution. The second year we tried to run the program without a book, but we found it ineffective and difficult to standardize around central objectives. Finally, I suggested that we produce our own textbook that would address a simple list of core competencies and that would be personalized to our institution and the specific needs of our students. I volunteered to write most of it, and we discovered that BVT could help us publish it for a lower cost than what we would pay to produce it in-house. We personalized the text to our institution, and we decided that it could serve as an orientation manual, a textbook for study skills, and a day planner that the student could use to organize his or her studies—not only for the first year of college but also every year until graduation. Important college events and deadlines were already printed on the calendar within the book.

One way in which we made the first edition of the college success book very cost effective was to include, within the book, approximately forty pages of handouts that were formerly distributed during new-student orientation. In this way we were able to capture the cost of paper, printing, copying, collating, and so on since those orientation handouts were included in our new textbook at no additional cost. The textbooks were distributed to students during orientation, and the portion of the text containing the information from the previous handouts

was used for instruction during orientation. The students were told that the remaining pages of the same book would serve as the textbook for the required student success course during their first semester.

We completed a study examining the impact of the student success program on retention rates at East Georgia State College. Data from the institution's enrollment database were used to examine retention over a fifteen-year period (from 2000 to 2015). The study chronicled the retention rates for students who experienced the student success course since its inception. It also chronicled the retention rates for an equal number of years before the student success course became a requirement. Retention statistics were compared between the years when the student success program was in force and those prior to the inception of the program. While extraneous variables cannot all be accounted for—so causality cannot be inferred—it remains a fact that retention rates have increased for the years that the student success program has been in force. Students of all levels of college readiness who have taken the student success course have experienced higher retention rates than students in the same readiness category that did not have the course.

Customization for Your Campus

College Success: A Concise Practical Guide can be easily customized for your campus and even for different courses and disciplines on your campus. You can include an appendix with all of your printed orientation materials. These can be perforated pages in the bound book or color-coded pages in the loose-leaf format.

Other customizations that you might consider are:

- Rearranging the chapter order
- Deleting unwanted chapters
- Adding chapters with your own content
- Modifying any of the text or illustrations throughout the book
- Creating additional assignments or in-class exercises
- Creating additional lab content or student resources
- Making up your own cover with your university logo
- Including a welcome letter from your president

Please contact BVT Publishing at 800-646-7782 for further information on customization.