

Welcome to the Fall 2005 Semester!

The Success Centers would like to welcome new students and welcome back returning Southwestern students! We look forward to seeing many familiar and new faces in the

Success Center where students can receive free tutoring, access computers, attend workshops, and use many other resources. A friendly staff is available to help you pursue your academic goals.

A Matter of Luck?

At the beginning of each semester, students wish each other “good luck.” Even instructors and staff can be overheard saying “good luck” to the students; however, what happens each semester is rarely a matter of luck. Although some students run into bad luck as car troubles occur, financial burdens strike, or family members experience illness or even death, for most students it is not luck, but the choices they make that have the greatest impact on their success. Some students choose not to buy textbooks. Others buy the books and then choose not to read them or read them in the halls/cafeteria where it appears they spend more time watching or talking to other students than actually reading. Some students choose to work 30+ hours a week reporting they have cell phones, car insurance, gas, and social responsibilities to manage. Finally, some students find no time to study as their weekends are consumed with partying and friends. The choices students make each day have much more impact on their success than the luck they run across. Students: ask yourself what choices are you making and how will these choices help you reach your goals? One more little tidbit that may help with your choices...

Graduates with an associate degree earn an average of \$469,410 more over a 30 year lifetime of employment than high school graduates.

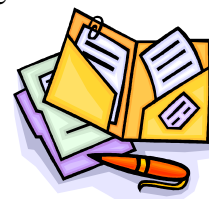


Success Center Website Links Students to Over 100 Academic Support Sites

Check it out at www.swic.edu/successcenter. You can download many free handouts plus link to popular sites on everything from math to writing to study skills.

What’s the Big Deal with a Syllabus?

A syllabus is likely the most important item students will receive from their instructors. Why? The syllabus describes critical information about the course, its objectives, the instructor and contact information, descriptions of major assignments, test dates, course policies, grading scale, and so forth. Most syllabi will answer important questions regarding the attendance policy, make-up tests, how to reach the instructor, etc. It is important to keep every syllabus, transpose the important dates and information into a student planner, and refer to the syllabus often to ensure you are keeping up with the course expectations.



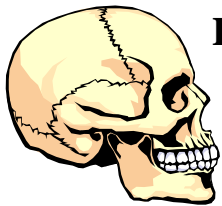
This is a COOL Site!

Go to www.howtostudy.org and under the Resource tab, you will find several free online assessment instruments. The VARK assesses if your learning preference is in the Visual, Aural, Reading, or Kinesthetic category. The Hemisphere Dominance Inventory evaluates if you are “left-brained” or “right-brained,” and other sites evaluate everything from Emotional IQ to temperament. The inventories are free, scored immediately, provide descriptions of the outcomes, and links users to other informational sites. When students have a better understanding of their learning preferences, they can create study strategies tailored to their strengths.

Congratulations to 17 Peer Tutors Who Received National Tutor Certification

Success Center Director, Debbie Alford, had the honor of awarding 17 peer tutors College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) Tutor Certification at the annual Student Awards breakfast in May. The award acknowledges those tutors who have met all criteria to earn the national certification. We are fortunate to have several of these tutors returning this year to share their expertise with students. Returning CRLA certified tutors are: Anne-Marie Clayton, Aimee Dickerson, Melissa Ganley, Christy Garritson, Sharon Gugliotta, Augelique Gross, Kay Jaklitsch, Ashley Jarrett, and Scott Lankford. Congratulations tutors!





Dem Bones, Dem Bones, Dem Crazy Bones!

Anatomy and Physiology students wanting online practice exercises will likely find www.getbodysmart.com an intriguing and fun site. Students can visually learn about the human body using interactive “flash” animation. Additional human biology sites are also posted on the Success Center webpage.

Why Do I Go Blank When I Get an Exam...Even When I've Studied?

It is normal to feel some anxiety before and during a test; however, many students report feeling significant “test anxiety” that seems to cause them to “go blank” during exams. Upon leaving the room, the students sometimes report that they can suddenly recall the answers and further that they made “stupid mistakes.” Why is this?

What students report as test anxiety may actually be a gap in their knowledge or test preparation strategy. Often students will study by reading through notes, perhaps repeating the information in their heads, and looking through the textbook. Understanding what the materials or notes say does not necessarily mean that the students actually KNOW the material well enough to recall it out of context and therefore find themselves going blank. As they “blank out” on the material, anxiety increases as fear of failure increases.

Try these test preparation strategies to reduce anxiety:

1. When reading through the notes, make potential test questions from them. Use note cards to write out (reinforces memory too) questions and put the answers on the opposite side of the card. If the instructor or book provides examples of the concept, include those on the card. Instructors often give examples in test questions to evaluate the students' abilities to apply the concepts.
2. Use the textbook to help you study. In the margins of most textbooks today, authors have highlighted pertinent information. Use these to test yourself on the subject matter. Write out or verbally state out loud the answers to the review at the end of the chapter. Unless students can articulate the answers out loud, often they don't have a solid enough foundation of the material.
3. Have someone test you on the material. When under time constraints, students are required to quickly recall the material.
4. Study new information in small chunks. We typically can only remember about 7-8 bits of information at one time. Learn one chunk of information, before going on to other material.

5. TEST YOURSELF! Test yourself again!
6. When studying, solve math problems without looking at the text. Assign yourself a certain number of problems within a given time frame to create a testing environment similar to the real one.
7. During any test, answer the questions you know as this builds up confidence and helps you earn points.
8. Close the books and note book and try to recall what you've read. Only open the book or notes to trigger key concepts and then try to explain the information, out loud preferably.
9. Before going into the test, write down all the things you've done to prepare for the test. These may be things like: attended all classes, taken good notes, read the chapters, reviewed definitions, used the online practice test, wrote out note cards, studied 3 hours, re-read notes, ... Then, when anxiety hits, instead of reacting to the fear of what



could possibly or possibly not happen in the test, tell yourself, “I'm going to do fine because I have prepared for this test by attending all classes, taking good notes, (continue on with the list you've made). By focusing on what is real or what you've actually done instead of reacting to the anxiety, students tend to stay more focused and settled.

10. Get to the test a few minutes early and claim your seat. Then, leave the room (and the intensity of the pre-test jitters) and use the above strategy to help you focus on what is real...that is that you have prepared well with some new strategies and are going to do fine.
11. Attend the Math Matters Workshop which offers additional tips to reduce math anxiety.
12. Talk with a counselor about the anxiety and utilize the Success Center tutors to help you apply new strategies to prepare for tests.
13. Focused breathing during tests combined with positive self-talk can assist students in gaining composure and minimizing anxiety.

What's New?

Success Center I has a new English Specialist, Cheryl Blake. Actually, Cheryl is not all that new. She worked nine semesters at the E. St. Louis Success Center as an English Specialist and has taught English classes for the college since 2001. Join us in welcoming Cheryl to the Belleville Campus Success Center. We also have two new lab assistants, Francine Chatman and Jennifer Greer, available to assist students with computer related questions in Success Center I.

