

Welcome to the Fall 2006 Semester

To our new students, welcome and for those returning, welcome back! This semester will likely prove challenging. If at any point during the semester, you would like academic assistance, visit the Success Centers located at each campus where you can utilize the free tutoring, attend one of the many workshops, access the online resources, or use the computers for word processing and internet research. Many friendly faces are available to help. Have a great semester!

And the Teachers Say...

Recently, several faculty members from different disciplines were asked, “If you could tell your students what the most important things to know about college are, what would they be?” Here is a combined list of their input:

1. Make college a top priority and dedicate your time and energy to it.
2. College is about learning the skills to make you a better thinker; make the effort and learn the skills.
3. If you need help, don't be afraid to ask.
4. Never miss a class. Too much happens in every one!
5. Do something every day to expose yourself to the material, even if it is just for 15 minutes.
6. Find a study buddy or create a study group.

Hope these tips are helpful. The Success Centers, along with faculty, are here to support you in your academic pursuits.

The Benefits and Drawbacks of PowerPoint Lecture Presentations

Technology has opened the door to new teaching styles. Instructors can take their handwritten notes and condense them into visual PowerPoint presentations that “bullet” core concepts of the lecture. Often, these lecture notes are available on WebCT or the instructor's homepage for students to access. If available before the class period, some students print the lecture outline with 3 slides and 3 note taking boxes per sheet. The students can then use the text boxes to take lecture notes. The instructor's outline can provide clarity and give students a starting point for note taking; however, one of the drawbacks of



powerpoint presentations is that students rely too heavily on the words on the slides without connecting to the relevance of the words. The notes on the slides are only words and intended to just be an outline.

By actively listening and taking meaningful notes, students engage more with the material and writing helps to reinforce concepts into long term memory. The examples given by the instructor are important too and should be written down. College tests rarely ask students to regurgitate definitions, but instead pose application questions where students must apply the concepts through understanding scenarios.

If you would like help with accessing instructor's presentations, logging onto WebCT, taking notes or with memorization strategies, visit the Success Centers and tutors are available to assist. No appointment is needed. Instructors are also happy to provide assistance.



Is Knowing Your Classmates Important?

Feeling uncomfortable in an unfamiliar environment, new college students sometimes tend to remain to themselves. As their comfort level with classmates, the instructor, and college in general increases, students will initiate interaction with fellow classmates. The benefits of meeting classmates are many. First, peers can understand some of the frustration and confusion that students inevitably experience at some point during their college years. Second, classmates can often quickly clarify a question. Third, if a class is missed, another student can explain the notes and allow you to copy his/her notes. If you've asked ahead of time to keep notes for you if you ever happen to miss, that's even better. Fourth, study buddies or study groups sometimes form from classroom interactions. Fifth, since learning to work collaboratively is an important life skill needed in the workforce, many faculty members require group projects of their students. When that dreaded “group project” gets assigned, students feel more comfortable working together when they've already made connections. And finally, it's just more pleasant to go into a classroom if there are people you enjoy talking to!

Congratulations to 16 Tutors Who Received National Tutor Certification

Success Center Director, Debbie Alford, had the honor of awarding 16 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: Nathan Decker, Jennifer Giovanetti, Brian Hagene, Lara Kern, Keri Miller, Aaron Papp, Pamela Plunkett, Lisa Sanderson, and JaCaria Williams. Congratulations tutors on your accomplishments and we are grateful for the expertise you bring the Success Centers!



Give a Hoot for the OWL!

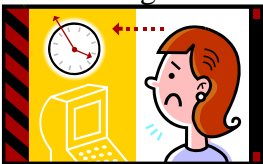
Southwestern Illinois College has an Online Writing Lab. We call it the OWL for short. Students wanting a paper reviewed can come into the

Success Center and meet individually with a tutor or can submit the paper to the OWL. It is a simple process and within two school days, a tutor will review the paper and return it with comments and suggestions for improving the paper. To submit a paper, register for STORM services and then follow the links to OWL.

Reducing Test Anxiety

Thanks to English Specialist Cathi Teel for submitting this article.

Classes are going well for you. You go to class prepared even though you work about twenty-five hours per week. You take notes in class. Then, the third week of the semester arrives, and you must take that dreaded first test. You get home from work and begin to study the textbook starting with page 1. Are you anxious about running out of study time? Are you nervous about forgetting the material unless you cram for the test the night before? Some anxiety can be helpful in motivating you to do your best. However, if the anxiety you are feeling becomes serious enough to cause physical illness or panic during the exam, there are strategies to help ease your test anxiety.



- Studying over time for the test may be one solution to help you improve your memory because the brain will store the

information in long-term memory. Cramming for a test is like trying to remember the names of five new people you've been introduced to all at once; you may not recall their names several days later because the brain has stored the information in short-term memory.



- Review material weekly and review class notes with a classmate to store the information in your long-term memory.
- Try studying copies of previous tests and consider finding a study partner. Study buddies can give another perspective and help with accountability.
- On a short-answer/essay test, write brief notes of answers on the back of the test, and underline key words from the questions to stay focused.

Practicing these new skills can ease the physical symptoms of test anxiety: sweaty hands, tight hand muscles, and the panicky feeling of forgetting information and running out of time. Sometimes you can gain more control over the outcome of the test by changing studying and test-taking strategies.

Perhaps some of these tips will work for you. When we struggle, sometimes we mistakenly decide there is little we can do to change the situation. If you need more help easing test anxiety, the Success Center at the Belleville Campus offers study skills videos on overcoming test anxiety. Additionally, tutors or counselors can work with you on specific anxiety-reducing strategies; or attend one of the Reducing Math Anxiety or Academic Success Kafé workshops offered by the Counseling Center.

Test Anxiety Resources

The Success Center will assist you in confronting your test anxiety head on with a host of resources:

- **VIDEOS:** Consider viewing: *Test Anxiety* or *Test Taking Without Fear* by Dave Ross. These free videos are short (15-30 minutes) and available in Success Center II. After viewing a video, meet with one of our tutors and see how they can help you feel more comfortable with the subject material too.
- **WEBSITES:** Check out one of these websites packed full of valuable hints:
www.mtsu.edu/~devstud2/anxiety.html
<http://www.couns.uiuc.edu/brochures/testanx.htm>
- **BOOKS** *Overcoming Math Anxiety* by Sheila Tobias
Succeed With Math: Every Student's Guide to Conquering Math Anxiety by Sheila Tobias

What's New

Welcome to English Specialist Tiffany Smith who joined the Success Center staff in the summer 2006. Tiffany is assigned to the E. St. Louis Success Center and available to help with reading, writing, and speaking assignments.

