Making the Grade

By Stephanie S. Marshall

Going to college is like starting a new job. As you learn how to do the job, you build confidence in your ability to perform. College offers the same challenges. Once the task is learned, you’re on the road to becoming a successful student. What does it take to make the grade in college? Performing at your highest level requires the following:

• Discipline
• Communication
• Time
• Motivation

Discipline is learned from an early age. The ability to acquire new information in college is developed through practice. Studying every day will help you retain the knowledge stored in your memory. You will learn there are consequences for poor performance. For example, if you received a D grade and want to transfer, that D grade can lower your grade point average and make it less likely that you will be accepted by the college of your choice. Monitor your grades throughout the semester to ensure that you will pass the class.

Communication in class is as essential as good attendance. Building relationships with your instructors and classmates will help you perform better. Participate in class discussions and set up a meeting with your instructor at least once a semester to discuss your academic progress. Remember to clearly state your name, phone number and the purpose of your call or email. Connect with classmates to exchange phone numbers and email addresses in case you miss class or want to develop a study group.

You must be willing to put in the time it takes to pass the class. That involves developing good study habits and the ability to manage your time effectively. Hand in assignments on time and avoid making excuses. Add extra study hours and limit social activity to improve your grades. Get help when needed and don’t wait until the end of the term.

Motivation is the catalyst for success in college. You must attend class regularly and be prepared to work. Ask questions and listen to your instructors and peers. Participating in class keeps you motivated and interested. Stay confident in your ability to make decisions and be enthusiastic.

If you are currently working and going to school, be conscious of your workload. Never take on more than you can handle. Talk to an adviser and your boss about your schedule. Taking action at the beginning of a semester can make a difference in your grades. Remember parents, relatives, friends and neighbors can also be an excellent resource. College is an exciting place to have new experiences. You are the creator of this journey. Go forth and achieve!

“Failure is the condiment that gives success its flavor.”

- TRUMAN CAPOTE, AUTHOR (1924-1984)