



CHAPTER

3

Challenge Number One Academics

Learning Objectives

After completing this Chapter, you will be able to:

- *Understand the differences between high school and college and obtain skills to help you with the transition*
- *Be a proactive learner by building relationships with professors and understanding policies and procedures*
- *Manage your time by keeping a calendar, making to-do lists, prioritizing tasks, and mapping out your day*
- *Apply study skills for note-taking, writing papers, and taking tests*

Student-Athletes Say:

- I take some many notes in class my hand hurts. I don't know if I will ever be able to study and remember everything the professors say.
- The quiz had 25 multiple choice questions and a short essay. I can't imagine what a test will be.
- I thought I wrote a decent paper. The professor wrote all over it and told me to try again.
- Last semester, I was studying, practicing hard, and trying to do too much at once. I was barely sleeping 4 hours a night and wasn't eating very well. I ended up get really sick after finals week.
- During my junior year in college, I finally mastered the art of effective time management. I ran track, and I learned to set aside time in the morning before practice to do school work that way after practice or meets when I was tired, I could just relax and have some time for myself.
- Last year, a friend of mine played baseball for a big school. After his first year, he had a 1.76 GPA and he wasn't allowed to continue playing baseball. He even lost his scholarship. Seeing what he went through, I knew I had to get off to a good start academically. I don't want anything to jeopardize my eligibility.

Many years ago when student-athletes arrived on campus their performance in the classroom was not a priority. Often it was left them to “sink or swim” in their classes. If they disappeared, dropped out or allowed to slide through, it really did not matter as long as they played their sport. And while a team might miss them if they “disappeared”, there was always another student coming along to fill the void they left behind. Sadly, many of these early student-athletes never got an education, a degree or a start toward a meaningful and productive career.

Today success in the classroom is equal in importance to success on the playing field. Being academically eligible is a requirement for college student-athletes. The first challenge for college student-athletes is academics. Large classes, class projects, and increased amounts of writing and reading are issues faced by every new college student including new college student-athletes. Even students who have continuously excelled in the classroom or took advanced placement courses in high school can have a difficulty transitioning to the college learning environment. Different skills are needed to succeed in college than in high school, junior college or two year colleges. The demands are greater and there is a greater need for self discipline in your

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This chapter focuses the learning skills you need to meet the academic challenge. Schools do care about you getting an education, learning, completing a degree and developing a realistic and meaningful career plan. To get started complete the Student-Athlete Challenge # 1 Academics Self Assessment. Think about how you are as a student. What is your pattern and style? What is your attitude and behavior in class? How can your academics add value to your success as a student-athlete?

Every day is a school day when you are in college. And professors see their class as the most important. It is up you to meet the demands of just not one professor but every professor you have each term. Professors expect and require you to work before, during and after class. And to be eligible to play, you need to meet this challenge.

From the first minute of class the professor was writing on the board and flipping through a PowerPoint presentation. He gave out the class website and told us to download the lecture notes. He fired off a steady stream of ideas, dates and details. I was taken back. I just listened for several minutes and then he noticed me sitting there, my arms folded. “I expect you to know all this”, he commented looking right at me. So I started taking notes, lots of them and halfway through the class my hand was hurting from writing. By the end of class, I had over ten pages of notes. His final words were to read the homework assignment for next class and be ready to discuss it. I wondered how I would ever remember all the material from today, read the assignment and be ready for the next class. I wondered if I could do it.

The learning skills discussed in this chapter are ones that you will use everyday. The first part of this chapter highlights the differences between high school and college. You will be encouraged to take action today to build a good foundation for success in the classroom. Next you will focus on five learning skills: time management, effective class notes, test taking, reading and writing. Developing and practicing strong learning skills leads to success in the classroom as well as on the playing field. As you work through this chapter it is important to realize that this chapter is not about specific course content. It is about the learning skills that will help you be a successful student. If you need help today with a specific course, talk with the course instructor, teaching assistant or an academic tutor (do not wait – you can also talk with the instructor of this course or your coach).

Understanding How College Differs From High School

You have officially arrived. You are a collegiate student-athlete. You may be worried about the transition from high school sports to college level sports, the competition is much tougher and the expectations are much higher. The same holds true for the academic side of the student-athlete equation. Things are just different.

In high school, you probably knew your teachers pretty well and were comfortable with the administrators, the school system, and the rules. You probably never had to give too much thought about what classes you were going to take, and knew exactly who to turn to when you had a question or concern. Maybe your parent or guardian would nag you to do your homework, and maybe they filled out all the forms and paperwork that the school required. In college, the game changes a little, and it's up to you to navigate your own way.

To prepare you for the transition to college academics, here are a few changes that you can expect.

- I. Bigger Class Sizes:** You may have gone to a small high school or are accustomed to small class sizes where the teacher knows your name and you receive a lot of personal attention. At some colleges and universities, you may continue to have these small classes, but at many universities, classes can be quite large. You may find yourself in a big lecture hall with hundreds of other students. You may have classes where your professor doesn't know your name, and doesn't even take role. Some students have a difficult time adjusting to larger class sizes. They may feel lost in a big class. They may be unmotivated by the lack of individual attention, and start skipping classes because they think no one will notice or care. The reality is that if you're in a large class, it's even more important that you attend classes and monitor your own progress in the course. A helpful hint for finding success in a large class is to actively participate in class. Active participation requires that you attend class consistently, take thorough notes during lectures, attend any additional review

sections or study groups, and seek clarification for material you do not understand. If you have questions, visit the professor or teaching assistant during office hours. Make a point of getting to know classmates and consider joining a study group or working with a tutor if you need extra help.

2. **Diversity:** When you hear the word diversity, it is natural to think of skin color. However diversity is much more. Diversity is in thought, size, education, gender, sexual orientation, economics/class status, geographic location, abilities/disabilities, etc. Your classmates and teammates will be diverse. We go through life viewing other individuals based on what we know, have heard, have seen or have been told. When we view people or a situation, we use our existing information about a group of people or similar situation to determine how we will act (or react), what opinion we form or what labels we will use. At times we do this without questioning if our information is factual, and often times isn't. College is a time to embrace differences and learn from people who have different views and beliefs.
3. **Choosing Your Own Classes:** In high school, you may have had few options when it came to your class schedule. There were many required courses and your day was packed from morning through afternoon. In college, you have much more flexibility in terms of the courses that you take. You will have courses that are required for your major but you will also have classes that you can take as electives. When choosing classes, there are two very important resources at your disposal; the college catalog and your academic advisor. Before choosing your classes, read the catalog and get a sense of what courses are needed to complete your degree. Also, look to see in what order classes should be taken and when courses are offered. Meet with your academic advisor to map out a plan of action. This will help ensure that you fulfill all your academic requirements. Finally, when selecting courses, take into consideration who is teaching the class and when the class is offered. For example, if you know that you have a hard time getting up in the morning and have a hard time focusing early in the day, it may not be a good idea to register for an 8:00 am class.
4. **Managing Your Own Time:** In high school your time was very structured. Perhaps a bus or a parent dropped you off at school the same time each morning and you had a set study hall. You may have had daily homework assignments to make sure that you were keeping up with your studies. In college, you have a more freedom, and with that freedom greater responsibility. You are responsible for keeping up with your work, reading assignments, getting to morning classes. As a student-athlete, you have even more to fit into your schedule. In addition to academics, you have practices, games, and team meetings. It becomes very important for you to learn how to budget your own time. It takes discipline to set aside time to go to the library or to read class assignments. It takes maturity to forgo a late night outing with friends so that you can make sure that you get to bed early enough that you can make it to your early morning class on time. You will not have a parent or guardian to bang on your door in the morning to make sure you are up in time for class, the responsibility becomes yours.

- 5. Less Frequent Tests:** As a high school student, you probably had weekly or even daily homework assignments. You probably also had several quizzes and tests for each class. In college there are fewer tests and assignments. Sounds like great news, right? On the surface, fewer tests seem like a blessing. But really, having fewer tests and assignments means that you have fewer checkpoints to see if you are on the right track. It also means a lot more individual reading and studying. As a college student, you will receive a course syllabus in the beginning of the semester. It will outline the material that will be covered in the course and it will also give the due dates for assignments and tests. Typically, college courses only have two or three tests or exams per semester. Courses may have a writing, research, lab, or participation component, but other than that, most of your final grade is comprised of your score on two or three exams. With only a few tests, there are only a few chances for you to earn points toward your final grade. If you perform poorly on a test, it becomes difficult to dig yourself out of a hole. Here are some hints for adjusting to fewer tests and assignments:
- Mark tests and assignments on your calendar. Don't let tests sneak up on you. As soon as you get your syllabus, identify tests and assignment due dates and budget your time accordingly.
 - Keep up with your reading. Don't put off your reading until the week before the exam, you will never get it all done in time.
 - Take good notes during class, and review them periodically.
- 6. More Independent Learning:** In high school, most teachers provide you with the materials you need to succeed. Teachers give you the information that you need to study for tests and complete your assignments. Even in tough classes or advanced level courses, your teacher probably laid out a framework for what is expected. Students can be successful without having to utilize many outside resources. In college, professors are less likely to provide you with all the facts and materials that you will need to succeed. Professors lay the framework for what you need to know but they expect you to do additional reading, writing, and research on your own to get a fuller understanding of the subject matter. With more independent work and more critical thinking, analysis, and writing required, it is helpful for students to utilize campus resources such as the writing center, the reference desk, and the library. Take time when you first arrive on campus to become familiar with the campus library system. Learn how to use your library's online catalog system and how to conduct an internet search.

ACTION STEPS

- What is one thing about college classes that is different from your high school classes? How will you adjust to this difference?
- Where does the information about people who are different from you come from? Family? Media? Personal experiences? Have you ever felt “different”?
- Describe a time when you performed really well in school. For example, you got an A on a final exam. What made you successful in that situation?

Be a Proactive Learner

You are responsible for your academic success. It is your choice. To a large degree it will come down to your attitude and self respect. There is a lot of opportunity and resources on a college campus. You need to believe that you can be and are good student. Here are three actions you can take today to build a foundation to support your academic studies.

I. Be a Student First

As a student-athlete, you wear several hats. You are a student, an athlete, a son or daughter, a friend, a roommate, possibly a girlfriend or boyfriend, and maybe even an employee. It can be quite challenging to be all of these things at once, and it's particularly hard to be a dedicated student and an elite athlete at the same time. Often, student-athletes are forced to make hard decisions between sports and their commitment to their academics. Student-athletes are often pulled in two directions at once, and forced to choose one over the other. For example, you may have to choose between going to the training room with your teammate to get iced and stretched out before practice or sitting through an Introduction to Psychology lecture in an auditorium with a hundred other classmates. Which would you choose?

The bottom line is that you are a student first. Without being a student first and foremost, you would not even have the opportunity to be a collegiate athlete. Skipping a class today may not seem like a big deal, but things add up and if you do not give proper attention to your studies, you may find yourself doing poorly academically and may even find yourself ineligible to play. There will be away games and travel that may take you away from your classes. It is unrealistic to think that on occasion, your involvement with sports will not interfere or preempt your school work, but those instances should be the exception and not the rule. Remember that academic conduct is to be taken very seriously. Below are a few rules for academic conduct that must be upheld to maintain your status as a student-athlete.

STUDENT REFLECTION

Academic Conduct

How is your academic conduct? Do you:

1. Attend classes regularly, complete all academic assignments, and adhere to the University's Academic Integrity Guidelines?
2. Consult with academic advisors and attend tutoring sessions, as directed?
3. Maintain an academic load of at least twelve (12) hours per semester and make satisfactory progress toward a degree, and accept responsibility for maintaining academic eligibility?
4. Complete at least six credits and attain appropriate grade point average each semester?

Build Rapport With Professors

Professors will treat you as adults and in turn, they expect you to act as a mature responsible individual. Professors are great people, but let's face it, they have busy schedules and are not in the business of holding students hands. While they want you to succeed, they are not going to chase after you to make sure that you come to class or turn in your assignments. Rather, they expect you to seek them out if there is something you don't understand, if something is wrong, or when you have a conflict with class. It is your responsibility to build a good working rapport with professors. To build a good relationship with a professor, you should be conscientious about your work, put forth your best effort, be honest, communicate openly, respect their time, and take their class seriously. You will find that the respect that you show will be reciprocated.

Playing a sport means that on occasion there will be the occasional conflict with class and assignments. It is important that you learn to handle these situations responsibly. Here are a few pointers for how to deal with a class conflict:

- **Find out what is expected from you by professors.** Each professor has his or her own set of rules regarding their class structure, attendance and grading. In the beginning of the semester, find out what the attendance policy is and when assignments and tests are due. See if there are any obvious conflicts between your athletic schedule and the course. If your professor has a very strict attendance policy and you already see that you will have to miss two classes due to games, you may wish to switch into another course that better fits your schedule or speak with your coach or advisor about other options.
- **Be up front with professors.** Make your professors aware of your schedule and involvement with athletics before there is a problem. At the start of the semester, email your professors and let them know if that you are a student-athlete but that academics

are your first priority. If there are days that you will be out of town for away games or meets, let your professors know in advance. Apologize in advance for missing class and find out if there is anything that you can do to make up work.

- **Make up all work that you miss.** If you do have to miss a class, make up all the work that you missed as soon as possible. Ask for notes from a classmate or ask a friend to tape record the class lecture for you.
- **Be respectful of classroom policies.** If a professor has a rule about being on time for class or turning off cell phones in class, respect it. Do your best to uphold policies and don't ask for exceptions.
- **Don't make excuses!** You may think that the story about your dog eating your homework was pretty convincing, but professors weren't born yesterday. Don't lie about why you missed class or turned in an assignment late. You won't fool anyone. Professors will be much more understanding if you are honest and explain your situation. You are accountable for both your successes and your short comings, and showing ownership and responsibility is a sign of maturity that professors will respect.

There will be times that you have to make hard decisions regarding school and sports and sometimes there has to be a compromise. It is important to speak to your not only your professors, but also your coaches about these conflicts.

Follow Academic Policies and Procedures

There is a laundry list of rules that you must follow in order to register for classes, be academically eligible to play sports, make academic progress, earn a degree, and graduate. Each school's policies and rules vary. Below is an exercise that will help you learn your school's academic rules.

Use your school's web site or your academic catalog to answer the questions below:

1. Who is your academic advisor?
2. How do you register for classes?
3. When is the add / drop period over?
4. How many classes / credit hours must you take each semester to play sports?
5. What GPA / QPA must you maintain to be eligible to play?
6. When and how can you declare a major?
7. Where can you find your degree requirements?
8. What happens if you withdraw from a class?

ACTION STEPS

- Describe a time where sports conflicted with school. Did school or sports win out and why?
- List three things you should do if you had to miss class due to an athletic event.

How to Manage Your Time

There are three main components of effective time management; planning your semester, making to do lists, and utilizing a day planner. Using these three skills together will help you manage your time.

Plan Your Semester

Planning your semester requires that you take a step back and look at the big picture. To plan your semester, do the following steps:

- Purchase or download a monthly calendar so that you can see the entire semester at a glance.
- Use your athletic schedule to identify dates that you have home games or competitions, travel, away games, tournaments, and any other special events that are related to your sport.
- Use your syllabi from each of your classes to identify when assignments are due or when you have tests and exams. Mark any special lectures or any other important class dates on your calendar.
- Consult your school's academic calendar and add any important academic dates and deadlines to you calendar. Include the add/drop deadline, spring break, course registration days, and other campus events on your calendar.
- Finally, mark any social commitments on your calendar. These include birthdays, parents' weekend, or events or activities that you plan in advance with friends or family.
- Look for conflicts in your schedule or things that overlap. For example, you may notice that you have a test for your Art History class the same day that you are away for a soccer game. Once you have identified the conflict, you can plan accordingly. You should speak to your professor about this at the start of the semester and see if you can take the test early before you leave for your game or discuss the situation with your coach and see if there is a way that you can be there for the test. The sooner you realize that you have a time conflict and

Use a Day Planner

The first step in managing your daily activity is purchasing a day planner. Your day planner should have a designated space for each day of the week, and that space should be divided into hour or half hour increments. Fill out your day planner and include all scheduled activities for the day. Fit your classes, practice, meetings, and appointments, and special events into the time slots. Include information like location so that you remember to give yourself enough time to travel from one activity to the next.

Once you have your daily schedule mapped out, you will be able to see gaps in your day where you can fit in items from your To Do list. For example, if you have class from 1:00 to 2:30 and don't have practice until 4:00, you may choose to kit in a quick trip to the bookstore, an item on your To Do list for the day. Mapping out your day and creating an hour by hour schedule of your time will help you budget your time and avoid procrastination. You will have a visual representation of how you spend your time, which activities take up the majority of your time, and where you are likely to waste time.

Practice planning your day by completing the grid below. Be sure to account for all of your time.

STUDENT REFLECTION

Seven day plan. What is your pattern?

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
5-6							
6-7							
7-8							
8-9							
9-10							
10-11							
11-12							
12-1							
1-2							
2-3							
3-4							
4-5							
5-6							
6-7							

ACTION STEPS

- ❑ Post your semester plan on the wall of your room. Make it visible for you and others to see. Encourage your teammates to do the same. At team study halls discuss your semester plan.
- ❑ Purchase 5" x 8" note cards and write on the cards your "Daily To Do List". Mark off the items you do as you complete them during the day. At the end of the day look at the card and see how you did. Use the card to plan the next day.
- ❑ Post your seven day plan you created in this section on the wall of your room. Make it visible for you and others to see. Encourage your teammates to do the same. At team study halls discuss your seven day plan. How are they same and different?

How to Take Classroom Notes

Just going to class is not enough to be a successful. To be a successful student, you must be an active learner in the classroom. This requires that you not only attend class but that you pay attention, ask questions, participate, and most importantly, take notes. Below are five tips for being a successful learner in the classroom.

- **Be prepared for class:** Have a notebook or binder for each class. Label your notebook or use different colors for different classes so that you don't accidentally grab the wrong one. Avoid writing notes on random pieces of paper. Inevitably scrap papers will get lost or your notes will fall out of sequence. Bring your notebook, binder, or any handouts or reading materials with you to every class. Also, have a pen or pencil with you, and keep a spare on hand. Bring a highlighter or an alternate color with you to class in case you want to emphasize something and make it stand out.
- **Be a Good Listener:** Taking notes begins with listening. To be a good listener, you should look at your instructor, sit up in your chair, and find a seat in the classroom where you can see the blackboard or screen and hear the instructor. Don't hide in the back of the classroom where you cannot see or hear.
- **Ask Questions:** If you miss something that is said during class or you do not fully understand what was said, ask the professor to repeat the material. If you are uncomfortable asking professors to repeat themselves during a lecture, wait until after class and ask for clarification. If there is something missing in your notes or something that you are not sure that you wrote down correctly, you can also ask a classmate to compare notes with you to see if your notes are consistent with theirs. Make sure your notes are accurate and that you understand what was said during class. Professors tend to include much

class material on tests and exams.

- **Think Through Material:** Instead of simply writing down word for word what is said in class, it is helpful to think through what is said in class and relate it to what you already know. By thinking through material you can analyze and apply what you are learning which will help you remember it and put it in a different context.
- **Organize Your Notes:** Follow a consistent note taking format. Use a numeric or alphabetical outline form, underline vocabulary words that you define. Start new topics on a new page.
- **Stay Alert and Present:** Don't let your mind wonder, keep your head up. Don't try to do other things like play on your laptop, text message, or read or finish assignments for another class. Don't try to read ahead, stay on the pace of your professor.
- **Be Consistent:** Use the same method over and over and be consistent in all your classes. Don't skip a day.

ACTION STEPS



- ❑ Note taking is a study skill and requires practice. Note taking can be used during class lectures as well as when you read text books. The key to good note taking is being organized. Below is an example of how to organize notes. Use this format to go back and outline/take notes on this chapter
 - I. Class Information
 - A. Class
 - B. Instructor
 - C. Date
 - D. Chapters Covered
 - E. Topic / Overall Theme
 - II. Main Idea
 - A. Supporting Idea 1
 1. Examples:
 2. Vocabulary / Definitions:
 3. Keywords:
 - B. Supporting Idea 2
 1. Examples:
 2. Vocabulary / Definitions:
 3. Keywords:
 - C. Concepts/Theories:
 - D. Applications:

1. How does this information relate to previous knowledge?
2. How does this information differ from what I already know?
3. What makes this information significant?

How to Take Tests

An upcoming test can be a source of stress and anxiety for students. The key to being a good test taker lies in the preparation. How you prepare for a test has a direct impact on how well you perform. The first thing to step to preparing for a test is knowing what to study. Make sure that you understand what your professor is expecting of you. Refer to your syllabus to see what chapters and topics will be included on the test. Make sure you know whether a test or exam is comprehensive and covers everything you have learned up until that point or whether it only focuses on a few chapters, the most recent work that you have done.

Once you have identified chapters and topics that will be included, identify key terms within those chapters and lessons. Define these terms and practice reciting and writing the definitions. You may wish to create a glossary of terms or write each key word on an index card or flash card. You can use flashcards to go over vocabulary and key terms throughout your day. For example, you can review definitions while waiting for the campus shuttle or on the bus ride to an away game.

In addition to identifying key words, also identify lists, diagrams, or charts that you covered in your reading or classes. Lists, diagrams, charts and graphs may appear in an exam as a short answer or essay.

Match your study style to the exam format. If your professor says that the exam will be all essays make sure you study large topics and main concepts. If the exam is multiple choice or true and false, focus on vocabulary, numbers, dates, or smaller details that the professor emphasized.

To study for a test or exam, do not wait until the night before. Give yourself at extra time so that you can go back through your class notes and reading and determine what areas the professor emphasized, what areas are likely to be on the test, what areas you feel confident that you know, and what areas you really need to focus on. Giving yourself lead time before a test will allow you to organize your study materials, clarify anything you do not understand from your notes or readings, and make study review sheets or flash cards.

Finally, the day of your test, you should arrive early. If you are running late, you are less likely to be focused. Make sure you have a pen or pencil and any other needed supplies or mate-

rials with you. Before you begin, skim over the test. See the format and read all the directions. Decide how much time you can spend on each section. Be aware of how much time you have to complete the test. Do sections or questions that seem easy first. This will get you in the rhythm and will help you recall information that may help you answer more difficult questions. If you get stuck on a question, do not waste too much time. Move ahead and come back to it at the end.

Often, a professor will tell the class what type of format will be used. For example, the test may be multiple choice, true/false, short answer, essay. Depending on the format, you should alter how you prepare and the strategy you take when taking the test. Sometimes, when students know in advance that a test is multiple choice, they study less because they think that the test will be easy because the answers will appear somewhere on the page. Multiple choice tests aren't necessarily easier. Multiple choice actually allows professors to test on more specific and smaller pieces of information. In addition, the language of the questions may be confusing to you. When preparing for an objective multiple choice test, try to identify topics, themes, and key words from your notes and text that may appear in a question. When taking a multiple choice test, read questions carefully. Look out for phrases like always or never. Answers that say always or never are often incorrect. Watch out for whether they are asking for the right answer or the one answer that is not correct. Eliminate options that you know are incorrect to narrow your choices.

If answering a short answer question or essay, make sure to be direct, make your point, and then support your point. Don't waste too much time on filler sentences. It helps to outline your answer to an essay question before writing it.

Answer all questions. Don't leave questions blank. Remember, there is always room for partial credit. Once you have answered all the questions, if time permits, go back and check your work. It is okay to use the entire time that a professor gives. Don't rush to finish just because other students may be finished and turning in their tests.

ACTION STEPS



- ❑ Prepare a list of your upcoming test for each of your classes. For each test complete the following information
 - Material covered in test (Chapters, assignments, readings, and class lectures)
 - Key words, diagrams and charts.
 - Exam format (essay, short answers, multiple choice, true / false, fill in the blank). Is the exam written, oral, or computerized.

- ❑ Make a course test study schedule (same as a practice schedule for your sport). When will you start with the fundamentals (i.e. key words, diagrams, charts), review your notes for each chapter, assignment, readings and class lectures) and strategize how best match your study plan with the test format (i.e. essay, short answer, multiple choice).

How to Read Textbooks

One of the main differences between high school and college academics is the level of independent learning that is required by students. Typically, college students are required to read independently prior to class. The amount of reading you will have to do in college is probably much greater than what you were used to in high school, and at first the amount may be overwhelming. Reading the texts, articles, journals, papers, and novels that are assigned for class is critical to being successful in the classroom. Professors often move through course material quickly and assume that everyone has read the corresponding text before coming to class. If you have not done your reading, it will be easy to get behind. When you have a class only a few times a week, it is hard to get caught up and dig yourself out of a hole. Therefore, it is extremely important that you stay on top of your reading. The last thing you want to do is cram an entire semester worth of reading into a day or two just before an exam.

Reading for class is also important because professors will expect you to discuss what you read and learned during class. Many smaller classes will be driven by peer discussion. You will do yourself and your classmates a disservice if you do not read before class and come to class prepared to contribute to the discussion.

When you read, begin by previewing the chapter. Skim through the chapter focusing on headings and bold words to get an idea of what you are going to be learning. Identify key topics or themes. Begin to draw on what you already know about the topic. For example, this chapter is about academics, before you start reading it, you should recall of your own experiences as a student.

While reading, be an active learner. Take notes or highlight items that are important. This will help you focus on critical points when you return to the text to study and review. Go back to sections that are confusing and reread them. Take note of words that are defined and items that are listed. These items usually appear on tests and quizzes.

Reading the assigned literature is only the first step in studying. Studying is a process that takes place over the entire semester. Studying does not only occur the day before a big exam—that is cramming! Studying requires consistent and repetitive learning of material. Studying requires that you read, rehearse, review, and retest yourself until you have memorized, understand, and can apply what you have learned.

Below are some helpful study tips:

- **Location, Location, Location!:** Have you ever heard the expression ‘location is everything?’ Well, when it comes to studying, this statement holds true. When reading or studying, it is important that you find a quiet place, without distractions. That place should have good lighting, plenty of table surface to spread out your materials. Become familiar with the library and visit it when you need to focus on your school work.
- **Stay Alert:** If you are dozing off while you’re reading, you probably won’t be very productive. After all, it’s very hard to read with your eyes closed. Sit upright in a chair rather than lying on our bed or lounging n front of the TV. Be an active reader by taking notes, outlining, or highlighting as you read. This will help you stay engaged with what you’re reading.
- **Organize Your Study Materials:** Keep your notes, study sheets, and readings in a notebook, folder, or binder. When you sit down to study for an exam, have all your materials in front of you. Group reading and notes together by topic.
- **Jog Your Memory With Creative Memorization Tricks:** Memorization is an important part of studying. When you have lists of things to remember, it helps to use creative tricks such as making words or sayings out of the first letters of each item. For example, you may have an easier time remembering the five great lakes by remembering one word- HOMES which stands for Lakes Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior.

ACTION STEPS



- Make space a spot in your room for all of your class reading assignment materials (books, articles, papers, printouts of class notes and assignments from the internet). Typically student-athletes like to keep them on their desks (maybe a shelf above the desks).
- For each class make a list of the readings. If your professors have electronic version of the class readings on a schedule print a copy for each class. Look at the readings to get an idea of what you are going to learn. Make and post on the wall of your room a weekly schedule of your reading assignments.

How to Write Papers

Writing papers in college can be an overwhelming task. Whether you have to write a two page paper or a twenty page paper, there are a few basic principles to follow. First and foremost, a paper is your opportunity to express a point and to support that point either with factual infor-

mation that you have researched or with your own sound reasoning. Writing assignments are a great way to express what you have learned and utilize your creativity.

The first step in writing an effective paper is to create an outline. An outline will help you organize your thoughts and information and will serve as a road map for writing your paper. Your outline should include the main point or topic, background information or an introduction, main points, analysis or synthesis, and a conclusion.

From your outline, you can begin to write your paper one paragraph at a time. Remember that paragraphs include an opening sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. The opening sentence usually includes the topic of that paragraph. Make sure that you incorporate transition sentences from paragraph to paragraph so that your work flows and is easy for the reader to follow.

Content: It is important that you get your facts straight. Use the library and the internet to research the topic that you are writing about and make sure that your facts are current.

Style: It is important that you follow the rules of the assignment, this includes adhering to page limits, font size and style and margins. You must also be careful to adhere to academic policies regarding citing resources, quotes or other people's work. If you use other people's writings, you must be careful to cite them as to avoid plagiarism. If you have questions regarding how to properly cite someone else's work, visit your school's learning or writing center.

Accuracy: Finally, proofread your work. Go through what you have written and check it for spelling and grammatical errors. Read your paper aloud so that you can hear how it sounds. Sometimes you can tell if a sentence is not structured properly or doesn't make sense if you stumble over it while reading it out loud.

If you are having difficulty writing a paper, visit the writing center or speak to the professor or teaching assistant for the class. Take advantage of the resources available to you at your school. Remember that writing is a process. You may not sit down and write an entire paper in one sitting. You may have to make several drafts and revisions.

Don't wait until the last minute. The writing process takes time. There are six key steps to writing an effective paper.

- A. Brainstorm
- B. Outline
- C. Write a first draft
- D. Make Revisions
- E. Edit
- F. Do a Final Proof Read

ACTION STEPS

- ❑ Write a three paragraph essay (each paragraph with four to six sentences) on the Pro and Cons of being a college student-athlete. Follow the guide below to go through the first three steps of the writing process (Brainstorm, Outline, and Write First Draft)
- A. Brainstorm: Write down what comes to minds when you think about the positive things about being a student-athlete

Make a list of all the negative things or things that you dislike about being a student-athlete

- B. Outline: Organize your thoughts into an outline

- I. Paragraph 1: Introduce Topic

- II. Make First Point

i. Support First Point

2. Support

3. Support

III. Paragraph 2: Transition

i. Second Point:

1. Support Second Point:

2. Support:

3. Support:

III. Paragraph 3: Conclusion

C. Write First Draft: On a separate piece of paper write a short essay using your outline as a guide.

PLUGGED IN TO SPORTS

***Student-Athletes and Technology***

Technology is changing how we learn. College and university professors use a variety of internet-based education support system and methods. Depending on your school the name will vary (e.g. Blackboard Academic Suite, Oncourse CL, Stellar CourseWork, CT Tools, Elyon). Professors also use power point presentations, video clips, recordings, films and laptops in the classroom. Some students bring their laptops to class, take notes and at times might be able to follow along the lecture on the internet. Most college student register for classes online, correspond with professors and classmates through email, and view their grades and academic progress from a computer. Technology can definitely enhance academics and the learning experience, but what happens when technology invades the classroom. Cell phones vibrate during class, students are playing computer games or instant messaging during class, iPods are playing in the back of a lecture hall. The use of technology such as these has gotten so distracting to the classes that many professors have actually added policies

One example of responsible use of electronics in the classroom is using the recording capabilities of cells phones, iPods, and MP3 players to distribute audio regarding phones and games during class to the syllabi. materials, such as famous speeches; recording interviews and field notes; and facilitating oral exercises, such as repetition of Spanish vocabulary words. Students can also use them to view pictures, movies, Podcasts, and other educational supplements prior to lecture allowing class time can be entirely devoted to discussion. In fact, by creating a Podcast, students can have automatic assess to course materials by listening to on their iPods or downloading it to their portable MP3 player.

Finally, be wary of technology overload and having unlimited access to course materials because it could make class attendance seem unnecessary and obsolete. There is now a danger through technology that students become distance online learners while on campus. And missing class is the first step toward not doing well in a class. Consider that it is not always appropriate to be plugged in all the time, even if technology permits it.

Chapter Summary

A major difference between high school and college or between a two year-college and four year institution is how classes are taught and their degree of difficulty. Even if you have taken advanced placement classes in high school, you may find college-level courses challenging because they require you, not your instructor to be responsible for what is learned. You are responsible for attending classes, for turning in your assignments on time, and for adequately preparing yourself for exams. The decision of whether you do these things is completely your.

As a student-athlete you already possess many skills and strengths that can help you to be successful in your classes. Five learning skills are discussed in this chapter: time management, effective class notes, test taking, reading and writing. You may need to do more on a particular learning skill. You can talk with a course instructor, coach, academic support counselor, family member or friend to further develop and strengthen your learning skills.

Your Thoughts

1. Recall a time when it was difficult for you to manage sports and academics. Given what you learned in this chapter, identify ways that you would better handle that situation today.
2. What would you say to a teammate who made a derogatory joke, statement, or used words about another person, that made you uncomfortable that you didn't want to be around your teammate?
3. Student-athletes tend to be competitive, focused, disciplined, and determined. How can these attributes help you to be a better student? What are some other skills or attributes that you have as a student-athlete that you can apply to the classroom?
4. What advice can you give to a friend or teammate who is having difficulty making a realistic schedule?
5. Identify some pitfalls or distractions that prevent you from staying on task and adhering to your schedule. What can you do to overcome them?