Using Student Support (Re)defined's Success Factors to Ensure Student Learning

(Guided Pathways Pillar Four)

Student Support (Re)defined
theRPgroup
Equitable
Integrated
Cost Effective

theRPgroup
Research • Planning • Professional Development
for California Community Colleges

California Community Colleges

About the Authors

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Diego Navarro taught at Cabrillo College for 16 years. During his tenure at the college, he created the Academy for College Excellence (ACE) which applied affective learning approaches with a population of 80% Latinx students. This successful program has been studied extensively and replicated at numerous colleges. ACE was featured in the Student Support (Re)defined study as one of two programs that incorporated all the success factors that students identified as essential to their success. Navarro has been training faculty on affective learning approaches since 2006 when he was asked to replicate ACE. The experiential learning courses he developed have been taught both in classrooms and online, serving over 45,000 students from multiple colleges. Navarro also developed the Five-Day Experiential Learning Institute (FELI) to teach faculty how to employ non-cognitive learning strategies in their classrooms. Over 1,500 faculty from more than 90 colleges have participated in these FELIs. Navarro has served as a coach on the California Guided Pathways Project and received appointments as a Visiting Scholar at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching at Stanford and University of California, Santa Cruz. He is currently a Senior Fellow at WGU Labs, an educational innovation laboratory bringing affective, non-cognitive professional development, curriculum exercises and tools to community colleges nationwide.

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Kathy Molloy taught English at Santa Barbara City College for 30 years. During her tenure at the college, she served as the Academic Senate President and led the Senate's Student Success Initiative, resulting in the creation of the Partnership for Student Success, SBCC's award-winning collaboration of tutoring programs. As director of the college's first Title V HSI grant, Molloy led faculty from English, math, and counseling to plan and implement the Express to Success Program (ESP), a program of accelerated math and English learning communities that used affective, non-cognitive strategies to help students achieve high success rates and close achievement gaps. The program received the Chancellor's Award for Best Practices in Student Equity in 2012, the associate's Example of *Excelencia* from *Excelencia* in Education in 2014, and the Exemplary Program Award in 2018. Molloy has served as a coach for the California Guided Pathways Project. ESP was also featured in the Student Support (Re)defined study as one of two programs that incorporated all the success factors that students identified as essential to their success. She is also the recipient of the Stanback-Stroud Diversity Award and the Hayward Award for Excellence in Education. She left SBCC in December 2018 to become the Guided Pathways Project Director for the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges.

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Introduction

Student Support (Re)defined identified six success factors that students say they need to be successful in college, and these factors should underpin all the Guided Pathways (GP) pillars as the Student Support (Re)defined + GP Crosswalk[1] indicates. The student experience needs to be central in addressing all the GP pillars. However, an examination of what faculty can do to apply the success factors in their interactions with students in the classroom has had little discussion in the GP movement thus far. Given that instructional faculty play a primary role in their education, it is essential that they have the practices and strategies necessary to ensure their students' success. Student Support (Re)defined has already provided the field with "10 Ways Faculty Can Support Students' Success," including ways that help students feel more **directed**, **focused**, **engaged**, **connected, nurtured**, and **valued**.

However, a more in-depth examination of how faculty can infuse these success factors into their classrooms is needed if we are to truly focus on the student experience and ensure that our students are learning and achieving their goals. Since utilizing affective learning is the primary way that instructional faculty can incorporate these success factors into their classrooms, our intent is to highlight some examples of affective pedagogy and curriculum that enable students to experience them. In sharing these practices and strategies, we want to acknowledge that they come not only from research in the field, but also from our colleagues and our students. As teachers, we have used these in our classrooms and seen the positive impact they have on student learning and success.

Six Success Factors Defined

Through a review of leading studies on effective support practices and interviews with both practitioners and researchers, the RP Group identified "six success factors" that contribute to students' achievement. We list them below in order of importance according to the students participating in the Student Support (Re)defined study.

DIRECTED: Students have a goal and know how to achieve it

FOCUSED: Students stay on track – keeping their eyes on the price

NURTURED: Students feel somebody wants and helps them to succeed

ENGAGED: Students actively participate in class and extracurricular activities

CONNECTED: Students feel like they are part of the college community

VALUED: Students' skills, talents, abilities, and experiences are recognized; they have opportunities to contribute on campus and feel their contributions are appreciated

[1] Read *Crosswalk: Where Student Support (Re)defined and Guided Pathways Meet* on our Student Support (Re)defined Resources page, under Tools & Guides at https://rpgroup.org/Our-Projects/Student-Support-Re-defined/Resources.

The Importance of Affective Learning in the Classroom

Time and again, students interviewed for the Student Support (Re)defined study underscored the ways faculty taught, challenged, encouraged, and engaged them, both during and outside of class, made a critical difference in helping them reach their goals. Since faculty are a critical component in every student's educational experience, they have a significant opportunity, responsibility, and ability to influence their students' success, not just in, but beyond their own classrooms. Student Support (Re)defined urges faculty to foster student achievement by finding ways to incorporate affective learning practices and strategies identified by students into their courses and by working with others across the college to integrate different types of support into their classrooms. **By adopting some of the practices and strategies presented in this guide, all faculty can help their students feel more directed, focused, connected, engaged, nurtured, and valued - and, as a result, increase their success in their classes and beyond.**

Affective Practices and Strategies That Help Ensure Learning

The practices and strategies are divided into seven categories:

1. Provide Information at the Beginning and Throughout the Semester That Is Essential to Your Students' Success
2. Make Expectations for Your Course Explicit to Help Ensure Students Know What Is Required of Them to Succeed
3. Learn about Your Students and Help Them Learn about You and Each Other
4. Build a Sense of Community and Belonging and Demonstrate to Your Students That You Care about Their Success
5. Create an Environment That Encourages Student Learning
6. Encourage the Development of Adaptive Mindset Skills
7. Demonstrate the Relevance of Your Course to Students' Lives and Goals

To illustrate how each practice or strategy supports students in experiencing the six success factors, the specific success factors addressed are noted. The student quotes included throughout are taken from the Student Support (Re)defined focus groups and serve to highlight how students experience our classrooms and illustrate in the students' own words why these affective practices and strategies, models, examples, and instructions for activities are included in the Appendices. It is important to note that most of these practices and strategies can be

adapted to accommodate different class sizes, modalities (e.g., via Zoom using the breakout room function), formats, or other variables that impact classroom interactions.

1. Provide Information at the Beginning and Throughout the Semester That Is Essential to Your Students' Success

- In your syllabus and in the beginning of the semester, set high expectations and provide encouragement that students will be able to achieve them. See "Start to Be Great" in Appendix A for a model. (*directed, focused*)

- Share information on your syllabus that is vital for your students' health and safety. For example, Sara Goldrick-Rab,[2] Professor of Sociology at Temple University and founder of Believe in Students, a nonprofit distributing emergency aid, includes this statement in her syllabus:

  > It can be challenging to do your best in class if you have trouble meeting your basic needs for safe shelter, sleep and nutrition. If you have trouble affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or a safe and stable place to live, I urge you to contact XXX and/or me. We are here to help. (*valued, nurtured*)

> **"[Teachers help] by reaching out and offering help and assistance. By checking up on people, making sure they're doing okay, that they're keeping up to speed. Letting them know what resources are available on campus and keeping them engaged in all the discussions and the events that are happening…Efforts like that just making sure that everyone is on the same page really makes a difference."**
>
> ***-Focus Group Participant***

- At the beginning of each class, share relevant information about important deadlines, resources, and opportunities at the college. (*connected, engaged, valued, nurtured*)

2. Make Expectations for Your Course Explicit to Help Ensure Students Know What Is Required of Them to Succeed

- At the beginning of the semester, give a low stakes quiz or assignment and provide feedback as soon as possible. This way you provide important information about

[2] https://www.thefastfund.org

expectations and what students need to do to be successful in your course. (*directed*)

- As homework, have students complete a week-long grid (with days and hours) where they list their usual commitments for school, study, work, family and other responsibilities, and recreation/social activities. Before they begin the grid, provide them with the hours required for study outside of your class. Then have them write an assessment of their schedule and what changes they may have to make to successfully complete the semester. Have them share their assessments in small groups and reflect on ways that they can set priorities so that they have the time they need to be successful in your class. Alternatively, share an example of a student's grid and have students evaluate it. (*directed, focused*)
- Explain your grading structure and assignment schedule to help students understand what work will be required and how it will be evaluated. (*directed, focused*)
- Explain how office hours work and the different ways that they can be helpful for students. Invite students individually when you sense they are struggling in some way and/or need support. (*valued, nurtured*)

For all small group activities, this can be done synchronously or asynchronously in an online environment. For **synchronous**, use breakout room functions in Zoom. For **asynchronous**, create assigned, dedicated Zoom lines; use any other virtual spaces where students log in together; or use the discussion boards in Canvas with topics you create

"My professors just, they really…want me to succeed and it's not just nurturing, it is about value. It's about valuing what I'm going to do because they've instilled in me or they've kind of shown me that they believe that what I can do for people is going to be extremely important. Because they see what my potentials are. And they know exactly what I can do. And so they're kind of pushing me…"

-Focus Group Participant

3. Learn about Your Students and Help Them Learn about You and Each Other

- Survey your students to help you learn about and follow up on important information about them. For example, ask them about their goals, their work hours, their availability for class-related activities, their challenges, whether they have the textbook, their computer access, their expectations for the class, etc. Use students' availability to determine online office hours and set up small groups for studying, discussion, and projects. (*connected, valued*)

> **"We would work with each other so we would get to know other people in our class. And then we'd get to work on the same problems together. And that would make us more engaged and we can learn from each other and the professor as well."**
>
> ***-Focus Group Participant***

- Address students by name and interact with them from the first day of class. This is more easily accomplished when students are working in small groups. (*connected, valued*)

- Share your own stories and passions and help them do the same. One method is to have everyone (including you) write down four things about yourself and one thing that is not true. Have students guess about what is not true about you, and then have them share their lists with a small group so that they can guess which statements are not true. This exercise helps students learn background about you and their classmates. (*connected, valued*)

- Meet individually with each student as soon as possible in the semester. This can be accomplished through individual conferences held during or outside of class. If meeting each student is not possible, ask students to physically or electronically submit questions they have about their progress and share their challenges. This way you can provide some individualized feedback and address concerns. (*connected, valued*)

> **"Sometimes you know I found…sometimes just acknowledging a person in class. Just that simple little thing is saying…I think that's…a good idea… It tells [students] oh, you can think out of the box, you can think differently and it's okay."**
>
> ***-Focus Group Participant***

- Use some of the Community Building Activities in Appendix B to help students connect with each other. (*connected, valued*)

4. Build a Sense of Community and Belonging and Demonstrate to Your Students That You Care About Their Success

- Ensure that you and your students learn one another's names by giving multiple assignments involving different small groups, icebreakers, reflections, and other getting-to-know-you activities such as the concentric circles activity in Community Building Activities in Appendix B. (*connected, engaged, valued*)
- Provide a time in the first week for students to introduce themselves to the whole class, including:
    - where they are from;
    - something about their background;
    - what they want out of their experience in your class;
    - what helped them decide to register for your class; and/or
    - what they like or don't like about their first, middle or last name. (*connected, engaged*)
- Support the student's focus in the classroom while building community and belonging by doing some of the following activities:
    - Get everyone's voice in the classroom. At the beginning of class or after a break, start with a whip around sentence completion exercise.
    - When the focus of students seems to be scattered, do a Light and Lively exercise that builds community and refocuses the class. See Community Building Activities in Appendix B for examples. (*focused, connected, engaged, nurtured, valued*)

> **"The first time I felt actually engaged is when the professor would select students to actually say something that's on [their] mind which allowed them to actually think about the topic that is being discussed in class or giving the students a chance to…speak out and stuff like that…in my math class, we're able to actually go up and do problems and get worksheets and help out other students."**
>
> ***-Focus Group Participant***

- As homework, have students form groups of three and visit a campus resource together. Share a list of possible resources for students to choose from. Then have

them submit a brief report including the resource's location, names of staff and/or faculty, and services provided. Have them bring back any printed materials and share in class what they learned about the services available. (*connected, engaged*)

For online classes, have students search the college website for information about a specific resource and post information about the resource online for other students in the class. Have students review postings, select those that might be most helpful to them, and write about why these would be personally useful.

- Provide class time for students to write about their experience and have opportunities to share their stories. This can be in written form, shared with a partner or small group, or shared with the class depending on the student's level of comfort. Alternatively, students can be given a choice: write about their own experience or the experience of someone they know. This allows students to choose how they share their stories. (*valued*)
- In courses where students may often not see themselves represented, give students profiles of professionals in the field who are also underrepresented. Then ask students to share with another student or small group how these profiles change their perspective. (*connected, valued*)
- Have students attend a campus event, such as a lecture or student performance, or watch a live video or virtual event together. (*connected, engaged*)
- Whenever energy is waning in the classroom during a lecture or some other passive activity, do not stop the class for a break since this dissipates the energy of the class. Instead, stop the class and lead them in an engagement-oriented exercise, such as those found in the Community Building Activities in Appendix B, to refocus the energy of the students and accomplish one of the following: build community, help the students learn about each other, reinforce what they are learning in your class, build teamwork, or support the development of other professional skills like empathy and listening.

> **"If you see a fellow [student] that's not in class this week, you call them and check on them. See what happened…It comes from the professors encouraging you to do it also. Our professor does that in her classes."**
>
> ***-Focus Group Participant***

5. Create an Environment That Encourages Student Learning

- Create an emotionally safe environment in your classroom so that students feel comfortable and ready to learn. Some ways to create this environment include:

- If you have students who may see themselves as not belonging in their college classes or second language learners, do not use sarcasm or tell jokes that may be misunderstood by them.
- Identify and articulate your students' strengths and positive intentions or traits either individually or collectively, in class, or in written responses to students' work.
- It is important to show respect for your students. Know that how you treat one student is witnessed by all students.
- Slow down your tempo; become curious; pay attention to your students' words, actions, and body language to help you understand their needs, concerns, purpose or challenges.
- Ask a question that shows your students that you understand their needs, concerns, purpose, or challenges. For example, ask them how they are feeling about an upcoming test or their ability to balance their classwork with their work or responsibilities. Be willing to pause and give students sufficient time to respond. (*connected, nurtured*)

> **"I don't have much support outside the college and feeling like someone else cares whether or not I succeed helps keep me motivated."**
>
> ***-Focus Group Participant***

- Give students starters like: "I learn best in classes where the teacher (or students)…" Students can write their responses on the board or on posters, or they can brainstorm in pairs or small groups. After all responses are discussed, students can brainstorm individual ideas for classroom norms based on the class responses. Finally, the students and teacher can co-construct norms for the semester, and these can be referred to or revised as issues arise. (*engaged, valued*)
- Build reflection into your class to consolidate learning. For example, having students keep a journal or learning log provides an opportunity for students to do some freewriting, share their questions, and articulate their insights and areas of confusion. Journals/logs can be part of a participation grade or used to prepare for class discussions. See Reflection Exercises in Appendix C for more examples. (*engaged, valued*)
- Take the first five or more minutes of class to focus students on ways to be more successful. In the following examples, students can do these entirely in class or, in some cases, they can do the preparation outside of class.
    - On the first class meeting each week, ask students to do a reflection on the previous week. For example, ask these questions: Did you attend all classes?

If not, why? Did you complete all required work? If not, why? What challenges did you face? Why is your education important to you? How can you avoid last week's problems in the future? Then have each student share these responses with another student. If any students are willing, have them share their responses with the class.

- Have a question or sentence completion exercise about what students are learning about the class' topic, themselves in light of your course, what may be holding them back from focusing solely on school, what they can do about creating the conditions in their lives to make school a priority, etc. If you need to conserve time in the class, then use the following rule: the answer or sentence completion can only be one or two breaths; when they run out of air, they need to stop.

- Show a short TED talk or other short video or a quote on a habit of mind you want to highlight. Eduardo Briceno's TED talk on "The Power of Belief - Mindset and Success"[3] is a good example. Have students write a response and share with another student or small group. Ask if anyone is willing to share his/her response with the class.

- Do a mindfulness exercise at the beginning of class to help students focus. See Mindfulness/Focusing Exercise in Appendix D for sample instructions. (*focused, directed*)

In an online environment, ask students to post to a discussion board, or in a Zoom meeting, ask them to post comments in the chat box.

- Develop exercises and projects that build empathy by having students stand in someone else's shoes or look at a topic from multiple perspectives. (*valued, connected*)

- Acknowledge and deal with test anxiety, sharing strategies and resources such as disabled student services that can help students prepare for and take tests and quizzes. (*directed, focused, valued*)

> **"When a teacher is engaging, when they're not just writing on a board or not just showing you PowerPoints, but really talking to the class, they make the eye contact and ask questions. Don't just say the answer, don't just give us the answer or something like that. Talk to the class. Engage people… Make a joke here and there, whatever… [Tell us about] outside resources, extra tutoring…"**
>
> ***-Focus Group Participant***

[3] http://youtu.be/pN34FNbOKXc

- Blunt the impact of negative stereotypes by using stories of students and teachers who first struggled in college before they succeeded, showing college students studies that conclude that intelligence is malleable.[4] (*directed, focused, valued*)

- Adapt the Concentric Circle exercise (see Community Building Activities in Appendix B) to have students quiz each other by creating questions about what they are learning in your course. (*directed, focused*)

- Monitor your students' progress. If someone is falling behind, reach out to him/her to offer support and resources. (*directed, focused, nurtured*)

- Break longer assignments into smaller chunks so that students can see the assignment as a process that builds on various steps and mark their progress in completing a longer, more challenging assignment. (*directed, focused*)

6. Encourage the Development of Adaptive Mindset Skills

- Share research[5] on adaptive mindset skills as homework and ask students to assess their mindsets. Have students share their assessments and the implications in a small group. In the next class, choose a few examples to read anonymously and discuss with the whole class to help students see how adaptive mindset skills affect their learning. (*directed, focused, valued*)

- Provide a reminder or an exercise that reinforces the importance of mindset before giving tests or quizzes. Afterward, consider ways to use these tests or quizzes to show students that setbacks are an inevitable part of learning. For example, students could be given additional points on their tests when they meet with a tutor and correct their mistakes. (*directed, focused, valued*)

7. Demonstrate the Relevance of Your Course to Students' Lives and Goals

- Share the connection of your course to your students' lives and their goals. Explain the skills and concepts that you are teaching and their relevance to your students' lives and their future careers. (*engaged, focused*)

- Choose texts that reflect the diversity of your students and their experiences. (*engaged, connected, valued*)

- Design the course so that there is experiential learning in each class to help students relate to the course content. For example, create projects in the course where

[4] https://www.stns.org/downloads/NAISBrainology.CarolDweck.pdf
[5] See *Adaptive Mindset Skills*, a student resource developed by Dr. Omid Fotuhi. This is a collection of 11 skills that lead to greater student engagement with academic opportunities and resources. http://bit.ly/adaptiveMindsets

students can apply their life experience or their values to completing the project, e.g., in a science course allowing the students to choose an environmental issue that effects their lives. (*engaged*)

- When doing research or assigning books, give students a choice of topics that connect your subject to your students' life experiences, majors, or career goals. (*connected, engaged, valued*)
- In math classes, give students word problems that have a relatable context, such as determining median rents in their neighborhoods. (*engaged*)
- Incorporate some form of project-based learning in your class. For example, choose a topic that students know well, such as social injustice; in teams, have them develop research questions that focus on different areas of emphasis for that topic. The STEEP model can be a helpful framework for this exercise as it encourages students to explore topics from social, technological, environmental, economic and political perspectives. Further information on the model can be found in a free guidebook at https://library.teachthefuture.org/product/shaping-our-future-facilitators-guidebook. (*connected, engaged, valued*)

> **"[I appreciate a] professor really engaging students in the idea, what it would be like to major in psychology and the benefits and how particular majors or particular subjects apply with other subjects, too… You could talk about psychology and the sciences, the social sciences. You can even relate it to math whether, regarding statistics. And it helps really, a student, figure out what they really want to do and it surely helped me out."**
>
> ***-Focus Group Participant***

Acknowledgements

The RP Group is developing a series of Student Support (Re)defined and Guided Pathways resources in partnership with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO).

For more information on the RP Group's Student Support (Re)defined project, visit www.rpgroup.org/student-support. For more information on our Guided Pathways work, visit https://rpgroup.org/All-Projects/Guided-Pathways/Resources.

Need help using this guide? Have a story to share? Contact us at research@rpgroup.org.

Appendix A: "Start to Be Great" Model

Compiled by Pam Guenther, Professor of Mathematics, Santa Barbara City College

Note from the author: I send this email to my students prior to the start of the course and then hand it out on the first day of class. The purpose is to set the tone about expectations and creating positive habits right away, rather than trying to play catch up later when it may be too late. We also spend some time talking about the last part where they can find help and support on campus. Students share a lot of their knowledge during this part of the class.

Please note that this handout was designed for a course with an embedded tutor. Therefore, you may need to make adjustments to refer students to other tutoring resources on campus.

How to "Start to be Great" in This Course

"You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great." -Zig Ziglar

Mindset

The first thing we must tackle in starting this course is mindset. While many of you may not find math to be your favorite subject, that does not have to hinder your success in math. One thing to know is that even if you did not do well in previous math courses, you can learn strategies to be successful now. It's important to remember that your thoughts and beliefs have a profound impact on your behaviors and outcomes. Our thoughts and beliefs are so powerful, they even impact bodily functions (see video below):

Video Link to Milkshake Study: https://youtu.be/pIfhxt0JCok

If you believe you are "bad" at math and cannot learn it, you may choose behaviors that will reinforce this, such as not attending class, not paying attention or participating in class, not completing homework, not studying for exams, not asking questions, not seeing the tutors, etc. In my over 25 years of teaching experience, the amount of time spent studying and the study strategies used are a much bigger predictor of success in this course than previous knowledge and performance are.

In order to be successful in this course, you must first commit to these three things:

8. **I will commit to having a positive approach to my learning.** I know that I have control over what I do to be successful in the course, and I will commit to making a ***true*** effort to do well.

9. **I will commit to spending a minimum of 14 hours per week OUTSIDE of class, studying for this class.** (I will complete a weekly study hour plan and stick to it or adjust it as necessary for me to stick to it. I will also use the Course Planner to stay on top of coursework and deadlines.) I especially plan to **"overstudy" the first three weeks of class**, so I develop the habit to last me the entire semester.

The best time to do your homework for this course is IMMEDIATELY after class. To encourage this habit, tutors assigned to this class will have hours after class. Plan your schedule now to **incorporate *at least* one hour after class for** doing **homework**. We will also have ***daily* due dates, even though we do not meet in-person every day**. Please prepare your study schedule to be able to meet these deadlines.

10. **I will fully participate in my learning by** attending every class, participating in class, taking good notes, working with my classmates, asking questions in class, and attending tutoring hours and instructor office hours regularly.

Differences between High School and College

This class may be the first college math course many of you are taking, so another important item to address as we "start to be great" is that there are many differences between high school and college. You may already be aware of many of these and may still be learning about some of the others. The overarching theme to these differences is that students have more responsibility and autonomy. This shift may seem daunting but remember how important mindset is. You now get to be in charge of your own learning! **First**, let's look at GENERAL differences between high school and college courses, no matter what subject:

Table 1. Differences between High School and College

High School	College
Teachers cover all material for tests in class through lectures and/or activities.	Students are responsible for information from outside reading or assignments whether it is covered in class or not.
Teachers give frequent tests and often allow make-ups or retests if the grades are poor.	There are often only 2 or 3 tests a semester, and make-ups or retests are generally not allowed.
Grades are often based heavily on level of participation and effort.	Grades are usually based only on quality of work and demonstration of college-level thinking. (Quality of outcomes vs. participation and effort)
A D is a passing grade.	A D is not a passing grade.
Teachers often give extra credit.	Professors rarely offer extra credit.
Parents have access to students' grades and get notifications when grades are slipping. Parents may meet with teachers to discuss students' grades.	Professors are prohibited from discussing anything about students with parents.
Teachers pull students aside if they are struggling.	Professors often expect students to initiate the conversation if they are struggling.

High School	College
Teachers remind students of due dates and incomplete work.	Professors generally do not remind students of due dates and incomplete work. The responsibility is on the student.
Teachers provide any materials missed while absent and allow makeup work.	Professors often do not "save" materials for absent students and makeups for missed class time are generally not allowed. Students are expected to contact other students for any missed material.
A course is covered over the span of two semesters for 6 or 7 hours a week in class.	A course is covered over the span of one semester for 3 to 5 hours per week in class.
Teachers often follow the book closely and write everything needed in notes on the board.	Professors expect students to take notes on reading done outside of class and things that are said in class, ***in addition*** to what is written on the board.
Often, classes do not require much homework or outside of class time.	The college expectation is at least two hours outside of class for every hour spent in class. For example, if a student is taking 15 units, it is expected that the student will spend around 30 hours per week ***OUTSIDE*** of class on homework/studying.
Textbooks provided at little to no cost.	Textbooks are NOT provided (except in special programs) and are often expensive.
Time and schedule for classes dictated by others.	Students are responsible for setting their own schedule.
Teachers rearrange test dates and assignments to accommodate events or other classes.	Professors schedule exams and assignments as appropriate for the course and cannot reschedule according to all possible events or courses in which students participate.
Teachers often conduct review sessions or give review sheets to prepare students for exams.	Professors often do not hold review sessions or provide review sheets; they expect college students to synthesize course information and take responsibility in preparing for exams.
Students often have short reading assignments that are then discussed, and often, re-taught, in class.	You may be assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing, which may not be directly addressed in class.

Second, let's look more specifically at differences between high school math courses and college math courses:

Table 2. Difference between High School Math and College Math

High School Math	College Math
Some class time given to start on homework. Only about 15-20 minutes of homework outside of class per day.	No class time given to start on homework. All homework is done outside of class. About two hours of homework per day for each hour of class
Homework regularly graded or checked.	Homework often not graded but ***MUST BE DONE*** in order to succeed in the math course. (You need to apply and practice the skills that are introduced in class. This is where the math learning actually happens.)
There are many tests given, often after each chapter.	Fewer tests are given, with each often covering 2, 3, or 4 chapters.
Two final exams (each covering half of the course). May not weigh heavily in course grade.	One final exam to cover the entire course. Generally, weighs heavily in course grade.
Teachers remind you of all due dates and missing assignments and provide you materials missed when absent.	Professors expect you to thoroughly read the syllabus, course schedules and emails or posts in Canvas. They expect you to contact a classmate for missed material.
Teachers provide frequent grade updates.	Professors expect you to keep track of your grades and be able to calculate your own course grade (using arithmetic skills).

There are many resources available on campus to help you be successful:

1. My office hours (location and hours on the syllabus.) Please come by whenever you have a question or need help, or you have something you'd like to discuss.
2. Class tutors assigned specifically to our course—their hours are on the syllabus.
3. Math Lab (location), which is open 7 days per week!
4. The Health and Wellness Office (location)
5. Counseling (location)
6. Financial aid (location)
7. Food pantry

8.

9.

10.

(Note: The last three were intentionally left blank for you to add other resources, such as mentors, special programs you belong to, etc.)

Looking forward to a fabulous semester together!

"You were born to win, but to be a winner, you must plan to win, prepare to win, and expect to win." –Zig Ziglar

Appendix B: Community-Building Activities

Concentric Circles[6]

Concentric Circles can be used in two ways: (1) to help students build connections with other students, and (2) to help students reflect on what they are learning in your class.

Questions[7]

You can develop questions that are specific to the topics that students are learning in your class, or you can be more generic or inter-mix questions so that the students will get to know each other. Sample questions for getting to know each other:

- What do you like to do with your free time?
- What kind of music do you like?
- What kind of movies do you like?
- What is your favorite food?
- What are your favorite hobbies?
- Where are your parents from?
- What is your favorite holiday and why?
- Where would you like to live when you are successful?
- What makes you happy?
- Who do you admire?
- Where would you like to travel?
- What drives/motivates you?
- Why are you here in college?
- What is your biggest dream?
- Where do you see yourself after you complete college?

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[6] First developed by the Anti-Defamation League and used in the Alternatives to Violence Project. These instructions are from the Academy for College Excellence Curriculum: Exercise #012135.

[7] These specific questions were developed over three semesters by asking students to write down what they would like to know about other students in the ACE Program.

Instruction – Setup

- Have students count off into two groups. If you have an uneven number of students, you will need to pull in an observer or rotate a student out each sequence.
- Form two circles of chairs, inner circle facing out, outer circle facing in.
- Have students sit in the chairs–ones on the inside, twos on the outside.

Verbal Instructions to Students

- Briefly review the characteristics of good listeners:
    - **Verbal**: Let speakers finish their thought before commenting. Allow space between thoughts, use reflective listening, sum up important thought, use opening questions, and avoid judgments or interjecting one's own views unless to clarify the speaker's thought.
    - **Body language:** Communicate interest and respect: Face toward the speaker, maintain eye contact without staring, keep your body position open (uncrossed arms, relaxed and attentive), and avoid distracting behaviors like eating.
- Give directions:
    - I'm going to read a question.
    - In this first round, the inner circles will give their answer to my question to the person in the chair on the outside circle facing him/her.
    - The person in the outer circle will use the techniques of good listeners in listening to their fellow student's answer.
    - In most cases, the listener won't say much if anything. But if the speaker seems stuck or if the listener needs clarification on what was said, the listener can respond.
    - I will tell you when to start, how much time you have to speak (30 seconds to 1 ½ minutes), and when to stop.
    - After the inner circle speaks and the outer circle listens, you will switch roles, with the outer circle speaking and the inner circle listening.
    - When both circles have spoken, I will have one circle rotate on position so that you are talking with someone new.

Debrief

Ask for feedback on what the experience was like for the students.

- What made it hard to listen? What made it hard to talk? Which was harder?
- Were you able to keep people talking with just your body language–without saying anything?

Whip Arounds[8]

Whip Arounds are sentence completion exercises that don't take long and help build community. They allow students to learn about other students that they may want to get to know outside of class.

Instructions:

Step 1: Create a sentence stem about something students may want to know about each other. For example, you might use "What I learned from our last class was…" or "The most important thing I'm learning this semester is …."

Step 2: Write it on the whiteboard or some other surface for all the students to see.

Step 3: Read the sentence stem and ask if there is a student who would like to start.

Step 4: When you select a student, mention the ground rules:

- The student who begins gets to choose the student who will go next.
- Answer the sentence stem in one breath; when your breath runs out, then your time runs out.
- Anyone can pass; however, after the last student addresses the sentence stem, go back around and call out the names of the students who have passed.

Light and Livelies

When the focus of students seems to be scattered in your class, do a Light and Lively exercise that builds community, consolidates learning and/or refocuses the class. Light and Livelies are community-building exercises that were pioneered in the Alternative to Violence Project (AVP). You can find these exercises in the AVP Basic[9] and Advanced[10] Manuals

Here is one example of a Light and Lively:

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[8] This specific exercise is from the Academy for College Excellence Curriculum: Exercise #90010
[9] https://avpusa.org/product/basic-course-manual
[10] https://avpusa.org/product/advanced-course-manual-2005-edition

Count to Ten[11]

- Create groups of between four and 10 students.
- Tell each group that in this game they must count to 10 as a group, and that they must follow certain rules:
    - They cannot go around in a circle, counting in order.
    - They cannot speak to one another other than to call out a number.
    - Only one person can speak at a time.
    - If two or more people speak at once, the counting must start over.
    - They cannot communicate with each other, even nonverbally, in a way that would indicate order.
    - Usually, the counting must start over several times before the group begins to concentrate intensely. Hints for a group that is getting frustrated: don't rush and don't be afraid to have long pauses between numbers.

[11]This specific exercise is from the Academy for College Excellence Curriculum: Exercise #01231

Appendix C: Reflection Exercise[12]

Build reflection into your class to consolidate learning. This exercise has instructions in six steps:

1. What you need to do to be prepared;
2. A script to help students understand why reflection is important;
3. Remind students of what occurred in the last class (explored in #1 Faculty Preparation);
4. How to lead students in individual reflection;
5. How to lead students in small group (teams) reflection; and
6. How to lead the students in a large group (class) reflection.

1. Faculty Preparation

Make notes of your own reflections about the last class (usually at the end of the class), looking for the following in your students:

- Came out of their shell
- Took a risk
- Performed the behaviors that you are looking for
- Helped each other
- Helped build the learning community

Then look for the following in your own experience and/or your observation of the students:

- Events that caught your attention
- Feelings that went with those events
- The impact of those events for you

2. Introduction to Reflections–Why It Is Important

The following is a script that can be used by faculty to help students understand why reflection is important (3 minutes).

[12] From the Academy for College Excellence Curriculum: Exercises #01111 & #01211

- Reflection is a leadership skill that works well within teams and enhances your ability to do knowledge work more effectively.
- It is important to look back at your day to determine what you learned, what you want to change, and how you and your team best perform. This allows you the time to determine how to improve yourself, your team, and your situation.
- It is also important to have a time after a night's sleep to reflect on the day before. A night's worth of sleep can change your perspective about what is important because having some distance helps give perspective, too.

3. Review the Last Class

Remind students about some of the things they did in the last class. You may also ask them what happened in the last class. Reviewing your notes from Step 1, Faculty Preparation, may remind you about key points you want to make.

4. Individual Reflections

Instructions for Faculty:

- Select the questions that students will be addressing. Samples include:
    - What did you like about our last class?
    - What excited you?
    - What was important that you learned, or what didn't seem important and made you wonder why you were learning it?
- Have each student write their individual reflections for each question.
- After 2-4 minutes, you may want to ask, "Does anyone need more time?" and act accordingly.

5. Team Reflection

Instructions for Faculty:

- Break up the class into teams of four by counting off *(divide the number of students in the class by the number that makes teams of four)*.
- Create and share a PowerPoint slide (or write on the white board) on the reflection process. Here are the instructions to include in the slide:
    - Use five minutes to journal on the questions.
    - Have one person share with the group.

- After the speaker is done, allow a moment or two of quiet to reflect on what was said. Then have another person share and repeat the process.
- **Note:** Be aware if a few are talking too much, or others are being quiet. Adjust your participation to have balance.

Instructions to the Students:

- Review the PowerPoint on the reflection process
- Remember to make space for quiet between speakers–try to allow 3-5 seconds between speakers. Silence is critical.
- Adjust your participation so everyone has some space to share.
- If you are one of the quiet-type people, try to add a least a little bit to the discussion.
- Instruct the teams to begin sharing. Tell them that their responses should be between 2-3 minutes.
- After each student has had time to respond, ask if any group needs more time. If so, give them a few more minutes to complete their responses.

6. Review Large Group (Class) Feedback/Brainstorm about What They Learned and Valued from the Exercise

- Ask students to share their reflections either as teams or individuals.
- Ask for feedback from students about their experience doing this exercise: what they liked or didn't like; what they were excited about or what bored them; and what they thought was important or seemed trivial.

Appendix D: Mindfulness/Focusing Exercise

Focusing on the Breath[13]

Instructor Notes:

This exercise is the most basic of the focusing exercises and is an introduction to the focusing exercise series.

Introduction to Students:

- Recent research and theories about neuroplasticity inform us that we can use our minds to make significant changes in our brains. Making these changes impacts our lives in some very significant, positive ways.
- You will learn several strategies that can help you apply these important theories of neuroplasticity this semester.
- One of these strategies is called focusing. We will be doing different kinds of focusing activities each day. For today's focusing activity, you will have the opportunity to observe your breath. Please bring your curiosity, an open mind, relaxed awareness and respectful silence to this activity.

Part 1: Set the Stage (30 seconds)

- Encourage students to clear their desks of visual distractions.
- Dim the room lighting to a comfortable level. The room should be lit softly.
- Encourage students to close their eyes and find a relaxed position.

Note: Some students who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may find closing their eyes causes stress. Let them know that it is fine for them to keep their eyes open.

Part 2: Focus on the Breath (3-5 minutes)

Deliver the script below (or your adaptation) with a measured, calm, and peaceful voice. After initially going through the script, consider repeating these statements at approximately 30-second intervals to assist students to return to awareness.

[13] From the Academy for College Excellence Curriculum: Exercise #10310

INSTRUCTOR SCRIPT AND NOTES:

- Find a comfortable position, sitting up and relaxed. Notice when you are breathing in, and when you are breathing out. Count silently to yourself each time you breathe out; on the out breath say "one." On the next breath, say "two" and so on.
- Pay attention to your breath. See if you can focus and concentrate–stay with it.
- If you become aware that your mind has wandered and is thinking about something else, just return your attention to counting the out breath again, starting again with "one."

Part 3: Return (15 seconds)

- Now start to come back to the room. Still paying attention to your breath, open your eyes if they were closed.

Debrief (1-2 minutes)

Ask students to reflect on the experience. Consider starting the reflection by asking the following questions:

- If your attention wandered, how long did it take you to become aware of it?
- How high were you able to count without being distracted?
- Ask, how many were able to get past one, how many got past 10, how many got past 25 etc.
- What were the difficulties you experienced?
- Was this fun or was it work?