**BACK ON TRACK**  
TOOLS FOR DESIGNING A SKILLS FOR SUCCESS COURSE

**INTRODUCTION**

College skills for success courses familiarize students with college norms and expectations and teach them strategies to manage the competing demands in their lives as college students. Although the format and delivery of college success courses vary, they are fundamentally about building resiliency and developing strategies to maximize learning, navigate the college environment, and ultimately achieve academic and career success.

DIRECTIONS

This tool includes key features of a college skills for success course, an overview of these courses in four institutions, and a matrix that program staff can use to design or enhance a college skills for success course in their school or program.

**KEY ELEMENTS OF COLLEGE SKILLS FOR SUCCESS COURSES**

* Delivered in cohort or learning community format
* Credit bearing – schools/community-based programs should work with college partners to align their curricula and certify their teachers as adjuncts
* Located entirely or partially on the college campus
* Units on financial aid, literacy, career exploration, and study skills (e.g., note-taking, test taking, reading strategies, learning styles)
* Build students’ nonacademic skills, (e.g., self-esteem, self-efficacy, goal setting, time management, identifying potential resources and supports)
* College IDs for students so they can access college resources and services
* Units on computer, writing, research, and presentation skills
* Support and case management to help students focus on studies

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| **LUZERNE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE** | |
| TITLE | FYE 101–Skills for Living & Learning |
| FORMAT | Delivered on campus; learning cohort format; includes group and individual projects |
| COURSE SUMMARY | Part of a program called *College Success: GED Completers Transitioning to Postsecondary Education to Prepare for Employment in High Growth Industries* (focus on IT and Financial Services) |
| LENGTH | 12 weeks |
| DELIVERED AT | Luzerne County Community College Campus |
| CREDITS EARNED | 1 credit hour |
| COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES | Course will assist students in a successful transition to college. This is accomplished by investigating and practicing specific academic skills, by inquiry into life skills necessary for citizenship, and by knowledge of policies, procedures, opportunities, and resources available at Luzerne Community College. Students will understand the college’s resources, support services, apply acquired knowledge of learning styles and study skills needed for successful completion of college course, and explore dimensions of diversity within the context of human communication. |
| ACADEMIC SKILLS COVERED | Writing (journals)  Reading  Preparation for ACCUPLACER and the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) |
| OTHER SKILLS COVERED | Problem solving, resiliency, personal responsibility, maintaining motivation, career assessment and planning |
| UNIQUE FEATURES | Enhance academic readiness to increase ACCUPLACER scores, focus on CLEP testing to get to credit-level classes, and use self-reflective journals to enhance metacognitive strategies. Focus on life skills and career assessment/planning. Use of OnCourse journal entries (9 total during the semester) |
| TEXT & MATERIALS USED | *Dream of Life…. Live Your Dream–A Manual of Skills for Living for Today’s Young Adults*, by Craig N. Piso  *On Course–Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life*, by Skip Downing  *Making Your Mark*, by Lisa Fraser  *First Year Experience–FYE101*, *LCCC*, 2009-2010 Edition |

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| **MADISON AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE LEARNING TO LEARN CAMP** | |
| TITLE | Learning to Learn Camp (plus College Success seminar) |
| FORMAT | Learning cohort; delivered on campus; includes individual and group projects |
| COURSE SUMMARY | Learning to Learn Camp is for students who are looking for new tools to use in setting and achieving their academic and personal goals. Students explore the campus and meet with staff. The five-day camp simulates a semester of college work, including doing homework and meeting deadlines. |
| LENGTH | One full week, followed by weekly seminar for eight weeks |
| DELIVERED AT | Madison Area Technical College, Truax Campus |
| CREDITS EARNED | 3 credits (for one-week camp plus College Success Seminar) |
| COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES | Students will develop personal responsibility, assessment skills, and effective teamwork. They will develop and improve skills and strategies for successfully transitioning into college. |
| ACADEMIC SKILLS COVERED | Camp: Effective writing skills, creative and critical thinking, learning processes, study skills  Seminar: Memory and comprehension, research and library skills, test preparation, test taking |
| OTHER SKILLS COVERED | Camp: Motivation, goal-setting, self-management of time and energy, relationship development, self-awareness and self-esteem, emotional intelligence  Seminar: Health and wellness, financial literacy |
| UNIQUE FEATURES | Intensive one-week, full-time session in summer before the start of the semester, followed by weekly meetings in College Success class throughout following semester |
| TEXT & MATERIALS USED | *Seedfolks* by Paul Fleischman (loaned by MadisonArea Technical College)  *On Course—Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life*, by Skip Downing. (loaned by MATC)  Three-ring binder (provided by MATC)  Three-hole punch (students purchase) |

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| **COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF DENVER COLLEGE 101: THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE** | |
| TITLE | College 101: The Student Experience |
| FORMAT | Learning cohort; delivered on campus; includes individual and group projects |
| COURSE SUMMARY | Orientation course to welcome students to college. This course provides an awareness of campus resources and procedures, sets academic and career goals, balances lifestyle/wellness issues with academic commitments, and develops an appreciation for diversity and community involvement. |
| LENGTH | Meets 1.25 hours weekly for 13 weeks |
| DELIVERED AT | Community College of Denver |
| CREDITS EARNED | 1 |
| COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES | Students will become active participants in the college community, learn educational etiquette and strategies, locate learner support programs, and learn how to access them. They will also learn about college policies and procedures and how to identify college programs, course requirements, and registration dates. |
| ACADEMIC SKILLS COVERED | Reading  Writing |
| OTHER SKILLS COVERED | Identify areas of academic interest and career goals  Make educational plan  Strategies for managing time, wellness, finance, and life roles  Value of diversity and community building |
| UNIQUE FEATURES | Campus scavenger hunt  Scholarship application and essay completed in class  College events promoted in course |
| TEXT & MATERIALS USED | *Community College of Denver Student Handbook* (provided by Student Life) |

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| **SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE: COLLEGE SUCCESS** | |
| COURSE SUMMARY | The College Success fosters those attitudes and skills that students will need to have a successful college career and to obtain and maintain employment. |
| FORMAT | Learning cohort; delivered on campus; includes lecture, group activities, discussion, individual learning projects, videos, guest lectures |
| TITLE | College Success |
| LENGTH | 3 lecture hours per week for one semester |
| DELIVERED AT | South Texas College Division of Developmental Studies |
| CREDITS EARNED | 3 credit hours |
| COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES | This course will help students succeed in college by understanding their personal learning style, study environment, and personalities. It will also cover multiple and emotional intelligence skills, understanding and using college policies and procedures, setting goals, managing time, memorizing information, reading textbooks for maximum learning, taking effective notes from lectures and books, maximizing test scores, thinking critically, listening effectively, communicating well both orally and in writing, and learning and applying library and technological research techniques. |
| ACADEMIC SKILLS COVERED | Demonstrating comprehension of course material, memorization techniques, reading and vocabulary building, note taking, test taking, group learning, critical thinking, writing and research skills, library skills, avoiding plagiarism, computer technology |
| OTHER SKILLS COVERED | Personal and classroom behavior, analysis of personal learning style and multiple intelligence skills, time management, goal setting, diversity, getting along with others, personal integrity and honesty, finding campus resources, planning courses and majors, financial skills |
| UNIQUE FEATURES | Course is required for students whose GPA is below 2.0 and are on academic probation, and for students enrolled in an Associate’s degree plan who have not passed all sections of the ACCUPLACER test. Assessments include daily written assignments, a research paper, reflective writings, oral presentations, cooperative learning presentations, portfolio, quizzes, and examinations. |
| TEXT & MATERIALS USED | *Keys to Success* by Carol Carter, Joyce Bishop and Sarah Kravits Workbook available online for download  Daily planner/calendar  2” three-ring binder with tab dividers, paper, and pen/pencil |

**DESIGN OR ENHANCE YOUR COLLEGE SKILLS FOR SUCCESS COURSE**

If you have a College Skills for Success course in place, describe its key features according to the matrix below. Then drawing on the exemplars, indicate how you will enhance your course. If you are developing a new course, work with your team to fill out the matrix, drawing on the exemplars.

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| COURSE SUMMARY |  |
| FORMAT |  |
| TITLE |  |
| LENGTH |  |
| DELIVERED AT |  |
| CREDITS EARNED |  |
| COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES |  |
| ACADEMIC SKILLS COVERED |  |
| OTHER SKILLS COVERED |  |
| UNIQUE FEATURES |  |