

A map of Arkansas showing major cities, roads, and rivers. The text is overlaid on the map. The map shows major cities like Little Rock, Fayetteville, and Pine Bluff, and major roads like I-49 and I-55. Rivers like the White and Arkansas are also visible.

# The Rules of the Road

**Black River Technical College  
New Student Orientation  
Study Skills**

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## Start Smart by Setting Realistic Goals

- What are your short term goals? What are your long term goals?
- Your dreams are your goals—but don't worry about what can't be done; think of how you can accomplish one step at a time.
- Seek to do well, but don't beat yourself up when you can't do it all in one month, one year—no one says achievement is easy; set your goals high and boost yourself out of your comfort zone to see your dreams.
- Persistence.
- Willingness to do the work that others are reluctant to do will make all the difference ultimately.
- Develop a support team to get you to those goals: your instructor, your family, and your friends.

## Time Management Tips

- **Using time wisely becomes a habit.** Analyze your current use of time according to the following principles of time management to gain great control of yourself and your environment.
- **Plan.** Keep an appointment book by the day and hour; write a daily to-do list.
- **Prioritize.** Start with the most critical activity of the day and work your way down to the least important one.
- **Question.** Ask yourself “What is the best use of my time right now?”
- **Use common sense.** Don't do what doesn't need doing.
- **Concentrate.** Do one thing at a time. Finish one job before starting ten others.
- **Block out time appropriately.** Set aside big chunks of time for large projects and smaller amounts of time for minor jobs.
- **Be frugal with your time.** Make use of 5, 10, and 15 minutes segments of time rather than waste them.
- **Learn to say ‘no’ to yourself and others when appropriate.** Keep phone calls short or avoid them; answer e-mail that is work related but avoid time-wasting cutesy mail; avoid wasting time just surfing the net.
- **Wean yourself from television and the internet.** Business successes do not watch soap operas or surf the net.
- **Strive for excellence.** Realize, too, that perfection may not be worth the cost. A job well done is often praise enough.

## Tips for Creating a Learning Schedule

- Use an assignment calendar to devise your learning schedule, and begin by marking all the important dates from the class syllabus on your calendar.
- Plan to attend all classes to listen and learn from in-class instructions and lectures materials.
- Participate in class discussions.
- Enter all project due dates, due dates for papers, and dates for presentations and tests.
- Divide reading assignments; then record daily and weekly goals.
- Set aside several specific chunks of time for studying and reviewing for the tests.
- Record dates for completing extra work.
- Analyze assigned projects and create daily or weekly goals.
- Designate dates for completing the first draft of written reports, for revising the draft, and for time to check with your instructor about the final copy.
- Follow all of the professor's requirements for the assignment: format, presentation elements, etc.
- **If all else fails, follow directions!**

## A Smart Start

Every term has just so many hours in a day, a week, and in the term itself. You can't change the number of hours available, but you can help yourself stay on track to succeed throughout the whole term. Begin by preparing a **term calendar**:

- Sit down with all the syllabi from your classes and enter all your required school assignments, projects, and scheduled tests.
- Record all your planned school activities.
- Be sure to write in all your out-of-school activities, including work hours and your family and household schedule.

**Every Sunday afternoon**, update your upcoming weekly schedule:

- Note major projects and assignments due during the coming week and plan how to get them done.
- Add any additional school assignments or activities that you may have been given during the past week.
- Note any changes to the original schedule and plan accordingly.
- Add any family responsibilities or work schedule changes so that you aren't at the wrong place at the wrong time.

**Take five minutes every morning to review your daily schedule:**

- Those five minutes may make the difference in your handing in an assignment on time or completing a project on the right day.

- Time may be finite, but it's there for you to use; use it wisely for the best possible chance at success in school.

## Surviving Tests

Yes, test anxiety is real. More importantly, how can you manage test anxiety?

### First you need to know what causes it:

- Pressure from yourself, from others;
- Negative thoughts are self-defeating. Need to relax and stop yourself from negative thinking.
- Past negative experiences.
- Fear of failure.

### How do you cope with test anxiety:

- Learn test taking skills to learn the material successfully.
- Learn to relax.
- Use your imagination positively to control your anxiety. No one ever succeeded who believed he or she could not succeed. Don't let yourself become negative and self-defeating.
- Develop confidence that you can succeed—one success will build upon itself.

### Test Taking Skills:

- Set the right atmosphere—where you study and how you situate yourself does matter. Hard rock, television, four kids arguing, and a free for all in the family room makes it hard to learn; the library or a quiet spot in your room works a bit better.
- Make the most of your notes; take notes efficiently, review them right before a class and right after a class to get the maximum learning from them. This allows you to identify what you didn't understand.
- Develop a schedule to get the work done, but give yourself some free time, too.
- Use learning aids: flash cards, time lines, charts, outlines to break large amounts of materials into usable chunks of learning; your teacher's study guides.
- Attend all classes.
- Ask questions.
- Get help if you need it.
- Network with other students; join a study group.
- Before the test—get a good night's sleep; get up early enough to be alert; have breakfast. Don't cram or pull an all-night study session.

### Coping with the Test Itself:

- Read all the questions; budget your time.
- Do the easiest questions first and get them out of the way.

- Answer each question required and only those required.
- Use the full time allowed.
- Be realistic with your writing skills. Read simply, clearly, and don't attempt a literary masterpiece.
- Answer the most difficult questions last; outline them if you are short of time.

### **Test Taking Strategies for Objective and Standardized Tests:**

- Solve in the order given; in math, show your work for partial credit.
- Don't get hung up on the tough questions; if necessary, skip them and go on.
- Read each choice carefully; beware of words like all, often, sometimes, and always; even wrong answers may be partially true.
- Think as you read.
- Finish the entire exam and then go back and answer any questions you skipped if you have time.
- If you are taking a standardized exam, get a guide and study it.
- Be realistic: there will be questions you can't answer; don't worry about them. Circle them and go back if you have time.
- Make an educated guess by eliminating all the wrong choices; look for clues for the remaining choices.

### **If Your Mind Is Blocked During the Exam:**

- Close your eyes for minute.
- Take a long, deep breath; squeeze your hands and then release them slowly.
- Let your breath out slowly.
- Concentrate on your breathing—don't allow yourself to concentrate on your anxiety about the time, the test, or the tension.
- Repeat this one more time; then return to the test.

## **How to Listen and Respond**

- Be quiet
- Empathize
- Give him/her time to finish
- Give him/her your undistracted attention
- Look at the other person
- Smile, nod, etc.
- Get the main points
- Use the difference in pace
- Listen for what is not said
- Listen for his/her problem-solving style and reasoning style
- Recognize your own prejudices and personal distractions
- Avoid jumping to conclusions and making assumptions

- Do not argue mentally
- Avoid classifying the speaker
- Reinforce client topics
- Paraphrase
- Reflect feelings
- Clarify

\*Adapted from Counseling Strategies and Interventions by Harold Hackney and J. Sherilyn Cormier, and from handout by Gloria Davis at Richmond College, Dallas TX.

## Time Management-Study Skills

- Devote time regularly to planning your activities.
- Use tools such as a master schedule which includes test dates, due dates for papers, presentations, etc.
- At least weekly, make a list of things to accomplish during the week.
- Use a daily to do list with a prioritized list of what you want to accomplish during the day.
- Try to minimize procrastination.
- Break large tasks into small ones, set dates for completion of small tasks, let go of perfectionistic standards, and reward yourself for task completion.
- Learn to challenge negative self-talk about your ability to handle a particular assignment. At the same time, recognize when you need to ask for help.
- Avoid over commitment of your time. Learn to say no and delegate responsibilities.
- Plan enough time to study.
- Establish and maintain a regular study routine.
- Set aside a special place to study that is solely devoted to that activity.
- Make use of small blocks of time to review material.
- Avoid cramming by spacing study periods over time.
- For each study session set specific goals, decide on a reasonable time limit, and take regular breaks.
- When preparing for tests, start preparation well in advance, know the type of test to be given, create written summaries of important material, and quiz yourself on what you believe will be covered on the test.
- Get enough rest the night before the test.
- Constructive suggestions regarding motivation.

It is your responsibility to make college a growth experience for you. The following suggestions and resources may be helpful.

### **Attack the problem of goal setting directly.**

Gather information about your interests, abilities, values, and needs. The following may be useful in this process:

- Tests
- Counseling
- Self-evaluation

Gather information about occupations.

- Career Services has files of this type of information.
- Use the Occupational Outlook Handbook.
- Talk to personnel in Career Services.
- Get first-hand information from people working in this field.

Gather information about training requirements and training programs.

- Using Career Services occupational files.
- Using college and other catalogs.
- Get first-hand information from professors or those in the field.

On the basis of the information, start making decisions which lead you in directions you want to go.

### **Attack personal problems directly.**

The following may be helpful:

#### **Using the services of the Counseling Center.**

- Individual counseling or therapy.
- Self-help materials.
- Group counseling or therapy.

#### **Attack the problem yourself.**

- Self-evaluation.
- Direct confrontation of others involved in the problem.
- Accept responsibilities for initiating changes you want to make.

## **Motivation Checklist**

The following checklist may prove helpful in getting at the sources of poor motivation. If you want to improve your motivation you may want to choose a self-directed improvement program or use the information as a focus for counseling.

1. Really preferring something other than attending this university:

- \_\_\_ Would prefer not to go to college.
- \_\_\_ Would rather attend another college.
- \_\_\_ Would prefer a different kind of training.

## 2. College as means to ends other than learning:

- To avoid getting a job
- To find a mate
- To have a good time
- To get away from home
- To prove self-worth

## 3. Distracting personal problems:

- Conflict with same sex
- Conflict with opposite sex
- Conflict with parents
- Lack of confidence
- Undefined resistance to college
- Angry at the world
- Overuse of drugs or alcohol
- Fear of evaluation
- Difficulty in making decisions
- Lack of financial resources
- Marriage problems
- Phobias and other anxieties
- Insecurity
- Loneliness

## 4. Lack of interest

- Undefined vocational goals
- Undefined educational goals
- Course material is not what I think is important
- Interest in school is not the "in" thing among my friends.

## 5. Continuing self-defeating behavior patterns:

- Excessive dependence on parents or others
- Fear as a motivator
- Parents as motivators
- Grades or academic achievement as motivator
- High school habits

## Time Scheduling Suggestions

Time scheduling will not make you a perfectly efficient person. Very few people can rigorously keep a detailed schedule day after day over a long period of time. In fact, many students who draw up a study schedule and find themselves unable to stick to it become impatient and often give up the scheduling idea completely.

The following method of organizing time has been helpful to many students and does not take much time. It is more flexible than many methods and helps the student to establish long term, intermediate, and short term time goals.

## 1. Long Term Schedule

Construct a schedule of your fixed commitments only. These include only obligations you are required to meet every week, e.g., job hours, classes, church, organization meetings, etc.

## 2. Intermediate Schedule - One per week

Now make a short list of **major events** and **amount of work** to be accomplished in each subject this week. This may include non-study activities. For example:

- Quiz Wednesday
- Paper Tuesday
- Ball game Tuesday night
- Finish 40 pages in English by Friday
- Finish 150 pages in History by Friday

These events will change from week to week and it is important to make a **new list for each week**. Sunday night may be the most convenient time to do this.

## 3. Short Term Schedule - One per day

On a small note card each evening before retiring or early in the morning make out a specific daily schedule. Write down specifically **WHAT** is to be accomplished. Such a schedule might include:

### Wednesday

8:00 - 8:30	Review History
9:30 - 10:30	Preview Math and prepare for Quiz
4:45	Pick up cleaning on way home
7:00 - 10:15	Ch. 5, 6 (History)
10:30	Phone calls

**Carry this card with you** and cross out each item as you accomplish it. Writing down things in this manner not only forces you to plan your time but in effect causes you to make a promise to yourself to do what you have written down.

# BRTC Tutoring Center

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Tutoring Center at Black River Technical College is to assist students in successfully completing their courses and improving their learning skills.

## Goals:

1. To help students meet the demands of academic college level coursework.
2. To help students succeed and graduate.
3. To help students develop self-awareness, self-direction, and self-confidence.

## Test Anxiety

### What Is Test Anxiety?

Too much anxiety about a test is commonly referred to as test anxiety. It is perfectly natural to feel some anxiety when preparing for and taking a test. In fact, a little anxiety can jump start your studying and keep you motivated. However, too much anxiety can interfere with your studying. You may have difficulty learning and remembering what you need to know for the test. Further, too much anxiety may block your performance during the test. You may have difficulty demonstrating what you know during the test.

### How Do I Know if I Have Test Anxiety?

You probably have test anxiety if you answer YES to four or more of the following:

- I have a hard time getting started studying for a test.
- When studying for a test, I find many things that distract me.
- I expect to do poorly on a test no matter how much or how hard I study.
- When taking a test, I experience physical discomfort such as sweaty palms, an upset stomach, a headache, difficulty breathing, and tension in my muscles.
- When taking a test, I find it difficult to understand the directions and questions.
- When taking a test, I have difficulty organizing my thoughts.
- When taking a test, I often “draw a blank.”
- When taking a test, I find my mind wandering to other things.
- I usually score lower on a test than I do on assignments and papers.
- After a test, I remember information I couldn’t recall during the test.

### What Can I Do About Test Anxiety?

Here are some things you can do before, during, and after a test to reduce your test anxiety.

- Use good study techniques to gain cognitive mastery of the material that will be covered on the test. This mastery will help you to approach the test with confidence rather than have excessive anxiety.
- Maintain a positive attitude as you study. Think about doing well, not failing. Think of the test as an opportunity to show how much you have learned.

- Go into the test well rested and well fed. Get enough sleep the night before the test. Eat a light and nutritious meal before the test. Stay away from junk foods.
- Stay relaxed during the test. Taking slow, deep breaths can help. Focus on positive self-statements such as “I can do this.”
- Don’t panic even if you find the test difficult. Stay with your plan!
- Don’t worry about other students finishing the test before you do. Take the time that you need to do your best.
- Once you finish the test and hand it in, forget about it temporarily. There is nothing more you can do until the graded test is returned to you. Turn your attention and effort to new assignments and tests.
- When the graded test is returned to you, analyze it to see how you could have done better. Learn from your mistakes and from what you did well. Apply this knowledge when you take the next test.

You have to know the material to do well on a test. You have to control test anxiety to show what you know.

### **The DETER Strategy for Taking Tests**

To do well on a test, you must have good knowledge of the information that is being tested. But you must also have a strategy for taking the test that allows you to show what you know. The DETER strategy can help you do your best on any test. Each letter in DETER reminds you what to do.

#### **D = Directions**

- Read the test directions very carefully.
- Ask your teacher to explain anything about the test directions you do not understand.
- Only by following the directions can you achieve a good score on the test.
- If you do not follow the directions, you will not be able to demonstrate what you know.

#### **E = Examine**

- Examine the entire test to see how much you have to do.
- Only by knowing the entire task can you break it down into parts that become manageable for you.

#### **T = Time**

- Once you have examined the entire test, decide how much time you will spend on each item.
- If there are different points for items, plan to spend the most time on the items that count for the most points.
- Planning your time is especially important for essay tests where you must avoid spending so much time on one item that you have little time left for other test items.

#### **E = Easiest**

- Answer the items you find easiest first.
- If you get stuck on a difficult item that comes up early in the test, you may not get to answer items that test things you know.

**R = Review**

- If you have planned your time correctly, you will have time to review your answers and make them as complete and accurate as possible.
- Also make sure to review the test directions to be certain you have answered all items required.

Using the DETER strategy will help you do better on tests and get better grades.

## Online Course Tips

### Time Management Tips for Online Courses

- Give yourself plenty of time. Many students assume that because a class is online or is a telecourse it will be easier. Unfortunately, they do not realize that distance education often takes more time than traditional courses. Remember that you must read and learn the material for yourself. Your instructor is here to help you, but the real work falls completely on you. Give yourself time to complete the reading, discussion, and assignments.
- Your instructor cannot be available 24/7. Please remember that your instructor has other classes and activities, too. While you may work best at 2 a.m., your instructor may work best at 7 a.m. Therefore, when you post or e-mail a question, please give your instructor time to check his/her e-mail and respond. You should be able to expect a response in no longer than 48-72 hours unless your instructor notifies the class of a longer absence.
- Hang in there! Don't give up on distance education if the first two weeks are tough! Distance education is quite different and does require a lot of persistence. However, once you get into the class and become familiar with the format and software, you will do wonderfully! All it takes is persistence and work!
- Keep organized! It is easy to get distracted and confused in the online environment. Make sure to create folders and name files in an understandable manner.
- Have a back-up plan. Computer and internet failures are not valid reasons for missing assignments, lectures, and discussions. Be prepared to use a family member's or friend's computer if yours goes down.

### Communication Tips for Online Courses

- Post all questions to the discussion thread. Posting questions here will prevent your asking the same question as another student.
- Answer all questions for your classmates that you can. If you know the answer to a classmate's question, by all means answer it! You and your classmates are valuable resources for information in the classroom. In fact, by helping your classmates, you will actually be reinforcing memory of the information for yourself!
- Avoid using your instructor's home phone number. Normally, your instructor does not call you at home. Only call your instructor at home if you have a serious emergency. Otherwise, e-mail, his/her office phone, and in-office visits are excellent ways to communicate with your instructor.
- Keep a copy of all correspondence between you and your instructor and classmates. You never know when you need to refer back to a message, lecture, or assignment.

- Proofread and spell check all correspondence. Sloppy messages are frustrating to read and convey an image of disinterest.
- Keep in touch with your instructor and classmates! Make sure that you never go a week without being heard. Don't just send in assignments; whether you post on the discussion board, send an e-mail, chat, or use the whiteboard, make sure that your instructor and classmates know you are still there.
- Contact your instructor immediately if you have a problem. Remember, you can still call your instructor on the phone if you need to.
- Virus check all attachments. If possible, avoid sending attachments to classmates and your instructor. Be wary of attachments sent to you from others.

### **Course Work and Assignments Tips for Online Courses**

- Retain a copy of all assignments sent. Technology does have flaws and it is not uncommon for instructors not to receive your assignments.
- Make sure that your instructor received your assignments. Most instructors will have a process by which they let you know when they received your assignment. However, though you want to know when your instructor receives your assignment, you don't want to pepper him/her with annoying messages. Be sure to follow the process set forth by your instructor. If 2 or more days go by and you have not heard from your instructor, a message is certainly appropriate.
- Meet your deadlines. Even though you are not physically handing in information, make sure to get your information in!
- Be patient when waiting for graded assignments. In some instances, grading online takes more time than grading in a traditional class. Please give your instructor adequate time to complete his/her grading.

## 10 Tips for Academic Success

Adapted from *The Student*, August 1994, by Dr. Warren McWilliams, Oklahoma Baptist University

- **The Paper Chase.** You may be called upon at any point in the day's class to discuss that day's topic or reading assignment, and pop quizzes may happen any time.
- **The Work Ethic Tip.** Think of your class meeting as your first day on the job and bring all the tools you need: textbook, pen, pencil, notebook. Attend every class unless you have a genuine emergency. Then have the courtesy to contact your instructor to see how you can make up what you missed. Never ask, "Did I miss anything?"
- **The Homework Tip.** Equate your college work load with a full time job. The old rule of thumb is you will need to spend two (2) hours outside of class for every hour in class.
- **The Final Exam Tip.** Every test in a college class is as important as a final examination in high school. Every test counts in college.
- **The No-Mind-Reader Tip.** Your instructor cannot read your mind. If you do not understand, say so and ask for help. Silence means understanding.
- **The Death-Bed Conversion Tip.** Do not wait until too late to seek help.
- **The Inquiring Mind Tip.** Approach every class with an open, inquiring mind. Ask questions; think and ponder so that you will challenge your ideas and preconceptions; sometimes, what you learn will confirm what you already know. That's learning, too.
- **The Do-Unto-Others Tip.** Treat other students and your instructor with respect. Class time is not a time to write letters, chat with friends, do another teacher's homework, or take a nap. Your professor can see you from the front, you know.
- **The Academic Integrity Tip.** Give credit where credit is due: quote, don't plagiarize; collaborate but give credit to the others in your group.
- **The So-What Tip.** Ideas have practical consequences. So What? is a valid academic question, but relevance is not the only test of value in learning.

## Study Skill Checklist

Read each statement and consider how it applies to you. If it does apply to you, check Y. If it does not apply to you, check N. The purpose of this inventory is to find out about your own study habits and attitudes.

1. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I spend too much time studying for what I am learning.
2. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I usually spend hours cramming the night before an exam.
3. Y\_\_ N\_\_ If I spend as much time on my social activities as I want to, I don't have enough time left to study, or when I study enough, I don't have time for a social life.
4. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I usually try to study with the radio and TV turned on.
5. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I can't sit and study for long periods of time without becoming tired or distracted.
6. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I go to class, but I usually doodle, daydream, or fall asleep.
7. Y\_\_ N\_\_ My class notes are sometimes difficult to understand later.
8. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I usually seem to get the wrong material into my class notes.
9. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I don't review my class notes periodically throughout the semester in preparation for tests.
10. Y\_\_ N\_\_ When I get to the end of a chapter, I can't remember what I've just read.
11. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I don't know how to pick out what is important in the text.
12. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I can't keep up with my reading assignments, and then I have to cram the night before a test.
13. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I lose a lot of points on essay tests even when I know the material well.
14. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I study enough for my test, but when I get there my mind goes blank.
15. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I often study in a haphazard, disorganized way under the threat of the next test.
16. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I often find myself getting lost in the details of reading and have trouble identifying the main ideas.
17. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I rarely change my reading speed in response to the difficulty level of the selection, or my familiarity with the content.
18. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I often wish that I could read faster.
19. Y\_\_ N\_\_ When my teachers assign papers I feel so overwhelmed that I can't get started.
20. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I usually write my papers the night before they are due.
21. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I can't seem to organize my thoughts into a paper that makes sense.

If you have answered "yes" to two or more questions in any category, look at our Study Skills Self-help Information for those categories. If you have one "yes" or less in a category, you are probably proficient enough in these areas that you don't need Self-help Information. Feel free, however, to get information in areas that you may have special interests, even if you scored well.

- Time Scheduling - 1, 2, and 3.
- Concentration - 4, 5, and 6.
- Listening & Note taking - 7, 8, and 9.
- Reading - 10, 11, and 12.
- Exams - 13, 14, and 15.
- Reading - 16, 17, and 18.
- Writing Skills -19, 20, and 21.

<http://www.wssu.edu/NR/rdonlyres/2D64BB93-B487-4C3E-B4A2-960C752F1B16/0/StudySkillsCheckList.pdf>

## LETTER GRADES

The quality of a student's work is expressed in grades and grade points. The scale is:

- A** 4.0 grade points/semester hour
- B** 3.0 grade points/semester hour
- C** 2.0 grade points/semester hour
- D** 1.0 grade points/semester hour
- F** 0.0 grade points/semester hour
- I** Incomplete (must be completed within one Fall or Spring semester after the I has been posted.)

## What Works for You?

### **Which study strategies have you tried for improving your grades?**

There are a variety of study strategies and no single strategy is likely to work best for all of your classes. Strategies might include taking notes on chapters in the textbook as you read them, reviewing your notes each day after class, reworking homework problems under test-like conditions, or testing yourself on the notes you have taken in class. Experimenting with various strategies that seem appropriate for different classes will help you decide which strategies work best for different types of classes. Your learning style will also have an impact on the study methods that help you learn most effectively. Some people prefer to study alone while others learn better in groups. Some people learn auditorily and benefit from talking aloud as they study. Some people are visual learners and need to see what they are learning. Think about how you learn best and try to include those learning methods in your study process as much as possible to enhance your learning.

### **Which strategy or combination of strategies have you used most effectively to prepare for tests?**

Just as there are a variety of correct answers to the previous question, there are also a variety of strategies that are useful for preparing for tests. It is important to know if you will be taking a multiple choice, essay or problem solving test because this will have an impact on the way you study. Study strategies for multiple choice tests may include reviewing notes after class each day, carefully reading the textbook and taking notes as you read and making flashcards with specific information you are expected to learn. Studying for an essay exam might include reviewing notes daily, reading and reviewing the textbook, trying to understand the "big picture," and making sure you can support general ideas with specific points. Preparing for a problem solving test may involve reworking homework problems, completing extra problems, meeting with a friend to talk through when to apply different problem solving methods, and creating your own test or taking an old test from the professor under test-like conditions to assess whether you know the material well enough to complete the test within the time that will be allowed. There are many other strategies as well. Finding strategies that work for you and allowing adequate study time to implement the strategies for each class is the key.

<http://www.ucc.vt.edu/lynch/SSwhatworks.htm>

## BRTC Plagiarism Policy

**Academic Dishonesty**--Students are expected to do their own work on examinations and in preparation of all assignments. They are also expected at all times to uphold high standards of integrity. Plagiarism, cheating, and any other form of theft of intellectual property are all examples of academic dishonesty and are prohibited.

**Cheating**--is an attempt to deceive the instructor in his or her efforts to evaluate an academic exercise. Cheating includes copying another student's homework, classwork, or a required project, whether in part or whole, and presenting this material to the instructor as the student's own work. It also includes giving, receiving, offering, selling, buying, and or/soliciting information on a quiz, test, or examination.

**Plagiarism**--is the intentional copying of any published work whether from a book, magazine, audiovisual program, electronic media, films, or manuscripts belonging to another student or another writer. It also includes purchasing written assignments from another person, company, or through an electronic paper-writing business. It will be deemed plagiarism when a student uses direct quotations without the proper usage of quotation marks and necessary attribution or when he or she uses the ideas of another without giving proper credit.

In fairness to all students, each instructor must enforce strict regulations to ensure honesty. Any student who violates the regulations may receive the letter grade of "F" in the specific assignment or examination. The instructor will also submit a written report of the incident to the appropriate Division Chair. The Division Chair will notify Student Services for documentation in the permanent record.

In case of repeated infractions, other disciplinary sanctions will be imposed. Under the specific circumstances of multiple incidents, the student may be dropped from the class for academic dishonesty; and the circumstances leading to this removal from the class be entered in the student's permanent record. Continued infractions of this policy will result in the student's expulsion from the college and the reason for this expulsion will be entered on his or her permanent collegiate record.

If the student believes an erroneous accusation of academic misconduct has been made and the final course grade lowered as a result, the student may submit an appeal under the guidelines for Academic Appeals.

## Study Environment Analysis

The purpose of this inventory is to help you evaluate the three places you study most frequently. Begin by identifying these three locations in the blanks below. List them in the order in which you use them most frequently. Then answer each question according to whether the statement is mostly true or mostly false about each of the three places you have identified. The place with the highest total may provide the best environment for studying. Try to do as much of your studying in this location as possible.

Location #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Location #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Location #3 \_\_\_\_\_

		Location #1	Location # 2	Location # 3
1.	There are few distractions, such as phone, computer, or TV, in this location.			
2.	Other people rarely interrupt me when I study in this location.			
3.	This is a quiet location, with almost no interruptions from phones ringing, people talking, or music playing.			
4.	I take a limited number of breaks when I study in this environment.			
5.	I study here regularly during the week.			
6.	I tend to keep my breaks short when I study in this location.			
7.	I rarely talk with people when I study here.			
8.	The temperature in this place is very comfortable for studying most of the time.			
9.	The chair in this place is very conducive to studying.			
10.	The desk/table in this place is very conducive to studying.			
11.	The lighting in this place is very conducive to studying.			
12.	There are few things in this location that are unrelated to studying or school work.			

## Grading Standards for Academic Writing

**An A paper is characterized by the following attributes:**

- It shows originality of thought.
- It develops its thesis intelligently and supports it with adequate and convincing detail.
- Paragraphs and sentences are carefully constructed and organized.
- Words are used effectively and exactly.
- It is free from mechanical errors in punctuation, grammar, and spelling.

**A B paper contains most of the positive qualities of the A paper.**

- It has a clearly stated central idea adequately and clearly developed.
- Transitions are appropriate; paragraph structure is sound.
- Sentence structure is varied.
- Diction is accurate.
- It is virtually free from mechanical errors.
- It may lack some of the originality of thought and the vigor of the A paper.

**A C paper is an average effort: neither outstanding nor conspicuously defective.**

- It presents a thesis and support for the thesis is adequate.
- Its organization and proportions are adequate.
- Paragraph structure is satisfactory.
- Sentence structure lacks variety.
- Its diction is conventional and colorless.
- It usually lacks originality.
- It generally, although not always, contains some mechanical errors.

An essay with no mechanical errors, however, is not always a C paper. Content, organization, and adequate development are central to a good grade.

**A D paper is below average:**

- It fails to present a central idea with sufficient clarity and completeness.
- Paragraphs lack unity, coherence, and detail support.
- Sentences are choppy, immature, or monotonous.
- Diction is flowery, pretentious, slangy, or abstract.
- It contains serious errors in the use of English.

An F paper may have no thesis or an irrelevant thesis. If a clear organizational structure is absent or is based upon the association of ideas rather than a clear plan, which must include good paragraph development and the use of transitional devices, it is clearly an F paper even though it may be free of errors in mechanics,

No paper will be accepted where there is a clear indication of intentional plagiarism.

Usually, however, an F paper contains errors in sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. It may contain a number of the following major errors:

- Sentence fragments.
- Run on sentences: fused sentences or comma splices.
- Lack of subject-verb agreement.
- Lack of pronoun-antecedent agreement.
- Faulty tenses.
- Misplaced modifiers.
- Lack of parallel structure.
- Misspelled words; three misspelled words equals one major error in grading.
- Illegible penmanship if written in class; an unacceptable format if written out of class.
- Crude, obscene, and inappropriate language and content.

As composition writing is a skill, it is only fitting that your grade in the course will be influenced heavily by the essays that you write. A poor beginning can be overcome by an intelligent, conscientious effort to meet the standards of the course.

Essay grades in any course are based on content as well as form. The objective of any essay is to achieve clear, exact, logical exposition. An essay, even if free of errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling, but without content or the effective structure to include a main idea and its development merits no more than a D and in some instances may earn an F. Any paper in which crude, obscene, or inappropriate language or content is included will automatically earn an F.

## Assessment

BRTC has an ongoing and ever-evolving assessment program which identifies and celebrates the college's strengths and weaknesses. Assessment is everyone's opportunity and challenge. Students as well as faculty and staff use assessment tools to help the college reach the goals of its mission. Keep in mind as you pursue your education that your input via classroom assessment measures such as examinations, individual/faculty conferences, questionnaires, and course evaluations is invaluable.





