



EOC News

Educational Opportunity Center
Assisting Adults to Reach Their Goals

Spring/Summer Issue 2010

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at the corner of
Sycamore and
6th Street in
Waterloo*

A GUIDE TO SUCCESS IN COLLEGE

FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S DESK

For many years the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) has been fortunate to have graduate students from various colleges intern with us. These students understand that the EOC program provides comprehensive services that are designed to address the needs of our students. Our interns have learned a variety of skills which they use to develop the students they may work with in the future.

This semester, our intern student was Ms. Eliza Washington, who is working on her Master's Degree at UNI in Postsecondary Education: Student Affairs. She completed a practicum experience with the EOC program. Eliza was provided with many hands-on opportunities, some of which included networking with community agencies, recruiting students for the EOC program, assisting with organizing a Community Sharing Session, and writing a newsletter.

The articles in this spring edition of the EOC newsletter were written by Eliza. Each article outlines helpful tips that you can use to enhance your academic success. Our goal is for you to read these articles and apply this information to your lives in order to become the best student you can be.

Best Regards,

Kathy S. Martin

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CREDITS

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"Small opportunities are often the
beginning of great enterprises."
Demosthenes

Non-Traditional Students Preparing for College

By Eliza Washington

It has probably been a while since you were in a classroom. There are a lot of changes and most of the students seem to be a lot younger than you remembered. Well, you are not alone. If you are going back after being out for a few months, you should fit right in with the regular students. If it has been a few years, the changes will be more apparent. A great way to start your journey back to school is to do some background research on schools, programs and jobs. There are some required courses that will provide a soft transition. You should have some idea of what you are going to pursue as a major and courses you want to take to lead you into the job market for which you are preparing.

You should decide on what you are preparing to achieve. Do you want to make money or are you a displaced worker and just want to support yourself and family? Are you looking for a more fulfilling career, one that you will enjoy and will probably keep for a while? These are some of the questions you need to answer before you begin your search for a college or university.

Set up appointments with local colleges and universities for a visit even if they are not high on your list of priorities. This is a practice run. The purpose of these visits is to get the feeling of being on campus. It is a time to get acclimated to the college routine.

Family Life:

Depending on the extent of interdependence in your family life such as if you are married, have children, and maybe a job, you may have to consult your immediate family or employer to coordinate a realistic schedule. In order to enhance your success in going back to school, you will need the support, peace of mind, and assurance from your family. Finances can be a sticking point for a family that is just scraping by. However, the federal government has a variety of programs that can be beneficial to you including: grants (free money if you qualify), loans, work study, internships, and scholarships. Depending on your income, you may qualify for one or more of the funded programs.

Embarking on a new venture in your life will no doubt cause some additional stress. What is stress? Stress is tension—the kind you feel when faced with a new unusual situation. Stress is an automatic physical reaction to a demand. Everyone feels the effects of stress. It is a fact of life. Some stress can be good for you because it helps inspire you to meet life's challenges. However, too much stress can make you feel like giving up or become overwhelmed.

It is important to know that stress comes from many sources - your job, your personal life, and your environment. There are things you can do to guard, minimize, or release stress. Plan a personal stress management program and include as many family members as you can. Do something you enjoy whether it is alone or with others. It is important to set aside time just for yourself to relax, say about 20 minutes per day. You will feel the benefits. A stress management program can increase your physical well-being. You will have more energy and be more alert. Emotionally you will notice the difference. You can also ask your health care provider for other suggestions. The Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) program suggests that you learn the following techniques to relieve stress:

- 1) **Deep breathing** - proper breathing is one of the most effective techniques for reducing stress.
- 2) **Awareness Breathing**
 - a) Take a break. Think about what's causing you to feel tense for a few seconds, and then put these thoughts out of mind.
 - b) Relax your arms and shoulders.
 - c) Slowly exhale.
 - d) Now take a deep breath, letting your abdomen and then your chest fill with air.
 - e) Exhale slowly, and repeat until your breathing is regular and steady. As you do, concentrate on each breath.
 - f) Enjoy the feeling of being relaxed and in control.

Time Management Skills are a Journey

By Eliza Washington



Time management may begin with this guide, but needs practice and other guidance along the way. When you set up study time, be sure to take breaks. One goal is to help yourself become aware of how you use your time as a resource in organizing, prioritizing, and succeeding in your studies in the context of competing activities with friends, work, and family, etc. First, decide how you are going to spend your time each day. A good idea is to set up your time in blocks by using a daily calendar and keep the calendar with you during the day and evening. Classes usually run in 50 minute increments, with 10 minutes to get to your next class. Evening schedules usually run 2 hours and 50 minutes, usually one class per evening.

Take advantage of your lunch/snack times to eat and relax. Use this time to re-energize yourself. Pick the times that you are most productive to study. For instance, I am most productive in the mornings, so I eat my banana and drink a cup of decaf coffee and begin studying. I can study for a good hour before my day begins. That is my dedicated time to study. When I get a chance during the day, I look at class material, not to memorize but to refresh myself of what I read earlier. Choose whatever method works for you. If night is better for you use that as your study time.

Study Skills

By Eliza Washington



Sometimes when I decide to study, I can hear everything around me. I find a place that is free of distractions (no cell phone or text messaging!) where I can maximize my concentration and be free of the distractions that friends or hobbies can bring. You should also have a back-up space that you can escape to, like the library, departmental study center, or even a coffee shop where you can be anonymous. A change of venue may also bring extra resources.

Weekly reviews and updates are also an important strategy. Each week, take a Sunday evening or another night to review your assignments, your notes and your calendar. Be mindful that as deadlines and exams approach, your weekly routine must be able to adapt.

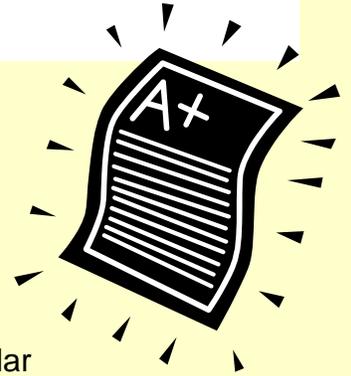


Assurance of Getting the Best Possible Grade

By Eliza Washington

These are really simple tips:

- Go to class, it is not a good idea to depend on someone else's notes. By writing your own notes you tend to remember more.
- Sit to the front of the classroom to show interest and in return you can hear and see better.
- Before going to class, scan the material from the textbook and be able to recognize terms when you hear them, even if you don't know the meaning.
- Spend a little time trying to fit the upcoming material into the context of similar information you are already familiar with, which will help to push you forward. It will also force you to think of upcoming material and maybe see it in more familiar terms.
- When taking notes, develop a shorthand system. Don't try to take down every word the professor says because you will miss some important points. If your notes are sloppy like mine usually are, rewrite them after class before you forget what was said. Again, this will help you to remember certain points.
- If, during class, there is something you just don't understand, get immediate clarification during class. There is a good chance you are not the only person that does not understand.



How To Prepare For A College Exam

By Eliza Washington

Exam preparation begins on the first day of class. This is the most important piece of information for a college freshman to understand and remember. On most college level exams everything mentioned in class is fair game. Keep this in mind when you start as a new student, or as a student returning to school. All professors have a favorite topic. He or she may spend a great deal of time on that topic. You can almost be assured that questions will be on the test. If in doubt, ask "Will this be on a test?"

Be sure to hold on to your syllabus. Your syllabus is an excellent study guide for test taking because it will list the test dates as well as emphasize the topics that will be on the exam. Participate in class, and be sure to keep copies of quizzes, essay questions, and other handouts.

References

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[http://www.braintrack.com/college-transfer-guide/articles/returning to college](http://www.braintrack.com/college-transfer-guide/articles/returning-to-college)





Hi,

I am one year away from receiving my Master's Degree in Postsecondary Education Student Affairs from the University of Northern Iowa.

My plans are to work with nontraditional or at-risk students after graduation. I have thoroughly enjoyed the learning experience I have received during my practicum here at UNI-CUE.

Eliza Washington

Providing You The Opportunity To Succeed



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EOC: A Tradition of Service

The Educational Opportunity Center program has provided quality service to the Cedar Valley area since 1988. EOC is sponsored by the University of Northern Iowa and funded by the U.S. Department of Education to recruit and assist 2000 non-traditional students with obtaining a secondary and/or postsecondary education.

The EOC program provides a wide range of comprehensive service to the participants. However, our primary focus is assisting students with the admissions and financial aid process, providing career and academic counseling, and assisting students with rehabilitating defaulted student loans. We also work closely with various community service agencies to assist our clients with other needs.

All of the services provided by the EOC program are free. In order to qualify for services, you must be 19 years of age or older and not have a completed baccalaureate degree, and live within the following counties: Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, Grundy and Tama. If you or someone you know has a desire to obtain a secondary and/or post-secondary education, call us for an appointment. We will be happy to assist you.

The University is an equal opportunity employer with a comprehensive plan for affirmative action.

Contact the EOC

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