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What are college readiness skills

College readiness is the ability for students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to successfully complete basic freshman level college courses. Graduating high school students must have a solid foundation of lifelong learning skills, defined by the College and Career Readiness and Success Center as “a group of cognitive, personal, and interpersonal skills that enable students to both acquire and act on knowledge.” College and career readiness has become a primary component of the national education agenda. Across the country, schools and districts define their success, in part, by equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in higher education, on the job and in life. According to a recent report by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, college-preparatory curriculum does not ensure that students develop the critical thinking skills associated with reading, writing, and math that are necessary for college-level learning. Graduation requirements including credit attainment, exit and end-of course exams often assess minimum mastery of math, science, English and composition, but don’t adequately assess readiness to succeed in rigorous college classrooms. Consequently, many students enter college unprepared for the rigorous Course requirements and need to spend time (and money) taking remedial classes. So then, how do high schools ensure that students graduate from high school college-ready? Laying the groundwork for college readiness begins long before graduation. Digital curriculum has the capacity to utilize real-time data, provide prescriptive assessment that addresses—and remedies—learning gaps in the following ways: Formative Assessment Guides Students. Periodic low-stakes assessments guide students through lessons, redirecting them when they take a wrong turn. Real-time Data Informs Teachers. Teachers have quick, easy access to data they can use to group students and provide appropriate instructional intervention as a part of the learning process. Students learn material at varying rates and have different styles of learning that can’t be uniformly addressed by traditional classroom instruction. A more student-centric approach is needed, wherein the higher level learning skills needed to complete college freshman courses are mastered along with the subject matter. “Learn-by-doing” activities are proven to increase engagement and improve conceptual understanding through real-world examples and interactive instruction. The results: Students build a strong foundation for postsecondary success that can be demonstrated on college entrance exams and successful completion of college-level coursework. Apex Learning College Readiness Tutorials go beyond just test prep for the ACT®, SAT®, ACCUPLACER® and TSI Assessment exams. Personalized instruction ensures each student—regardless of where they are on their individual learning path—develops powerful study skills and masters a deep understanding of the concepts necessary for college-level learning and beyond. Each Tutorial targets concepts covered by a specific college-readiness exam through instruction and ongoing progress reports aligned to that test. Tutorials provide individualized instruction designed for different learning styles and academic needs. Learn more about College Readiness Tutorials. What does a College-Ready Student Look Like? Case Study: Students Overcome Barriers to College Readiness. An alternative school in Oceanside, California leveraged digital curriculum within an independent study program to re-engage students who had not found success in the traditional classroom and increased grad rates. Are You Ready for College?College Readiness Courses are designed to improve reading, writing, mathematics and computer skills. Developing these skills provides students with the opportunity to achieve academic success and enhance life-long learning, personal, and academic goals. Some courses are designed to be taken in sequence. College Readiness courses are prerequisites for many courses in both Liberal Arts and Sciences and Technical Career education. Who Needs to Take College Readiness Courses?Students who score into College Readiness Mathematics, Reading, or Writing based on their scores on the Accuplacer assessment test are required to take the appropriate College Readiness classes. Students who have been out of school for a number of years and need to “brush-up” on reading, writing, or mathematics are encouraged to take College Readiness classes. Why Are College Readiness Courses Important?Students who improve the essential skills of reading, writing and mathematics are more successful in college and more likely to achieve their academic and personal goals. Smaller classes provide College Readiness students more individual attention from instructors who are dedicated to helping them reach their academic and personal goals. Student Experience“My education has expanded so much since high school because of my experience at South Central College. My instructors are always willing to help students understand the lessons, and they have helped me a great deal. I cannot thank them enough.” -Scott Bremseth View the Academic Catalog / College Readiness page for more info. For more information: (507) 389-7200 | This email address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it. More so than ever before, a college degree opens doors to the kind of successful, fulfilling career that all students aspire toward (and that parents and families, teachers, and other mentors and caregivers want for them too!). But, the postsecondary environment is a completely different baligame than the typically highly supported, scaffolded, and familiar environment of high school. For students to be successful, they need to come in prepared with more than a solid foundation in the traditional reading, writing, and arithmetic. “Soft skills” go beyond standard classroom studies; they are college- and career-readiness skills that are interpersonal in nature, which include personal qualities, characteristics, and attitudes. Here are five soft skills that are key to a great college experience—with tips for how parents (and educators) can help students develop them: 1. Self-Management The loss of structure is the most difficult aspect of the transition to college for many students. It is especially true for students who move away from home for college, as they now have unprecedented freedom. Stay up until 3 AM on a class night? Why not? Eat an ice cream cone for dinner? Sounds tasty. Skip that assignment that no one is around to nag about? Sure. Almost every college student succumbs to these less-than-great ideas at some point. Like all other skills, the ability to overcome these temptations is learned. Self-management encompasses all things related to effectively handling one’s own life—including time management, healthy sleep and eating patterns, and financial responsibility. Building a solid foundation in these “adulting” skills can give your child a huge leg up on a college campus. What parents and caregivers can do: Practice time management by having students keep an updated calendar (digitally or with an old-school planner) of his or her assignments, extracurricular activities, and social events. Make healthy habits enjoyable and ingrained by cooking as a family and regularly getting active together. Talk to your student about practical skills like doing laundry, making appointments, and managing money. When appropriate, teach self-advocacy skills by helping your student work through problems or challenges they encounter—not solving those problems for them. 2. Communication This should come as no surprise—the ability to effectively express thoughts, feelings, ideas, and challenges is key to effectively navigating college classes and adult life in general. Your child needs to know how to listen to those around them and share their own ideas in both written and oral form. It’s also important that students learn to recognize their audience and tailor communication styles appropriately for different groups of people (for instance, communication with a professor or boss will likely have a different tone than communication with friends or classmates). Students can start learning marketable communication skills early and can continue to improve throughout school. Here are some activities to give your students extra practice in communication. What parents and caregivers can do: Share some of the types of communication you engage in regularly (like scheduling events via email, making appointments, sending thank-you notes, etc.). Read articles from various publications together and talk about the different audiences they are written for and how that affects tone. Help your student take on responsibility for scheduling their own doctor, dentist, and other appointments, and teach them to advocate for their health and wellbeing when speaking to their provider. 3. Collaboration College classes seek to prepare students for careers—and that inevitably means a lot of projects requiring teamwork. Students must be comfortable working and communicating (see tip #2!) with others. They must be prepared to interact with others whose backgrounds, worldviews, and ways of thinking are not necessarily like theirs, and they must be able to embrace differences as an opportunity to create better work instead of seeing those differences as a challenge. It’s also important that students know how to navigate conflicts and disagreements when they do arise in a way that’s respectful and productive. What parents and caregivers can do: Encourage students to experience situations that require collaboration by taking part in sports teams, performance groups, interest clubs, or part-time work. Expose students to a diversity of opinions by taking them to different cultural events, reading a variety of news publications, or even just visiting different neighborhoods in your city. Talk to your students about effective conflict resolution skills, like listening, using “I-statements,” and considering others’ points of view. 4. Personal Goal Setting College is all about choice. It’s an amazing opportunity for students to explore their interests and chart a path for their future that works for them. But, all of those choices can feel overwhelming at times. That’s why it’s so important for your student to enter college with the ability to set and follow through on personal goals. Having the foundational knowledge to identify realistic, productive goals and make an actionable plan to achieve them can be a make-or-break skill for students in college and can lead to a much richer, more fulfilling, and more fun experience by helping them maximize the opportunities available. What parents and caregivers can do: Familiarize your student with the “SMART” framework for goal setting. Share your own personal goals—and your process to achieve them—to help your student understand the value of goal setting beyond the classroom. Talk to your student about what they want their college experience to look like in order to get them thinking about some of the things to pursue and accomplish upon getting there. 5. Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking A college curriculum is much less cut-and-dried than a high school curriculum. Your student will be challenged to push the boundaries of their own thinking beyond simply memorizing and reciting information. They will be asked to weigh different viewpoints, make inferences, and tackle difficult questions. Creativity, persistence, and a willingness to embrace failures (and get right back up to try again) are necessary for success in the college classroom. What parents and caregivers can do: Encourage critical-thinking skills by asking students questions that can’t be answered with a simple yes or no—there is never a shortage of topics to discuss that will push your student to consider new ideas and solve challenging problems. Help your student develop a growth mindset by viewing failures as a natural and valuable experience to be learned from. True college readiness is all about finding a balance between academic and real-world skills. For more information and tips about the soft skills that are central to postsecondary success, check out this blog on social-emotional skills to learn for the work-force. This blog was originally published August 2017 by Sarah Cornelius and has been updated.

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