

Making the Grade: How to Study at the College Level

Mark Pruitt

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Want to know how to succeed in college? This experienced administrator has some no-nonsense advice.

This isn't high school anymore, and the old tricks and gimmicks just won't cut it. Tackling higher education requires a different approach, and Mark Pruitt's "4 Study Steps" system aims to teach college students how to study, learn more, and get better grades, all without sacrificing the "fun" of their college experience.

Pruitt knows college. After more than fifteen years on a college campus, much of it spent working in an admissions office, he is very familiar with what it takes to succeed. In his upbeat and helpful book, *Making the Grade: How to Study at the College Level*, Pruitt offers sound and specific advice for new college students seeking to start off on the right foot. For those already floundering, he provides a solid core system of effective study steps to put things back on track.

Anyone hoping for an easy, miraculous formula for success and straight A's will not find it here. Pruitt is the first to admit that his system requires serious commitment. "Making great grades without studying is not likely to be a reality," he says, but time spent studying must be productive, or it is worthless. His guidelines are precise; following them must become habit if students want Pruitt's plan to succeed.

From how to take notes to when to review them, Pruitt provides guidelines. He speaks of things students do not often consider, such as the "Window of Recovery"—that short period during which newly learned material "can really sink into your brain"—and how to take advantage of that window to make information become actual knowledge. Topics like how to "program your mind to focus" and when to "give your brain a break" add practical but rarely discussed guidance on making study time effective.

Pruitt's friendly and clear advice reflects not only hands-on experience but also the reality of living the life of a college student. As he is very aware, temptations abound on campus, and studying is not often the most fun option available. Discipline is the only solution. "If you are trying to get by with as little effort as possible, you won't be successful...period," he comments. Efficient studying reduces stress, allows time for proper sleep and socializing, and effectively offers students the ability not only to achieve better grades but also to participate in the numerous other options that college life affords.

Ultimately, there is no magic trick, but the advice Pruitt offers in *Making the Grade* is substantial and well worth consideration. His casual and confiding tone, careful repetition of key points, and convincing, first-person experience make for a credible guide for anyone seeking help in "making the grade" in college.

CHERYL HIBBARD (July 1, 2013)

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