Clarion Review

Self-Help

Making the Grade: How to Study at the College Level
Mark Pruitt
AuthorHouse
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Five Stars (out of Five)

Veteran college admissions officer and former middling student Mark Pruitt offers a winning formula for success at collegiate life, both academically and socially, based partly on how he changed his own study habits for the better and partly on his observations of top college students. He presents his path to excellence in his new guide *Making the Grade: How to Study at the College Level*.

In lucid, short sections designed to be read quickly by undergraduates, Pruitt covers topics such as study skills, time management, and the components of a fulfilling college career. Although the lessons build on each other, the chapters can also stand alone for those too busy to read the entire book straight through. Even as he draws mainly on his own experiences and observations, the author also cites numerous sources. The presence of other voices to back up his opinions, as well as the inclusion of a works-cited page and endnotes, give the author's suggestions an authority rarely seen in independently published books of this genre. Furthermore, Pruitt's meticulous and targeted research underscores the sensible nature of his conclusions.

While the author does write with a certain amount of repetition, readers will not be bored by the repeated statements because Pruitt always puts a new twist on a familiar idea, every time he mentions it. For example, he offers a multi-pronged, convincing case against the disease that often plagues undergrads: procrastination. First, he reiterates his patented four study steps. Then he urges students to complete assignments in manageable chunks. Finally, he warns why procrastination in the college environment is inadvisable. By tackling procrastination from all these different angles, Pruitt subtly hammers home his point without making readers feel as though he is hitting them over their heads with an anvil.

Wisely, the author acknowledges part of "making the grade" lies outside the classroom.

To this end, he advises students to balance their academic studies with their social lives. He also stresses the importance of friendships and campus organizations by explaining how involvement will improve the richness of student life. While written specifically for undergrads living at four-year institutions, commuter students, community college students, high school students, and even graduate students will come away from this book with useful tidbits. In fact, anyone who struggles with time management can indeed learn some pointers from Pruitt. In sum, thoroughly researched and eminently readable, *Making the Grade* is definitely worthy of an A+! It is the perfect gift for anyone of any age about to embark on the road of higher education.

Jill Allen