**Course Learning Profile Analyze Strategize Succeed**

**Step 1: Course Profile**

Every college course is different, and at the beginning of each semester strategic students pay close attention to the expectations of each individual class learning environment. In short, students take a moment to *size up the course*to address the overall question: “What will be required to be successful in this course?” Example factors to consider include the format of the course, time commitment needed, pace and volume of information covered, type of content covered, style of the instructor, methods of assessment, methods for presenting content, nature of course reading materials, assignment and grading structure.

Size up the Course:

* Nature of the Course

Is the course taught online, face-to-face, or a hybrid?

If the course is taught online, is it synchronous or asynchronous?

If it is face-to-face, which days of the week is the course being taught?

If it is hybrid, what does the school week look (face-face, online, synchronous or asynchronous)?

What are the minimum requirements (How “heavy” is the class - what are the stakes) (e.g., grade requirement for major, capstone project, internship)?

How many credit hours is the course and the expected time commitment?

* Nature of content

What is your interest level (may change unit-to-unit)?

Is the course writing intensive?

Is the course dense with vocabulary?

What is the applied content?

Is there background knowledge needed? Assumptions of knowledge going into the class?

* “Why” of the class- Is this...?

Is this required for major/minor?

Is this required for General Education?

Is this a GPA booster?

Is this class of personal interest?

Is this a pre-requisite or co-requisite?

Is this helpful for professional or personal goals?

Is this a repeat/grade replacement?

* Style of teacher

How is the content presented (lecture, flipped class, media site)?

What are the teaching tools used (PPT, outlines, hands on activities, video)?

How clear is this professor’s voice and language (Can I understand what my professor is saying) (e.g., voice, language, volume, terminology, sarcasm, figurative language)?

What are their communication preferences (email, office hours, university learning management system, virtual meetings)?

What is their availability to meet (office hours, any time, appointment only, after/before class, email)?

What is the structure/ organization patterns of this professor/course (very structured and organized with set curriculum or very flexible with when and how curriculum is presented)?

What is the professor’s level of understanding about learner variability?

* Pace & Volume of information

Are there smaller chapters, modules, etc... or large units of instruction?

Is each class a different topic?

Is there cumulative material for exams?

What is the frequency of testing/assessment?

* Type of assignments and grading structure (Assessment Options)

Do you work in groups?

Are there papers?

Are there projects?

Are there tests/exams?

If so, how many tests/exams during the semester?

What is the format of tests (fixed response versus open-ended)?

Is the final exam cumulative?

Do you receive a grade based on points vs percentage?

* Type of materials/information

What is the format of the textbook?

Format and density of information in the text

Traditional textbooks or trade books or journals or...no textbook

Support materials for text (e.g., online resources by the publisher)

What handouts are provided?

Are there coded materials (math lab)?

Is a clicker required?

Is a calculator required?

Do you need to download any specific applications/software for the course?

* Resources available through course

Is there a Graduate Assistant available for this course?

Are there tutors that I can utilize?

Are there study guides provided?

**Step 2: Learning Profile**

Strategic students will enter a learning environment with a strong understanding of their learning profile. This second step in the CLASS strategy encourages students to reflect on their own learning preferences, strengths, and needs.

Articulate your learning style:

How do you best take in info?

How do you best interact with info?

How do you best express what you learn?

What is your best study environment (most effective place to study)?

What are successful learning strategies you have used from your past?

What new strategies could be applied?

What supports or resources have helped in the past?

How do you handle distractions?

What time of day do focus/learn best?

**Step 3: Analyze**

This third step encourages the student to pull the information from the first two steps together and compare them to determine the level of match between the demands of the learning environment for each course and their learning profile. This will not always be a perfect match, and this allows students to identify places where they will need to be especially intentional with the academic routines they develop for that course.

Compare the course and your learning style:

Are there elements that are a good match between the instructor profile and student learning profile?

What are some potential barriers that may be challenging for learner or prevent the learner from being successful?

What resources in the class are a good fit with their learning profile?

What are your strengths, growth-points, opportunities, and potential threats (things that you are unable to plan for or uncontrollable)?

Some potential questions students should ask themselves related to each element of the course:

Repeat analysis for each element of the course:

Has this been a challenge for me in the past? Why?

Do I have what I need already in place to address a potential challenge ….

**Step 4: Strategize**

During this step, students make a plan for academic routines to use and support networks to access in order to be successful in the course. Based on the analysis in step 3, students might find additional formats of materials, plan study routines, request accommodations, access support resources, initiate study groups, find tutors, conduct an executive functioning analysis, etc. As students gain more experience in courses, this proactive approach can become more efficient and effective.

List of questions for course that are flagged for consideration:

What accommodations are available that might help?

What Assistive Technology has helped in the past with this sort of course expectation?

What resources has your professor suggested that relate to this (e.g., office hours)?

Is there a tutor who can help?

Is there a campus office/resource that can provide assistance (Tutoring Center, Speech and Communication Center, Writing Center)?

What daily routines have you used in the past that might apply here?

How much time each day will this take?

Where will you work most on this course (or section of a course)?

Is there someone in your class who is strong in this area?

How will you implement your planner strategy for this type of assignment/task?

What resources are in the class (e.g., Power point in advance)?

Who is available to help hold you accountable for following the plan you create for yourself for this course (or element of the course) - how can that person help you?

Are there additional places I can find information about this content (e.g., YouTube, Quizlet, Linda.com, Khan Academy)?

What is your preference for outside resources (i.e., that match with your learning profile)?

Tools to utilize while creating a strategy:

Conduct an executive functioning self-analysis: Do I need to (take brakes before and after instruction, use countdowns & time checks during work periods, give extra time to organize before transitions, create an end-of-the-day checklist, chunk out workload, adjust the priority of this course)?

Create goals utilizing the SMART Goals or Locke and Latham’s Theory

**Step 5: Succeed**

The cyclical process instilled with CLASS includes an emphasis on reflection and evaluation. Even the best-designed approach will probably need some adjusting as the semester progresses. Step 5 reinforces the importance of celebrating incremental successes while continuously evaluating and refining academic routines and selection/utilization of support.

Follow through and reassess:

Periodically monitor academic progress; after your first exam/essay/project is completed, once you receive your first grade (What has been working? What has not been working? Revisit your analysis and strategy.)

Give yourself a progress report (Have you been following through on your planning and strategy? Have you accessed and utilized the resource identified in the process?)