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THE
COMPANION

FOR THE FIRST YEAR AT CITY TECH

5TH EDITION

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JENNIFER SEARS, LAURI AGUIRRE, A.E. DREYFUSS, AND JANET LIU-MARK

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR LEARNING

Be pro-active! Take responsibility for your learning. Go to class, be on time, keep up with assignments, do all of the required reading, and strive to do even more than the required expectations. Go after what you want to learn with vigor. Learn about topics and issues that are important to your future. Cultivate your mind by pursuing and learning about opportunities that interest you.

To Take Charge of Your Learning:

TAKE MODERATE RISKS

Often students conclude that sticking with what they already know will be “safer” than trying something new. Operate from what you know as a base, but take risks! Stretch yourself to reach new levels of skill.

SPEAK UP IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS! DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE WRONG

Speaking in class discussions may seem like the scariest thing to do. Your heart may race. Your voice may sound weird. But, forcing yourself to participate in discussion is the only way to overcome this common fear. Conquer it!

GET FEEDBACK

Learn where you can find trustworthy feedback. Then use it. Positive feedback is reassuring and negative feedback (although potentially painful) can be helpful if accepted as constructive criticism. Be open-minded, self-monitoring, and honest with yourself. Grades are also a form of feedback. Use them as a motivating tool to do better.

STRATEGIZE WAYS TO DEAL WITH A CLASS OR PROFESSOR YOU DON'T FIND ENGAGING

It is likely that during your college life, you will be in a class taught by a professor who you find to be uninteresting or dry. Especially in the first couple of years when you are taking “core” courses (see Chapter 2), you may find yourself in such a situation. To benefit from this situation, here's what to do:

- Get interested. Don't wait passively for the instructor or subject to interest you. Your job as a student is to make the effort to look more deeply into the subject. Most ideas are engaging if you make the effort to look beneath the surface.
- Sit in the front row where you can't hide and drift off.
- Form a study group with classmates to share ideas and notes so that you can generate and sustain some interest.
- Use the textbook and other materials to bolster your awareness of the topic and to supplement the class lessons.
- Be your own teacher – find one point that interests you and do further research.
- Read what is assigned before class so the professor's lecture will have significantly more meaning to you. Don't believe us? Try it.
- Surprise! What your “boring” teacher is saying may suddenly become more interesting if you bring your own knowledge to it.

FIND CONNECTIONS

- Train yourself to look for intellectual connections that are unique to you and your path of study. Learn to actively make connections from one subject to another. This skill will help you succeed in the future in a rapidly changing workplace that is ever more interdisciplinary.
- Finding connections among subjects are also about finding a deeper understanding of knowledge. You will be surprised by the pleasure you will feel when you link ideas between courses and come across them on your own.
- In addition, the phrase “compare and contrast” will stand you in good stead. We mean that you need to look for how ideas are similar and how they are dissimilar from each other. Take a critical stance and consider the opposite of any idea with which you are presented.
- Research the academic environment. Consider and investigate how your learning relates to the labor market and the larger world. Cultivate the skills you already have to offer by learning about opportunities on campus. Consider how your individual skills and strengths fit into your chosen field, career, and graduate studies.

Activity 4

Track Your Learning Successes!

Be honest with yourself, check off what you have done each week:

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
In Each Class															
I did not miss any classes.															
I listened actively by following what the instructor was saying.															
I wrote down questions for what I did not understand and asked questions in class.															
I understood the lecture and the instructor's emphasis because I came prepared by reading the assigned material and/or doing assigned homework.															
I scheduled time with classmates to discuss course material.															
While Studying															
I did not miss any classes.															
I studied for two hours for every hour of class time.															
I rewrote and reviewed lecture notes.															
I noted questions or comments for discussion.															
I "previewed" chapters before reading them.															
I planned ahead for what I needed to do the next day.															
I scheduled time for a social life after studying.															

TIPS



Shade each box under each week to show that you have completed the task.