

25 Ideas for Embedding College Readiness Skills into the High School Classroom when teaching College-Level Content

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Time Management

1. For a long-term project or research paper, model how to use the “count backwards” technique. Tell the class the due date. Using a large calendar, model how to “count backwards” to create personal project goals and writing deadlines to ensure the project or research paper is done on time.
2. Have students email or drop their assignments into a digital drop box by a certain time in the evening. For example: Assignment will be due on Wednesday night at 10:00 p.m. Give a grade penalty for students that turn in the assignment even a few minutes late.
3. When a long-term project is assigned, demonstrate to students how to set an automatic email reminder. Most email browsers have this feature. Also, these reminders can be linked up to a mobile device or iPad.
4. At the end of your course, have students write down 3 strategies for success that could be utilized by the incoming class next year. Require that one of them be a time management strategy. Collect and record these strategies and give them to your incoming class in the fall.
5. Be intentional in scheduling, model to students how make good use of their own time. Have students be part of the weekly planning for the class. Using a Google Calendar or Online Calendar, map out the class topics for the week and assignments. Talk about upcoming school events and how they will affect your class. Talk out how you are going to plan your lessons, mention that in college the student is responsible for managing their time.

Writing & Research

6. Have students use an “editing checklist” for every written assignment. This forces students to recognize every college assignment should be in “final draft” format.
7. For every digital or text resource utilized in your class, have students write out the correct reference formatting according to the formatting style utilized in your discipline. The next day put the correct formatting in the front of your classroom and have students check their work as they come into class. This gives students practice actually learning a formatting style for writing and research rather than fully relying on electronic reference tools.

8. After a class discussion of a text, have the students take 5-7 minutes to paraphrase the text in their own words. Have one student write their paraphrase in the front of the room for the class to see. Underneath, write a direct quote from the text. Discuss with the students the difference between paraphrasing and the use of direct quotes. This summative activity is an easy way to end the class and emphasize proper research etiquette.
9. When assigning the same writing assignment to the entire class, it is often common for high school students to utilize the same phrase or word choice to respond to the writing prompt. While grading the assignments, choose a word that is repeated frequently in the text. Write the word on the board the next day in class. Have students write synonyms of the word on the board as they arrive in class. As you return the writing assignment to the student, have the student re-write at least 4 sentences of their assignment using the synonyms that were part of the class brainstorm. This emphasizes to the student that it is important to utilize different sentence form, vocabulary and grammar to create an exemplary assignment.
10. High school students have a tendency to utilize phrases or similar sentence structures for every single topic sentence when writing. To emphasize the importance of editing and the need to have quality writing. Have students highlight every first sentence of every paragraph in their finished written assignment. Often these sentences are extremely similar. Have students edit the sentences by adding better vocabulary words, a different sentence format or adding a transitional word or phrase. This helps students recognize simple ways to make their paper have more clarity and professionalism.

College Academic Skills

11. Have students complete a “Web Scavenger Hunt” on a college they have been accepted to or are thinking of applying to. Students should locate how to find and contact the Registrar, Burser, Provost, Writing Center, Library Hours, ect... This introduces high school students to the different structure of college. (See sample handout)
12. Create “mock office hours” for a major assignment. Have students come to the office hours ready to initiate a conversation by introducing themselves and communicate clearly a question they have about their assignment. Give students feedback on how they presented themselves.
13. Create “mock office hours” by using the Google Appointments feature of Google Apps. This allows a teacher to block off times for students to get help on assignments in fixed time slots. For example: The teacher can identify that he or she will be available from 2:00p.m. until 3:15 and specify that students can sign up for a 15 minute time slot. Give students feedback on whether or not they arrived on time, neatness of clothing and use of respectful, professional speech.

College Academic Skills

14. Discuss during class time how to have an effective study group session. Discuss that many college students find study groups helpful to prepare for large examinations. Many college/ university websites have resources for effective study groups. I utilize the guidelines for study groups on www.collegeboard.com. Have students pick their own study groups, list each persons' role and meeting location. Encourage students to have the study group on their own time before the test. Set aside a few minutes after the text to discuss the outcome of the study groups and discuss any changes the students would make to their study group next time.
15. Discuss with students the proper email etiquette for communicating with professors. High School students are usually unaware that they will have to state to the professor which class they are in and the course number in the email. Most colleges have links to email etiquette standards on the library homepage. I utilize the Purdue University Online Writing Center email etiquette standards. Have students email you one or two questions they have about your class in the proper email format for college professors. Utilize the students' emailed questions as discussion points for the next class.
16. Discuss with the students suggestions for "naming digital files" when completing assignments. High school students tend to "name" files in a simplistic format. High School example: "writing assignment 1.docx". College professors often require that students "name" their work as their last name.first initial. Course number.name of assignment. College example: Smith.J.EDUC201.theories.docx. Choose a format that models these requirements for your class. This is helpful if you are having students email their major assignments to a digital drop box or email address.

Critical Thinking & Synthesis

17. Split up the class into groups. Have each group read a different current research article on a major controversial or unsolved issue in your discipline. Have students discuss the articles and come up with a solution of how to solve the problem or how to address the gap in the research through a research study. Have students present their solution and/ or suggestion for further research. For example: In my Human Development class students discuss and attempt to solve the issue of children growing up in poverty.
18. As a quick review of a difficult topic or section in the text, assign students to bring in an object that represents a non-tangible concept. Have students discuss their object as part of the review. Having students bring in an object helps to bring the difficult concept to life.

19. Utilize famous pieces of artwork or visual representations to introduce a difficult concept. For example, Salvador Dali's *Persistence of Memory* painting can be utilized as an introductory discussion on the grieving process in a human development or sociology class.

Note-taking

20. After students have taken notes on a section of the text or chapter, assign students to visualize the concepts to review. Have students use only hand drawings, symbols or images to represent the concepts. Students should not use any words at all. This forces students to synthesize the material into a holistic, visual view of the topic.
21. Have students build a better vocabulary note card. On side #1 write the vocabulary word in the center. In the top right corner write a synonym or positive example. In the top left corner write the antonym or negative example. On side #2 write the book definition of the vocabulary word. Underneath the book definition write a phrase in your own words in 7 words or less.
22. Create a note card tree using the "build a better vocabulary note card" in #10, model to students how to use the note cards as a study game. Choose one word that encompasses the theme of the entire unit of study. Place that card (note card A) in the middle of your desk. Take another note card from the pile (note card B) that is a synonym or positive example linked to the note card you already placed on your desk. Place note card B over the synonym in note card A to represent a similarity or connection. Repeat so that all the words in your note card pile are interconnected. Students can repeat the process for further review in a different order. This emphasizes that all words and concepts within one chapter are connected. This activity helps students recognize relationships and synthesize the "bigger picture" concepts.
23. Primary texts or research material is often hard for a high school student to decipher. To aid in their understanding, model how to break up the text into manageable chunks. Assign each student 1 to 2 paragraphs in the text. Have the students read the paragraph(s). Secondly have the students write a 1—2 sentence summary in their own words about what the text is saying. As a class, compile the sentences into a sequential list (summary sentence from the first paragraph, then the summary sentence from the next paragraph and so on). This basically creates a summary of the main points of the primary text in the students' own voice. Send the students home with the class sentence summary to aid them in reading the primary text or research material on their own for homework.

24. Create a running list of words that students might not know from your discipline that are not the typical vocabulary words. Discuss with the students the importance of learning the jargon of each academic discipline. Encourage students to use these words in their writing assignments and daily classroom conversations. For example in the field of Human Development the words exacerbate, nexus, resiliency, malevolent and intricacies are commonly used in textbooks and primary texts.
25. Have students take “visual notes” for a chapter or concept that is sequential or abstract. Limit students to one large piece of paper and only 10 words. This forces students to choose visual representations for the concepts. This helps to eliminate the tendency students have to regurgitate information from the text, forcing students to think about the concepts.