Final Project Example

**Final Project Example – 100 points**

**Excellent Example!**

**Why? It has good format, thoughtful, and is complete with quotes and examples with reference page numbers.**

**Requirements have been highlighted in red for your increased understanding.**

Final Project – College Success

**My reasons for attending college:**

I have many reasons for attending college.  Like a lot of students, one of the main reasons I’m going to college is to get the knowledge I need for the career I hope to have some day, which is to be a professional photographer. On page 7, there is a graphic that answers the question, “What are your objectives for being in college?”  The graphic shows the 41% of first year students reported that they go to college “to become successful in a business of my own.”  For me, the photography classes that I’m taking at Cabrillo are helping me learn the skills I need to take better photographs, to use editing programs and other photographic techniques such as lighting, and to learn from others how to critique and display my photos.  These classes will help me become a more successful photographer.

Another one of my reasons for going to college is to help me get to know other photographers.  Like it says on page 8 in Chapter 1, “College will provide numerous opportunities for developing a variety of social networks…”.  It goes on to say that “the networks will help you make friends…who share your interests and goals” (page 8). That’s been true for me.  I’ve gotten to know several people from my photography classes and we have become good friends.  We go take photographs together, help each other decide which photos to display, and have helped each other find new locations and subjects for our photographs.

Finally, I am going to Cabrillo to gain knowledge in other subjects.  “The most important skill you will need to learn in college is how to keep learning throughout your life” (page 7). I know that I want to become a photographer but I know that it is hard to make a living doing just photography. By going to Cabrillo I can take classes that help me get learn about other subjects, cultures and even careers. For example, I’ve taken a class in web design that has given me skills that I can use to build my own website or design websites for other people.  I’ve also take a few classes in museum and gallery viewing as well as the history of photography.  Being in those classes helped me learn to enjoy visiting art galleries and how to appreciate art even more.  I also know because of those classes I will keep looking for interesting art exhibits to visit.

**How I plan to manage my time:**

Before I answered this question, I went back and looked at the answers I gave for the journal assignment in Chapter 2.  I think it is interesting that I wrote that before I’d read the chapter on Time Management how bad I was at managing my time.  Since taking this class I’ve gotten much better at time management, and I’m using several of the ideas from Chapter 2.

Because I tend to get distracted easily, one of the strategies that I now use to manage my time better is to avoid the things that distract me especially when I’m trying to study. I’ve actually done what it suggested on page 29 to do about distractions, which is to figure out what distracts me, when and where I get distracted and what I’m doing when I get distracted. What I found out is that what I should be doing when I get distracted the most is to study.   Also, I get distracted more at home if I’m trying to study in the rooms where we have TVs or if I can look online or on my phone.  The three things that distract me the most are the TV, my computer and my IPhone.  So, now I avoid getting distracted by doing most of my studying in a room at home where there is no TV and where I don’t have my phone with me.  I also turn off the “notification” signals and pop-ups on my computer when I’m using it to study. Doing these things has helped me to manage my time better and to avoid getting distracted when I should be studying.

Another time management strategy that I’m using more than I used to is keeping a “to do list” (page 27). Even before taking this class I did use the electronic calendar on my computer and my IPhone to keep track of my class schedule and appointments.  But, what I’m also doing now is keeping track of *all*the things I need to remember to do during the week and not just the school stuff. I’ve also started prioritizing things so that I try to get the important things done (like studying) at the beginning of the week (page 40). I keep the list on my IPhone and when I get done with something on my list I “cross” it off.  That gives me “a feeling of accomplishment” (page 27) and it’s like getting a reward because I can see what I’ve actually finished each day and by the end of the week.  Then, I can give myself a real reward like watching TV or spending time with friends (page 27).

Because doing these things have helped me manage my time better and have helped me be less stressed out about school, I’m sure I’ll continue to use them to plan my classes, school assignments, study times, outside activities and appointments, etc.

**My learning style and how I will use this information.**

My learning style is a kinesthetic style according to the VARK Learning Styles Inventory, which means that I “prefer to learn through experience and practice, …through sense of touch, and …when bodies are in motion” (page 70). One way that knowing my learning style can help me is with the ways I study. According to the “Study Strategies by Learning Style” based on the VARK Inventory on page 74, being a kinesthetic learner, I should use as many of my senses as possible when studying.  I should also try to get real-world examples to add to my notes. And, I should physically move in some way while I’m reading my notes or reciting them out loud.   Knowing that I should move and use my senses while I study I actually do rewrite my notes especially when I’m studying for a quiz or exam.  I also know that I can remember things better if I’m doing something physical with the information that I’m trying to memorize. What I’ve started to do is put the material I need to memorize on notecards and then “play a Concentration-like game.”  I flip cards over and move them around to match up information that I need to know. Being able to physically move the notecards helps me to remember what I need to know.

Another way knowing my learning style is useful to me is when I’m working with the Learning Skills Center.  Knowing that I’m mostly a kinesthetic learner, my counselor tries to put me in classes where the instructors’ best match my style of learning.  That’s why on-line classes are so good for me to take because I can move around when I need to, work at my own pace, have my computer read material to me, and I don’t have to listen to lectures while trying to take notes to keep up.

Finally, being able to explain my learning style to my instructors is really useful and important.  It helps me explain the type of accommodations I’m asking for and why I need them.  It also helps my instructors help me adapt to their teaching style (page 87).  For example, in my History of Photography class, my instructor used a lot of PowerPoint presentations in class.  It was really good for me to see the material.  But, also knowing my style of learning, he was willing to send me the PowerPoint notes and slides so that I could have them on my computer and “flip” through them while he was showing them up on the big screen.

Knowing my learning style has given my more confidence when I’m studying because I’ve learned some of the best ways for me to study.  It has also given me confidence to talk to my instructors and get the accommodations I need because I can explain exactly what my learning style is and what ways I learn best.  I’ll continue to use that information as I go through Cabrillo and also plan for my career.

**How will you assess your Emotional Intelligence?**

When I took the Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire on page 52 in Chapter 3 in September, I found out that I needed to work on making my EI stronger since I tended to get stressed easily.  Since September, I’ve tried really hard to improve my EI and reduce my level of stress by using some of the strategies listed on pages 61-61 in Chapter 3.  For example, I figured out that I was getting the most stressed out by feeling that I had too much to do and not enough time to get it done.  So, I started to make a list of things that needed to be done and making a schedule for getting those things done. The other strategy that I used was to figure out what made me feel less stressed out.  Like it says on page 62, I found out that exercising really helped me feel better.  For this semester, I’ve been taking a swim class here at Cabrillo twice a week.  The longer I’ve been taking that class and getting that regular exercise, the better I feel.  I also think that situations that might have really stressed me out before don’t bother me so much on days when I’ve been swimming.

Finally, the other strategy that I’ve been using is to meet with a therapist every few weeks (page 61, strategy #1).  She has helped me to identify my EI strengths (my independence – page 54, my self-regard – page 54, and my interpersonal relationships – page 55) and is helping me to work on my weaknesses.

I think that learning about EI and what to do to make EI stronger has helped me with my Emotional Intelligence especially when it comes to stress and knowing what to do about that.  Assessing my EI at the end of this semester, I would say it is much stronger than it was in September and getting stronger.

**Which study skills learned in class will you utilize in your future classes?**
What’s most important about studying is “to develop a deep understanding of course information” (page 158-159). Another goal for studying is being able to remember. Having good study skills can help you do both.  For me, I know that I will continue to use several study skills that I’ve learned in this class.  One study technique that I will keep using to help me remember is mnemonics, which are “tricks to aid the memory (page 167).  The mnemonic trick that seems to work best for me is the visualization one where you “associate words, concepts or stories with visual images” (page 168).  I’ve used this technique in my history of photography class where I had to memorize names of photographers and titles of photographs.  Think of silly or weird ways to remember both really helped me do well on the exams so I know that I will continue to use that technique in other classes.

Another study technique that I think I’ll continue to use is making flashcards from my notes (page 170).  I can put information that I need to know on the cards and then flip through them when I need to study.  Since I’m a kinesthetic learner, flipping the cards or “playing matching games” can help me to study since I am actually moving the flashcards around.  Another advantage of flashcards is that I can keep them with me and study them when I’m waiting just about any place (page 170).

A third study skill that I’ll keep using is repeating out loud using my own words what I’m trying to learn (page 160).  I think that technique has helped me a lot because it gets what I’m trying to learn into my memory better than if I just keep reading the material over and over.  Because of my dyslexia, reading is hard so saying things out loud is also really helpful to make sure that I’m “reading” what I’m trying to learn correctly.

Finally, I’ll continue to take “effective notes” which are notes that “prepare you to do well on quizzes or exams” (page 141).  I have been using a two-column type note which is like the “Cornell Format” (Figure 7.1 – page 142), but I take mine on my laptop since it is hard for me to keep up with my hand-writing.  The other thing that helps to make sure my notes are complete is that I have a note-taker in some of my classes.  That helps me compare the notes I take with the notes that they take which makes them a lot better (page 151).

Those are the study skills I’m sure I’ll continue to use in my classes here at Cabrillo.

**Are you transferring to a four-year university? Why or why not? What steps will/would you take? Be specific.**

I’m not going to be transferring to a four-year college in the near future.  Because of my learning issues I’m taking just a few courses each semester at Cabrillo so that I can do the work and get good grades in each course. Like it says on page 334 in Chapter 15, I am paying attention to my grades because they show that I have a “solid knowledge base and a strong work ethic,” and with my dyslexia I do have to work really hard to get the grades that I get which are mostly A’s and a few B’s.

Some of the steps I’ve taken so far to help me with my education and career planning have been ones that are in “My Career Itinerary” found in Table 15.2 on page 331 in Chapter 15. I’ve been working with my counselor in Learning Skills (now Accessibility Support Center) to figure out what my interests, skills, aptitudes and goals are and what type of classes I should be taking that match those things. I’ve also taken a “variety of classes to get exposure to various knowledge areas.” So far, I’ve taken mostly photography classes, and I only need two more classes so I can get a Certificate in Digital Photography.  But, I’ve also taken several CG classes, a study skills class, a reading class and two English classes to help me get ready for more general education classes.  Another class that I’ve taken was a web design class to get better at my computer skills and to find out how I liked doing web design as a possible career choice.  Eventually, I’d like to get my AA degree and then transfer to an art or photography school.

Another step that I’ve taken is to get some “experiential learning” while I’m taking classes.  So, I’ve taken private lessons and done some work with a professional photographer because “it is important … to continually enhance and expand your skills and competencies while you are learning in the classroom” (page 335).  Working with the professional photographer one-on-one has certainly helped me improve as a photographer.

While I’m not transferring to a four-year university soon, I am taking steps to help me if I decide to transfer at some point.

**What major are you considering? Why?**

“Exploring your interests is the best way to choose an academic major and ultimately a career” (page 13).  That’s exactly what I did in the first few semesters that I was here at Cabrillo.  I took courses that helped me transition from high school to college like a study skills class, but mostly I took digital photography classes because that’s what I am most interested in. I also seem to have an aptitude for taking really good photographs.  So like it says in Chapter 15, page 327…”shine a light on your aptitudes and discover a path in which your strengths become your best intellectual assets.” Because I did so well in the first photography classes that I took, I became more excited about majoring in photography. Working with my counselor, we figured out an educational plan for me that would allow me to focus my studies on photography with the hope of getting an AA in Art Photography here at Cabrillo.

I think this is a perfect major for me since it combines my interest in photography, my aptitude and skills for taking good photos and my personality – I like working alone and have a lot of patience for getting the shots that I want. So, I’m following my passion, I know what I love to do and I’m going for it – by majoring in Art Photography (page 333).

**What career are you considering? Why?**
The career that I hope to have one day is to be a nature photographer. Taking photos out in nature is a passion that I have.  I’m also pretty skilled and creative with my photographs.  I also think I have a good personality for being a nature photographer – I’m persistent, very patient, and enjoy being out in nature. Another reason that I am considering this career is that I’ve spent time with professional nature photographers so that I have a good idea of what that career involves.  Like it says on page 330 in Chapter 15, “it is important not only to take time to talk your interests over with a career counselor, but also to shadow individuals in the occupations that interest you.” I have done that enough to know that I want to try to be a nature photographer.

But I do know that it may take a while to become successful in that career. So, while I’m building my strengths by taking photography classes, I’m also working on developing my weaker skills by taking other classes (page 330) that might help me in other career areas. Besides my photography classes, I’ve also taken classes that improve my computer skills such as web design so that I could consider careers in web design or computer support services if I needed to since  both of those careers would also match my skills and interests with computers (page 330).

**How do you plan to manage stress?**
“College, by its very demanding nature, both increases stress and can teach you how to reduce it” (page 293).  For me, the thing that gets me most stressed out is school especially if I have a lot of schoolwork to do and feel like I don’t have enough time to get it all done. But, I have learned ways to manage stress better by reducing “stressors” in my life (page 161).  One way that I’ve learned to manage stress is to not try to do too much.  I’ve learned that it’s important to “assess your other time commitments and let go of one or more” (page 30) so that I can focus on what is important which is my schoolwork and other things related to my classes.  Another way that I’m managing stress better is by getting exercise, which is “an excellent stress-management technique” (page 276).  This semester I took a beginning swim fitness class that met twice a week.  I know that on the days that I swam I felt much better and was not stressed by any schoolwork or other stuff that I had to do. Two other ways that I’m managing stress better are to be sure to get enough sleep and to eat more healthy foods.  I really felt like the photo on page 33 in Chapter 2 could be me sometimes.  What I’m trying to do more often is to “get up in time to eat breakfast and make it to class without feeling frazzled” (page 33) or stressed out.  I’m trying to make sure that I get enough sleep especially on nights when I have classes the next day.  And, I’m trying to bring more healthy snacks and lunches on days when I have to be at Cabrillo longer. Those are a few of the ways I’m managing stress better especially this semester.

**How you plan to budget your money?**

Having a budget is important because it is “a spending plan that tracks all sources of income and expenses” (page 298) so that “you … live within your means, put money into savings, and possibly invest down the road” (page 299).  For me, I’m lucky because my parents give me an allowance each month because they want me to focus on my courses – that’s my job and that allowance is also my monthly “income.”  Because I live at home, I don’t have as many living expenses. Even so, I am learning how to live on a budget.  Because I get a monthly “income,” I keep a monthly budget (page 299).  I keep track of what my expenses will be during the month including gas, entertainment, personal items, and miscellaneous (page 301).  I also put a set amount in savings each month.  That money is off limits, and I would only use if for real emergencies. One of the ways that helps me budget my money is that I use my debit card to keep track of what I’m spending.  Before I spend any money or take money out of my checking account, I always check the balance.  That way I never overspend since I know exactly how much money I have in my account (page 312).

I also have a credit card that is helping me build a good credit rating so I’m very careful about using it.  If I use it during the month I’m careful that I am able to pay off the balance each month.  Like it says on page 312, “”if you use your credit card just once a month and pay the balance as soon as the bill arrives, you will be on your way to a strong credit score…”  That’s exactly what I’m doing and it is another way that I budget my money.

Two other ways that I budget my money so that it goes further is that I try to use discounts or coupons when I can.  I have a coupon book that has coupons for the movies, restaurants and even stores. The other thing that I do is I like finding discount items at Goodwill or second-hand stores.  Doing both of those things helps me to spend less and have more money left each month to spend (page 303).

**Optional:** Answer these additional questions. Not included in your earned points.

**What was the most important thing you learned in this class?**

There were a lot of important things that I learned in this class, but if I had to think of one that was most important it would that if I have a passion for something that I want to be I should go for it (page 333). When I read that, it made me feel really good about wanting to be a photographer even though I know that I may not make a lot of money. But, because I love taking photos I should work really hard to try to make that my career.  The other important thing that I learned is that I am already doing some of the things that were talked about in each chapter. For example, the way I take notes, work with my counselor, knowing what type of learner I am, etc.  That really made me feel good about myself and how I’m doing here at Cabrillo.

**What was the least important thing you learned in this class?**

A lot of what was in this course was important and I think helpful, but I guess one of the least important things for me was when the book talked about four-year colleges.  I’m not sure that I’m going to transfer to a four-year school any time soon, so sometimes I felt like the examples and information didn’t relate to where I was going to school.  For example, in Chapter 14 where it talked about cutting costs (page 302) and deciding whether to live on campus or not that didn’t really fit into going to Cabrillo, which may it hard to relate to.

But, most of the time, I think the information was really helpful and I learned a lot by taking this class.