

Hi, future student!

My name is Daniel, and I was a first year student in pathways, just like you. I'm studying radio/broadcasting here at PCC, and I feel like I got quite a bit out of this class, and I'd love to share it with you.

So. You're starting out, just out of high school. Straight from the "big person on campus" to one of 30,000+ students at PCC.

You want to get the most out of this class and take it seriously because you're a diligent student, and you really want that priority registration, right? Well, I'd love to help you! I certainly don't know it all, but it's possible that this little letter could help you along the way.

The first thing I'd say is really important is to latch on to something in this class. It could be the book, it could be getting to write about it, it could be leading a group, or working with other people. The point is, find something! It doesn't even have to be something big, it could be a word, or a phrase, or a quote.

For me it was a quote from the book we read, "Spare Parts" by Joshua Davis; it was a quote from an ROTC officer at a school in Arizona who was talking about one of his cadets, a Mexican Immigrant who was one of the very best in the program: "Oscar had it all, his only drawback was that he wasn't a U.S. Citizen".

That quote got me to thinking about being American. What is it exactly that makes us American? America is made up of many races, ethnicities, languages, and cultures; what on earth makes someone truly "American"? and where do immigrants (legal or otherwise) fit into all that?

I brought this up to my group during a meeting early on in the process of developing a poster for the big poster conference I'm sure you'll hear about. We ended up having a really interesting discussion about the whole idea of being truly American. It was so good that I felt that we had something to work with. Our meeting really hadn't gotten off the ground with a subject we had picked, but now here we were talking and debating about what the word "American" and "Feeling American" really meant. I knew there was something we could latch onto.

Oh, and speaking of group projects, let me give you a tip on those; please communicate. Pick from any form: Facebook, twitter, group text, google

docs, (even snapchat if you can behave yourself and stay focused!) just make sure you keep in touch with the group to make sure everyone is on track.

Face-to-face communication is important too. When you're meeting together in class (if your college 1 class does that sort of thing), make sure the whole group knows about any changes in plans for the project. Also, make sure to be real specific with what you are researching; even rather narrow topics have a lot of information and data that could become overwhelming.

Here's some more advice: have fun with the reading responses. If you didn't really like the way that section of the book was written, explain why. If a certain passage in the book reminded you of an opinion you have, or something really made a strong visual stick in your mind, talk about it!

If you're one of those who think this writing thing is too scary, let me give you an idea of what I've written (I've gotten some pretty positive feedback)

*-I think it's so important to be humble and not act like you know everything, because people will learn so much if they act like they haven't learned it all already. I guess it would be the "beginner's mind" we've talked about in class.*

I guess that serves as kind of a message also about how to do well in this class (although it wasn't intended!).

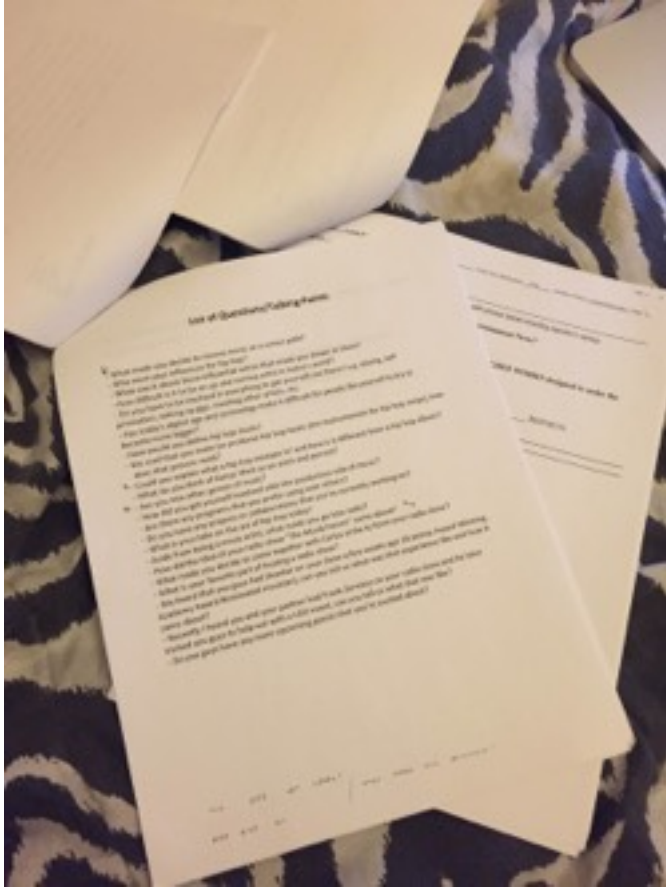
Lastly, I want to encourage you to ask questions. Go to Pathways if you have any questions about life on campus, they know all about it and are a great resource.

And If you're family's cool, talk to them, be honest about how it's going (in fact, do that with everyone you know).

This semester will be great if you do the work, take it seriously, and treat everything as a learning opportunity.

Have fun, and I wish you the best.

- Daniel West :)



It may not seem like a huge thing, but the printers on the first floor of the library were absolutely indispensable. Many of my classes involved printing out scripts, and the presentation/look of them ended up being one of the things I was complimented on quite a bit.

Not only was my family a big help for moral support, they also gave me practical help. My Dad helped me brainstorm quite a few solutions to problems that came up during the semester. Here's an example from a radio script.

