

Description of the College Study Skills Inventory (CSSI™)

By

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Adapted from *The Learning Wizard*
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The CSSI is an inventory that can be used to determine the student's awareness of what is required to be successful in college. Below you find a description of the CSSI inventory along with how the scales on CSSI correlate to the units in *The Learning Wizard*, an online college reading and study skills program. For more information see the Instructor's Guide for *The Learning Wizard* here: <http://www.thelearningwizard.com/instructors-guide.htm>

| Scales | Description | The Learning Wizard |
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| <p>Goal Setting</p> <p><i>What do I need to learn for my educational goal?</i></p> | <p>The Goal Setting Scale determines if a student knows what and why certain subjects need to be learned for an educational goal. This is the first step in getting into the zone to focus on completing college assignments.</p> <p><i>Symptom:</i> Not studying because there is no reason to obtain, retain and use the information introduced in college courses.</p> <p><i>Effect:</i> Time is spent primarily on nonacademic activities.</p> | <p>Study Skill Unit 1 shows a student how to use the online occupational information to determine the following requirements and their importance for the selected profession: knowledge, skills, abilities, work activities, work context, job zone, interests, work values, and related occupations.</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> For each of the ten basic skills required to be successful in one's career, a student lists what is needed to achieve each skill. Basic skills include reading comprehension, vocabulary, critical thinking, listening, mathematics, and writing. Short and long-term goals needed for success are developed in this unit.</p> |
| <p>Study Time Required</p> <p><i>How can I predict how many courses I have time to take?</i></p> | <p>The Study Time Required Scale determines if a student can predict if they have the time required to focus on completing the assignments in the courses he or she plans to enroll.</p> <p><i>Symptom:</i> A feeling of being overwhelmed and discouraged due to being enrolled in more courses than there is time available to study.</p> <p><i>Effect:</i> Soon one has to drop a course or accept a low grade in a course they could have received a high grade.</p> | <p>Study Skills Unit 2 provides a five-step procedure to calculate the number of courses one has the time to take. This is done by subtracting the number of hours one needs to study from the number of study hours required for the courses taken. Information is given on how to estimate the preparation time of college-level courses. When needed, suggestions are given on what adjustments need to be made to one's personal needs, work requirements and number of college courses to enroll.</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Determine how many courses one has the time to study.</p> |
| <p>Determining Priorities</p> <p><i>How can my activities be prioritized?</i></p> | <p>The Priorities Scale determines if a student prioritizes his or her activities in order to focus first on those activities promoting one's academic goal.</p> <p><i>Symptom:</i> Attention is focused on activities that take time away from the time needed to complete the assignments in one's courses.</p> <p><i>Effects:</i> Completing assignments under urgent conditions resulting in cramming and lack of proper preparation. Studying needs to be done under necessary and not urgent condition to be effective.</p> | <p>Study Skills Unit 3 explains how to use a matrix to prioritize one's activities by determining the "requirement" and "urgency" of activities as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Necessary and not urgent. b. Necessary and urgent. c. Not necessary but urgent. d. Not necessary and not urgent. <p>The cause and effect (consequence) of each of the four parts of the priority matrix as they relate to success in college are also given</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Construct a priority matrix showing the requirement and urgency of your activities. Explain what needs to be obtained, retained, avoided or eliminated in order to complete assignments in the "required but not urgent" part of the matrix.</p> |

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| <p style="text-align: center;">Time Management</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How can I create a prioritized study scheduled?</i></p> | <p>The Time Management Scale determines if a student keeps and knows the advantages of using a prioritized to-do list that tells when and what activities need to be focused on to complete course assignments.</p> <p><i>Symptom:</i> Forgets to complete an assignment or has to complete assignments under necessary and urgent conditions.</p> <p><i>Effect:</i> Anxiety about completing one's assignments.</p> | <p>Study Skills Unit 4 emphasizes that it is necessary to know when and what to focus one's attention on to complete assignments on time. It also shows how to construct a prioritized to-do list of activities.</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Construct a prioritized to-do list of activities so that assignments are completed as necessary and not under urgent study conditions.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Perseverance</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How can I keep motivated?</i></p> | <p>The Perseverance Scale determines if a student knows how to prevent any distraction that prevents focusing on completing the assignments for a college course.</p> <p><i>Symptom:</i> During a semester one "slacks off" for a while due to a lack of commitment and non-involvement in a course.</p> <p><i>Effect:</i> Studying now has to be done under necessary and urgent conditions to get caught up.</p> | <p>Study Skills Unit 5 explains how to develop and use a perseverance matrix that will help the student become committed and involved in courses and keep studying despite distractions, difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement. The matrix identifies an activity as one of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. High commitment with high involvement. b. High commitment with low involvement. c. Low commitment with high involvement. d. Low commitment with low involvement. <p><i>Assignment:</i> List ways to become committed and involved in the courses you plan or are enrolled.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Procrastination</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How can I prevent or overcome procrastination?</i></p> | <p>The Procrastination Scale determines if a student knows the symptoms of procrastination and how to prevent it from keeping focus on obtaining, retaining, and using the information required for college success.</p> <p><i>Symptom:</i> Student cannot start or stops working on assignments.</p> <p><i>Effect:</i> Assignments are not completed which causes a feeling of discouragement. Soon the student becomes so far behind in assignments that it becomes difficult or impossible to catch up.</p> | <p>Study Skills Unit 6 gives eight internal factors and three external factors that cause procrastination. The unit defines each factor and its symptoms, and suggests how to prevent it. Unit 6 shows how to use a procrastination checklist to determine the cause of procrastination and gives steps to help a student become a recovering procrastinator.</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> List ways to prevent or overcome procrastination from interfering with completing your assignments.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Questions</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How can I use questions to keep focused when studying?</i></p> | <p>The Question Scale determines if a student is using questions to prevent distracting thoughts from interfering with focus on obtaining, retaining and using information.</p> <p><i>Symptom:</i> The student is unable to stay focused when obtaining information.</p> <p><i>Effect:</i> Distracting thoughts keep entering one's mind and interrupt the ability to obtain the information.</p> | <p>Study Skills Unit 7 emphasizes that it is necessary to develop questions to determine what information to focus on obtaining. It shows how to use taxonomy of cognitive skills to develop questions to locate facts, concepts and principles required to solve problems and do critical thinking.</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> In the exercises in the Vocabulary and Comprehension Sections, develop the questions needed to keep focused on locating the information required to understand a topic.</p> |

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| <p>Cognitive Maps and Outlines <i>How can I use cognitive maps to know what information to obtain and how to predict test questions?</i></p> | <p>The Cognitive Maps and Outlines Scale determines if a student knows why and how a cognitive map or outline can be used to organize information into a form that promotes understanding.</p> <p><i>Symptom: Does not know the relationship connecting pieces of information</i></p> <p><i>Effect: The student cannot organize information in the form required for critical thinking and problem solving</i></p> | <p>Study skills Unit 8 reveals how to create a comprehension cognitive map and ask questions to understand a term or topic.</p> <p>Unit 8 introduces different types of cognitive maps and shows how to use them to predict test questions. It also gives ten ways of using a cognitive map to get into the study zone and stay focused.</p> <p><i>Assignment: In the Vocabulary and Comprehension Sections, create vocabulary and comprehension cognitive maps.</i></p> |
| <p>Reading Rate <i>How can I use purpose and self-talk to determine reading rate?</i></p> | <p>The Reading Rate Scale determines if a student knows how to adjust the reading rate according to the kind of information to be obtained.</p> <p><i>Symptoms: Bad reading habits make understanding difficult and laborious.</i></p> <p><i>Effect: The student does not enjoy obtaining information by reading.</i></p> | <p>Study Skills Unit 9 stresses the importance of adjusting one's reading rate according to the purpose of obtaining the information. The unit explains the importance of using intrapersonal communication or self-talk to understand information being read. It also gives bad reading habits with suggestions on how to overcome them. The unit also introduces the three reading rates of skimming, scanning, and study reading</p> <p><i>Assignment: Practice using different reading rates to obtain information in the comprehension skills units. In these units students determines if they possess any bad reading habits and how to correct them.</i></p> |
| <p>Retention <i>How can I retain information?</i></p> | <p>The Retention Scale determines if students use retention strategies to keep information obtained active in their mind until it is permanently retained.</p> <p><i>Symptom: The student quickly forgets Information obtained.</i></p> <p><i>Effect: Previously obtained information is not retained thus it is not available for understanding current information, performing critical thinking and solving problems.</i></p> | <p>Study Skills Unit 10 gives sixteen retention strategies to be applied to retain new information. The unit gives five retention strategies to prevent physical and mental factors from interfering with the retention of newly obtained information. Applying retention and recall strategies reduces the amount of review/study time required to learn new information.</p> <p><i>Assignment: In the Vocabulary and Comprehension Sections appropriate retention strategies are introduced for different kinds of information.</i></p> |
| <p>Recall <i>How can I recall information?</i></p> | <p>The Recall Scale determines if the student understands and uses strategies to recall information after it has been retained.</p> <p><i>Symptoms: The student is unable to recall information obtained and retained when this information is needed for critical thinking and problem solving.</i></p> <p><i>Effect: Unable to use information retained.</i></p> | <p>Study Skills Unit 11 explains that to recall information it is necessary to mentally connect information obtained in cognitive maps into a cognitive network. Information is recalled by using a retrieval clue on the lines-of-recall. Lines of recall are the connections between pieces of information organized into cognitive maps.</p> <p><i>Assignment: Link cognitive maps together to form a cognitive network.</i></p> |

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| <p style="text-align: center;">Test Preparation Strategies</p> <p><i>What test preparation strategies I need to know?</i></p> | <p>The Test Preparation Strategies Scale determines if the student applies the strategies required to determine if he is adequately prepare for a college-level test.</p> <p><i>Symptom:</i> The student has test taking anxiety as a result of not being sure of passing.</p> <p><i>Effect:</i> Worrying about being successful on a test causes a lack of confidence leading to self-defeating emotional feelings.</p> | <p>Study Skills Unit 12.1 shows how to use an Information Preparation Checklist for knowing information required for a college-level test.</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Before taking a test answer the questions on the Before Test Taking Scale on the CSSI. Do what is required on future test to change any “no” answers to yes.”</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Test Taking Strategies</p> <p><i>What strategies can I use to answer test questions?</i></p> | <p>The Test Taking Strategies Scale determines the strategies required to reveal all of the information one knows to answer the questions asked during a test.</p> <p><i>Symptom:</i> The student is unable to pass or do his best on a test because the information known is not revealed.</p> <p><i>Effect:</i> Doing poorly or failing a test after preparing for it.</p> | <p>Study Skills Unit 12.1 gives the strategies to use while taking a test to reveal one’s mastery of the information learned.</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> After taking a test answer the questions on the Test Taking Strategies Scale on the CSSI to determine if the proper strategies were applied. Do what is required on future test to change any “no” answers to yes.”</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Post Test Taking Strategies</p> <p><i>What strategies can I use to debrief myself to be better prepared on future tests?</i></p> | <p>The Post Test Taking Strategies Scale determines if a student debriefs oneself after taking a test to know which study skills need to be maintained or improved.</p> <p><i>Symptom:</i> The student is not prepared to improve the study skills needed for future tests.</p> <p><i>Effect:</i> Keep making the same mistakes.</p> | <p>Study Skills Unit 12.3 gives the importance of debriefing oneself after taking a test to determine if any study skills need to be improved before taking future tests.</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> After taking a test use the answers on the Post Test Taking Strategies Scale on the CSSI to determine if any study skill need improved before taking future tests.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Vocabulary Skills</p> <p><i>How can I obtain, retain and use the large number of terms introduced in a college courses?</i></p> | <p>The Vocabulary Scale determines if a student knows and uses the strategies to obtain, retain and use the large number of terms introduced in college-level courses.</p> <p><i>Symptom:</i> The student finds it impossible to understand any information in the course.</p> <p><i>Effect:</i> Not prepared to understand the information required to do critical thinking and problem solving.</p> | <p>The Vocabulary Skills Section of <i>The Learning Wizard</i> develops the ability to obtain, retain and use the terms introduced in a college-level course.</p> <p><i>Assignments:</i> Vocabulary Skill Section Unit 1: Recognize the three parts of a definition Unit 2: Use a term’s definition to recognize an example of it Unit 3: Use context clues to determine the definition of a term Unit 4: Determine the exact meaning of a metaphor or simile Unit 5: Apply the strategies required to retain a term’s definition Unit 6: Select a synonym Unit 7: Predict definition and example test questions</p> |

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| <p>Comprehension Skills</p> <p><i>How can I understand the information in a college-level course and use it for critical thinking and problem solving?</i></p> | <p>The comprehension Scale determines if a student knows and uses the strategies to obtain, retain and use the information required to be successful in a college course.</p> <p>Reading comprehension requires the reader to be an active constructor of meaning. This requires the reader to know what information must be obtained for every term or topic in order to obtain understanding. Comprehension cognitive maps must be constructed to visually show the following for every term introduced in a course:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Three parts of the term's definition 2. What caused the term to come into being? 3. What is the effect of the term? 4. What features the term shares and does not share with other terms having the same classification? 5. Examples of the term <p><i>Symptom:</i> The student cannot learn the information in his courses.</p> <p><i>Effect:</i> Being unable to learn the information in courses leads to dropping out or failing.</p> | <p>The Comprehension Skills Section of <i>The Learning Wizard</i> develops the ability to predict test question, do critical thinking and solve problems in a college-level course. This is done by developing cognitive maps similar to the way the information is stored in the brain.</p> <p><i>Assignments:</i> Comprehension Skills Section</p> <p>Unit 1: Selecting important facts and factual statements</p> <p>Unit 2: Organize information into an outline</p> <p>Unit 3: Determine what is being emphasized or contradicted about a topic</p> <p>Unit 4: Develop a topic sentence for a passage</p> <p>Unit 5: Recognize the relationship connecting items of information</p> <p>Unit 6: Apply critical thinking strategies</p> <p>Unit 7: Apply problem solving strategies</p> |
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