

EXCELLENCE WITHOUT EXCUSE (Classic Edition)
THE BLACK STUDENT'S GUIDE TO ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

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CHAPTER ONE: "FREE YOUR MIND, AND YOUR ASS WILL FOLLOW..."

- I. Life at the Academic "Big House"
- II. What This Book Is Designed To Do
- III. My Story
- IV. What I Did
- V. Why Re-Invent the Wheel?
- VI. Name Your Weapon
- VII. Now You See Me...

CHAPTER TWO: ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

- I. Purpose of this chapter: identification of attitudes of you, teachers, fellow students
- II. Your Blackness: Handicap or Help?
 - A. Common Assumptions Blacks Make About Whites
 - 1. Whites are smarter than blacks
 - 2. Whites always know what they are doing
 - 3. White folks are after you
 - 4. Whites are racist
 - 5. all Whites have money
 - 6. Whites have had it easier than blacks
 - B. Common Assumptions Whites Make About Blacks
 - 1. blacks are intellectually inferior
 - a. recent history of this assumption
 - b. how standardized testing and teacher expectation affect this assumption
 - c. using 'misdirection': how to make this assumption work for you
 - 2. all blacks have artistic or athletic talent
 - 3. blacks are culturally and economically deprived
- III. Summary

CHAPTER THREE: PRESEASON CONDITIONING

- I. Preparing the Mind

- A. Gaining self-confidence and discipline
 - 1. why Black students should have self-confidence
 - a. a side trip into history
 - (1) sociological point of reference
 - 2. why you should have confidence in yourself
 - a. individual point of reference
- B. Develop support systems
 - 1. external
 - 2. internal
- C. Learn to turn a minus into a plus
- D. Practice stress reduction techniques
- E. Make a self-assessment
 - 1. academic strengths, weaknesses
 - 2. personality traits
 - 3. level of motivation
 - 4. bad habits
 - 5. goal-setting
 - 6. perseverance
 - 7. willingness to sacrifice
- F. Principle vs. ego: when to turn the other cheek

II. Summary

CHAPTER FOUR: LEARNING THE SKILLS

I. Gathering the Equipment

- A. Active, aggressive listening
 - 1. prepare to listen
 - 2. restrain your emotions
 - 3. adjust to the speaker
 - 4. concentrate
 - 5. summarize and filter
- B. Speed reading
 - 1. Oh, say, can you see?
 - 2. Is there a secret?
 - a. saving time
 - (1) commercial outlines and summaries
 - (2) prefaces, forwards, introductions
 - (3) Table of Contents
 - (4) key words
 - 3. speed reading technique: an application
- C. 'First and last': how to use breaks to your advantage
- D. Underlining/highlighting

E. Taking notes in a book

1. understand the passage
2. consider using the author's system
3. use notations

F. Keeping track of class lectures

1. To tape or not to tape?

G. Taking written notes

1. paraphrasing vs. word-for-word
2. being prepared to take notes
 - a. set the road map
 - b. pronounce the words
 - c. take your tools
3. 'first five/last five'
4. don't hurry
5. abbreviate
6. don't be cute
7. review ASAP

H. Note-taking systems

1. Hanau system
2. Carey-Cherry system

I. Outlining/summarizing: the true secret of success

1. Whose words: mine or the instructors?

J. How to make a good outline

1. gather the sources
2. look at the syllabus
3. divide/categorize the topics
4. incorporate the text and notes
5. make diagrams and pictures
6. include in-class problems
7. don't be cute
8. note questions
9. share it with a friend

K. Memory systems

1. Lorayne 'link'
2. units of four or less
3. mnemonics

L. English and writing skills

1. "The English language is my enemy..."
2. Are you bilingual?

M. Why you should learn to type

N. Library skills

II. The Process In Action: How I Spent My Summer Vacation

III. Summary

CHAPTER FIVE: THE MARATHON BEGINS

I. Running to win

A. establish a daily routine

1. be realistic
2. be flexible

B. manage your time wisely

1. list tomorrow's activities tonight
2. do important things first
3. break big jobs into smaller ones
4. work on one thing at a time
5. specifically define all jobs to be done
6. check yourself
7. be realistic in making your list
8. reward yourself

II. Getting the biggest bang from your study time

A. repeat, repeat, repeat

1. rewrite your notes

B. submit to the material

1. just do it!
2. make yourself interested
3. take regular breaks
4. review notes before sleeping

III. How to choose a study group

IV. How to choose an instructor and register for classes

A. meet the instructor personally, if possible

B. get the scoop

C. make a self-assessment

D. ride that horse to death

V. Image Management: practical ways to manipulate instructors and administrators

A.Instructors:

- 1.see the instructor personally before the first exam/quiz
- 2.go to the instructor with questions
- 3.do you homework first: no ignorant questions!
- 4.observe proper classroom etiquette
- 5.observe proper business etiquette
 - a.leave notes
 - b.call if you must miss appointment

B.Administrators:

- 1.know the school catalog inside and out
- 2.remember, school is a cold-blooded business
- 3.count the cost of going against the grain
- 4.go up the chain of command, or to the person who made the mistake
- 5.treat the 'hired help' with respect
6. never put yourself in a position where administrative discretion must be used
 - a.make them follow their own rules
7. get the administrator's decision in writing
8. promptly fill out necessary form and copy them
9. get into the information flow

C.Pigeonholing the professors: Some instructors I have met

D.Add/drop

E.Manipulating the system to your benefit

- 1.pass/fail
- 2.audits
- 3.get-overs
- 4.incompletes

F.How to get a grade changed

G.Interacting with peers (business/social)

- 1.strategies:
 - a.low-profile
 - b.high-profile
 - c.White only
 - d.Black only
 - e.Black/White

H.Culture shock and misplaced priorities

VI. Summary

CHAPTER SIX: CROSSING THE FINISH LINE A WINNER

I. Get yourself together

- A. what type of test?
- B. spread exam preparation time
- C. gather your sources
- D. gather possible questions
- E. review outline
- F. pretest yourself
- G. check
- H. review outline
- I. lock in using memory system
- J. test yourself
- K. review outline
- L. final test
- M. cool out

II. Prepare to cheat on the exam

III. Taking the test: how to come through in the clutch

- A. don't forget your name
- B. relax
- C. read the whole exam
- D. let your mind go
 - 1. scribble immediate ideas
 - 2. scribble formulas/factors/ingredients
- E. True-false:
 - 1. true=true
 - 2. general tendencies
 - 3. separate long questions

F. Multiple choice:

1. read the directions
2. look at the call
3. take one at a time
4. check number of question/answer
5. separate into true/false, if possible
6. use process of elimination
7. if no penalty, always guess

G. Essay:

1. scan all questions
2. look at the call
3. go for what you know
4. outline it first

H. Miscellaneous hints

IV. Before you hand in your test paper...

V. After you hand in your test paper...

VI. Summary

CONCLUSION

I. You Are Now A Success. What Next?

II. The Unforgivable Sins

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