



Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds

Richard J. Light

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Why do some students make the most of college, while others struggle and look back on years of missed deadlines and missed opportunities? What choices can students make, and what can teachers and university leaders do, to improve more students' experiences and help them achieve the most from their time and money? Most important, how is the increasing diversity on campus--cultural, racial, and religious--affecting education? What can students and faculty do to benefit from differences, and even learn from the inevitable moments of misunderstanding and awkwardness?

From his ten years of interviews with Harvard seniors, Richard Light distills encouraging--and surprisingly practical--answers to fundamental questions. How can you choose classes wisely? What's the best way to study? Why do some professors inspire and others leave you cold? How can you connect what you discover in class to all you're learning in the rest of life? Light suggests, for instance: studying in pairs or groups can be more productive than studying alone; the first and most important skill to learn is time management; supervised independent research projects and working internships offer the most learning and the greatest challenges; and encounters with students of different religions can be simultaneously the most taxing and most illuminating of all the experiences with a diverse student body.

Filled with practical advice, illuminated with stories of real students' self-doubts, failures, discoveries, and hopes, *Making the Most of College* is a handbook for academic and personal success.

Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds Details

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From Reader Review Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds for online ebook

Marie desJardins says

This book includes interviews and survey data gathered from undergraduates at Harvard (and perhaps other universities as well; the book mostly seems to be about Harvard students, but at one point, the author mentions that he visited 90 other schools in the course of doing his research). It talks about the undergraduate experience from a variety of perspectives -- academics, mentors/advising, diversity, etc. There aren't any grand or deep lessons to be learned, but it's an interesting view inside today's undergraduates at one particular institution.

William Lawrence says

While there is some great general advice for college students in this book, (like time management, organization of work, selection of courses, and study habits), I think this book is more for the student of education and teaching rather than the general college student. College teachers may benefit from this book; there are a few new little tricks revealed. I particularly liked the chapter on writing where Light shares statistics from the Harvard study e.g. 83% of the undergrad students wrote 60 pages per year. Two major flaws: Harvard is not the same as most schools as much as the author would like to think so and the book seems slanted with pedagogical ideology and promotes his philosophy of education through narrative. Of course, there's no reason why every school can't strive to be like Harvard and unique in its own way.

Jared says

Lots of good advice.

Jenna Cooper says

I would definitely recommend this to someone going into college, at least for the first half (it gets a little redundant in the diversity chapters). However, this was a three-star for me personally, because:

- a) I'm not a college freshman/entering college.
 - b) Everything he said I've already learned at work, so it was nothing new.
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Zoe says

Even though I was already a college student, I still decided to read this. It does offer some insightful tips & tricks, & I agree with others (that Harvard is not the same as other colleges, especially public colleges). I feel like I will use some of the techniques mentioned when I go back to school. I think advisors/counselors would

find this book helpful in freshman seminars/orientations.

Jocelyn says

How to get your \$225,628* worth? Students have a few suggestions. Take courses with professors who teach you how to think. Choose a good advisor. Create. Use extra-curricular activities to develop your values and find your passion. Get to know students from all different kinds of backgrounds.

*The author teaches at Harvard.

Jeanne says

This is both an easy and a thoughtful read. Most of the interviews are with Harvard students, so some recommendations are inappropriate, but many are spot on and things to consider implementing. His conclusions are farther ranging than this--including advising, mentoring, ethnic and religious diversity, class structure and process--but end with faculty and administration "should make a thoughtful, evidence-based, purposeful effort to get *in* each student's way. In fact, shaping a certain kind of campus culture may be the biggest contribution campus leaders can make." I think both faculty and students would profit from reading this, at least parts of this.

Mckinley says

Blend of practical, theoretical and experiential. While student would gain from this, it is well suited to professors and teaching faculty.

See also What the Best College Students Do by K Bain. And You're on Your Own (But I'm Here If You Need Me): Mentoring Your Child During the College Years by M. Savage.

Sam says

There are many parts of this book that lost me a little. A lot of parts are kind of repeated, but I enjoyed reading this book. It interviews lots of Harvard students showing how they succeed in college. It gives you many tips on how to approach college, with most of the book being on diversity.

Simon says

Great book on college and what they can do to make college a conducive learning experience

Andy says

Hmm...well...be prepared for A LOT of text that reads like a novel. It would be a good book for you if you're into that sort of thing!

Larry Gallagher says

A useful read for academic advisors, college administrators, and faculty. Based on an interview study of (mostly Harvard) undergraduates, the author describes trends in student experiences - what has worked well, and what hasn't. As a social science book goes it's a bit of a light read - I wish the author had tied these findings to the larger conversations around educational theory and practice. But it serves well to stimulate conversation among practitioners and reflection on one's institutional policies.

Eleana says

pretty good. i won't pretend to know anything about harvard courses but it would have been an even cooler book if there was more data on the arts but okay

Nathan H. says

Sound advice but unfortunately rather uninteresting delivery. TLDR seek out diversity in thought and background, take writing courses, engage with faculty, and participate in meaningful out-of-classroom activities.

Carla says

This is a highly readable book about some very interesting research conducted by a Harvard professor. Richard Light interviewed scads of Harvard undergraduates to suss out what made a difference in their college experience. His results, though applicable at other college (and even my independent school world), have prompted significant changes in programs, advising/mentoring and teaching at Harvard. A lot of the findings are what you would expect but there are several surprises. This book should be required reading for students about to embark on the college experience, anyone who will parent a college student, college professors that care about enhancing their connection with their students (both in and out of class) and secondary school teachers that want to create the kind of learning environment that will help students prepare for college.
