

The Capable Student



June 23, 2016

News from Mrs. Shepard's "Where There's A Will There's an A" Class

This has been a busy week in our "Where There's a Will There's an A" class. On Monday, we learned and practiced the CUCC strategy for following written directions. Students learned that the first C stands for Circle, and involves circling each action that the directions call for. The U stands for Underline. Students underline the key words that relate to each action. The second C stands for Count, and involves counting the number of steps identified. The last C stands for Complete and relates to students completing each step to finish the assignment or project.

On Tuesday, we talked about using assignment notebooks. One tool that about 40% of the class had indicated in self-assessments that they were *not* using was an assignment notebook. We discussed what students were doing in place of writing down assignments. Most students that weren't using an assignment notebook regularly said that they are relying on their memories. While some students can successfully use their memory instead of their assignment notebook about 95% of the time, the 5% of the time that memory fails them is usually at critical moments. At the end of the grading period, when students have many tests and projects due, they tend to be stressed (and sometimes tired). Both stress and fatigue will undermine memory, and this is when students who don't write assignments down get into trouble. ***Using an assignment notebook (or a functional equivalent) is an essential routine for the student who wants to succeed.***

In class we reviewed how to use an assignment notebook, and students worked to identify mistakes in a sample planner page that they were given. All students were given blank planner pages to put in their binders. We will be practicing the routine of writing down assignments each morning when students walk in. While the assignments won't be real, the practice using the skill will be.

On Wednesday, we learned about managing papers from school. Students practiced deciding where different papers should go in their binders. In addition, we talked about developing the routine of cleaning out binders. It was suggested that students keep papers that teachers have told them to keep, or that have directions that students will regularly use in their binders, and clean out homework, quizzes, tests and sometimes notes and *store* them at home (accordion file, crate with hanging file, large binder with dividers). We also discussed long term storage, and the reasons to keep papers until the end of the grading period, semester or school year.

On Friday we talked about homework distractions and ways to eliminate them. In addition, students learned about the research on multitasking that suggests that when students multitask the time they spend working falls to 65% of what they could accomplish with full attention and that memory is affected and learning is shallower.

Hope you have a fun, relaxing weekend!

Leah Shepard