

Canada College – Science and Technology Department

ENGR 100 - Introduction to Engineering - Spring 2014

My Process to Become a "World-Class" Engineering Student

by



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Introduction

This is a detailed report about the tools and qualities I possess that will help me become a “world-class” engineering student. This semester, our Introduction to Engineering class has focused heavily on how each student can adapt their life and learning styles to a new way of thinking. Throughout this report, I will discuss how my cumulative experiences and knowledge gained throughout this semester have impacted the way in which I am planning for the future. My success as a student, specifically as an engineering student, is dependent on my own willingness to make positive changes to my academic and personal habits. I will discuss 15 items that we have discussed this semester, and describe why they are so important to my transformation into a World-Class engineering student.

Goal Setting

The first step in my road to being a world-class engineering student is to have an idea of where I want to be. For me, it is about taking small steps toward my future success. When I decided to become an aerospace engineering major, I went into it without any real idea of what I was getting into. I set my sights high: one day, I knew, I wanted to work for NASA. But I had no idea how I would go about fulfilling that dream.

When I first began college, I was never serious about it. I knew I want to be an engineering major, but I honestly spend the first 3 – 4 years of my college career taking classes that didn’t help me achieve anything. Furthermore, I was only taking a class here and there. In my first year at Canada College, I took an Oceanography class that I loved. It was an early class on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and I easily maintained an A until I started to lose focus. I began to miss lectures and homework assignments. At the end of the semester, I walked out with a C. This really affected me, and in every class after that, I have been able to maintain a relatively good grade. I knew if there was one thing that would make it challenging for my career, it would be bad grades on my transcript. Despite this, it has been about two years since I have committed myself to school. At 26 years old, I feel like I have missed out on so much opportunity to advance my career goals. I do not want to let my GPA get below a 3.0 I think that is a fair goal to set for myself, for now, because it is manageable. I would also like to finish my Canada College education by Spring of 2016. I think it is important for me to set manageable goals for myself.

I never thought I would be where I am now academically. I have wasted a lot of time I could have spent studying dwelling on past grades, and prioritizing my job over myself and my education. For now, I have made a lot of progress toward my future goals. I was recently granted an internship at NASA Ames Research Center in the Rotorcraft Aeromechanics Office, which has been an amazing experience so far. I set a goal and I stuck to it. If I can manage to continue to do so throughout the rest of my college experience, I will be well on my way to being a World-Class Engineering student.

a world-class engineering student should be looking toward the future, and setting realistic goals for themselves that will help them get there. The first step toward success is building a road map to graduation. Once you achieve that goal, set another one! They should be considering the schools they want to go to, and meeting those schools’ requirements as they go along. This is less stress and work for any student, because planning saves time and stress down the road.

Commitment

On my path to becoming a world-class engineering student, I have to maintain a level of commitment to myself and my studies. The engineering field is intimidating for me, as I’m sure it is for many others. As a student who struggles to turn in assignments on time, the workload for engineering and mathematics is intense. Committing myself to a career in engineering will open doors for me. The skills

learned in the coursework are so important in understanding your limits, and being able to understand more about the world around you. It is a well-respected, broad field of learning. There are limitless possibilities to your specific field of study. In order to commit to a goal, I believe you must first understand what you are committing to. A world-class engineering student should have a solid plan for success in their field, and that foundation is something that will strengthen their commitment to their goals.

In order to understand more about my chosen field, aerospace engineering, I committed to a two-year internship at NASA Ames Research Center. This internship is the first step in my commitment to a career in aerospace engineering. Immersion into an engineering environment will not only keep me motivated to study, but encourage me to meet my own academic and personal goals. My internship has so far been an amazing experience. This summer, I will be promoted to senior intern, and my job responsibilities will include teaching and guiding other interns through the software we use, Creo and Rhino, as well as creating and completing tasks assigned to me by my mentor. This is the first real engineering experience I will gain, and I am simultaneously terrified and excited. If I had not committed to my goal, and persevered despite two rejections, I would not be gaining valuable experience. Additionally, my internship is preparing me to become a world-class engineering student because it is teaching me things I have not learned in school yet. Because of this, I will have an advantage in some ways over other students that are much like me: preparation!

Being able to commit to something is a great show of character as well. I am still working on becoming a world-class engineering student academically, but I am very committed to my work, regardless of the field. It is important for a world-class engineering student to be committed to their academics, but it also important to be committed to completing your work efficiently and well. To improve

Clarifying my Goals

As an aspiring aerospace engineer, I want to prepare myself in any way possible for my future career. However, I have not taken any other classes that might peak my interest in other fields. While I think it is important to commit to your studies and career, I think it is also important to recognize because there are so many fields of engineering, there is opportunity to explore them. Exploring your options is a great way to clarify your goals, and is something I am greatly looking forward to as I continue along my academic career path. In other words, in order to become a World Class Engineering Student, one needs to understand what exactly engineering is, and use that knowledge to find an area they are passionate about. To start, I think it is important to look into how many opportunities are available in the area you live in, as well as how well those opportunities pay (i.e. can you afford to stay local? Do they provide health benefits?).

Of course, while none of this has to be decided immediately, because life circumstances change and goals adapt to those circumstances, it is important to know you are on track. You can adapt your goals to your circumstances, but it is important to know what you need to do to achieve your goal. For myself, I would love to work with NASA or Lockheed Martin in the future. I don't have a set plan yet, because I still need to decide on a college and work towards achieving success on the path toward graduation. However, I do have goals in mind. I want to graduate with a minimum 3.0 GPA and a great recommendation letter from my mentor. I want to prepare myself as much as I can for academics at the University by engaging in extracurricular activities with classmates, and spending a lot more time with tutors. These are my clear goals that I have already in motion. All of these tie into my road map to success.

My Road Map to Success

I spent the first years of my academic career wasting time by taking only a class here and there. Over the next couple of years, I have decided to take 2 -3 classes at a time to maximize my time at school, as well as maintain a good GPA. I am still going to take summers off, just because I do not think the fast-paced nature of a summer course works with my learning ability. Although this is something I should and will eventually

improve on, I recognize that I learn best in a semester environment with the constant availability of tutors and peers to help me with assignments. Additionally, I will be spending by summer pursuing internships and I'm sure various other jobs to gain experience in my engineering field of choice.

I believe that one of the most important parts of learning is applying your knowledge outside of the class room. Taking a hands-on approach to research and development in your field can teach you so much more. In order to gain the most out of their education, a World-Class Engineering Student would take as many opportunities to include not only academic studies on their resume, but work experience that can show they are not only able to learn material, but apply it.

Below: my predicted courses until graduation

Summer 2014	Credits
CIS 250	3
Fall 2014	
MATH 252	5
ENGR 210	3
Spring 2015	
MATH 253	
PHYS 250	4
Fall 2015	
MATH 270	5
PHYS 260	4
Spring 2016	
ENGR 230	3
ENGR 240	3

Challenges and adversities

One of my biggest struggles in school is my tendency to wait until the last minute to complete homework assignments. This has always been my greatest challenge to overcome, even when I was in grade school. I was always able to maintain good grades throughout all of my classes (I was a straight A student until high school) but this became more difficult as I got older and was exposed to tougher subjects, less lenient teachers, and a more intense academic curriculum. I avoid things I feel intimidated by, particularly big projects and writing assignments. This also applies to material that is challenging for me. Another challenge is working with a professor whose teaching style is different than the way I learn. If I am lost during a lecture, I have a severely difficult time keeping up with the coursework. I struggle to understand the concepts.

A world-class engineering student would want to overcome these challenges as soon as possible by asking the right questions and spending extra time to make sure that their intimidating assignments are started early and completed early to minimize stress and workload. If their professor didn't fit with the way they learn, they would seek out alternative sources for help, and perhaps meet with their professors after class to clear up information.

This is one of the many things about my college career that I will never be able to change. My professor's teaching styles and the projects and assignments they sign are out of my control. What *is* in my

control is my ability to prepare for these assignments and spend the time I need to accomplish them successfully, while maintaining a healthy and solid understanding of the material. In order to be a successful engineering student, I need to attempt to be less intimidated by workload and professors, and engage more in the resources available to me on campus and around me – especially my Professors.

Adapting to different teaching/learning styles

As I mentioned in the previous section, sometimes a professor's teaching style differs from your learning style. While seeking out help from your professors is great, Mr. Landis suggests that we learn and understand exactly *how* they teach [1]. We all have preferences on how we like to be taught. I have to be taught in a classroom, but I also need to hear an explanation of concepts from a tutor before I can understand them. A world-class engineering student would each teaching style has its merit, and that learning these teaching styles in turn makes them a better teacher to other. If there is anything that tells you more about a subject, it is trying to teach it to someone else. This is a fascinating idea that I never considered before.

In addition to struggling to learn material, I am also a poor teacher when it comes to subjects I feel I have a good grasp on. It is not just a challenge for me to understand a teacher's teaching style – it's a challenge to understand someone else's learning style. What makes a singular style (whether it be teaching style or learning style) difficult to use in a classroom or study environment is their limitations. I have had a lot of professors that use the same teaching method in every class, but it is important to offer a variety of methods in every class. I feel I do the best in these courses, because although they are much more challenging, they enable greater interaction between students.

For example, in my Analytical Trigonometry course, our instructor used a wide variety of tools during his lectures. He wrote parts of his lecture down on the whiteboard, but would sometimes use the projector to show us videos that relate to the subject or to display lecture notes there. He also would occasionally assign a student a homework problem to present and explain to the class in order to encourage students to complete their homework, as well as encourage them to understand and be able to articulate their understanding to their peers. In addition to all of this, we had spontaneous group quizzes, and random group projects that required us to visually show a problem we were presented with. This was one of the hardest classes I have taken during my college education, because the coursework was heavy and the tests were challenging, but it was also the most rewarding because I gained a solid grasp of the material and walked away with a study buddy that I still study with for my Calculus class.

What I would like to do is try to approach every class the way I had to approach my trig class. In order to be a world-class engineering student, I should be willing to try and teach a subject to my peers during a study session on campus. If I apply the same dedication and hard work into my other classes, and treat them like I will be required to teach them to someone else next semester, I will be one step closer to becoming a world-class engineering student. Education is not just about memorization of facts and turning in homework. It is about being able to understand and apply knowledge to the world around you. In order to be able to understand more about my learning style and relate to an instructor's teaching style, I will need to build a bridge to connect the two. The foundation of that bridge can start with trying to discover the way a professor teaches their students.

Managing my Personal Life

In a perfect world, my schedule would be easy to manage. Setting a work and school schedule for the semester is not the problem – it is trying to fit in everything else life throws at you. I am one of those people that loves spending time with their friends and family, but I tend to put a lot on my plate at once unnecessarily. I usually have my main job and one to three other jobs that happen randomly. On top of my internship, I spend a lot of time babysitting and a few hours a month on flyer and postcard design for one of

the realtors at my former job. There is also the occasional house/dog/cat sitting. The hours I put into the odd jobs add up fast. Every hour I spend working is an hour I can spend studying. On top of all of the work hours, I have a tight-knit group of friends that enjoy getting together for outdoors activities, like camping, hiking, backpacking, and bonfires, all of which are difficult to resist. Despite how happy all of my work and socialization make me, they seriously impact my ability to succeed academically if I do not manage my time effectively.

I think that a world-class engineering student would be able to manage their life more efficiently than many students. As logical, organized thinkers (for the most part), they would be able to prioritize tasks effectively and accurately. Being able to step back and decide what is urgent, important, and least important is imperative to success in the engineering field. Firstly, they would be able to take a step back and limit their workload (where possible) if it was going to negatively impact their studies. This also applies to social interactions with family and friends, and comes down to the idea of whether or not you should go out based on your work and school loads.

This is something I have to work on. I get so dedicated to my job(s) that I let them consume a lot of my free time, and thus get behind on my schoolwork. To try to snap out of this, I need to set up a strict schedule for myself and stick to it. There needs to be more time invested in my schoolwork, and less time working on side projects that I can easily turn down without judgment, obligation, and worry – the odd jobs always have backups in case I am not available.

Personal Finances – cut back and stick to a budget

As I mentioned in the previous section, I take on a lot of odd jobs. I do this because most of the time, I really need the money. My stipend from the Universities Space Research Association (my employer and funder of my NASA internship) is very small, especially considering the cost of living in this area. I have a car payment, phone bill, insurance payments, and various other expenses to worry about. Fortunately, I am living at home with my parents, so I do not have to pay rent. I help them with bills when they let me, like the PGE or water, but they are very considerate and understanding of my financial situation, and almost always reject my offer to help pay the bills. Regardless, I am still making barely enough money to pay my bills, and am able to put even less money away. However, I sometimes spend more than I should on unnecessary expenses. I occasionally go out to dinner, out for drinks, or to a movie. These all cumulatively cost a lot of money, especially if I drive because the price of gas has gone up so much.

A world-class engineering student would be more reserved with spending, because they are already good at efficiently managing their time. In addition, I believe they would find more rewarding and educational sources of income, such as tutoring, so that they could continue to study while they work. This is much more efficient, and a better use of time if it is a realistic option for the student. At a general rate of about \$10 an hour on campus, they may not be able to make very much money. However, they could also consider looking at ads of individuals who need tutors online. These sometimes pay a lot more money and are a great way to earn while keeping up their studies. In addition, they would pursue scholarships and financial aid options to help alleviate some of their costs. These scholarships and grants can really make a difference in the life of a financially struggling student, particularly when some courses have texts that cost almost \$300.

One situation in which a tutoring job may not be a solution is for the working adult. A lot of these working adults are trying to better themselves and build a future from their success for their families. Not everyone is fortunate enough to have a living situation similar to mine, so this may be a challenge for those who need a larger income to support them. Tutoring is even a challenge for me, because I have so much going on with my work and school schedule as it is. The side jobs are more convenient for me because they are sometimes only a couple of hours, and they pay very well. I just recently got approved for a larger amount of financial aid. In the past, I have received the BOG Fee Waiver, but nothing else. This year, I will be receiving enough money to pay for my books and the gas it costs me to drive to school and back. On my path

to becoming a world-class engineering student, I believe I need to lighten my work load to enable myself to focus more on my schoolwork.

Time Management

A world-class engineering student should be able to effectively balance their personal and professional lives, without having it negatively impact their academics. They would create a schedule and stick to it, being careful to include some downtime in their lives so they don't spread themselves too thin. I imagine any successful student manages a daily planner, whether they keep it old school with an At-A-Glance notebook, or they use tools such as their email calendar, smart phone, or tablet to manage their time. For a world-class engineering student, keeping a routine is imperative to their success in their classes, as they will always have accounted for the appropriate time they need to complete their assignments and occasional projects.

I am currently managing my schedule with the combination of a notebook and smart phone. However, I am only managing my personal and work schedules in this manner. I program all of my side jobs into my phone, as well as any events I am attending. I have my weekends planned until August at the moment, but I have not been so careful with the planning of my study times. When I started this semester, I began by ensuring I had a 4 hour window between classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This was immensely beneficial throughout the first half of the semester, as I always tried to spend time in the learning center to keep up with tutoring sessions and get a lot of my coursework completed. However, other than those 8 hours a week, I was not sticking to a study schedule. I had plenty of downtime at home after class, but I began to cut back on study times to spend more time with friends and de-stress.

While it is important to de-stress, the perspective I should take is this: if I had not spend so much time out with friends when I could have been studying, would I really be as stressed out? Thinking about it realistically, if I had managed to balance my time, and maybe have some of my friends help me (within their limits) with my assignments, I could be more successful with my time management. In order to become a better student, it is important to set personal deadlines and solid schedules to stick to. While I am on the right track with my personal and work schedule, I can improve that by incorporating study times into it as well. Furthermore, I could involve friends that are also in school in my study groups.

Improving attitudes and study habits

A world-class engineering student understands the importance of managing their time, but they also maintain a positive disposition toward their coursework by staying on task. All of the time spent working on assignments, studying for tests, and managing their schedule lessens the workload and better prepares the student for their classes. They:

- Are confident in their work
- Exhibit willingness to seek help
- Desire to change and improve
- Prepare for classes
- Get involved with other students
- Establish relationships with their peers
- Establish relationships with their professors
- Complete assignments on time

I exhibit almost the complete opposite of most of these traits. I have very low self-confidence, especially when it comes to my schoolwork. I never feel like my assignments are good enough, so I am almost always reluctant to turn them in. I am too embarrassed to ask for help with some assignments, because I

sometimes feel like I will be looked down upon or judged poorly for not knowing the material. This is particularly the case later in the year if I have waited too long to ask for help, and am lost in a sea of new concepts.

I procrastinate because I don't know where to start, but also because I have a crippling fear that I will fail the assignment. The most destructive part about this is my procrastination is the cause of any failure. People don't spontaneously fail at something. They make the conscious decision to not do the work, and thus, set themselves up for failure. I can say this readily, because I know it is the truth, but I still have enormous difficulty completing an alarming amount of my coursework on time. I am improving, but slowly. The only thing that has been able to keep me on top of school work is maintaining study groups with my classmates, most of whom complete their assignments on time regularly and sometimes early.

On the positive side, I have been spending a lot more time on campus this semester, especially since starting this course. I began building relationships with my peers that have turned what could have been a terrible semester into a mostly enjoyable one. Although I am still struggling in one of my classes, I don't feel so much like weights are dragging me down to the bottom of the ocean, because I have had ready and willing people to help lead me back to the surface.

In order to improve my class performance, and become a world-class engineering student, I need to take a step back and evaluate my study habits and how they are impacted by my attitude toward coursework. Step one would be an adjustment to my attitude. I need to figure out why I procrastinate, even though I know how much stress it will cause me later in the year. I need to spend more time with tutors and classmates on campus, to help me effectively prepare for my classes and complete my assignments on time. I believe that by getting the help I need, my attitude will greatly improve as I gain more confidence in the work I am doing.

Teamwork and Leadership

Teamwork is an important part of an engineering career. Often engineers will collaborate with each other on designs and processes they are working with. This requires effective communication skills, which is one of the most important characteristics an employer looks for in an engineer. In group situations, sometimes a problem can be resolved much faster by collaborating on it. When you have a group of individuals with different opinions, education levels, and experiences, you have a group of people with varying perspectives on situations. This can make a big difference in group study situations as well, because it is likely that someone will be able to offer an explanation that makes the problem click for you. A world-class engineering student will be an effective communicator because they understand that in order to succeed, it is important to work with others. They value the opinion and input of others, and have more fun with classwork because they are not going through it alone. The social experience of group work not only opens up new possibilities in thought processes, it helps build you build relationships with your peers. If a student values studying alone over studying in a group, they are not maximizing their study time. Furthermore, a world class engineering student not only learns how to work with others, but learns how to take control of situations in which the group may lose its focus. In addition to great communication skills, they ensure that when a project, study session, or other gathering is getting off topic. This means they are not just a team player, but a team leader that others will look to for guidance when they need it.

I have just learned to appreciate the value of group studying. While I am still quite far from becoming a world-class engineering student, I am on the right track when it comes to teamwork and in some cases, leadership. At school, a friend of mine and I have started to meet up at least twice a week to work on homework problems together. This has already helped both of us immensely, because we are able to catch each other's mistakes as we work on our assignments. Just having that extra eye and mind on your work speeds up the process, and has made me feel more confident in the work I am doing, simply because I feel

comfortable knowing that it's okay to make a mistake, because I have someone who is there to help me understand what I am doing wrong. It is almost always a simple mistake, but when it something neither of us can solve, we feel comfortable approaching a tutor to explain a problem to us.

In addition, I am interacting with many other individuals at me office, some close to my age that come to me for help with various tasks. This summer, I will be one of 55 interns, and my mentor is confident that I will be able to manage the others. I will be a senior intern that others will count on for help, which is a big responsibility, but I am not the only one that will be guiding the interns. I have my mentor and two bosses who are easy to approach with questions. The entire duration of the summer, I will be learning and teaching what I learn all at once. It is a steep learning curve, but I feel like I am part of a team with a great structure.

Because I have managed to stay involved in team activities, I think I have an early advantage to others who are also on their path to becoming world-class engineering students. I am still working asking for help from others – sometimes I feel that I am asking stupid questions, and that makes me hold back when I need help. However, I am much more likely to ask for help when I have been working with someone regularly, and have been able to build a relationship with them based on mutual trust and a commitment to cooperating with each other to complete our assignments completely and by their respective deadlines. I still need to work on my confidence and my approach to new responsibilities, but I think I have a solid foundation to work form, and a solid support group to help prepare me for leadership.

Utilizing Campus and External Resources

Utilizing campus resources is one of those things that many students take for granted. I myself did not start to use the Learning Center on campus until I started taking my Analytical Trigonometry course. I have never been very social in classes. I am shy, and in academic situations, I am afraid to ask for help on occasion. This is one of the most important parts of learning: being able to properly judge your own knowledge and success in a class. Tutors are there to help you succeed, and waiting too long to ask for help will do you much more harm than good in the long run.

A World-Class Engineering Student will utilize campus and peer resources as much as possible in order to succeed. In addition to not being afraid to seek help when necessary, they will utilize many other campus resources to help them understand the material they're learning, such as the library and computer labs. In addition, they may seek out help from another student that has already taken the class.

This is one of the things I am working toward the most. I love having free time, but it is not really free time if it costing me valuable study time. While I am already working with groups to accomplish homework assignments, I don't always utilize all of the available resources to me. I need to reach out more when I need help, and be less afraid of how others will perceive my need for their help. Most people are more than happy to help out someone, especially if they have specific questions regarding their problem.

Stress Management

An important thing many students overlook is their own health. In order to maximize their education experience, a world-class engineering student would ensure they maintained proper diet and exercise habits, as well as a healthy sleep schedule. In addition to this, they would try to minimize their stress level as much as possible. To minimize stress, they would stick to a routine that works for them. In addition, they would do their best to fit some "me time" to keep their stress in check. Stress management is packaged with many of the other thing listed above, and because of this, I believe that this is one of the most important parts of succeeding as an engineering student. A world class engineering student would be able to minimize their stress in order to maximize their potential.

This is another challenge for me. I tend to pack a lot of work onto my plate, misjudging how long the work will take me and becoming overwhelmed in the process. In addition to this, I do not take care of myself the way I know I should. To begin, I do not eat as healthy as I should, and even worse, I do not want to eat healthy when I am under stress. Even worse, sometimes I get so stressed out that I lose my appetite completely and make the decision not to eat. Food is fuel, and the healthier the food, the more enriching the energy you will gain from it.

In addition, I normally try to be somewhat active. I do participate in outdoors exercise, such as long hikes, hiking, and backpacking, but I do not keep this up later in the school year because I have usually let myself fall back into old habits. I feel too tired to be active, because I am spending a majority of my time staying up late to catch up on homework assignments and study for tests. By consciously deciding to manage this aspect of my life poorly, I am setting myself up to be consumed by my stress and anxiety. There is nothing more damaging to a student's motivation than letting their stress control them, and allowing it to negatively impact their attitude, confidence, and success in a class.

To manage this, I will need to commit myself to a schedule that will produce the least amount of stress and the maximum amount of efficiency. I need to maintain a regular sleep schedule, practice healthy and regular eating habits, and get outside and enjoy the fresh air on occasion. I call my down time sanity time, because it allows me to step outside of my head and try to organize my thoughts.

Know your Limits...and work to improve them

One of the most important things I have learned is that you should test your limits, discover what works for you, and try to improve from there. In my Computer Science class, my professor often discusses the idea that each of us has a CROW, which means we can only focus on a certain number of things at any given time [2]. This is a great way to test how much information you are capable of retaining at any point in time, and an important part of studying. The mind handles information most efficiently when we learn it in small chunks. It's the difference between reading a little bit every day, and reading the entire chapter in one night. Which one will offer the best results? It's taking in information in manageable sections, so you are able to process and digest the information in order to better understand it. In many classes, especially STEM classes, you are building your work from concepts you have already discussed in class.

This is particularly useful when it comes to how many classes you are taking a semester, and how well you are doing in them. These past two semesters, I have taken about 12 units, and in both cases, I elected to sacrifice work in one class to work on another. This is more about my study habits, certainly, than it is about my focus, but in each case, I have managed to receive two As in two classes, and one decent grade in the other class. However, this was much more challenging when I was taking more challenging courses, courses that demanded more of my time than I anticipated. This has made me consider that perhaps I should lighten my course load to maintain a good GPA, and to better manage my stress level. While doing that, I can try to get my study habits under control. I can try taking two challenging classes at once, while continuing to manage my jobs and extracurriculars.

A world-class engineering student would be aware of their limits, and constantly work to improve them. As a person good at establishing schedules and sticking to them, they dedicate sufficient study times in manageable chunks throughout the week to retain information they are learning in class. In Chapter 3 of his book, Landis describes learning as a reinforcement process in which a student is constantly reviewing material to keep the information fresh [1]. A world-class engineering student practices these good habits, and does not cram for exams. Rather, they prepare for tests and quizzes from the moment they learn the material, simply by reviewing what they were taught before, during, and after class. Furthermore, they continue to review the information in the following weeks to keep it fresh in their memory.

I do not have excellent study habits, but I am definitely working hard to improve them. The first thing I need to do is re-evaluate my schedule, and make the time to reinforce material before, during, and well after class. I tend to cram for exams, which almost never works for me because I am crowding my mind with information and in the process, losing focus on the material I should be mastering.

Summary

Overall, I have a long way to go before I can consider myself a world-class engineering student. I have a lot of habits I need to work hard to change, but I have the motivation and support I need to begin making positive changes in my life. I am still struggling to overcome my anxiety and trepidation I experience towards the end the semester because of my tendency to procrastinate and cram for exams. However, I feel more comfortable with the future than I have in the past. Being a part of a community on campus has made getting through my classes so much easier, because I do not have to struggle through anything alone. I look forward to implementing these success strategies to get through the next few semesters, and perhaps even apply them to my projects at work.

References

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