

Structured for Success: Tips and Tools for College Organization

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Published by *K20 Center*

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Time Frame 60-65 minutes

Essential Question(s)

How does staying organized contribute to academic success?

Summary

This session focuses on helping students and their families prepare for college by learning useful task management and organization skills. Participants will play a game where they simulate organizing their weekly calendar, then they will explore digital tools that can aid them in their task management, time management, and organization.

Learning Goals

- Learn the importance of using a calendar to manage deadlines and commitments.
- Understand how to prioritize tasks using a to-do list.
- Understand the connection between organization and academic success.

Attachments

- Calendar Header—Structured for Success - Spanish.docx
- Calendar Header—Structured for Success - Spanish.pdf
- Calendar Header—Structured for Success.docx
- Calendar Header—Structured for Success.pdf
- Chance Cards—Structured for Success - Spanish.docx
- Chance Cards—Structured for Success - Spanish.pdf
- Chance Cards—Structured for Success.docx
- Chance Cards—Structured for Success.pdf
- Organization Resources Note Catcher—Structured for Success - Spanish.docx
- Organization Resources Note Catcher—Structured for Success - Spanish.pdf
- Organization Resources Note Catcher—Structured for Success.docx
- Organization Resources Note Catcher—Structured for Success.pdf
- Quest for the Organized Mind—Structured for Success - Spanish.docx
- Quest for the Organized Mind—Structured for Success - Spanish.pdf
- Quest for the Organized Mind—Structured for Success.docx
- Quest for the Organized Mind—Structured for Success.pdf
- Session Slides—Structured for Success.pptx
- Staying Organized in College—Structured for Success - Spanish.docx
- Staying Organized in College—Structured for Success - Spanish.pdf
- Staying Organized in College—Structured for Success.docx
- Staying Organized in College—Structured for Success.pdf

Materials

- Session Slides (attached)
- Calendar Header (attached; one per group)
- Quest for the Organized Mind card sort (attached; one per group)
- Chance Cards (attached)
- Staying Organized in College handout (attached; one per participant)
- Organization Resources Note Catcher handout (attached; one per participant)
- Sticky Notes
- Highlighters
- Internet connected devices

10 minutes

Engage

Use the attached **Session Slides** and display **slide 2**. Introduce yourself and welcome participants to the session. Transition to **slides 3-4** and go over the essential question and learning objectives. Then, move to **slide 5** and play the video How to Start a New Semester or School Year the Right Way - College Info Geek.

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=Ey-cAHDme2s

When the video ends, transition to **slide 6** and introduce participants to the instructional strategy I Notice, I Wonder. Distribute sticky notes to participants. Ask them to reflect on one important thing they noticed and one thing they are wondering about and write down their thoughts. Ask participants to discuss their answers with an elbow partner.

Optional Tech Integrated Strategy

To utilize a digital option for the I Notice, I Wonder activity, consider using this tech-integrated strategy, I Notice, I Wonder with Padlet. To use this strategy, following the directions below to set up your Padlet prior to the start of the session:

1. Go to Padlet.com and select “Sign up.”
2. Select “Make a Padlet.”
3. Select “Wall with sections (Shelf).”
4. Give the Padlet a title.
5. Add the directions to the description box.
6. Make any needed changes to the default settings and then select the X to leave the Settings menu.
7. Select the three dots to rename “Section 1” to “I Notice.”
8. Select the “Add section” button and rename it “I Wonder.”
9. Select the right arrow to open the Share settings.
10. Select “Copy link to clipboard” to get a shareable link.
11. Select “Get QR code” to download a QR code for students to scan with a device.
12. Select “Close” to leave the Share settings.
13. Copy the shareable link to **slide 7** where it says, “paste link here.”
14. Copy the QR code to **slide 7** where it says, “QR code here”.

Display hidden **slide 7** in lieu of **slide 6**. Instruct participants to access the Padlet using either the shared link or the QR code. Direct them to answer the questions displayed. When all participants have finished, ask for volunteers to share their thoughts.

20 minutes

Explore

Preparation Note

It is recommended to print and cut out the cards for the **Organization Card Sort** (attached), **Chance Cards** (attached), and the **Calendar Header** (attached) before the session. You may also add your own events, tasks, and chance card scenarios to the activity beforehand if you choose.

Divide participants into groups of three or four. Distribute one set of the **Quest for the Organized Mind** card sort (attached) to each group of participants, along with one **Calendar Header** (attached). Display **slide 8.** Instruct participants to sort their cards to fit their weekly calendar, noting that they have to fit calendar events (red cards), tasks (yellow cards), and materials (green cards) in a cohesive manner. Move to **slide 9** and let participants know they will have fifteen minutes to organize their calendar. Start the timer when all participants are ready. Once the timer has started, move around the room to each group and hand out the **Chance Cards** (attached). These cards are designed to disrupt the organization process. You may distribute a few to each group at one time or rotate around and hand out one card to each group periodically. As you distribute them, help the participants navigate the new scenario by asking guiding questions and offering feedback. When the timer ends, move to **slide 10.** Ask each group to discuss the questions on the slide, then ask each group to share their responses.

The creation of this activity was aided using artificial intelligence.

15 minutes

Explain

Display **slide 11** and distribute copies of the **Staying Organized in College** handout (attached) along with a highlighter to each participant. Introduce participants to the instructional strategy Why-lighting. Instruct participants to read the article. As they read, ask them to highlight the information they find important and to notate why they highlighted it in the margins. Allow participants 10 minutes to read and notate. When everyone has finished, ask for volunteers to share some of what they highlighted and why.

Optional Instructional Strategy

If you are presenting this session in a large group, consider using the instructional strategy Jigsaw. To use this strategy, display hidden **slide 12** in lieu of **slide 11.** Divide participants into 4-5 groups and assign one section of the article to each group. Instruct participants to read their section. When they are done, move to hidden **slide 13** and ask each group to discuss their section, noting the most important information to share. Then, ask each group to share about what they read.

You could also choose to move participants into new groups after they read, making sure each new group has a person who's an "expert" on each section to share with each other.

15 minutes

Extend

Distribute the **Organization Resources Note Catcher** handout (attached). Move to **slide 14.** Direct participants' attention to the resource table on page 3 of the Staying Organized in College handout. Instruct participants to take out their internet connected device and follow each link or scan each QR code in the resources table. As they explore each resource, ask them to fill in the note catcher. Allow 15 minutes for participants to work. When everyone is finished, ask a few volunteers to share what they wrote.

5 minutes

Evaluate

Move to **slide 15**. Ask participants to answer the following questions on a sticky note. Collect their answers as an exit ticket as participants leave the session.

What was the most valuable thing you learned today?

How will you maximize your organizational skills?

Which organization resource will you use the most?

Optional Tech Tool

If you'd like to utilize a digital option for the exit ticket, display hidden **slide 16** in lieu of **slide 15** and use the Padlet tech tool. Before the session, use the following instructions to set up your Padlet activity:

1. Go to Padlet.com, and create or log in to an account.
2. On your dashboard, select "Make a Padlet."
3. Select a layout that suits your purposes. "Grid" may be useful to reduce collaborative clutter, while "Stream" is more suited for easy reading of premade content.
4. Modify your Padlet's settings, including its title, description, icon, wallpaper, and font.
5. Adjust your Padlet's sharing options in the "Posting" section of the settings. You can toggle whether responses require attribution or remain anonymous, whether students can comment on posts, and what emojis students can use to "like" or react to posts. Once you have finished, select "Next" in the Modify panel.
6. Select "Start Posting." Create your Padlet learning activity by double-clicking anywhere on the background to make your first post. Input a subject, description, and add other elements such as pictures or links. Select the "More" icon (...) to access a number of other options for adding content, including GIFs, YouTube videos, audio or video recordings, and drawings.
7. Repeat to add as many posts and elements as necessary for your learning activity.
8. Select "Share" in the top-right corner. First, adjust your privacy settings if needed by selecting "Change Privacy." The default privacy setting "Secret" keeps your Padlet hidden from the public but allows access to individuals you've added. Adjust your students' permissions if needed, as well. The default permission "Can write" allows students to view others' posts and create their own but does not allow for modifying others' posts.
9. Share the Padlet with participants by selecting "Share" in the top-right corner. Select "Copy link to clipboard" and paste the link onto **slide 16** where it says, "Paste link here".

Instruct participants to answer the questions on the screen. When all participants are finished, ask for volunteers to share their thoughts.

Research Rationale

As students transition from high school to college, they typically experience an increased level of autonomy and responsibility. Many college students no longer have daily interactions with instructors, parents, or other adults. The need to balance the many academic, social, and extracurricular goals students pursue is a primary source of stress and a major challenge. Developing strong organizational and time management skills is a key factor in college student success. Post-secondary institutions understand this and dedicate substantial resources to equipping students with these tools (Wolters & Brady, 2021).

Resources

- Brisk Teaching. (n.d.). Free AI tool for teachers. https://www.briskteaching.com/
- Doodle. (n.d.). Free online meeting scheduling tool. https://doodle.com/en/
- Dropbox. (n.d.). Dropbox. https://www.dropbox.com/
- Evernote. (n.d.). Best note taking app—organize your notes with Evernote. https://evernote.com/
- Frank, T. (2015, August 7). How to start a new semester the right way. College info geek. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ey-cAHDme2s
- Google. (n.d.). Google accounts. https://docs.google.com/
- Google. (n.d.). Google calendar. https://calendar.google.com/
- Google. (n.d.). Google docs. https://docs.google.com/
- Google. (n.d.). Google drive. https://www.google.com/drive/
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Bell ringers and exit tickets. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/125
- K20 Center. (n.d.). I Notice, I Wonder. strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/180
- K20 Center. (n.d.). I Notice, I Wonder With Padlet. Tech-Integrated Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-strategy/2956
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Jigsaw. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/179
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Padlet. Tech tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/1077
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Why-Lighting. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/128
- Open AI. (2024). *Chat GPT* (Mar 14 version). [Large language model] https://chat.openai.com/chat
- Patterson, R. (2021, July 2). How to easily stay organized in college. College info geek. You Tube. https://collegeinfogeek.com/how-to-stay-organized-in-college/?utm_source=The+Daily+Spoon&utm_campaign=5c65c48fb7-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_07_12_05_52_COPY_03&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4c623fe8ac-5c65c48fb7-150029661#why-you-must-stay-organized-in-college-its-not-why-you-might-think
- Todoist. (n.d.). A to-do list to organize your work and life. https://todoist.com/
- Wolters, C. A., & Brady, A. C. (2021). College Students' Time Management: a Self-Regulated Learning Perspective. *Educational Psychology Review*, *33*(4), 1319–1351. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-020-09519-z