

THE FOUR Cs OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Commitment	Content
<p><i>Commitment</i> describes the extent to which students care about the work and maintain consistency in their attempt to succeed.</p> <p>Key aspects of commitment are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consistency</i>: Everyone can be great or make heroic efforts for a day or even a week; real, sustainable success in a class or on large assignments requires consistent hard work and quality conscience. • <i>Effort</i>: Some students resist making a serious effort when they do not believe they can succeed. Without such effort, neither success nor improvement is possible. • <i>Emotional investment</i>: Refers to how much students care about their success and the quality of their work on this assignment or performance. Directly related to perceived relevance and importance. This is what Jaime Escalante calls <i>ganas</i>, which means “the urge to succeed, to achieve, to grow.” • <i>Faith</i>: Students must believe that the effort they make will eventually lead to the result or success they seek. Faith applies to a method or means by which they hope to achieve success. • <i>Permission</i>: Students must give themselves permission to learn and work hard and others permission to teach and support them if they are to improve and succeed. 	<p><i>Content</i> refers to information or processes students must know to complete a task or succeed on an assignment in class. Domains include academic, social, procedural, cultural, vocational, ethical, and cognitive.</p> <p>Content knowledge includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conventions</i> related to documents, procedures, genres, or experiences. • <i>Cultural reference points</i> not specifically related to the subject but necessary to understand the material, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People • Events • Trends • Ideas • Dates • <i>Discipline- or subject-specific matter</i> such as names, concepts, and terms. • <i>Features, cues, or other signals</i> that convey meaning during a process or within a text. • <i>Language</i> needed to complete or understand the task. • <i>Procedures</i> used during the course of the task or assignment.
Competencies	Capacity
<p><i>Competencies</i> are those skills students need to be able to complete the assignment or succeed at some task.</p> <p>Representative, general competencies include the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communicate</i> ideas and information to complete and convey results of the work. • <i>Evaluate and make decisions</i> based on information needed to complete the assignment or succeed at the task. • <i>Generate</i> ideas, solutions, and interpretations that will lead to the successful completion of the task. • <i>Learn</i> while completing the assignment so students can improve their performance on similar assignments in the future. • <i>Manage</i> resources (time, people, and materials) needed to complete the task; refers also to the ability to govern oneself. • <i>Teach</i> others how to complete certain tasks and understand key concepts. • <i>Use</i> a range of tools and strategies to solve the problems they encounter. 	<p><i>Capacities</i> account for the quantifiable aspects of performance; students can have great skills but lack the capacity to fully employ those skills.</p> <p>Primary capacities related to academic performance include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Confidence</i> in their ideas, methods, skills, and overall abilities related to this task. • <i>Dexterity</i>, which allows students, when needed, to do more than one task at the same time (aka multitasking). • <i>Fluency</i> needed to handle problems or interpret ideas that vary from students' past experience or learning. • <i>Joy</i> one finds in doing the work well and in a way that satisfies that individual's needs. • <i>Memory</i>, so students can draw on useful background information or store information needed for subsequent tasks included in the assignment. • <i>Resiliency</i> needed to persevere despite initial or periodic obstacles to success on the assignment or performance. • <i>Speed</i> with which students can perform one or more tasks needed to complete the assignment or performance. • <i>Stamina</i> required to maintain the requisite level of performance; includes physical and mental stamina.

FIGURE 1.2. The Four Cs of Academic Success from *School Smarts: The Four Cs of Academic Success* by Jim Burke, © 2004 (Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH). Contact jburke@englishcompanion.com for permission to use.