

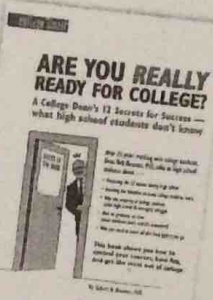
## Education

## Get 'Ready' for honest college advice

Robert Neuman says he has seen "every student problem imaginable" in his 25 years as an associate dean of academic advising at Marquette University in Milwaukee. Now retired, he shares strategies to help middle school and high school students avoid common problems in *Are You Really Ready for College?* One secret, he tells USA TODAY's **Mary Beth Marklein**, is to start early.



Neuman



speaking and listening with intelligence and purpose to teachers, counselors and adults in general. Why? Private studying aside, learning is a social activity. Contributing to class discussions, asking provocative questions and listening carefully to teachers and other students are crucial to maintaining an interest in every subject. Plus, talking privately with teachers and counselors covers everything, from getting needed advice to clarifying academic goals or career paths. An articulate student excels in college and the workplace.

**Q: What's your core message?**

**A:** College is a world very different from high school. College demands that students possess a solid, basic body of high school knowledge. They must also come equipped with the self-management skills to control the learning process.

And lastly, in college, there's no time to learn how to learn.

**Q: Why is "really ready" in the title? What's your point?**

**A:** Many students enter college clueless about the level of work required of them. They believe college will be high school away from home and have a false sense of the effort needed to earn high grades in college. Studies of college-bound high school students prove the point: High school seniors study not much more than they did in middle school, yet more than half graduate with A averages. This is due, in large part, to the rampant practice of cramming that serves so many students too well in high school but fails them in college.

**Q: What's wrong with cramming?**

**A:** Mistakenly, students think they're learning because cramming often produces good grades. Yet it yields only short-term knowledge. It lasts long enough to pass the test but fades long before teens get to college, where professors expect a solid background at the outset of their courses. Furthermore, in college, fewer tests are given, and they cover much more material, making cramming impossible. Grades plummet. Cramming is one of several student deficiencies.



By Greg Kreller, Idaho Press-Tribute, via AP

**Not in high school anymore:** Robert Neuman says students like Rachel Upton of the College of Western Idaho can't just do homework and cram; they actually have to study.

**Q: You make a distinction between study and homework.**

**A:** For many high school students, simply doing homework earns them acceptable grades. Why do more? Merely doing homework does not lead to real learning. On the other hand, studying does, but it entails more: preparing for every class, besides doing homework, by rereading chapters; taking, organizing and refining notes; memorizing and reviewing; and working beyond minimum expectations. Study takes time and produces learning excellence.

**Q: Why do students need to "practice" talking?**

**A:** Talking must evolve from overused teen-speak to

**Q: How do students get the most from guidance counseling?**

**A:** Students must schedule more than one appointment per semester with the guidance counselor. Good counseling sessions require good talking skills. Yet these meetings are often perfunctory and unproductive because students lack the ability to communicate. Students who just sit waiting for the guidance counselor to read their minds and then tell them what to do will be disappointed. Productive counseling sessions require good questions as well as good answers for both students and counselors.

**Q: Could all this advice end up stressing kids out even more?**

**A:** Much of everyday teen stress comes from being unprepared and disorganized, not having enough time, and not knowing how to handle problems. My strategies actually help relieve stress, giving teens ways to take control. Teenagers who don't learn these lessons now will become a part of the dismal statistics that universities know so well and that are becoming a topic of the national conversation. I have seen student stress firsthand in college. It's demoralizing for students and carries serious life consequences.

**Q: Where do parents fit in?**

**A:** Parents do whatever they can to equip their children for college, buying microwaves, laptops, calculators and so forth. But helping teens develop these skills to succeed academically early — as early as middle school — is the best equipment of all.