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Rushmore's Student Philosophy: Success for Each Student

By: Iola Cox, CPA
Chair, Rushmore University Board of Governors

Prior to becoming Chair of the Board of Governors of Rushmore University I home schooled our eldest son up to fifth grade and our second son up to third grade. It is hard to explain in words the excitement of mentoring a child through reading their first book or writing their first report. It was exciting to see them gain the tools they need to learn and now it is exciting to watch them build on these tools as they progress through school.

I have also had the privilege of listening to the excitement in the voices of Dr. Cox or many of the Rushmore advisors or Laurel Barley from the editing department when they talk about the success of one the students they have mentored. Dr. Mitchell has been catching up with some of the Rushmore alumni and has published some articles of their success.

We have compiled these articles on the website under "Published Articles" <http://www.rushmore.edu/RushmoreForum/PublishedArticles/tabid/150/Default.aspx>. I encourage you to read some of these articles. It is a joy to see former students building on the tools of learning they received from their mentors at Rushmore University.

Fully SEO Optimized Webpage Now in Use

Rushmore has developed and implemented a fully optimized website for those interested in finding out more information about Rushmore, our study programs, and scholarship opportunities.

When answering a Google ad, each request now goes directly to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who follows up via either email or telephone with potential Rushmore students. In addition, letters are being sent by various Faculty members to potential students in an effort to "personalize" the Application process, and welcome the student. Past students have commented on the "warm welcome" which they have received at registration.

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Dr. Don Mitchell's Article Series: Bringing Home the Importance of Education

By Don Mitchell, J.D.

Special to the Rushmore Worldwide News

There's an old saying that the teachers learn more than the students. I've certainly felt that way in working with the many outstanding students who have prepared superb papers for me.

My perception of that excellence within the student body and alumni was expanded recently when Dean Alan Guinn asked me to interview alumni and write about their experiences during and after Rushmore. I wish that my Harvard classmates had done as much with their college, business school, and law school educations.

I have now completed 25 articles that have been published on over 14,000 Web sites, demonstrating that lots of people want to learn more about Rushmore's unique approach to online education. In the process, it has been a pleasure to meet many alumni who have accomplished great things as a result of graduating from Rushmore.

If you would like to learn more about these alumni experiences and comments concerning Rushmore, please visit

<http://www.rushmore.edu/RushmoreForum/PublishedArticles/tabid/150/Default.aspx/>.

If you are an alumnus and would like me to write about you, please send me an e-mail to: dmitchell@faculty.rushmore.edu/. I'll be glad to work with you.

The Importance of Reading at Rushmore

By Dan Dolejs, Director of Admissions and Records

READING!

For the duration of your Rushmore program you will be doing a lot of reading. Don't take shortcuts. Start by browsing the links on our web site. Read about the Oxford Tutorial Method, the number of credit hours Masters & Doctoral degrees, Tuition fees and Registering for student access to our web site.

I suspect that many of the questions I receive about the above topics are because potential students want to know they are dealing with real people in a real university. A good way to check our Bona fides is to review our faculty profiles. Then go to Amazon.com and read reviews of the books our faculty have written. Also go to their personal web sites and blogs.

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When you apply, be sure to answer all our questions. Take the time to read your Admissions letter.

Have you ever had a Computer crash? Well, that happens to us too! Yes, we have back up systems in place but sometimes the important information is what was delivered in the last 24 hours, so take seriously our request to keep a record of the papers you write and the grades you receive.

Have you heard of “absent minded Professors?” Well, fortunately our Faculty is almost entirely immune to that syndrome. Almost! Grade-Reports can go astray, be forgotten or get deleted. That’s another good reason to keep your own record of your progress. Sometimes emails are accidentally deleted or erroneously marked as ‘read’ so if you do not hear from us within 3 days send a second message.

Finally, let me say that I am happy to answer all your questions but very often I will refer you back to our web site. So spending 5 or 10 minutes looking for information on our web site may save you anywhere from 24 to 72 hours.

Happy READING.

“The beginning is the most important part of the work.”

Plato

Your Editor’s Notes

Each month, we offer a column written (and edited!) by Rushmore’s Director of Editing, Laurel Barley. Laurel interacts with every Rushmore student—from their very first submissions. She works tirelessly to help each Degree Candidate create perfect Papers prior to submission to the Advisor for grading.

Words—The Means to the End

By: [Laurel Barley, Director of Editing, Rushmore University.](#)



[Time waits for no man.](#)

[Or woman.](#)

Words are a means to an end – an objective. We use them to inform, entertain, persuade, comfort or console, rebuke, praise, empathise, encourage, motivate, build rapport, threaten, express emotions, or solicit help. The skill is to use words in the way that best meets the objective. This article addresses only writing to inform: course papers and business documents.

In business, time is a constraint. Concise writing respects the recipient’s time, and is more likely to achieve the objective, if only because it is more likely to be read and understood. In course papers, it demonstrates thorough understanding of the concepts. Einstein couldn’t write his

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Are You running to catch up?



Time to read: 45 seconds

Time to read: 18 seconds

famous equation $E = mc^2$ until he fully understood everything that led to that conclusion. To me, many papers seem to be written as a 'stream of consciousness'; the student just keeps writing as one idea after another comes to mind. That's fine for a first draft, but then each sentence and paragraph should be analysed and reduced to the main point. The whole paper should then be read through for continuity and logical development. Padding – the written equivalent of 'um' in speech – should be removed.

Here is an example of verbosity, written in the style common to student papers.

It is, in my opinion, necessary to address the issue of skilled personnel by ensuring that we hire the appropriate people and deploy them in the most appropriate fields. Once we have achieved this, it is desirable that these skilled and trained people stay with the organisation for a long period of time. Therefore, the management needs to offer incentives, such as a bonus, to encourage staff members to remain in the company. [73 words]

Now consider: I recommend more stringent recruitment and deployment policies, and the introduction of retention incentives such as performance bonuses. [18 words]

I look forward to your next paper.

Statement of Rushmore University Use of Email

Rushmore has been approached in the past for use of our email list for advertising and soliciting students in the sales of goods and services. This is not an acceptable practice, and we want all Rushmore students and faculty to know that your personal information is not only safe with Rushmore, but we will never sell your name and/or email address to any other group for soliciting you for sales for goods or services.

In addition, we are often asked by potential students to "share the names and email addresses of students within [our] home country so that we can email them and ask about their experiences while students at Rushmore."

Rushmore's practice when asked for reference students is to identify other students/alumni within the home country of the potential student and email them, asking them—if they feel comfortable—to contact the potential student directly to offer their input on their experiences while at Rushmore.

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Organization: Who Needs It? You Do!

Editors Note: A blog online called www.Zenhabits.com offered this to anyone who needed it. I was so impressed that I felt it could help all of us with our organization. It's been "uncopyrighted," so it's being copied with attribution. Ed.

It's a rare person among us who doesn't feel the need to get more organized. I consider myself fairly organized, for example, but there are times when I get a little lax about my organizational rules, and there's always room for improvement.

And if you're already organized (read: you're an organizational freak), chances are, you like to read about others' organizational systems.

As such, there should be something for everyone on this list.

A couple of weeks ago, I asked all of you for your best organizational tips and tools. And you responded in force, with some great stuff. What follows are some of the best of the tips (tools will be in another post), edited for brevity and consistency.

I must emphasize: these are not my tips, but yours, and when you see the word "I" it refers to the reader writing the tip, not me. Names have been removed to protect the innocent.

1. **3 Most Important Tasks.** Writing down and making mental note of my top 3 tasks to get done for the day. Everything else seems to fall into place if I do that.
2. **An easy and workable task list, or to do list.** While I love all of these handy web 2.0 apps, computer software, very neat gadgets like palms and really cool cell phones, they just don't work for me. I'm a lazy woman, with an even lazier attitude. I might put a task in Remember the Milk, another task in my palm, one in my Goal and send another text to my phone. With all of these different ways of doing things, I end up spending much more time trying to organize my "to do" list, or consolidate it, that I don't get much actually done.
3. **Keep an ubiquitous capture device.** It might not be the same device for every location (I have a moleskin for work, but use my mobile for inspiration on the fly) but just being able to write stuff down when you think about it is key for me.
4. **Choose one tool and stick with it.**
5. **Do one thing at a time.**
6. **Do it now.**
7. **Make use of the word no.**
8. **Use the recycling bin/trash basket.** Organizing unnecessary items is wasted energy. It is amazing how much more in control I feel just by ridding myself of now outdated

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articles I'd like to read "someday," or countless meeting notes from which relevant action items have already been extracted.

9. **A (good) place for everything, and everything in its place.** By finding places that are easy to get to for all the things I use most often, and places that are pretty easy to get to for the things I use less often, I spend less time dreading doing things and more time actually doing things. And the place for things you never use is elsewhere (trash can, place that accepts donations, etc.).
10. **Simplify, simplify, simplify!**
11. **Put it away now.** The single, simplest thing I do to stay personally organized is to put whatever tool, item, clothing, bag, hairbrush etc., away immediately after using it. I always know where everything and anything is so I never waste time looking for something. Very efficient. I could tell a stranger where to find anything in my home.
12. **Keep a to-do list that syncs with your mobile phone** (so you can add stuff as and when you remember it). And make sure every item has a due date.
13. **Change.** It obsoletes unimportant things. It brings down any method or idea that isn't timeless. It brings up newer and more important things that you and others can't resist anymore. Best of all: it's an organizing tool that operates itself. You simply have to embrace it.
14. **Divide material into red, yellow, blue and green plastic file folders.** For example, anything that has to be done today (paperwork to be given to a client, bills to be mailed) go in the red folder. Contact material or anything related to customer field support goes in the yellow folder. Your mileage may vary as to how you organize your briefcase, and like me you may also have project-specific manila file folders as well, but dividing stuff up into just four color coded folders is a huge help.
15. **Flylady.net.** She helped me realize that I needed to apply GTD principles to my home life and not just work. I had work under control using checklists, projects and next actions. I tried the same system at home and failed. Then about a month ago I discovered flylady.net courtesy I believe one of your blog posts. Wow, what a difference. My house is clean and so is my desk at work. Many if not most of her basic ideas are just like GTD in a slightly different perspective (control journal, baby steps) and also concrete methods for accomplishing next actions (2 minute hot spots, 15 minute timers). Her most useful tip was to put my daily/weekly lists into shiny page protectors in my control journal. I use a dry erase marker and voila no more killing trees or not doing my list because I can't print it (or want to avoid the hassle). The best thing about this, I am more relaxed, my blood pressure is finally dropping and I feel less stressed.
16. **Unapologetically take control of your time and priorities.**
17. **Sort at the source.** My favorite organizational tool is my post office box. I visit it once a week (usually Saturday), stand at the counter in the lobby and sort my mail. I use the P.O.'s trash bin. What comes into my house is only what I need to have. Bills and

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letters and checks go into my inbox (which by the way is a box with a lid that is wrapped in lovely fabric and has a yellow bow on it so it looks like a present sitting on my desk). Reading material goes on the table by my chaise lounge which is where I do all my reading.

18. **A sheet of paper, a calendar and a white board.** I've found that the easiest way to organize myself, my days and so forth is a good paper calendar, a sheet of paper that I divide into four sections and a medium sized white board. For my paper the top left section is my actual running to do list for today. The top right section is my running grocery list, or list of things I must purchase. The bottom left is for notes such as calls I made, who I spoke to, appointment dates. The bottom right is whatever I need to move to another day. If I'm told to call back on Monday, then I note that on the calendar. As for the white board, the kids can make notes (Can I spend the night at Brian's on Friday? Grandma called), and I can jot down things as I think of them to be added to tomorrow's to do list. My calendar, and the white board are in the same location, so I can transfer short notes if need be. I carry my paper task list with me everywhere, so I can make notes at any given moment.
19. **Color coding.** I'm a visual person, and I find that color-coding my various lists and calendars minimizes the time I have to spend looking at them. This worked especially well when I was in school: I dumped every class syllabus into Outlook, and then color-coded every class period (blue for paper due, yellow for quiz, red for test, etc). It took awhile to set up, sure, but then for the rest of the semester I only had to glance at Outlook to get a very clear idea of what kind of week I was going to have.
20. **One binder.** I use a binder cleverly labeled "@ 2008" with the following divisions:
 - o @ Today - With my Emergent Task Planner from davidseah.com;
 - o @ Week - The remaining days of the week ETP's as a skeleton;
 - o @ Year - All my historical sheets;
 - o @ Diet - Which tracks what I have eaten for the day;
 - o @ Fitness - Which tracks my workout routine for the day. My binder is with me all the time and it has helped me become a better employee, family member and relationship guy.
21. **Write down, execute and tidy up on the way.** These are my organization bible. I've been living that way since more than two years and I can say that I'm an organized person.
22. **A little whiteboard on my bedroom wall.** I have it separated into two sections, a "todo" and a "today". "Todo" is a list of general things I have to do, like get my car inspected, buy someone a present, etc. Then "today" is what I need to do, obviously, today! Things can be moved back and forth as appropriate. I find having a specific list for today helps push me to get the important things done in a timely manner. I also keep two things permanently on the "today" part, which are meditation and exercise.

The Rushmore Worldwide News is published monthly to disseminate information of general interest to Rushmore University Students, Faculty, Alumni and Friends.

Articles are accepted for publication from students, Faculty, and Friends of the University.

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This seems to help.

23. **Note cards.** One can write tasks on them — one per card, or in a list (depending on the type of task in question; I do both). When doing one per card, the stack serves as an easy prioritization scheme. But wait, there's more: They can be arranged on cork boards, shared, annotated, torn up and rearranged. They can be used as placeholders, as mini-white boards and as tokens to model ideas. They are easy to carry around, and to attach to other documents. Further, different colors allow for a visual representation of different kinds of todo's (as can different annotations). Finally, they are cheap and most importantly of all: easy (much easier than software) to reconfigure as needs and projects change.
24. **Never rely on a single point of failure.** I've seen people pay \$1,000 to hear speakers at a conference and only have one pen to take notes. It's a great feeling when one thing breaks, gets lost, or runs out of power, and you have another one in reserve!
25. **Have... less... stuff.**
26. **Delegate.** Learn to trust people with critical tasks in all areas of your life. When you learn to effectively delegate tasks you actually find that it is easier to keep the stuff you cannot delegate better organized.
27. **You control your life.** Whatever electronics or paper you use, make them work for YOU not the other way around. Does Outlook really have to stay checking your email every 5 minutes? Maybe, but I bet you'll get a whole lot more done if you check it a few times per day. That goes for the Blackberry too! After all, there are so many tools, and one to fit everyone - so use what works, but make it work for you!

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<http://zenhabits.net/2007/08/27-great-tips-to-keep-your-life-organized/>