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Orientation to the Psychology Major has been a very helpful class in learning about a wide variety of topics regarding psychology. Through the weekly quizzes, self-assessments, assignments, and psychology-related activities I have learned a great deal about myself as a student and psychology as a major. Being in the classroom taught me all about categories of psychologists and what it means to have a psychology degree. I have also learned of experience needed for graduate school and how to get into graduate school. Another thing this class has taught me are study skills that I can utilize in my current life. Outside of the classroom, the psychology related activities exposed me to what psychology is like in the real world. Both inside and outside of the classroom, Orientation to the Psychology Major has given me a well-rounded perspective of what it is really to be a college student majoring in psychology.

Upon declaring my major as psychology, I initially thought that the only career paths available were either clinical or counseling psychology. I have now come to realize that there is a broad spectrum of psychologists ranging from health psychologists to forensic psychologists. I never even knew of some of the categories of psychologists such as human factors psychologists who study how people interact with machines, environments, and products. In addition to learning about forms of psychologists, I also learned what it means to obtain a liberal arts degree. Having a liberal arts degree does not only limit an individual to psychology, but means that one must be familiar in the areas of communication, reading and critical thinking. These are areas of skill that can be applied to many other fields other than psychology.

In order to obtain a liberal arts degree, one must first put in the work to reach that level of education. I now have a more positive outlook on writing and can write papers at ease without stressing out as much as I used to. I also learned the important study skills of time management, creating a schedule, and using to-do lists. Initially, time management was a habit that was very hard for me to do. While dorming, a student is basically living with all of their friends so that distraction is always there. After classes, I would go spend time with my friends and then be up all night doing homework. Eventually, this became exhausting so I knew that something had to be modified. Currently, I will not go anywhere with anyone if I have any homework to do for that night unless it is a special occasion. Once I finish my homework, I then allow myself to spend some time with my friends or whatever else I want to do. Every week, I try to create a schedule for myself that breaks down what I have to do every day. This visualization keeps me on track and aware of what is coming up. There is also a feeling of accomplishment after crossing off something on a to-do list.

Being in my first semester of college as a psychology major, I am taking Introduction to Psychology as one of my courses. I always found this class very interesting, but I also found it difficult at times to keep up with the notes and studying for the exams. Orientation to the Psychology Major introduced the SQ3R method of reading a dense textbook and this has helped me in studying for my Intro to Psych exams. When it comes to taking notes, Orientation to the Psychology Major taught me to focus more on what the professor is saying and less on what is on the PowerPoint. In the beginning of my Intro to Psych class, I would spend all of my time writing every single word of the PowerPoint down instead of listening to my professor speak. I learned that a balance of note taking and listening to the lecture is essential to truly understanding the material.

After earning my bachelor’s degree in psychology, my ultimate goal is for me to go to graduate school and earn my master’s degree. I found the lesson on graduate school very interesting because I was not exactly sure what it took to apply and get into a program. I am now aware of the graduate record exam, admissions essay, personal statement, and letters of recommendations from professors. In contrast, for a career as a counselor, I would need a master’s degree in psychology, but in case life gets in the way, I now know that I can utilize a bachelor’s degree in psychology. Previously, I was told otherwise, that a bachelor’s degree in psychology is worthless in the job market, so it is good to know that it can be applied to a variety of job fields from public relations to being a police officer.

Along with material covered in the textbook, the assigned projects acted as a learning experience for me. The literature search and APA-style reference page showed me two different skills; how to write a reference page using APA format and how to use PSYCinfo for journal articles related to psychology. The assignment that I benefitted from the most was the academic plan. Not only was it a learning lesson, but it now also acts as a guide for me as I plan my classes for upcoming semesters. This project presented to me the different University, Arts and Sciences, and Psychology BA Core requirements that need to be fulfilled in order for me to earn my degree in four years.

Learning outside of the classroom was just as valuable as learning inside of the classroom for this course in regards to psychology related activities. I volunteered as a research participant in Impression and Initiation of Friendship on Facebook study. The study took a deeper look at people on social media sites and what criteria they look at with the intention of accepting a friend request on Facebook. Not only was the study interesting, but it also educated me on the importance of research experience when it comes to graduate school after speaking to the graduate student who was conducting the experiment. The experiment acted as his project for his master’s degree in Experimental Psychology; something that I did not know would act as a main component in earning a master’s degree. An additional experience I had with a graduate student was when I interviewed Chris Cagna, my TA for Intro to Psych. He is currently in the process of completing his fifth year in the 3+2 program in Experimental Psychology. I am also interested in completing one of the two 3+2 programs here at Seton Hall so this interview was very informative and interesting for me. He provided me with great tips to being an undergraduate student pursuing graduate school and for being in graduate school along with the application process. Along with getting advice from graduate students, I also received guidance from fellow students at Psych Club meetings. Psych Club meetings were very interesting, but they also provided a sort of connection with other psychology major students. Listening to other students’ feedback on courses and professors was very helpful in connection with me making my schedule for the spring semester.

In conclusion, Orientation to the Psychology Major has been an extremely valuable course in discovering psychology as a major and myself as a student. In and out of the classroom, there have been a variety of learning experiences that have given me a full understanding of what the major of psychology is truly about. After taking this course, I now have a much better understanding of what is expected during the present time for me to get to my future of going to graduate school. This course has deepened my interests in psychology and has also made me realize that I made the perfect decision in choosing my major. Orientation to the Psych Major is a unique course that I can take something from now and also reflect back on to in a few years.