

# Student Newsletter

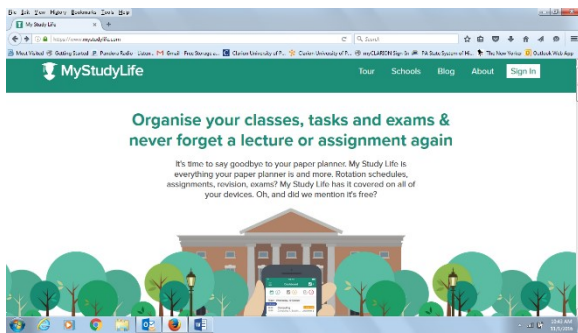
Winter 2017

## Hacking Your Academics

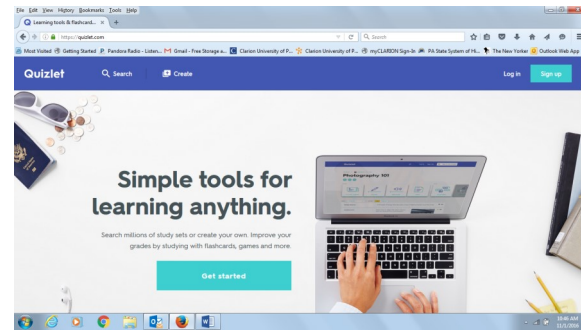
Recent news stories have highlighted the surge in the number of identified cyber hacks; from agency servers, retail stores, POS systems to personal laptops and cellular devices.

Although we tend to think of hacking as a negative, “flip the script” and view the positives hacking can offer in regards to your academics. One key to utilizing hacking techniques is to take advantage of the technology that surrounds you.

My Study Life and Quizlet are two resources for the tech savvy individual to hack their academics. My Study Life takes the place of the traditional planner and turns your paper planner into a digital format. This resource is free and can be used across several devices. Head to [www.mystudylife.com](http://www.mystudylife.com) and check it out. Before you decide if this is something that would help you in your hacking quest, you can take a tour of how My Study Life works and decide if it is right for you.



Second on the list is Quizlet. This resource allows you to access a library of flashcards/study sets that have already been created for various topics. Quizlet also allows you to create your own flashcards/study set for material you need for a specific class. Instead of Candy Crush, why not put the Quizlet app on your phone? Quizlet is located at [www.quizlet.com](http://www.quizlet.com).



In addition to these tech related hacks, cultivating relationships with your teachers is essential and can be considered a “hack”. One, that more often than not, is under-utilized. This relationship creates a connection to what you are learning and is essential in retaining information.

Understanding how, where, when, and why you learn best is an integral part of hacking your academics. Instead of concentrating on the part of your academic self that is failing, examine and celebrate the parts of your academic self that are succeeding. Explore the world of other apps that are available and find what works best for you.

## Attention Seniors

Deadlines are fast approaching!

Did you file your FAFSA?

Did you submit your college applications?

Did you apply for scholarships?

Need help?

Call Educational Talent Search @ 1-888-533-6487 or 814-393-2071.

Call Upward Bound @ 814-393-2342.



# Effective Collaboration and Teamwork

The value of being an effective teammate is not a value exclusive to athletics. Developing the ability to be a functional member of a team is an attribute athletically, academically and in the workplace. Educational and employment trends that are prevalent in the electric pace of our schools and global economy today have placed an increased emphasis on the ability to productively keep pace with one's teammates. Industry, regardless of the field, is placing higher and higher importance on group goal achievement as a performance measure.

This increased emphasis on group function is rooted in a need to maximize performance and minimize effort/expense. It is the six heads are better than one mentality and it is a proven approach to problem solving, as well as serving to increase performance. This fact has not been lost on educators and increasingly a student's ability to work well with others is an element of the educational process. Many classes have introduced the practice in the shape of group projects, service learning experiences, lab work, etc. Group learning has become a highly valued teaching approach, in part because it has real world applications, as it is a critical skill for students entering the work place.

The momentum created by a highly motivated group of students or a group of committed employees is powerful in terms of goal achievement. Goal achievement professionally and scholastically lends itself to successful companies, job retention and skill acquisition. The ability to collaborate productively is consistently among the top factors impacting employee retention. Simply put, those who can successfully navigate the dynamics of a group (play nice in the sand box) are more likely to be valued by the group, not to mention the fact that they will be a positive factor impacting group performance.

Collaboratively working with others is a skill that should be approached as any other critical skill. Conscious efforts to develop and master that skill are necessary. The basics of team effectiveness are dependent on the following enabling conditions: compelling direction, well defined structure, shared mindset and general support. Evaluation of what is working and what is presenting performance barriers is the final element that must be embraced on a functional team. Understanding these enabling conditions and understanding one's role within the group as that role relates to those conditions is a good starting point in developing group function skills.

## Homeless Youth Can Achieve Dreams

Close your eyes and picture "homeless." Do you see a person sleeping on a park bench in the city, or someone dressed in dirty rags sitting on a street corner begging for change? While those may be accurate representations of a homeless person, there are many other cases of homelessness of which we need to be aware.

According to U.S. Department of Education data, under the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program, the term "homeless," as it applies to children and youth, is defined as follows:

- Sharing housing (doubled-up) with relatives or friends due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Living in cars, parks, campgrounds, abandoned buildings or other places not intended for human habitation.
- Staying in motels, hotels, shelters or other temporary housing.

In the 2013-2014 school year, Pennsylvania reported 21,309 homeless enrolled students, which included students in preschool through grade 12. The total number of homeless students reported for the entire United States was 1,301,239. Those numbers are pretty shocking, right?

As you may know, states are required to administer assessments in order to evaluate the academic progress of students in math, English, and science. In Pennsylvania, we commonly refer to this as the PSSA. According to the EHCY Federal Data Summary for the 2013-2014 school year, 38.8 percent of homeless students received proficient scores on mathematics assessments; 43.2 percent received proficient scores on English language arts assessments; and 44.8 percent were proficient on science assessments. In comparison, the PA Department of Education reported 24.9 percent of ALL students received proficient scores for mathematics; 41.4 received proficient scores for English language arts; and 33.6 percent were proficient in science.



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According to the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY), many students who experience homelessness not only perform well on academic assessments, but graduate from high school, and continue on to pursue a college education. In effort to encourage homeless students to pursue post secondary education, the NAEHCY established a program through which they award scholarships to students who have experienced homelessness and demonstrated academic achievement. For more information, call 1-866-862-2562 or go to [naehcy.org](http://naehcy.org).

So, what does all this mean? Despite the barriers and challenges they face, homeless children and youth can and do achieve academic success! If you or someone you know is experiencing homelessness, there is hope and there is help. Talk to your Guidance Counselor, ETS Coordinator/UB Counselor and/or check out the resources below. Always remember, “You CAN Achieve Your Dreams!”

Resources:

<http://nche.ed.gov> (1-800-308-2145)    <http://naehcy.org> (1-866-862-2562)    <http://www.education.pa.gov> (717-772-2066)  
<http://www.miu4.org> (724-458-6700 ext. 1289)

## Soft Skills: The Key to Success

A lot of emphasis is placed on academics and proficiency to prepare you for higher education and the workforce, but there is another set of skills that are just as necessary for success. These skills are referred to as soft skills and are transferrable to any career and life situations. Everyone has to solve problems, work with different personalities, communicate effectively, exhibit teamwork, and use resources and technology wisely. Employers are seeking individuals who are creative, detail-oriented, and team-oriented. Both schools and employers are looking for individuals who are independent, organized, hard-working risk-takers. People with a good attitude and work ethic that are seen as pleasant, friendly, punctual, and responsible are highly desirable. Just take a look at the job requirements in these classified ads.

### Graphic Design Supervisor

Exciting opportunity for a detail-oriented individual with excellent organizational and communication skills. Job will include managing production and projects.

Proficiency in Quark, Photoshop, and knowledge of Macintosh system are a must.

Must be able to coordinate many projects at a time.

Benefits include medical and dental insurance, 401K, and profit sharing, and a 30% discount.

### Auto Sales

We're expanding our sales staff. We need motivated sales people with good communication skills and a team spirit.

### Editorial Coordinator

You'll coordinate a team of editors and proofreaders assigned to a variety of projects. Must be a problem solver with strong team skills. Effective verbal and written communication is essential. Other responsibilities may include checking research and making corrections. You'll update files, edit and run reports. PC and Mac experience a must. Excellent salary and benefits.

How do you develop soft skills? They are gained through socializing and interacting with others. Communication skills are developed through group work and oral presentations. Group projects let you practice collaboration, delegate duties, and respond to others' ideas and criticism. Presentations allow you to practice public speaking, organize ideas and facts, and justify an argument. Research papers or projects help you learn to manage time, plan projects, and work within deadlines. Responsibility can be demonstrated by turning work in on time and complete. Being on time for class, coming prepared, and being respectful to others demonstrates professionalism. Participating in extracurricular activities requires multi-tasking, prioritizing, organizing, and managing your time. Participating on teams helps develop elements of teamwork like negotiation, compromise, and conflict resolution. Volunteering, holding a part-time job, or starting your own business cultivate many of these skills.

Always be willing to grow and learn, believe in yourself, communicate clearly, adapt to unexpected and difficult situations, and work well with others for success!

# Can You See Your Shadow? Now Is the Time to Start

Job shadowing is an experience where you spend a day or longer working alongside a professional to gain a better understanding of what it is really like to go to work every day in a specific career. You could shadow a nurse or a doctor in the hospital to see what an average day is like, or sit along side an electrical engineer participating in their daily work environment. Job shadowing typically consists of listening and observing. However, sometimes you get the chance to actually take part in the work activity. Job shadowing is a major networking tool. The relationships you make while job shadowing can transcend into an internship down the road while you are in college or another postsecondary program. It is always a good idea to network and keep contact with professionals that you meet.

How can you find a job shadowing experience? Check with your school and guidance counselor to see if they have any connections. You can also directly contact the specific places that you are interested in. Most businesses and professions welcome a student who wants to job shadow their profession.

**Here are some general tips to guide you in a job shadowing experience:**

## **Before**

- Research the company or individual that you would like to job shadow. You can check websites to find this information. Look for the size of the company, the customers that they serve, and the educational background required for employment. This research will help you to be prepared for your on-site experience.
- Be prepared to discuss your career goals and personal interests. If you are uncertain, explain to them that you are trying to gather more information through the job shadow.
- Prepare questions ahead of time that you would like to ask during your job shadow experience. Examples could be:
  - Why did you choose this career?
  - What education is required for this position?
  - What are the pros and cons of the job?
  - What skills are required or useful for this position?
  - What classes should I take to better prepare me for this career?

## **During**

- Be familiar with the job location and allow plenty of travel time so that you arrive on time.
- Dress appropriately for the position. If it is in an office, a dress or a suit would be appropriate. If you are working alongside a pharmacist or a doctor, it would be a good idea to check in with them before hand in case you need to wear scrubs or a specific uniform.
- Bring a notebook or a method of taking notes.
- Keep your phone off and do not make personal phone calls or texts while you are shadowing.
- Be eager to learn as that is why you are there. Participate in any experience that you can.

## **After**

- Always send a thank you note to all of the individuals who took the time to help with your experience.
- Write a short write-up of your experience, listing what you learned and what you liked or disliked for your own personal reference later down the line.
- Share your contact information, so that you can continue to network in the future.

## **WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? GET OUT THERE AND FIND YOUR SHADOW!**

Remember that a job shadow may also help you to realize that a certain career is not for you. Try as many experiences as you can before you go onto post-secondary education. It is better to know now that you enjoy or do not enjoy a certain type of work, it will save you time, money and effort.

Sarikas, C. , Complete Guide: Job Shadowing for High School Students, November 11, 2015. Retrieved from <http://blog.prepscholar.com/job-shadowing-for-high-school-students>

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TRIO Educational Talent Search, 814-393-2071 and TRIO Upward Bound, 814-393-2342  
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