



**Aggies Engage:**  
***Choosing to Succeed***

Dr. Dwight Roblyer '84 & '09, Ph.D.  
Lecturer, Department of Political Science

## Where you & I are going in this talk...

- My own path to this stage today
- What is success to you?
- What types of **choices** are important for success here?
- What exactly should you **choose** in order to succeed at TAMU?



# My Own Path to Today

Start



BA in Physics

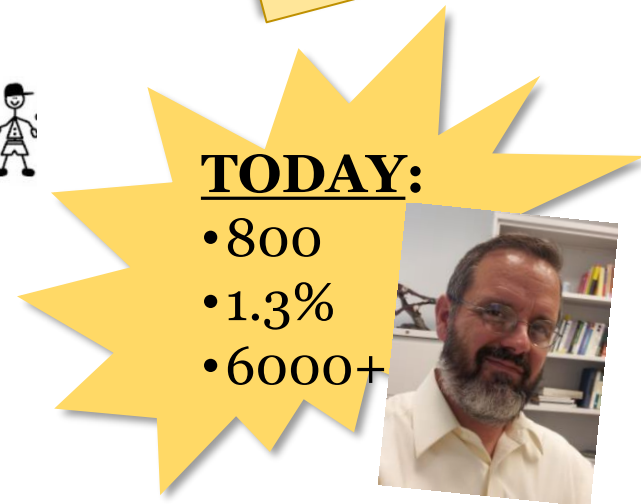


U.S. AIR FORCE

"Eight is Enough"



PhD = Pretty  
Hard  
Degree!



**TODAY:**

- 800
- 1.3%
- 6000+



*Father of Former Students*  
*Trained Critical Thinker*  
*Strong writer*  
*Son with strong work ethic*  
*Passionate educator*  
*Practical academic*  
*Father of Special Needs Kids*  
*Student that struggled*  
*Aggie who highly regards the Honor Code*



**Who I am today...**



Father of Former S  
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Strong writer  
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But whether I succeed tomorrow depends  
on more than the sum of my past!

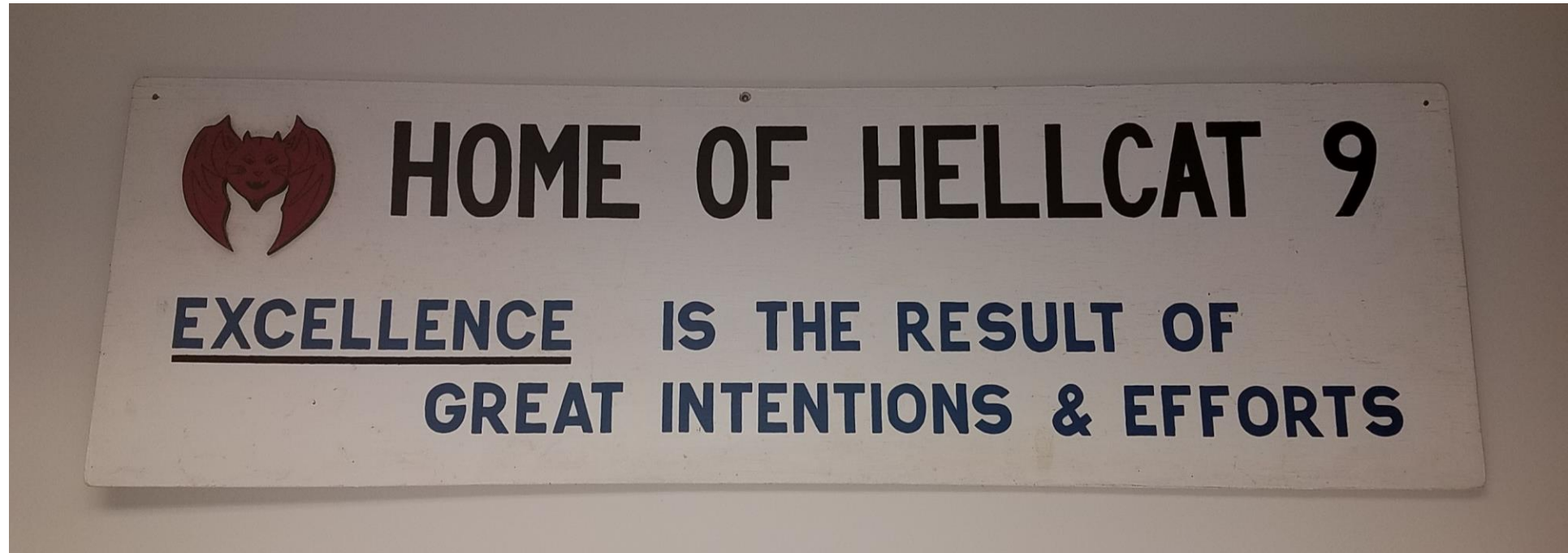
Who I am today...



What is “success” to college students?



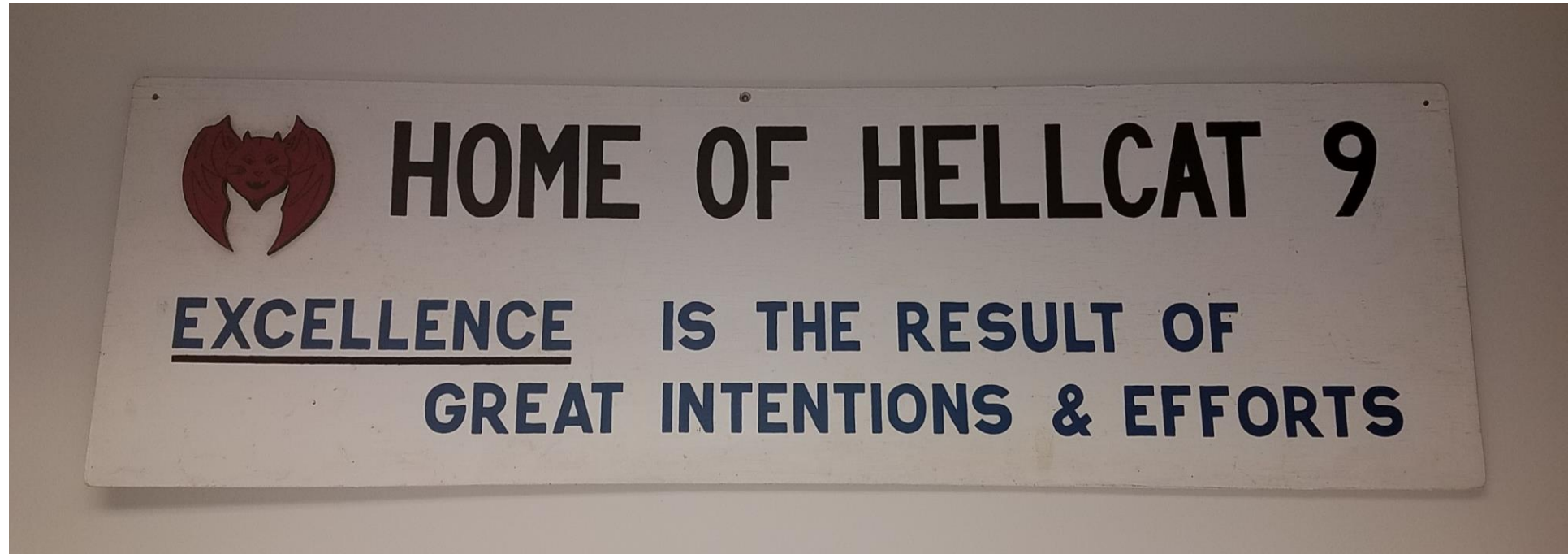
How do we succeed?



...from the stairwell in my Corps dorm during my senior year



How do we succeed?



...from the stairwell in my Corps dorm during my senior year



How do we succeed?



**SUCCESS?**

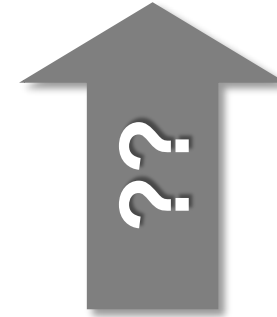
How do we succeed?



*We control these*



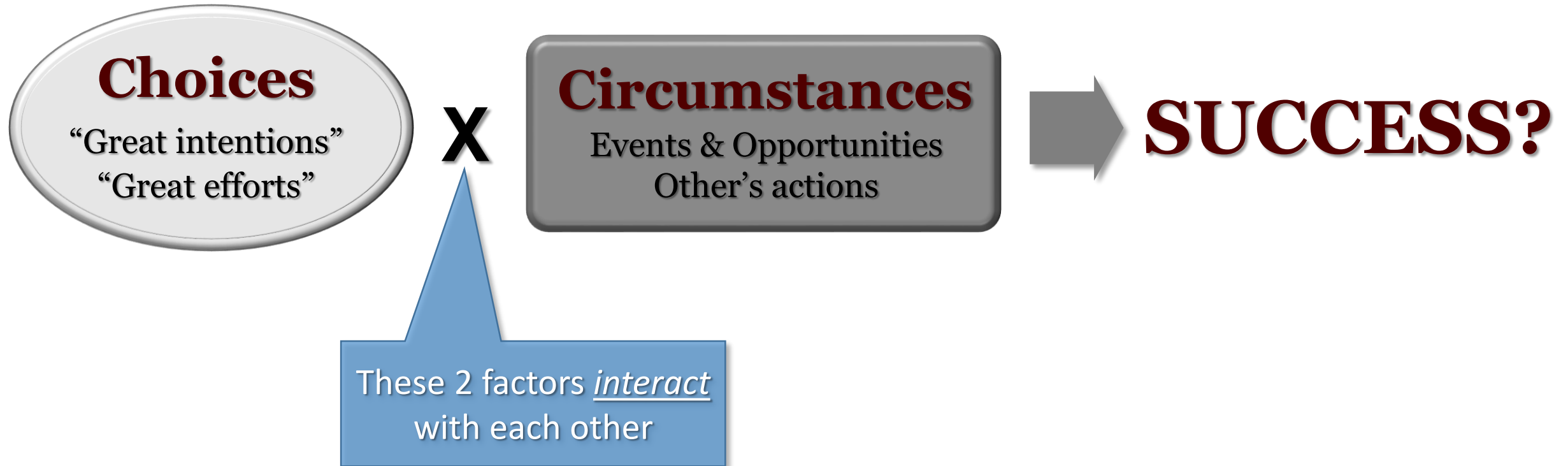
**SUCCESS?**



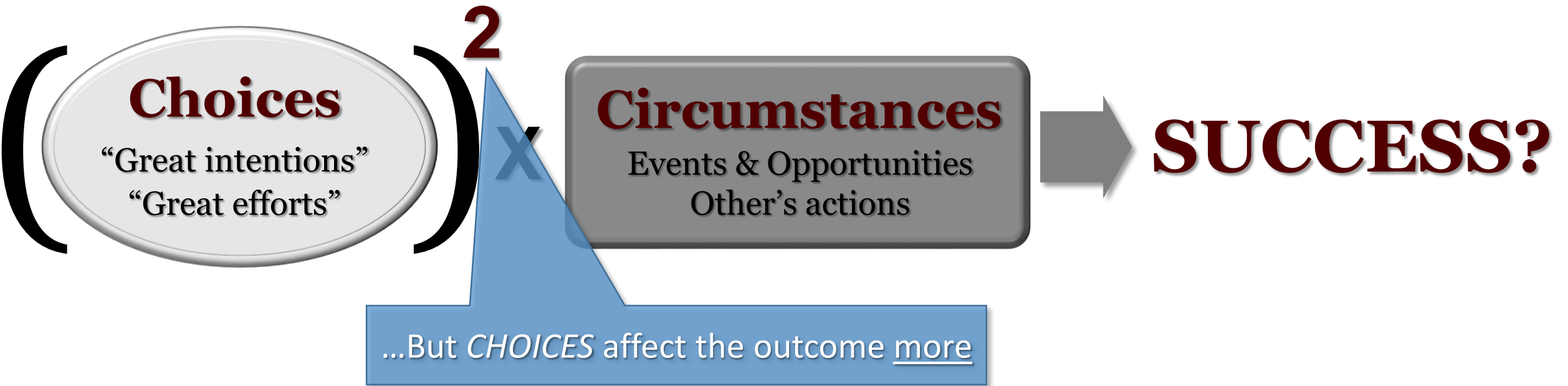
*We don't control most of these*



How do we succeed?



How do we succeed?



To succeed here, which choices matter most?

1. How & what will you **learn**?
2. How will you **plan**?
3. How will you respond to **stress**?
4. How will you use **resources** and build **relationships**?
5. How will you **balance** work vs. pleasure, and self vs. service?



# CHOICE 1: How & what will you learn?

Option 1

Option 2



## Learn by Understanding

“Own” your knowledge

Do your own work

Build a solid foundation

Discover the common threads

Lead & teach

## Settle for Recognition

“Rent” your knowledge

Let others do the work

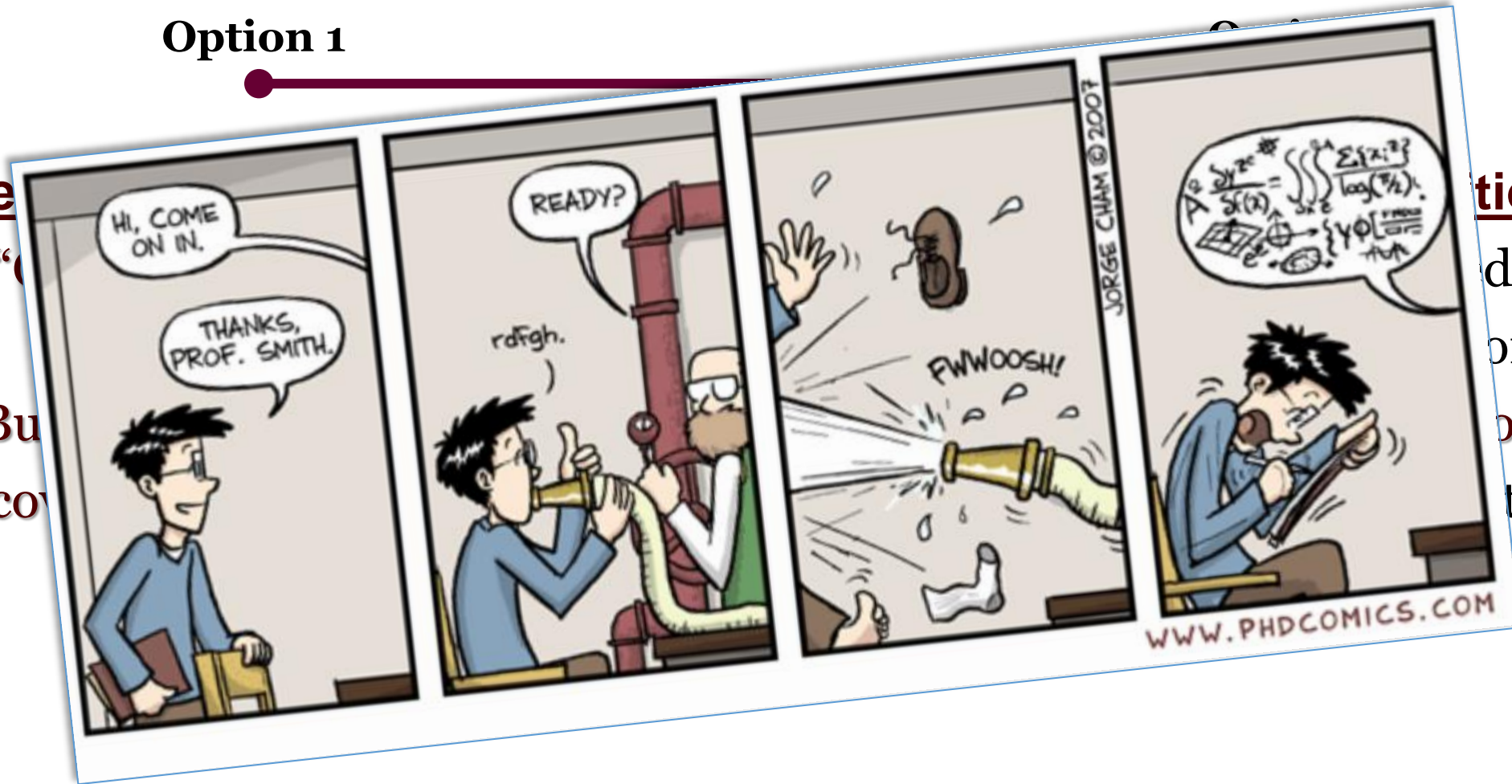
Constantly repair & prop-up

Wander aimlessly between topics

Follow & scramble

# CHOICE 1: How & what will you learn?

## Option 1



Learn  
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But  
Discover

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ork  
op-up  
topics

## CHOICE 2: Will you plan & prioritize?





# CHOICE 3: Will you manage stress or will it manage you?

Option 1

Option 2

## Go for Eustress

Think clearly

Be more rested

Be pleasant to be around

Protect your health

?

## Suffer Distress

Make mental errors

Be exhausted

Break relationships

Your health at risk

GOOD decisions  
on Choices 1-2 and 4-5  
help a lot!



# CHOICE 4: How will you use resources & build relationships?

Option 1

Option 2

**Citizen of the Academy**

Embrace **community**

**Ask** questions—be curious

Learn **with others**

**Admit** your need for help

?

**Island all by myself**

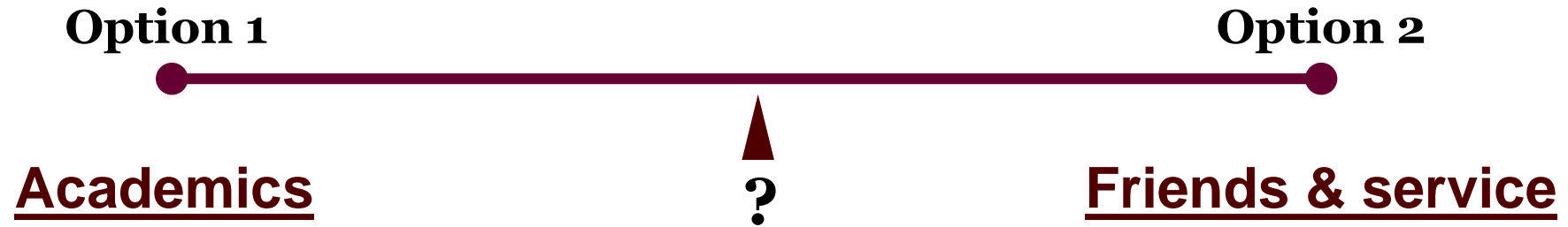
Go it **alone**

**Suppress** questions

Learn **by yourself** or not at all

**Hide** your weaknesses

# CHOICE 5: How will you balance life as a student?



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*This Fall semester is the time to be conservative and allocate more time and resources to ACADEMICS...*



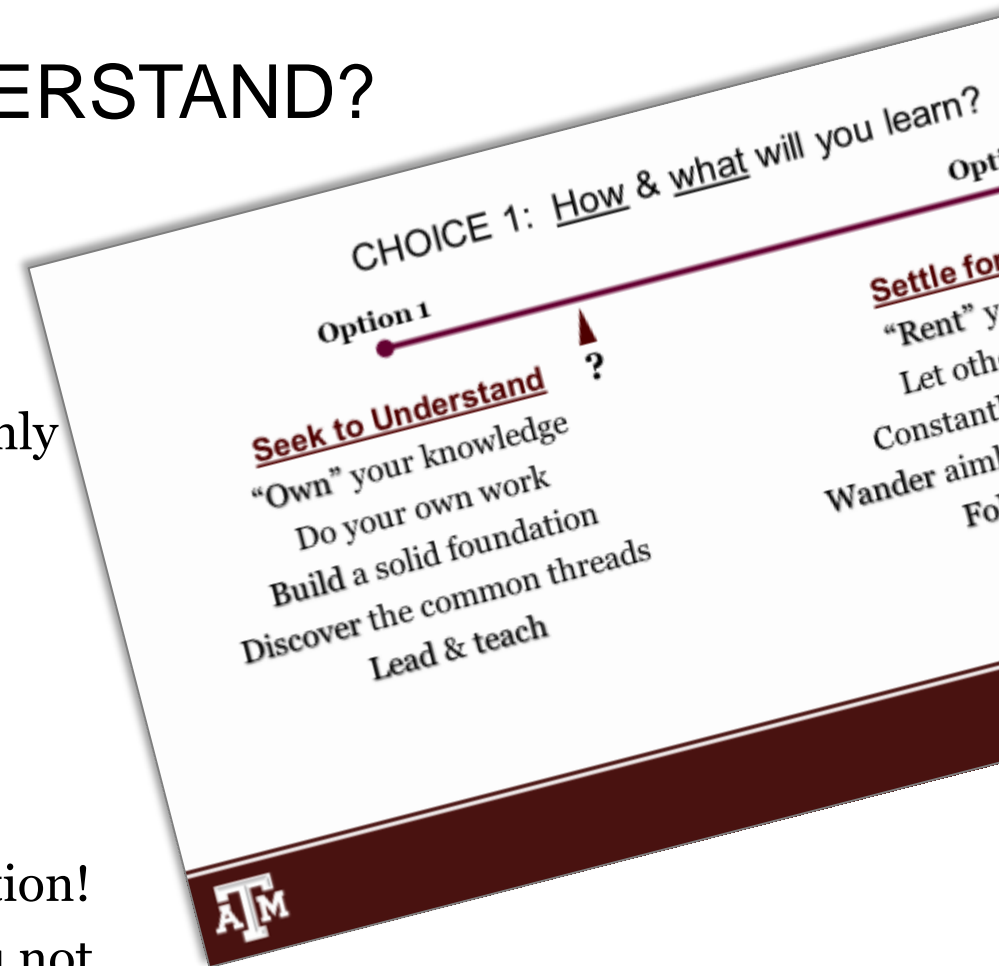
# CHOICE 5: How will you balance life as a student?

*Make adjustments in Spring 2018 based on GPA, course load, health, etc! Focus should still remain on ACADEMICS because that is how you graduate!*



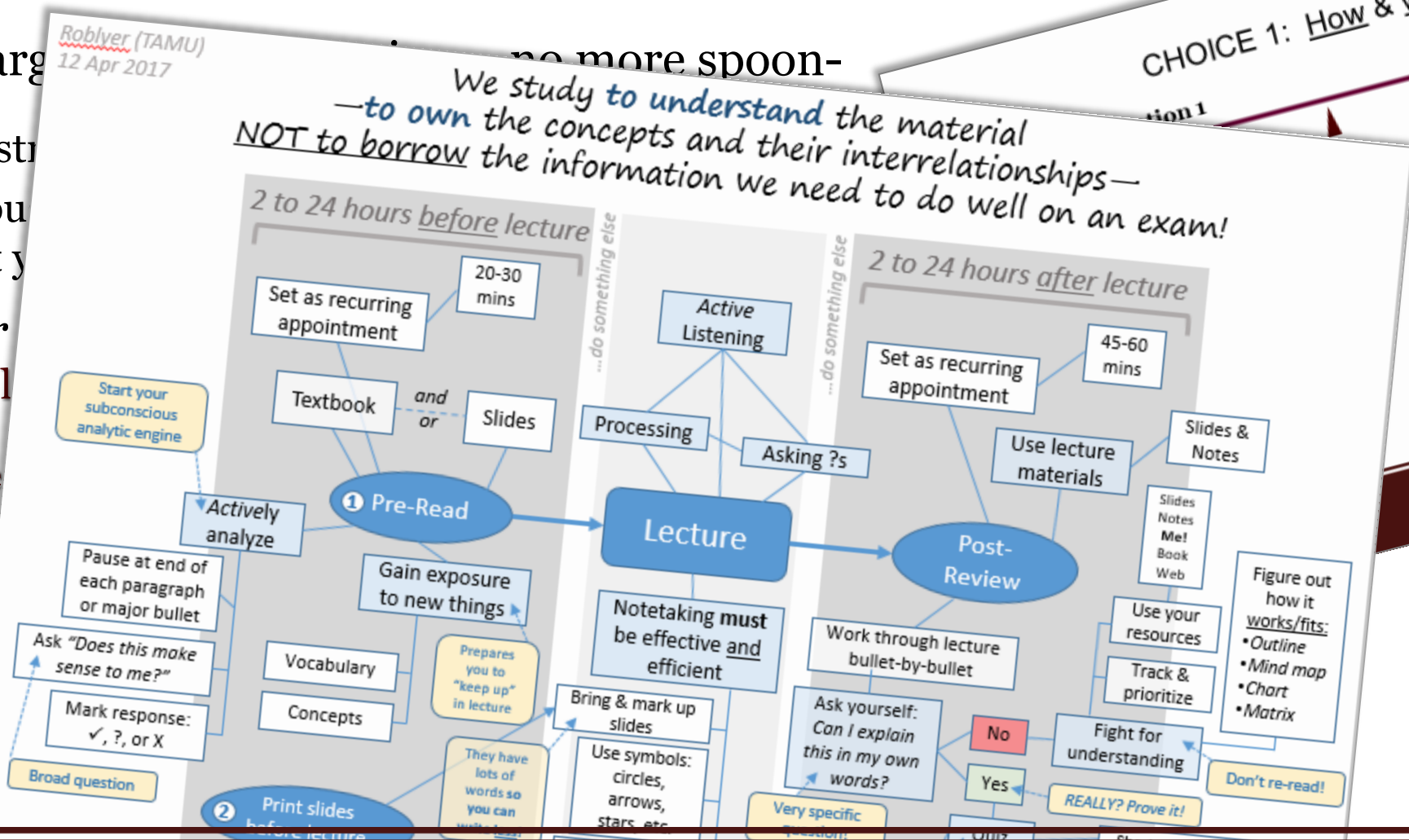
# How do you choose to UNDERSTAND?

1. Take charge of your education – no more spoon-feeding!
  - Your instructor is (only) your **paid, expert guide**
  - You “bought the **season ticket**,” but the semester will only be what your daily decisions make it to be!
2. *Fight for understanding* in every course.
  - Seek to **learn to think like each instructor** does in their subject
  - **Prepare before class:** read, question, look things up
  - **Attend class:** present **physically and mentally**
  - **Actively listen and participate** in class—it’s your education!
  - After class, **quiz on the material covered**—what can you not yet explain in your own words? Re-reading is NOT studying!
  - **Do the assignments, and don’t cheat!** Dishonesty is a shortcut that lands you *where you didn’t want to go....*



# How do you choose to UNDERSTAND?

1. Take charge of your own learning!
  - Your instructor is not your spoon-feeding!
  - You “buy” your own information. You can be what you eat.
2. Fight for understanding!
  - Seek to understand the subject
  - Prepare to learn
  - Attend class
  - Actively participate
  - After class, review notes yet expect to learn more
  - Do the homework
  - Shortcuts are not the way



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# Is this your brain on exam day?



paisan191/iStock/Getty Images

- You've studied HARD, your brain is FULL
- You've **re-read & reviewed** a lot, so you can **RECOGNIZE LOTS** of stuff
- But that stuff feels like it could "spill" out of your head with the slightest bump
  - ...if you hear some news that distracts you
  - ...if you run into an unexpected question that none of your "stuff" fits
- There is little or no organization
  - Items are not "connected" to others
  - Items are "there," but difficult to locate
- You are anxious and worried



# I want this brain on exam day!

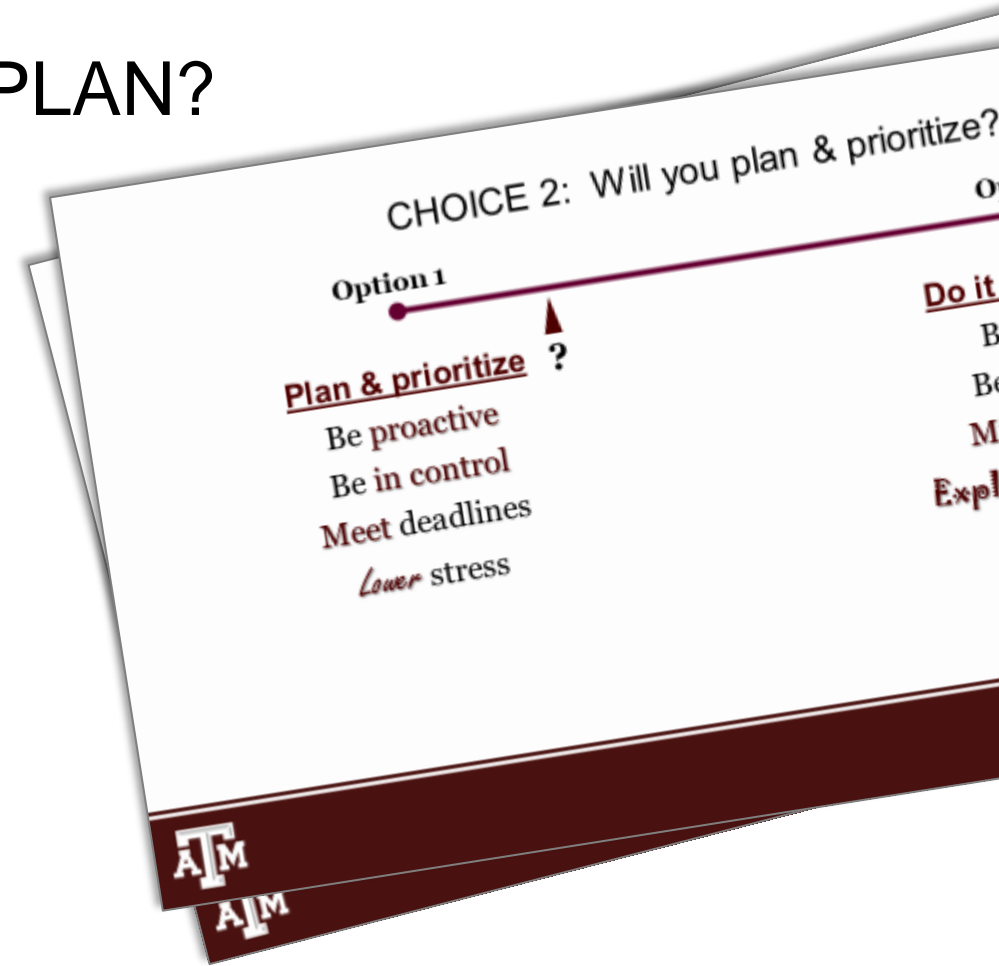


<http://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/video/busboy-removes-dirty-plates-stock-footage/91373401>

- You've worked HARD, but also EFFICIENTLY
- You've come to **UNDERSTAND** and can **EXPLAIN LOTS** of stuff
- Your knowledge is stacked, nested, **CONNECTED**
  - Little threat that a "bump" will cause you to "spill"
- Your knowledge is **ORGANIZED**
  - If you can't immediately recall an answer, you know in which "stack" it should reside
  - Connections between "items" allows you to remember one item, then allow it to lead you to the item you seek
- You are relaxed and confident

# How do you choose to PLAN?

1. **READ** your syllabi as **contracts**—they are!
  - Write down every assignment, quiz, paper, project, exam
  - Note “crunch weeks” when multiple things are due across different courses—then plan ahead!



# How do you choose to PLAN?

1. **READ** your syllabi as **contracts**—the
  - Write down every assignment, quiz, paper, exam
  - Note “crunch” days across different assignments

Approximate Schedule of Course Topics and Activities


Spring 2017 (Roblyer POLS 207)						
Date	Week	Day	Participation Points	Home-work Due	Chapter & Topic	Activity
18-Jan	1	W	none		Meet the Prof & the Course	Read Syllabus
20-Jan		F	none		Essential Academic Survival Skills	Review eCampus / Studying & Grade Improvement
23-Jan	2	M	1		1-Facts, Beliefs, Winning & Losing	End of Add/Drop
25-Jan		W	1		1-Facts, Beliefs, Winning & Losing	
27-Jan		F	1	HW1,2,3	2A-Empirical Relationships	
30-Jan	3	M	1		2B-Analyzing Data Presentations	10-min In-Class Practice Exam (before lecture)
1-Feb		W	1		2C-Causality & Spuriousness	
3-Feb		F	1	HW4	3-Political Cultures	
6-Feb	4	M	1		3-Cultural Continuums	
8-Feb		W	none		EXAM 1 (Chpts 1-3)	
10-Feb		F	1	HW5	4A-Concerns w/ Govt	
13-Feb	5	M	1		4B-State Constitutions	Makeup Exams
15-Feb		W	1		5A-Revenues and Expenditures	
17-Feb		F	1	HW6	5B-Taxes by Type	
20-Feb	6	M	1		5C-Borrowing	
22-Feb		W	1		6-Individual Participation	
24-Feb		F	1	HW7	6-Individual Participation	
27-Feb	7	M	1		6-Individual Participation	
1-Mar		W	none		EXAM 2 (Chpts 4-6)	
3-Mar		F	1	HW8	7-Group Participation	Participation Logs Due by

All scores will be calculated and recorded comprised of your participation, homework credit offered and received:

**Aggie Honor Code**

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, because trust and faithfulness is the foundation of education.”

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, you also accepted responsibility to uphold the Honor Code, the axiom of the same time, you also accepted responsibility to the Honor System. Ignorance of the rule the Honor System as described at <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule20> misconduct (including the appeal process) are not aware of most of the content of the Honor Code—do not be one of them.



**QUICKSTART STEPS:**

1. Obtain your course materials (textbook, syllabus, etc.)
2. Register for REU
3. Log onto eCampus and review important instructions for exams.
4. Start reading my textbook for improvement. I will
5. Ensure you never miss a class.
  - a. Download the syllabus from <http://ecampus.tamu.edu>
  - b. Set up my calendar

**HONOR CODE**

recording, invest much time in these rules academically

**In-Class Regulations**

being optional other assignments

- I will
- I will
- Opti com



# How do you choose to PLAN?

1. Treat your syllabi as contracts—they are!
  - Write down every assignment, quiz, paper, project, exam
  - Note “crunch weeks” when multiple things are due between different courses—then plan ahead!
2. Plan out a typical 7-day week, **hour-by-hour**
  - Class times & work hours
  - Meals, sleep, grooming, fitness, etc.
  - Study time (**2x to 3x class hours**) specific to
    - Prepare for next exam as you go—not 2 nights before
  - All other commitments: clubs, social, etc.
  - **See how little time is actually left!**

CHOICE 2: Will you plan & prioritize?

Option 1

**Plan & prioritize ?**

24/7 Planning Template

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
5am								
6am								
7am								

Checksheet for 24/7 Planning Template

Checker: \_\_\_\_\_

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
Course1								
Course2								
Course3								
Course4								
Course5								
Course6								
Course7								
Meals								
Sleep								
Hygiene								



# How do you choose to PLAN?

1. Treat your syllabi as contracts—they are!
  - Write down every assignment, quiz, paper, project, exam
  - Note “crunch weeks” when multiple things are due between different courses—then plan ahead!
2. Plan out a typical 7-day week, **hour-by-hour**
  - Class times & work hours
  - Meals, sleep, grooming, fitness, etc.
  - Study time (2x to 3x class hours) specific to each course
  - All other commitments: clubs, social, etc.
  - See how little time is actually left!
3. **Track** your own course grade in a spreadsheet
  - Always know where you stand & what you still must do

CHOICE 2: Will you plan & prioritize?

Option 1

Do it

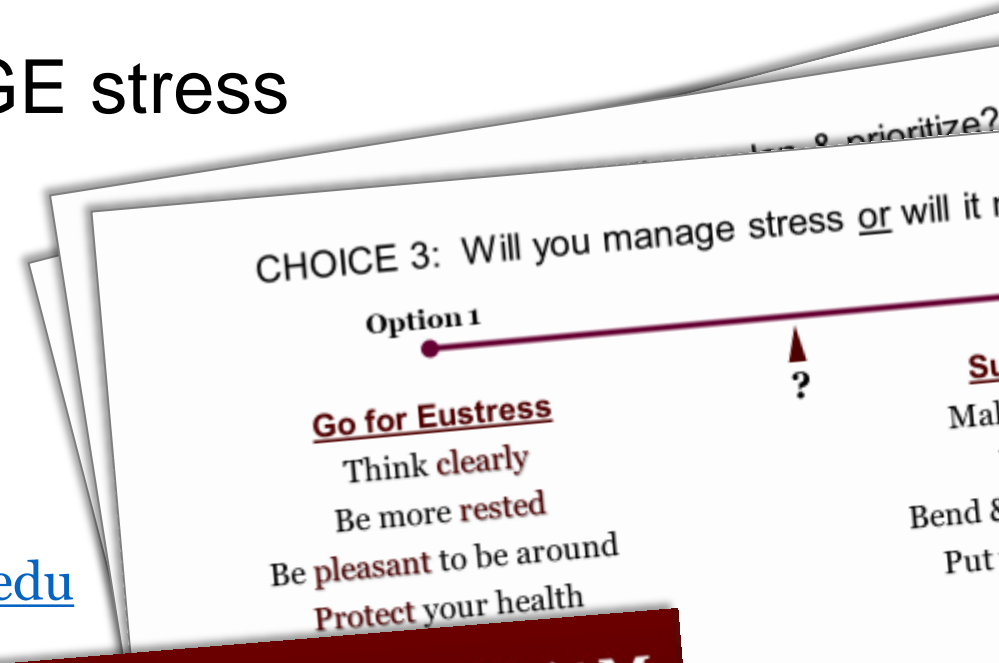
EXAMPLE:	Component	Score	Weight	Contribution
	Exam 1	67.17	20.00%	13.434
	Exam 2	72.33	20.00%	14.466
	Exam 3	91.88	20.00%	18.376
	Exam 4	88.62	20.00%	17.724
	Online Quiz 1	100	1.25%	1.25
	Online Quiz 2	0	1.25%	0
	Online Quiz 3	100	1.25%	1.25
	Online Quiz 4	100	1.25%	1.25
	Online Quiz 5	100	1.25%	1.25
	Online Quiz 6	0	1.25%	0
	Online Quiz 7	100	1.25%	1.25
	Online Quiz 8	100	1.25%	1.25
	Participation	94	10.00%	9.4
			Course Grade	80.9



# How to choose to MANAGE stress

## 1. Don't forget the basics!

- Get your sleep
- Eat well
- Build & use your support network
- Use Student Counseling Service: <http://scs.tamu.edu>
  - Top-notch insights, advice, and care
  - Already paid-for by you



**Student Counseling Service**  
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

HOME | SERVICES | STUDENTS | PARENTS | FACULTY/STAFF | GROUPS | CONTACT US

**STEP IN UP**  
against sexual violence

### Services

- Career Counseling
- Couple Counseling
- Crisis Intervention
- Learning Disability and ADD/ADHD Screenings
- Personal Counseling
- Psychiatric Services
- Self-Help, Outreach, and Consultation
- Stress Management & Biofeedback Services
- TAO Therapist Assisted Online
- Testing Services

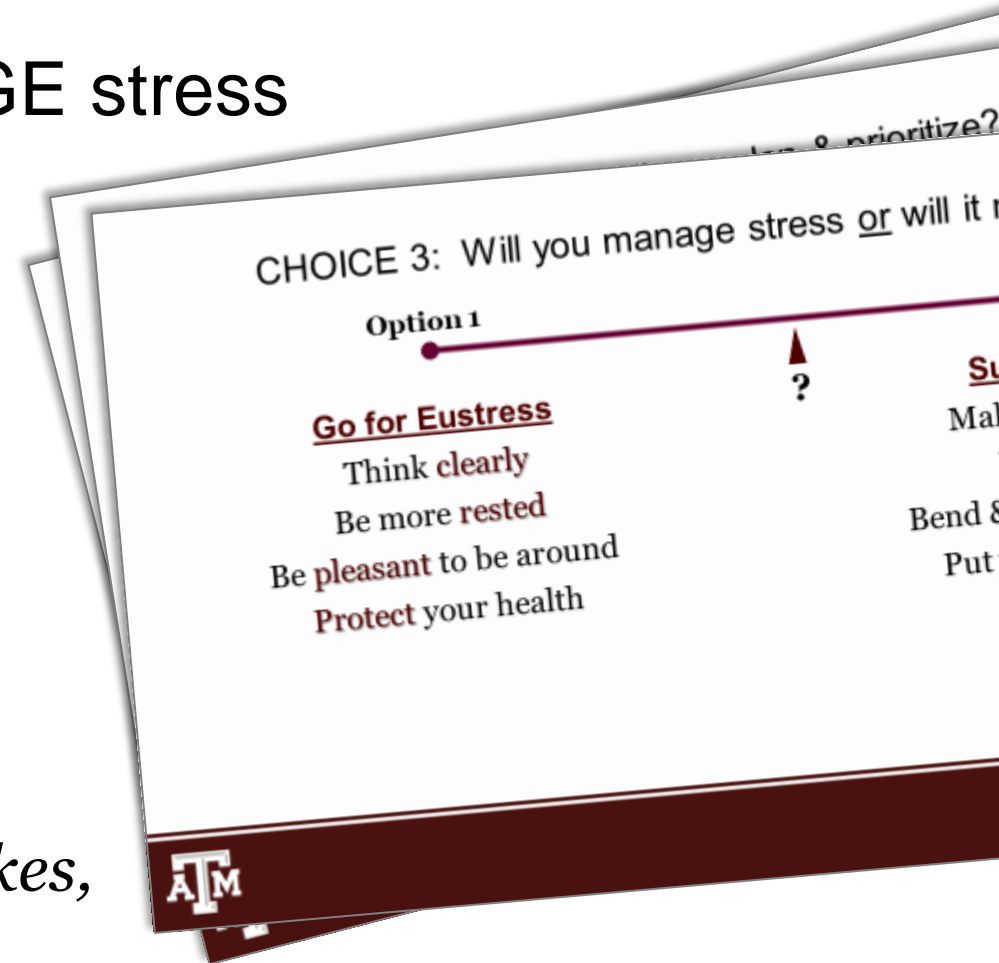
Navigation



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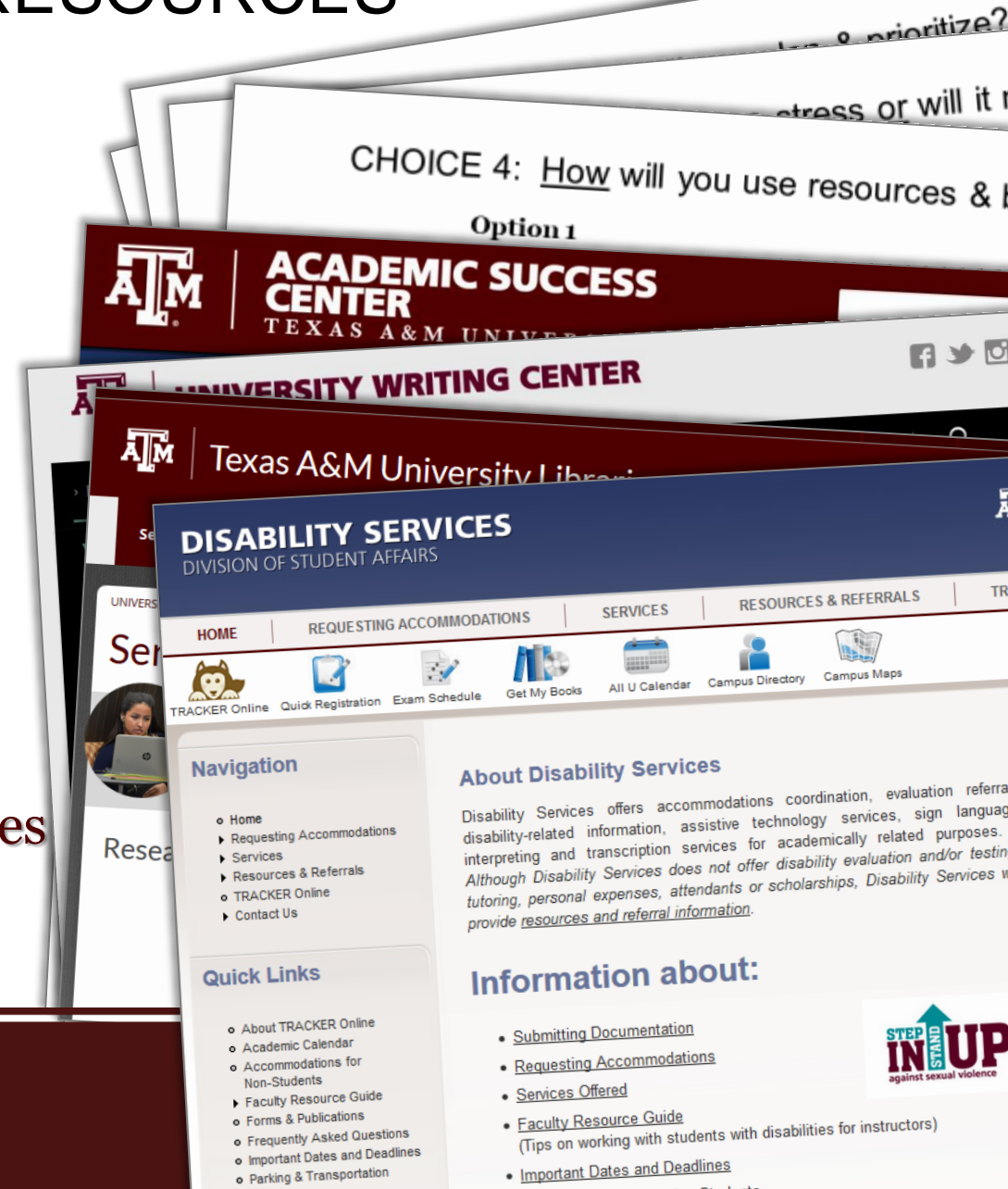
# How to choose to MANAGE stress

1. Do the basics!
  - Get your sleep
  - Eat well
  - Build & use your support network
  - Use Student Counseling Service
2. Make **understanding** your academic goal
3. **Plan ahead** and prioritize carefully
4. Expect **the inevitable**: *You will make mistakes, and you will get some poor grades*
  - What matters most is what you do after that!
  - Do like a designer: make changes and test it out again...



# How to choose to USE RESOURCES

1. **Seek out** your instructor & **ask** questions!
  - Before/after class and during **office hours**
  - Email if permitted
  - **Make an effort** to understand before asking
  - Be as **specific as possible** with your questions
2. **Network** within each class—study partners, note sharing, etc.
3. Use the BIG THREE **early & often**
  - **Academic Success Center** (<http://successcenter.tamu.edu>)
  - **University Writing Center** (<http://writingcenter.tamu.edu>)
  - **University Libraries** (<http://library.tamu.edu>)
4. Advocate for yourself—visit **Disability Services**—no one else will do this for you!
  - Why make college harder than it has to be?





# How to choose to use RESOURCES

## 1. Seek out

- Before/a
- Email if
- Make a
- Be as sp

## 2. Network sharing

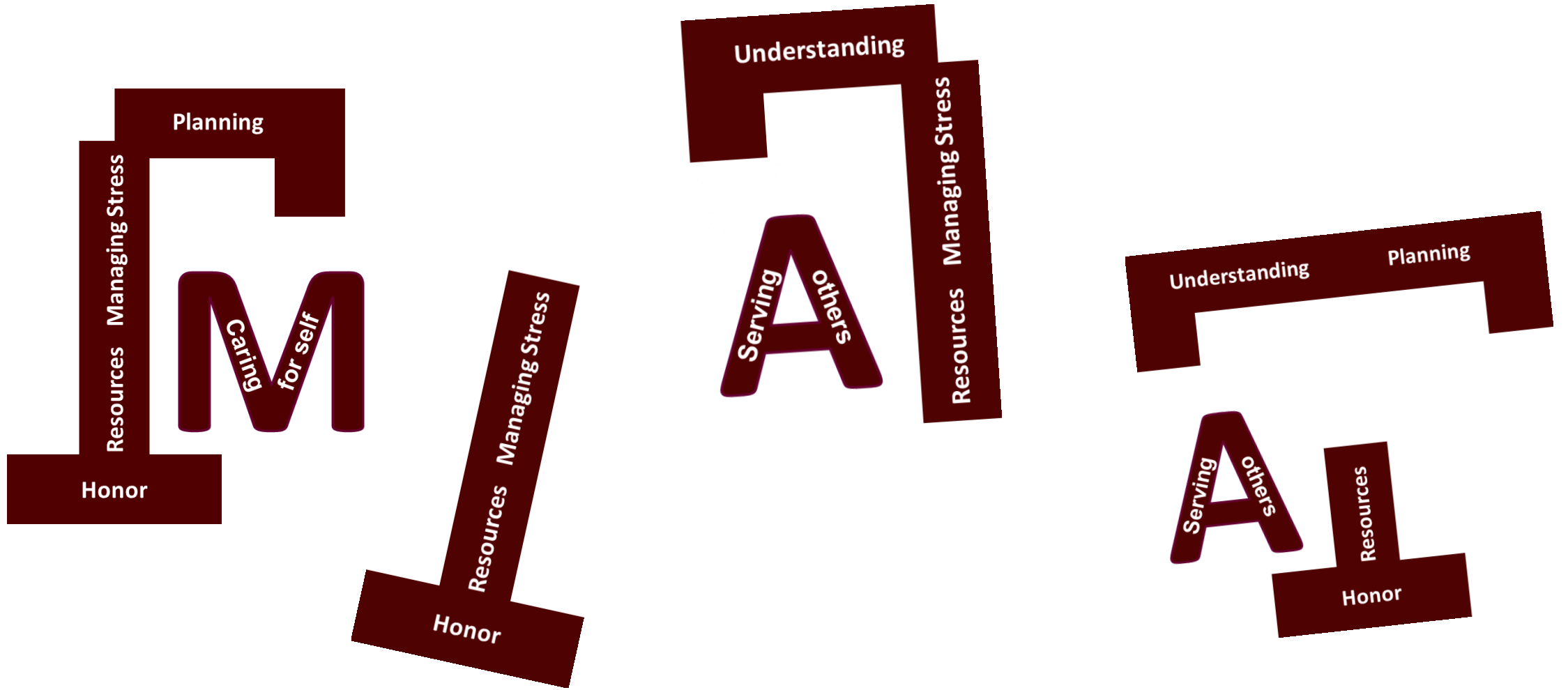
## 3. Use the

- Acade
- Univer
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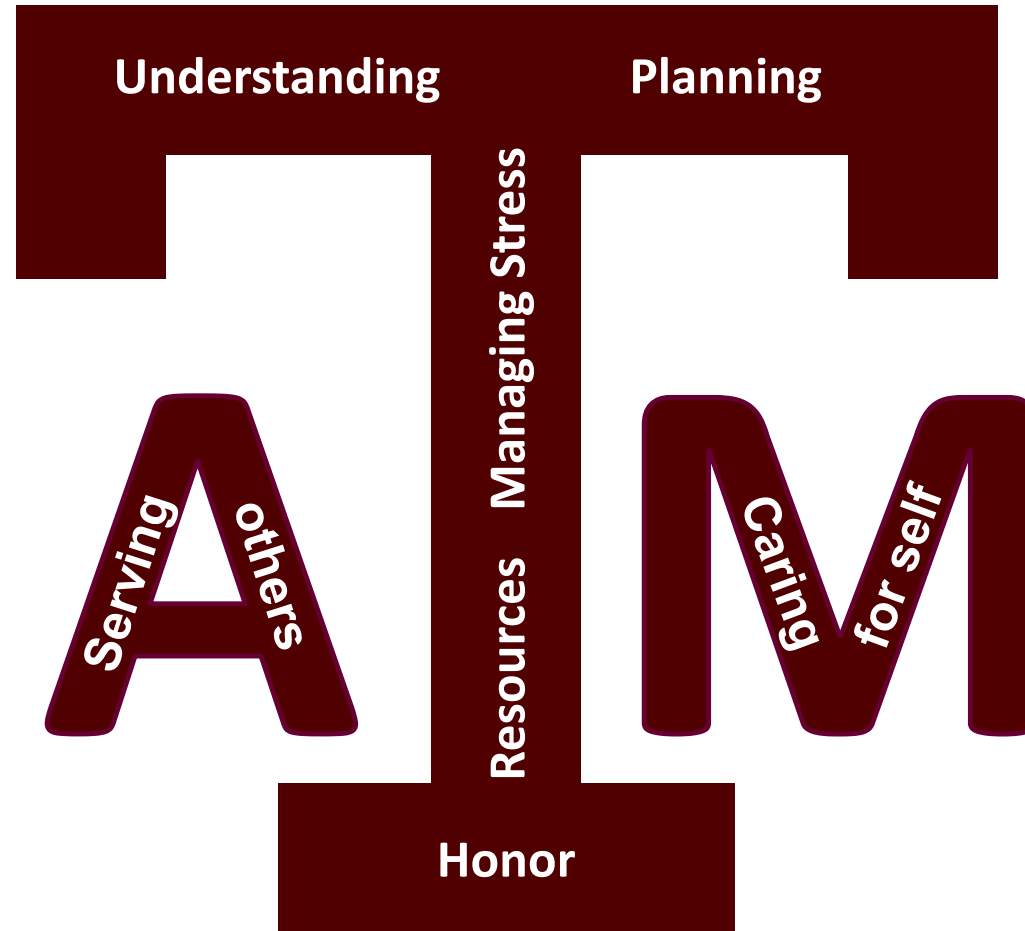
*These slides and many other articles, helps, and info are available at my web page:*  
<http://dwightroblyer.sites.tamu.edu>

- 8 High-School Habits That Will FAIL You in College
- 7 High-Impact Tactics for Academic Success
- Study Methods: Which Ones Work and Which Don't
- 24-7 Planning Sheets
- How to Track Your Own Course Grade in Excel
- How to Think Like a Designer
- ...and lots more

A few good choices make **success** more possible...



...but more good choices make **success more probable**...



# Gig'em!

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Colonel, USAF (Retired)

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<http://dwightroblyer.sites.tamu.edu>

*Contact me! I'll be glad to chat...*



Images downloaded from the following sites:

<http://www.aggieband.com/info/brass.html>

<http://dbclipart.com/stick-figure-clip-art-image-20941/>

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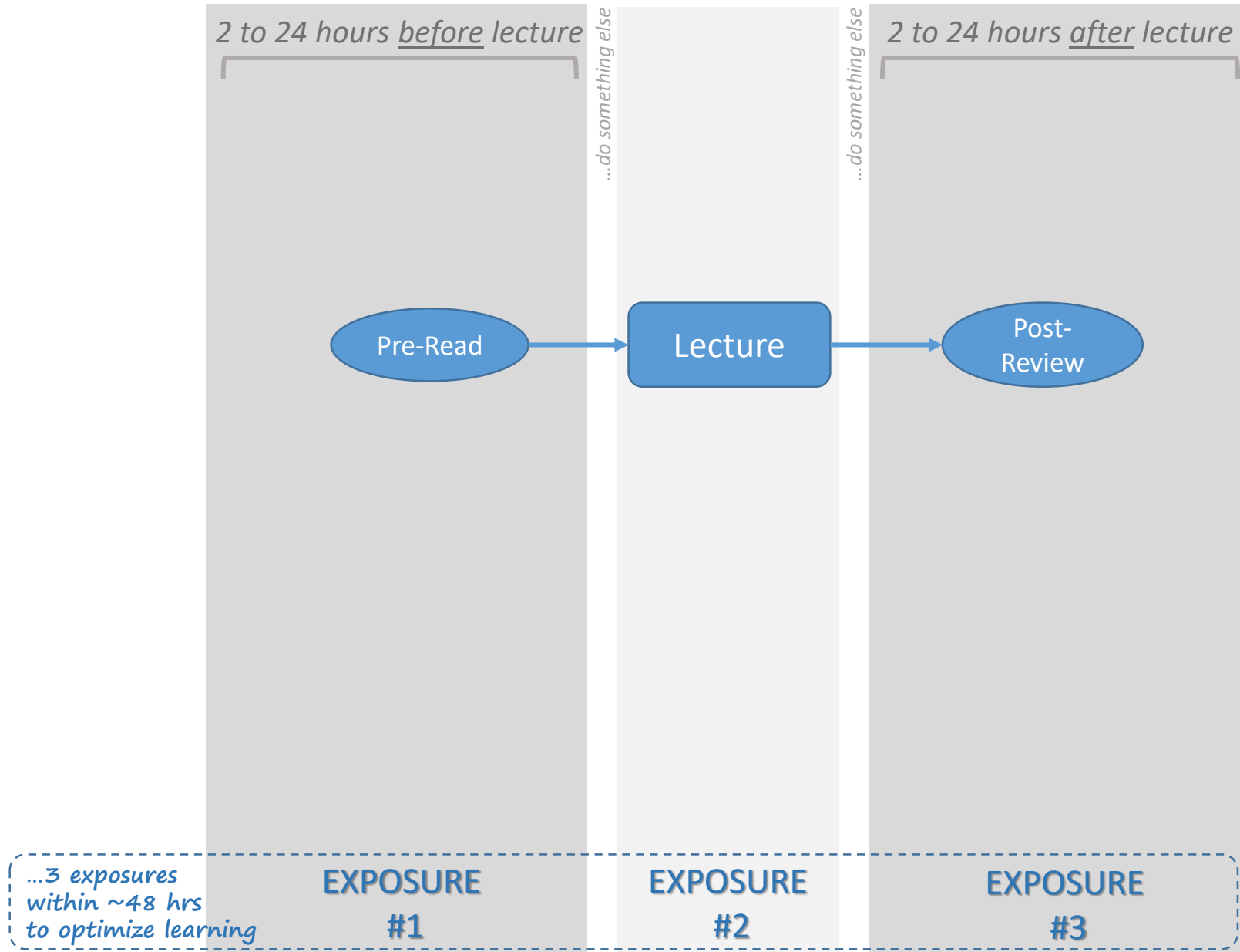
<http://airforcelive.dodlive.mil/files/2014/11/Capture.jpg>

<http://www.keywordsuggests.com/>

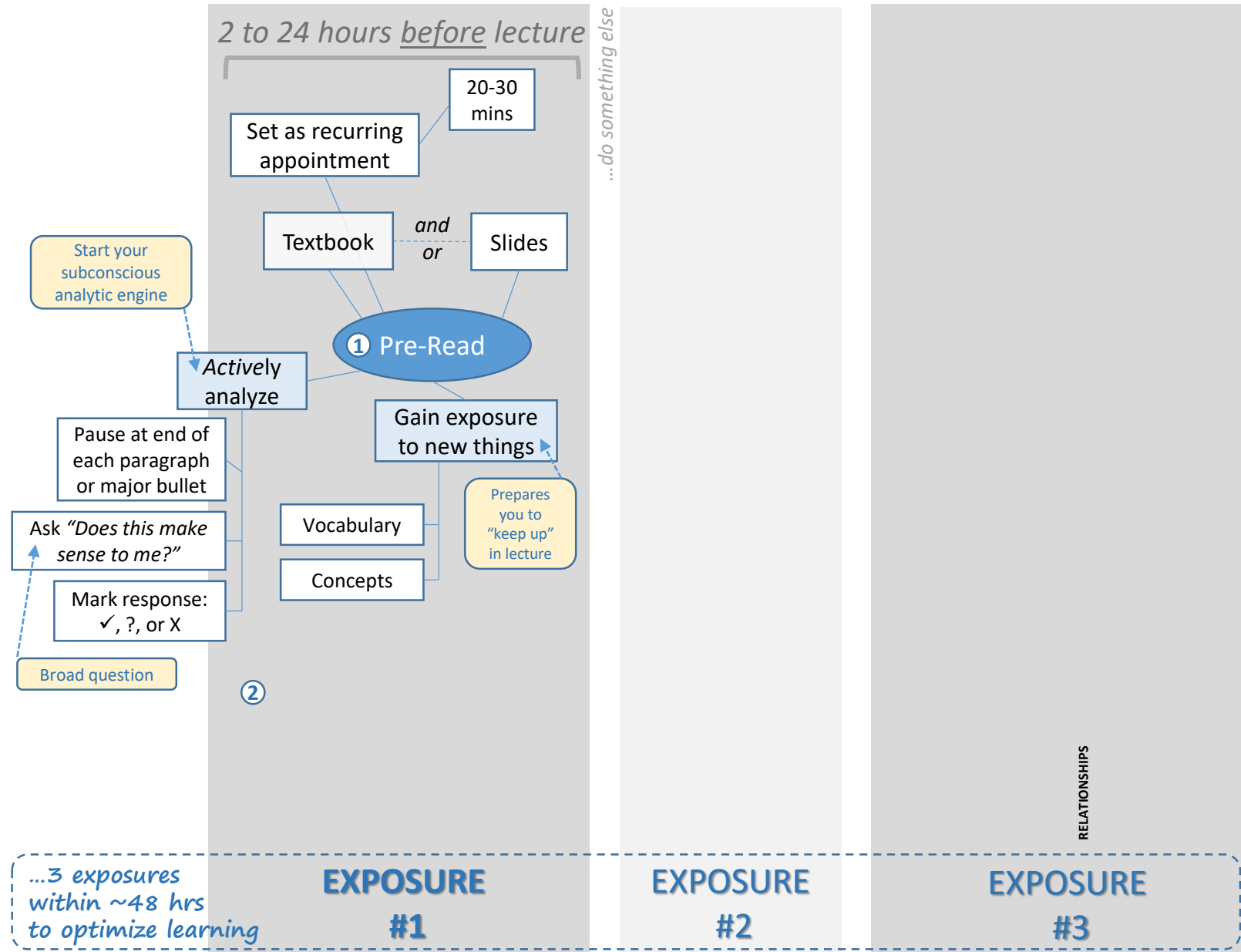
<http://phdcomics.com>



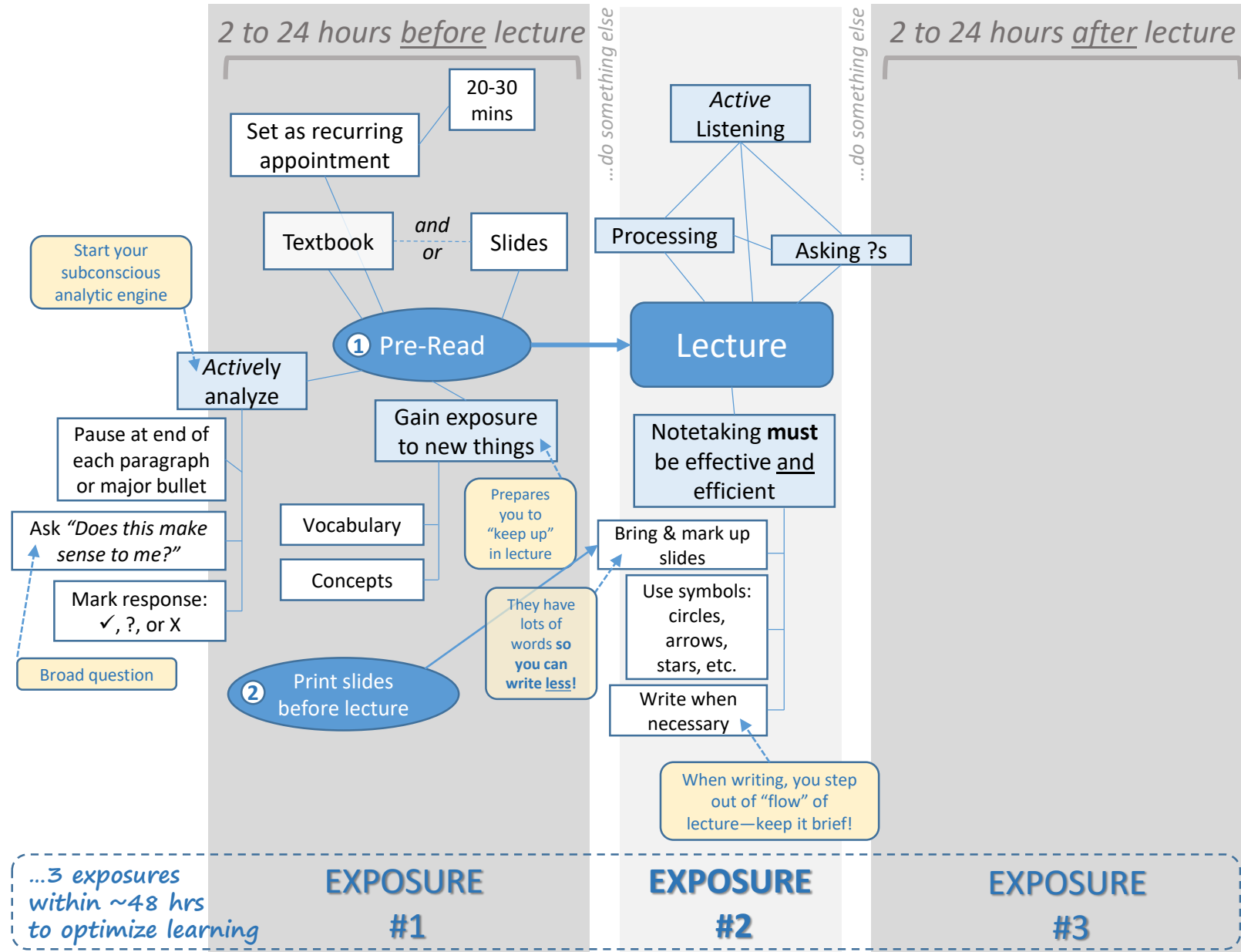
We study *to understand* the material  
—*to own* the concepts and their interrelationships—  
NOT to borrow the information we need to do well on an exam!



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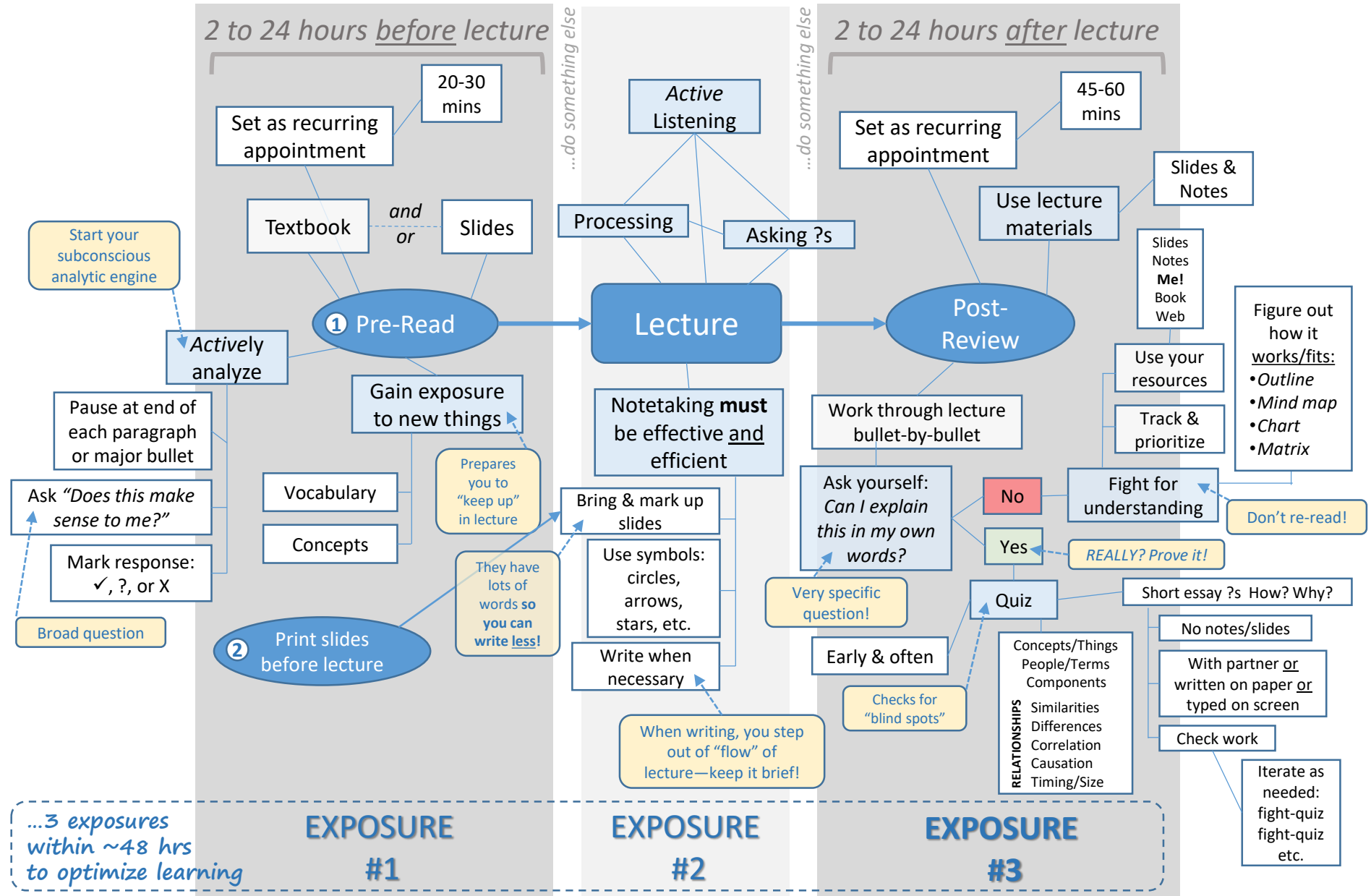


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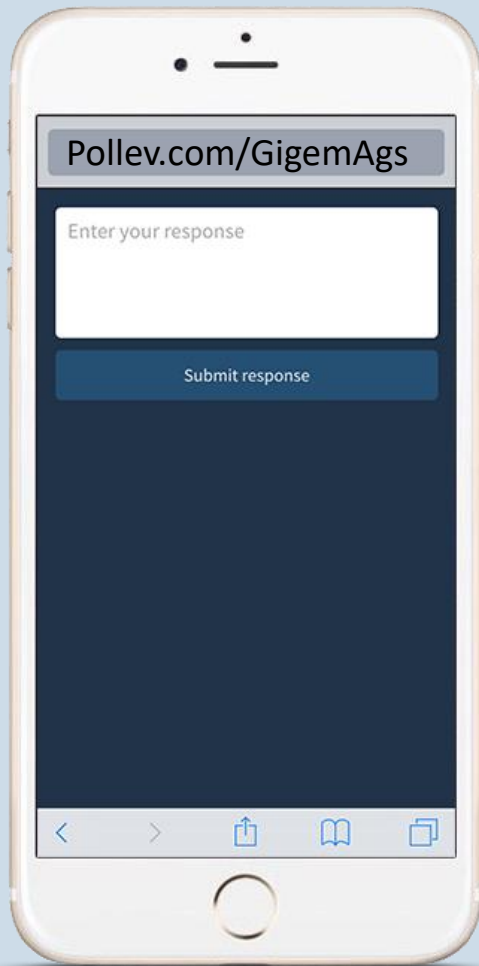




We study to understand the material  
 —to own the concepts and their interrelationships—  
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# Participating with Poll Everywhere



Web voting



Text voting

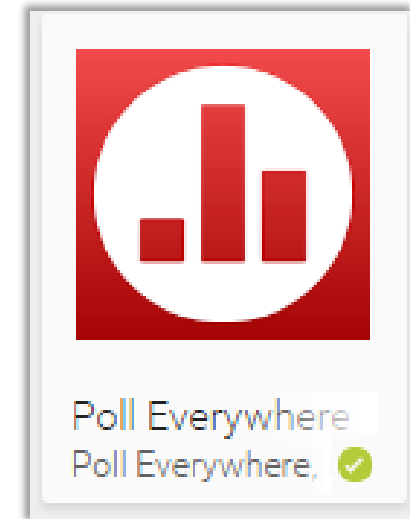
Text *GigemAgs* to 37607 (Good)

-or-

[pollev.com/GigemAgs](http://pollev.com/GigemAgs) (Better)

-or-

Download *PollEverywhere* App (Best)





is a ONE or TWO-WORD phrase that comes to mind when you think  
SS? (...for 2-word responses, use a dash to connect the words, e.g.  
money")



**Start the presentation to activate live content**

If you see this message in presentation mode, install the add-in or get help at [PollEv.com/app](https://PollEv.com/app)

