

# A MESSAGE TO THE AP<sup>®</sup> PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT

from Charles T. Blair-Broeker, Hawkeye Community College (Iowa),  
and Randal M. Ernst, Nebraska Wesleyan University (Nebraska)

You have enrolled in Advanced Placement<sup>®</sup> Psychology, a college-level class. Bravo! If, by chance, you are questioning your ability to successfully complete this rigorous curriculum, you are not alone. True, there is no magic trick that will ensure your success in AP<sup>®</sup> classes, but the following suggestions will help you to achieve your goals:

1. Keep up from the very beginning. It's easy to let one class slide if there is a big project or test in another class. Don't let AP<sup>®</sup> Psychology slip just because you're busy.
2. Prioritize your activities. Sports, jobs, volunteer work, social events, and family responsibilities all compete for your time. One sign of academic maturity is your ability to fit all these important activities into your daily schedule.
3. Listen to your teacher, who knows what it takes to succeed and is your greatest resource. Your teacher has your best interests in mind and wants you to succeed.
4. Actively participate in class. Ask lots of questions.
5. Don't question whether you're smart enough to succeed. You are! The difference between successful and unsuccessful AP<sup>®</sup> students is rarely intelligence. The difference is in *attitude, self-discipline, study skills*, and the *investment of time*, all of which you control. Evaluate where you stand on these four areas, making the adjustments necessary to ensure that you will succeed.
6. Establish a study group of 2 to 4 classmates, and meet regularly to discuss course content.
7. Don't freak out about the AP<sup>®</sup> exam in May. Take one day at a time, focusing on what should be done *today*. Have you completed your reading? Are you using the *Strive for a 5 Guide* and/or the resources available on this Student Site? Have you reviewed material from earlier in the unit? Are you making progress on assignments? Are you following your teacher's suggestions? Take care of business on a daily basis throughout the course, and when May rolls around, you'll be ready.

Unlike many AP<sup>®</sup> courses, AP<sup>®</sup> Psychology is immediately relevant to your life. That is, the content of every AP<sup>®</sup> psychology unit applies to your life in ways that will help you understand yourself and others better than you do now, and the scientific methods of psychology will improve your critical thinking skills. Former students often tell us that AP<sup>®</sup> Psychology was the most valuable course they ever took. Dedicate yourself to this class, and you may find yourself agreeing with so many of our former students!