

TIME MANAGEMENT
IN A MASON JAR
ROLANDO, NICK AND ANDREW

SPOTLIGHT



ILLINOIS VALLEY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

CENTER FOR ACCESSIBILITY
& NEURODIVERSITY

FALL 2022

Getting set for success: COLLEGE READINESS 101

The first day of college might leave some students feeling like they've landed on an alien planet. But this fall, a new program helped launch a dozen new IVCC students on their college journey and gave them a roadmap and tools to succeed in the classroom.

Shortly before they stepped on campus for real, the 13 students were immersed in time management and study strategies, note-taking tips, technology log-ins, and explored classrooms and resources. Daily lessons also included career exploration and social ice-breakers.

They were part of a weeklong summer bridge program called Get Set, designed to help recent high school graduates or returning adult students get ready for college academically and socially.

CAN coordinator Tina Hardy designed the course based on a curriculum she'd developed as a graduate-level project. Bridge programs are common – and often mandatory – at universities but rarer at community colleges.

"As students move from level to level, they may need help adapting. I feel like the gap from high school to college is wider than ever." Some students aren't ready for college, and wait until they fall off-track to seek help, if they do at all. "That doesn't feel good to anyone (staff or students), when they could know certain skills and start strong with resources and tools."

Several Get Set grads raved at how mastering campus technology early put them ahead of their peers. "(Classmates) were stressing about how to log in, and I showed them how to do it! Otherwise, I'd have been in the same boat!" recalled Alex Jagers.

The more Catherine Znaniecki practiced on IVCC's online course management system, Blackboard, the less intimidating it became.

That first week, her anxiety dropped as her confidence rose. "I really liked the welcoming environment that Get Set Allowed for."

Note-taking strategies introduced some students to the task and or helped others become more proficient at it. The program eased first-day jitters for Andrew Knipper because he knew his way around both on campus and on classroom assignments. Study and test-prep strategies left him feeling more confident as those moments-of-truth approached.

"In college, you have to take getting ready for tests into your own hands; that's different from high school."

"I hadn't taken a test in soooo long," Ivy Jones said of her "gap year" between high school and college. She adds, "My note-taking is a lot better. And we talked a lot about caring about grades" and about its academic or financial impact. "It's pushing me to make sure I don't fail."

Alex readily adopted the white boards provided in class to plan his day, a new strategy for him. "It keeps things in line. In online classes, you get assignments for the whole week and I'm trying to get the assignments done Monday or Tuesday to have time later in the week to do other things."

He realized he needed a way to cope with a pile of homework he inherited as a college student, more than he'd faced in high school where "we had the opportunity to do homework in class and ask the teacher."

Aaron Noble used to envy classmates who balanced a heavy courseload and homework and "yet somehow managed to get it all done and have free time." One Get Set class exercise helped him see how he could do that too. As part of a time management exercise, teams of students crammed sugar and candy pieces into mason jars, simulating all the

continued from previous page

tasks they had to fit into their lives. Some jars overflowed or ingredients got left out. Sometimes, everything fit.

"It helped me understand how the important things you need to get done get done, but there are ways to fit recreational things in afterward," Aaron said. He learned another valuable organizational tip: keeping a list of assignments in front of him.

"Before, I'd use a planner and forget it existed. Making sure I can't avoid tasks helps me remember to do things." He also learned how his traits were better suited for some types of careers than others.

Overall, "Get Set opened me up to people here who could help me," Aaron said.

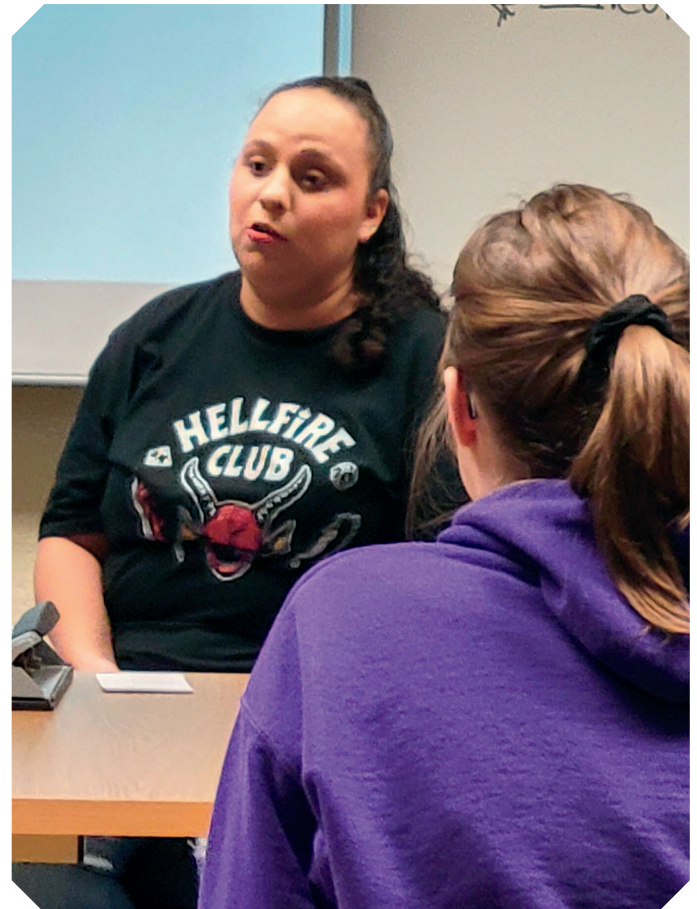
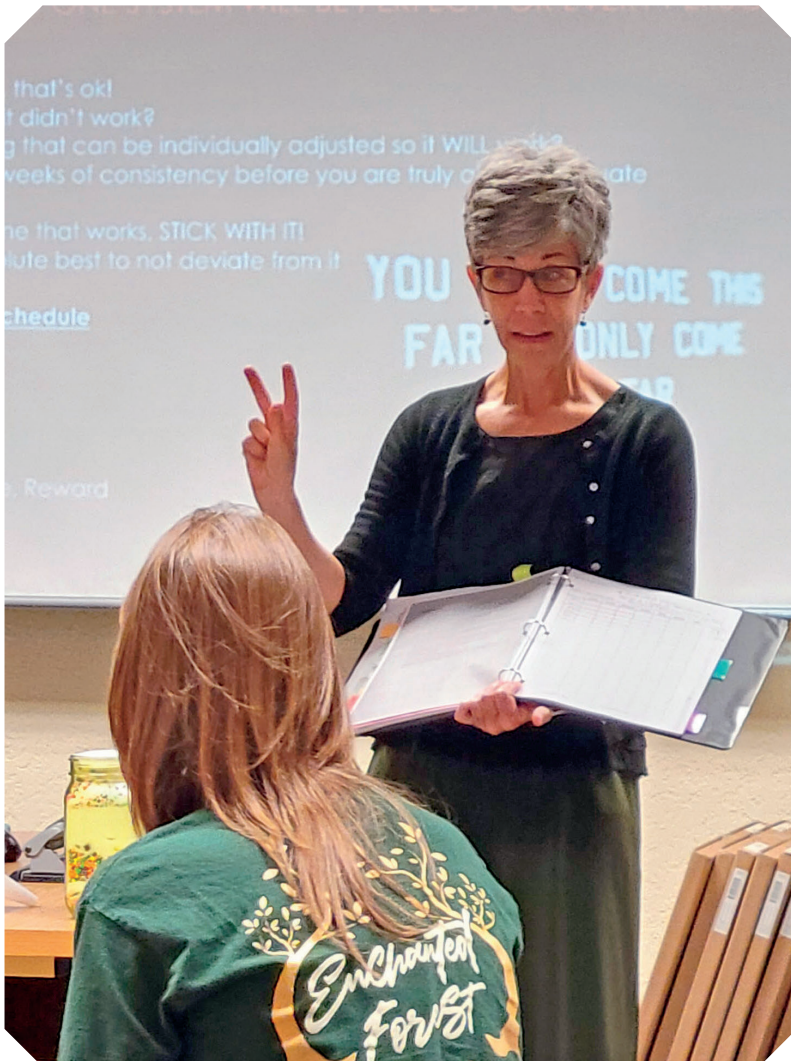
Students were encouraged to reach out to instructors, resources, even new friends.

"Emailing my instructors and letting them know what's up is the most important thing that Get Set taught me," Catherine said. "It makes college so much easier."

"No one in my family had been to college, and I figured I'd have to figure it all out myself," Ivy added. "Get Set kept reassuring me where I could go to get help, that people are here for you no matter what age you are."

Get Set showed Andrew who to ask, which was a relief because "you don't have to step out of your comfort zone as much if you know someone."

continued next page



Left: Coordinator Tina Hardy developed a curriculum encompassing college knowledge and study and note-taking skills, and paired each student with a mentor.

Above: student Virginia Garcia served as a presenter and a mentor.

continued from previous page

As each Get Set class period opened, “we went over the skills of talking to people,” he added.

When the class ended, support continued. Each student was assigned a mentor to work with them through the fall semester. Most were staff members, and one was a student.

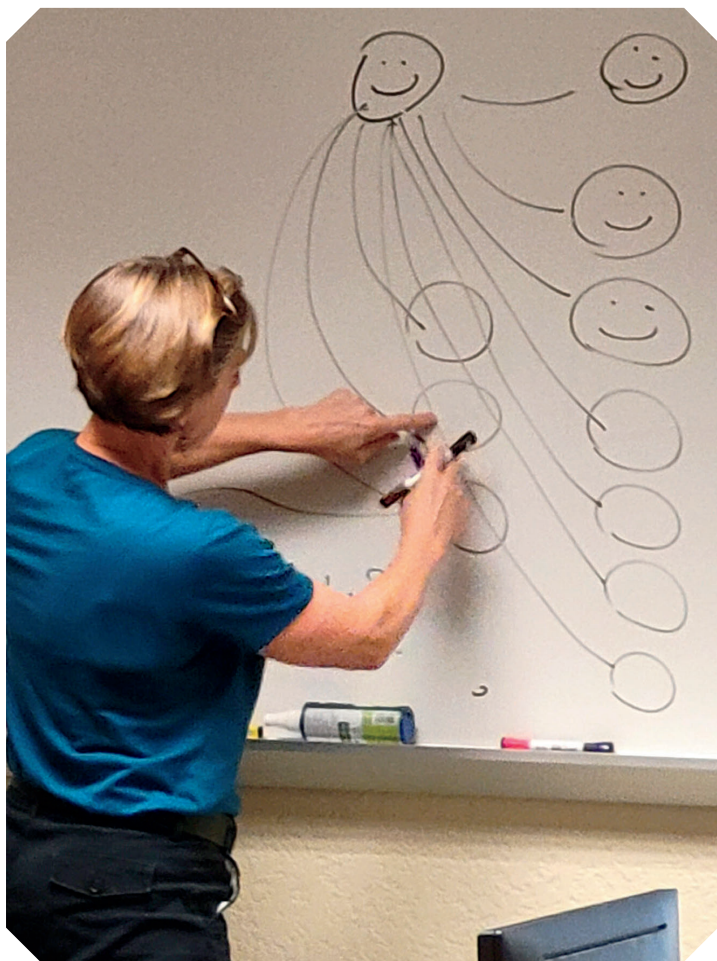
Andrew was skeptical at first, until he met his mentor and started talking about his college career. His mentor opened his mind to “things I wouldn’t have thought of.” They discussed a class he struggled with, “about dropping it or waiting to see how I did on the first test. That was decent, so I’m sticking it through. And she helped me consider different options, if I transfer to different schools, if that class is valuable.”

Ivy likes knowing somebody cares. “My mentor pushes me to do something right away, if I need a book from the bookstore or how to print to paper or make an

appointment with a tutor. She listens and emails between meetings to see how I’m doing. Somebody cares about school and my wellbeing outside of school.”

The program was funded by a grant from the Illinois Community College Board. Plans are to apply for additional funding and continue offering it each semester, Tina said. She said she was pleased with how the program went, though enrollment wasn’t as large as she’d hoped. She enjoyed the contributions of current students who helped develop the curriculum and presented segments of it.

IVCC’s bridge program will be a topic at the 2022 Joint Conference of the Illinois Council of Community College Administrators and the Illinois Community College Faculty Association in Champaign in November, in a presentation by Tina and Dr. Patrice Hess, director of Learning Resources.



Professional tutor Kathy Scheibenreif leads the class in problem-solving strategies.



Student presenter Jordan Shaw explores coping strategies.



Above: Day class graduates (from left to right) Front row: Vincent Fleming, coordinator Tina Hardy, Ivy Jones and student presenter Virginia Garcia. Back row: Andrew Hamm, Rolando Gonzalez, Nick Beebee, Kyle Schaffner and Catherine Znaniecki.

Below: Evening class graduates (from left to right) Sitting: student presenters Virginia Garcia and Jordan Shaw, Celia Lopez and Alex Jagers. Standing: Brett Cooper, Aaron Noble and Andrew Knipper.





Vincent and Kyle use sugar and candy to illustrate time management, as the three students on the cover are doing.



Catherine and Nick set up their student planners as Tina stands by to advise.

Below: Evening class students bond over pizza as the five-day class winds up.



Guiding influence = MENTOR

Tina Hardy believed it was important to incorporate mentors into IVCC's program, though they weren't common in college bridge programs.

"It's based on what I do here (in the Center for Accessibility and Neurodiversity office). I call them 'check-ins.' Having a connection to a person over time matters, someone to be accountable to and ask questions of. Studies show the more you feel connected to college, the longer you stay around."

Each student was expected to meet with their mentor throughout the fall semester, with visits counted as part of their attendance and eligibility for financial incentives. All but one of the mentors are staff members.

Watching Get Set unfold reminded student mentor Virginia Garcia of the anxieties and struggles she faced when she stepped on campus two years ago.

"I was so lost and overwhelmed. I knew the basics of being a student, but a college student is very different because every course is different, every instructor, the class formats. It's not what I expected - it's more, so I wish I had been prepared. I probably would have handled everything much better."

As mothers and adults, Virginia and the student she mentors can relate to each other. "I think it also makes a difference when you can see someone working toward the same goals as you and share your thoughts and experiences."

Becoming a mentor fit with an ambition Virginia hadn't known how to fulfill. "I have wanted to pay it forward and help people in similar situations. We may come from different paths but we meet somewhere along the road, so to be on this road as a mentor and help someone as they go forward is such an honor!"

Mark Your Calendars!

- Spring Registration Begins --- Nov. 1
- Exam Week --- Dec. 5
- Spring Semester Begins --- Jan. 9, 2023

FIGURING OUT COLLEGE, TOGETHER

All over campus, mentors and students are learning together.

"It's been great to help him figure out how college works and make sense of the jargon we use in higher ed. I realize the need of constant reminders/nudges of registration dates and when to meet with a counselor. I'd like to think that I have helped him with his self-confidence and not hesitating to ask for help. I've become more mindful of how I work with students."

Aseret Loveland
assistant director, Admissions and Records

"It's important students know they have another person who supports them. There are so many more people at a college than faculty that can be of assistance. Being a mentor lets me personally connect a student to a resource rather than just inform them of their options. I'd recommend Get Set to anyone trying to figure out the transition to college -- being a college student impacts so many things in your life."

Sarah Trager
director, Assessment Center

"It's meant a lot to work with a student outside of our Adult Education Department. I help students with the early parts of registration, but it's nice to get a regular update on a student's progress. Working with my student helps me to think about all that is involved with being a college student and I can pass that information on to students transitioning to college classes."

Luke Olivero
ESL/GED Program manager

Tell your story. TIPS FROM A SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Recently, the IVCC Foundation awarded scholarships worth \$416,000 to 260 students for the 2022-23 year. Lynn Keyt, a widowed single mother in her 40s from LaSalle who is pursuing a business degree, received two of them. She hopes someday to open an animal rescue/rehabilitation center.

Here's her advice:

Reluctant to apply? Hold tight to your dream and do it!

More scholarships are available than students might realize, and there are "wonderful donors (who) want to help students achieve their goals. They know there are many hills to overcome as they also had to climb them.

"These amazing people are here to help you and want to help you. It may just be you they pick as a winner! And maybe one day it will be you offering a scholarship to students of the future, paying it forward.

"I was worried I would not qualify for any scholarships, especially since I am an older student. But I learned I am worthy and deserving of these scholarships and any assistance would help me achieve my goals."

Apprehensive about tackling that key part of any application, the essay?

"You will find that writing the essay is a lot easier with all the support IVCC has to offer, like the Tutoring & Writing Center, counselors and others."

Be yourself!

"Express to them who you really are and why this would mean so much to you. Don't be afraid to include the details that you may think are minor or embarrassing. I did not hide behind a fairy tale.

"I wrote about my struggles as an older single mother who has a love and passion for animals. I included the many struggles I come across on a daily basis (raising children with special needs), as well as that I became a widow at 39.

"I did not tell my story for sympathy or to draw attention to myself. I told it because it is MY story, my life that I live and overcome every day."

RECIPIENTS RECOGNIZED

Among the recipients whose achievements were recognized recently at the 26th Annual Scholarship Recognition Event were:

Alex Jagers (2 scholarships); Alaina Marquez; Austin Dille; Levi Bland (2); Virginia Garcia (2); Rebecca Moreno; Sophia Holland (3); Rosevelia Rocha (2); Katherine Follmer (3); Elizabeth Martinez; Natasha Delaney (3); Tina Biba (2); Amber Witek (2); Tiara Brokaw; Alicia Detmers (2); Stephen Shaw (2); Allison Perez; Chloe Orozco; Aaron Noble (2); Zoe Crawford; Lynn Keyt (2); Consuelo Santos; Cassandra Lowande and Kailey Johnson.



Lynn Keyt