

Many have asked me what my secret is that helped me go from a 2.07 GPA in high school to a 3.7 GPA in college.

And in turn I've also asked many other college students performing at various levels academically what they thought was the key to scholastic success or failure. Some confided why they thought they were failing a class while others shared their tips for excelling. For five years, I asked these questions of myself and of other college students. One theme I noticed was that the students who were doing well asked more questions of themselves, doing self-assessments early and often. It seemed the main difference between those who succeeded and those who struggled was not how smart each student was but **how early** each student realized that he/she needed help.

After my second year of college, I started asking myself what I call the AT-PODS (AT – Possibility Opportunity Door Students) questions. I made it a point to try to have almost all “yes” answers. Mr. Charles Ward, my algebra professor at South Georgia College for three semesters, gave me some advice that helped me pass this self-test: “John, you have learned many ways to learn in your college classes. Make sure you remember that one size does not always fit all. **Make sure you always remember modification.** You may have to modify some of the techniques you have learned in order to do well in your future classes.” As you use this exam to assess your current performance, also assess your learning techniques. **Mastering the art of knowing when to modify can make all the difference.** Why am I doing well or not doing well in class?

AT-PODS Questions:

- 1) Y__ N__ Did I come to class every day?
- 2) Y__ N__ Did I take notes and participate during class?
- 3) Y__ N__ Did I study with my best effort?
- 4) Y__ N__ Did I speak with my professor about any concerns?
- 5) Y__ N__ Did I realize I was having problems comprehending?
- 6) Y__ N__ Did I use any resources available for assisting me?
- 7) Y__ N__ Did I take advantage of the Student Success Center?
- 8) Y__ N__ Did I have a clear understanding of the class syllabus?
- 9) Y__ N__ Did I notify my classmates when I was struggling in class?
- 10) Y__ N__ Did I do my best every day in class?
- 11) Y__ N__ Did I have fun?
- 12) Y__ N__ Did I blame other people for anything?
- 13) Y__ N__ Did I believe U-CAN? (U-You C-Capture your message, moments, and memories A-Attack every assignment with your best effort N-Never be defeated)

Tally up the number of yeses and the number of nos throughout your school year:

Where I Am:	# of Y Answers:	# of N Answers:	Should I Make a Modification?
After my first week of a new semester			
After my first exam			
After my midterm			
After my final exam			
After finishing all classes for the semester			

I don't believe in the term “at-risk student.” When I first started college, I was not at-risk but AT-PODS, and if you track your performance using this quiz, you will be too.

NOTHING SPEAKS LIKE RESULTS. IF YOU WANT TO BUILD THE KIND OF CREDIBILITY THAT CONNECTS WITH PEOPLE, THEN DELIVER RESULTS BEFORE YOU DELIVER A MESSAGE. GET OUT AND DO WHAT YOU ADVISE OTHERS TO DO, COMMUNICATE FROM EXPERIENCE. JOHN C. MAXWELL