



# CAREER VISION

## Back-to-School with a Bang

The end of summer and start of school comes all too soon for most families. As students head back to classes, why not pack a few more success tips into their backpacks? Here are four resources to put on students' radar:

### 1. Online tutoring resources linked to textbooks

Some textbooks today come with an online tutoring feature, a password-protected website that offers help with a subject 24/7. Sponsored by the book publisher, the range of tutoring services varies. Students may be able to submit questions, ask for ideas for research paper topics, view a video of a teacher explaining a concept, take practice quizzes and get immediate feedback. Online writing labs can provide detailed feedback on how to improve a paper. Sometimes live sessions working individually with a teacher are available. All of these features are designed to deliver assistance to the student at the time it is needed. Students are often pleasantly surprised at how helpful they can be – especially late at night or on a weekend! Students and parents can check out these resources together at the beginning of the semester; they may not need the assistance at that time, but will be comfortable knowing there is a resource they can turn to later.

### 2. Online databases and live librarians

To make research easier, a vast number of resources are available through a variety of online databases subscribed to by college and public libraries. Some databases are free while others require a User ID and password, often a library card number or school-assigned login information. If students need guidance identifying which databases to choose for their research, or how to search for information, turn to the experts: the librarians. They offer the experience and expertise to get students to the right information and learn skills that will make future assignments less overwhelming. Resources that were extremely hard or impossible to access are now brought directly to a student's laptop. These databases cover everything from art and culture, to literature, history, science and contemporary issues. For example, the Library of Congress sponsors a database called American Memory, which provides access to written and spoken words, sound recordings, still and moving images, prints, maps, and sheet music that document the American experience. Other unique databases allow access to Associated Press photographs, or to 4,000 years of historical reference material, including primary source documents. Google Scholar provides a way to search



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scholarly literature such as peer-reviewed papers, theses, and articles from academic publishers, professional associations and universities.

### **3. On-Campus Tutoring Programs**

Schools maintain a myriad of on-campus services designed for supporting student success. Campus tutoring programs may be in a centralized location on campus, or decentralized and located within a college or department. It is helpful to find out how your school has structured yours. Programs may employ teachers or may be peer-based, staffed by graduate students or upperclass students. In some cases, tutors must complete training in one-on-one instructional strategies. Services are typically free to students. The fact that these programs exist on most campuses means that if students find they are struggling in their classes, they need not feel alone.

### **4. Academic Advising**

Students investigating academic majors and minors can tap the expertise of academic advisors. These individuals may be faculty members of an academic department or professional staff in a central location on campus. Either way, their role is to assist students in defining their academic goals and putting together an educational plan that will reach them. They guide students to use complex information from a variety of sources to make decisions. Working with their academic advisor, students are educated about curriculum requirements, get advice on course selection, registration, internships and study abroad programs. Advisors may also serve as a resource for career and graduate school preparation within their academic field.