

## Student Life 101 Can Help Students

By EMMA HAWKINS

I love Thursdays. Do you want to know why I love Thursdays? When I wake up after sweet dreaming, I get up and I do a little dance, because today is Thursday, Student Life day. Then at 8:40, I make my way down to Watts 5, say hello to Mr. Ritchie, and sit down with a grin on my face because I am excited about Student Life 101.

This is my favorite class. "But this class is pointless," seems to be the mantra of some of my fellow juniors. But is it really as useless as they say?

Dave Ritchie, instructor of Student Life 101, states the purpose of his subject: "There are two main goals: First, to help juniors to orient themselves to NCSSM. Secondly, to help students, as individual people, become aware of how they treat and view others, as well as themselves."

Odd as it may sound, most of the students here didn't come from schools that gave hours of homework per class. Odder still, is that most students don't know how to juggle the new responsibilities of work, socializing, and extra-curriculars.

I appreciated the two weeks we spent on time management, and I still use my "urgent-important square" from time to time. Whenever I find myself with a spare moment, I'll bust out my copy of Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens and look for ways to improve my study habits.

Also, as Ritchie says, the class teaches about life after graduating school. The world is a constantly changing place, and unfortunately, those changes are not always for the better. As young people, we should arm ourselves with knowledge to deal with these

changes. What better way to learn about sex, drugs, and something to that effect than in a laid-back classroom setting with a qualified professional?

On a lighter note, this class gives some stories to tell. I always leave SL 101 with a skip in my step and know that I can provide my own personal commentary on everything that is said.

My favorite commentaries came from the day we learned about sex education. The sound bites that I got from that single fifty-minute period gave me a week's worth of Facebook statuses and quotes. Not to mention conversation starters...and enders. Believe me,

there is no better way to get rid of somebody than to start reciting symptoms of various STIs.

However, SL 101 is not simply fun and games. It's also a good way to boost esteem. When I come to SL 101, I feel smart.

Granted, mostly everything that you learn in that class is common sense or "street smarts," providing an easy "A". Now don't get me wrong; I'm all about "accepting the greater challenge," but in a world of Physics, AP Psychology, and American Studies, it's nice to have a class where I can sit down and chill.

Of course I'll answer some questions and be attentive to what the teacher is saying, but it's still nice to have a class period I can relax in.

However, I feel accomplished when I walk out the door on Thursday mornings, realizing that I'm excelling in at least one class.

I don't know if it's completely

healthy that I am excelling in a class that teaches about drugs and STIs, but I'll take my little victories as they come.

NCSSM's website describes the student life aspect of NCSSM as "some of the most personally rewarding social endeavors they'll ever undertake."

## Superstudy Proves Ineffective

By LANAIR LETT

"Super Study", two words that meant nothing to juniors a year ago, and now has become a phrase we have come to loathe. Super Study is the single worst part of the NCSSM junior experience.

Don't get me wrong. NCSSM offers a phenomenal educational opportunity. But I'm sure that my peers will agree that Super Study is an ill-executed, unnecessary institution that we could live without.

Super Study is an example of the sometimes excessive attempts at structuring the NCSSM homework schedule. There are already designated "study hours" at the same time so what is the purpose of Super Study?

If anything Super Study actually wastes study time, requiring students to take time to gather their materials, walk to their often inconvenient assigned location, and resettle in a new environment.

Speaking of location, what is the point of making students go to a different study site rather than staying in their respective building? It seems pretty odd that juniors in Bryan or Beall end up having to walk all the way to Hunt for Super Study, while I, a student who lives in Hunt, have to go completely across campus to study in the cafeteria.

Super Study is executed in such a way that it works against itself, counter to its purpose. Instead of improving junior time management and ensuring that homework gets completed, though, in fact, it does the opposite. Juniors, often find themselves not getting their work done because of the common excuse "I'll just do it in Super Study". This very popular mindset leads to juniors to holding off the majority of their work until during and after Super Study, which causes excessive late nights or, in the worst cases, leaving homework left incomplete.

However, of all these problems the biggest has not yet been addressed—laptops! For the NCSSM student the laptop is like an additional limb, or brain, and without it work is all but impossible. Students take notes, write papers, keep track of assignments, and submit homework, all with the use of their laptops.

The administration argues that there is enough work to be done without laptops during Super Study, but, if this is true, what would account for the large portion of students who have nothing to do during Super Study?

Following Super Study, these same students have to go to their rooms and work well past the 1:00 am lights out cut off to finish a WebAssign, or a paper when they could have very well done those things during Super Study.

Super Study, in itself, is a good concept, but its execution is flawed and illogical. Juniors would work much more efficiently in their own rooms, uninhibited by pointless and needless regulations.

OR

## Super Study Provides Structure

By PETER MCNEARY

The campus living lifestyle is one lifestyle that very few juniors are accustomed to before coming to NCSSM, but Super Study can help to smooth the transition from home life to campus life. With events constantly occurring on campus throughout the day and without parents to set limits, time management at NCSSM is sometimes a mess.

Super Study provides students with a concrete timeframe around which to structure their new study habits. Although many students loathe it, the program, when assessed objectively, has its benefits.

Super Study, aside from the ungodly hours of the morning, is without

issue the quietest time of day for juniors at NCSSM. The "zero distraction" factor is a definite plus. Without friends, hallmates, or the incessant noise on hall, students get a chance to plow through work without being side-tracked.

One of the junior class's deepest felt concerns is the ban on laptops. It's true that much of the homework assigned at NCSSM is done by way of laptop, but I feel that the prohibition of laptops during this vital hour and a half of study is ultimately a reasonable precaution.

We all know that if we had laptops during Super Study we would be Facebooking, YouTubing, instant messaging, etc., instead of doing our work, defeating the point of isolated study

entirely. Really though, not having laptops is not all that bad. There is always the option of printing out WebAssign, or doing American Studies reading. The administration also permits music to make schoolwork a bit more palatable, which in my opinion compensates for not being allowed laptops.

For me, the best part of Super Study is its calming effect on my mood. It gives me time to mull over my studies in all of my classes free of stress. I absorb a lot more of what I am learning when I can go at my own pace, without distraction and without being hurried by teachers.

Curious about other people's opinions, I conducted an investigation regarding juniors' attitudes toward Super Study, the results of which I found quite surprising. Out of all of the juniors I talked to, about half said that they do like it, and about half said that they do not. I did not expect so many people to find it worthwhile. The ones who do not like Super Study reason that it is not a flexible enough institution. In other words, it does not make room for procrastination. I am sure that of the juniors who do not like it, most do not like homework to begin with, and their grudge against Super Study is less of a hatred for Super Study itself than it is a general dislike of homework.

Though it may not be convenient for some, mandatory study periods exist for a reason. Time management, concentration, scheduling, balance: all of these are part of a manageable, orderly life at NCSSM facilitated by Super Study.

