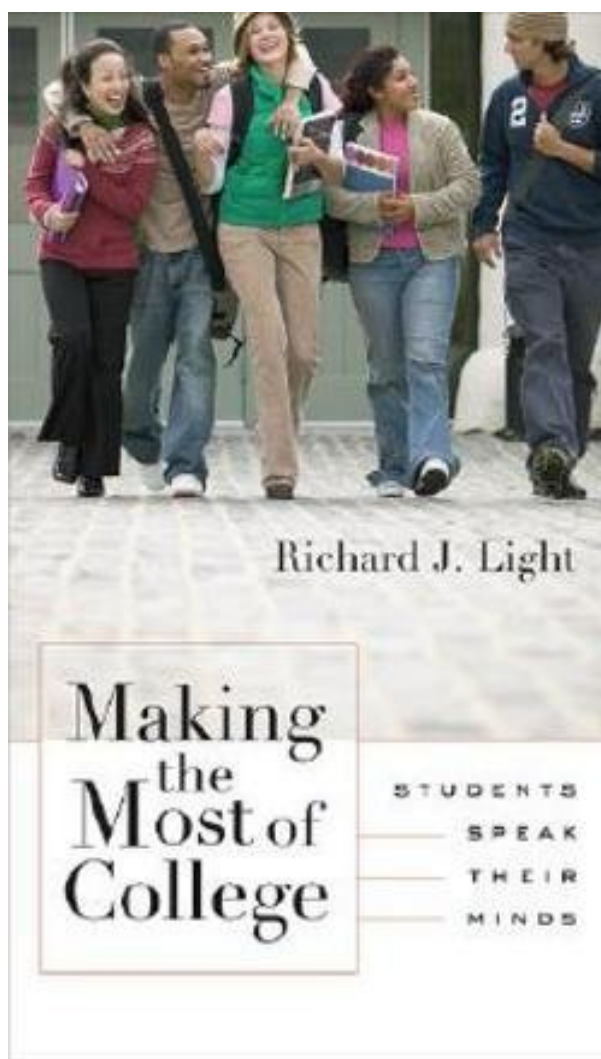
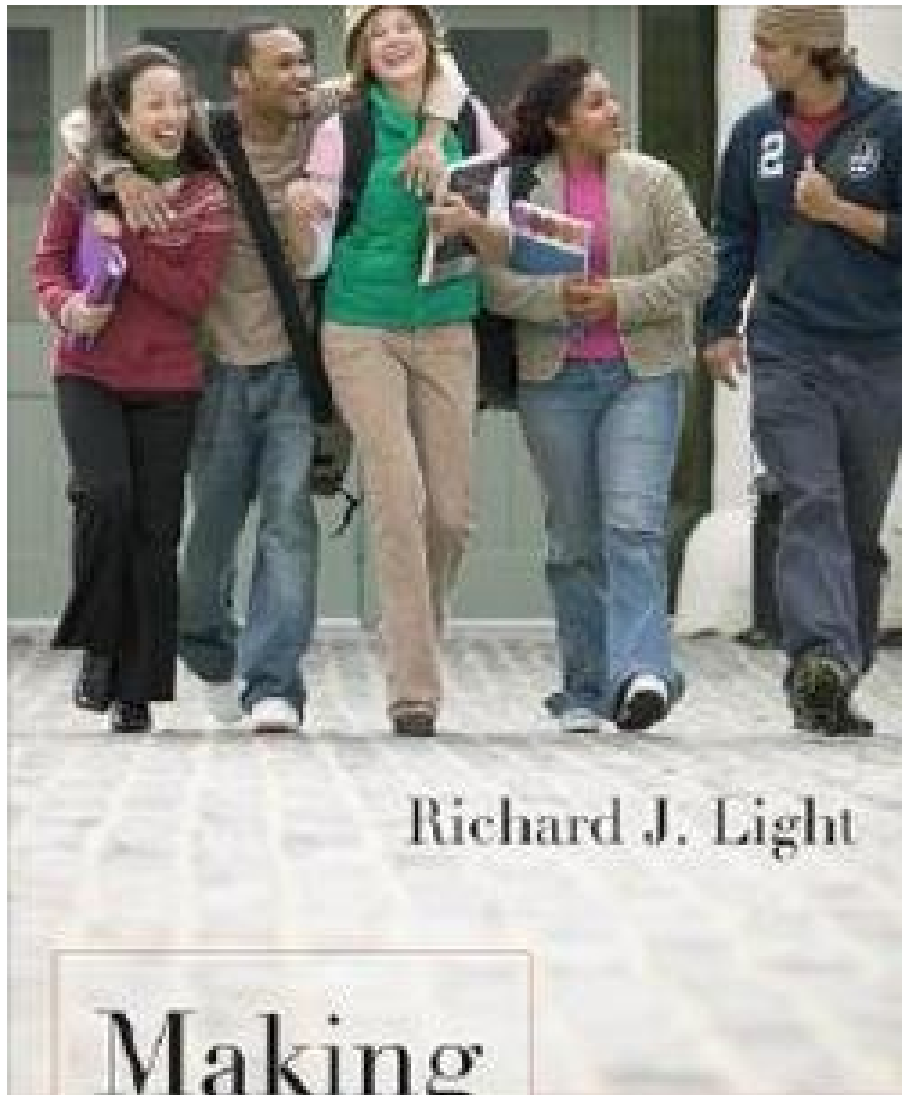


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43 of 45 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent educational advice for students and faculty alike

By R. J. O'Hara

This small volume is an excellent compendium of practical advice for students, faculty, and university administrators on how to build strong educational environments. The author, Richard Light, is a professor of education and an educational researcher, and the conclusions he presents are powerful because they are based on more than ten years of detailed interviews with students.

The students were asked to describe their best teachers, the classes that had the greatest impact on their lives, the social experiences on campus that have been most valuable to them, and the things that universities could do to further strengthen the educational environment. What makes a great professor? (It's not theatricality.) What makes a great class? (It's not the quality of the PowerPoint slides.) What makes for great advising? (It's not telling students to get their requirements out of the way.) How can teachers constantly improve their classes? (It's not by handing out an evaluation form at the end of the term.)

Light places particular emphasis on the social environment that universities provide for their students. This is something that has been woefully neglected for more than a generation on many large campuses, and attention to it by faculty is badly needed. I am an advocate of decentralized residential colleges within large universities, and such colleges can provide precisely the kind of environment that Light recommends: stable, rich, genuinely diverse, and full of opportunity.

One popular topic is notable for its absence: technology. There is no discussion of teaching via the web, nothing about distance learning, nothing about video conferencing, yadda, yadda, yadda. The message is clear: outstanding education comes from personal contact, not remote access.

If you are a college professor, this book may be the only general-purpose "education" book that you will ever need. And if you are a student, or the parent of a student, this straightforward guide will help you "make the most of college."

41 of 43 people found the following review helpful.

Not really for students...

By C. Burch

As a professor, I found the book excellent, both for its many insightful suggestions and as a reminder of the student experience. If I were evaluating this book for faculty, I'd give it five stars.

But the book's title and marketing indicate that this is a how-to book for college students. That's deceptive: It is a summary of findings by Harvard's self-assessment team. Suggestions for students are good when they come, but they're spread between suggestions more useful to college faculty and administration. As an example, one idea is to schedule discussion classes just before dinner, so that students in the class could eat

together afterward and possibly continue discussion. That's a great idea for administrators, but students can't make much use of it. The book would be stronger if it were separated for the two potential audiences. The book also suffers from not being up-front about its origins: It summarizes findings of an assessment project at Harvard, but you won't find it described until you reach the appendix. I realize that fewer copies would be sold if they admitted this in the introduction. But until I reached the appendix, where the project's major questions were finally described, I was left wondering why the book's organization was so lopsided. Particularly, the part on campus diversity was much longer than I expected; it wasn't until I reached the appendix that I learned why. (The appendix was one of the best parts. In fact, I recommend reading it first.) I'd certainly recommend the book to faculty and administrators from any college. The work is clearly based on extensive, well-done interviews, and the analysis is both well-organized and rich in ideas. Just recognize it for what it is.

12 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

This is a MUST for students, parents AND educators

By Blaine Greenfield

Read MAKING THE MOST OF COLLEGE: STUDENTS SPEAK THEIR MIND by Richard Light . . . this is a book that is definitely NOT for everybody . . . but if you're a high school or college student, a parent of either, or a teacher or administrator at any level of education, then you should obtain a copy and devour it as soon as possible! . . . Light, a professor at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, researched students at that institution for over 10 years . . . but what he has to say applies to virtually any school at any level. I've been teaching for some 30 years--can you believe it? (I was a child prodigy, of course, having started at the tender age of 7. NOT.) . . . Yet even I managed to get several ideas that I plan to implement just as soon as I can.

I liked the author's use of verbatim quotes from students . . . in addition, his overall findings made sense to me:

1. Learning outside of classes, especially in residential settings and extracurricular activities such as the arts, is vital.
2. A large number of students say they learn significantly more in courses that are highly structured, with relatively many quizzes and short assignments.
3. Professors increasingly are encouraging students to work together on homework assignments.
4. Some undergraduates, when asked to identify a particularly profound or critical experience at college, identify a mentored internship not done for academic credit.
5. For most students the impact of racial and ethnic diversity on their college experience is strong.
6. Students who got the most out of college, who grew the most academically, and who are happiest organize their time to include activities with faculty members, or with several other students focused around accomplishing substantive academic work.
7. I was surprised by students' strong attitude toward writing.
8. A large majority of undergraduates describe particular activities outside the classroom as profoundly affecting their

academic performance.

9. Students talk about [foreign] languages with special enthusiasm.

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