



The inspiration behind *The Confident Student*, 6/e, Student Achievement Series – a letter from Carol C. Kanar

Kanar, *The Confident Student*, 6/e
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Dear Instructors:

Someone asked me recently what motivated me to write *The Confident Student*. I like to think of my book as a personal message to students from one who remembers clearly what it is like to be in college: the excitement of being on your own, meeting new people, looking ahead to a good job, a great life. I also remember coming back to the dorm from classes, loaded down with books and assignments, the frustration of not knowing how to study, and the disappointment of bad grades. With the help of a friend and a teacher who worked with me outside of class, I pulled myself up from academic failure and eventually graduated with honors. What these two people taught me seemed like common sense at the time: a note-taking system, strategies for reading and marking textbooks, and other useful skills that opened my mind to the world of learning. That these strategies ought to be available to all students *before* they find themselves on academic probation became the ruling principle behind my teaching and the core of *The Confident Student*: the book that I wish someone had given me when I was in college.

The Confident Student is not a mere survival guide. It is not a collection of tips and tricks. It is neither a quick fix nor a band-aid approach to the real problems that keep students from being successful. *The Confident Student* is about becoming fully, actively engaged in the experience of learning, first through a realistic assessment of strengths and weaknesses and then to the development of transferable skills that lead to real achievement in college, work, and life. With achievement comes confidence. Students who think critically, listen and read actively, control their concentration, manage their time, and set goals will succeed. *The Confident Student* teaches them how to do all this and more. From choosing a major to finding their dream career, students—young and older—are empowered to choose and create their future.

I am especially proud of *The Confident Student*, Sixth Edition. After five editions, I wanted to do something more for students, something that would address their often stated desire for textbooks that are more accessible and useful—and worth their cost. That is why I was thrilled when Houghton Mifflin approached me about making *The Confident Student* the first student success text in the new Student Achievement Series. This seemed an especially good fit for my book because student achievement and the confidence that comes from it have always been my primary focus. I also believe that active learning is the key to achievement and the Student Achievement Series format both encourages and guides students through a process of active reading and learning. Let me tell you what I mean.



To read actively means to do certain things before, during, and after reading that engage the senses and open neural pathways in the brain. These processes include building background before reading, questioning and note-taking during reading, and reviewing what you have learned after reading by doing exercises or other activities. The Student Achievement Series format encourages mental processing before, during, and after reading. For example: Each chapter opens with a photograph that reflects a central concept or chapter theme, engaging the visual sense. Then follow clearly stated objectives, a chapter outline, and a list of key terms—all of which build background for the topic addressed in the chapter. During reading, section headings color-coded to chapter objectives, key terms and definitions called out in the margins, and Concept Checks also called out in margins, guide students through the text and focus their attention on the key ideas. Icons designate exercises by type and direct students to the *Online Study Center* where they will find additional learning resources for review, following reading. The Student Achievement Series format is colorful and varied enough to attract and hold students' interest, allowing for an interactive reading experience.

Converting *The Confident Student* to the Student Achievement Series format was an easy fit. My book has always been a highly visual, accessible text with a thorough but concise treatment of concepts. In the past, revising the text for a new edition simply meant dropping a section here or adding an exercise there. This time I had to rethink many parts of the text, asking myself such questions as, “Does this section really develop the stated objective?” or “Does this exercise provide enough direction for students?” or “Do I need to call out a key term here?” The result is a more focused discussion of the strategies that promote student achievement and a more intentional development of the theme of confidence: Who is a confident student? How does one become a confident student?

Writing *The Confident Student*, Sixth Edition, as an Student Achievement Series text has been a learning experience for me. I am hopeful that students and their instructors will like the result.

Sincerely,

Carol C. Kanar