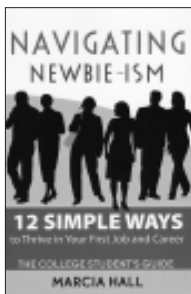
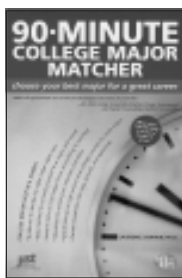


BOOK REVIEWS



Navigating Newbie-ism: 12 Simple Ways to Thrive in Your First Job and Career—The College Student's Guide, Marcia Hall, Parker Stanton Publishing, 2007 (\$12.95, paperback)



90-Minute College Major Matcher: Choose Your Best Major for a Great Career, Laurence Shatkin, JIST Publishing, 2007 (\$8.95, paperback)

Navigating Newbie-ism

Review by Peter Vogt

It might be easy for you and, especially, your students to quickly write off *Navigating Newbie-ism* as being “too basic” or “common sense.”

After all, some of the topics it covers—like smiling (Chapter 6), being honest (Chapter 8), and saying thank you (Chapter 13)—could be found in the daily lesson plan of practically any elementary school teacher you might ask.

Unfortunately, too many college students—and other adults, for that matter—either weren’t listening during those grade-school discussions or have forgotten what the lessons were all about.

We’ve all seen it in our work with students, and *Navigating Newbie-ism* author Marcia Hall has seen it as well in her 25+ years in the world of work—including 11 as executive director of the West Anne Arundel County (MD) Chamber of Commerce. Too often, students and recent grads fail in the world of work not because they lack technical skills but, rather, because they lack critical **soft skills**.

Navigating Newbie-ism addresses the problem by highlighting what Hall calls the 12 “simple ways” today’s college students and recent grads can stand out in the competitive and demanding world of entry-level work.

Hall focuses on many of her own thoughts, but perhaps just as importantly she offers the insights of young adults

and entry-level employers she interviewed for the book. Each piece of advice, thankfully, is something college students can begin working on immediately—while they’re still **in** college.

Perhaps even better yet, Hall has written the type of book that allows students to jump in anywhere they’d like depending on their interests—and to finish the entire 154-page book in perhaps 90 minutes.

There are a few oddities in the book. Chapter 3 (“A Word About Bosses”), for example, is all of one and a half pages, and at times the material Hall covers is a bit choppy (for lack of a better term).

But Hall makes up for these minor glitches with her own attitude (about the book and the advice she offers), summed up best on page 27:

Once you read about these simple ways, you may think each one is a no-brainer. You might think they are too obvious. You might say, “Of course I do them.” In reality, most people practice only a few or do not do them consistently.

She couldn’t be more right.



90-Minute College Major Matcher

Review by Peter Vogt

I’ll freely admit that whenever I see a book title with a phrase like “90-Minute” (or “Quick” or “Fast” or “Easy”)

in it, my expectations tend to go sky high. That type of claim, especially for a usually complicated task like, in this case, choosing a college major, is very difficult to live up to—well, where I’m concerned, at least.

If you and, more importantly, your students view Laurence Shatkin’s *90-Minute College Major Matcher* as a way to get a **start** on picking a major, then you’ve got a good book on your hands.

If, conversely, you and/or your students expect this book to literally live up to its name, you’re probably going to be disappointed to some degree, even though you’ll still walk away with a lot of outstanding information and ideas.

The book describes John Holland’s popular RIASEC classification scheme and uses it to give readers brief assessments to help them pinpoint their interests and skills. Fair enough. The book also helps readers reflect back to which high school courses they liked the most. Again, fair enough.

But that’s the full extent of the assessment. Readers are then instructed to use the interests and skills they’ve identified to sort through many majors—described in impressive detail—and choose the one(s) that fits them best.

It’s a nice idea, but I just don’t see the typical student being able to pull it off without some help and, especially, some further assessment and critical thinking. If you’re willing to serve as guide, *90-Minute College Major Matcher* is a good basic map.