

# GATEWAY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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ISSUE NO. 1

You may have noticed that this layout looks new- that's because we've been working very hard to create Gateway's first quarterly newsletter! We have so much knowledge to share at the Center that we've decided to create this piece and share it with you. You'll see topics that range from new Center activities, to sharing educational best practices from yours truly, to broader issues that relate to our mission for educational equality.

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## What's New at the Center

### Gateway Summer Camps



It seems that just yesterday students were returning from winter break and now summer is just around the corner! We want to make sure your children have a fun filled summer that will also provide them with opportunities to expand their minds.

The Santa Barbara Independent is filled with camps to keep your children busy whether they're 5 or 15. Summer is also a critical time for learning because students are susceptible to [Summer Learning Loss](#) where they can lose 3 months of math skills and up to 2 months of reading skills. It's critical to maintain a balance of fun activities with educational opportunities that will keep your child's academic achievements up to par.

Gateway's STEM Camp for Girls is one way to do just that. STEM Camp will provide a challenging and entertaining way for your child to discover computers and robotics.

If your child finds inspiration in their surroundings then Photo Journalism Camp will be the perfect way for them to capture those moments. Students will learn about camera angles, perspective shots and discover how writing can be a creative outlet to tell their stories.

These camps fill up quickly so [reserve your spot today](#).

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## **The Reading Corner**

There is little argument that reading is essential for success in all educational endeavors. As summer is approaching, it is important to think about how students can make the most of their time. We wanted to learn more about why older students stop reading for fun and provide some inspiration to change the trend!

There have been many studies conducted regarding youth desire to read and the effects of achievement. Common Sense Media conducted a study that clearly summarized a few areas of concern: as students get older, they read for fun less often; there is a gap between reading achievement for African American, Hispanic, and White students; there are some ways for parents to help their children not become part of a negative statistic.

There are a variety of reasons why middle school and high school students may read less often compared to when they were younger. School requires more reading and therefore there is less time to read for leisure. Also, with the growth of technology, it is easy to be less enthusiastic about putting down the phone and picking up a book. In 2014, Common Sense Media found that 9% of 13-year-olds and 27% of 17-year-olds read “never” or “hardly ever” (Rideout et al.).

However, these statistics become concerning when they begin to affect school performance. Differences in achievement between African American, Hispanic, and White students is similarly alarming as “government test scores indicate that white students continue to score 21 or more points higher on average than black or Hispanic students” (Rideout et al.).

Because many Gateway students fall into either this age and/or race, we thought it was important to bring some awareness to these statistics. As parents, there are a few things that can be done to motivate your children to read more.

### **Spend time reading with your child**

For younger students, it is crucial to read to them often. Older students and parents could select a book to read together and spend time discussing it. 57% of children whose parents read to them daily are “frequent readers,” while only 16% of children without daily reading can say the same about their reading habits (Rideout et al.).

### **Lead by example**

Another powerful way parents can demonstrate the importance of reading is doing so themselves.

### **Exposure**

Lastly, just having books, newspapers, or magazines around the house can influence young readers.

Reflecting on these statistics should only motivate us to read more often. Check out NPR’s list of the [100 Best-Ever Teen Novels](#) for something to read this summer. We would love to hear from you--no matter your age or reading level. Please fill out [this survey](#) to help us learn more about the state of reading at Gateway!

### **Works Cited:**

Rideout, Victoria, et al. “Children Teens and Reading.” Common Sense Media, 12 May 2014, <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/uploads/pdfs/csm-children-teens-and-reading-2014-1.pdf>.

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## **A Look into Common Core**

### **Understanding the *Why* Behind it all**

The topic of Common Core seems to have caused a rift in the educational community but like it or not, these standards are here to stay. We were curious as to why educators decided to implement this new system of learning so we did a bit of research.

To understand the direction our educational platform is moving in, we first have to understand the way we learned “when we were in school”. Stacks of flashcards for multiplication tables, pages of the same types of addition or subtraction problems- it all came down to rote memorization.

Comparatively, common core is a system that’s been designed to help your student think about the *why* behind it all. Too often we see students graduating from school thinking that they’ll never have a practical application for the math they sat through because they’ve only covered surface level topics. Common Core mathematics will help students understand math from a creatively analytical perspective instead of rote memorization. The focus with Common Core math is to give students the opportunity to *demonstrate* concepts.

One argument we hear a lot is that the point of the lesson is to get to the answer- that couldn’t be farther from the truth! Professional tennis player Arthur Ashe once said “Success is a journey, not a destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome.” As it relates to education, teachers using the Common Core method are more interested in ensuring the student understands the process, the basic fundamentals to get to their answer, over getting the answer itself.

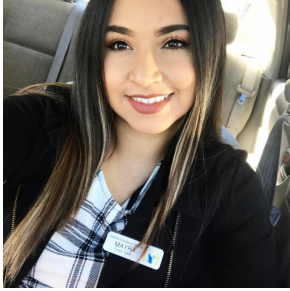
Why is the process so important? Understanding the process teaches our students to become critical thinkers and to tackle a problem, any problem, from multiple angles. It can sometimes feel uncomfortable not knowing what the right answer is and too often students are stigmatized into silence over asking a question to gain understanding. Common Core will help address the struggle many students face with being afraid to fail or to ask questions to understand the problem.

As a parent, there are several things you can do to help your student understand this new way of learning:

- Be supportive, don’t tell your student that their teacher is doing it the hard way (it’s just the new way)
- Have them explain the assignment to you- you’re probably struggling with the new concepts just as much as your student. Try having them explain what the assignment is so that you can learn too.
- Use visuals- this is a great way to help students understand new concepts, especially with the math lessons.

Have more questions about the Common Core method? Write us back and let us know!

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## **Gateway Guru College Planning Advice**

This is quite an exciting and stressful time for high school seniors. Between finishing the last months of high school, students need to make big decisions about the future and can be overwhelmed with how to make this transition. We wanted to provide some insights from current UCSB seniors and current graduates. One of Gateway's own tutors, Mayra, answered some questions about her experiences. She is double majoring in Sociology and Latin American Studies.

### **Q: What advice do you have for high school seniors who are struggling to choose which school to attend?**

If you are having a hard time deciding between two of your top schools consider the following factors. First, look into the major you are planning to pursue and whether or not the department/program meets your expectations. In addition, compare the financial aid award package and decide which school is offering you more financial aid. The location and school environment are also important. This will be your home for the next four years. If you are one of those people whose mood is greatly affected by the rainy weather, for example, then maybe choose a school where you'll be more content and motivated to succeed.

### **Q: Are there any scholarships seniors can apply for?**

Yes! If you are a senior in good academic standing consider applying to the [Gates Millennium Scholarship](#). It may sound super scary and intimidating to know that only 1000 students nationwide are able to obtain it. However, it is worth the try considering the benefits. Three students of my graduating class (2013) were able to receive the scholarship and they are now attending UCSB and UCLA without having to worry about money. [The Dell Scholars Program](#) is also very similar. There are countless of local scholarships in your area. Do some research and make note of deadlines. Have an idea of how many letters of recommendation you will need in addition to other important documents. Most importantly, be confident and don't doubt yourself.

### **Q: What made you choose UCSB? What were you looking for when selecting the school for you?**

When I was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade my teacher showed us a brochure that had a beautiful image of UCSB. I immediately fell in love with the campus and the beautiful ocean scenery we have. At that moment I had no idea about the rigorous process one must go through in order to get accepted into one of the top UC's. Fast forward to senior year of high school. I found out I got into UC Santa Cruz, UC San Diego, UC Riverside, and UC Santa Barbara. Needless to say, I did not have a hard time choosing UCSB over the other schools. My heart and mind were always here. I was reassured about my decision when I found out UCSB has one of the best Sociology programs in the nation. Also, it was far enough from home. I wanted to get away from my parents, not because I don't like being with them, but because I knew that I needed to step out of my comfort zone. As a woman of color, growing up in a patriarchal atmosphere can be very limiting in terms of personal development. One is expected to marry at a young age and give up our dreams of becoming college graduates. I realized being close to home would not allow me to obtain the independence I needed. I followed my heart and I know for a fact that attending UCSB has been the best decision I've made.

**Q: How did visiting campuses impact your decision?**

I did not have the opportunity to visit any college campus before making my decision. The only time I was able to visit a campus was in 9<sup>th</sup> grade with my AVID class when we visited USC.

**Q: Any last advice?**

I would say to choose a college based on what you want and not on what your parents or friends want for you. Aside from being the perfect opportunity for social and economic upward mobility, college is where you discover yourself. It is an experience for you to live, not for your parents or peers. Choose a major that truly interests you and that you're passionate about! What you study in college does not necessarily reflect the career or job you will have after you graduate. It is possible to major in Feminist Studies and later pursue a career in the law field or be in the film industry. Lastly, learn how to take advantage of all the resources provided to you. Be resourceful!

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Thanks so much for taking the time to read our 1st edition of the Gateway Newsletter- please let us know what you like (and what you don't) so that we can focus on providing you with information that is useful and relevant, whether you're a student, parent, or educator.

Finally, to leave you with a bit of inspiration:

"Develop a passion for learning. If you do, it will never cease to grow."

- Anthony J. D'Angelo