making the transition to . . . next semester //

1. Drive
Researchers are finding that the critical quality that predicts whether a student will complete a course or an entire program is “grit”—his or her determination to continue toward a very long-term goal despite adversity. How does your determination change as you are given more autonomy in a course? As you feel your skills are growing? If you have a sense that the work you do matters to more people than just yourself?

2. The Mind of the Mob
Crowdsourcing is the gathering of data in real time, as an event happens, from a growing crowd of people. Because of the large number of students who now own phones with Internet access, crowdsourcing on campus could start to be useful. In what settings would making decisions based on information from a gathering crowd on campus be valuable? How would you react to your professor using a form of crowdsourcing to determine your grade on an essay?

3. Recycle, Repair, Redistribute
The Microsoft-authorized refurbisher program and TechSoup both help provide resources to people in need to reduce the barrier of the digital divide. These organizations recycle hardware and supply software inexpensively to needy families. How could a program be set up at your school to make people aware of these options? Could students donate materials or retrofit systems as part of their coursework? As part of a club activity? How could you make these programs work for your community?

making the transition to . . . the workplace //

1. Patients and Medical Computing
As more hospitals and doctors’ offices begin to use electronic medical records (EMRs), the flow of information among the doctors and care facilities a patient uses could become much more reliable. In their training and work, doctors and nurses rely on computers. What about patients? Examine Microsoft Health Vault at healthvault.com for an example of an electronic medical history. How does this migration from a traditional paper records system impact the skills required for medical office workers? New ethical questions also often arise when technology changes. How would a medical facility now protect and verify its data records? What risks are there with a product like the Microsoft Health Vault?

2. Social Media Careers
With the explosion of users on social media sites, businesses need to establish their presence on social media sites. Just search for “Vans” or “Starbucks” on Facebook for examples of company sites. To manage their interaction with customers (and fans), companies need to hire social media managers. Using a job site such as Monster.com, search for “social media manager” and review the job postings. What are the educational requirements for social media managers? What technical skills do these jobs require? Given your major, what companies would you do well for as a social media manager? What steps should you take while in school to prepare yourself for a career as a social media manager?

3. Edges of Literacy
Employers always seek to hire computer-literate workers. Is the boundary of what is computer literate changing? Is it enough to just know how to use the most popular computer programs, or is writing programs important? Is it enough to know how to use Google, or are there other techniques of finding information employers expect? Is it enough to be able to install a mobile app, or do employers want you to be able to create one? How could you document for your employer your ability to learn, adapt quickly to changes in technology, and acquire new skills?