Defining College Success

Video Transcript

What does it mean to be successful in college? Well, the answer to this question depends on what is important to you. You might think that "success" is earning an associate's degree, or graduating from a four-year university. Maybe it means receiving a certificate of completion or finishing a skills-based training. Perhaps it means feeling connected to your peers and engaged with university life or even juggling your job, your family obligations and your school commitments.

What does it mean to be successful in college? Well, the answer to this question depends on what is important to you. You might think that "success" is earning an associate's degree, or graduating from a four-year university. Maybe it means receiving a certificate of completion or finishing a skills-based training. Perhaps it means feeling connected to your peers and engaged with university life or even juggling your job, your family obligations and your school commitments.

If most students consider passing a class to be a minimum requirement for "success," and most students want to be successful in their courses, why aren't all college students consistently successful in the classroom?

A large part of being successful is your personal ownership of success, setting your standard for achieving success, and attaining that standard. It is important to know that you own your success, and you are the only person truly responsible for reaching your goals.

We often hear students say phrases like: “I just can't do it.” “I am not good at math.” “Maybe college is just not for me.” “I am just not smart enough.” These explanations for success or failure aren't necessarily accurate. Considerable research into college success reveals that having difficulty in or failing college courses usually has nothing to do with intellect. More
often, success depends on how fully a student takes ownership of his or her learning experiences, and embraces and masters the following strategies.

- Create measurable goals to guide your learning
- Establish and follow a study schedule
- Manage your study time and reduce procrastination
- Believe in yourself, know your strengths, and work to improve on any weaknesses

Overall, students struggle in college not because of natural intellect or “being smart enough,” but because of time management, organization, and lack of quality study habits. The good news is that there are ways to combat this, like creating a regular study schedule, studying in groups, and taking advantage of your school’s academic resources - its tutoring center, your instructors' office hours, and any available online help.

One of the most important aspects is your understanding of what is important to you about going to college; knowing that you are in charge of your learning experience and outcomes. So, what started you on your learning journey? What do you plan to achieve, and how will you make that happen?

About this transcript:

- Transcript title: Defining College Success
- Corresponding Lesson: STSU_013 Success and Self-Sufficiency in College
- Author and curator: Stacy Zemke M.S.K.M. for The TEL Library.
- Creative Commons License: CC BY NC SA