

Striving for Success: Causes of College Completion

by Rachel Moore

What causes some college students to achieve success? College provides a wide range of challenging situations, each a unique opportunity to fail or succeed. Poor academic performance is especially likely if the student is unsure of how to strategize for success. Fortunately, there is a vast array of helpful information readily available. Countless tips lead to success, but common strategies typically fall under three main categories. Students can improve their performance in school by staying organized, utilizing resources, and following through with academic commitments.

Organization is paramount to academic success. Lack of organization can easily impede an otherwise brilliant student's best efforts. For example, one may be an excellent writer, but if they have lost track of when their Composition assignment is due, their talent is rendered useless. Similarly, a misplaced calculator could doom an otherwise successful Algebra test. Students' accomplishment hinges upon their level of organization, especially in college. A neatly organized calendar of assignments and exams is an indispensable tool for any prospective successful student (Hyman and Jacobs 59). Keeping up with these important dates is a crucial prerequisite to academic success.

Furthermore, students must maintain a high level of organization beyond the planning stage if they wish to succeed (Hyman and Jacobs 11). A calendar is useless if it is not regularly updated. For instance, classes may vary from the syllabus over time, so it is best to take an active role in keeping one's calendar neatly organized. Similarly, students regularly receive and

generate a dizzying array of paperwork. It is all too easy to lose track of things, misplace essential items, or simply get overwhelmed with the vast number of documents. One helpful strategy is to regularly sort through one's files- digital and physical- to purge unnecessary junk and stay organized.

Students are not the only ones with the power to affect their success. Most colleges are equipped with a variety of resources to assist students in various aspects of life. The primary resource for academic help comes in the form of tutoring or instructors' office hours; these are invaluable tools that all students should use early and often (Hyman and Jacobs 30). Schools also offer help beyond academics; most also provide mental health services, such as counseling. Additionally, the school may offer other assistance, such as discounted medical care or help in obtaining food, shelter, transportation, or other essentials. Students should reach out when in need of help to raise their chances of success.

The aforementioned strategies only preliminarily set up the student for success; following through on academic commitments is where the real work is done. Without this vital step, all the planning, organization, and utilization of resources was for nothing. The best-laid plans and good intentions are nothing compared to action. Students must remain committed to pressing on, giving each assignment their full attention and doing their best each time. It can be tempting to slack off and occasionally let an assignment slide, assuming one's grade will work out in the end. This is a dangerous frame of mind and can lead to a downward spiral of unfortunate, avoidable grades.

Another essential aspect of following through on academic commitments is simply attending class. It can take up to three times as long to learn the material solo as it would have taken to go to class (Hyman and Jacobs 96). Lectures not only help teach the material but often

provide vital information which will be tested later. Also, attendance can count for a significant portion of the final grade- in some cases, as high as 40% (Hyman and Jacobs 29). If a class must be missed, students can improve their chances for success by communicating with the instructor and doing all they can to stay caught up with the class.

In summary, although college offers many challenges, students can maximize their chances to thrive by adhering to principles that are known to cause success. Generally, students should focus their efforts in the following areas: organization, resource utilization, and following through on academic commitments. Dedication to these tenets will lay the foundation for great success in college and beyond.

Work Cited

Hyman, Jeremy S., and Lynn F. Jacobs. *The Secrets of College Success*. 3rd. ed., John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2019