

The Successful College Student

Data supports the fact that entering degree-seeking students are more likely to complete if they understand what it takes to be successful in college. Patrick Henry Community College as well as most colleges require students to enroll in a one credit hour College Survival Skills course which helps students transition from high school to college. Carolyn Byrd, dean of instructional support services teaches one of the sections. One assignment requires students to read an article entitled *How Not to be a Successful College Student* and then write a short essay about themselves and their educational goals. They are asked to indicate if any of the negative behaviors listed on the handout describes them and if so what they intend to do to change. Following is an essay by Regina McKenzie addressing this assignment. Regina is enrolled in the Health Sciences Curriculum.

Essay by Regina McKenzie

After reading "How Not to be a Successful Student," I began to think back to how I was in high school. A lot of the behaviors described me at the time and when I first started college. Now that I have matured, I really understand what it means to get a good education.

When I was in high school I would always try to take the easy way out. I would read text from the chapter summary instead of reading the chapter. I would rarely ask or answer questions in class. Sometimes I would wait until the day before to start an assignment or to even ask for help. Reading over material a second time, especially if the material I was reading bored me, was something I rarely did.

When I was in my sophomore year of high school, I remember taking a math class where I was totally lost. Every day I went to class I would either act like I was doing class work or paying attention when actually I was working on assignments from another class. Of course I had to retake the class the following summer and my parents weren't happy with me.

After my sophomore year I really started to wake up and realized the importance of education. I did great in my junior and senior years. When I graduated from high school, I took a break from school awhile and enrolled in college when I was in my middle 20s. At first I started out the same way that I was in high school. I waited until the last minute to work on assignments, I didn't bother to take notes during class, and I would ask instructors to extend deadlines for me. I knew that I could do a lot better, so one day I looked myself in the mirror and said, "Believe in yourself." After that day, I began to go to study sessions with other classmates. I began turning assignments in weeks before the due dates. My whole attitude changed. I began being more responsible. My self-esteem went up, and I really enjoy college now.

Although sometimes class work seems a little overwhelming, I still take charge of the situation and put forth my very best effort. I do really well most of the time. When I'm having difficulties with course material, I always ask my instructors for assistance, and I try to study with other classmates when possible.

Now that classes are in full force, I plan to use all the learning resources that are available to me when possible. Patrick Henry Community College has lots of resources that are available, and I'm very thankful for that. I realize that with the right motivation and attitude and taking responsibility for my learning, I will be successful.