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If most students believe that passing a class is the minimum requirement for “success,” and if most students want to be successful in their courses, why aren’t more college students consistently successful in the classroom?

Perhaps some common misconceptions are at play. For example, we often hear students say, “I just can’t do it!” or “I’m not good at math,” or “I guess college isn’t for me...,” or “I’m not smart enough.” But these explanations for success or failure aren’t necessarily accurate. Considerable research into college success reveals that **intellect usually has nothing to do with having difficulty in or failing college courses**. More often, success depends on how fully you embrace and master the following seven strategies:

1. Learn how to take effective notes in class.
2. Review the text and your reading notes prior to class.
3. Participate in class discussion and maybe even join a study group.
4. Go to office hours and ask your instructor questions.
5. Give yourself enough time to research, write, and edit your essays in manageable stages.
6. Take advantage of online or on-campus academic support resources.
7. Spend sufficient time studying.

So if you feel you are not smart enough for college, ask yourself if you can implement some of these skills. Can you make more time for learning? One approach is to create a regular study schedule and make sure you allow yourself ample time. Most college success experts agree that students should study two hours outside of class for every hour in class. Only break away from your committed schedule if an extreme situation prevents you from sticking to it.

Another strategy to consider implementing is group study. For example, rather than relying just on your own knowledge, notes, and skills, try studying with other students in your difficult

classes. Studying in a group gives every group member a chance to ask questions and talk about concepts.

You can also add a tutor to your study group. You will really be able to notice a positive difference. Tutoring is generally free in college, and the strategies and knowledge you gain will be invaluable. Usually tutors have taken the class you are currently enrolled in, and they are trained to get the best out of you.



Overall, students struggle in college not because of natural intellect or smarts, but because of poor time management, disorganization, and lack of quality study time. The good news is that there are ways to combat this, specifically by doing things like creating a regular study schedule, studying in groups, and taking advantage of your school's academic resources, like a tutoring center, instructor office hours, and any available online help.

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