

Student Success in College: Doing What Works! 3rd Edition

Christine Harrington Ph.D.

A First-Year Seminar Textbook Aligned to the Guided Pathways Movement:
Helping Students Choose and Stay on a Path

Guided Pathways and the First-Year Seminar Course

Guided Pathways is a national movement aimed at improving student success outcomes. Colleges and universities embracing this work engage in collaborative, institution-level reform that target the following essential practices:

- Establishing Pathways
 - Defining Programs and Paths
 - Creating Meaningful Learning Experiences
- Navigating Pathways
 - Helping Students Choose a Pathway
 - Helping Students Stay on a Pathway

The first-year seminar course is a critical part of this important work, especially with helping students choose and stay on a path. Unfortunately, students are often choosing majors or career paths based on little or no career exploration and as a result, often change majors. This often means that students will need to take additional credits, delaying graduation and increasing debt. Students are most likely to engage in meaningful career exploration if it is required and there are structures and supports in place. Requiring all students to take a first-year seminar course with a strong emphasis on career exploration and decision-making is an excellent approach to helping all students choose a career pathway.

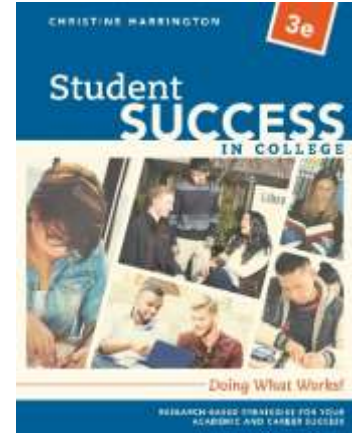
Staying on a path is also important. Unfortunately, many college students do not make it to the graduation finish line. In many cases, this is due to students not having the strategies and skills needed for success. For example, many students are relying on ineffective study strategies such as reviewing instead of using research-based approaches such as the testing effect. Giving students an opportunity to build academic and other important soft skills employers desire right from the start of their college experience makes it more likely that students will be successful.

First-year seminar courses that engage students in career exploration, develop academic and soft skills necessary for success, assist students with mapping out educational, career, and financial plans, and foster resilience and grit needed to persevere when obstacles arise serve as a critical part of the Guided Pathways movement, setting students up for success.

Guided Pathways and Student Success in College: Doing What Works!

A national expert in Guided Pathways and the First-Year Seminar, Harrington uses Guided Pathways as the framework for the third edition of *Student Success in College: Doing What Works!* This is evident in the organization of the text:

- Determining Your Path to Success
- Strategies and Skills for Success
- Being Successful: Plans and Perseverance



Rather than addressing career in just one chapter or as a discrete topic, career exploration and planning serve as a unifying theme of the text. In the first section, students discover the value of education and learn about essential thinking skills such as information literacy and critical thinking that will serve them well as they engage in the career decision making process. Goal setting and decision-making processes, especially as they relate to career decision making, are addressed right from the start. When students engage in self-assessment and career exploration and set meaningful personal, academic and career goals, they are more likely to see the value and purpose of tasks and activities that are designed to build knowledge and skills needed for success. In other words, students are more likely to be engaged and committed to the learning process when they have a clearly defined goal. In the second section, students learn about the skills and strategies that will lead to college and career success. In addition to key academic skills, there is an entire chapter on soft skills that helps students see the importance of seeking out opportunities to develop and enhance skills employers want. In the third section, students have the opportunity to engage in the planning process, mapping out educational, career and financial plans. Going beyond identifying courses and educational experiences needed, students are also challenged to build and strengthen their professional network. Finally, students learn how to stay motivated, be resilient and gritty, and manage stress so that they can continue to persevere toward their career goals.

Simply put, *Student Success in College: Doing What Works!* assists students with choosing and staying on a path, essential components of Guided Pathways. By using this textbook, students will engage in meaningful career exploration and decision making, learn skills and strategies needed to achieve goals, and develop comprehensive academic, career and financial plans. As a result, students will choose and stay on a path!