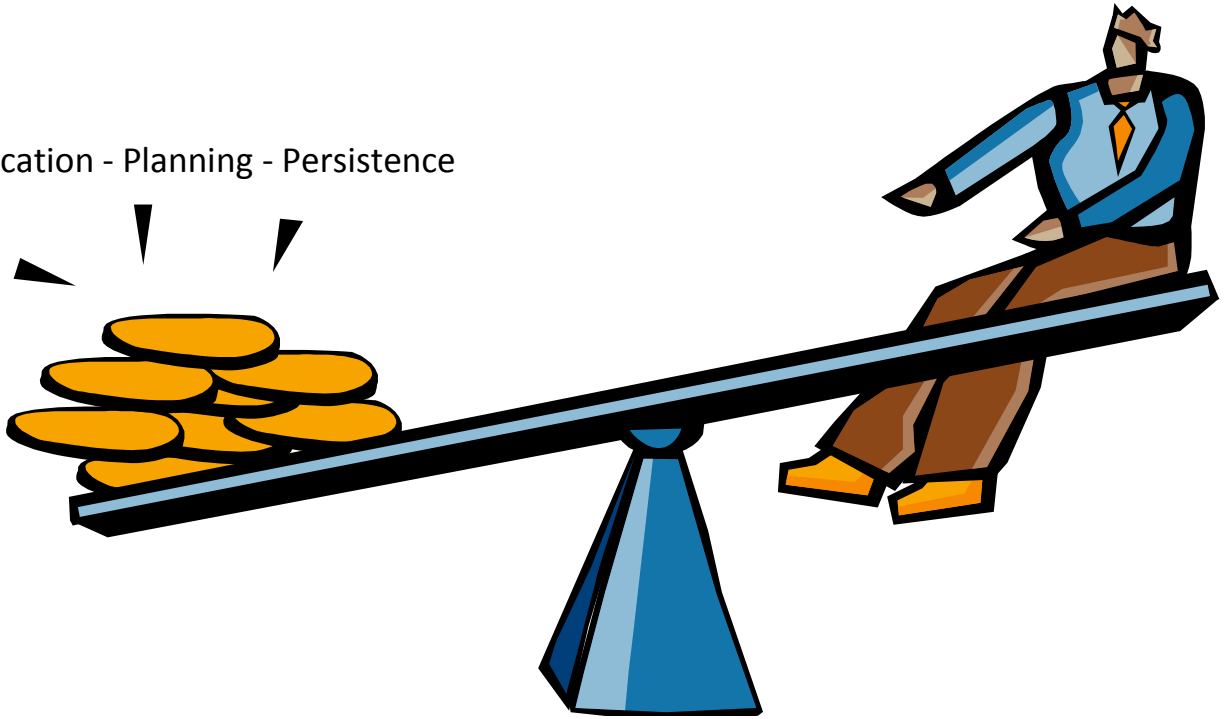


Student Success

Education - Planning - Persistence



Getting to the Tipping Point in Your Life

A Study Packet of information, student stories and discussion questions about being successful in your life.

The Tipping Point

A tipping point is like what you see on the cover of this packet. The man in the drawing is on a teeter totter. He needs enough weight on the other side to lift him up. Where there is enough weight, he will be able to go higher. The teeter totter is like someone's life. That person can stay down with not enough English, not enough other education, and a low-paying job that he hates. In order to be lifted higher, a person needs to make some changes and get ahead.

In 2005, the State of Washington studied students who came to its community colleges. The State found out some very interesting information about success and education for students. Read these points and then read the student stories that follow. Then discuss these students and how they are on the way to building a better life for themselves. Then discuss your own hopes and dreams. See the questions on the last page.

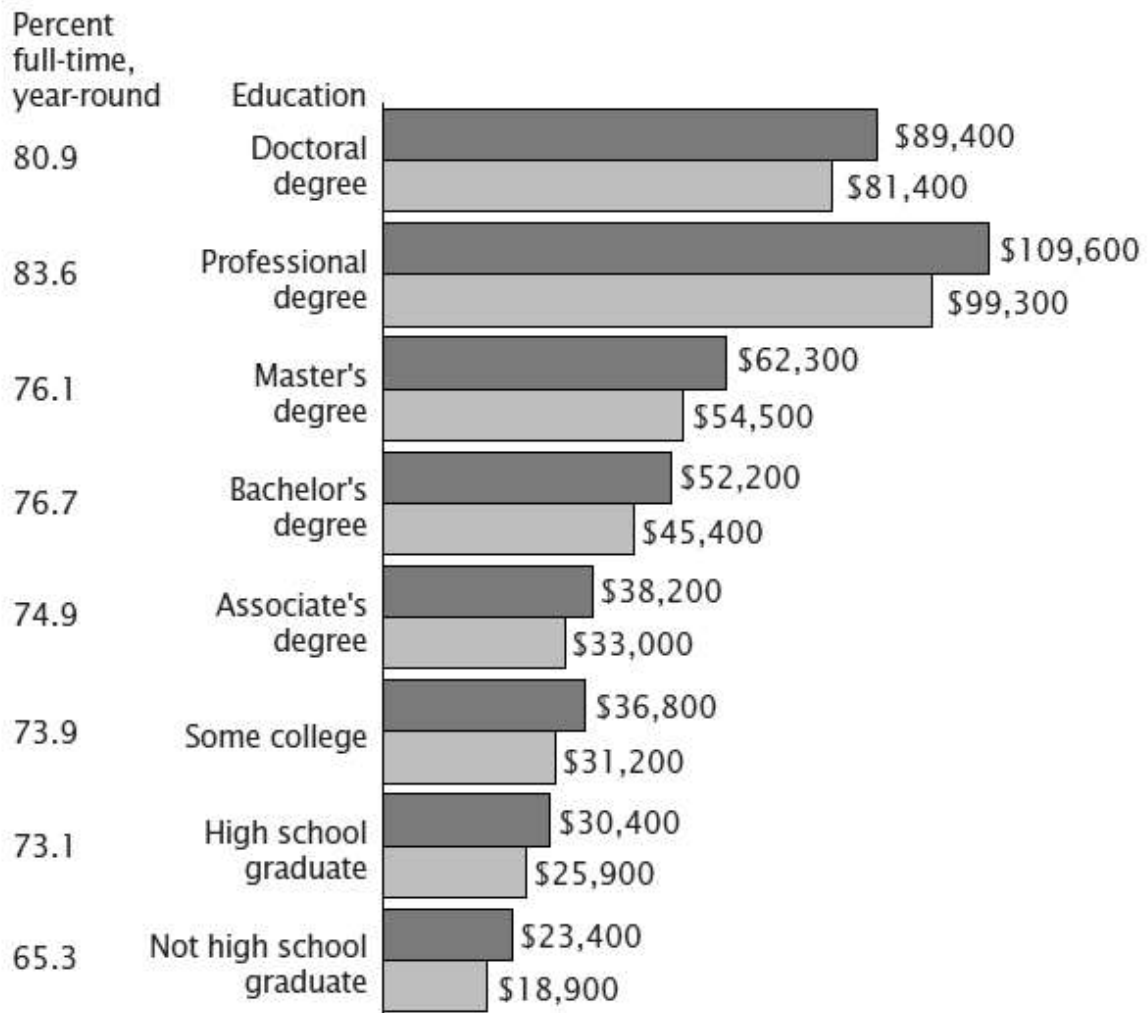
Here are some of the important points from that study.

- 42% of adults in the US between 25 and 64 have no more than a high-school education.
- Most new jobs, especially the ones that pay well, require education beyond high school.
- 70% of all students in ESOL or ABE/GED are parents. 25% are single parents.
- More than 50% of these students were working or looking for a job and had low income.
- 13% of students who start in ESOL go on to earn college credit. 30% of GED students continue.
- Only 4 - 6% of ESOL or GED students stay in college for 2 years and earn a degree or certificate.
- Just completing ESOL or ABE/GED doesn't help a student earn much more money or find a job.
- The students who stayed in college and earned a degree or certificate earned more money after finishing college.
- In 2005, the ESOL students earned \$7,000 more per year than the ESOL students who didn't stay in college.
- Short-term training, like that which welfare recipients take may help a student find a job, but it doesn't help raise what a student can earn.
- The students who stayed in college and earned a degree or certificate are 8% more likely to get a job.
- Only 23% of ESOL students applied for and received financial aid.
- Only 28% of ESOL students who transition take developmental courses.
- Students who receive financial aid and take developmental courses are two to three times more likely to earn a credential or a degree.

Figure 1.
Work Experience and Average Annual Earnings of
Workers 25 to 64 Years Old by Educational
Attainment: 1997-1999

(Earnings in 1999 dollars)

■ Full-time, year-round workers
 ■ All workers



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Surveys, March 1998, 1999, and 2000.

This chart shows what some workers will earn per year with education.

ESOL Student Stories

Saori from Japan

It's my dream to become a nurse in the USA. When I first moved here from Japan, I had difficulty communicating with people in English. Through ESOL program, I have not only been able to build up my English skills, but I've also made many new friends with whom I can learn with and learn from as we have similar challenges and diverse backgrounds. I really appreciate the support and encouragement I've gotten from my teachers who have not only helped me become more confident, but also have motivated me to plan for my future. I've decided to continue taking college classes and I plan to enroll in the LPN program at GRCC. As a mother, I have also realized what a great opportunity it is to be able to continue my education since it is uncommon in my country. By pursuing my dreams, I believe that I can be a good role model for my children in showing them how importance of education.



HOLA!



My name is Gabriel. I am from Puerto Rico. I have three professional passions that I want to realize in life; they are law, journalism, and politics. That's why when I finished my bachelor's degree in the University of Puerto Rico, I made the decision to come to the United States to learn and improve my English skills because right now it's very important if you want to have a good job. I came to the United States 7 months ago without my family, and I was having serious problems with my speaking and listening in English. In ESOL, I could improve everything what I wanted about my English skills. In just few months after I started ESOL, I learned many things that helped me to communicate with others successfully. Now, I want to finish a certificate in forensic and fingerprint technology at GRCC, and then, I want to enter the next year to a good law school in the United States.

My name is Yim Fong. I was born in Hong Kong (China) and come from big family where I am the middle child. I came to live in the US in 2004 after we married in Hong Kong. I study ESOL in 2004, after finished my Level 6. In 2005 I took I-Best program about Child Development Associates. In the summer of 2007, I graduated from the CDA program and now I work in a childcare center. The most important goals in my life are to speak professional English and continue my education. My goal is become a Financial Analyst. Now I study academic class in Green River Community College.



Hi, my name is Claudia. I'm from the Dominican Republic. I came to Seattle in February 2008. Since I came, I started to study English at GRCC. Now I'm coursing English 110 and literature 267. I have improved a lot in my English thanks at all the wonderful teachers that we have at GRCC. Now, with my English skills I'm ready to get a job and start my professional life in the United States. I like to cook, rents movies and spend time with my husband, family, and friends.



I am Ana Maria and I'm from Colombia. When I was 20 years old I moved to Washington state with my family. Everything was new for me because I never had been in this state before. At the beginning, it was hard because I did not speak English at all. When I wanted to communicate with other people, it was a real headache: nobody could understand my English. I needed to get my A.A degree, but how to move forward if I dared not speak English? Well, Green River Community College together with ESOL, gave me the opportunity to improve my English and continue with my goal: to get a higher education.

My teacher played a very important role in this process and always had a remarkable support and kept me motivated to work hard. Today, I am attending academic classes to get my AA in Broadcasting and Journalism. My taking ESOL was the best decision I ever made. Apart from growing in many different aspects of my life, I experimented a healthy transition, and I reaffirmed my decision concerning my major. Thanks to the ESOL division for making this possible... I am a college girl now!



READING AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions about the Information on P. 2 - 3

1. What is a teeter totter? What happens when there is more weight on one side?
2. What is a tipping point?
3. According to the information on P. 2, what makes a person go up in life?
4. If there are 100 adults in the room who are age 25 to 64, how many will have a high school education?
5. If there are 100 ESOL or ABE/GED students in the room, how many will be parents?
6. Who goes on more to college classes, ESOL or ABE/GED students?
7. What percentage of each group succeeds in earning a degree or certificate?
8. What are the benefits of staying in college and finishing a degree or certificate?
9. What will help a student succeed in complete a degree or certificate?
10. How much more per year will a person who finishes an Associate's degree earn than someone who is a High School graduate?

Questions about the Student Stories on P. 4 - 5

1. Where is Saori from and what is her dream.
2. What has helped Saori be successful in her classes?
3. What benefits will there be for Saori by pursuing her dreams?
4. Where is Gabriel from and what is his immediate goal?
5. What is Gabriel's long-term goal?
6. Where is Yim Fong from and what has she done to reach her goals so far?
7. Where is Claudia from and when did she come to the US?
8. What is Claudia doing now at GRCC and what are the benefits for her?
9. Where is Ana from and why was it hard for her when she first came to the US?
10. What goals does Ana have?

Questions about Your Life and Goals

1. Where are you from and how long have you been in the US?
2. What education have you had already? Did you finish High School or take any college classes in your country or in the US?
3. What information did you learn from pages 2 - 3 that you did not know before this class?
4. Why did you come to GRCC for this class?
5. Do you think studying ESOL will be helpful for you?
6. Do you have any goals for studying at college after ESOL?
7. What do you want to be doing next quarter or next year?
8. What do you want to be doing in 3- 5 years?
9. Did the information and stories you read impact what you think about goals and your future?
10. What other questions do you have for the teacher?