OWNERSHIP OF LEARNING

LESSON 10-13 ▲ UNDERSTANDING SELF DOUBT

**LEARNING GOALS/OUTCOMES**

* Create an understanding of doubt and how it impacts the decision to prepare for higher education.
* Define doubt
* Identify the causes of self-doubt.

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

* **Student Handouts:**
* Extreme Success Worksheet
* Just the Facts! Worksheet
* **Chart paper**
* **Sticky-note pads**
* **Pencils**
* **Colored markers** for the facilitator

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

1. **To begin, ask students how they define the word “doubt.”** Write their definitions on chart paper or the board. Discuss the definitions students offer. Share that the typical definition of doubt is “a feeling of not being sure or certain.” Be sure to share that doubt is actually a powerful tool.
2. **Give students sticky notes** and share with them that they are going to create a list of times that they and their friends have experienced the most self-doubt.
3. **Ask students to work with a partner to identify times in their lives when they were uncertain about something** and to write an individual example on the sticky-note. Be sure that you give examples that might be relevant to the life experience of your students. Work from some that are typical for all teenagers but include those that are most relevant to the first-generation college-going student in your school. An example may be changing schools frequently or taking harder classes than their friends.
4. **Rather than asking students to report out verbally, have chart paper posted up around the room or use the board to allow students to put up their sticky-notes** and to group them with notes from other students that are similar.
5. **Give students time to look over the groups of notes** and see if there are any themes they can identify about when teenagers are most uncertain. Make a master list.
6. **If students do not see the themes immediately, be prepared to help them think about how most people experience doubt** when something:
   * Is unknown, unclear or challenging to understand,
   * Requires learning new skills,
   * Requires personal risk-taking, and
   * Places the individual outside of the peer or community group.
7. **Guide students through an activity regarding “Extreme Success.”** One of the first strategies in overcoming self-doubt is to look back on times in the past when you doubted yourself but ended up coming through with flying colors. Knowledge and recognition of your past successes bolsters the courage it takes to achieve your goals in the future.

Inform students that just like in the TV and video examples of extreme sports, we all have some challenges that we have overcome even when it was challenging and we were not sure we would be successful. Ask students about what they know about extreme sports or competitive shows that are on TV or video. Ask them what all of the people involved have in common. Distribute the *Extreme Success Worksheet* and give them time to make a list of things they have overcome and the strategies they used. Have students share with a partner or in small groups and be prepared to share with the larger group one or two strategies they thought were particularly important.

1. **Help students learn to focus on the facts.** Distribute the *Just the Facts!* Worksheet, which is an opportunity for the facilitator to assess the information students have, to identify what is accurate, and to help students see what information they may need to find.

Ask students to individually fill out the worksheet as best they can and be prepared to share one doubt. Use a “popcorn” technique where you ask one person to share a doubt and then have others share if they had a similar one. Have the group provide the “facts” so that no individual student is vulnerable in displaying what they know and what they do not know. Help the group as needed to determine strategies that may address the doubt.

1. **To conclude, ask students to turn to their partner and share what they have learned about self-doubt.** Summarize for the class (using their words and examples) that:
   * Self-doubt is the feeling of uncertainty about your ability to accomplish something. It can lead to hesitation, indecision and compromising personal expectations.
   * Self-doubt is totally normal. Feeling it does not mean that you are going to fail.
   * Self-doubt has a positive side because it causes us to stop and evaluate our actions.

**STUDENT PRODUCTS**

* **Completed *Extreme Success Worksheet***
* **Completed *Just the Facts! Worksheet***

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND OTHER INFORMATION**

* **FACILITATOR NOTES**

Self-doubt makes any of us feel alone and this is especially true of teenagers and even more so for the first generation students. Make sure that when students leave the lesson they understand that:

* Self-doubt is the feeling of uncertainty about your ability to accomplish something. It can lead to hesitation, indecision and compromising personal expectations.
* Self-doubt is totally normal. Feeling it does not mean that you are going to fail.
* Self-doubt has a positive side because it causes us to stop and evaluate our actions.

For the first generation student, it is critical that people such as the facilitators of these lessons help students see that they already have skills and knowledge that they apply to living their lives successfully. Often these students lack the information they need to overcome personal or community doubts about higher education, have weathered far more severe situations and have far more responsibility than their more affluent peers.

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LESSON 10-13 STUDENT HANDOUT

EXTREME SUCCESS WORKSHEET

Just like the people who participate in Extreme Sports, you have already overcome many challenges and have gained the skills and knowledge that will help you be successful in the future. Take a minute and reflect on these situations, filling in the information in the chart below. Be prepared to share with a partner or small group and identify the skills and knowledge that has helped you be successful.

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| **What was the challenge?** | **Why was it hard?** | **What strategies did you use to be successful?** | **What new knowledge about yourself or new skills did you gain?** |
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LESSON 10-13 STUDENT HANDOUT

JUST THE FACTS! WORKSHEET

Sometimes one of the very best ways to overcome doubtful thoughts is to compare them to the facts.

* Write down all of the doubtful thoughts you have about going to college.
* Work with a partner or small group to see what information you have that is factual and can dispute the doubtful thought.
* Be prepared to share what you know as a group and find out what facts others may have.

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| **Doubtful Thoughts About Going to College** | **FACTS** |
| **Example: Colleges only look at grades. Mine were not very good in my freshmen year so I won’t be able to go.** | **Example: Colleges look at many things when admitting students. Researching programs and knowing how your GPA sets you up to be successful the first college year is what is most important.** |
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