

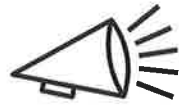
“It takes a village to raise a child,” the old proverb says. And getting a child to college takes just that—everyone.

The Village is the families, the educators, the counselors, the youth workers, and the other community members within and beyond our schools—everybody who comprise the potential support system in a student’s life.

The Village is the external force that reflects or rejects what students think about themselves and their prospects for college and life well beyond it.

At its best, the Village reminds students that college is a crucial and collective venture; one that they do not have to navigate alone.

The Teacher
Ms. Paceley



*“I am currently a science teacher.
I got a nineteen on the science test.
So no, the ACT does not measure
aptitude, potential, or success.”*

I teach everything. If you want any student in the entire school to be educated in biology, I am the go-to woman. I teach classes from general freshman in integrated science, to the accelerated program's sophomores, to the juniors in AP Biology. Every single level in this science, I have covered. With these different subjects, you need to have different sets of standards. General is the state standards, and AP is dictated by the College Board, so the standards lend themselves to different levels, just based on these requirements alone. When I go from general to the gifted and talented sections, everything has the same set of standards, but I have to figure out how to teach them at different levels, and it's a struggle. You have to get to know your kids first, before you really know what level they're on, and then you can differentiate your instruction.

Once I get to know the students personally, and sometimes I look at their test scores and reading ability, I deliver material in different ways to see how the students respond best. It might be with a PowerPoint, guided notes, or sometimes I can just say, "Read these textbook chapters. We're going to use this material next class." It really just depends on the kind of students I have. For example, with the gifted and talented group, I can say, "Review this material at home; we are going to apply that knowledge in a lab tomorrow." With the general class, they're most likely not going to do homework or not be able to do homework because of what their outside-of-school lives might entail. So then, all of the learning is in that ninety minutes. There's nothing that's going to happen outside of that class, which just means you just have to be really intentional about what you do pick for them to learn.

All my teaching career has been exam-based. For six years I've been teaching towards the EOC test. In the back of my head, I keep telling myself that I am teaching so

that students learn biology, and I am simply relating it to what is on the test. The root of the class is passion and curiosity. But I'm held to this testing standard and compared to everyone else year by year, and the whole science department is looking towards the biology classes for their accountability scores.

In the end, the goal for each individual differs in high school. I think for some people, it's college, but I don't think that's everyone's purpose for high school. I think it's preparing them for life as an adult, if you had to pick one purpose. And that might be pursuing higher education, or it might be pursuing a career, or it might be becoming a parent. Regardless of what it actually looks like for everybody, they have to be an adult in our country. To get to that goal, everyone needs to have responsibility and be able to solve problems. We say in class that deadlines are important and that you never get second chances in your real life, but you do. And deadlines can be pushed in a lot of things in your real life.

Only some of my students are ready for life after high school. Not everybody, but there's only so much you can teach. They're not going to learn until they're there like applying for a job. You can help prepare them mentally and encourage them to study for the test, but you're not going to know if you're prepared until you're in the moment. So unless we have mock adult days, I don't know that we'd actually get them really prepared. But maybe a better sense of what resources are there for them when they fall short of being prepared would be better.

What is most definitely not the way of evaluating readiness for college though is the ACT. When I was in high school, twelve or thirteen years ago, I took the ACT myself, and it in no way told me how prepared I was for college.

I am currently a science teacher.

I got a nineteen on the science test.

I went to college for free.

I have a master's degree, and I'm going back to school to get my second master's degree.

I have a full-time job with job security, retirement.

I can take vacations and still get paid.

I got a nineteen on the science test.

So no, the ACT does not measure aptitude, potential, or success.

What would instead? I think it's a combination. I mean, I also had a 4.0, did extra-curricular activities in high school, and was well-rounded. The ACT was only a piece of the puzzle, which I understand, but it didn't dictate everything about whether or not I'd be prepared in the way public policy is currently doing now.

COLLEGE TRIPWIRES

READY OR NOT

Stories from the Students Behind the Statistics



With a Foreword from
Dr. Vicki Phillips

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